



## Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

### Prayer and Liturgy Policy

#### Mission Statement

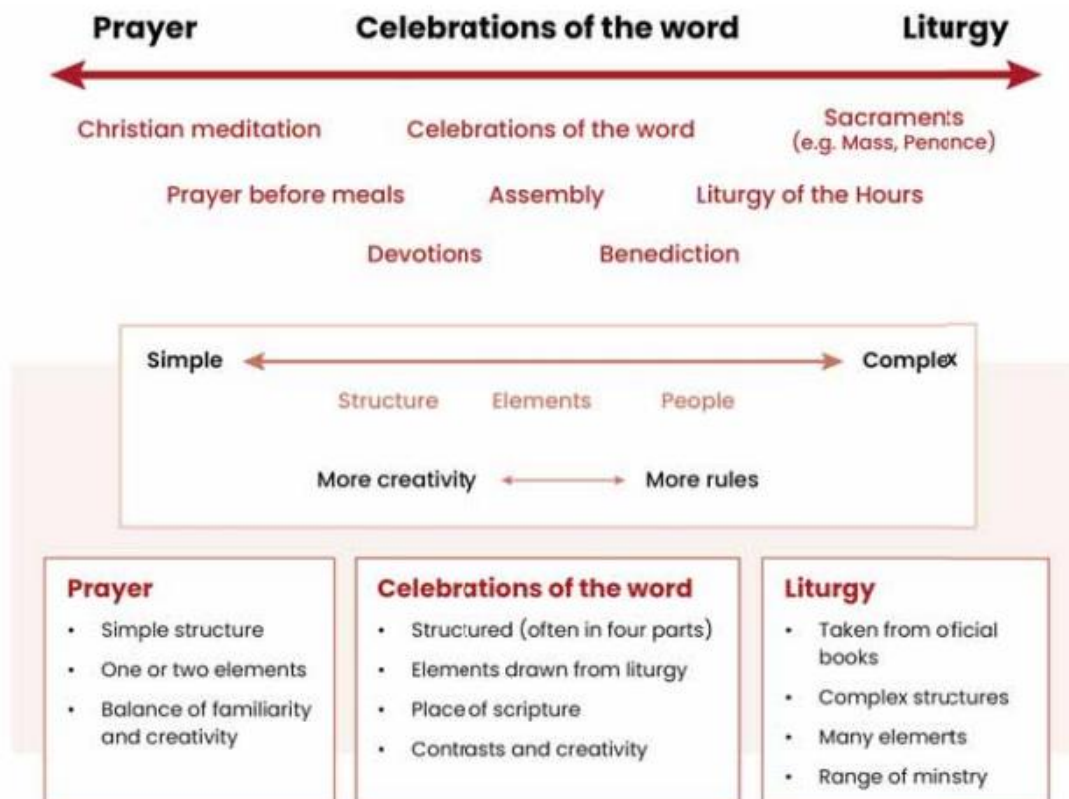
With the help of Jesus, we prepare to live as Christians bringing faith, hope and love to our world.

#### 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.'

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, and 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



## **Legal Requirements**

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily act of worship (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. Collective worship 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 Collective Worship 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 Collective Worship 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 and the liturgical calendar.,

## **The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of Our Lady'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.
- It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.
- We will continue to foster and deepen the children's personal relationship with God our Father daily in prayer. We do this by helping them become aware of God's presence in their lives and of His love for them by leading them to respond to Him in a manner suited to their age.

Prayer will not be confined to an act of worship. Pupils are invited to pray at important stages of the day to reflect preparation for the day ahead, thanks for what is to be enjoyed and reflection on what has been successful, or needs reparation, at the end of the day. Prayers are also explained and taught through RE lessons, which is particularly important for our non-Catholic pupils. Children also learn specific prayers in each age group. Prayer, for the whole school community, also happens:

- In all staff briefings
- At staff inset days
- Through prayer cards for assemblies
- In voluntary opportunities for private prayer during weekly prayer group meetings
- At the start of Governors', senior leadership and other meetings

Prayer and liturgy in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. Visitors are invited into assemblies and class liturgies, and priests are invited to school liturgies. Pupils are encouraged to take part during Masses as altar servers, Readers of the Word, Offertory, leading music (SoulBeats) or by writing intercessions.

## **The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer and liturgy in Our Lady'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 Prayer and liturgy in Our Lady'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 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.<sup>1</sup> Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

## **Planning Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, the RED, 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.

When planning any Prayer and Liturgy, we use the structure Gather, Listen/Word, Respond and Send. This model reflects the four parts of Mass and it is a good basis on which to plan Worship. The table later in the policy gives some suggestions on how to plan Worship based on this model. When planning Prayer and Liturgy, it should reflect the theme, or liturgical season of the church where appropriate. (For example, don't sing Alleluia during a Lent worship, or have a lively upbeat service for a Reconciliation service that has a reflective undertone.) Allow the children to feel differences in the mood of the Liturgical calendar and to experience different prayer and liturgy to further their spiritual self.

As the children grow in age and confidence, they can take a more active part in the planning of Liturgy.

- Children in Early Years can help to prepare the focus, for example, selecting the right liturgical colour of cloth, placing a candle and a Bible in the centre, with the adult placing any additional props.
- Children in Key Stage 1 can write simple prayers that can be used, they can help to choose the songs sung with guidance so they fit in the theme of the Worship. Children can choose

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<sup>1</sup> Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

the artefacts needed and the correct liturgical cloths as a teaching point or reinforcement. They can identify which aspect of the worship is happening.

- Children in Key Stage 2 can plan simple prayer and liturgy, reflecting on the four aspects: Gather, Listen/Word, Respond and Send. The children can think about the type of response that would be the most appropriate e.g John the Baptist, using holy water and inviting each child to bless themselves in response to a meditation read. They can lead through sharing readings and prayers, playing musical instruments and using recorded music through their worship.

When planning Prayer and Liturgy with the class, or for the school, a similar format to the Mass (Gather, Listen/Word, Respond and Send) can be used. There are many books and resources that can be used to support this (see RE Lead in the first instance.) A good starting point is either a theme relevant to the people present – for example, Catholic Social Teaching - or a celebration from the Liturgical Calendar – for example, a Feast day or the Gospel from the previous Sunday.

### **Displays for Gatherings**

When creating a prayer focus for Prayer and Liturgy during key Liturgical seasons, the use of colour is encouraged to show the changes throughout the year, reflecting the vestments and colours shown in Church.

Green – Ordinary Time

Purple – for Lent

Purple – for Advent

White – for Christmastide

White and Gold – Eastertide

In addition, key symbols, icons or visual aids could form part of the display e.g. a bowl of water, pictures of the disciples, fishing net, fish to reflect the Calling of the Twelve.

### **Liturgical Music**

There is a wide selection of music, covering a variety of themes, that can be chosen to enhance the worship. Music can be used directly in worship for communal singing or used as background music for quiet moments or meditation. The music should reflect the liturgical season and/or the theme for the Mass. It should be selected carefully. The music should also reflect the Congregation so that all can participate in the majority of the worship. Members of staff should encourage children to take an active part in Worship, leading the music or singing both in the classroom and for Prayer and Liturgy or Masses. This will also help the children grow in confidence and ability. Staff leading liturgical music may attend or encourage others to attend In-service specific to Christian music such as those offered by One Life, CJM and the Diocese to enhance provision. Staff need to be confident in using the right music to reflect the Liturgical calendar or the theme of the worship. In the back of the Liturgical Hymns Old and New, there is an index of uses and themes including music for the various parts of the Mass.

### **Leading collective worship**

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead assemblies. The Chaplain will plan masses together with the parish priest. The class teacher will assist the pupils in planning and leading class collective worship and end-of-topic liturgies. Children are taught to plan and lead worship according to their age. Collective Worship is recorded in the class R.E. Celebration book.

### Prayer and Liturgy weekly overview

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Gospel Assembly (Whole School)	Tuesday Prayer (Class – Pupil Led)	Praise and Songs (Whole School)	Class Worship (Bible and meditation)	Gratitude Assembly (Whole School)

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of pupils and whether it truly reflects the aims and mission of the school.

### 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'<sup>2</sup>

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.

### Eucharist

Eucharist celebrations form a very important part in our Collective Worship strategy. Masses take place to celebrate feast days and significant dates in the Church and school calendar. Effective working relationships are established between Our Lady's Catholic School and our local Parish Priests (Our Lady's and St. Columba's). Masses on Holy Days of Obligation take place, where possible, in Our Lady's Church where the school join the parish community. School feast day and other Masses will take place in school.

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<sup>2</sup> Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005