

St Mary's Blackbrook Catholic Primary School



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

'Lord teach us to pray'. Luke 11:1

Mission Statement

- *To teach children the gospel values of honesty, forgiveness, empathy, respect and self control through religious education, prayer and liturgy and assemblies.*
- *To celebrate God's love through a variety of meaningful experiences.*
- *To explore awe and wonder through everyday experiences.*
- *To identify each person's special gifts and talents, providing experiences and challenges to fully develop these abilities.*

Introduction:

Luke Chapter 11 opens with the disciples' simple request, 'Lord teach us to pray'.

Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. The whole of creation is new to them, and their days are full of endless exploration and discovery. Our task is to recognise this, foster it and develop it.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school, names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving praise and thanks to God.

'Prayer is one of the most important spiritual disciplines we can teach our children because prayer nurtures their relationship with Jesus and produces faith that will last a lifetime. The more time they spend with Jesus, the more they become like Jesus—full of his grace, love, compassion and forgiveness'. Candy Marballi

Context

Prayer and liturgy at St Mary's has its foundations in the Gospels and endeavours to cater for the religious, spiritual and educational needs of all who play a part in the community.

Therefore prayer and liturgy addresses the needs of all individuals and is sensitive to:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in the church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
- Those from other Christian traditions
- Those from other faith backgrounds

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and priority is given to providing the children with experiences of the Eucharist, highlighting Holy Days of Obligation and opportunities to receive the sacraments. Worship is planned around the Church's calendar/liturgical year using the physical space creatively.

Statement of requirement:

Within maintained schools and academies, there is a legal requirement for an act of 'collective worship' to take place daily. Those responsible for the governance of schools with a religious character are legally required to ensure that collective worship is provided and is in accordance with the religious designation of the school. In Catholic maintained schools this daily requirement will be fulfilled variably.

It is however much more than this. It is an integral part of school life and central to Catholic tradition.

Responsibility

Parents can choose to withdraw their children.

In all Catholic schools, prayer and liturgy are integral to the spiritual life of the school and to the pupils' moral and spiritual development. Prayer and liturgy are therefore an important part of the school's distinctive character. The Archbishop entrusts his responsibility for prayer and liturgy to the governors and headteacher.

This is monitored in school by the Governing Body the Senior Leadership Team and the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator.

Aims

'For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them'. Matt 18:20

- Foster a personal relationship with Jesus through prayer and action
- Provide different opportunities and experiences for pupils and staff to worship God
- Reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs
- To be respectful and reverent towards the beliefs of others
- Enable and encourage a sense of belonging
- Encourage a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To introduce children to aspects of the Gospel message and to reflect and celebrate the word of God
- To take time out, 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and to 'give worth to'.

In order to achieve a sense of belonging and a common ethos, we try to involve as many of our school community as possible and as many different experiences of prayer as we can facilitate. Teachers plan and enable prayer to take place each day in classes. Occasions for worship include prayer times in class, services of reconciliation.

Principles

'I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness'.

Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- Develop in pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organize, and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude, and family backgrounds to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.

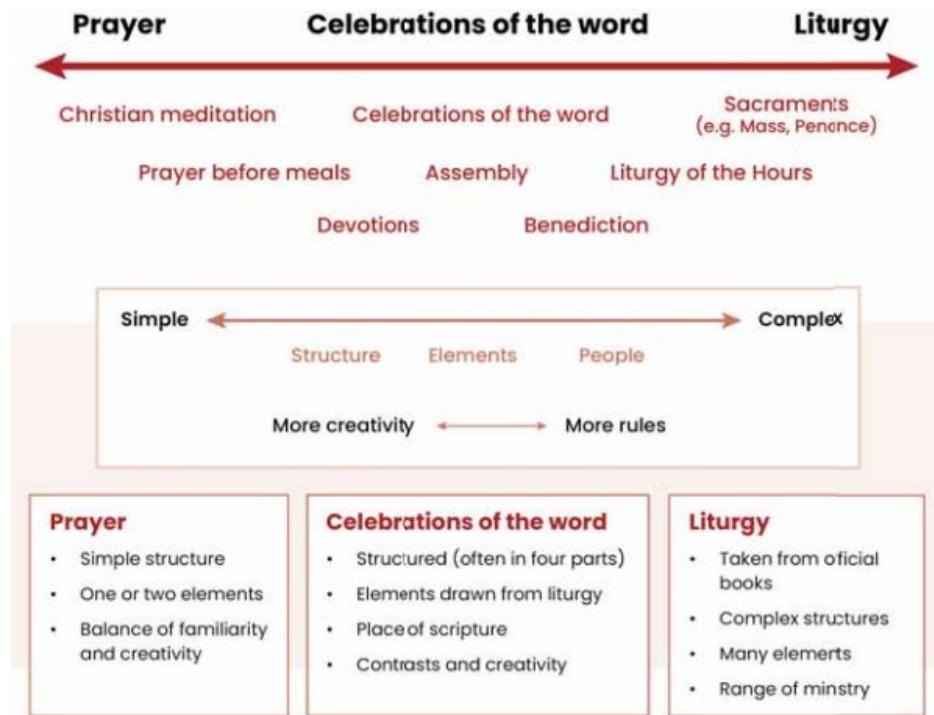
To do this, celebrations will:

- be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience.
- be short and appropriately paced (A child's attention span is said to last in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life *i.e., 5-6 minutes for Key Stage 1 and 7-10 minutes for Key Stage 2*).
- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Prayer and Liturgy in our schools will be:

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- recorded
- monitored evaluated

Overview of prayer and liturgy provision



Taken from, 'To love you more dearly' The Prayer and Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools in England and Wales 2023

Setting

The setting should be conducive for prayer, reflection, and celebration. Sometimes worship will be quiet and contemplative and at other times it will involve music, dance, and joy. The mixture needs to be creative and varied, joyful and reverent, penitent and spirit filled.

Celebrations of the Word

'Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs; sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts'. Col 3:16

Celebrations of the word carried out as a distinct section of an assembly or within individual classrooms. These celebrations are a coming together of the school community. They provide an opportunity to extend, enhance and support the programme (Come and See or Religious Education Directory) used in the classroom.

Our celebrations can be a time of greeting, reflection, praise, thanksgiving, meditation, and celebration, and take place each week along with a celebration of the week.

Whole school assemblies take place on a Friday Morning. The whole school is invited to join in worship with the classes who lead these. KS1 and KS2 assemblies take place on a Wednesday morning, a member of SLT will lead this assembly and will introduce the Gospel of that week.

Structure

All forms of Celebration of the word follow the accepted four-fold structure of:

- Gather
- Word or Listen
- Response

- Send

All Prayer and liturgy must contain some form of scripture, whether it be a full passage or just a short sentence for reflection and meditation. Weekly themes for Prayer and Liturgy are planned by the RE Team.

Prayer

'Be still and know that I am God'. Ps 46:10

Prayer has been traditionally described as 'lifting up of the hearts and minds to God'

Throughout the day there are opportunities for short times of prayer. These often mark the time of day and the rhythm of the school timetable. The timing of the prayer can be flexible and can be at any time of the day, so as to ensure it is a meaningful and prayerful opportunity for all participants.

Beginning and ending of the day

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens". Ecclesiastes 3:1

To begin and end each school day in prayer helps to put the whole day into perspective. There are three basic models of prayer. Each usually begins and ends with the sign of the cross and includes a pause for silence. Always consider the current liturgical season and how it might affect the prayer. The three basic models are:

- A single prayer, suitable for the time of day and prayed from memory.
- A simple structured pattern of prayer, with perhaps a short reading or psalm verse, prayer for others and a concluding prayer.
- A time of prayer which has some more spontaneous elements, such as improvised prayers or intercessions.

Grace before and after meals

This is a good Catholic tradition thanking God for the food provided and remembering those in need. Each class will decide on their own version of grace before meals to use

Classroom prayer

Where there is a prayer focus within the classroom or other space, this may provide an aid to prayer. These may be formal times of prayer, or pupils could be encouraged to use the space as the focus of their personal prayer.

Additional Celebrations

During for example feast days, advent, lent etc whole school and phase celebrations of the word will be planned. These will aid the children in a deeper understanding of the liturgical pattern.

- Introductory Rites - simple welcome to celebration
- Penitential rite / Gloria / Opening prayer - Although all three aspects can be incorporated, it is better to choose one and preference might be given to one liturgical season, e.g. Gloria during Easter season.
- A scripture passage should always be included in celebration.
- Using various methods i.e., pictures, simple responses, children can be encouraged to reflect upon God's message to his people.

Forms of prayer and devotion

The Church has a long and varied tradition of devotions to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Saints. We plan specific celebrations of the word to highlight this.

- Advent wreath
- Christmas crib
- Stations of the Cross
- Easter garden

Spontaneous Prayer

'Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God' John 14:1

Prayer is a spontaneous expression of joy, sadness, and other emotions, and leads to a growing awareness of self and others in the world, and our relationship with God. Informal prayers can arise from children's simple everyday experiences, and this can encourage them to be focused, still, quiet or joyful.

Our children will be encouraged to, 'whisper in their heart' and pray aloud for personal intentions and to give thanks. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer will be built into classroom prayer sessions and spirituality days. Children are also encouraged to write their own prayers and if they feel comfortable doing so, sharing them with others.

Common Prayers

Common prayers are introduced gradually throughout their time at St Mary's. Children will become familiar with them through hearing them said and joining in. They may focus on phrases which are appropriate to topics or sing simple prayers and phrases set to music.

Age phase	EYFS	5-7 (KS1)	7-9 (Lower KS2)	9-11 (Upper KS2)
Prayers	Sign of the cross The Lord's Prayer Hail Mary Glory be	Sign of the cross The Lord's Prayer Hail Mary Glory be Grace before meals Grace after meals	The Apostles Creed The Act of Contrition Angel of God Come Holy Spirit Prayer of St Richard of Chichester	Morning Offering The Rosary The Magnificat Act of Faith Act of Hope Act of Love

Participation and Progress in leading Prayer and Worship
The experience of worship across the school is progressive

Child Led Celebrations of the Word

We have chosen a theme for each term based on the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Scripture has been selected under each of the themes which aid children to plan their own prayer time for their class. Children can select any other scripture passage or indeed another theme however this framework supports intentional planning. The children follow the same liturgical structure and in KS2 record their plans on a simple proforma.

Autumn 1	Love
Autumn 2	Peace (Advent)
Spring 1	Patience
Spring 2	Faithfulness (Lent)
Summer 1	Joy (Pentecost)
Summer 2	Kindness

We work towards a growing competency and confidence in planning and leading prayer.

Children's involvement

Step 1

The teacher always models and leads

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts – given from 2 choices
- Help to set up focus table and notice the liturgical colour

Gather

- Sing a gather song
- Make the sign of the cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Reverence for the Word of God in Scripture should be shown and expected from the earliest years

Respond

- Be silent and be with God
- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for
- Model and say traditional prayers e.g. Hail Mary, Our Father

Evaluate

What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?

Step 2

The teacher always models and leads – Reflect Quietly, participate in periods of reflection in response to a given stimulus

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts from 3 or 4 choices
- Share the theme of message and ask children which hymn they could sing from 2 or 3 they know
- Help to set up focus table and notice the liturgical colour

Gather

- Sing a gather song
- Make the Sign of the Cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Reverence for the Word of God in Scripture should be shown and expected from the earliest years

Respond

- Be silent and be with God
- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for
- Model and say traditional prayers e.g. Hail Mary, Our Father
- Heartfelt responses

Evaluate

- What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?
- Why did you choose the hymn/song/focus?

Step 3

The teacher always models, leads and supports children in preparing and beginning to lead in parts

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts given from a wider choice
- Share the theme of message and ask children which hymn/song they could use
- Give a theme/message – set up a focus table, write prayers for Respond
- Help chose the liturgical colour
- Help to support ICT equipment

Gather

- Sing a gather song
- Make the Sign of the Cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Read from Scripture
- Reverence for the Word of God in Scripture should be shown and expected from the earliest years

Respond

- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for

- Model and say traditional prayers e.g. Hail Mary, Our Father
- Heartfelt responses

Evaluate

- What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?
- Why did you choose the hymn/song/focus?
- How did our focus help us today?

Step 4

The teacher always models, leads and supports children in preparing and beginning to lead in parts

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts given from a wider choice
- Share the theme of message and ask children which hymn/song they could use
- Give a theme/message – set up a focus table, support children in finding suitable Scripture, write prayers for Respond
- Help chose the liturgical colour
- Help to support ICT equipment
- Support planning for larger liturgical gatherings

Gather

- Sing a gather song
- Make the Sign of the Cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Read from Scripture
- Reverence for the Word of God in Scripture should be shown and expected from the earliest years

Respond

- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for
- Model and say traditional prayers e.g. Hail Mary, Our Father
- Heartfelt responses

Evaluate

- What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?
- Why did you choose the hymn/song/focus?
- How did our focus help us today?

Evaluating

Time is taken to evaluate prayer and worship at staff meetings following observations .

Children evaluate prayer and spirituality days through discussion with the class teacher and RE Team. Parents and Careers evaluate the stay and pray sessions they are invited to with short comments following a shared celebration. These evaluations are an important way of making sure the prayer experiences we offer the children are enriching their lives. Enabling us to reach the aims set out earlier in the policy.

It is important that children have an opportunity to evaluate their own experience of prayer both **as a leader** and as a **participant**.

- Did everyone participate, actively or inwardly?
- Did the act of worship enable prayer?
- Did it provide support for their faith journey?

Children with Additional Needs

Our whole approach to prayer and liturgy is intended to be inclusive and the individual needs of every child is considered when prayer and liturgy is planned.

Equal Opportunities

Care is taken to ensure that all material used in developing the spiritual needs of the children addresses issues of sex, gender, race and religion. All children are treated as unique individuals and everyone is invited to play an part in prayer and liturgy.

Resourcing

The annual budget allocation reflects the priority placed on prayer and liturgy and is ratified annually by governors.

Training and formation

The professional development of staff is given priority. New staff have an induction process that supports staff developing as leaders of prayer

Monitoring and evaluation

The cycle of monitoring and evaluation is shared with Governors and the RE Governor is integral to this process.

Review

The policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the community it serves.

Review Date: July 2024

Signed:

Signed:

Date for next review: July 2026

