



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

*'With Jesus, we learn together
through faith and love'*

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Updated March 2023

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that 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.

Prayer is an integral part of school life at St Mary's, and is not separated from the rest of school life; therefore children who belong to the school will share in the prayer life of the school. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer and are open to God. They respond in many ways to the world around them and their school life is full of endless exploration and discovery.

Teachers must create an environment where these responses are developed as the beginnings of prayer. Each classroom has a special and visible prayer space which either reflects the current topic or the liturgical season. These spaces are to support children in their communication with God.

Prayer and liturgy are crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Taking part in daily prayer and liturgy helps build community cohesion by creating a consistent structure around the core values.

Aims

We aim to:

- To develop an awareness and understanding of the presence of God in each individual child's life and to encourage a personal response to that presence
- To allow each child to develop their conscience and make sound moral judgements based on commitment to following Christ
- To offer opportunities to deepen their faith and foster attitudes of care and respect for each other
- To live, experience and understand the Liturgical life of the Church through the Liturgical Year together with Solemnities and Feast days
- To foster school-parish links to ensure that our children remain exposed and committed to the Catholic faith experiencing liturgy and worship beyond and realms of the school curriculum
- To enable each child to participate and respond to liturgy and worship in an appropriate way to their age and maturity

Formal Prayer

Children are taught that prayer can be an everyday way of praising, thanking,

asking and saying sorry. Children are taught to use prayer to ask for God's help in times of difficulty e.g. if somebody is sick or dying.

Over time, children learn formal prayers.

These formal prayers are learnt by:

- Children hearing and joining in with them
- Singing them
- Attending Mass and liturgical celebrations
- Saying them in assemblies

The school website contains booklets for each year group with formal prayers the children can learn throughout their primary school years at St. Mary's. These prayers can be said at home with the children's family members and in school.

Prayer Experiences

It is important for the children at St. Mary's to experience the richness and diversity of the Church's prayer and liturgy.

Children pray in many different ways and we want children to develop different forms of praying as they grow older. It is very important as a school that children know they can pray in many different ways.

The forms and styles of prayer that children experience include:

- Praying the psalms "I thank you for the wonder of my being." (Psalm 139)
- Meditation
- Silent Prayer
- Spontaneous Prayer
- Traditional Prayers e.g. Hail Mary
- Repetitive prayer phrases
- Scripture – reflections on this
- Prayer of the heart – stillness "Be still and know that I am God."
- Contemplation
- Gestures e.g. the sign of the cross and the sign of peace
- Hymns, both modern and traditional
- Music – listening to quiet reflective music or other
- Litanies – e.g. Thanks be to God
- Processions – Gospel processions with sung acclamation
- Prayer services and liturgies
- Celebrations – gathering in prayer, song, scripture, sharing food and celebrating all aspects of life
- Liturgical Prayer
- Movement
- Use of symbols and visuals

Scripture

One of the distinctive aspects of Catholic prayer and liturgy is the centrality of scripture. This is most evident in the proclamation of readings but will also be

found in the prayers we say and the chants we sing. Scripture should have a place in any liturgy or liturgical prayer. In doing this we are opening ourselves to listen to God who is present among us when scripture is proclaimed.

The Planning and Content of Child Led Collective Worship

Each week, a group of children in each class lead a collective worship session with their peers. Children reflect on gospel stories as well as lead prayers, songs and other chosen activities. The children select the Bible reading that they want their session to be focused upon. They may choose a text related to the liturgical calendar, their class saint or a theme they would like their class to reflect upon e.g. friendship, honesty or forgiveness.

As the children get older they develop more independence in planning and taking part in the collective worship.

Collective Worship is planned by the children:

- To develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- To make collective worship have a more meaningful purpose for the children
- Enable pupils to play an active part in the collective worship
- Provide more opportunities for children to lead and evaluate
- Give pupils more opportunities to say their own prayers

The format for Collective Worship for our school will be:

- ❖ **Gather** – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)
- ❖ **Word or Listen** –we read text from the Bible, with the reading of the day being the first source. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary.
- ❖ **Respond** – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (music, drama, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God (intercessory prayers)
- ❖ **Send** – Giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

This four-part pattern is very flexible. Each part can be simple or elaborate.

Celebrating Mass

Whole school Eucharist celebrations in school highlight special occasions and are celebrated with children, staff, parents and parishioners. Children take part in Mass in school helping to set up the altar, doing reading and music. Children attend Mass throughout the year and also take part in parish Masses.

Forms of Prayer and Devotion

As the Church has a long and varied tradition of devotions to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints we want to also do this in school

These can include:

- Advent Wreath
- Christmas Crib
- Stations of the Cross
- Easter Gardens
- May Processions in honour of Our Lady
- Rosary

Many of these devotions relate are from different parts of the liturgical year. We want the children to have deeper prayerful understanding of what we celebrate.

Individual Prayer

The Church also teaches the importance of encouraging personal prayer. In school we want to give the children time for personal reflection and prayer starting in the Early Years. In school we help give the children guidance and encouragement to pray by themselves

Inclusion

At St. Mary's we want all children to be included from Nursery to Year 6 in personal prayer

Prayer and Liturgy in St. Mary's

Below is a timetable of prayer and liturgical celebrations throughout the school year. These times may change or the school has other opportunities to develop prayer life and liturgy in the school.

Prayer and liturgical Celebrations at St. Mary's	
<i>Daily</i>	Prayer at the start of the day Prayer before lunch Prayer after lunch Prayer at the end of the day Each class has prayers they traditional say at each part of the day but there may be times the class pray in different ways
<i>Monday</i>	Whole School Assembly with the Head teacher All the children gather in the hall for assembly The content and messages may be linked to the Gospel and Liturgical year. There may be other themes covered during this assembly.

Tuesday	Child Lead Class liturgy or Class assemblies
Wednesday	Liturgy in the classroom (Teachers may use Ten Ten Resources)
Thursday	Whole School Singing of Hymns and liturgy
Friday	<p>Reward Assembly</p> <p>This assembly is a celebration assembly for the whole school. The whole school gathers in the hall to celebrate the week, and to share special achievements of individuals and classes. On a Friday afternoon the children also come together for Hymn practice</p> <p>Whole School Singing – opportunity to come together to sing hymns and pray together at the end of the week</p>
Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole School Mass at the start of each term • Whole School Mass in the last week of the school terms • School Feast Day Mass at the start of September • Leavers Mass at the end of July • Each class attends Mass throughout the year with a buddy class in the school church • There may be other Masses attended by the children throughout the school year • Holy Days of Obligation and feast days <p>Most of the Masses are held in the school hall but we also hold Masses in the our parish church. Parents are invited to attend all school Masses</p> <p>During Covid classes continued to attend Mass virtually as our Parish Priest continued to say Mass for the children.</p>
Other Liturgies and celebrations	<p>Crowning of Our Lady and May Procession</p> <p>Ash Wednesday</p> <p>Advent – Confessions</p> <p>Lent – Confessions</p> <p>Carol Service in the church in December</p> <p>Responding to different needs or events</p> <p>Penitential Service</p>
Class Assemblies	<p>Each class from Early Years to Year Six leads an assembly for the whole school.</p> <p>Year Five always lead an assembly for Easter</p>
Church Visits	<p>To visit to see the Crib near Christmas</p> <p>Stations of the Cross</p>
Our Parish Priest	<p>Fr Nicholas our parish priest regularly visits the school and will speak and pray with the children in their classrooms.</p>

Parish Links

The school wants to continue to reinforce and strengthen our links with our local parish.

The journey in faith experienced by the children involves our parish priest, Fr Nicholas, parents and parishioners who commit themselves to the spiritual development of our children. Among some of the opportunities provided are:

- Children attending parish Mass
- School governors who our parishioners of our parish
- Links with the church
- Our parish priest regularly visits the school
- Link with the pupil chaplaincy team

Wider Community

We want to children to know St. Mary's is part of the wider community, we offer opportunities for the children to learn about and respond to the needs of the World Wide Family. The school is a member of the WE project.

CHAPLAINCY TEAM

St. Mary's has a Chaplaincy Team of children from Year 6.

The Chaplaincy Team is designed to give the children more ownership and understanding of this central aspect of their faith. They look at what they can do to help the wider community. The chaplaincy team also look at helping to develop the prayer life of the school. Our parish priest Fr. Nicholas and Angela attend meetings of the Chaplaincy Team.

Staff Prayer and Governors

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. All adults can contribute to the liturgical life of the school by modelling active participation through their body language and response during prayer and liturgy. There is an expectation that all teachers will play an active part in this." Our governors meetings also begin and end with a prayer. The catholic life of the school is central to all our governors meetings.

Linking School and Home

Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their child. We hope to resume inviting parents to attend class assemblies and collective worship which we have been unable to do due to Covid. Parents attend Masses in school and at church with the children as well as the other liturgies celebrated in the school. The school sends home the 'Wednesday Word' each week for parents to share with their children.

Parents also have a log in to Ten Ten Collective Worship which has a monthly newsletter and ideas for parents to prayer together as a family

Our Website has copies of all the formal prayers parents can say with their children at home. We want to continue to share with parent's information on other forms of prayers they pray as a family at home.

Prayer Focuses / Prayer Corners

The classrooms

Each class has a prayer focus/ corner which is changed to reflect the present liturgical colour. Each class has access to resources to create their prayer focus. All classrooms have prayers displayed in the room and also a display board for work in Religious Education.

It might also feature a crucifix, a candle, a bible, and an interactive opportunity, for example a class/home prayer book.

Entrance Area and corridors

There is also a prayer table in the entrance area. In the corridors there are Religious picture and focuses. The school also has a statue of Mary in the entrance area.

Rooms around the school

All rooms around the school have religious pictures, crosses or statues to focus on.

Budget

The governors ensure there is adequate budget to support the development of prayer and liturgy

Training

Staff have training to support the development of Prayer and Liturgy.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

At least once a year the school's Prayer and Liturgy Policy will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and if there are ways we can improve and develop the prayer and liturgy life of the school.

Prayer and liturgy will be monitored throughout the year and we will involve the children in the monitoring. An important part of the monitoring will be how the community participates in prayer and liturgy and the impact it has on their lives and their community.