

LITURGY AND WORSHIP POLICY

Mission statement

Saint Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy was founded to pass on to the children the faith and heritage of the local Catholic Community. Each child is valued as a unique individual, a child of God, made in the image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In partnership with parents and parish and with God's grace, the school tries to discern and help the child to develop fully as a person with particular gifts and aptitudes. Guided and challenged by Gospel values, the school aims to provide a community in which the child will grow and experience the love of God, self and neighbour.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

In light of our school mission statement we understand the prayer and worship life of our school community to be central to all we do.

Through liturgy and worship we aim to:



Foster an understanding of what it means to belong to a community;



Provide opportunities for enhancing spiritual growth and personal development through prayer and reflection;



Encourage the development of a personal relationship with God;



Provide experiences of sharing values and celebrating significant events in the lives of individuals and the community;



Develop knowledge of and experience seasons within the Church's year;



Develop knowledge and understanding of scripture;



Develop and celebrate skills of creativity.

WHAT IS LITURGY?

Liturgy is a communal act in which we praise and worship God.

Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life and our lives.

All good liturgies involve the telling of the story of Christ and his Church.

Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.

Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.

In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.

The purpose of adapting liturgy for pupils is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the wider liturgy of the Church.

Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity. Good liturgy touches our lives in such a way that we are renewed in our mission.

LITURGY/WORSHIP IN SCHOOL

Good worship happens when the whole school community, staff and pupils, are fully involved in the preparation and celebration. Time for worship is in addition to the 10% curriculum time for classroom Religious Education, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Within St. Thomas More School liturgy and worship provides opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate and share. Parents of the class leading whole school assembly are invited to join the worship.

Liturgy and worship in school follows the Church's calendar in using daily scripture readings from relevant liturgical seasons. In addition we celebrate the Come and See topics and key events in the school year.

ADVENT AND LENT

The seasons of Advent and Lent are times of preparation for Christmas and Easter, but need to be given their own importance. A focus is given to both of these seasons by raising money for certain causes. The children run their own stalls for the Parish Christmas Bazaar with the money going to a chosen charity. The Year 6 children hold an annual Year 6 Bazaar during Lent to raise money for their chosen charities. Prayer and assemblies at these times must also reflect the season, even if preparations for Christmas are also going on. During the last week of the spring term preparation for Easter takes place, with the school focussing on the events of Holy Week. There are liturgies and prayers planned throughout the week to celebrate Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday. The week culminates with a Stations of the Cross Service with parents and parishioners invited to explore the Stations of the Cross by providing a meditation on each station. Following Easter there is a New Life Liturgy during each of the two key stage assemblies which is planned to emphasise the resurrection. It is important that the children appreciate that Christmas Day and Easter Sunday are the beginnings of the seasons of Christmas and Easter.

HOLIDAYS OF OBLIGATION

Holy days of Obligation are marked with a Mass, led by children from each of the Key Stage 2 classes in the parish church of St. Thomas More

PATRONAL FEAST DAY

The 22nd June, our Patronal Feast day, is marked with a Mass at church in which each class is represented. During the days before each class in the school will be finding out about the life of St Thomas More and completing activities to enable them to learn more about the saint after whom our school is named..

RECONCILIATION

An opportunity for Reconciliation is planned for years 3, 4, 5 and 6 during Lent. Afterwards there is an opportunity for reflection and prayer with the priest or Deacon for all children including those who are not Catholics.

RETREAT

Year 6 are provided with the experience of a three day retreat within their autumn term. The children visit The Briars in Crich. The year 6 children are given the opportunity to develop spiritually through drama, team work, prayer writing, liturgy, worship and music making.

INSET/TRAINING

INSET days offer the opportunity for staff to come together and reflect upon the spirituality of the school and their part within it. We also hold at least one moderation session each year to share RE pieces of work and discuss levels to try and ensure consistency in marking. We regularly ask David Quinn, the Diocesan advisor to visit and advise us on any changes or assist us with our moderation.

PREPARATION FOR MASS

Preparing for Mass begins in the classroom when class teachers will take an opportunity to reflect on the theme and remind the children of the times in the Mass when they should be reflecting upon those themes in silence (after the Homily and Communion), meditating or praising God in their hearts. Opportunities in class to practice meditation and silent praise will help the children to develop this ability. How pupils arrive and gather for any liturgy is vital as it can create the climate in which the liturgy is received. It is also true that how pupils depart will have an impact on how they remember the liturgy. Therefore, children should walk to the church in a quiet and reflective manner. Each Key Stage 2 class will pair up with a F2 or Key Stage 1 class and they will sit with them throughout the Mass.

Music should provide a signal that the gathering part of the Mass has begun. Children should be reminded about behaviour before Mass. Class teachers should remind children that communion should be received in a reverent way (clean hands!) and how to cross arms if they are receiving a blessing. How to genuflect should be discussed and practised if necessary. When sharing the sign of peace children should be reminded that it is to the person either side of them that they shake hands and not the whole row, and that this should be done in a sensible and quiet manner.

PRAYER

'Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. True prayer draws us to discover God

within our deepest being, and calls us to walk with God in faith. Each person has to find the space within where the encounter with God takes place.’(HIA p40) The Come and See scheme provides opportunities for this.

When praying with children we must remember that each of them is unique and therefore their prayer is unique. They come from different homes, with different experiences, and an individual set of problems, anxieties and questions. Teachers will need to provide creative and varied opportunities for prayer so that children from many diverse backgrounds have the best opportunities to discover their own spiritual response. The use of music and actions supports this.

DAILY PRAYER IN THE CLASSROOM

A daily experience of prayer - in classroom, assembly or elsewhere - is much more than just a legal requirement. It should be at the heart of every school day. It is a centre to which many of the achievements and challenges of daily life can be brought and from which strength and purpose can be taken. At this centre is the person of Jesus, the Son of God.

Daily prayer helps make Jesus real for all in the school - a friend whom they can trust and relate to, one who is a guide, and one to whom they can turn in time of need. Prayer within the classroom should take place before and after lunch, at the start and end of the day.

The community must be able to pray as well as recite prayers together. Pupils should learn, and experience, all forms of prayer so that they can adore, give praise and thanks, express sorrow to God on their own behalf and on behalf of others, as well as offer prayers of petition and intercession. Each class should provide a prayer focus within their room, in the form of a display, collection of artefacts, bible and candle etc. where the children can focus during times of class prayer or private reflection during the day. While it is important that children should learn to pray, there is always a place for learning prayers that can be recited together. The RE curriculum plays an important role by providing opportunities to teach pupils about prayer, and also for them to learn prayers.

Each class is provided with a prayer corner box containing Crucifix, cloths reflecting the Liturgical season, candles, Rosary and other artefacts. Teachers and pupils are encouraged to add to the contents over the year. There is also a folder containing copies of the Prayers and responses it is expected each year group will learn.

We use the excellent classroom resource Let Us Pray to enable children to take ownership of prayer and liturgy in their classroom. Each class has their own box of Let Us Pray resources.

STAFF PRAYER

“One of the distinctive features of the Catholic school is that it proclaims itself as a faith community ... as part of their life as a faith community, Catholic schools are committed to communal prayer. There is an expectation that all teachers will play an active part in this.”

All staff meetings begin with a prayer or reflection providing an opportunity to be still and quiet at the end of the day. At the start of a new topic in our Come and See programme, staff will gather to

discuss and reflect upon the new topic, informed by the suggestions in the Come and See for Yourself section of the topic.

HOME-SCHOOL-PARISH LINKS

Liturgy and worship can be a key way to develop and realise the links we have between home-school and parish. At St. Thomas More School we are fortunate enough to have St. Thomas More Church across the road from our site. We are therefore actively involved in joint celebrations for Holy days of Obligation, where parents and parishioners are invited and assist in preparation, ministering and helping out.

The school also provides a lead at celebrations within the parish on the first Sunday of the month at the 9am Mass and fully supports sacramental preparation and celebration through class work and attendance of First Holy Communion celebrations.

The school's harvest celebration provides an opportunity for all parties to come together. Children and parents are involved in gathering of food, children lead and participate in the liturgy or Mass. The food collected is given to the needy of Leicester. The Parish Priest provides chaplaincy for the school and has a special role in the sacramental life of the school. The school is also blessed with the support of Deacon.

DIFFERENTIATION

A key principle of the Directory for Masses with Children is to enhance the quality of worship by adapting, whilst maintaining authenticity to the Catholic tradition, thus encouraging participation. Therefore worship and liturgy should be "suited to children's age and capabilities"

Children do not have to always understand all of the experiences provided in worship and liturgy, as they are aimed at a wide range of ages. They must, however, experience some elements that are relevant to them whenever they attend.

Curriculum RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for worship by giving them the means to understand the religious language and significance of the actions. Particular attention should be given to the Word of God, and all readings used in worship and liturgy, so that it is proclaimed at a level appropriate to the pupils' age and capacity. We use a Children's Lectionary for all weekday and Sunday Masses which the children lead.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all our children and staff. We are committed to giving all our children and staff every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. This policy helps to ensure that this happens for all members of our school regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, belief, physical need, attainment, language, background or emotional state.

Multicultural /Multifaith Issues

In respect of worship and liturgy, it is very important to be faithful to the Catholic tradition. The school community reflects to our multi-cultural society, thus it is appropriate to incorporate a

multi-cultural dimension to the worship and liturgy. A certain degree of sensitivity is required to avoid tokenism and enable authentic celebration. The Catholic Church is a world-wide community (the largest multicultural institution in the world) with a wealth of different cultural traditions, as is Christianity a world-wide faith. It is helpful to draw upon these common traditions to promote a multicultural perspective.

Liturgies and prayer should look to be inclusive where possible. We are sensitive to needs of children of other faiths. Our policy is to promote in all persons a sensitive regard to the needs and welfare of others and to encourage respect for and appreciation and understanding of the language, belief and customs of all cultural groups.

The presence of another faith will enrich and deepen the understanding of our own when there is genuine dialogue. The St Thomas More/Uplands Interfaith dialogue using e-mail presents the children with an opportunity to learn about and meet, groups of people of other faiths. Our school recognises and celebrates important feast days and special days of other faiths. Discreet teaching of other faiths occurs during the year and displays of photographs and artefacts from other faiths complement the multi-faith teaching in the school. Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism will be taught as part of a rolling programme with two faiths covered each year.

PLANNING/MONITORING/EVALUATION

It is important to evaluate all aspects of the liturgy including the preparation process in order to improve. Worship is a special living experience and evaluation needs to support its development. Regular reflection is the most appropriate short term evaluation with periodic records or consultation supporting Collective Worship in the SDP. Just as every part of the curriculum needs to be monitored, so does liturgy. The purpose of monitoring is to identify good practice, as well as to support and develop areas of weakness.

Good liturgical celebrations are dependent upon good preparation. The involvement of those who celebrate in this preparation is crucial.

Key elements which guide liturgy preparations: The Scripture readings; the season of the liturgical year/feast; the nature of the celebration; particular events or concerns for the school or wider community

Class teachers are given a guide entitled Planning a Mass or Service for Your Class to assist them in the practicalities of organising these celebrations with their class. Appendix A

Class Masses, Sunday Masses, Class Services and Class Assemblies are evaluated on a regular basis to encourage reflection and to ensure development. Children, staff and parishioners are involved in this. See Appendix B

There is an annual Staff Questionnaire and Pupils Interview. We seek to gain information about the experience of those delivering and experiencing Liturgy and worship in our school. We look forward to acting upon what we learn from these valuable information gathering exercises to improve the experiences of liturgy and worship for all. See Appendix C

MASSES AND SERVICES

Class Masses are planned by each Key Stage 2 class in turn with each class holding their own class Mass twice a year. Parents and family are invited to these celebrations. Each Key Stage 2 year group will also plan and lead one or sometimes two Sunday Masses at St Thomas More Church. Key Stage 1 classes will prepare and hold their own class service twice a year to which parents and family are welcomed. The class teachers will guide the class in their preparation and will liaise with the RE Coordinator. The priest or leader of the Mass or service will be briefed and provided with information about the structure of the celebration in good time.

CLASS ASSEMBLIES

Class assemblies to the whole school are collective acts of worship and should therefore be planned for accordingly. They should include the sign of the cross and a prayer which involves all those present. Prayers should be seen as integral part of the celebration and should represent the various forms of prayer which the children experience. Readings and stories should be at an appropriate level to engage the interest of the whole community and should be read clearly. The use of art, dance, music and drama adds interest to the celebration, creates atmosphere and maintains the participation of the rest of the community.

TRADITIONAL PRAYERS

Traditional Prayers – F2

- Sign of the cross
- Morning and Evening prayers
- Prayers before and after meals
- Responses at Mass (And with your Spirit. Peace be with you. Thanks be to God)
- Greeting the Gospel (Alleluia)
- Prayers for the blessing of the Advent wreath, lighting of the candles
- Prayers for Christmas

Traditional Prayers – Year 1 and Year 2

- Sign of the cross
- Morning and Evening prayers
- Prayers before and after meals
- Responses at Mass (And also with you. Peace be with you. Thanks be to God)
- Greeting the Gospel (Alleluia)
- Prayers for the blessing of the Advent wreath, lighting of the candles

- Prayers for Christmas
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory be to the Father
- Simple Magnificat
- Come Holy Spirit
- Act of Sorrow

Traditional Prayers - Key Stage 2

- Sign of the cross
- Morning and Evening prayers
- Prayers before and after meals
- Responses at Mass (And also with you. Peace be with you. Thanks be to God)
- Greeting the Gospel (Alleluia)
- Prayers for the blessing of the Advent wreath, lighting of the candles
- Prayers for Christmas
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory be to the Father
- Simple Magnificat
- Come Holy Spirit
- Act of sorrow
- I confess
- Angelus
- Benedictus
- Magnificat
- Eternal Rest
- Act of love
- Act of contrition
- The Rosary
- Some prayer used at Mass
- Saints prayers e.g. St Teresa of Avila, St Francis of Assisi

Appendix A

Planning a Mass for your Class – Weekdays

- At least two weeks in advance have a look at <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/2016>. This will tell you which season we are in, if there are any Saints' days on the day you will be having your Mass. If you look at the Home page of this site it will give you some background to the different liturgical seasons.
- Find the Children's Weekday lectionary on the R.E shelf. This is the one everyone will be using and planning from so please make sure you return it to the shelf after you have used it.
- If you look in the Lectionary you will see that it is divided into seasons – Ordinary time, Lent, Advent etc... Within these are sets of readings with a suggested focus. It might be "Give Thanks To God" or 'Show Faith By Actions' Choose a theme that fits in with your RE focus in Come and See or another focus that might be relevant to your class at the time. The focus is up to you for weekday Masses.
- In Lent there is no Alleluia. We have a Gospel Acclamation instead.
- Use the PowerPoint Presentation saved in the RE folder to customise your Mass. The children should be involved in this.
- You need to gather the children and read through the Mass together and discuss the theme. This discussion will be really important and help them when they come to write their prayers for the Mass.
- **The children need to write the introduction, bidding prayers (prayers of the faithful)** The bidding prayers start 'We pray for...' At the end the priest says, 'Lord in your mercy' and the congregation replies 'Hear our prayer.' The order for bidding prayers is:
 - [a] for the needs of the Church (which includes all Christians)
 - [b] for public authorities and the salvation of the world
 - [c] for those burdened by any difficulty
 - [d] for the local community
 - To this list may be added intentions for the sick and the dead. We end by asking Mary to pray for us and with us. *Hail Mary...*
 - The Thank you prayers begin, 'Dear Lord, we thank you for...' and end, 'Lord we thank you.' To which the congregation replies, 'Lord, we thank you.'
- A week before the Mass invitations to parents can be written by the children informing them of the time and date.
- When you have all the prayers and readings sorted for your Mass, they will need to be shown to Father Michael as a courtesy approximately a week before the Mass. Please include the Gospel as Father will be reading this and the version is

slightly different in the Children's Lectionary. They can be emailed to Father Michael at: stthomasmoreknighton@gmail.com

- On the R.E shelf there are 2 blue A4 soft covered folders. When you have printed out your Mass the final version needs to be put in two of these. One to be placed on Father Michael's chair before Mass. One to be put on the Lectern for the children to read the prayers from. The First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Alleluia or Gospel acclamation and Gospel need to be read from the Gold covered Children's Lectionary. We try to keep this one just for Mass and make it our special book to read the word of God from, hence reading from this and not the blue folder. The Lectionary should be bookmarked clearly at the First Reading, Second Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Alleluia or Acclamation, and Gospel.
- The day before your mass check with Leon Taylor that he is able to set up the hall with chairs for the congregation. (Unless your Mass is at Church) The children and the adults should sit on chairs. Please also ask and help Mrs Duddy to set up the altar for your mass. The chaplains should be involved in this. There is a white plastic box in the P.E Cupboard with all the altar pieces for Mass.
- The music for weekday Masses should be chosen by the children – if you are in any doubt as to the suitability of a hymn for a certain season or time in the Mass please ask Dan McGlynn who will be able to advise you.

Planning a Mass for your Class – Sundays

- The Mass sheet for your Sunday Mass will be available to collect from Father Michael two weeks before your Mass. The RE Coordinator will collect this for you if asked. Once you have this the steps for preparation are the same as for the weekday Masses. On Sunday there is a Second Reading after the Responsorial Psalm.
- A letter needs to be sent to parents to ask if their child will be able to participate in the Sunday Mass. This will need to happen in good time in order to know who will be coming so that you can gather this group to discuss the Mass together and prepare the prayers.
- The children usually have a practice at church on the Friday before a class Sunday Mass.
- Children need to be in church by 8.45am for 9am Sunday Mass.

- You will need to bring the 2 blue folders – give one with a copy of the Mass and all the prayers to Father Michael on the day. You will need one.
- You will need to arrive at church in time to place 2 or 3 RESERVED signs on the front 2 or 3 pews according to how many children you are expecting.
- Children will need to sit according to the order they will read. This makes it easier and less fussy when they are called to go up to the lectern.
- You will need to accompany each group of readers to the lectern to read. This allows you to make sure they stand close enough to the microphone to be heard by the congregation and to offer support. Do not forget the blue folder. Father Michael will generally ask for the readers as they are needed to help you to know when to go up. It is usually – the Introduction, First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading and Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation. The Thank you Prayers and Conclusion go up together.
- The hymns for Sunday Mass are usually chosen in advance by the parish so do not have to be decided by your class.

Planning a Liturgy for your class Key Stage 1

Dan McGlynn is usually invited to lead the services for Key Stage 1 and F2

Three weeks before your service contact Dan to discuss what you would like to do and the focus for your service. These are often linked to the focus of the Come and See topic. You then choose hymns suitable for the occasion and your children and text him to let him know what they are.

Key Stage 1 usually have 3 services during the year. As we are trying to involve the staff and children more with the planning of their liturgies, if you feel confident enough your second and/or third liturgy could be lead by you rather than Dan. There is a service on the Come and See page of the Nottingham Diocesan Centre which links with the Come and See topic. www.nottingham-diocesan-centre.org.uk

Your children will need to write an invitation to their parents/carers to invite them to the service a week in advance. The service is usually held at 9am in your classroom.

Teaching and Assessment in R.E Class teacher / TA views

- Are you finding it easy to keep your prayer areas up to date?
- If this is an area you would like to develop further in your class, can you suggest some ways in which you might be helped?
- Is there any aspect of the **Come and See** programme which you find difficult or hard to manage?

How do you find the pupil assessment form used at the end of each lesson? How easy is it to use with the children?

Class Masses and Sunday Masses Key Stage 2

There are currently 2 class masses a year per class and 1 Sunday Masses a year for each class group.

Services – F2/ Key Stage1 There are currently 2 or 3 Services a year

Do you have any comments about the frequency or timing of these?

Do you find the Nottingham Diocesan Centre website easy to navigate? Can you find everything you need to carry out your teaching and assessments?

Any other comments?

You don't need to write your name but your key stage would be useful.

Thank you

RE Questionnaire

We would like to find out your opinions about RE in our school. When we have looked at your answers we will use them to try and improve the RE at our school. You don't have to put your name but please put which school year you are in. Please answer each question honestly and put what **you** really think.

1. Do you have a place in your classroom where you can go to to pray? Yes/No
If you do what does it look like? _____

2. Do you know which topic you are studying in RE at the moment? What is it?

3. What do you like best about your RE lessons?

4. Is there anything you would change?

5. What do you do to help prepare for your class mass or service?

6. Do you enjoy school masses in church? Yes/No
If you answered no – how could we make them more enjoyable?

