

# St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School

## Prayer and Worship Policy

Date	Review Date	Drawn up by	Committee Approving
Spring 2024	Autumn 2025	Clare Longhurst	Curriculum

### Collective Worship and Prayer

Prayer and Worship are a fundamental part of our school life. It is important that we develop in the children an appreciation of, and active participation in prayer, worship and liturgy. Celebration of the Eucharist is the high point of Catholic worship, and therefore during the year the children will participate in whole school and class masses. In addition, they will take part in other forms of liturgical experience e.g. the celebration of work at the end of the Come and See topic, opportunities for reflection, class prayers, assemblies and class liturgies.

### Prayer

Prayer reflects a personal relationship with God. God is someone we talk to and listen to, not just speak about. Prayer can be both formal and informal. Spontaneous prayer has an important place in the spiritual life of the children and should use the everyday language of praising, thanking, asking, and saying sorry. Children are encouraged to express their thanks and petitions in a variety of ways using a range of different media during collective worship and assemblies. We have a prayer week and Focus on the Rosary during Autumn term to remind the children of the prayers we use at school in greater depth. There are prayer boxes in classes and a school prayer book which children regularly contribute to. It is important for children to be familiar with our rich heritage of traditional prayers. In sharing formal prayer with children it is important to reflect upon the words used and decide how much we might need to explore the meaning behind them. In addition to the Lord's prayer, the following prayers are the basic requirements of all Catholics and are best known from memory.

- The sign of the cross
- The Glory be
- The Hail Mary
- The Apostle's Creed
- The Act of Sorrow
- Grace before and after meals.
  - Act of Love (year 3)
  - Hail Holy Queen (year 4)
  - Angelis (year 5)
  - Benedictus (year 6)
- The Rosary
- The responses of the Mass

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### Worship

We aim:

- To join the work of the home and the parish in developing the spirituality of the children.
- To bring the children to a fuller understanding of our main act of worship- the Mass
- To develop the concept of worship as a central element of our school life
- To lead the children to a “full, conscious and active participation in the liturgical celebration demanded by the very nature of the Liturgy”. (Vatican 2) These aims are achieved by:
- Careful preparation of and involvement in class, year, School Masses
- Preparation of Class Assemblies and Corporate Acts of Worship
- Attention to devout and reflective prayer
- Development of classroom worship and the establishment of a focal point for prayer
- Supporting the parish programmes of Reconciliation and First Eucharist

### Class Based Worship

Display is an important part of sharing and celebrating our Religious Education. Each classroom has an RE display board and a central focal point for prayer. These reflect the current Liturgical theme. The focal point benefits from quality rather than quantity. The objects that should be displayed might include a Bible, pictures, icons, statues, rosaries, holy water, prayer books or candles. Other things that might be displayed could be symbols of the seasons- red poppy, autumn leaves, shamrock, etc. All artefacts should be relevant to the topic/ theme and suitable for the liturgical season. The themes on the focal point are changed on a regular basis as is the altar cloth which reflects the liturgical season. The Respond part of the Come and See programme takes the form of a class worship/celebration session. The children take an active part in arranging this celebration by choosing pieces of work to show, prayers to be said, readings from the Bible and hymns to be sung based on the topic they have just studied. We also use Ten:Ten and CAFOD resources for Class worship.

At the start of each academic year staff are given a timetable showing the class assemblies and Masses for the year. They also receive a timetable showing school assemblies, Key Stage assemblies and Class Collective Worship. A corporate act of worship will be held in class on the days that classes do not attend assembly but spontaneous prayer is encouraged for times of family, national or world joy and grief. The themes of our whole school assemblies are based on the liturgical year, reflect themes in Come and See, deal with moral issues, or celebrate Bible stories. On Friday's, the assembly is led by a particular class and parents are warmly invited to attend. Each term there is an opportunity for the whole school to share in the celebration of the mass. We also rejoice with the First Holy Communicants and parents of Year 6 Leavers' each year. Key Stage 2 classes have the opportunity to join in with a week day parish mass to which parents are invited. Children lead the readings, bidding prayers and offertory procession at these masses. Suitable Para liturgical services are held to celebrate particular times of the year: Harvest; Advent; Christmas; Lent (Penitential services for Year 4-6) and Easter.

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Assemblies:

Monday – Gospel Assembly

Tuesday – Hymn Assembly/Special Prayer Assemblies

Wednesday – Key Stage Assembly and Wednesday Word in Classes (lead by year 5)

Thursday – In class Worship

Friday – Class Assembly

Links with Home, School and Parish

In Year Three the children receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist. During this year the parents are invited to attend a programme of meetings at the parish church, to support them in their responsibility for the faith development of their child. The school choir sings at the Year 3 Communion masses as a sign of the partnership between the home, school and parish. At the beginning of each term all parents receive an R.E. Newsletter. This informs them of the topics to be covered and gives suggestions of things parents might do at home to support the teaching within school. Parents can find out about their child's progress in Religious Education at the three parents evenings that take place over the course of the school year. The religious and spiritual progress of each child is reported on in their school report at the end of each academic year. The clergy play an important role within our school community. Our parish priest comes into school on a regular basis as a celebrant for our whole school, key stage and class masses. He also has a programme of visits where he regularly talks to individual classes about the R.E. topic being studied at the time. This is also an opportunity to consider the 'big' questions.

### Spiritual Development

Opportunities to support the spiritual development of our pupils permeate the whole curriculum. The children are given opportunities in every area of the curriculum to question, think, reflect and wonder. Anything that will put children in touch with their imagination and with awe and wonder will encourage spiritual growth. This can be developed through story, which can comfort, challenge and affirm our beliefs, and through Scripture which develops a child's personal relationship with God. A sense of awe and wonder is developed through encouraging the children to take pride in themselves and others and appreciating that we are all creations of God made in his image and likeness. The children are encouraged to have an enquiring mind, become independent thinkers and learners and to think about others ahead of themselves.

### Moral Development

Children in our school are encouraged to reflect on their actions and the actions of others. Through the Religious Education programme and across the curriculum in areas such as PHSE and RSE, the children can find moral values and moral dilemmas which can develop their growing awareness of moral questions and moral choices. The formation of moral conscience involves teaching children to understand the difference between good and evil, right and wrong, which contribute to the children's moral development. They are taught to appreciate God's gifts in themselves, in others and in creation. They will begin to understand how people can strengthen or damage their relationships with one another through the choices they make.