



'Growing, Loving and Learning in the arms of Mary'

Prayer and Liturgy policy

N. Simpson

Review September 2023

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement *'Growing, loving and learning in the arms of St. Mary's.'*

The St. Mary's family grow closer to God through praying, learning from the Gospels and from the inspiration of the life of Our Lady. We are encouraged to follow the Golden Rule, *'treat others, as you would want to be treated'* (Matthew 7:12) and *'feed the hungry and help those in trouble'* (Isaiah 58:10). Our school is a place where the entire community are greeted with love and trust, which guides all that we do – *a place where we all put our faith in action.*

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 a 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

At St. Mary's, Sunday's Gospel lies at the centre of all of our prayer and liturgy times. The same Gospel is shared in a variety of ways throughout the week, which are appropriate to the child's age.

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily act of prayer and liturgy 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 and Liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two 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 times lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Prayer and Liturgy. 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 the Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St. Mary's Catholic School

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

Prayer and Liturgy considers 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.

Principles

All acts of Prayer and Liturgy in St. Mary's Catholic School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

- 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 worship;
- 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.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy in St. Marys Catholic 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.'

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

INSET Days begin with staff prayers. Weekly staff briefings on a Friday 8.15pm include sharing the forthcoming weekly Gospel, followed by a reflection led by Martin Clephane/Claire Clinton.

COVID 19

Prayer and Liturgy suffered greatly with COVID 19 restrictions. During Lockdowns, mass gatherings were prohibited, schools were closed to the majority of children and bubbles were established to prevent social mixing. Prayer and Liturgy was permitted in September 2021, with restrictions. During the academic year 2021- 2022, Prayer and Liturgy has reverted to some pre COVID restrictions. Visits from the clergy are to be kept to a minimum and whole school gatherings continue to be restricted while cases in school are high. This is an issue that is reviewed each month within school by the SLT.

Leading Prayer and Liturgy

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead Prayer and Liturgy. At St. Mary's, we are a Gospel centred school. Our Prayer and Liturgy times are based on the Sunday Gospel. Our plan follows the annual cycle of the churches readings, 2022 - Cycle C. Prayer and Liturgy in class is led by the class teacher. Children are taught to plan and lead worship according to their age.

The Head teacher first shares the Gospel with staff, the week before it will be used in the classroom. His reflection and understanding is shared with staff. The Head teacher leads Prayer and Liturgy for each key stage to share the Gospel with the children at an age appropriate level.

Prayer and Liturgy Timetable

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

At St. Mary's, we follow the Liturgical seasons and feast days, special Prayer and Liturgy opportunities are held such as Holy Week, Advent, October the month of the Rosary, May for Our Lady, and November Remembrance Sunday. The school environment enhances the Liturgical year through the display spaces in classrooms, hall, and around school. The current timetable reflects COVID 19 restrictions.

Weekly Gospel

Staff are emailed 2 variations of the weekly Gospel. The Gospel Message and the Statements of Belief are handed out to the Faith in Action Team mini members to display on focal points in classrooms and in the hall.

Foundation Stage

Early Prayer and Liturgy is held in Reception and Nursery. A simplified 'child speak' version of the Sunday Gospel is shared with the children. The children take turns preparing the prayer space as a starting point to planning their own Liturgies. Children are expected to show reverence for religious artefacts and Collective Worship. The children are taught the school prayers for morning, lunch and evening.

Key Stage 1 Children say morning, lunchtime and evening prayers daily.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Who: Class Where: Classroom Led by: Class teacher Focus: Sunday's Gospel Other: At the discretion of the class teachers	Who: Key Stage 1 Where: Main Hall Led by: Mr Clephane Focus: Sunday's Gospel Other: Statement of Belief Shared Linked to Rights Respecting Time: 9.05 – 9.25	Who: Key Stage 1 Where: Small Hall Led by: E Paget Focus: Hymn Practice Other: Time: 3.00 – 3.25	Who: Class Where: Classroom Led by: Class teacher/Child Focus: Sunday's Gospel Other: At the discretion of the class teachers	Who: Key Stage 1 Where: Main Hall Led by: Mrs Clinton Focus: Celebration/World Issues Other: Statement of Belief Shared Linked to Rights Respecting Time: 2.30 – 3.00

Key Stage 2 Children say morning, lunchtime and evening prayers daily.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Who: Key Stage 2 Where: Main Hall Led by: Mr Clephane Focus: Sunday's Gospel Other: Statement of Belief Shared Linked to Rights Respecting Time: 9.05 – 9.30	Who: Class Where: Class/Outside Led by: Class teachers Focus: Sunday's Gospel Other: At the discretion of the teacher	Who: Class Where: Class/Outside Led by: Children Focus: Sunday's Gospel Other: At the discretion of the teacher	Who: Key Stage 2 Where: Main Hall Led by: E Paget/N Simpson Focus: Hymn Practice Other: Time: 3.00 – 3.25	Who: Key Stage 2 Where: Main Hall Led by: Mrs Clinton Focus: Celebration/World Issues Other: Statement of Belief Shared Linked to Rights Respecting Time: 3.00 – 3.25

Annual Liturgy Plan

January	February	March	April	May	June
Who: Whole School What: Mass Led by: Father Chris Focus: Mass to start New Year	Who: Whole School What: Assembly Led by: N Simpson Focus: Fair Trade/Social Justice	Who: Whole School What: Service Led by: Father Chris Focus: Ash Wednesday	Who: Whole School What: Liturgy Led by: N Simpson Focus: Lent	Who: Whole School What: May Procession Led by: N Simpson Focus: Our Lady	Who: Whole School What: Service Led by: N Simpson Focus: Corpus Christi Procession
July	September	October	November	December	Other
Who: Whole School What: Mass Led by: Year 6 Focus: Leavers Mass	Who: Whole School What: Mass Led by: Father Chris Focus: Mass to start new academic year	Who: Whole School What: Liturgy Led by: N Simpson Focus: The Rosary	Who: Whole School What: Liturgy Led by: N Simpson Focus: Remembrance Sunday	Who: Whole School What: Liturgy Led by: All Staff Focus: Advent/Nativity	Weekly story time with clergy Year group Mass at different points within the year

Leading Prayer and Liturgy Key Stage 1

Each Monday the class teacher will lead Prayer and Liturgy using Sunday's Gospel. Teachers act as models of good practice. The children are taught about the 4 parts of a Liturgy: Gather, Word, Respond and Going Forth. Each Wednesday, the children will take an increasingly greater role in the preparation: choosing hymns, religious artefacts for the table and preparing the prayer space. Children can choose to use the Cardiff Resources for ideas, but they are not compulsory.

Leading Prayer and Liturgy Key Stage 2

Each Tuesday the class teacher will lead Prayer and Liturgy using Sunday's Gospel. Teachers act as models of good practice. The children are taught about the 4 parts of a Liturgy: Gather, Word, Respond and Going Forth. Each Wednesday the children will take an increasingly greater role in the preparation: choosing hymns; religious artefacts for the table; preparing the prayer space; how the Gospel will be shared; the Gospel message and how the children will respond to the word. Children can choose to use the Cardiff Resources for ideas, but they are not compulsory. Pop songs may be used in Liturgies if they are relevant to the Gospel message.

Recording

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded at the end of each module in the 'Come and See' scheme. In Key Stage 2, children who are able to plan their own Liturgies use the school planning format. Staff are emailed a copy of the weekly Gospel.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and Liturgy is monitored annually. Pupil voice is gathered annually with the Headteacher and RE lead. Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the CSED.

Resources

Classrooms are required to have a dedicated focal point. The Gospel Message and Statement of Belief should be taught and displayed near the focal point. Scripture to support each module in the 'Come and See' scheme should

also be displayed. Staff have been given boxes to store religious artefacts and cloths. Staff are given a copy of the 'Living the Seasons of the Liturgical year' to support them with their subject knowledge. Staff have access to the 'Ten Ten' online resources to help with providing a variety of experiences in Prayer and Liturgy times. Staff are encouraged to use the Forest School, outdoor classroom and Our Lady Grotto to provide different Prayer and Liturgy experiences for the children.

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. There is also a display in the hall which follows the focus of the diocesan year – December 2022 The Eucharist. During Advent and Lent, a whole school display will be created in the school hall.

Faith in Action

6 children from Year 6 volunteer to be part of the Faith in Action team. They are working towards the pin level badge and are awarded in the Summer term, following moderation by K Devlin. Their role is to produce the Gospel Message, the St. Mary's Act of Kindness and the Statements of Belief. The St. Mary's word is written by N Simpson.

The Gospel Message is their understanding of the weekly Gospel, and it is written so that younger children can understand and remember it.

The St. Mary's Word was created to replace the 'Wednesday Word'. The children generate quiz questions, fun facts and a prayer for the whole school community to complete at home.

The Statement of Belief is edited so that it is colourful and has a picture to match the words.

The Act of Kindness is a way to encourage others to live the faith.

Each of the documents are emailed to parents on a Friday with the newsletter.

Retreats

Opportunities for full day staff retreats are offered in the Hexham and Newcastle training document.

Eucharist

Masses are held throughout the academic year to celebrate the Liturgical Seasons or feast days (see annual timetable). Year group Masses are planned throughout the year. A Leavers' Mass is held in July for children, staff and parents. Year 6 children are invited to attend a Deanary cluster Mass, Youth Village Masses and transition Masses at St. Aidan's and St. Anthony's (COVID 19 restrictions dependent).

Sacramental Preparation

Children are invited to join the programme in Year 4. They are asked to attend monthly sessions after school. They are taught specific modules in RE lessons linked to Eucharist and Reconciliation, which is different to the rest of the school. Catechists include volunteers from school and the parish (COVID 19 Restrictions). As a result of COVID 19 restrictions, Catechists from the parish have been limited.

All parents are invited to meeting prior to the start of the programme to discuss the commitment expected. Father Chris has implemented a passport. Children are expected to attend a Mass each weekend and have their passport signed.

³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Children are split into groups of 8 and they are allocated to a catechist. The children meet in the school hall for an introduction to the session, then they split into small groups. In the small groups, the catechists follow a break down of discussion points based on the Diocesan Sacramental Programme. All resources are provided for the catechists.

At the end of the session one of the groups lead a short act of worship. The children gather back in the hall. The lead group are given a reading or a bidding prayer. Pre COVID 19, parents were invited into the hall to hear the readings. September 2022 – parents should resume attending the act of worship.

Reconciliation - children make the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the school hall due to COVID 19 restrictions. Children follow an order of service then take one confession up to the priest. To be reviewed annually.

Holy Communion – children are split into groups of 5/6. Children make their Holy Communion at St. Cecilia's or St. Mary's as part of a normal weekend Mass.

Prayer and Liturgy in the home

During Advent, children are given a Travelling Crib bag consisting of a candle, Nativity Scene, prayer card, Christmas Story and an instruction pack. The bag is given to each child in the class for one night to share with parents at home.

During Lent, children are given a Lenten Bag consisting of a candle, holding cross, prayer card, an Easter story book and an instruction pack. The bag is given to each child in the class for one night to share with parents at home.

During May, children are given a Marion Bag consisting of a candle, holding cross, prayer card, and an instruction pack. The bag is given to each child in the class for one night to share with parents at home.

The coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy is led and monitored by the Religious Education Coordinator (N Simpson) and Head Teacher (M Clephane)

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.