**St. Bridget’s Catholic Primary School**

**Prayer and Liturgy Policy**

*Learning to Love, Pray and Grow Together as a Community in the Light of Jesus Christ.*

Written by Jane Summerson

Approved by Governors: Review date: September 2024

Mission Statement:

*Learning to Love, Pray and Grow Together as a Community in the Light of Jesus Christ.*

**Intent:**

St Bridget’s is a Christ centred school which endeavours to be recognised in the community as a centre of Christian values based on a commitment to the Catholic Faith. Christian Prayer and Liturgy within a Catholic school names and celebrates God’s presence in our lives. It is an essential part of our distinctive ethos; a way of giving glory to God and deepening our relationship with Him through prayer, reflection praise and rejoicing. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God’s invitation to enter into a loving relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Governors, staff, parents and Parish work in close co-operation to ensure that each child is developed to his/her full spiritual, social and academic potential. Of prime importance is the development of a personal relationship with God through prayer and the Sacraments.

**Prayer**

*“Prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for God”* [Catechism of the Catholic Church 2560]

*“Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”* [Therese of Lisieux*]*

At the heart of the Christian faith is the belief in a God who communicates with people. God calls every human person into a loving relationship and as with every relationship, our relationship with God can only grow through communication. Prayer is the way in which we engage in communication with God. Christians believe that prayer is essential to human fulfilment for it is only in God that we can discover ourselves, our meaning and our purpose.

*“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You”*

[St. Augustine]

**Implementation of prayer at St Bridget’s:**

Prayer and Liturgy takes many forms including prayer, song, assemblies, Christian meditation and liturgies. We strive to provide many opportunities for the children to develop their relationship with God; to meditate and reflect deeply on the Gospel Values; and to carefully consider how the Word of God can impact their lives and the lives of others.

Where does it take place?

**In a quiet and calm atmosphere where everyone shows reverence and respect, then:**

**listening** - being attentive to the voice/word of God.

**speaking -** expressing our heart’s deepest longings and desires to the One who knows and understands us better than we know and understand ourselves.

**reflecting** - thinking about our relationship with God. Pondering on the actions of God in history and in the unfolding mystery of our lives.

**resting** – simply being consciously in the presence of God, knowing that we are loved.

One of the Early Fathers of the Church described prayer as *“… the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”* These words of St John Damascene have become a classical definition of prayer and they point to the reason why, in a Catholic school, we begin and end each day in prayer.

Prayer can have a variety of forms, styles and express different things.

* Blessing and Adoration – the prayer which blesses God for the goodness which has been shown to humankind
* Prayers to express sorrow – the prayer which asks for forgiveness and which calls for the establishment of the Kingdom of God
* Intercession – consists in asking on behalf of another and ourselves
* Thanksgiving – acknowledging the gifts which God has given
* Praise – the prayer which praises God simply because God is

*[CCC 2623 –2649]*

**Intent of Liturgy**

*The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows*

[This is the Liturgy 10]

“Liturgy” literally means, “work of the people”, and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action. Liturgical celebration therefore should be brought all human symbols of expression - art, dance, poetry, music, gesture, stillness.

The ‘Liturgy of the Word with Children. Guidelines’ [1996 The Bishop’s Conference of England and Wales] lists the General Principles of Liturgy:

* Liturgy is the praise and worship of God.
* Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church’s life and our lives.
* It is the right and duty of all baptised, both children and adults.
* The function of the liturgy is to build up members of Christ’s body, to strengthen us in Christ.
* Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the whole 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 children is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy of the parish.
* Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity.

**Prayer and Liturgy**

God is present and active in all authentic human experiences. We already have a blessed life and worship is recognising and celebrating this reality in the Christian tradition. God is reached through the world and adored within it. Creating a sacred space for worship is to create a space where the unity of God and creation is reverently symbolised and celebrated. Worship and the words and rituals we use should not sever us from the ordinary circumstances of our lives but rather unite us more closely to them.

**Implementation:**

* Our weekly Prayer and Liturgy takes place daily:
* Monday = Teachers use the weekly celebration of the Word assembly in class.
* Tuesday = Prayer and Liturgy from the Daily Classroom Prayer section.
* Wednesday = Whole School sing hymns and celebrate the Wednesday Word.
* Thursday = Pupil led, planned and implemented worship from the pupil Portal, liturgical calendar or appropriate theme chosen.
* Friday = Whole School Celebration of our current Gospel Value.
* Worship remembers and celebrates the marvellous things God works in our lives. It celebrates God's presence in our lives. Worship should not feel like an interruption from a different world. It is a response to life and can be spontaneous.
* Prayer and Liturgy 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 strength of the Holy Spirit.
* Worship is at the very heart of our school and will reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.
* Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship.
* All liturgies involve the praise, thanksgiving and adoration of God and are, therefore, acts of worship. However, not all worship will be liturgy as it may or may not include symbol and action.
* Whole School Prayer and Liturgy is any experience of gathering/assembling in school. It includes the Word of God, an act of worship and reflection. It takes the form of the Wednesday Word and a Celebration Worship. Worship takes place daily within our own classes 3 times per week.

**Impact of Liturgy/worship in school**

In light of this and our school mission statement, we understand prayer and worship to be central to our daily life. We use the Ten Ten online resource to support worship, as well as the Prayer and Liturgy Directory “To love you more dearly”.

Through liturgy and prayer we encourage the development of a personal relationship with God. As a result of this the following occurs:

Pupils develop an understanding of what it means to belong to a community; provide opportunities for enhancing spiritual growth and personal development through prayer and reflection; 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.

Good prayer and liturgy happens when everyone is 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 Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

**At Key Stage 1 worship includes**:

* short, simple liturgies and prayer times
* occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word
* the occasional celebration of Eucharist
* a range of types of prayer
* a range of styles of celebration
* Opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship

**At Key Stage 2 worship includes**:

* short, simple liturgies and prayer times
* occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite
* the occasional celebration of Eucharist
* a range of types of prayer
* a range of styles of celebration
* opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship
* opportunities for pupils to take leadership roles in worship
* opportunities to plan their own worship
* opportunities to share their planned worship with other classes

**Prayer Experiences**

Pupils are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer, which are developed in ways which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. We use the Ten Ten online resource to support daily prayer. We also follow the guidance given in ***“To love you more dearly”*** Prayer and Liturgy Directory.

**Common Prayers:**

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| **Age Phase** | **5 – 7 (KS1**) | **7 – 9 (Lower KS2)** | **9 – 11 (Upper KS2)** |
| **Prayers** | * The Sign of the Cross * The Lord’s Prayer * Hail Mary * Glory Be * Grace before meals * Grace after meals | * The Apostle’s Creed * An Act of Contrition * Angel of God * Come Holy Spirit * The Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester | * Morning Offering * The Rosary * The Magnificat * Act of Love * Act of Hope * Act of Love |

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| Type: | Example: |
| **Praying the psalms ‘** | I thank you for the wonder of my being’ [Psalm 139] |
| **Traditional prayers** | Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary |
| **Repetitive prayer [mantra]** | ‘Jesus, I love you’, repeated several times, slowly |
| **Meditation** | Scripture reflection with use of imagination |
| **Bodily prayer** | Raising hands in praise, bowing, dancing, genuflecting |
| **Prayer of the heart** | Stillness to listen to God: ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ |
| **Contemplation** | Looking at trees, a sunset, an icon etc. |
| **Gestures** | The sign of the cross, the sign of peace |
| **Hymns** | Traditional and modern hymns |
| **Music** | Listening to quiet, reflective music |
| **Litanies For all creation:** | Thanks be to God |
| **Processions** | Gospel procession with sung ‘alleluia’ |
| **Prayer services and liturgies** | Formal and spontaneous prayer using holy water, candles, Incense and other symbols |
| **Celebrations**  Reviewed on 12/09/24  By Mrs J Summerson  To be reviewed next in September 2025 | Prayer, song, sharing food and drink, celebrating work done |
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