



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

*We grow and learn in the footsteps of
Jesus*

Approved by	
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Prayer and Liturgy Policy May 2020

St Mary's School strives to be a positive force in the life of the Catholic Church by accepting individuals into a journey of living faith. Within the framework of the national education system, we are committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, emphasising Religious Education, based on the attitudes and values to the Gospels. Working in close partnership with the home and St. Mary's Parish we aim to provide a welcoming, secure and happy Christian atmosphere in which the children can thrive, each developing their academic, emotional, physical and spiritual potential.

We aim to provide for all members of St. Mary's Community a level of pastoral care and spiritual development fulfilling the highest ideals. In light of our school mission statement, we understand the prayer and worship life of our school community to be central to all we do.

Through liturgy and worship we aim to:

- Foster an understanding of what it means to belong to a community;
- Provide opportunities for enhancing spiritual growth and personal development through prayer and reflection; • Encourage the development of a personal relationship with God;
- Provide experiences of sharing values and celebrating significant events in the lives of individuals and the community;
- develop knowledge of and experience seasons within the church's year;
- develop knowledge and understanding of scripture;
- develop and celebrate skills of creativity.

WHAT IS LITURGY?

Liturgy is a communal act in which we praise and worship God.

Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life and our lives.

All good liturgies involve the telling of the story of Christ and his Church.

Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.

Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying. In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness. The purpose of adapting liturgy for pupils is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the wider liturgy of the Church. Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity. Good liturgy touches our lives in such a way that we are renewed in our mission.

Good worship happens when the whole school community, staff and pupils, are fully involved in the preparation and celebration. Time for worship is in addition to the 10% curriculum time for classroom Religious Education, as required by the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. Within St. Mary's liturgy and worship provides opportunities for the community to come together to

celebrate and share. Parents of the class leading whole school assembly are invited to join the worship.

Liturgy and worship in school follows the Church's calendar in using daily scripture readings from relevant liturgical seasons in addition we celebrate 'The Way, the Truth and the Light' topics and key events in the school year. One assembly a week, for each key stage, is led by the teacher or member of the SLT, and follows the relevant readings of the forthcoming or previous Sunday, depending on time of year and holidays.

Advent and Lent

The seasons of Advent and Lent are times of preparation for Christmas and Easter, but need to be given their own importance. A focus is given to both of these seasons by raising money for certain causes. Prayer and assemblies at these times must also reflect the season, even if preparations for Christmas are also going on. During the last week of the spring term preparation for Easter takes place, with the school focusing on the events of Holy Week. The whole school are involved in the Stations of the Cross and families are invited to join us in this special time. There are liturgies and prayers planned throughout the week to celebrate Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday. It is important that the children appreciate that Christmas Day and Easter Sunday are the beginnings of the seasons of Christmas and Easter.

INSET/Training

One INSET day per year or equivalent if allocated for Religious Development. This is an opportunity for staff to come together and reflect upon the spirituality of the school and their part within it.

Preparation for Mass

Preparing for Mass begins in the classroom when class teachers will take an opportunity to reflect on the theme and remind the children of the times in the Mass when they should be reflecting upon those themes (after the Homily and Communion), meditating or praising God in their hearts. Opportunities in class to practice meditation and silent praise will help the children to develop this ability. How pupils arrive and gather for any liturgy is vital as it can create the climate in which the liturgy is received. It is also true that how pupils depart will have an impact on how they remember the liturgy.

Music should provide a signal that the gathering part of Mass has begun. Children should be reminded about behaviour before Mass. Class teachers should remind children that Communion should be received in a reverent way (clean hands) and how to cross arms if they are receiving a blessing. How to genuflect should be discussed and practised if necessary. When sharing the sign of peace children should be reminded that it is to the person either side of them that they shake hands with and not the whole row and that this should be done in a sensible and quiet manner. The Gospel will be discussed with the children, an opportunity to ask the class teacher questions is created and readers are chosen to take part in the Mass. Parents are informed when it is their child's class going to Church to encourage the families of the children to join us.

Prayer

“Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. True prayer draws us to discover God within our deepest being and calls us to walk with God in faith. Each person has to find the space within where the encounter with God takes place.” (HIA p40.) When praying with children we must remember that each of them is unique and therefore their prayer is unique. They come from different homes with different experiences and an individual set of problems, anxieties and questions. Teachers will need to provide creative and varied opportunities for prayer so that children from many diverse backgrounds have the best opportunities to discover their own spiritual response. The use of music and signing supports this.

Daily prayer in the classroom

A daily experience of prayer – in classroom, assembly or elsewhere is much more important than just a legal requirement. It should be at the heart of every school. It is a centre to which many of the achievements and challenges of daily life can be brought and from which strength and purpose can be taken. At this centre is the person of Jesus, the Son of God. Daily prayer helps make Jesus real for all in the school – a friend whom they can trust and relate to, one who is a guide and one to whom they can turn in time of need. Prayer within the classroom should take place before and after lunch and at the start and end of the day. The community must be able to pray as well and recite prayers together. Pupils should learn and experience all forms of prayer so that they can adore, give praise and thanks, express sorrow to God on their own behalf and on behalf of others as well as prayers of petition and intercession.

Each class should provide a prayer focus within their room in the form of a display, collection of artefacts, bible and candle etc. This is where the children can focus during times of class prayer or private reflection during the day. While it is important that the children should learn to pray, there is always place for learning prayers that can be recited together. The RE curriculum plays an important role by providing opportunities to teach pupils about prayer and also for them to learn prayers.

Review Date: May 2021