'A joyful union of Catholic Schools'

Prayer & Collective Worship Policy

2026 – 2027

With Jesus in our hearts, we welcome, we learn, we laugh, we flourish.

Together we love, care, learn and thrive under the umbrella of God.

Introduction

Within our joyful unions of two Catholic primary schools within Our Lady of the Valley Parish, Jesus is beside us and forever with us, as we all grow together as children of God. Prayer and collective worship is at the very heart of our Catholic schools. We are a praying and worshipping community, who seek to keep Catholic traditions alive and foster a real warmth and meaningful connection to our faith through our actions and words and as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

'The joy that radiates from those attracted by Christ and by His Spirit is what can make any missionary initiative fruitful.' Pope Francis

Aims of Prayer and Collective Worship

We believe that prayer and collective worship aims to provide our two school communities with:

- A sense of awe and wonder of Jesus Christ
- A sense of belonging to a community of demonstrative faith
- Enriched spiritual encounters which nurture a connectivity to Jesus Christ
- The opportunity to reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- Reinforcement of shared values and positive attitudes
- The opportunity to explore our own beliefs and to explore big questions relating to faith
- A sense of reverence and respect
- Faith-based learning and routines
- The confidence and familiarity to participate and even plan or lead prayer and collective worship
- The understanding of Catholic traditions linked to prayer and collective worship, which include traditional prayers, Catholic Liturgy and the Liturgical Calendar
- Special links with our home/school/parish
- An awareness and appreciation of the wider Christian family across the world

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our schools

We believe that Collective Worship must take 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 the Church
- those from other Christian traditions – or none
- those from other faith backgrounds

We encourage the active participation of the children in prayer and collective worship through readings, singing, drama, and art, along with opportunities to write their own prayers and child-led Celebrations of the Word.

Legal Requirements

According to The Prayer & Liturgy Directory, To Love You More Dearly 2023 Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, page 16, 4.1. Governance:

Within maintained schools and academies, there is a legal requirement for an act of collective worship to take place daily.

Within our Catholic schools, prayer and collective worship is valued far more than just a 'legal requirement', it gives us all the opportunity to thank, praise and honour God; to ask Him to intercede at times of need; to celebrate His presence in our lives and to reflect upon and respond to God's invitation to get to know Him.

The Organisation of Prayer and Collective Worship

At St Mary's and Thorneyholme, there is a wide range of prayer, celebrations of the word and liturgy. Each of these have its own character and are conducted with reverence and respect. All members of staff and pupils are encouraged to participate, plan or lead prayer and collective worship in a way which is meaningful and relevant to them and their age (see Appendix A). Our G.I.F.T. teams not only lead prayer and collective worship, but are always at hand to support other pupils and groups across the school.

The school has an Annual Plan of Provision (APOP) document which outlines key provision of prayer and collective worship throughout the year.

Prayer can be approached in many ways from traditional forms to new creative ways of praying in our contemporary culture. Prayer may come in the form of individual private prayer, silent prayers, meditation, spontaneous prayer, prayers which are sung, prayers written by individuals or for an occasion, traditional prayers (see Appendix B) Catholic devotions like the Stations of the Cross, litanies or collective group prayers in class or as a whole school. A school prayer was written using a collection of the children's own words (see Appendix C).

Prayer can be seen across the school, at least three times a day.

Celebrations of the Word are for the proclamation of Bible scripture for groups within our school community and for celebrations. They are lengthier than prayer and the number of people involved may be greater. Celebrations of the Word may be approached creatively, but their whole essence is to proclaim biblical scripture, therefore they must include the following:

- **We Gather** - how we come together, the setting, the environment and atmosphere
- **We Listen** – one piece of scripture from the Bible is chosen (the Word of God is proclaimed from a Bible or a location central to the focus table)
- **We Respond** – time to consider and understand the meaning of the Word of God, and which may lead to a certain action in response to this or a group prayer
- **We Go Forth** – all will take something away from the experience of worship and be encouraged to apply this to their daily lives

Celebrations of the Word may include assemblies led by members of staff or pupils and other special occasions such as the celebration of the Month of May for Our Lady who is St Mary's school patron saint, St Hubert who is Thorneyholme school's patron saint or on Holy Days of Obligation when it is not possible to celebrate a liturgy at church within school time.

Celebrations of the Word can be seen within both schools at least three times a week. When a Gospel reading is being read during a whole school Celebration of the Word, children stand up and sing 'alleluia' at the start and at the end. Children are encouraged to be involved with the delivery of these, with at least one Celebration of the Word within the

week which is completely prepared and led by children, see Appendix A for children's progressive involvement in Prayer and Celebrations of the Word.

A range of materials are used for prayer and collective worship, including but not solely Ten:Ten.

Liturgy is the celebration of the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. St Mary's has strong links to St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Sabden and Thorneyholme with St Hubert's Roman Catholic Church in Dunsop Bridge. Mass is celebrated as a 'joyful union of schools' at the start and at the end of the school year as well as other special occasions in the Church's liturgical calendar. Children are taught the responses and will progressively - with age - be able to respond with greater frequency throughout the Mass.

At both our schools, opportunities are sought to involve our wider school family and to take into consideration our global brothers and sisters 'Fratelli Tutti' in prayer and collective worship. Families and parishioners are invited to attend some of our Celebrations of the Word, as well as all school Masses. Our global family are often included within prayer and collective worship.

Areas of Worship

Prayer and collective worship is encouraged anywhere and everywhere at our two schools. Each classroom and the school hall has a focal area. Classroom focal areas are designed and changed according to the Liturgical calendar and pupil voice. It is important that children feel a personal connection to God within the areas of worship and that they are given every opportunity to deepen their relationship with Him.

Outside, there is a quiet reflection area in the Prayer Garden at St Mary's, which can be accessed by individuals, or groups including our school families and at Thorneyholme there is an outdoor prayer area, including an area within Black Plantation Forest.

Recording of Prayer and Collective Worship

It is encouraged to record examples of collective worship through:

* Photographs
* Displays
* Class Prayer Book
* Class Pupil-Led Celebrations of the Word Book
* In weekly school newsletters
* On the school website

Sacramental Programme

St Mary's and Thorneyholme, both support Our Lady of the Valley parish in the preparation of the Year 3 pupils during their sacramental programme journey. An initial meeting takes place at Church, followed by fortnightly sessions arranged to take place after school with the Year 3 class teacher and/or local Catechists.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school's provision for prayer and collective worship will be evaluated regularly by the RE subject leaders and reported to the SLT team.

Appendix A

Children's Progressive involvement in Prayer and Celebrations of the Word:

EYFS	• Lay out the focal area and clear it away • Suggest ideas to teacher's questions • Listen to scripture • Join in songs and prayers • Participate in short periods of silence
Years 1 & 2	• Lay out the focal area, selecting items and explaining why • Suggest own prayers • Listen to and read scripture • Select songs and prayers • Increasing comfort with periods of silence
Year 3	• With significant adult support, contribute to the planning of class Celebrations of the Word (We gather, We listen, We respond, We go forth) • In pairs, lead elements of worship including reading scripture • Select songs and prayer • Spend time in silence
Year 4	• With less adult support, plan class Celebration of the Word (We gather, We listen, We respond, We go forth) • In pairs, lead worship from the joint plan with regular adult support and intervention • Select songs and prayer • Spend time in silence
Years 5 & 6	• With very limited adult support, plan class Celebration of the Word, being increasingly creative (We gather, We listen, We respond, We go forth) • In pairs, lead worship from their plan • Select and lead songs and prayer from a variety of sources • Prayers are increasingly detailed in what they are asking for, the reasons why and what they want the outcome to be • Spend increasing amounts of time in silence.

Appendix B

Traditional Catholic Prayers

EYFS & KS1	Years 3 & 4	Years 5 & 6
Sign of the Cross Hail Mary Our Father Simple responses at Mass including Greeting the Gospel (Acclamation)	Sign of the Cross Hail Mary Our Father Glory be to the Father Act of Contrition More responses at Mass including Greeting the Gospel (Acclamation) Come Holy Spirit	Sign of the Cross Hail Mary Our Father Glory be to the Father Act of Contrition Eternal Rest Come Holy Spirit The Angelus All Responses at Mass

Sign of the Cross
In the Name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Hail Mary
Hail Mary, full of grace.
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death,
Amen

Our Father
Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen

Act of Contrition
O my God, because you are so good.
I am very ***sorry*** that I have sinned against you
and by the help of your grace.
I will not sin again.

Glory Be to the Father
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen

Eternal Rest
Eternal rest grant unto him/her/them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon him/her/them.
May he/she/they rest in peace.
Amen

Come Holy Spirit
Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and enkindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created
and You shall renew the face of the earth…

O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful
by the light of the Holy Spirit,
Grand that by the gift of the same Spirit
we may be truly wise
and ever rejoice in his consolation
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Angelus
The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary: and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary… Holy Mary…

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to your word.
Hail Mary… Holy Mary…

And the Word was made flesh: and dwelt among us
Hail Mary… Holy Mary…

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:
Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts,
that we to whom the incarnation of Christ, your Son,
was made known by the message of an angel,
may be brought by his passion and cross
to the glory of his resurrection,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Appendix C

Our School Prayer

Dear Lord,
May our school be filled with welcome, joy and laughter.
May it be full of respect and kindness to each other
and to all of your Creation.
Help us to be like you.
To do our very best.
To make good choices.
To help each other.
May we grow into beautiful people with you by our sides.
May Mary's love shine down upon our lovely school.
Remember you are always in our hearts.
Forever.
Amen.