

Prayer and Liturgy Policy



St. Mary's RC Primary School

Mission Statement

We live learn and grow together with Jesus through:

- Showing love to all
- Encouraging friendship to include everybody
- Acting with honesty through prayer
- Being thankful for all God's gifts
- Remaining respectful through our actions
- Forgiving someone when they are sorry
- Displaying patience by being calm and caring
- Demonstrating compassion to everyone in God's family
- Leading in service by supporting our school community

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Policy will be reviewed: Annually

Aim of the Policy

We aim to show and proclaim God's way to our families, so that we can all have the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and the love of God and His entire creation: from the plants below our feet to our brothers and sisters across the entire world. At our school, we seek to promote the Catholic faith and keep her traditions alive as MISSIONARY DISCIPLES of Jesus Christ; faith-filled, joyful and outward-looking Christians who are growing in confidence to speak humbly of the difference that knowing Christ makes to our lives, and who bear witness to His love in our service of others. Our Catholic school sets out to encourage the spiritual development of the individual, whilst appreciating that each and every person, has an individual relationship with God. We are privileged to be missionary disciples and we want everyone to have the opportunity to experience a close and loving relationship with God.

As Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "*Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others.*"

Prayer, liturgy and collective worship provides opportunity to:

- help live out our mission and grow closer to God as an individual person and together collectively
- nurture and deepen our sense of awe and wonder in our response to God, His world and all His people
- encourage children and adults of all faiths and no faith to express their feelings and emotions
- emphasis through prayer and worship the Catholic ethos of our school
- celebrate and respond to our achievements and life on earth

Definition of Terms

According to The Prayer & Liturgy Directory, To Love You More Dearly 2023 Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, page 7 and 8:

Prayer, celebrations of the word, and liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories.

Prayer

Prayer has been traditionally described as 'lifting up of the hearts and minds to God', which means it involves our whole person – our head as well as our heart. This definition expresses a fundamental understanding that God is concerned and interested about what goes on in our lives; is due our expression of thanksgiving and gratitude; and responds to us when we express our needs. This basic dynamic of recognition, thanksgiving, and intercession forms the core of all prayer and liturgy. It is wholly appropriate that communal prayer forms an essential dimension of life in a Catholic school. Staff and pupils are invited to recognise God's action in their lives and the life of the school, and in response to express together their needs and those of the whole human family, and to offer thanks for all that is good. Communal prayer takes place, for example, at the beginning or end of the school day, in the classroom, or at a staff meeting.

Such prayer times will have a clear, simple structure. Texts used may include familiar prayers as well as prayers written for the occasion, but there is also scope for spontaneous prayers, for example, intercessions. Long-standing Catholic devotions, such as the Angelus or the Stations of the Cross during Lent, can also be suitable. Giving space for appropriate silence forms part of the prayer. There is virtue in variety and also great scope for creativity: varying the focus and the format according to the liturgical year reinforces the essential Catholic focus of the school while providing opportunities for pupil engagement.

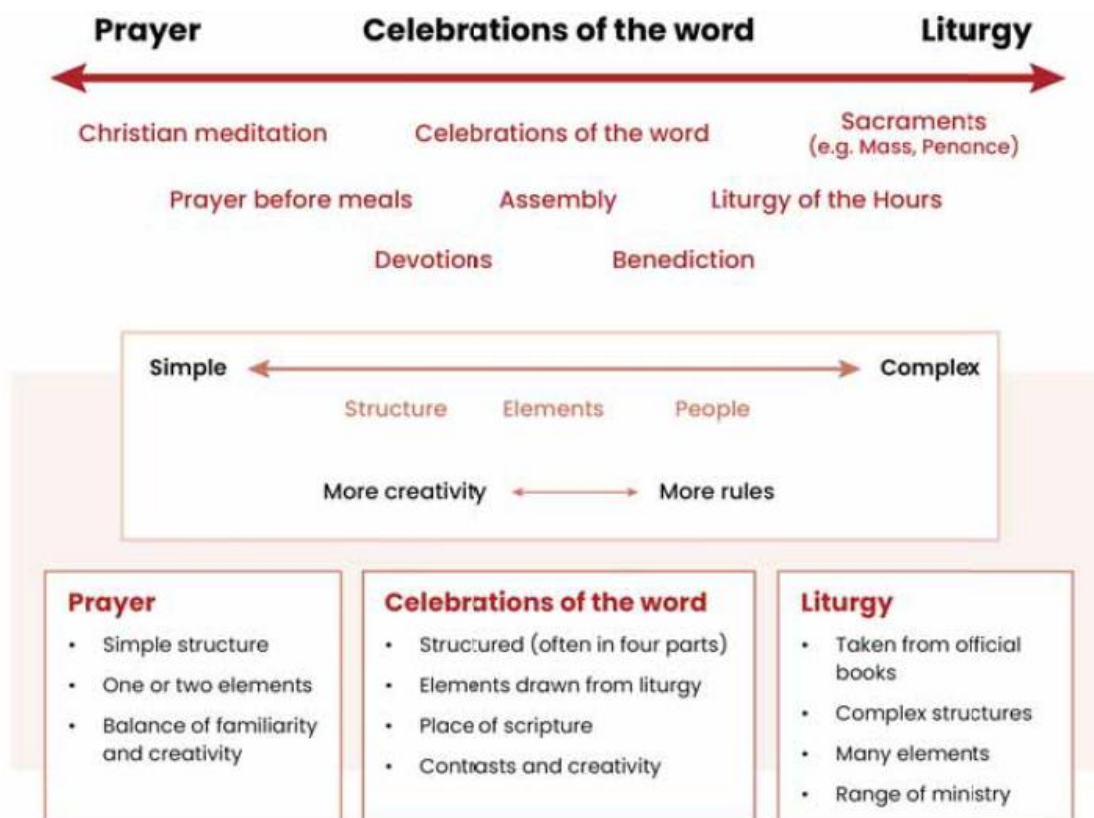
At Saint Mary's, our pupil prayer leaders take a leading role at regular prayer times, leading daily prayer three times a day.

Celebrations of the Word

As the time allotted to prayer lengthens and the number of people involved grows, there is a corresponding need for more formal structures. The term 'celebrations of the word' is used in this Directory for celebrations which are created for the school community and not directly taken from the liturgical books of the Church. These celebrations will take many forms, but the common element is the proclamation of scripture. These include assemblies, carol services, and other gatherings of all or part of the school community for special times and occasions. They may draw upon elements of the liturgy, such as its texts, symbols, and gestures, which help to reinforce their Catholic nature, but the various elements may be used with greater creative freedom than in the liturgy itself.

Liturgy

The most familiar forms of the liturgy celebrated in school are the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The liturgical books, such as the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, set out the structure to be followed, the words to be spoken, the gestures to be performed, and the symbols to be used when celebrating a liturgy. The possibility for some creativity and adaptation remains but they have to be exercised within the parameters authorised by the liturgical books.



Prayer, Liturgy and Collective Worship

At St Mary’s we believe that prayer, liturgy and collective worship in our school truly acknowledges and celebrates God’s presence in our lives. It is integrated throughout the life of the school; though our relationship with our brothers and sisters here in the community and around the world. It is our loving response to God’s invitation to enter into relationship with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Through prayer, liturgy and collective worship, we can form a deep bond and connection with God, we can tell God anything. It is a fundamental part of Catholic school life; central to our Catholic tradition and school ethos and values.

The Religious Education Directory 2023 Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, page 8, reaffirms the importance of worship in Catholic schools:

In Gravissimum Educationis, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council teach that the purpose of an education that is distinctively Christian is threefold.³¹ Its first purpose is to ensure that the baptised increase in their understanding of the faith which they have received. Second, that they learn how to worship God in spirit and truth through prayer and liturgy. Third, that they are formed to live in conformity with the pattern of human goodness and truth that we find in Jesus Christ.

Planned opportunities for individual and collective worship are at the heart of our school life, and we encourage a culture of spontaneous prayer and reflection. All of these opportunities enrich the spiritual development of both children and adults within our

community. We believe that prayer, liturgy and collective worship should take into consideration the different religious and educational needs of all who share it.

'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'. Galatians 3:28

Organisation of Prayer, Liturgy and Collective Worship

At St Mary's, we offer:

- Daily prayers at least four times a day
- Twice a week celebrations of the word in class (one adult led, one pupil led)
- Weekly whole school hymn practice
- Weekly whole school celebration of the word
- Weekly whole school celebration with parents and guardians
- Monthly GIFT Team Family Worship with parents and guardians
- Whole school masses at key points in the liturgical year (see APOP for more detail)
- Class masses on a regular basis and on Holy Days of Obligation (see APOP for more detail)
- Additional prayer, liturgy and collective worship linked to the liturgical calendar e.g. October and the Holy Rosary, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter and to special Saint's days linked to classes
- Regular reflection time and opportunities for spontaneous prayer

We intend to provide many opportunities for both children and staff to come together to worship God and specifically to:

- experience quietness
- be mindful
- use all our senses
- reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- build foundations of liturgical awareness
- develop deeper understanding of scripture
- develop understanding of our roles as missionary disciples
- experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- respond to and celebrate life

Daily Prayers

Prayers are said a minimum of four times during the day: start of the day, before lunch, after lunch and at the end of the school day.

See Appendix 1 for a list of school prayers

Traditional Catholic Prayers

As a Catholic school we have the responsibility to teach prayers and responses of parts of worship at Mass, which are part of the Catholic traditions. It is agreed that

children should become familiar with and know the prayers in our prayer progression document (see Appendix 2)

Celebration of the Word

Our class celebrations of the Word, within which we celebrate the word, follows the pattern of:

- Gather (Welcome)
- Listen (Word of God)
- Respond (Prayer/Symbolic Action)
- Going Forth (Missionary Disciples)

On Tuesday mornings, our celebration of the Word is teacher-prepared where pupils lead different parts of the worship. At another time during the week (class dependent), our celebration of the Word is pupil led. Pupils are supported with the preparation of celebration of the Word from members of staff, our G.I.F.T. Team or their peers.

Spontaneous Worship

Our school encourages spontaneous worship at any point in the day. Spontaneous individual and collective prayer may occur across the curriculum for example during a PSHE with RSE session on friendship, or in a geography lesson when learning about contrasting locations or natural disasters. Spontaneous prayer may also be in response to a current situation, whether that be within the school community, nationally or globally. Children are encouraged to stop and reflect, and to pray to God either individually or as a whole class.

Class and Whole School Masses

Class masses are held in the church. Whole school masses are held at different times of the year and on Holy days of Obligation. Classes participate in these masses by undertaking readings and preparing and reading bidding prayers. Classes attend Masses which are arranged between the parish priest and RE lead and are detailed in our APOP.

Areas of Worship

Prayer and celebration of the Word is encouraged anywhere and everywhere at St Mary's. However, the notable areas of worship are in the school hall and in each classroom. Each classroom has a focal point for prayer and celebration of the Word in the form of a prayer table which shows the liturgical colours and is designed and changed throughout the year. It is very important to our school that children have ownership of their area of worship, allowing them as individuals to develop their relationship with God. All areas of worship are welcoming to both those of faith and non-faith backgrounds.

Leaders of Prayer, Liturgy and Celebration of the Word

Each and every one of us at school and within our community, play a role in worship.

1. G.I.F.T. Team (Growing in Faith Together) - The G.I.F.T. team have led liturgies and perform choreographed prayers at certain times of the year. They in turn train and

support younger pupils to take on the role as members of the G.I.F.T. Team as they move onto high school. They lead worship on a regular basis both independently and alongside teachers. They also take an active part in masses throughout the year.

2. Governors Responsibility lies with the Governing Body, to approve a Policy for Prayer, Liturgy and Celebration of the Word in the school, after consultation with the Headteacher. The Subject Link Governor works closely with the school, to monitor the delivery and opportunities for prayer, liturgy and celebration of the Word and to evaluate whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in their own personal faith journey. This evaluation will help the Religious Education subject leader to focus staff in their means of evaluating and reflecting upon the delivery of prayer and liturgy and how to move forward in order to enhance and facilitate children in their spiritual growth and development.

3. Headteacher- The Headteacher's role, supported by the Religious Education subject leader, is to ensure that worship is provided for each child and like the governors, that they monitor and evaluate prayer, liturgy and collective worship.

4. Children- All children have an entitlement to take part in different acts of worship. All children are also entitled to lead worship and contribute in spontaneous prayer.

5. School Staff- Teaching staff assist in the planning and delivery of meaningful acts of worship, with the entire school staff supporting and being role models of the Catholic faith and worship.

6. Parents- Parents have a focal supportive role to play and example to set. They are encouraged to participate in school celebrations of the Word and are encouraged to attend various school masses during the school year.

7. Parish Priest and wider Faith Community- The active participation of the Parish Priest and the Parish community in supporting aspects of collective worship is acknowledged by all.

'The family that prays together stays together.' R.C. Family Rosary Crusade 1947

Inclusion

St Mary's is committed to supporting and allowing all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and English as an Additional Language, to participate in prayer, liturgy and celebration of the Word.

Sacramental Programme

School supports the parish in preparation for the Year Three children and above on their Sacramental Programme Journey. Parents are invited to make contact with the parish priest to discuss the Sacraments and how this can be offered. At St Mary's, sacramental programme is offered through the parish.

Resources

Many different resources are available to support prayer, liturgy and celebration of the Word including:

- Bibles and Bible stories
- Lighting the Path Scheme
- Prayer and Liturgy Directory, To Love You More Dearly, 2023
- Ten:Ten Resources

- CAFOD Website
- Caritas Resources
- Mark 10 Mission Resources
- Hymn resources including Mark 10 Mission and Sparkyard

We also have a wide range of books, symbols, candles, coloured cloths, visual imagery and musical resources that are available within classrooms and in our Prayer Room.

'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' (John. 8:12)