



PRAYER AND LITURGY

A Model Policy for Primary Schools

<p>Document Management: Date Policy Approved: 27 June 2017 Date Amended: April 2023 Next Review Date: April 2026 Version: 3 Approving Body: Board of Directors</p>
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Introduction

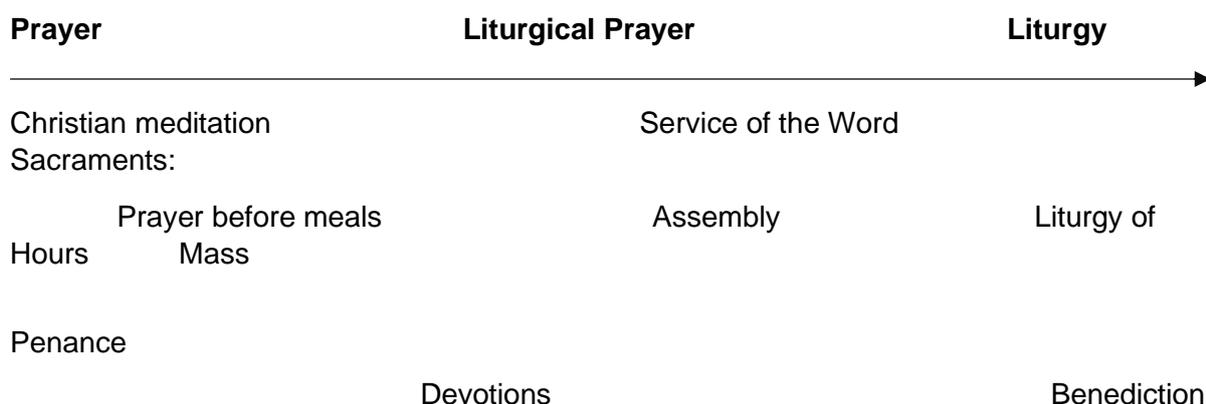
Understanding Prayer and Liturgy

(From the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory, September 2022)

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, 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, Liturgical Prayer, 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	Liturgical Prayer	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 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.

St Mary's Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Vision & Mission Statement

Our Catholic ethos and support for one another as a family of schools drives all that we do. Our mission is guided by a collective culture and vision where:

'Our schools are places of excellence –providing service and witness to children, their families and the wider Catholic community, adding value as a family of schools and enriching the learning and experience of all our young people, so they may achieve their full potential.'

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, liturgical prayer 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 Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St Mary's 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.

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

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
- 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 prayer forms part of every staff meeting and a variety of prayer styles are encouraged. There is also a staff prayer board in the staffroom.

The Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below:

Monday	Whole School Candle Time	Led by HT or DH
Tuesday	Individual Class Liturgical Prayer	Led by children
Wednesday	Class Prayer Journals	Children's own prayers
Thursday	Individual Class Liturgical Prayer	Led by children
Friday	Whole School Candle Time	Led by member of staff and children's own prayers
Termly	X3 termly Family Mass	Father Thomas, children and staff

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

	X3 end of term class Assembly	Led by children and class teacher- wider community invited to attend
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Leading Prayer and Liturgy

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy to begin and end each week as a school family. The class teacher will lead class prayer and liturgy. Children are taught to plan and lead prayer times according to their age.

On the last Friday of each term, each class, along with their teacher, will lead us in prayer and parents, parishioners, governors and local community are also invited to attend.

Father Thomas leads a short prayer group each half term, over break times for 15 minutes here in school for children, staff, governors, parents and parishioners.

Recording

Prayer and liturgy is recorded in class liturgical prayer folders from nursery to year 6. This includes annotations, pupil voice, photographs and planning sheets. Teacher's are responsible for maintaining the files and these are kept in each classroom. The headteacher is responsible for monitoring the files.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and liturgy is monitored termly using our prayer and liturgy monitoring form and any feedback is shared with relevant prayer leaders and children.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

Resources

Each class has their own resources to support liturgical prayer in their classroom, as well as shared resources in school to. These include:

Liturgical cloths, bibles, crucifixes of different sizes and design, candles, scripture, artefacts linking to the 'Living the Seasons' document and suggested focal points such as flowers, natural resources, sand, footprints, photographs etc.

The children are responsible for looking after their class resources and the RE lead ensures shared resources are accessible and renewed if necessary.

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'³

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

Retreats

Children in KS2 attend retreats on a two- year cycle at both the Youth Village and Minster acres. They take place in autumn term and Summer term.

Other opportunities

Other opportunities include:

³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Termly Mass
Parish Mass
Prayer group in school
Visits to Church/ from Father to school
More than Dance themed days
YMT Festivals
Art related forms of prayer including homework tasks
A model job Creative Prayer linked to national themed days

Eucharist

Children have opportunities to attend Eucharistic celebrations on Feast Days celebrated at church as a whole school across the liturgical year and also during Family Mass each term.

Role of Trust Head of Catholic Life

The Trust Head of Catholic Life acts as a resource to support to Lay Chaplains and Chaplaincy Teams. Their role is to provide:

- Training and support
- Point of contact
- Identify and meet the training needs of those involved in chaplaincy in our schools
- Oversee spirituality timetables
- Assistance with sacred spaces
- Opportunities to meet and discuss ideas and problem-solve together
- Assistance with the planning and preparation of key Liturgical celebrations including major feasts and seasons across sectors
- Resources for websites

The Trust Head of Catholic Life will work with school Chaplains and those with responsibility for co-ordinating collective worship to develop ideas to:

- Make prayer engaging and meaningful
- Increase involvement of our young people in the prayer life of their school
- Develop whole Trust MAT spirituality events including retreats and liturgies

The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

Mrs Box is our RE coordinator at St Mary's school, but each class teacher sees themselves as a leader of prayer and worship too.

(job description is also included in Appendix 1.)

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 three years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Appendix 1

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 in-service 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