

# St Mary's Catholic Primary

## Prayer and Liturgy Policy



### School Mission Statement

Loved and inspired by Mary... We shine and learn as a family of God.

- **Live our lives as Jesus taught us**
- **Work hard together to achieve our best**
- **Respect each other and the world around us**
- **Have fun and enjoy learning!**

*“The king will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’  
Matthew 25:40*

## The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

## Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils.<sup>2</sup> (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Collective Worship' in schools. 'Collective Worship' is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context and are explored in greater depth in the guidelines.

<sup>2</sup> Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. However, given the importance of Collective Worship in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents need to be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that Collective Worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including Religious Education.

As a rule, Prayer and Liturgy will take place on the school premises. However, the Governing Body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, church grounds.

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Prayer and Liturgy rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

## **The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School**

We endorse the belief that Prayer and Liturgy takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- those who form part of the worshipping community in church
- those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
- those from other Christian traditions - or none
- those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

## **The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy**

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- to contemplate something of the mystery of God
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues

- to explore their own beliefs
- to respond to and celebrate life
- to experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- to develop a common ethos and shared values
- to enrich religious experience
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development
- to reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- to reinforce positive attitudes
- to participate fully
- to take time out to 'wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

## Principles

All Prayer and Liturgy in this school will aim to:

- raise our mind and heart to God
- celebrate the presence of God in our life and school community
- be a high quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- support learners' spiritual development
- give learners positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds. In order to do this, celebrations will:
  - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
  - be short and appropriately paced
  - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings;
  - seek to involve learners at all times in preparation and leadership.

## Organisation

Monday	2.45pm - Whole school - scripture
Tuesday	2.45pm - Prayer and Liturgy in class prepared by the pupils.
Wednesday	2.45pm - House Team Worships - all based on the Wednesday Word
Thursday	2.45pm - Whole school Sing and Praise
Friday	Golden Go Forth Liturgy 2.45pm - Whole school Celebration - Parents and families invited

## **The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer and Liturgy is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the church's seasons, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- in consultation with appropriate parties and with reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in learners skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship, rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

### **Recording**

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, learner groupings
- and in our new liturgy floor books to be evaluated by the class.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all learners and whether learners are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

### **Resources**

Bibles and age appropriate Gospels are housed in the classrooms. Prayer books and other prayer and liturgy related materials are also housed in the classrooms. Further materials are in the resource room. There is also a section for religious books in the library.

Each classroom has a cross with a crucifix and an area as a focus for Prayer and Liturgy. The school has a 'Worship Area' in the entrance area and an outdoor 'Worship Area' which is used in the summer months.

Materials for worship focal points are also provided by the RE Subject Leader. The school mission statement is displayed in all classrooms.

## **Eucharist**

Eucharistic celebrations in school highlight a special occasion such as the start of the each school term and end of year. Each term we join the Parish for a Family Sunday Mass in St Mary's Church. The same general principles apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for learners to participate will be maximised.

We believe that learners are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

In school, therefore, the '**Liturgy of the Word**', rather than the Eucharist will be the norm.

## **The Subject Leader for Prayer and Liturgy**

The Subject leader for Prayer and Liturgy is Mr Matthew Taylor.

## **Policy Monitoring and Review**

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Policy updated by Matthew Taylor September 2023

## Appendix 1

### **The Role of the Co-ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy**

- ❖ Formulating a written policy for Prayer and Liturgy
- ❖ Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer and Liturgy which may at times form part of the school development plan
- ❖ Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of learners
- ❖ Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory on Children's Masses'
- ❖ Organising themes for Prayer and Liturgy
- ❖ Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and Liturgy

### **Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating**

- ❖ Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- ❖ Observing, on occasions, an Act of Prayer and Liturgy
- ❖ Informing the Headteacher of standards and developments in Prayer and Liturgy

### **Communication**

- ❖ Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Prayer and Liturgy
- ❖ Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- ❖ Acting as consultant to colleagues
- ❖ Encouraging positive attitudes towards Prayer and Liturgy
- ❖ Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Prayer and Liturgy
- ❖ Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- ❖ Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

### **Professional development/ongoing formation**

- ❖ Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Prayer and Liturgy
- ❖ Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- ❖ Keeping up-to-date by personal reading

## Resources

- ❖ Evaluating existing resources
- ❖ Developing the resources available for Prayer and Liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc
- ❖ Budgeting efficiently

## Appendix 2

### School Statement on Prayer and Liturgy

It is the responsibility of every Catholic school to provide for all its members a vital experience of liturgy, worship and prayer which:

- ❖ names and celebrates God present and active in authentic human experience
- ❖ is educative
- ❖ is within our Catholic tradition

The purpose of these experiences is:

- ❖ to raise our mind and heart to God
- ❖ to develop the school as a community of faith
- ❖ to assist learners in developing their relationship with God, creation and the community of the Church
- ❖ to witness to the community and the wider world

Prayer and Liturgy in our schools will be:

- ❖ properly planned
- ❖ adequately resourced
- ❖ recorded
- ❖ monitored
- ❖ evaluated

In order to ensure that the Prayer and Liturgy experienced within the school is a relevant, meaningful and positive contribution to the religious, spiritual and moral development of all members of the community.