



Catholic life and mission

2025-26



Discover, Develop, Rejoice

School Mission Statement

Discover – Develop – Rejoice

At St. Cecilia's Catholic school we believe that:

As individuals, we all come with God-given talents to discover, develop and rejoice. It is our responsibility to make sure we support the growth of our own talents and gifts, along with those of each other.

We celebrate God in all we do, say, think and achieve, as we strive to succeed.

When things go wrong, Christ's love will help us support each other to start again. We should never give up but should persist in the face of setbacks.

We all serve and build our community in Christ by showing respect for ourselves, respect for each other and respect for the world.

St Cecilia We Celebrate You
Lyrics and music composed by Debbie Jones

Verse 1

***We all have offerings and talents to give
Let's all discover them, develop them and live
Inviting friends to share in our journey
We'll join together, telling our story
Stories of learning and teaching each other
We are one family like sisters and brothers
Hearing and sharing experience of life
We thank Our Lord, as we lift our voices***

Chorus

***In all we do, we sing for you
We're here to praise, our blessings gifts and faith
Respect each other, forgive forget
St Cecilia we celebrate you***

Verse 2

***When things go wrong we can always start again
There is no shame in saying sorry in the end
Consideration, everyone is treated fairly
We thank Our Lord as we lift our voices***

Chorus

Instrumental over verse

Chorus x2 and repeat last line

School Prayer

*L*ord, each of us have different talents and abilities

We ask you to inspire us to *discover* and

develop the best within us.

Lead us to be both humble and generous in using
our talents.

Help us to *rejoice* in the talents of all within
our school community.

Amen.

Working in our Catholic School

Saint Cecilia's has a clear purpose which is informed by beliefs and values that are based in scripture and church teachings. These should permeate every aspect of day-to-day learning and life in our school. They should come from the school's ethos of justice, forgiveness, love and compassion as found in the Gospel.

Saint Cecilia's is part of the mission of the worldwide Catholic Church. It exists:

- to witness to the mission, beliefs and values of Jesus.
- because each child is a God-given gift that the world is waiting for and needs.
- to teach young people to acquire critical thinking skills, write and speak articulately and discover their God-given talents and vocation.
- to inspire them to recognise who their God is, who they are, and discover the reason for their existence on earth.
- to motivate young people to become people of challenge, change and transformation.

Challenge: to see the world as God created it to be; to be unafraid to challenge anything which belittles the person; to see every person as a brother or sister and made in the image and likeness of God.

Change: to be agents of change where it is needed; to understand how to bring about change wisely, bravely and peacefully; not to be afraid to persevere when it gets difficult.

Transformation: to be personally transformed and be able to see the world from God's perspective and work towards a vision of a transformed world; to be filled with the Holy Spirit to create a world of justice and peace for all.

Our school should be a living community where everyone is educated in heart and soul, as well as mind. Following Jesus' example, it should be a place where everyone is equally respected and unconditionally loved, a community which reaches out to all, especially the poor and marginalised.

Regardless of your own faith, staff in Catholic schools need to support and contribute to its ethos. You are expected to contribute to every aspect of school life, including its faith life.

At Saint Cecilia's learning is a sacred endeavour, and all learning helps us to fathom the mysteries of life. The challenge is to help children to discover their full potential, not just their academic one.

Pastoral care is central to the ethos and identity of a Catholic school. Our job is to make sure that each pupil feels that they matter and are valued as unique and loved. The pastoral system is not there just to pick up the pieces when things go wrong but to actively promote the flourishing of pupils.

SMSC

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education encompasses all aspects of learning, including extracurricular and out-of-school activities.

Below is a summary of what the term mean:

Spiritual	Signifies what we / I believe about the meaning and purpose of life. Engaging in the big questions of purpose and meaning. It is everything about existence on this planet this is beyond the material.
Moral	Because of what we believe about the purpose and meaning of life we live by principles and codes which guide our choices between right and wrong.
Social	Our way of relating to self and others which is influenced by our spirituality and our morality.
Cultural	The ways in which we do things – the rites, rituals, customs and practices which develop over time within communities. Culture gives expression to a community's spirituality, morality and social values.

Specific information about how SMSC is covered in different subject areas can be found in the separate SMSC document.

Daily Worship and Prayers

In our school we set aside 3 times in the day for collective worship: in the morning, before lunch and at the end of the day.

Always ask pupils to begin with the sign of the cross:

The Sign of The Cross



1. With your right hand, touch your forehead and pray, "In the name of The Father."



2. Touch the center of your chest and pray, "and of The Son,"



3. Touch your left shoulder and pray, "and of The Holy..."



4. Touch your right shoulder and pray, "Spirit, Amen."

Catholic Social Teaching

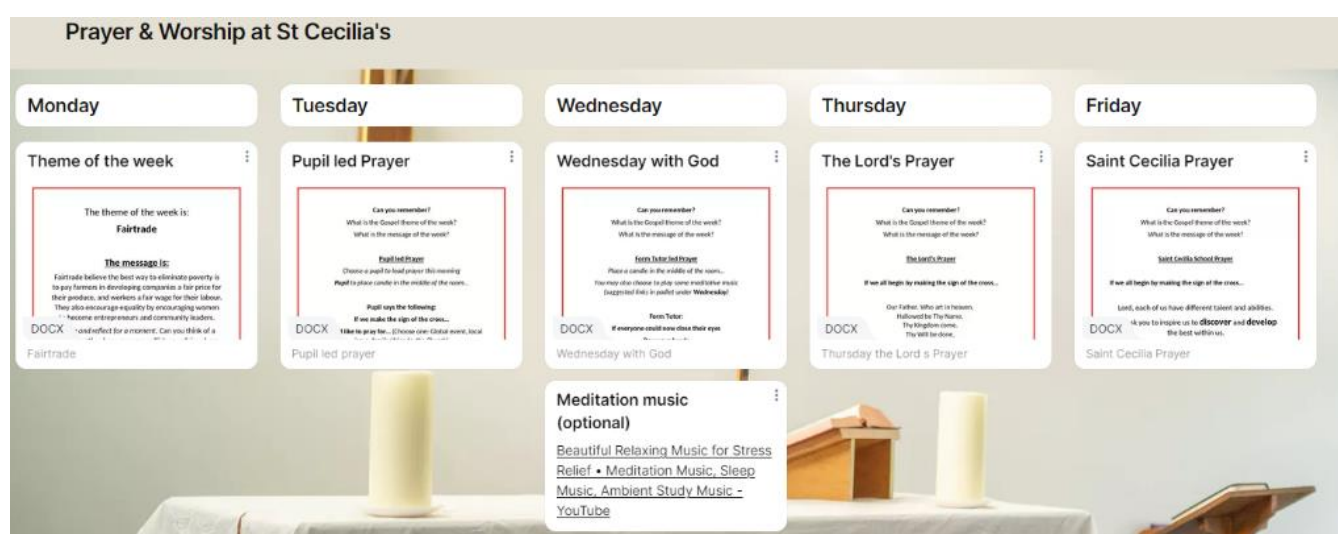
In our Catholic school, we live out **Catholic Social Teaching** in practical and meaningful ways. Through **Care for God's Creation**, we promote environmental responsibility by encouraging recycling, reducing waste, and engaging students in eco-projects such as litter-picking and sustainability clubs. We pursue the **Common Good** by fostering inclusive communities where every student is supported and can contribute, ensuring school policies benefit all rather than just a few. **Human Dignity** is central to our ethos: we celebrate the unique worth of each student through restorative behaviour systems and respectful relationships, while the **Dignity of Work** is upheld by valuing every role in the school and encouraging students to appreciate the vocation of work through careers education. We respect **Subsidiarity** by giving students a voice in decision-making through school councils and class

representatives. **Solidarity** is shown by our fundraising for global causes and teaching about global justice. Finally, we prioritise the **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable** by supporting food bank drives, non-uniform days, and ensuring all pupils have equal access to enrichment activities, regardless of financial circumstances.

Each half term we prioritise one aspect of CST and explore this across the curriculum in all subjects.

Prayer and Liturgy

Every pupil should be given the opportunity to pray during form time. Once a week this will take the form of a Celebration of the Word. On Tuesdays we have pupil led prayer. On Wednesdays we have Christian meditation. For the other days the form tutor will follow the Prayer and Liturgy padlet as seen below:



The prayer and worship padlet is regularly updated. It incorporates both teacher and pupil led prayer. It also allows the opportunity for meditative and silent prayer, as well as reflection.

Before lunch pupils should say Grace Before Meals or another suitable prayer. This needs to happen in all subject areas:

Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts which we are about to receive from your bounty,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen

During Lesson 5, usually at the end of the lesson, a final prayer for the day should be said. At this point it may be appropriate to use the department prayer. This should be displayed in the classroom. However, teachers may choose another prayer or to get their pupils to pick / say another prayer.

Aim to make prayers:

- pupil-led
- God-centred
- relevant
- seasonal

Catholic Prayers

The 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

Explanation of the 'Our Father'

This is the prayer that Jesus used to teach people how to pray and is common to all Christians. In this prayer we are recognising the holiness of God. Fundamentally we are asking for forgiveness from our sins but recognising that for this to happen we have to be prepared to forgive others first. Some pupils, especially if they are not of the Catholic tradition, may ask about the 'extra' bit that some Christians add to the Our Father:

For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This is commonly believed to have been added by the early church and is therefore not used when saying the Our Father. However, in Mass you will hear that we do say it soon after praying the Our Father.

The 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.

Explanation of the Hail Mary

The first part of the Hail Mary recognises the Annunciation – when Mary was visited by the Angel Gabriel and asked to be the Mother of God.

The second part of the prayer is asking for Mary to pray for us. Mary is seen as being extremely important for Catholics and this prayer is specific to Catholics.

Glory Be

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.

For remembering someone who has passed:

Eternal Rest

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

Amen

Celebration of the Word

This is intended to provide you with some guidance when planning an assembly in our Catholic school (Celebration of the Word). Celebration of the Word is an opportunity for group worship. The assembly hall becomes our church and staff should try to create the appropriate atmosphere.

Aim of Celebration of the Word

Celebration of the Word at St Cecilia's is an **act of worship**- it is not a business meeting. Nothing should interrupt the message that is being given in assembly. Pupils should leave with the key message as their final thoughts as they leave silently from the assembly hall.

When preparing your assembly these are the things to include:

- A focus as people enter the assembly hall. This could be a thought-provoking image or a piece of music.
- A candle lit at the front of the assembly hall and/ artefacts placed centrally for all to witness.
- A powerpoint presentation to compliment what you are delivering.
- A clear theme. The assembly should reflect the theme of the week. For form assemblies this will be about one's House Saint.
- The Saint Cecilia's school hymn.
- Scripture. This can be a whole passage or a carefully chosen quote.
- A prayer appropriate to the aim of the assembly.
- A key message or challenge to inspire pupils.
- Pupil participation (not essential in every assembly)

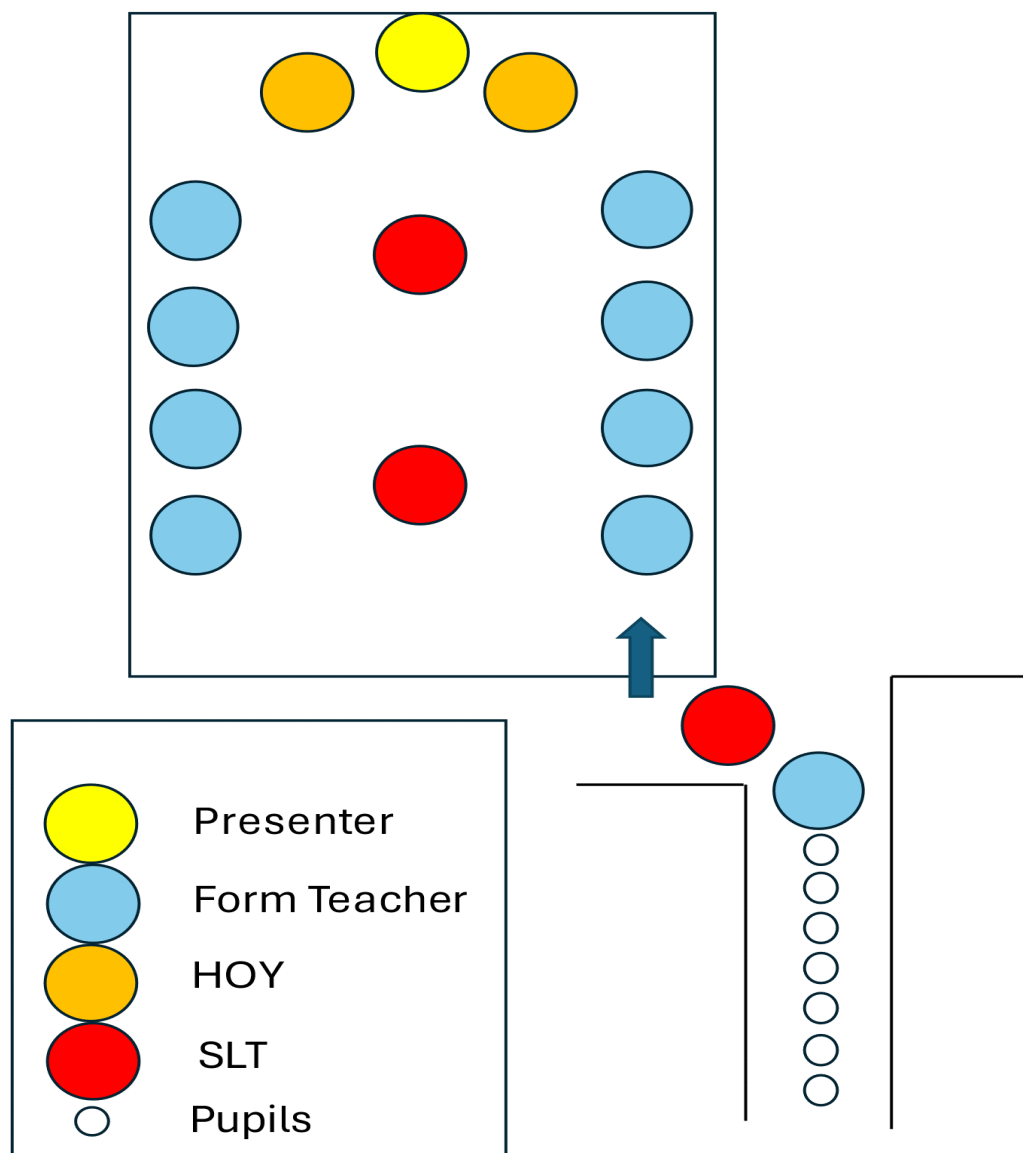
We use the Celebration of the Word Planner to help prepare for each special moment.

Celebration of the Word Planner

Theme:	
Gospel Scripture:	
Gather: Music upon Entry. Candles. Focal Point. Display.	
Be Still (There should be prayerful space to encounter God)	
Word. Listen. YouTube / Written or read out.	
Response: How do the pupils participate? Prayer / actions?	
Send How could this message impact on them this week? What challenge could they be given?	
Resources needed:	

Who is responsible for what?

Ensuring appropriate number of chairs adequately spaced	Caretaker
Ensuring the hall and stage area are tidy / clean and reflect a place of worship	Caretaker
Technology – projector / mic / speakers	Staff leading the assembly. Check the night before that everything is working. IT technician available to help.
Ensuring pupils enter hall quietly and leave quietly (See routine below on next page)	SLT / HOY / FT / Chaplain It is <u>not</u> the job of the person leading the assembly to be the disciplinarian – their focus is on the worship. Form tutors need to accompany their form down to assembly, stay with them and ensure that they behave in a respectful way throughout. A member of SLT should be there at the door to ensure that the assembly lead is ready for pupils to enter the hall and that they enter in an appropriate manner.
Dismissing pupils	HOY, or in their absence, a FT to start dismissing pupils from the back once given the nod by the person leading the assembly. The person leading the assembly should not need to start giving instructions about leaving.



- Pupils registered, uniform checked and brought to the Hall
- FT pauses at the front with SLT member, checks pupil order
- Pupils do not enter without FT leading them into the hall
- FT leads pupils into assembly and stands in the wings next to form, monitoring behaviour
- HOY directly in front of year group, monitoring behaviour
- Only focus for presenter is presenting

The Mass

The Mass, the formal, official worship service of Catholicism, is the most important, sacred and common act of worship in the Catholic Church. Going to Mass is an obligation for Catholics.

The Mass incorporates the Bible (Sacred Scripture), prayer, sacrifice, hymns, symbols, gestures, food for the soul, and directions on how to live a Catholic life — all in one ceremony.

Essentially Mass is split into two parts:

The Liturgy of the Word

The first part of the Mass is built around hearing the word of God. After the priest processes to the altar, the priest and congregation participate in the Penitential Rite, which is an acknowledgement that everyone has sinned to some degree during the week. This is followed by the kyrie, which expresses public guilt and shame for any sins against God.

The Gloria, a prayer or hymn of adoration of God, is followed by a prayer that addresses all three persons of the Holy Trinity, and that usually sets the tone for the rest of the prayers and Bible readings at Mass. Every day has its own unique prayers and readings chosen by the Church, not the individual parish.

A member of the congregation then reads the readings of the day. Following these readings, the congregation, which has been sitting, stands while the priest reads the holy Gospel, which contains the words and deeds of Christ and requires the respect shown by standing.

The congregation sits and listens to the homily, which is an explanation and reflection on the Word of God. The priest connects the Scripture readings to the daily lives of the people, the teachings of the Church, or the particular celebration at hand.

On Sundays and holy days, the homily is followed by the Profession of Faith, or Creed, which sums up all the teachings of the Church. Next are the Prayers of the Faithful, (Bidding Prayers) which are petitions for the pope, the Church, the civil authorities, current concerns, and so on, to which the people usually respond with “Hear our prayer” or “Lord Graciously Hear Us”.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the offertory. The bread and wine are brought to the altar.

The priest pours wine into the chalice and adds a few drops of water to symbolise the union of the divinity and humanity of Christ. The priest lifts the hosts above the altar as an offering to God, then does the same with the wine-filled chalice. The priest then ceremonially washes his hands as priests and rabbis did before ritual slaughters. It’s a reenactment of the real sacrifice of Jesus.

After the Sanctus (Latin for Holy) is prayed or sung, the congregation kneels for the first time for the holiest part of the Mass, the Consecration. Catholicism professes that when the priest consecrates the bread and wine, it becomes the body and blood of Christ in the miracle of transubstantiation. It still looks, feels, and tastes like bread and wine, but it's not.

The ringing of bells at the Consecration signifies the holiest moment of the Mass, a symbol of reverent rejoicing. Often, bells are rung when the priest elevates the Host, and again, when he elevates the chalice.

After the congregation prays the Our Father, the priest or deacon may say "Let us offer each other a sign of peace," and people shake the hands of the people around them and say, "Peace be with you." This shows solidarity as one family of faith before the real and most intimate sign of unity — Holy Communion.

The Agnus Dei (Lamb of God), which asks God for mercy and peace, is said or sung, and then the people kneel in prayer before lining up to receive the Holy Eucharist.

The priest first consumes the consecrated host and then drinks the consecrated wine from the chalice. Then Catholics who are in a state of grace approach the priest, deacon or extraordinary minister and are given a consecrated Host. Sometimes, they're also offered a sip of the consecrated wine from the cup. People who are not Catholic, or who are Catholic but are unable to receive Holy Communion, may come forward for a blessing. Upon approaching the priest or eucharistic minister you signal that you want a blessing by crossing your arms across your chest.

When distributing Holy Communion, the priest, deacon or extraordinary minister says "The Body of Christ" to which the recipient replies "Amen," meaning, "I agree." If the wine offered, the communicant may go to the person holding it who says, "The Blood of Christ," and they again reply, "Amen."

After receiving Holy Communion, you return to your seat and kneel to pray silently for a few minutes before sitting down.

The Mass ends with the priest blessing the congregation and sending them forth to spread the Word of God and put it into practice.

***Please note that mass at school may not include all aspects described above. Practical alterations, such as no kneeling, have to also be made.**

Mass at Saint Cecilia's

Mass takes place once a week, on a Tuesday, in the chapel. A rota has been drawn up so that each form group gets the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist on numerous occasions throughout the year. Forms will take it in turns to help with the preparation of Mass.

Form Mass – Guidance for form tutors

- ✓ Meet with Lay Chaplain (optional)
- ✓ Get weekly readings (supplied by AB) and prepare pupils to read them:
 - 1st Reading
 - Psalm
- ✓ Prepare Bidding Prayers:
 - Try to write these with the pupils. These are prayers of intercession. Prayers are usually said for:
 1. The needs of the Church
 2. The world
 3. Those in need
 4. The local community
 5. Specific intentions
 - The prayers begin with, 'Let us pray for..' and conclude with 'Lord Hear Us' to which the congregation reply, 'Lord Graciously Hear Us'.
 - Get a different pupil to read each one.
- ✓ Offertory – 2 pupils needed to bring the gifts up to the altar.
- ✓ Choose hymns. Entrance, offertory and communion hymn needed. Think about a piece of music for the pupils to enter / leave the hall that helps set the tone. This may be played by the instrumentalists or CD music. (Please consult with RE)
- ✓ Encourage pupils to play instruments.
- ✓ Please prepare the whole form by reminding them about the importance of Mass and reminding them about our expectations whilst in Mass. Please remind pupils about what happens at Holy Communion.
- ✓ Please sit with your form.

***Please speak to AB if you need any extra support in your preparations.**

The Liturgical Calendar

The Church year is split into different seasons within which there will be different events and celebrations. The Church Year starts on the first Sunday of Advent.

Advent

Colour: Purple

From: 4 Sundays before Christmas – 24th December

Advent is a season of preparation for the birth of Christ at Christmas. During Advent Christians are called to sort ourselves out to make ourselves ready for the arrival of Christ. There are themes for each week in advent: “Wake up!”, “Prepare the way of the Lord”, “Rejoice”, and “Emmanuel is with us” (hope, joy, love and peace). The advent wreath marks the journey to Christmas – a different candle is lit every Sunday in Church. During Advent, Christians are called to action – to help the poor, marginalised and promote the common good. A lot of charity work happens in school during Advent.

Christmas

Colour: White / gold

From: 25th December to the Baptism of the Lord (usually the Sunday after Epiphany)

At Christmas Christians celebrate that God is with us. Epiphany falls on 6th January which is when we celebrate the visit of the wise men (magi) to Jesus. At one time, the season lasted for the whole of January and ended with the feast of Candlemas (2nd February) which celebrated Jesus being presented in the Temple.

Lent

Colour: Purple

From: 6 weeks between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday

Lent reminds Christians of the forty days Jesus spend fasting and praying in the desert before he began his public ministry. It is when the Church prepares for the greatest of all celebrations – Easter. Lent is a serious time when the Church encourages us to pray, fast and abstain, and give alms or do something good for the community.

Holy Week is the sixth week of Lent. It is when Christians really focus on the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday and the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. Often penitential services or the stations of the cross form part of worship that takes place in school that week.

During Lent there are some subtle changes that happen in liturgy. For example, “Alleluia” is not used. This needs considering when picking hymns for Mass etc.

Easter Day

Colour: White / gold

Date: a Sunday between 22nd March & 25th April

This is a time of rejoicing and celebrating Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is about the triumph of good over evil, life over death. It is the most important celebration in the church year. Easter Day leads to Eastertide which lasts for 50 days.

Pentecost

Colour: Red

Date: 50th day after Easter day

This marks the time when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples and gave them the courage and wisdom they needed to become true Apostles. Sometime Pentecost is referred to as the birthday of the Church. (See Acts 2:1-12)

Holy Days of Obligation

These are days when Catholics are obliged to go to Mass. Every Sunday is a holy day of obligation. Some of the holy days have been moved to the nearest Sunday.

The holy days of obligation are:

- The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) 25th December
- The Epiphany of the Lord 6th January (transferred to second Sunday after Christmas)
- The Ascension of the Lord: Thursday of the 6th week of Easter (transferred to the following Sunday)
- Corpus Christi: Thursday after Trinity Sunday (transferred to following Sunday)
- Saint Peter and Paul, Apostles: 29th June
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: 15th August
- All Saints: 1st November

Sacraments

A *sacrament* is an outward sign of an inward grace. It is a way in which we see God's help for our souls in a particular way. It is a sign of Jesus' presence in the world today. There are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church.

The Sacraments of Initiation:

Baptism is when someone (usually a baby) is admitted to the Church. The service includes the use of prayer, signing of the cross on the forehead, water, oil, light and a white garment.

Confirmation is the sacrament that completes baptism; in it the gifts of the Holy Spirit are bestowed upon us.

Eucharist / Holy Communion Catholics receive the body and blood of Christ. It is seen as an act of unity with the whole Church. Catholics believe that Jesus becomes truly present in the Eucharist (transubstantiation).

The Sacraments of Healing:

Reconciliation is sometimes called confession or penance. It is when a person confesses their sins and is forgiven. Catholics are asked to go to confession at least once a year and often try to go during Advent and / or Lent.

Sacrament of the Sick is given when someone is seriously ill or near death. During the sacrament a person receives forgiveness and often receives Holy Communion, called Viaticum (food for the journey).

Sacraments of Service and Community / Vocation:

Matrimony – marriage.

Holy Orders – the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons.

Saints associated with our school

Saint Cecilia

Cecilia lived in Rome about the year 230AD. Her parents were very rich and wanted Cecilia to marry someone who was also rich. However, Cecilia wasn't interested in getting married. She had a secret – she was a Christian!



At that time it was against the law to be a Christian and you could be put to death for it. Hundreds of Christians had died by being eaten by animals in the arena. This didn't frighten Cecilia. She was brave and had a strong faith. She decided not to marry but to work for God by praying a lot and looking after beggars and the poor people around her. She promised God that she would spend her whole life like this.

Then, one day, Cecilia's parents told her that she was going to get married. They had even chosen who she was going to marry. Valerian was a young and rich man. Her parents were pleased and happy. They would not listen to Cecilia. Valerian was a pagan. He worshipped the false gods of Rome and knew nothing about Jesus.

Cecilia had to marry Valerian but she had a plan. When she was married to Valerian she told him all about Jesus. She told Valerian that she wanted to spend her whole life serving God and not have a family. Valerian was very impressed by how Cecilia talked about God and Jesus. He was so impressed that he decided to become a Christian too. Valerian and Cecilia lived happily helping the poor and serving God. Valerian also persuaded his brother to become a Christian.

Then one day an enemy told the magistrate in Rome about Valerian and his brother. He sent for them.

Valerian was asked to give up following Jesus. He said, "No!"

The magistrate warned Valerian and his brother that he would have their heads chopped off but they believed that if they died for Jesus they would go straight to heaven.

They were beheaded. Cecilia was very sad but very proud too.

Then the magistrate decided to try to secretly kill Cecilia. Cecilia had a bathroom in her house that could heat to a very high temperature. One day the soldiers came and locked Cecilia in the bathroom. They were determined to kill her by filling the room with a terrible, steaming heat.

After many hours they opened the door. Cecilia was not dead. She stepped out unhurt. They could hardly believe it.



This made the magistrate angry. He said she was to be beheaded. The executioner was allowed to take 3 blows only with his sword. Three times he struck her and

wounded her badly but did not kill her. Cecilia lay on the floor dying. Whilst she was dying she prayed.

All her friends and the poor she helped heard about her death. They came to the house. They knelt down around Cecilia crying for her and helping her with their prayers. She died. They buried her in the catacombs (underground burial places) and sealed the entrance to her grave with a stone. They were sad but knew that she would have gone to heaven.

Saint Cecilia's feast day is 22nd November. She is the patron saint of music.

Carlo Acutis

Carlo was born in London in 1991 but grew up in Milan, Italy. From a young age, he had a deep love for Jesus, especially in the Eucharist. He went to Mass daily, prayed the Rosary, and often visited the Blessed Sacrament. Despite being a normal teenager who enjoyed football, video games, and computers, he had a strong faith and was known for his kindness and compassion, especially to those who were bullied or lonely.

Carlo had a great talent for computers. He taught himself programming and used his skills to build a website cataloguing Eucharistic miracles from around the world. He wanted to share with others the truth that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. He once said, "The Eucharist is my highway to heaven." Carlo believed that technology was a gift from God and should be used for good.

When he was 15, Carlo became ill with leukaemia. He offered his suffering for the Pope and the Church. He remained cheerful, prayerful, and brave throughout his illness. He died in 2006, and thousands of people were touched by his story and his example of living the faith in the modern world.

Carlo Acutis was beatified in 2020, becoming the first millennial to be on the path to sainthood. His body lies in Assisi, dressed in jeans and trainers, just as he lived. His feast day is October 12th.

Josephine Bakhita

Josephine Bakhita was born around 1869 in Darfur, in Sudan. As a young child, she was kidnapped by slave traders and sold many times. She suffered cruel treatment and was beaten and scarred by those who owned her. So traumatic were her experiences that she forgot her birth name. The name "Bakhita" – meaning "fortunate" – was given to her by her captors.

Eventually she was bought by an Italian diplomat and brought to Italy. There she came into contact with the Canossian Sisters in Venice. For the first time in her life, she felt truly loved, safe, and treated with dignity. She discovered the Catholic faith and was baptised in 1890, taking the name Josephine.

Josephine later joined the Canossian Daughters of Charity and spent over 40 years serving as a cook, sacristan, and doorkeeper. She was known for her gentle presence, her deep faith, and her readiness to speak about God's love and forgiveness. She would often say, "Be good, love the Lord, pray for those who do not know Him. What a great grace it is to know God!"

Despite all the suffering she endured, Josephine never became bitter. She forgave her captors and believed that everything in her life had led her to God. She died in 1947 and was canonised in 2000 by Pope John Paul II. Her feast day is February 8th.

Saint John Paul II

John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyła in 1920 in Wadowice, Poland. His childhood was marked by great loss — he lost his mother at 8, his brother at 12, and his father at 20. Despite the sadness in his life, he grew up full of energy and loved acting, sports, and poetry. He studied secretly during the Nazi occupation of Poland and later trained for the priesthood in an underground seminary.

He was ordained a priest in 1946, became a bishop in 1958, and was made a cardinal in 1967. In 1978, at the age of 58, he became Pope John Paul II — the first non-Italian pope in over 450 years. As pope, he travelled more than any pope before him, visiting over 100 countries and spreading the message of Christ to all corners of the world.

He was known for his courage in defending the dignity of every human person, standing up against communism, and inspiring young people. He helped bring about the fall of communism in Eastern Europe through peaceful resistance and faith. He was also a key figure in the Second Vatican Council and wrote extensively on the value of human life, love, and truth.

John Paul II survived an assassination attempt in 1981, and he later forgave the man who tried to kill him. He continued to serve the Church despite growing illness and suffering. He died in 2005 and was canonised in 2014. His feast day is October 22nd.

Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)

Teresa was born in 1910 in Skopje, which is now in North Macedonia. She joined the Sisters of Loreto at age 18 and travelled to India, where she began teaching in a convent school. For nearly 20 years, she taught the children of wealthy families, but her heart was always drawn to the poor.

In 1946, while on a train, she experienced what she called a “call within a call” — a deep sense that Jesus was asking her to leave the convent and serve “the poorest of the poor.” She obeyed this call and began working in the slums of Calcutta, caring for the sick, the dying, and the abandoned.

She founded the Missionaries of Charity, a religious order dedicated to serving those no one else would touch. Her work grew across the world. She opened homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and tuberculosis, always insisting that every person be treated with love and dignity, saying, “Each one of them is Jesus in disguise.”

Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, but she never sought fame. She lived a life of simplicity, prayer, and service. Even in moments of spiritual darkness, she remained faithful. She died in 1997 and was canonised in 2016. Her feast day is September 5th.

Oscar Romero

Oscar Romero was born in 1917 in El Salvador. He grew up in a poor but hardworking family and became a priest at the age of 25. For many years, he lived a quiet life, serving as a parish priest and later becoming a bishop. He was known for being careful, gentle, and not someone who made waves.

But in 1977, everything changed. He was made Archbishop of San Salvador, just as violence and injustice were growing in his country. He saw the poor being treated unfairly, the government abusing power, and innocent people being killed. After a close friend, a priest, was murdered for standing up for the poor, Romero began to speak out boldly against the injustice.

Each Sunday, his radio broadcasts gave people hope and truth. He preached peace, justice, and the value of every life. He became the voice of the voiceless in a time of fear and repression.

On March 24, 1980, while celebrating Mass, Romero was shot and killed at the altar. He gave his life for the Gospel and for his people. He was canonised in 2018 and is remembered as a martyr for justice. His feast day is March 24th.



Glossary

Bishop	Appointed by the Pope. Has authority over a diocese.
Blessed Sacrament	A term Catholics use when referring to the consecrated host - especially when it is reserved in the tabernacle.
Canon Law	The law of the Church.
Catechism	A written summary of Catholic teaching. Can be difficult to read, however, Youcat is a simplified version and a good starting point.
Catholic	One / universal
Laity	The majority of Catholics. Ordinary baptised Catholics who are not ordained.
Liturgy	The official prayers and sacraments of the Church
Magisterium	Teaching of the church from the pope and bishops.
Mass	Eucharist
Para-liturgy	When the school or parish designs its own style of worship.
Prayer	Raising the heart and mind to God. Listening and speaking to God.
Sacrament	Outward sign of an inward grace. The action of God working within someone.
Scripture	The Bible. The inspired word of God.
Tradition	Refers to what the disciples taught the early Christian communities and what has been handed on.
Transubstantiation	A word used by Catholics to describe the way in which Jesus becomes present in the Eucharistic bread and wine.
Trinity	The belief that God is three-in-one: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Vocation	A calling from God to do a particular job.
Worship	Giving glory, praise and thanks to God

Reading Material

Christ at the Centre – Fr Marcus Stock, Diocesan Schools Commission

How to survive working in a Catholic School Sister Judith Russi SSMN and Raymund Friel

The 5 Ws Framework – Diocese of Salford, Department for Education

Annual Plan of Provision for Prayer

Theme

The themes are loosely based on the calendar provided by the diocese of Salford, tailored to meet the uniqueness of our school community. Each week you should aim to be aware of and refer to the theme in staff prayer, assemblies and within the life of the school.

Scripture and CST link

Catholic Social Teaching is concerned with global social issues. The Church's stance is to tackle the issues and find a way to resolve them. It should be the aim of every Catholic to challenge these injustices and make our society a more equal place, where all people are treated with dignity and respect. Where workers are paid a fair wage and all people accept our role as stewards and care for God's creation. As a Catholic community we place Catholic Social Teaching at the heart of everything we do. Therefore, as part of our collective worship programme we have specifically written into the calendar the 7 themes of Catholic Social Teaching to really highlight what they are and what they mean. Each theme is complemented with a piece of scripture and the link to the strand of Catholic social teaching. Example. Environment: CST, Link 'Care for God's Creation'. Or Fairtrade: CST Link, 'Dignity of workers.'

The calendar should be used for:

- Form tutors refer to the theme each week and direct prayers to reflect the theme. Mention formally and informally if there is a CST link.
- Form tutors look at the key events in the Church's year and discuss this with your pupils in form.
- Those leading assemblies use the scripture and include CST in your collective worship.
- Form tutors and class teachers use the prayers in the booklet. For example, the Eternal rest is a prayer that sporadically is required and not included on the 5-day Padlet.
- Pupil led prayers on Tuesday. Referring to the booklet ask pupils to write these a week in advance ready for the following week.

Celebration of the Word

This is the person or group who will lead the collective worship in the assembly hall.

Form Mass

This is the form who will have mass delivered by a Parish Priest in the chapel. See AB for more details.

Staff prayer rota

This is the person designated to lead prayer during staff briefing. Try to aim to choose a prayer that links to the theme that week.

Events

These are events either linked to the liturgical year and/ or events that will be taking place.