



# **St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy**

## **Catholic Life Policy**



**Guided by Jesus' love and example, we use our gifts  
to grow, pray and learn as a community;  
united in faith.**

*For I know the plans I have for you; plans to give you hope and a future – Jeremiah 29:11*

At St John Fisher, we care and meet the pastoral, spiritual, moral, cultural and social needs of the children by:

- Providing good Catholic role models for the younger citizens of the future so that they may follow in Jesus' footsteps.
- Maintaining, working with and developing successful links with the home, parish, diocese, community and the wider world.

Our school strives to follow in the mission of Christ and his Holy Church on Earth by:

- Providing opportunities for daily collective worship, so that our children may encounter Jesus and his love.
- Providing a caring, inspiring and creative environment, which supports our children to live out their mission on a daily basis.
- Equipping our children to consider and act as missionary disciples within the school, their homes, our parish and our global community.

### **The Spiritual Life of our School**

At St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy, we aim to create and continually enhance an environment which celebrates and supports the spiritual life of our school. Our school entrance, classrooms and communal areas display and support our Mission Statement, our community in Christ and the ways that we work as a school family.

### **Prayer**

Prayer has an important role in Religious Education as a means of expressing, fostering and nurturing faith. It is through prayer that children can respond to what happens in their own lives and the world around them. Children are encouraged and supported to be open to prayer in different forms, with others and in moments of personal reflection. Our school prayer was written by children and we say this prayer at the beginning of staff meetings, governor meetings, in classrooms and when we gather as a school in prayer.

We aim to teach and develop a variety of prayer methods to the children such as:

- Teaching the traditional prayers of the church alongside new prayers.
- Allowing the children to develop their spiritual awareness by giving them the skills to create asking, thanksgiving, praising and sorry prayers.
- Through the reading of the Gospels and the Holy Bible.
- Through the teaching of traditional hymns alongside modern hymns.
- Through the teaching of drama, sacred music and prayer.

- Meditating and reflecting in silence whilst being inspired by liturgical music and religious art.

### **Prayer in the Classroom.**

Each classroom in the school creates a prayerful environment through a prayer focus area.

- This focus is dressed in the liturgical colours of the year as a visual sign to the children to show the change and the mood of the liturgical calendar.
- This prayer focus has a Bible which shows the previous Sunday's Gospel readings; or the reading associated with a feast day; or a reading which is relevant to the current scheme of work.
- Teachers are encouraged to be creative when creating an interactive display on this focus. Objects, images, candles and other symbolic items will feature which reflect the liturgical year, feasts, liturgical celebrations or lesson foci.
- Each room in the school has a cross or crucifix which reminds us all of the sacrifice of Christ for us all and that Christ is at the centre at everything we do.
- Our school prayer, the Mission Statement and Mission Motto is also displayed in every room.

### **Providing Class Collective Worship on a Daily Basis.**

Worship is provided daily. Teacher and pupils pray at the start, middle and end of each day.

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	BISHOP'S THEMES				
Focus	DIOCESAN WORD OF THE WEEK	VIRTUES TO LIVE BY  CLASS-LED LITURGIES	CLASS-LED LITURGIES	Gather and Praise (sing)	
Organisation	Gather & Pray Leadership led Whole school  Lunchtime Prayer groups for KS1/KS2 led by School Chaplain	Whole school or Key Stages Class led		Whole school or Key Stages	Gather & Celebrate OR Class led Come & See Whole school
All classes participate in daily prayers throughout the day. All classes timetable sessions for Collective Worship preparation in line with the overview. CW Leader will co-ordinate joint preparation of whole school collaborations.					

Further details can be found within our Collective Worship Policy.

### **Places for Prayer**

In addition to classroom prayer areas, there are prayer areas in the school hall and the Hub, which are made available to children as spaces to support their own and communal prayer.

### **Liturgical Year**

Throughout the year, our Calendar of Events outlines how we will embrace, respond to and celebrate the Church's Liturgical Year. Throughout their time at St John Fisher, children form a deeper understanding of the changes in seasons, the signs and symbols which express the journey through the year.

A KS2 class go on retreat to deepen their knowledge and understanding of a season, preparing a Collective Worship to share with the school and wider community.

Advent and Christmas are celebrated through our curriculum RE and brought to life through our Advent Gather and Pray, Travelling Cribs, Sharing Stockings, Nativity plays, Christmas Mass and Carols around the Tree.

After Christmas, we gather for Mass, to celebrate the Epiphany.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday Mass, and children are encouraged to make Lenten Promises. Supporting the learning within RE topics, our Lent Gather and Pray, Stations of the Cross and Lenten charity help our children to understand and embrace this season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Celebrating Eastertide, our Collective Worship helps us reflect on Jesus' resurrection and how he prepared his disciples for their mission.

Pentecost is celebrated with a Day of Faith, where our school community celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit; we are encouraged to reflect on and renew our role as Missionary Disciples.

During the month of May, the children learn about and experience praying the Rosary. Home prayer boxes are shared throughout the month and we gather to pray with and to Mary during our May Procession.

In October, we celebrate the Harvest, led by a KS2 class, who plan and organise donations of Harvest to those in need. Devotions to Mary take place, in classrooms and when we gather as a whole school.

In November, we pray for those who have died. We also come together to observe Remembrance Day.

## **Bishop's Themes**

Bishop Patrick has called people of our diocese to become more outward-looking and missionary in its sense of purpose and direction. This is achievable by having a strong spiritual foundation which will be firmly in place over the next few years. The three themes which we are using are:

### **1. ENCOUNTER**

### **2. DISCIPLESHIP**

### **3. MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP**

*The Gospel joy which enlivens the community of disciples is a missionary joy. (EG21)*

*The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded. (EG23)*

(Diocese of Nottingham website)

During our Key Stage Collective Worship, we seek to support our children's understanding of each theme, through scripture, prayer and reflection. Children are challenged to apply these to their learning and their lives, in their RE lessons, weekly missions and their interactions with others within school and beyond.

## **Year of the Word**

Catholics have a richly different way of hearing the Word of God. God's Word is for everyone, not just for educated individuals. We see this regularly at Mass, where the Word is read to us as an assembled body, including people who cannot read or write.

Our God speaks to us, and we can reply - and be sure of a hearing. Listening to the Word together, we become a strong community, which grows by celebrating the Sacraments and constant prayer.

(Diocese of Nottingham website)

During the Year of the Word, we seek to support our community to explore God's Word through our whole school Collective Worship, the introduction of Scripture Detectives into curriculum RE lessons, exploring scripture that reflects all areas of our learning and school life and Lectio Divina.

## **House Groups**

Each member of our school is a member of a house group, which have adopted their names from the gifts of the Holy Spirit: Awe and Wonder, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, Right Judgement, Understanding and Wisdom.

These groups meet at intervals throughout the year, to explore the Bishops' Themes and our Mission Statement.

In July, Mission Days are spent reflecting on our Mission Statement, deciding on a new motto for the coming year, creating displays to inspire us through the next school year and culminate in a shared Collective Worship.

## Reaching out to others

We aim to bring about an awareness of the needs of others. This is on-going throughout the year and those less fortunate than us are remembered in daily prayer.

In Advent term, children and the community are encouraged to bring in food for those less fortunate during the Harvest Festival celebrations. The food is distributed to charities chosen by our children.

During Advent, our children are encouraged to support those less fortunate through donations of gifts through the Sharing Stocking.

St John Fisher join with SRSCMAT, to support their chosen charity (currently Rainbows Hospice) in addition to raising funds, our Day of Faith seeks to deepen our understanding of the needs of others, and how we as disciples of Christ can support the hospice through prayer.

In Lent, the children decide which charity we support and how we can do this. Charities include *CAFOD* and *Project Arusha*.

Throughout the year, our school engages in days that raise awareness of current issues and initiatives, such as *Child Mental Health Awareness* and *Show Racism the Red card*.

Children are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in our community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, an appreciation and respect for one's own property and that of others.

## Parent Involvement

We seek to involve parents and give them the confidence to play their part in the formation of their children. The school supports and develops the primary task of parents as the first teachers of their children in the ways of Faith. We aim to involve parents by:

- Inviting them to child-led Collective Worship
- Inviting them to celebrate Holy Mass
- They are invited to parent meetings when Religious Education is discussed e.g. as their children enter school in Reception, at Curriculum Open Evenings and later as they begin their immediate preparation for the Sacraments.
- Inviting them to special celebrations e.g. Nativity, Carol Service, Holy Week celebrations and Leavers' Mass and Assembly.
- They are encouraged to bring their children to Mass and other celebrations within the parish of English Martyrs.
- During Advent and the month of May, home prayer boxes are sent home with a different child each day to support families when praying at home.

- They are encouraged to support the Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discuss with their children work being completed when preparing to receive the Sacraments.
- Providing information about RE, Collective Worship and Catholic Life on our website and through Twitter,
- Inviting them to share their views often through questionnaires.

### **Father Mark and Parish Community**

Father Mark is a source of support and guidance. He celebrates Mass with us and helps us to celebrate and understand seasons, feast days and Catholic rituals and actions.

The church and school support and share events including Carol Services, Holy Days of Obligation, Welcome Mass, the celebration of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation and the May Procession.

The parish accommodate Days of Retreat in the parish hall.

### **SRSCMAT and Nottingham Diocese**

As part of St Ralph Sherwin CMAT and the Nottingham Diocese, our school plays an active part in shared activities and initiatives.

This includes:

INSET days with SRSCMAT

Fundraising for Rainbows Hospice

Bishops' days for both children and leaders

CPD led by NRCDES

Engagement in events led by NDCYS

Work with and use of resources provided by Joe Hopkins (SRS Lead Lay Chaplain)

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Catholic Life are monitored and evaluated regularly by SLT, the children, parents and Governors.

All children have the opportunity to evaluate Catholic Life and contribute to further decision making. This takes the form of a discussion, questionnaires and evaluations. Areas for developments are actioned in order to continue to develop and enhance the quality of Catholic Life in our school.

Catholic Life Leader will monitor evaluations and give feedback to staff within RE CPD sessions.

Events and developments in our Catholic Life are frequently celebrated within the school and wider community through the use of Twitter, Tapestry and @SJF #ourcatholiclife board.

Signed by:  
Angelina Brett

May 2021

**Headteacher**

Date:

Patricia Hurd

May 2021

**Chair of Directors**

Date: