

St. Joseph's Specialist Trust
Amlets Lane, Cranleigh
Surrey GU6 7DH

Website: www.st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk

Prayer and Liturgy

(Acts of Prayer and Liturgy Procedures)



Christ in our Lives
'No limits ... just possibilities'

Reviewed: February 2026
Next Review: February 2027
Cycle: Annual

WEBSITE PROCEDURE
GOVERNOR/TRUSTEE

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Mission Statement

The staff, parents, pupils, students and governors of St Joseph's Specialist Trust, together we will create a supportive Catholic ethos within a Christian environment, with aims, structures and curricula designed to achieve the full potential of all pupils and students.

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

A Catholic School and College is part of the wider Church and therefore part of a sacramental community. We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school is a part of the Church's action as the Body of Christ, giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.¹

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils and students.² (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils and students, or separate acts of worship in school groups.) In line with the directory from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the collective act of worship is referred to 'Prayer and Liturgy' since this is more authentic to the practice of the Church.

We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that Prayer and Liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

In this school, responsibility for arranging Prayer and Liturgy rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Executive Principal and the Leader of Catholic Life.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that Prayer and Liturgy takes into account the religious and educational needs of *all* who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in Church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of Church
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds.
- Those from no faith background

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

¹ It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Prayer and Liturgy' in schools. 'Prayer and Liturgy' is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context and are explored in greater depth in the guidelines.

² Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Prayer and Liturgy. However, given the importance of Prayer and Liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents need to be aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life, conforming to the norms and teachings of the Catholic Church and central to our Catholic tradition and identity as members of Christ's Body, the Church.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in our school aims to provide an opportunity for all pupils, students and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To enter into relationship with God
- To come to know and love Jesus Christ
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ.
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs and feelings
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To develop the skills of:
 - Reverence
 - Contemplation
 - Reflection
 - Interpretation
 - Empathy
 - Meditation
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding.
- To reinforce prayers and practices which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Lead pupils and students to a greater understanding of the Word of God expressed in the Bible and religious stories
- Celebrations will:
 - be short and appropriately paced
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

- include singing, drama and other forms of participation
- use a range of multisensory resources to gain and hold pupils' and students' attention and include them spiritually in the liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy is organised in our school as follows:

- *Weekly 'Singing Assemblies' and/or class led assemblies which showcase the class and are open to parents and family friends*
- *Mass or Liturgy of the Word in the school's hall half-termly to celebrate an event in the liturgical calendar*
- *Candle Time within class groups*
- *Prayer of thanks for meals*
- *Prayer and song in many RE lessons*

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, the Religious Education Directory and the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, significant dates and the curriculum. A Celebration of the Word will be the focus in most prayer and liturgy.
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in pupils and students, skills that enable them to prepare, organise and participate in worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- Using the Annual Plan of Provision (APOP)

The format for Prayer and Liturgy for our school follows the norms of the Roman Rite and will be:

- ❖ **Gather** – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)
- ❖ **Listen** – every liturgy will centre around at least one proclamation from the Bible, with the reading of the day being the first source. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary.
- ❖ **Respond** – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (dance, music, drama, silence, art, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God (intercessory prayers)
- ❖ **Go Forth** – Giving the pupils and students something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Recording

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, learner groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils and students' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and students and whether these are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Resources

Illustrated Bibles for pupils and students (various levels)

Simplified Mass readings produced by St. Joseph's staff

Puppets and other figures

Music

Musical instruments

Candles and glow sticks

Interactive books and toys

Food for sensory explorations of liturgical seasons and other world faiths, and sensory experience and sharing activities

Costume

The chapel and Stations of the Cross, the outdoor areas, including Forest School

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

(E.g. sharing a lunchtime mass with parishioners during Lent, followed by a Lenten Cafod lunch)

Eucharist – Holy Mass

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated and made accessible to all pupils, students and staff irrespective of their faith development stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school liturgy. In line with the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, we facilitate full, conscious and active participation.

Mass is celebrated for the beginning of Advent, the Patronal Feast in March and for Leavers in July. Other celebrations of Mass occur for extra-ordinary events, e.g. in 2015/16 a Mass to open and close the Year of Mercy and a Mass for the Induction of the Executive Principal. Mass is also celebrated when there are sacraments of initiation to be celebrated, e.g. a Baptism, First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation.

We believe that pupils and students are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

In school, therefore, A Celebration **of the Word'**, rather than the Eucharist will be the norm.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

During Advent and Lent, a penitential liturgy will be held. The Sacrament of Confession will be made available for pupils, students and staff who have made their First Confession and First Holy Communion.

Those pupils, students and staff who are not Catholic, but wish to have a one to one with the visiting priest are encouraged to do so.

Across the Three Pathways worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites in the mass or The Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite.

The Leader for Prayer and Liturgy

David Purcell, Leader of Catholic Life

Procedure Monitoring and Review

This Procedure is monitored by the Leader of Catholic Life and is evaluated and reviewed by the SLT and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role. Governors should review reports on the prayer life of the school on a termly basis.

Appendix 1 – The Role of the Leader for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written Procedure for Prayer and Liturgy
- Formulating the Annual Plan of Provision (APOP)
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer and Liturgy which may at times form part of the Strategic Improvement Plan
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils and students
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Pupils and Students'
- Organising themes for Prayer and Liturgy
- Assisting the governors and Executive Principal to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and Liturgy

PLANNING, RECORDING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Prayer and Liturgy
- Informing the Principal of standards and developments in Prayer and Liturgy

COMMUNICATION

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Prayer and Liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and Executive Principal regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Prayer and Liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school Procedure regarding Prayer and Liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the other members of the Chaplaincy Team
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ONGOING FORMATION

- Leading and organising for staff ongoing formation for Prayer and Liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

RESOURCES

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Prayer and Liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

Prayer and Liturgy: Plan of Formation

	Where is formation needed? In Prayer & Liturgy and for those with particular roles?	How are they being formed?
All Pupils From PRESENCE To ENCOUNTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass • Celebration of the Word • Prayer • Music in Prayer and Liturgy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing Assemblies • Class Assemblies • RE Lessons • Preparation for Liturgies
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above, as well as senior leaders who lead staff reflections/prayer. • Class teachers who lead class prayer and class assemblies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD/PL Days
Particular Groups of Pupils and Students From ENCOUNTER to MISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers of the Word • Readers of the Prayer of the Faithful • Those participating in the Procession of Gifts • Altar Servers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 preparation/training
Particular Groups of Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above, as well as music leads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through discussion with Prayer and Liturgy Lead/Chaplain

Formation is ongoing and happens throughout a student's time at the school. It works alongside a plan for progressive participation, supporting students from **PRESENCE** to **ENCOUNTER** and **MISSION**.
Participation in Prayer and Liturgy is itself a formative experience for all.

Prayer and Liturgy: Progressive Participation

PRESENCE	ENCOUNTER	MISSION
<p><i>“Be still, and know that I am God”</i> Psalm 46:10</p>	<p><i>“Did not our hearts burn within us?”</i> Luke 24:32</p>	<p><i>“Follow me”</i> Matthew 4:19</p>
<p>Developing full, conscious and active participation.</p>	<p>Developing full, conscious and active participation.</p>	<p>Developing full, conscious and active participation.</p>
<p>Pupils are invited to be present for Prayer and Liturgy. They learn how to act and be in God’s presence. For some students this includes learning to sit quietly and join in with responses and singing.</p>	<p>Prayer and Liturgy presents an opportunity for prayerful encounter with God. Students are open to experiencing and developing a relationship with God, one that can impact their lives.</p>	<p>Students respond to an encounter with God through acts of service to God and to their neighbour. The impact of Prayer and Liturgy can be seen and felt in the school’s Catholic Life.</p>
<p><i>Formation</i></p>	<p><i>Formation</i></p>	<p><i>Formation</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What does it mean to be in God’s presence?</i> • <i>How does this change my behaviour?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What does mean to have an encounter with God?</i> • <i>What might this encounter mean in my life</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What does it mean to serve God and our neighbour?</i> • <i>How is this expressed in our school community?</i>

Date Procedure Reviewed

Updated	Changes	By	Version
January 2014	Minor changes re Headteacher/Principal and change of Chaplain	Annie Sutton	v1.1
January 2017	The Catholic School as part of the wider Church and therefore a sacramental community and part of the Body of Christ. Clarification on celebrations of the Mass during the School/College year. Introduction of a penitential liturgy in Advent and Lent and the availability of the Sacrament of Confession 'Pupils and students' to Pupils and Students Change of lead on RE and Catholicity	David Purcell	V1.2
June 2017	Change in title to Leader of Catholicity	David Purcell	V1.3
January 2020	Interim review to reclassify from Policy to Procedure; cycle changed to annual; name change to reflect Trust	Administrator	N/A
Summer 2020	Location of liturgies: held in the school hall (p.5) Insertion of weekly singing and/or class assemblies to reflect existing practice (p.5) 'the Mass' wording changed to 'Holy Mass' (p.5) Change of KS1 and KS2 to 'Across the Three Pathways' (p.6)	David Purcell	V1.4
Summer 2021	Addition of 'identity as members of Christ's Body, the Church.' Deletion of 'Key Stage 4 and 5 curricula'	David Purcell	V1.5
Summer 2022	Addition: The format for Prayer and Liturgy for our school follows the norms of the Roman Rite and will be... p.5	David Purcell	V1.6
Summer 2023	Procedures: 'Acts of Collective Worship' renamed as Prayer and Liturgy to align with the Prayer and Liturgy Directory and the Catholic Schools Inspection Framework. P3 gives an explanation of this P5 reference is made to the new Religious Education Directory (RED) and the Prayer and Liturgy Directory (PLD)	David Purcell	V1.7
June 2024	Changes on pp 4,6,8 – amendments to aims (4), description of when Mass is celebrated (6), CPD removed in favour of ongoing formation to describe support for staff (8)	David Purcell	V1.8
November 2024	Addition of Appendix 2: Plan of Formation Addition of Appendix 3: Progressive Participation	David Purcell	V1.9

Updated	Changes	By	Version
February 2026	Terminology in line with the Prayer and Liturgy Directory Introduction of the Annual Plan of Provision (APOP)	David Purcell	1.10