

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and liturgy Policy



**Together, in Jesus,
we love,
learn, create
and celebrate!**

Reviewed Autumn 2023

Approved by Governors:

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. H. St. John".

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Introduction -Understanding Prayer and Liturgy (From the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, September 2023)

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**

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.



Prayer and Liturgy Policy for St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

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All pupils attending Maintained School should take part in a daily collective worship
- Education Reform Act 1988.

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. We are now transitioning from the secular words Collective Worship to Prayer and Liturgy, in anticipation of the new Prayer and Liturgy Archdiocesan policy to be implemented in September 2024.

Collective Worship in a Catholic school is more than just a legal requirement. It is central to Catholic education and forms an essential part of school's overall provision for prayer and liturgy.

Collective worship in a Catholic school, whilst respecting diversity of belief and commitment will be Catholic in character, reflecting the liturgical tradition of the Church and having Christ at its heart.

Collective worship takes into account 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



The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy formally Collective Worship

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.'

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 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.



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Prayer and Liturgy at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy at St Gregory's aims to -

- ◆ Foster a personal relationship with Jesus through prayer and action
- ◆ Provide different opportunities and experiences for pupils and staff to worship God
- ◆ Reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs
- ◆ Enable and encourage a sense of belonging
- ◆ Encourage a common ethos and shared values and re-in force positive attitudes

In order to achieve a sense of belonging and a common ethos, we try to involve as many of our school community as possible. Pupil, teachers, support staff and any visitors gather together to begin the week in prayer based, on the previous day's Gospel.

Teachers plan and enable prayer to take place each day in classes or in phase groups.

We invite parents to join each class for bi-weekly masses and our 'Stay and Pray' Class Family prayer sessions.

Occasions for worship include liturgy of the word, prayer times, services of reconciliation, circle prayer, masses in school and in church, the celebrations of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

During our celebrations we try to:-

- * make our prayer and liturgies appropriate for our children
- * to include all who are attending by ensuring the possibility of conscious active participation of all present
- * encourage children to lead where appropriate
- * to use a balance of scripture, quiet reflection, silent prayer, responses, prayer, music, songs and hymns, dance, drama, guided meditation.
- * provide a focus using artefacts, candles, symbols and lighting

Places for Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy can take place anywhere. As we hear in Matthew's gospel— .
'For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them'. Matthew 18:20

The School Hall

'Praise God in His Holy Place' (P.100:1 P.150:1)

Whole school or phase prayer and liturgy takes place in the school hall or the outdoor Cathedral.



Outside



'Heaven and Earth are full of your glory' (Roman Missal)

Class, phase or whole school prayer and liturgy can on occasions take advantage of our wonderful local environment and take place in the school grounds and in our Peace Garden— our outdoor Cathedral!

Classroom *'Here I am to worship'* (Tim Hughes)

Class acts of collective worship take place in the classroom or make use of our beautiful grounds.



Church

'Praise God in His Holy place' (P 150:1)

Mass and Liturgies occasionally take place in the Church.

Give Glory to God!

Times for Prayer and Liturgy

The timing of the prayer can be flexible and can be at any time of the day, so as to ensure it is a meaningful and prayerful opportunity for all participants.

Whole school Prayer and Liturgy mainly can take place during morning assemblies, however, a clear distinction between the prayer and assembly is always made clear for example in celebration assembly.

Whole School Prayer and Liturgy -

The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher leads a time of prayer each Monday morning with all staff attending. The theme of the prayer is based upon the previous day's Gospel and follows the Gather/Listen/Respond/Go Forth pattern for prayer.

On Friday morning the head or deputy lead an assembly for the whole school and include a time of prayer following up the topic from Monday or anticipating the weekend's Gospel.

Class or Phase times of prayer are varied and are centred upon scripture and can include the children's own experiences. Sometimes, events in the local area, the world in general, stories from the life of Jesus, feast days or a theme connected with the current RE topic will form the basis of the prayer.

The theme may be to do with the Come and See topic or seasonal, topical, some national event, a sporting triumph or a tragedy which has taken place. The theme is simply a vehicle for exploring some aspect of universal experience, and allows all the members of the class to share for a few moments, ideas which may have a bearing on their own experience or life.



During the time of prayer, children are always given the opportunity for reflection and frequently compose their own prayers which may be shared with everybody. They are also invited to respond through prayer, singing and responding to psalms or readings.



Focus should be made on a specific item, a candle may be lit, music may be played while children say their own prayers or listen to others.



Children are taught the ways in which to greet the Gospel and use the correct responses when hearing Scripture.

A list of the themes and topics to be covered is shared with staff at the beginning of each term.

Major Celebrations During the Year -

Harvest Mass or Liturgy - At Harvest Festival there is a Liturgy or Mass for all pupils, staff and parents joining together in the school Hall or Church for a Liturgy or Mass of Thanksgiving. Readings, dance, mime, prayers and art work are prepared by the children to celebrate the theme. Gifts for the Harvest, collected by the whole school, are then distributed to the Nugent Care Society or local food bank.

Awe and Wonder week -During our Awe and Wonder week, our Prayer concentrates on giving thanks for the beauty and wonder of God's great creation.

Service of Remembrance

Children attend an age appropriate service/liturgy of Remembrance on or around the 11th November. At the service/liturgy we remember the fallen from Lydiate and light a candle in remembrance each and every man lost in the First World War.



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Advent - During Advent we hold four special 'celebration of the word' on the themes of Stay Awake, Prepare, Rejoice and Wait. There is a special focus table including the Advent wreath. Class Cribs sets with a candle, suggested prayers and a diary are sent home with each child for one night during Advent.

Christmas - At Christmas the Infant children lead us in prayer through a Nativity play and all the whole school gather on the final day of term for Carols by Candlelight.



Lent/Easter - During Lent the pupils organise fund raising events for the Good Shepherd Fund and there is a focus in Prayer times on Giving things up, Taking things up, Helping those in need and Prayer. Some years pupils take part in a musical dance/drama with readings telling the Easter story. This is performed for the school, parents and parishioners.

Holy Days - If a particular Holy Day falls on a school day the children are encouraged to attend the evening masses offered in the local area. If Father is available we attend mass either in the church or within school.

Leavers Mass - Yr 6 pupils choose their own hymns, readings, prepare dance, and write their own bidding prayers for this very special Mass in school. Parents are invited to join in the celebration

Services of Reconciliation - Y4 pupils participate in a Service of Reconciliation at school and visiting priests assist the Parish priest for children to make their first confession.



Planning for Prayer and Liturgy

At St Gregory's School we plan with reference to the Sunday Gospel, Church's seasons, Come and See topics, significant dates and events, the curriculum, sensitivity to the issues of the local community and the wider world.

We plan through consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies.

In planning our Prayer times we are mindful that taking part in any Prayer or Liturgy implies more than simply passive attendance, **it requires a response** (through word or song) from those assembled.

Guidance for Leading Prayer and Liturgy

Gather: consider how to begin, to create a receptive atmosphere for example with a bell, quiet music, a hymn. Begin with the Sign of the Cross and light a candle. Introduce the theme of the prayer.

Listen: This is where the reading from Scripture comes and is central to the prayer and liturgy. Children should greet the Gospel with an Alleluia or Gospel Greeting depending on the time of the year. They should also use the correct response at the end of a piece of scripture– See Appendix. .



Respond: This is the chance to reflect and respond on what we have heard. We may be invited to reflect upon the scripture, or sing a response or join in intercessions in some way. All gathered must have some active way of responding, in their own hearts, spoken or sung.

Go Forth The prayer should be brought to a conclusion with something to do during that day or week, drawing upon the theme and piece of scripture. Sometimes children may be given an object or prayer card to remember the focus of the prayer.

Creating the Environment for Prayer

At St Gregory's, we aim to create an environment that encourages prayer.

- prayerful images
- appropriate music
- suitable lighting
- comfortable posture
- atmosphere of peacefulness



Focus/ Prayer Table

Each classroom has a designated area for prayer. The prayer table may contain such items as a candle, bible, plant or flowers, focus for that topic, a cross. A prayer table would contain a small selection of the following:-

- Candles - candles remind us that Jesus is amongst us and is the Light of the World.
- Bible - the word of God should be given prominence on the prayer table
- Flowers/Plants - greenery is a reminder of God's beautiful world and of the gift of creation
- Sacred images - crucifix, statue, pictures of Jesus and Mary
- Interesting objects - variety of stone or shells give a good focus for prayer
- Meaningful pictures - pictures or photographs appropriate to the theme
- Oil burners - aromatic smells are relaxing for prayer

The list is endless....be creative!!

Cloths

The colour of the cloth can be different for each liturgical season. The change of colour highlights the mood and focus of the prayer of the Church.

- Purple - Advent and Lent
- White - Christmas, Easter, special feast days
- Gold - Special Celebrations
- Red - Pentecost, Good Friday
- Green - Ordinary Time (Pentecost to Advent and After Christmas to Lent)

Recording

At St Gregory's, Collective Worship is recorded through display, pupils contributions, prayers and photographs.

We also have liturgy files and scrapbooks in which we celebrate our times of prayer.

The Prayer and Liturgy Leader keeps a brief note of the themes and resources used along with photographic evidence of class displays and focus areas.



Monitoring and Evaluation of Prayer and Liturgy Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the staff of the school and the Governors Curriculum Committee. It was last reviewed in Autumn term 2023, and will be reviewed further during the coming year, when we have received training in using the new Prayer and Liturgy directory, 'With you always'.

The RE Co-ordinator and Headteacher sensitively observes times of prayer by joining in.

Prayer times are evaluated at staff meetings.

In evaluating our Prayer and Liturgy we try to ensure that the children and staff are receiving a variety of Prayerful experiences.



Appendix—Useful supportive documents

- ~ Mass responses sheet
- ~ Stepping Stones— Liverpool Archdiocese
- ~ Pages 40 - 42 of Teachers information from 'Come and See'
- ~ Prayer and Liturgy directory 2023, 'With you always'.

