



Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2026

Prayer and Liturgy Policy will be reviewed in October 2027.



Growing, Loving and Learning in the Arms of Mary



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, including those in the sixth form (*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; Instrument of Government, clause 2). Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements (*The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement, December 2020; Model Articles for Catholic Academies, February 2019*).

The law requires all maintained schools to recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)). Sixth-form pupils can choose to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)).

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.

Diocesan Bishop directive

The Prayer and Liturgy Directory refers to the norm at all Masses that only those who normally receive Holy Communion at Mass be invited to proclaim the Word of God. It continues that on exceptional occasions and for a just cause the Diocesan Bishop will give permission for a Christian from another denomination to proclaim scriptures at Mass. "As an exception to the norms and when there is a pastoral just cause exercised on his behalf by the Headteacher, the Bishop gives permission for children from other Christian denominations to read the scriptures at school Masses. Permission is also given for baptised Catholics who have not received First Holy Communion, and are of sufficient maturity, to read the scriptures at school Masses. Children of other faiths are welcome to actively participate in school Masses and liturgies in keeping with The Prayer and Liturgy Directory. A just cause may also be applied due to the diversity of faith backgrounds in a school, cohort or the age profile of those attending a Mass."

Responsibility

(a) 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(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator – Gemma Smith)
- 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.

(b) Headteacher

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
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy 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 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, delivery and evaluation 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
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes

- liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice

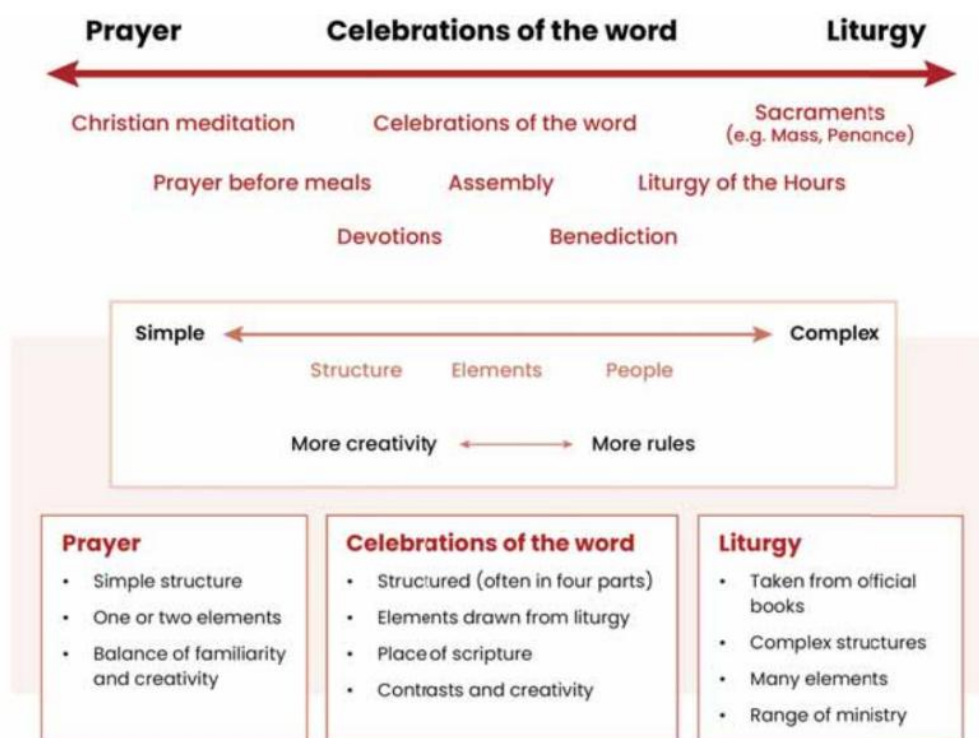
Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Understanding Prayer and Liturgy at St Mary's Catholic Primary School

In our school there is a range of prayer and liturgy embedded within the school day. *'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'. (p.7 The Prayer & Liturgy Directory)*

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'. (p.7 The Prayer & Liturgy Directory)



Prayer

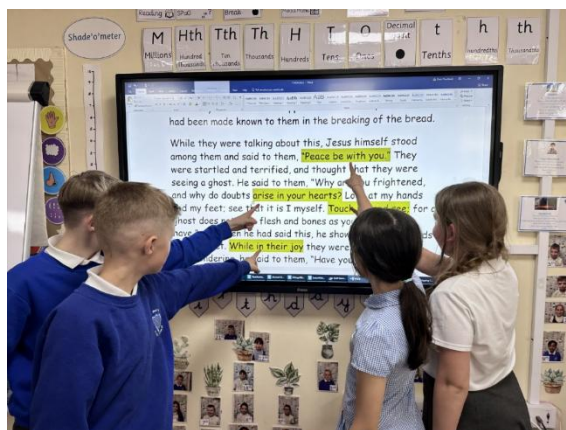


“Prayer has traditionally been described as ‘lifting up of the hearts and minds to God’, which means it involves our whole person – our head as well as our heart.” (p.7 The Prayer and Liturgy Directory)

Prayer at St. Mary’s can be formal or informal, routine or spontaneous, private or shared. We include familiar prayers, prayers written for the occasion and spontaneous prayers written by the children and school community. We also include silence, stillness and Christian meditation.

We embrace the creativity element of prayer and understand that God is concerned about and interested in our lives.

Celebration of the Word



Celebration of the Word at St. Mary’s is a time of communal prayer that follows liturgical patterns. The common element is the proclamation of Scripture, and we follow the weekly Sunday Gospel as well as other well-chosen Scripture passages informed by the church’s liturgical year, the current RE Branch or the interests of the children.

Scripture texts are taken from the English Standard Version – Catholic Edition Bible. Where appropriate, simplified language or selected phrases from Scripture may be used to ensure that the Word of God is accessible and meaningful to all pupils, while remaining faithful to the meaning and message of the original text.

Celebrations of the Word also include special moments and occasions such as assemblies, Harvest Celebrations, Remembrance Service, Nativities and Carol Services, Lenten and Holy Week Celebrations and May and Corpus Christi Processions.

The texts, symbols and gestures draw on the Catholic traditions although again we embrace the creativity opportunities within these limits.

We use the format of;

Gather – Word – Respond – Mission



Liturgy



Liturgy at St Mary's is understood as 'A rite of the Church with a prescribed structure, gesture, words and symbols'

On these occasions '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.' (p.8 *The Prayer & Liturgy Directory*)

With guidance from the Parish Priest, we celebrate Mass at a variety of times during the school year such as at the start of the school year, the New Year and at the end of the year. Additionally, KS2 children celebrate Mass termly. We also aim for opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation at points throughout the year such during Lent.



Daily Prayer

Prayer is an integral part of each school day. Pupils are given opportunities to pray at key points throughout the day, including morning prayer, grace before meals and prayer or reflection at the end of the school day.

Daily prayer may include traditional Catholic prayers, spontaneous prayer, Scripture, silence, music, meditation and opportunities for pupils to offer their own intentions. The Sign of the Cross is used appropriately to begin and end prayer.



Weekly Prayer and Liturgy

Throughout each week, pupils participate in a planned pattern of prayer and liturgy. This includes whole-school, key stage and class celebrations of the Word and prayer.

Scripture is central to our prayer and liturgy. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to hear and reflect upon the Word of God, including the Sunday Gospel and Scripture appropriate to the liturgical season.

As pupils progress through the school, they are given increasing opportunities to prepare, participate in and lead prayer and liturgy. The level of pupil leadership and independence is appropriate to their age and capacity.

Parish priests visit every week for Mass sessions, story times and catch up with different year groups.



Early Years

Our youngest children experience prayer and liturgy at various times during their day and in a variety of settings and formats (see our Formation of prayer document)



Key Stage One

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Celebration of the Word with Mrs Smith	Celebration of the Word with Mr Clephane Hymn Practice with Mrs Paget	Creative Prayer opportunities. Reflecting on the Gospel of the Week.	Planning a class Celebration of the Word using the children's ideas.	Celebration with Mrs Clinton



Key Stage Two

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Celebration of the Word with Mr Clephane	Creative Prayer opportunities. Reflecting on the Gospel of the Week.	Planning a class Celebration of the Word using the children's ideas.	Planning a class Celebration of the Word using the children's ideas. Hymn Practice with Mrs Parkin	Celebration with Mrs Clinton

Celebration of Mass

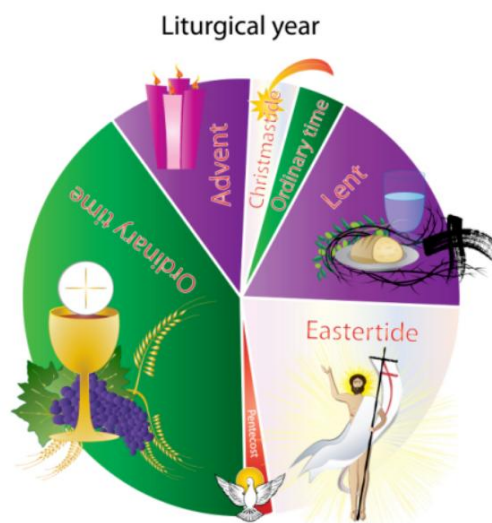


The celebration of the Eucharist has a special place within the prayer and liturgical life of the school. Mass is celebrated at appropriate times throughout the year in collaboration with our parish priest and parish community.

Opportunities for the celebration of Mass may include significant feasts and solemnities, the beginning or end of the school year, patronal or school feast days and other important occasions in the life of the school and Church.

Pupils are supported to participate actively and reverently in the celebration of Mass through prayer, responses, music, readings and other appropriate ministries.

The Liturgical Year



The rhythm of prayer and liturgy reflects the liturgical year of the Catholic Church. The seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, together with significant solemnities, feasts and memorials, are marked appropriately within school.

The changing liturgical seasons are reflected through Scripture, prayer, music, sacred images and symbols, liturgical colours and the school's prayer spaces.

Special liturgies take place at appropriate points throughout the year and include Advent and Christmas celebrations, Ash Wednesday, Stations of the Cross, Holy Week and Easter liturgies, Pentecost, Marian devotions, Remembrance, Harvest and end-of-year or leavers' celebrations.



Prayer and Liturgy Yearly Overview 2026 -2027

<i>September</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>December</i>
<i>School New School Year Celebration of the Word Celebration of the Word celebrating Mary's Birthday Marian Art Competition Mission Statement Celebration Y6 Mass sessions with Father Chris Y2 story sessions with Deacon Eddie</i>	<i>KS1 Harvest Festival Celebration of the Word Month of the Rosary Y5 Mass sessions with Father Chris KS2 Mass in school Y2 story sessions with Deacon Eddie</i>	<i>Whole School Remembrance Day Celebration of the Word Y2 Visit to Oaklea Convent Y5 & Y6 Mass in school Y4 catch up with Father Chris Y2 story sessions with Deacon Eddie</i>	<i>Advent EYFS Nativities KS1 Nativity KS2 Carol Service Bambinelli Celebration Home/School – Travelling Crib Bags</i>
<i>January</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>April</i>
<i>New Year Celebration of the Word Y4 Sacrament of Reconciliation</i>	<i>Shrove Tuesday Ash Wednesday Celebration of the Word KS1 Lenten Celebration of the Word Home/School – Lenten Bags</i>	<i>Paschal Candle Celebration of the Word</i>	<i>KS2 Year Group Holy Week Celebrations of the Word Y4 retreat to Youth Village</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	
<i>Month of Mary MaryFest Celebration Y4 Sacrament of First Holy Communion May Procession</i>	<i>SS Peter & Paul Celebration of the Word</i>	<i>Y6 Leavers Mass Y6 retreat to Youth Village</i>	

Reconciliation

All pupils are helped to understand God's loving mercy and the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.

At appropriate times, particularly during Advent and Lent, opportunities are provided for penitential prayer and reflection. Catholic pupils who have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation are provided with appropriate opportunities to celebrate the sacrament, supported by the parish priest.

A Rich Variety of Catholic Prayer

Across their time in school, pupils experience a wide variety of ways of praying within the Catholic tradition. These include traditional prayers, the Rosary, meditation, contemplation, silence, spontaneous prayer, Scripture-based prayer, Lectio Divina, litanies, Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic prayer and adoration where appropriate, prayer through music and singing, and prayer using sacred art, symbols and gestures.

Through this progressive provision, pupils are supported not only to know Catholic prayers but also to understand different ways of praying and to develop their own relationship with God. (see Formation of Prayer document)



Retreats

Year 4 and Year 6 children are invited to attend the Youth Village each year. Retreat opportunities for staff are offered by the Hexham and Newcastle Diocese.



Participation and Inclusion

Prayer and liturgy are carefully planned to be accessible and meaningful for all pupils, taking account of their age, stage of development and individual needs. All members of the school community are welcomed and treated with respect, while the distinctively Catholic character and purpose of prayer and liturgy are maintained.

Staff Prayer

The Weekly Gospel and reflection is shared with all staff during a Friday morning staff briefing. This is led by Mr Clephane or Mrs Clinton.

The St Mary's Word is written by Mrs Smith and shared with all staff and the school community on a Friday during term time.

INSET days and staff meetings begin with staff prayers.

Resourcing

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 and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

Staff are supported by our greatest resource at St. Mary's – other staff. We work in a supportive community where everyone is willing to help each other in their role and share ideas to produce the best outcome for our children.



Training and formation

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. Staff receive regular professional development through whole staff INSET each half term and are also provided with opportunities to attend relevant training offered by the Diocese.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and at least annually. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.

Signed by the Headteacher: *Martin Clephane*

Person responsible for writing policy: (RE Subject Leader) *Gemma Smith*

