



ST MARY'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Date: September 2024

Review Date: September 2026

Introduction

Understanding Prayer and Liturgy

(From the Prayer and Liturgy Directory September 2023)

In any school there will be a range of prayer and liturgy: classroom prayer, meditation, assemblies, devotions, special services for times in the school year, and celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each form of prayer and liturgy will have its own character, dependent on the circumstances, size and age of the group, the place of celebration, and its content.

Definition of Terms

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.

Commented [Ma1]: I have updated this section to reflect the PLD 2023



Prayer	Celebration of the Word	Liturgy
Simple structure	Structured (often 4 part)	Taken from official books
One or two elements	Elements drawn from liturgy	Complex structure
Balance of familiarity & creativity	Places of Scripture	Many elements
	Contrasts and creativity	Range of ministry

In Catholic terminology 'worship' is not generally used to name and describe a distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises that everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do gives glory to God. That, of course, does include prayer but the scope is broader. With that understanding of worship it will be seen that that the purpose of education in a Catholic school is to know and love Christ and to open the vision and imagination of all pupils to the wonder of living in God's world, and the responsibilities that follow from this.

Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 there is a statutory duty to inspect and report on denominational education (that is religious education) and collective worship in schools designated as having a religious character. For this reason, the term 'Collective Worship' has been kept as the headline judgement by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate but throughout the framework it is referred to as prayer and liturgy. This model policy addresses the shift in vocabulary and is an interim response to the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory. When the Directory is published it will contain a model policy which the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle will adapt for schools.

Mission Statement

At St Mary's our mission is to be a community which offers the best possible education based on Christian values. Every child is valued, cared for and encouraged to reach their potential in an atmosphere of warmth, care and hope.

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

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.

'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.'¹

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily 'act of worship' offered for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single 'act of worship' for all pupils, or separate 'acts of worship' in school groups. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, Celebration of the Word and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between 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. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from 'Collective Worship'. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will 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, within Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Liturgical Prayer in the Life of St Mary's Primary School

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

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.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in St Mary's School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

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- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using 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 acts of prayer in St Mary's School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.² Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

Planning, content and celebration

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day. Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

Staff meetings and gatherings are opened with a prayer.

- Morning Prayer
- Lunchtime Prayers
- End of Day Prayer
- School Prayer
- Reflection/Mediation times

The timetable of Liturgical prayer is as below:

Monday	Whole School Celebration of the Word	20 mins	School Hall
Tuesday	Class Celebration of the Word	10 mins	Classrooms
Wednesday	Key Stage Celebration of the Word	15 mins	Classrooms
Thursday	Class Reflective Prayer Time	10 mins	Classrooms
Friday	Class Celebration of the Word Whole School Celebration Assembly	10 mins 20 mins	Classrooms School Hall

Class Liturgical Prayer

Each class has a Focal point for prayer. For class Celebration of the Word each week, pupils plan and deliver one session, one is led by the class teacher and one is a reflective/Christian meditation time. Each class has a prayer table which is decorated with a crucifix or cross, a coloured drape, reflecting the time of the liturgical year, a bible and prayers

- The school day begins and ends with prayer, a prayer is also said before lunch.
- Children are taught the traditional prayers as stated in the Come and See.

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Class Celebration of the Word for families

These are the spiritual focus of each term. Every class prepares a liturgy based upon their current theme in Come and See/Liturgical celebration. Parents, family and parishioners are also invited to attend these special events.

- Parents are also sent an invitation to these events.
- The liturgies are planned and prepared by the class teacher and children in collaboration with the Religious Education Co-ordinator.
- The children play a full and active role in the celebration, following the Gather, Word, Respond and Go Forth planning format.

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Whole School Celebration of the Word Prayer

These are led by the Headteacher based on the weekend Gospel reading; pupils participate in the delivery of the Celebration of the Word. The structure of Gather, Word, Respond and Going Forth is followed with readings, prayers and reflections being led by the Headteacher and children.

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Whole School Celebration Assembly

- Begin and end with prayers.
- Affirms the talents and efforts of the children both in and out of school.
- Certificates - Star of the Week Award, Headteacher's Award, Values Award and Sportsperson of the Week

Leading Liturgical Prayer

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead whole school Celebration of the Word on a Monday; on occasions when the Headteacher is not present this will be undertaken by the Deputy Headteacher. The class teacher and children will plan and lead class liturgical prayer according to their age.

Recording

Celebration of the Word is planned using the Let us pray 2gether resources. Pupils complete a planning sheet; younger children are supported by an adult to record planning. Afterwards other pupils will evaluate the Celebration of the Word and this is added onto the planning sheet; the planning sheet and photograph is added to the Class Celebration of the Word book.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and liturgy is monitored using prayer and liturgy monitoring form (Appendix 1). Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

Resources

Resources are stored in individual classrooms, there are also some resources available in the Year 6 classroom. Each class has their own box of Liturgical prayer resources including, liturgical cloths, holding crosses, candles, bible, prayer books and natural resources (pebbles, shells etc.)

The learning environment

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment'

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way there will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Other opportunities

1. Monthly Mass at church with the school leading readings and hymns.
2. A class attends the Parish Mass each Friday.
3. Year 6 attend North Tyneside Catholic partnerships of school Leavers' Mass
4. Year 6/Reception Buddy Celebration of the Word
5. Harvest Festival Celebration of the Word
6. Advent Reconciliation Celebration of the Word
7. Christingle Assembly
8. Year 5 Justis Conference celebration liturgy at St Mary's High School

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharist Celebration as other acts of school prayer, therefore opportunities for the children to participate will be maximised.

Children in Year 4 undertake the Sacramental Programme in school and in church following the Sacramental Programme set out by the diocese.

The Co-ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

The Co-ordinator for prayer and liturgy is Mrs S Foster/Mrs J Gartland. (See Appendix 2 for a model job description for this role).

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator 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.

Appendix I

Year Group:

Monitoring of Collective Worship

Date:

Focus	Comments
<p>Planning (discussed with teacher before or after celebration)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the children been involved in the planning? Has the Act of Worship been planned around a theme/feast? 	
<p>Structure (If Liturgy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the four parts (Gather, Word, Response, Mission) be distinctly identified? How did children gather? Was the Word appropriate and treated reverently? How did children respond to the Word? Was there a clear Mission, an evident message at the end of the liturgy? 	
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or adult led? Depending on the age of the children were they as involved as possible in leading? 	
<p>Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were children fully engaged and participating enthusiastically? Was it a prayerful experience? 	
<p>Creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How creative was the Act of Worship? Did it include different prayer styles/dance/music etc to enhance the experience? 	
<p>Prayer Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were children able to create focal point, atmosphere for prayer, appropriate for their age? 	
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were liturgical resources used appropriately eg correct liturgical colours, artefacts? 	
<p>ICT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was ICT used to support and enhance the Act of Worship or was it a distraction? 	
<p>Agreed areas for development</p>	

A copy of this monitoring sheet has been given to the class teacher

Coordinator ...

Class Teacher ...

Appendix 2

The Role of the Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for prayer and liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- 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 for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for prayer times
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy including withdrawal from Collective Worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in prayer and liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content 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 school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising inservice training and ongoing formation for prayer and liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- 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

[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the coordinator, the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the coordinator to lead this group.]