

**Holy Family Catholic Primary School**  
**Catholic Life and Religious Education Policy**

Member of Staff Responsible for this Policy:  
**E Allonby**

Date Review:  
**Autumn 2022**

### **Mission Statement**

Holy Family School aims to develop our children's all round potential in a happy, secure and disciplined environment. To achieve this, we are committed to a partnership of parents, carers, staff, governors and the parish. Our school is founded on faith in Jesus Christ and His teachings and we accept the guidance of the Catholic Church in establishing that foundation.

**In all things, love.**



Catholic schools are special, Christ's teachings and values, through the Gospel, permeates through absolutely everything we do. Whether this is the way in which we interact with each other, forgiving those who have upset or hurt us and how we treat anyone within our family or community.

### **Catholic Life**

#### **Dealing with people**

Every person that comes to our school, whether child, parent, grandparent, relative, professional or otherwise is treated like part of the family. They will be greeted with a warm welcome and invited into school and treated as an individual – an individual that commands respect and the right to feel valued: just as Christ would expect us to.

#### **Behaviour**

Our school has a very robust behaviour policy which all children and staff are very familiar with. Whilst this policy sets out expectations it is important to remember Gospel values and Christ's teachings when dealing with behaviour. Jesus gives us the opportunity to say sorry and make things right again – we expect staff and children to do the same. Each child is treated as an individual and situations and actions are tailored to the needs of that individual. One size does not fit all.

## **Prayers**

Each class pray at least twice a day. Each class will have their own age appropriate prayers for the different times of day. It is expected that all classes will say a prayer at:

- Before lunch
- At home time
- During worship sessions

All the prayers are displayed in each classroom.

## **Communal Areas - Worship Area, Hall etc.**

The communal areas in school provide classes with the opportunity to showcase their work and faith to other children and adults outside of their class community. In each of these areas you will find our faith is evident.

## **Classroom Environments**

Our classrooms aim to be a simulating learning environment for our children. Each classroom focuses on the learning needs of that particular class whilst also ensuring the values and teachings of our faith are evident in everything.

Each classroom will have:

- A cross/ crucifix in a prominent position
- An interactive prayer and worship area
- A Religious Education display
- Other displays relating to the learning needs of the children

## **Whole School Worship Areas**

Worship Areas are intended to be quiet and reflective spaces where children can go during breaks and lunchtimes to be still and be closer to God. Throughout the year, the focus of the areas will be changed to match that of the Liturgical Calendar. It is important that children are aware of how to use these spaces and staff should consider training the children in this. Every Monday lunchtime the RE co-ordinator runs a Lunchtime Liturgy in the Library Worship Area for Key Stage One children, where the liturgy reflects on the Gospel of the previous Sunday.

## **Classroom Prayer and Worship Areas**

Within each classroom, there is a dedicated area that allows children to focus on Prayer and Worship. This should be the most prominent in the room and attention should be drawn to it wherever possible, leading prayers in this area having lit a candle for example.

This area will regularly have its theme changed to match the Liturgical Calendar and colours. For example, during Lent, the focus will be around Jesus's time spent in the desert, his suffering and use the colour purple.

Each area is equipped with a selection of items and resources that allow the children to plan and lead their own liturgies – whether this is for themselves, a small group or their whole class. Depending on the age of the children, this process will be supported to ensure they act in an accurate and appropriate manner.

### **Class-based Prayer and Liturgies**

It is expected that all children, regardless of their age will plan and deliver Prayer and Liturgies to their class. Each liturgy should be age appropriate and the children will be supported in the planning and delivering of such.

In Reception, this may be the children choosing appropriate artefacts, decorations and leading actions; in Year 6, the process should be much more independent – children choosing the theme or topic, an appropriate Bible story, writing prayers, considering a mission appropriate to their topic.

Each Prayer and Liturgy will follow a distinct pattern:

- Gather – how will the Prayer and Liturgy start, what will the children have as a focus
- Listen – there will be an appropriate Bible story
- Reflect – having listened to the reading, how will the children engage and reflect upon it
- Respond – following the reflection, what will we do, will they say or write a prayer?

It is important to remember that children will need support with this process, it is very tempting for children to choose as many objects and decorations as they can rather than putting thought and consideration into their choices.

### **Class-led Whole School Prayer and Liturgies**

Throughout the year, each class will be expected to lead at least two whole school Prayer and Liturgies. These Liturgies offer the children the opportunity to develop a multitude of skills both in faith and other areas.

These Prayer and Liturgies should follow the same pattern as class-based sessions and as much as possible, the planning and practice of these should be led by the children.

It is important to note, these Prayer and Liturgies are not a performance – they are an opportunity for our school family, led by children, to engage with God, His words and consider our own faith.

### **Teacher-led Class Prayer and Liturgies**

Just as children are expected to lead Prayer and Liturgies in the classroom, so too are teachers and other adults. In order for the children to progress and develop in their ability to lead worships, they need to have good practice modelled to them.

In delivering a Class Prayer and Liturgy, adults will make it clear and obvious to the children the structure and pattern of the worship so that when children lead, they have a clear idea.

Teachers and adults should work with their class to decide when they will have adult and child led worships and the planning will be modelled.

### **Weekly Celebration Assembly**

At the end of each week, as a school we come together to share and celebrate the various successes of our children. During this assembly, each teacher chooses two children that have shone as a 'Star of the Week'.

Whilst this assembly does not follow the structure of a Prayer and Liturgy, it is a vital part of our school life – celebrating children's successes and will always proclaim the Word of God and end with a prayer – reminding children how we put God's love at the centre of our lives.

### **Links within our Community**

Whole School Prayer and Liturgies and Celebrations such as the Nativity, Carol Service, Passion Play, Harvest, Remembrance and Leavers services are built around the proclamation of scripture and are based on the structure of the Liturgy of the Word. These are held in school or at church, when appropriate and family members and parishioners are invited.

Each year a group of children participate on behalf of the school in the shared Lenten and Advent services with our Blackpool Family of Schools. These services are on a rota basis and so Holy Family also work with the parish priest and parishioners to take it in turns to host.

Opportunities to participate in charitable activities and to empathise with the needs of others take place throughout the school year in line with current affairs or initiatives. Each year during Lent money is raised for a chosen charity for example, Mission Together or CAFOD. As well as these charities, Holy family pupils have raised funds to send to Nigeria to support children in need on several occasions.

Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical Laudato Si' remains a profound invitation to everyone on the planet to care for our common home. Our School Council and Chaplaincy Team reflect and respond to Laudato Si' and strive to live out their faith by living wisely, linking deeply and loving generously in order to take care of, respect and value our 'common home'.

Throughout their time at Holy Family children are given opportunities to visit Lancaster Cathedral, the principle church in our diocese for a 'Day with the Bishop'. This is as part of their own personal faith formation and children are able to meet with the Bishop and talk about their faith journey with him.

Children have also visited Ladywell on pilgrimage and also visited the Holy Relics of St. Bernadetts. In KS2, children learn about other religions and visit several places of worship. By year 6, children will have had the opportunity to visit a local Mosque, Synagogue, Hindu Temple and Buddhist Temple.

### **The Parish**

As a Catholic school, we have a responsibility to ensure the continuation of the Catholic faith for years to come. For this reason, teachers continue to foster a relationship between our school and our parish.

Wherever possible, teachers should ensure the children are involved in parish life and the parish are involved in school life.

### **Whole School and Class Masses**

Throughout the school year, Mass forms an integral part of our worship. At the beginning of the year for example, the whole school will join together to celebrate Mass in Church with the Parish, or celebrate Mass at school. These Masses are special as children from Upper Key Stage 2 are chosen to lead the Readings, Bidding Prayers and Offertory.

Weekly class masses with Father David, our school Chaplain take place in school and always reflect Gospel themes or class needs. The same general principles apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for learners to participate will be maximised.

There has long been a misconception that Mass happens to the children and they do not need to engage with it. Teachers work hard throughout the year to address this misconception; encouraging the children to engage with, learn responses and prayers in school and understand the various elements to the Mass.

### **Jesse Tree**

Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent by journeying through the stories on Jesus's family tree. Each day during Advent school gather together to light the candle/s on our Advent Wreath and hear a story from Bible about someone on Jesus' family tree, children hang hand crafted ornaments symbolising the story on our tree. As the tree fills with ornaments, children are able to notice how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations.

Both adults and children are invited to lead our Jesse Tree readings and introduce Jesus' ancestors to the rest of the school. Children hear from a wide range of people within our school family from teaching staff to Governors.

### **Stations of the Cross**

During Lent each year, classes take it in turns to visit church and reflect upon the Stations of the Cross. Children from KS2 lead each year group in the Way of the Cross, offering prayers and reflections at each station. Children from Years 5 and 6 will also write their own prayerful reflections for each station. Children sing 'Jesus, Remember Me' (Taize) as they journey through Jesus' final moments.

When the children go to these Stations of the Cross sessions, we expect them to behave appropriately and be especially reverent as they walk with Jesus on his journey to his eventual death.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

The school assists the Parish in any way it can, to prepare the children for the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation. First Holy Communion usually takes place with Year 3 children. Each Year, Year 3 join with other Catholic Primary schools in our Blackpool Family of schools for an outdoor Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Academy.

For many of our families, school is the place where our children develop their sense of community and in many cases, the only experience of prayer and Mass they receive. School works hard to create an environment in which children can grow in their faith.

### **Friendship Ambassadors and Playground Friends**

Morals/ values – Justice Award and Good Neighbour

## **Religious Education**

### **Aims**

We seek to provide a religious education, which is a comprehensive and systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life; in a manner which encourages investigation and reflection by the pupils, develops the appropriate skills and attitudes and promotes free, informed and full response to God's call in everyday life.

In the words of the *Curriculum Directory*, the outcome of Catholic Religious Education 'is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life'.