



Catholic School

“Learning Together, Loving God”

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

“Knowing other people, loving, suffering and pain, discovering truth, wanting what is good, admiring beauty in all of its expressions, coping and failure, all of these experiences are moments and situations where we can be led to look beyond the immediate to something or someone which is the ultimate explanation of all that is.” Cardinal Hume 1993

Intent

To grow to love ourselves, each other and Jesus Christ as we develop and nurture in all members of the community a sense of stillness, reflection and prayer through which our relationship with God the Father can grow.

Objectives

- To develop an awareness of the community and to grow in an understanding that we are all precious in God's eyes.
- To encourage children to reflect upon and celebrate the word of God.
- To provide continuous opportunities for children to develop prayer as a natural expression of their developing relationship with God.
- To encourage spontaneous prayer and reflection through various activities as a means of communicating.
- To develop a growing understanding of the celebration of mass and actively participate with the community.
- To know the formal prayers of the Mass, depending on year group, such as
 - The Sign of the Cross,
 - Our Father,
 - Hail Mary,
 - Acts of Contrition
 - Penitential Act
 - The Creed
 - The Gloria
 - Responses in various parts of the Mass
 - To develop continuous opportunities for silent reflection and to develop in children a sense of stillness leading to meditation
 - To develop a growing awareness of the choices we make and the consequences they have for others
 - To develop an awareness of the church in our world today

Implementation

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Whole School Policy

The act of Prayer and Liturgy is central to the life of the school. It is a way of affirming our individuality and our communal belonging to the Body of Christ.

Equal Opportunities

All children are given an equal chance to join in Prayer and Liturgy according to their age and ability.

Right of Withdrawal

Individuals may withdraw from acts of Prayer and Liturgy but parents should keep the School's Mission Statement in mind when applying for a place at our school.

A Time to Reflect

At Notre Dame, prayer plays a central role within the school community. On the days when children are not involved in a school assembly, an Act of Prayer and Liturgy takes place in the classroom. This is either led by the teacher or the children and is normally based on a theme.

KS1

Monday	Gospel Assembly	30 mins
Thursday	Hymn Practice and Assembly	20 mins
Friday	Celebration Assembly	30 mins

KS2

Monday	Gospel Assembly	30 mins
Wednesday	Hymn Practice and Assembly	20 mins
Friday	Celebration Assembly	30 mins

Our school assemblies bring the school community or part of the school community together in Prayer and Liturgy. Within each assembly, there is always an opportunity for Prayer and Liturgy where the children take part in a variety of prayer experiences. e.g. responding to scripture readings, the identification of prayer intentions, individual prayer, spontaneous prayer, silent prayer, traditional prayers of the Church, music and singing, drama, poetry etc.

Opportunities are provided for the children to participate in the celebration of Mass as outlined in the RE policy.

Prayers are said throughout the day and are developed within the community of each class. This gives each class, ownership of their Prayer and Liturgy life. Prayers of Adoration, where God is praised, Contrition, asking for God's forgiveness, Petition, asking God for a special favour and Thanksgiving, showing gratitude to God, are all included.

Parents and families are invited, when possible, to join our Prayer and Liturgy during school mass and at other special times.

Further celebrations include:

- Harvest festival,
- Remembrance Assemblies,
- First Holy Communion
- Christmas Nativities,
- Annual Leavers' Mass for Year 6

Parents and parishioners will be invited through the school website, the parish bulletin, texts and personal letters from the children and teacher. We actively encourage participation. Prayer and Liturgy is for all to join as one community.

Teaching

Throughout their time at school, children will experience a variety of approaches to Prayer and Liturgy – some will be teacher led, whilst others will be child led. We aim to develop a growing understanding and independence to enable children to plan their own sessions which will inspire others to reflect. All sessions include a reading from scripture.

All children are involved in preparing, supporting and leading prayers and liturgical Prayer.

We recognise that children need to develop these skills and therefore we spend time developing the tools linked with Prayer and Liturgy, especially choosing relevant scripture and appropriate resources.

Child Led Prayer Expectations:

Reception

By Advent all children should be able to:

- **Lead** the sign of the cross and any prayer the school regularly uses at the start of worship, e.g. the school prayer, welcome prayer.
- **Join in** the set morning, lunchtime and end of the day prayers.
- Help in the setting up of the prayer focal point.

By the end of the Summer term all children should have the opportunity to:

- **Be involved** in an aspect of class prayer e.g. passing around a symbol or prayer focus.
- **Plan and set up** the focal point for worship according to liturgical season/RE topic guided by an adult.
- **Join in** saying Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be – led by an adult.

KS1

Children should:

- **Plan and prepare** focal point for worship according to liturgical season/RE topic **initially** guided by an adult.
- **Generate their own way** of gathering to begin the liturgy.
- **Lead** the welcome including the Sign of the Cross and The Lord be with you... with children responding appropriately.
- **Respond** with spontaneous prayer (e.g. prayer pebbles) relevant to the theme of the liturgy.
- **Lead** Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, morning, lunch and end of the day prayers.
- **Participate** in saying traditional beginning and end for readings and scripture.

Evaluate liturgies as a class, on the proforma guided by an adult.

LKS2

Children should:

- **Ensure** the class prayer space is liturgical correct
- **Independently generate** their own way of gathering to begin the worship and liturgy, including the welcome.
- **Lead** traditional beginning and end for readings and scripture
- **Lead** Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, School Prayer, morning, lunch and end of the day prayers.
- **Guided by adult**, plan and lead **class prayer and worship** including choosing scripture relevant to the liturgical year, a response to the scripture (explanation and links made to scripture), their own mission/going out for children to complete the liturgy e.g. link to Catholic social teaching, appropriate music and focal point.

Evaluate liturgies **as a group and class**, on the proforma guided by an adult.

UKS2

Children should:

- **Plan and lead** class prayer and worship including generating how they gather, choosing the form of the worship, the theme and appropriate scripture relevant to the liturgical year or to current events (school, local or world-wide), a response to the scripture (explanation and links made to scripture), quiet reflection time, key going forth message/ mission, (e.g. link to Catholic social teaching action), appropriate music and focal point.
- **Plan and lead** guided meditation.
- **Lead** Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.
- **Lead and re-write** the morning, lunch and end of the day prayers to reflect the liturgical season, e.g. Advent, Lent.

Evaluate liturgies **as a group and class**, giving reasons for their response and recommendations on the proforma – **both guided by an adult and independently**.

Prayer Areas

All classrooms have their own small table which is used as a focus in Prayer and Liturgy. The colour of the cloth covering the table is always linked to the liturgical year and teachers and children carefully choose a small amount of relevant religious artefacts to be placed upon it. Quiet areas around school provide daily opportunities for children to reflect. The worship area in the entrances are regularly used by children to write and say their own prayers.

Time Allocation

Approximately between five and ten minutes per day is spent in Prayer and Liturgy, depending on the age of the children in the class. This is in addition to various other prayers, including morning, lunchtime and home time prayers, which are said on a daily basis. Children are encouraged to write and say their own prayers and are also encouraged to spend extra time planning their weekly liturgies.

Assessment

No *formal* assessments are made of Prayer and Liturgy sessions although children are encouraged to reflect upon their contributions and consider how effective they have been. However, if a child says something very deep and spiritual, these can be noted down in the class RE big book (by the teacher, the teaching assistant or the child themselves) and can be used towards assessment.

Recording

Children use planning sheets to record their liturgy. Sometimes photographs are taken when appropriate. Other examples of liturgies are also recorded and kept.

Reporting

Comments are made on the end of year reports to parents regarding the child's contribution to whole school and class liturgies.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND)

All children's contributions are valued and children receive assistance if necessary when planning their liturgies.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) Within Prayer and Liturgy

ICT is a valuable tool which both children and teachers use to enhance Prayer and Liturgy sessions. PowerPoint including text or pictures or both are used effectively to provide visual stimulus.

Impact

Children are developing a growing independence to pray through stillness. They understand the importance of spending time in God's presence and use prayer and liturgy to strive every day to bear witness to Christ and 'be the change they want to see in the world today'. They demonstrate reverence, sing joyfully and respect the need of others to pray. This nurtures the children to love themselves, love each other and love Jesus Christ.

Evaluation and Review

It is the intention to review this document every two years in line with the whole school policy and the development plan.

Monitoring

Monitoring, evaluation and review of Prayer and Liturgical Prayer is an integral part of the self-review process and is shared with the whole school community. Strengths and areas for development are highlighted throughout this process and recommendations for future action will be identified in the School Development Plan.

Resources – e.g. Ten Ten, Cafod, Diocesan resources and resources developed by staff

Information on Prayer

Prayer is the foundation of Christian Life. Prayer is communication or communion with God. Through prayer we are drawn deeper into the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself taught us the need for prayer. In Gethsemane as He prepared Himself for the climax of His life, Jesus received the strength He needed in prayer to His Father, "Abba Father Take this cup away from me but let it be as you not I, would have it". At moments of His public ministry when those in need were pressing around Him, Jesus went off to a lonely place and prayed there.

What is Prayer?

We can pray anywhere and at any time. The **first step** is to place ourselves, as we are, in the presence of God. The **second step** in prayer is to pray. This means speaking to the Lord, asking Him for our needs and thanking Him for the many gifts He has given to us. This leads to praise and adoration. The **third step** is to be silent so the Lord Himself can guide the direction of our hearts.

How do we Pray?

The best prayers are those that come from the heart. There are times however, when we find it almost "impossible" to pray: and then we need prayer books and the prayers we have learned by heart. Our children should have the opportunity to find out about and respond in a variety of ways to Jesus' example and teaching with regard to prayer. They should be encouraged to explore the different forms of prayer, and to be helped to grow in appreciation of the importance of prayer in sustaining a living relationship with God. Children's experience of prayer and worship in school, which for some of our children will be the only prayer experiences they will receive, will have a deep impact on their spiritual development as Christians, and a love of their Catholic heritage which they can take into their adult life. Their lives of Prayer Worship must be continually developed and fostered. In prayer we become aware of God's presence with us and his love for us. We listen to Him in order to discover His will for us and to express to Him our gratitude, praise, love and adoration.

We can foster the children's life of prayer by helping them become aware of God's presence in their lives and His love for them and by leading them to respond to Him in a manner appropriate to their age.

Children learn to pray chiefly by sharing in the faith and prayer of adult Christians, especially parents, priests and teachers. Therefore, we believe that we should go a step beyond teaching them prayers, we should pray with them in their presence.

We should encourage them to pray by themselves, especially in the morning and at night. There are many ways of helping the children to meet God Our Father in prayer:

Prayers of silence	Own prayer
Spontaneous prayer	Prayers through gestures or actions
Prayers of the Church	Prayers through music and song

Prayers of Silence: To help the children participate in a prayerful silence, we can use various ways of focusing their minds on prayer. We can ask them to concentrate on an object, a picture, a lighted candle, some quiet background music or by giving them guidance about what to think: "Let's think about

Spontaneous Prayer: Once we have begun it is often difficult to stop children praying spontaneously. The children may not be able to express their thoughts accurately at first, and they may initially be shy or embarrassed. Many of their prayers may be prayers of petition for a sick parent, grandparent or friend. At Notre Dame we try to encourage them to pray not only for what they want, but also to pray that things will turn out as God knows best. We also encourage the children to express thanksgiving, love and praise to God the Father in their spontaneous prayer.

Praying through gesture or action: We encourage children to make even the simplest gestures thoughtfully so that the gesture or action is a prayer in itself.

Gestures that the children will be taught as they move through the school will include: making the Sign of the Cross, joining their hands, offering the sign of peace, bowing their heads at the name of Jesus, genuflection, hand gestures, processions etc.

Formal /Traditional Prayers: As the children move through school they will be taught and introduced to the commonly used prayers of the Church so that they are able to join in and participate in parish celebrations. The introduction of many of the responses of the Holy Mass are incorporated into their classroom and assembly prayer and worship celebrations. Our aim is to help the children to develop a reverence and a positive attitude to praying.

Praying through Music and Song: Listening to reflective music can create an atmosphere conducive to prayer and reflection. The singing of hymns can be so joyful. "Singing hymns is praying twice". Reflective music and singing are both used during prayer and worship sessions.

An act of Collective Worship with children should last about one minute for each year of the child's life:

e.g. A maximum of 5 minutes for Reception/Year 1 children. A maximum of 10 minutes for Yr. 6 children

School Prayers - booklet and on website

Rosary Prayer Groups

Rosaries are available in all classrooms and for sale throughout the year

