



**We joyfully
live, love and
learn in the
footsteps of
Jesus**

St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy Prayer and Liturgy

Date agreed by governors:	September 2021
To be reviewed:	3 years
Policy Holder	Head teacher
Reviewed last:	September 2024
Next review:	September 2027

This is St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy's policy for Prayer and Liturgy and is set within the context of the whole school aims and Mission Statement.

Aim

At St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy we aim to ensure that children and staff have the opportunity to participate in daily high-quality Christian Prayer and Liturgies encouraging a regular habit of personal prayer to develop spirituality.

Objectives

To achieve these aims, we will:

- Ensure that activities help to explain the teachings of Jesus and an understanding of the greatness of God.
- Ensure that activities reflect the Church's Liturgical seasons.
- Identify suitable times each day when Celebrations of the Word takes pace.
- Provide a prayerful environment for quiet reflection.
- Provide a prayer focus in each classroom (and Hall, where used) during activities.
- Use appropriate resources for the age of the child.
- Use appropriate activities that contribute to spiritual development e.g. listening to scripture, listening to music, saying psalms together, mantra, using gesture with hands or body singing, being still, meditating, contemplating, dramatising, processing, sharing celebrations, speaking, focussing on visuals
- Use a mixture of informal prayer and formal prayers.
- Ensure that all present at Celebrations of the Word activities can participate in some way.
- Ensure worship is meaningful by linking planned activities to children's other experiences.
- Ensure children are involved in the planning and delivery of worship as appropriate.

Why Prayer and Liturgy?

Prayer and Liturgy in our school provides opportunities for all parts of our school community to come together to worship God.

- To pray
- To reflect on spiritual and moral beliefs
- To enable and encourage a sense of belonging
- To reflect on personal belief
- To respond to and celebrate life

- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To mark us as special
- To come to terms with
- To give worth to
- To wonder at
- To build a firm foundation for liturgy
- To contemplate something of the Mystery of God
- To take time out
- To develop a community spirit
- To enrich the religious experience of children and staff
- To encourage a common ethos and shared values

Responsibility for Prayer and Liturgy

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that Liturgical Prayer is provided for each child. Learners must have the opportunity to take part in a daily act of Liturgical Prayer. Parents and other adults can be invited to participate in Liturgical Prayer. Teachers, other members of staff, children and visitors can lead Liturgical Prayer. Our newly appointed Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator , Emili Coburn is also supporting in the development and evaluation of Prayer and Liturgy,

Where Prayer and Liturgy takes place:

Anywhere a prayerful atmosphere can be created.

Prayer and Liturgy should take place in school, but the Governing Body have the discretion to organise prayer and liturgy elsewhere on special occasions.

When Prayer and Liturgy takes place:

Prayer and Liturgy need not take place at the beginning of the school day, but at the most appropriate time for the school to ensure that it is a meaningful and prayerful experience for all participants.

Length of Celebrations of the Word

In general, Liturgical Prayer should last one minute for each year of a child's life.

Organisation of Celebrations of the Word

Liturgical Prayer in our school will provide a variety of experiences which:

- Can be led by learners, staff and visitors
- Can be offered for a class, year group, Key Stage or whole school
- Use a balance of quiet reflection, silence, prayers, responses, music, dance, drama, slides, video excerpts or short addresses
- Ensure the theme, focus, delivery length and resources are appropriate to the interests, age range, backgrounds and ability of the learners.
- Set an appropriate prayerful atmosphere with a sense of order and occasion, including entry and exit
- Provide a focus using artefacts, candles, symbols and lighting
- Respect the freedom of learners and staff in the invitation to prayer and worship
- Ensure the possibility of conscious, active participation of all present

Planning Prayer and Liturgy

All Celebrations of the Word should be planned. Diocese planning sheets should be filled in by anyone planning Celebrations of the Word (staff and pupil).

All Celebrations of the Word should be planned around appropriate scripture. Scripture should be at the forefront of all worship.

All Celebrations of the Word should be planned to contain elements of 'Hearing', 'Seeing', 'Doing' and 'Thinking.'

Celebrations of the Word should be planned to follow this sequence:

Stage	Things to think about/Points of note
Gathering	How do you want people to enter, what are they going to see – how will you set the tone? We always start with the sign of the cross. Explain why we have gathered and make it clear what we are going to be thinking about.
The Word	Scripture should be near the start. It should be the heart and inspiration of the Liturgical Prayer.
Response	How do we respond to what we have heard and to the theme
Mission	How will we send people out and what do you want them to do?

Evaluation

Children should evaluate the effectiveness of Celebrations of the Word using the diocese 'Evaluation sheets' for at least one Celebration of the Word per week. Staff and students should reflect on these strengths and weaknesses identified and develop AFLs in future COTW.

Recording

COTW planning sheets, evidence and evaluations should be collated in each classes COTW book.

Timetable

A COTW activity will take place each day. On a Monday, there is a Gospel liturgy led by the headteacher, on a Thursday children sing hymns and on a Wednesday there is child led COTW in the Hall. During the week, children lead class COTW, within their class and within their key stage.

Themes

The theme plan links with the church's year, Come and See topics, SEAL topics and Nurturing Human Wholeness themes. They also follow the 'Word of the Week'.

Teachers encourage children to be involved in planning and delivering COTW, dependent on their ability. This may include preparing the prayer focus, selecting music or readings to be used, or leading the response in informal prayer. It is expected that by Year 3, that children will be able to plan and lead class COTW.

Considerations when planning and delivering COTW

COTW 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.
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

COTW is an educational activity or experience:

- To which all can contribute from which all can gain.
- It is central to education in our school and forms an essential part of the school's overall provision for prayer and worship.
- COTW in our school respects the diversity of belief and commitment, but it is Catholic in character, reflecting in the liturgical tradition of the Church and having Christ at its heart.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We will review this policy every two years with reference to the variety of experiences offered to our children. We will assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout our school.