



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

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

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Updated December 2025

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

Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory

The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

‘The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.’ (Marcus Stock (2012), Christ at the Centre, Catholic Truth Society, 23.) Statement of requirement The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; 699.4 Model prayer and liturgy policy Instrument of Government, clause 2).

The school’s provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil pupils’ entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar. Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

Responsibility

Governance

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school’s life and mission, have a responsibility

to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- there is a named person who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

Headteacher and Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator

The headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- there is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- there is daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory

- pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- there is collaboration with our local parish
- liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

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

Hymns and Music

Children from EYs to Year 6 have weekly hymn practice on a Thursday morning. Children sing traditional hymns and new hymns. We prepare hymns for Mass, liturgical celebrations and liturgies. Children also sing hymns in assemblies. Children also listen to music to help with their prayers and reflection.

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. The children will also take time afterwards to reflect on the collective worship as a group.

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. The children will prepare for and sing hymns during hymn practice for Masses and liturgical celebrations across the year.

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 and in all Masses and liturgical celebrations.

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	
Daily	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
Monday	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 Whole School Singing – opportunity to come together to sing hymns and pray together at the end of the week
Friday	Reward Assembly 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.
Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole School Mass at the start of each term• Whole School Mass near the end of the term• School Feast Day Mass at the start of September• Leavers Mass at the end of July• Classes attends Mass with a buddy class in our parish

	<p>church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 our parish church. Parents are invited to attend all school Masses</p>
Other Liturgies and celebrations	<p>Crowning of Our Lady and May Procession Eucharistic procession Ash Wednesday Advent – Reconciliation Lent – Reconciliation Carol Service in the church in December (Lead by Year 3) Responding to different needs or events Penitential Service</p>
Class Assemblies	<p>Each class from Early Years to Year Six leads an assembly for the whole school.</p>
Church Visits	<p>Visits to see the Crib near Christmas 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>

We have a plan for the whole school year of Mass and liturgical celebrations

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 are parishioners of our parish
- Links with the church
- Our parish priest regularly visits the school
- Link with the pupil chaplaincy team
- We send out the parish newsletter each week

Wider Community

We want 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.

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. The catholic life of the school is central to all our governors' meetings.

St. Mary's fully follows the Prayer and Liturgy Directory 'To Love You More Dearly'

"The clear link between ministry and faith means that it is inappropriate to ask someone who is from another religious tradition to perform a liturgical ministry. A class teacher who belongs to a different faith tradition can facilitate classroom prayer even if they cannot with integrity lead it."

As a school we fully respect staff from other faiths do not expect staff them to perform a liturgical ministry. Other members of staff or children can lead the prayer in the classroom daily.

Linking School and Home

Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their child. We invite parents to attend class assemblies and collective worship. 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.

Each month there is a prayer group for parents which is held in the school.

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 cross, 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 which is a place for prayer and reflection.

Rooms around the school

All rooms around the school have religious pictures, crosses or statues to focus on. We also have our school mission statement displayed around the school.

Budget and Resources

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

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy will be furnished and maintained as such, and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training costs will be funded to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

Training

Staff have training to support the development of Prayer and Liturgy. All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Every two years 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. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

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. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place.