



**Introduction:**

Pope Francis in his daily homily on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 said:

*“The Lord tells us: ‘The first task in life is this: prayer.’ But not the prayer of words, like a parrot; but the prayer of the heart: gazing on the Lord, hearing the Lord, asking the Lord.”*

St Julie's Catholic High School is a community that recognizes the need to provide regular opportunities for such meaningful prayer and reflection.

It is a legal requirement under the 1988 Education Reform Act that “*all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship*” and that the collective worship required “*shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.*”

Prayer and Liturgy in foundation schools with a religious character, such as St Julie's, should be in accordance with the school's trust deed *i.e. our Notre Dame identity.*

**Aims:**

The collective prayer life of our school is an essential and integral feature of our daily activities as a Christian community. It is one of the ways in which we:

- contemplate something of the mystery of God
- explore and share beliefs
- consider the importance of meditation and silence,
- think about the needs of others
- develop a sense of school family/community
- recognise and celebrate achievements
- re-affirm and put into practice the mission and values of the school.

**So, what is prayer?**

Prayer has been described as many things and of course there are many ways to pray. In school we are called to set aside time each day and the main focus is at the beginning of our day. It is an opportunity to set some quality time aside to put ourselves in the presence of our God and to start our day off together in his presence.

We are ever mindful of the fact that ‘**Prayer is about awakening to the presence of God within us**’ (Laurence Freeman) and that ‘**the more we find Christ within, the more we find Christ without**’ (Bede Griffiths). The more we place ourselves in God's presence, the more likely we are to have the same attitude and actions as Jesus: ‘**In His presence we are bound to love**’ (Evelyn Underhill).

| Created by:               | Version | Reviewed and amended by:                      | Approved by Policy Committee | Review date  | Page 1 of 7 |
|---------------------------|---------|---|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Mr C Willis<br>24-05-2010 | 3.0     | Mr C Willis and<br>Ms J Wallace<br>16-10-2023 | 24/11/23                     | AUTUMN<br>25 |             |



### **Why do we pray?**

On the most simple level, and as has been stated already, we have daily collective prayer because it is a legal requirement to do so. We also aim to follow the teaching of our patron St Julie, our patron Saint, who wrote “When you have time to spare go faithfully to prayer,; the good God will be waiting for you there”

However, on a deeper level it is important to remember that **‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath’** (Mark 2: 27) – the requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not important in and of itself, but because of the potential benefits it can bring.

Young people need and desire an experience of reflection, prayer and stillness. Opportunities for ‘Sabbath time’ in modern society are few and far between, but all the more valuable and necessary for this.

As the great Hindu spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi said:

**“I am neither a man of letters, nor of Science, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. It is prayer that has saved my life. Without prayer I would have lost my reason a long time ago. I did not lose my peace of soul – in spite of many trials – because the peace came to me from prayer. One can live several days without food, but not without prayer. Prayer is the key to each morning, and the lock to every evening. This is my teaching: let everyone try this experience and they will find that daily prayer will add something new to their lives”.**

Prayer at St Julie's is a key element of pastoral care – a means of being with pupils, sharing experiences with them and offering them opportunities, challenge and invitation to grow.

### **Participation:**

| <b>Created by:</b>        | <b>Version</b> | <b>Reviewed and amended by:</b>               | <b>Approved by Policy Committee</b> | <b>Review date</b> | <b>Page 2 of 7</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Mr C Willis<br>24-05-2010 | 3.0            | Mr C Willis and<br>Ms J Wallace<br>16-10-2023 | 24/11/23                            | AUTUMN<br>25       |                    |



St. Julie's endorses the belief that Prayer and Liturgy take into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the churchgoing Catholic community
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of Church
- Those from other Christian traditions
- Those from other, or no, faith backgrounds

To this end, we recognize that:

- All children should be involved in the daily act of worship unless withdrawn by the parent or guardian.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Form students have the right to withdraw themselves.
- Teachers also have the right of withdrawal from collective worship.

### **How do we pray?**

**'Jesus told stories and asked questions. We tend to moralise and give answers'.**

At the same time as affirming the potential benefits of meaningful collective worship, we are mindful of the potential harm that can be done by exposure to prayer that attempts to 'preach' or explicitly evangelise.

We recognize also that the positive elements of prayer can easily be negated by the attitude of the person leading the prayer or by the manner of delivery of comments or notices that might follow.

For this reason, all those responsible for the leading of collective worship strive to be mindful of the fact that worship is essentially about **inviting**, not preaching. It involves extending invitations to:

- Grow in respect and appreciation of self and others
- Grow in responsibility towards and service of those in need
- Grow in awareness and wonder, in understanding and wisdom
- Discover the 'kingdom within, seeking life in all its fullness'.

### **Content:**

Each week, there will be a whole-school focus on one of our six Notre Dame Values Throughout the year students will be challenged to reflect on how these values can be lived out

| <b>Created by:</b>        | <b>Version</b> | <b>Reviewed and amended by:</b>               | <b>Approved by Policy Committee</b> | <b>Review date</b> | Page 3 of 7 |
|---------------------------|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Mr C Willis<br>24-05-2010 | 3.0            | Mr C Willis and<br>Ms J Wallace<br>16-10-2023 | 24/11/23                            | AUTUMN<br>25       |             |



in the world today through videos on a value theme accompanied by questions to promote thinking and/or discussion. In addition, the weekly values and questions are displayed throughout school. These values are reinforced and revisited throughout the academic year.

The liturgical seasons of the Church are the focal points of the Prayer and Liturgy Calendar which also takes account of other events such as significant anniversaries or national/international focus days. The Church's liturgical sources (eg. Ordo) are consciously used to inform planning of prayer and liturgy.

Our students are also invited to lead acts of worship. Students are encouraged to be active participants in worship in a variety of ways including asking for their own personal intentions to be remembered (for example, praying for a sick relative, or for success for the whole class as exams approach.) They might be encouraged to research or read a reflection or may bring in a personal item that is important to them as a stimulus for the act of worship. Students are also encouraged to support the Chaplain in planning, producing and leading prayer for whole school Sacred Time resources.

**Guidance for staff – setting the tone:**

In order to help prayer and liturgy to be as inclusive and as meaningful as possible, staff are themselves invited to consider a number of questions, amongst them:

- Do I create an atmosphere of stillness in which prayer can take place?
- Do I ever pray *for* my pupils before praying *with* them?
- Do I share myself/my story with my pupils?
- Is my attitude to leading prayer conducive to meaningful reflection?

**Delivery:**

**At 8:55 a.m. a bell sounds to mark the beginning of Sacred Time. This is five minutes set aside to facilitate the daily act of collective worship. At 9:00 a.m. a bell denotes the end of Sacred Time and pupils will be dismissed to attend their first formal lesson of the day.**

Pupils will have the opportunity for Collective Prayer in their Form groups four days a week during Sacred Time.

On the fifth day, the act of Collective Prayer takes place as part of a weekly assembly for each year group. (Assemblies run from 8:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.)

There are also a number of other ways in which faith and worship are lived and celebrated including:

- Advent, Lent and other Services for the whole school

| Created by:               | Version | Reviewed and amended by:                      | Approved by Policy Committee | Review date  | Page 4 of 7 |
|---------------------------|---------|---|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Mr C Willis<br>24-05-2010 | 3.0     | Mr C Willis and<br>Ms J Wallace<br>16-10-2023 | 24/11/23                     | AUTUMN<br>25 |             |



- Seasonal liturgies eg. Ash Wednesday, May Crowning
- Y13 Leavers' Mass
- Year 7 Welcome Mass
- Services and Sacred Time resources to mark Foundation Day (28<sup>th</sup> March 1851 when the Sisters of Notre Dame arrived in Liverpool)
- Retreats
- The weekly staff briefing always includes an element of prayer.
- Lunchtime services or celebrations at Breaktime that mark Feast days (eg. St Cecilia and St Patrick) or international/national events (e.g. International World Day of Peace)
- Chaplaincy Prefects
- Daily Morning Prayer emailed to all staff at 6.30am during term time
- Friday Morning Mass before school @ 8.10am
- Wednesday Prayer Breakfast in the school canteen from 8am
- Faith In Action Award
- Working towards the Live Simply Award
- Local deanery parish feast days and feeder primary schools are recognised on school projector screens
- Local clergy 'drop-in' sessions with the Chaplain ensures good communication between school and parishes

### **Chaplaincy Website and Social Media**

Whilst being an online space to access resources for Sacred Time, the impetus behind the Chaplaincy website and Chaplaincy Instagram account is to:

- Highlight Chaplaincy events, services and celebrations in school
- Offer reflections on Scripture from the readings at Mass each week
- Reflect the different styles of praise and worship within the tradition of Catholic Church
- Offer catechetical materials for students, staff and parents
- Raise awareness of parish and Archdiocesan events
- Provide online prayer opportunities and signpost useful faith apps eg, Hallow App and Rosary
- Engage students and a wider audience with discussing faith, prayer and asking questions
- Promote the domestic church through encouraging parents to follow the account as well as students
- Sharing links to online Catholic influencers
- Encourage general interest in faith

### **Other considerations:**

The QCA document '**RE and Collective Worship – An analysis of 2006 SACRE reports**' made a number of useful observations, some of which are listed below:

| Created by:               | Version | Reviewed and amended by:                      | Approved by Policy Committee | Review date  | Page 5 of 7 |
|---------------------------|---------|---|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Mr C Willis<br>24-05-2010 | 3.0     | Mr C Willis and<br>Ms J Wallace<br>16-10-2023 | 24/11/23                     | AUTUMN<br>25 |             |



- Best practice is characterised by thorough planning, the use of themes, the evaluation of collective worship, and the use of outside speakers who were able to bring insights directly from their own faith and cultural traditions.
- Prayer and Liturgy often allows for the clearest expression of a school's ethos, affirming the importance of relationships and the sharing of both joy and sadness
- Collective worship is an important vehicle for pupils to explore and share beliefs, consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence, the relevance of ideas and beliefs to their own lives, think about the needs of others and develop a sense of community.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

#### **How do we support people to lead/facilitate Collective Worship?**

The main points of contact for staff seeking support in leading and facilitating collective worship are:

- The Lay Chaplain
- The Curriculum Leader for Religious Education
- The member of the Leadership Team with responsibility for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Prayer resources are shared electronically via email, the school network and the Chaplaincy website ([chaplaincy.stjulies.org.uk](http://chaplaincy.stjulies.org.uk)). For Sacred Time, staff are provided with weekly slides for each half term in advance and these include daily prayer, catechetical resources to help understand the tradition of the Catholic Faith and other faiths and videos marking and celebrating festivals or other events eg. Live Simply Award. The resources provided are planned to enable staff, whatever their personal religious affiliation, to facilitate and/or lead prayer and contribute to the spiritual life of the school.

Together, the staff members above aim to provide ongoing support to colleagues, especially those new to teaching; new to the school; or here as ITT students in formal INSET training as well as in day to day conversations. There are also opportunities for staff to attend additional training provided by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

#### ***How do we monitor and evaluate provision for collective worship?***

Given that we have a legal duty to offer a daily act of Collective Prayer that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character and/or in accordance with the trust deeds, we also have a duty to monitor and evaluate how effectively we fulfil this duty.

The primary manner in which monitoring and evaluation takes place is by the visit of the Lay Chaplain to staff briefing, Sacred Time and assemblies. Where Sacred Time is to be visited, this is done by prior arrangement with the relevant Form Tutor with a reasonable notice period. The aim will be for each Form group to be visited at least once per academic year. A record is kept of each Sacred Time visit and a termly report produced which is circulated to all staff, with examples of best practice highlighted and shared.

| <b>Created by:</b>        | <b>Version</b> | <b>Reviewed and amended by:</b>               | <b>Approved by Policy Committee</b> | <b>Review date</b> | Page 6 of 7 |
|---------------------------|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Mr C Willis<br>24-05-2010 | 3.0            | Mr C Willis and<br>Ms J Wallace<br>16-10-2023 | 24/11/23                            | AUTUMN<br>25       |             |



Both a pupil and staff survey covering aspects of Collective Worship (including Sacred Time and Assemblies) is to be completed each year. This may be completed online via the school's survey tool. (*Any SMSC surveys carried out will also include reference to Sacred Time and Assemblies and will help inform decisions regarding Prayer and Liturgy.*)

Assemblies are monitored weekly by Progress Leaders who keep an Assembly Record Sheet which records: the facilitator, the theme/main activity, whether pupils are involved in the preparation and deliver, whether there were opportunities for prayer/reflection, what the most effective moment was in the assembly.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

In evaluating collective worship, questions to be considered are:

- Is there evidence that enough is being done to make staff aware of the weekly theme?
- Is there evidence that the support materials/resources provided are helpful for staff?
- Is there evidence that the support materials/resources provided are helpful for pupils, both in terms of their accessibility and allowing them to be active participants in worship rather than just passive recipients?
- Are there examples of staff or pupils using their own resources to lead prayer in relation to the weekly theme?
- Does the response of pupils to collective worship suggest that it is something which forms part of their normal daily routine in registration?

All findings would be anonymised and the purpose would be to allow the Lay Chaplain, the Curriculum Leader for Religious Education and the member of the Leadership Team with responsibility for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development to identify action points which would enable them to provide a dynamic and well-planned programme, to better support staff and pupils in getting the most out of collective prayer.

| <b>Created by:</b>        | <b>Version</b> | <b>Reviewed and amended by:</b>               | <b>Approved by Policy Committee</b> | <b>Review date</b> | Page 7 of 7 |
|---------------------------|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Mr C Willis<br>24-05-2010 | 3.0            | Mr C Willis and<br>Ms J Wallace<br>16-10-2023 | 24/11/23                            | AUTUMN<br>25       |             |