



St. Edward's Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2022-2023



*"How powerful prayer is! May we never lose the courage to say:
Lord, give us your peace" - Pope Francis*

St Edward's Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

“Live, Love and Serve.”

At St Edwards we endeavour to develop and care for the whole child through our teaching and sharing of the Catholic faith.

We aim to develop an awareness of God's love for each person in the school community, through our work and prayer.

We aim to show our love of God in the way we care and value each other and ourselves.

In the delivery of the curriculum we aspire to equip children with those skills necessary to become contributing members of society and responsible adults.

We recognize and encourage our pupils' individual gifts and talents.

St Edward's staff will aim to provide a good quality of education striving to achieve the very highest standards for all its pupils and, at the same time, to develop lively critical minds.

We will aim to develop each pupil's appreciation of education as a lifelong and enjoyable process.

St Edwards School wishes to work in partnership with the parish and families, local schools and community groups recognising that only by working together can the school make its contribution towards the development of committed Christians and active members of the Church.

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian worship 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 and recognises the words of Christ: "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I" (Matthew 18:20). 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.'*¹

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship 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.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that 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.

Prayer and Liturgy means that there must be a gathering and this will be acknowledged by the leader. It may consist of liturgical prayer (paraliturgy), prayer, mediation, song, dance, drama, music, silence and in other formats and mediums too.

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.

In this school, the responsibility for arranging Prayer and Liturgy rests 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 Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St Edward's Primary School

Worship in St Edward's Primary School is more than just a legal requirement. It 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 The Church;
- Those from other Christian traditions - or none;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy in St Edward's Primary School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils, staff, parents and our parish family:

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

- 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.'

Definitions and forms of worship

Collective Worship is the legal term for the way in which we connect spiritually with God, our creator, following the example of Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit. This comes in a multitude of forms and there is no right or wrong way to give glory to God.

Mass is at the centre of the celebration of our faith. We celebrate the mystery of the Eucharist as a faith community, praising alongside our parish community of The Holy Name of Mary. Fr Tom is our parish priest and leads our prayer and worship.

Liturgy has a distinct, formalised format that mirrors that of the Mass. There are four sections: Gathering (coming together as a prayer community); Word (listening to God as found in the scriptures); Response (prayer time, reflection or action to digest and ponder over God's word); Mission (taking the message from the liturgy out into our school, home, community and beyond).

Prayer, according to St. John Damascene, is the "raising of one's mind and heart to God." This can be vocalised or internal, contemplative prayer. We can use traditional prayers of the Church or our own thoughts and words.

Principles

All acts of worship in St Edward's Primary 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.² Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

The Organisation of Prayer and Liturgy at St. Edward's

We place Christ at the centre of all we do and therefore Prayer and Liturgy is crucial in developing a way for children to develop a relationship with Christ and come to know him better. 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.

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Prayer and Liturgy and Assembly Timetable

Monday: Whole School Liturgical Prayer 9:00 am

Tuesday: Class Worship

Wednesday: The "Wednesday Word" KS1 Liturgical Prayer in classes; Y3/4 Liturgical Prayer at 9:00am; Y5 Liturgical Prayer at 9:30am; Y6 Liturgical Prayer at 10:00am

Thursday: Class Worship

Friday: Whole School Celebration Assembly 10:00am (including a time for shared prayer)

Whole School Prayer and Liturgy

The Head of School/Executive Head Teacher leads whole school in Prayer and Liturgy every 2-3 weeks, with individual classes leading worship in the weeks between. The theme is closely linked with the liturgical year so that all members of the school community have an understanding of the readings, colours and messages we listen to and see on Sunday at mass. However, this act of worship may address current issues, events in the week (both secular and religious) or other feasts in the Church's year.

Friday's Assembly celebrates our children and the gifts given to us by God, sharing our achievements and talents. While this is not an act of worship within itself, it will begin or end with a form of shared prayer.

Key Stage Worship

Teachers lead Prayer and Liturgy in their Key Stage Assembly each week. This takes place on Wednesdays. The teachers lead worship by using the "Wednesday Word." Physical copies of the Wednesday Word are no longer produced since the Covid-19 Pandemic; therefore, a digital version is shared on social media each week.

Class Prayer

Teachers in school seek to empower children; they lead and model good practice and also give children the opportunity to participate, take ownership of their learning and develop their own relationship with God. Teachers aim to give children a real voice in planning and leading worship. It is important that we all look to children as having an important role to play in leading our faith communities; Christ himself said, "Let the little children come to me" (Matthew 19:4), welcoming them as models of faith - and so should we. We will pray together as a class at regular intervals each day and share in Prayer and Liturgy daily, either as a whole school or an individual class. On a Tuesday and a Thursday, pupils and teachers lead worship within the classroom. This can be in any medium of worship. The theme for this worship may be based on our Come and See RE curriculum, the liturgical calendar, current events etc. The children will lead their own worship within the classroom at least once a week, though this is related to the pupils' age with regards to their level of involvement.

- EYFS: the theme and style of worship is decided by adults and pupils prepare the Prayer Focus, participating as appropriate.
- KS1: the theme and style of worship is decided by adults and pupils have varying levels of input, according to their ability and confidence. This progresses through the key stage.
- KS2: the theme and style of worship is decided by children with increasing independence, though some support is still given.

Each class has a Prayer Space that changes regularly. This is a quiet area within the classroom setting where the children can encounter God at a time of their choosing. This usually involves some form of reading, reflection and action.

Furthermore, prayers are said at key moments of the day such as morning, before and after lunch and at the end of the day in each class.

Parent Worship

Parents are invited to worship with our school community at key events in the year, such as the EYFS Welcome Liturgical Prayer and the Y6 Leavers' Liturgical Prayer. They are also welcomed to participate in giving glory to God during specific liturgical seasons, such as Advent and Lent.

Parents are also invited to attend Stay and Pray sessions in every class, whereby they participate in the planning and delivery of our shared worship. This timetable is established across each Key Stage.

The Wednesday Word is also shared online each week for our families to use to support their prayer life at home.

Mass

A Mass rota has been developed for the children in order to develop the links between School and Parish. Children in KS2 attend Mass on a rotating system each Thursday. This allows our children to give glory to God and meet him in the Eucharist: the foundation of our Catholic faith.

Recording

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded using Liturgical Prayer planners which are used in conjunction with "Come and See" at the end of each topic. In addition to this, class teachers also will keep a record of their weekly worship in a Prayer and Liturgy floor book which is to be monitored by CW leader.

More informal forms of prayer are recorded by a variety of means, including reflections, journaling and photographs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and Liturgy is monitored using Prayer and Liturgy monitoring form, (Appendix 1).

Monitoring of Prayer and Liturgy will take place termly.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform SEF 48.

Resources

RE and CW Leaders have access to all resources and they are distributed as and when necessary relating to the Church's liturgical calendar. Classes also have a range of their own resources to aid and enhance worship.

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.

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.

DATE FOR REVIEW: July 2023

The Co-Ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy:
Mrs C Gardner

³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Appendix 1

Year Group: _____ Monitoring of Collective Worship Date: _____

Focus	Comments
Planning (discussed with teacher before or after celebration) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the children been involved in the planning? Has the Act of Worship been planned around a theme/feast? 	
Structure (If Liturgy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the four parts (Gather, Word, Response, Mission) be distinctly identified? How did children gather? Was the Word appropriate and treated reverently? How did children respond to the Word? Was there a clear Mission, an evident message at the end of the liturgy? 	
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or adult led? Depending on the age of the children were they as involved as possible in leading? 	
Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were children fully engaged and participating enthusiastically? Was it a prayerful experience? 	
Creativity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How creative was the Act of Worship? Did it include different prayer styles/dance/music etc to enhance the experience? 	
Prayer Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were children able to create focal point, atmosphere for prayer, appropriate for their age? 	
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were liturgical resources used appropriately eg correct liturgical colours, artefacts? 	
ICT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was ICT used to support and enhance the Act of Worship or was it a distraction? 	
Agreed areas for development	

A copy of this monitoring sheet has been given to the class teacher

Coordinator ...

Class Teacher ...

The Role of the Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for Prayer and Liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer and Liturgy included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and Headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and Liturgy
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
- Informing the Headteacher of standards and developments in Prayer and Liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Prayer and Liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and Headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Prayer and Liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Prayer and Liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development / Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising inservice training and ongoing formation for Prayer and Liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Prayer and Liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the coordinator, the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain.]