



St Lewis' Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

To belong to our school community, to believe in ourselves and Jesus and to become all you are meant to be, following the footsteps of Christ

Signed by:

Mrs AM Harvey

Headteacher

Date: 22.1.26

Mrs M. McGarry

Chair of governors

Date: 22.1.26

Aims and Purpose

At St. Lewis' Catholic Primary School, all children will be introduced to the worship of God and the Liturgy of His Word on an increasing scale as the children progress through the school. We will build upon the children's previous experiences with the Catholic Spirit of the School Mission Statement as the focal point. The staff and Governors should recognise that each child will have a different background with regards to the worship of God.

The aims and purpose of prayer and liturgy at St Lewis':

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God in an atmosphere of joy, happiness and friendliness;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to develop the capacity to listen, to forgive and to ask forgiveness;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to express gratitude;
- to act together as a Christian community;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values such as respect for others, truth, forgiveness and justice;
- to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship and how to lead worship.

What is Prayer and Liturgy?

'Prayer, celebrations of the word, and liturgy form a continuum with silent mediation at one end and a celebration of Mass at the other.' (To love you more dearly - The Prayer and Liturgy Directory 2023)

- Prayer – has been traditionally described as 'lifting up of the hearts and minds to God', which means it involves the whole person – our head as well as our heart. This expresses an understanding that God is concerned and interested about what goes on in our lives; is due our expression of thanksgiving and gratitude and responds to us when we express our needs. The basic dynamic of recognition, thanksgiving and intercession forms the core of all prayer and liturgy.
- Celebrations of the word – As the time allotted to prayer lengthens and the number of people involved grows, there is a corresponding need for more formal structures. The term 'celebration of the word' is used for celebrations which are created for the school community and not taken directly from the liturgical books of the Church. These celebrations will take many forms, but all will proclaim scripture. These will include assemblies, carol services and other gatherings of all or part of the school community. They may draw upon elements of the liturgy, such as texts, symbols and gestures, which help to reinforce their Catholic nature.
- Liturgy – The most familiar forms of the liturgy celebrated in school are the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The liturgical books (Roman Missal and Lectionary) set out the structure to be followed, the words to be spoken, the gestures to be performed, and the symbols to be used when celebrating a liturgy.

Prayer

Celebrations of the word

Liturgy

Christian meditation

Celebrations of the word

Sacraments(e.g. Mass)

Prayer before meals

Assembly

Liturgy of the Hours

Devotions

Benediction

Simple

Complex

More creativity

More rules

Prayer

- Simple structure
- One or two elements
- Balance of familiarity and creativity

Celebrations of the word

- Structured (often in four parts)
- Elements drawn from liturgy
- Place of scripture
- Contrasts and creativity

Liturgy

- Taken from official books
- Complex structures
- Many elements
- Range of

We understand prayer as a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show honour, glory and reverence to God.

Prayer and liturgy may involve all members of the school, children from a Key Stage or a class coming together and participating in an act of worship.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we base our acts of worship on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Catholic Church. However, we conduct our acts of worship in a manner that is sensitive to all religious and educational needs of those 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

While the majority of acts of prayer and liturgy in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the wider community.

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

Why do we celebrate Prayer and Liturgy?

Prayer and liturgy provides opportunities for pupils and staff to come together to worship God and:

- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To reflect on personal belief
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To enable and encourage a sense of belonging
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To mark as special
- To come to terms with
- To give worth to
- To wonder at
- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To take time out
- To build a firm foundation for liturgy
- To enrich the religious experience of children and staff
- To develop community spirit
- To encourage a common mission, ethos and shared values

"It is important to ensure that our prayer reflects the essence of our lives: joy and sorrow, a sense of belonging, a feeling of loneliness, celebration and peace, anger and upset" (R.E. The Primary Years).

Throughout the ages of a primary school, prayer builds upon the natural spontaneous expression of joy, wonder, awe, concern, thanks, sorrow, sadness, anger, fear, disappointment evoked through children's growing awareness of themselves, others and their world.

Prayer is the natural way of expressing the above through words, song, gesture, movement, dance, art, writing, silence. This is developed through having a "focus of reverence" - a special experience of awareness; learning to be still and quiet. Informal words of prayer arise out of the above, in the children's own simple everyday language.

Gradually, formal prayers are introduced either by hearing them said and joining in or learning by heart. With older pupils, children can be introduced to traditional meditation techniques... stilling exercises, use of a mantra, forms of rhythmic prayer etc.

Who participates in Prayer and Liturgy?

Children must have the opportunity to take part in daily Prayer and liturgy and to take an increasing role in planning, preparing and leading an act of worship.

Teachers must plan and enable this to take place each day.

Parents are invited to participate in prayer and liturgy (but also have the legal right to withdraw their child).

Where and when does Prayer and Liturgy take place?

As a rule, all acts of prayer and liturgy should take place on the school premises. However, the Governing Bodies of foundation and special agreement schools have discretion to organise it elsewhere on special occasions.

Classroom: "Where two or three meet in my name I am among them"

School Hall: "With gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God"

Church: "Praise God in His holy place"

In the Open: "Heaven and earth are full of your glory"

Other Venues: "We praise you Lord and bless you"

Legislation does not require prayer and liturgy to take place at a specific time. It need not occur at the beginning of the day but rather at the most appropriate time for the school to ensure that it is a meaningful and prayerful opportunity for all participants. It is important to note that every child must have an opportunity to take part in prayer and liturgy every day.

At St Lewis', daily acts of communal prayer are organized as follows to provide a range of experiences throughout the week for all children:

Monday: Whole School Prayer and Liturgy led by Mrs Harvey

Tuesday: In class Prayer and liturgy

Wednesday: In class Prayer and liturgy

Thursday: In class Prayer and liturgy

Friday: Whole school Prayer and Liturgy to which parents, family and the community are invited on occasion.

Assembly themes are taken from the traditions of the Catholic faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar.

Harvest, Christmas and Easter Celebrations are central whole school celebrations for our school family.

On Friday our Celebration Assembly is two-fold. Prayer is led by the Head Teacher. The second part of the assembly is a celebration of the achievements and learning of the children during the week. We invite parents to our Friday assemblies, and we encourage them to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school, work together to support the achievements of our children. We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Principles of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy should be inclusive. It should:

- Christ should be at the centre of Prayer and liturgy
- Be led by teachers, visitors and children

- Be pupil centred, related to pupil's own experience
- Acknowledge diversity
- Involve pupils as active participants and match the needs of pupils
- Foster a sense of community

Prayer and Liturgy should be educational. It should:

- Be a learning experience
- Be related to pupil's own experiences
- Be properly planned with reference to the school Mission Statement, policy and procedures
- Relate to the liturgical calendar, reflecting significant seasons and dates
- Relate to other curriculum activities and should be used to celebrate learning at the end of each branch of learning in R.E.
- Be recorded through plans, displays, photographs, children's contributions etc, making note of themes, leaders,
- pupil groupings and resources
- Be evaluated regularly by staff and children to ensure high quality prayer and liturgy is being shared
- Provide the school with opportunities to reflect on the education it provides
- Have a purpose and celebrate educational achievements
- Be consistent with the aims of the school

Prayer and Liturgy should be spiritual. It should:

- Be time to be still and reflect, and be made special
- Make pupils feel calm, relaxed and secure
- Include a variety of silence, reflection, word, action, music and imagery
- Provide opportunities for children to take part in a variety of spiritual opportunities
- A time for reflection
- Provide an opportunity for children to take part in worship

Prayer and Liturgy should offer:

- A focus point using artefacts, candles, symbols and lighting.
- Time for reflection
- Communal prayers
- Private prayer
- Scriptural reference
- Music/dance/mime/singing – there should be regular opportunities for singing both hymns and liturgical texts eg Holy, Holy, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation

Children participate in all areas of prayer and liturgy, participating fully in acts of worship. They are also involved in preparation and delivery, regularly leading class prayer and liturgy sessions

Children's Involvement - Step 1

The teacher always models and leads.

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts – given from two choices
- Help to set up focus table and notice the liturgical colour

Gather

- Sing a gather Song
- Make the Sign of Cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Reverence for the **Word of God in Scripture** should be shown and expected from the earliest years.

Respond

- Be silent and be with God
- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for
- Model and say traditional prayers e.g. Hail Mary, Our Father.

Evaluate

- What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?

Reflect quietly

Being still

Children's Involvement - Step 2

The teacher always models and leads.

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts – given from three/four choices;
- Share the theme or message and ask children which hymn they could sing from two or three they know.
- Help to set up focus table and notice the liturgical colour

Gather

- Sing a gather Song
- Make the Sign of Cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Reverence for the **Word of God in Scripture** should be shown and expected from the earliest years.
- Read from Scripture.

Respond

- Be silent and be with God
- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for
- Model and say traditional prayers
- Heartfelt responses

Evaluate

- What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?
- Why did you choose the hymn/song/focus?

Reflect quietly
Being still

Participate in periods
of reflection in
response to a given
stimulus
*Think to myself about
what I have seen or
heard*

Children's Involvement - Step 3

The teacher always models and leads and supports children in preparing and beginning to lead in parts.

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts – given from a wider choice
- Share the theme or message and ask children which hymn/song might be suitable
- Give a theme/message – set up a focus table, write prayers for Respond.
- Help choose the liturgical colour
- Help to support ICT equipment*

Gather

- Sing a gather Song
- Make the Sign of Cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Read from Scripture.
- Reverence for the **Word of God in Scripture** should be shown and expected from the earliest years.

Respond

- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for
- Lead a hymn/song
- Heartfelt responses

Evaluate

- What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?
- Why did you choose the hymn/song/focus?
- How did our focus help us today?

Reflect quietly

Being still

Participate in periods of reflection in response to a given stimulus

Think to myself about what I have seen or heard

Show understanding of the importance of stillness and quiet during times of reflection and prayer

Be still, be quiet, think to myself and say a prayer

Children's Involvement - Step 4

The teacher always models and leads and supports children in preparing and beginning to lead in parts.

Prepare

- Choose suitable artefacts – given from a wider choice
- Share the theme or message and ask children which hymn/song might be suitable
- Give a theme/message – set up a focus table, support children in finding suitable Scripture, write prayers for Respond.
- Help choose the liturgical colour
- Help to support ICT equipment*
- Support planning for larger liturgical gatherings

Gather

- Sing a gather Song
- Make the Sign of Cross
- Greet everyone

Listen

- Read from Scripture.
- Reverence for the **Word of God in Scripture** should be shown and expected from the earliest years.

Respond

- Pass an object around and take turns to share
- Say prayers together
- Say who/what they want to pray for
- Lead a hymn/song
- Heartfelt responses

Evaluate

- What did we hear about today? What will it help us to do?
- Why did you choose the hymn/song/focus?
- How did our focus help us today?

LEADERS OF ...
FAITH IN ACTION
CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

- ✓ Reflect quietly- *Being still*
- ✓ Participate in periods of reflection in response to a given stimulus - *Think to myself about what I have seen or heard*
- ✓ Show understanding of the importance of stillness and quiet during times of reflection and prayer - *Be still, be quiet, think to myself and say a prayer*
- ✓ Demonstrate an appreciation of the elements needed for reflection and contemplation or prayer (places, times, foci, stimuli) - *What do we need to do to reflect, think and pray? What helps us reflect, think and pray?*