



ST. GEORGE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

At St George's, God calls us by name to love,
learn and achieve together, safe in the palm of His hands.

'I have called you by your name; you are mine' /isaiah 43

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

At St George's we believe Prayer and Liturgy plays a fundamental part in the daily life of our school. It enables us to join together as one community in prayer and worship. Prayer can be defined as 'talking to God'. It is personal time to open our hearts to God and bring everything in our hearts to him. Through the Apostle Paul, God asked us to pray. Prayer can bring about a powerful change in our lives and we strongly believe that prayer on a daily basis should be instilled in our children.

Communication is the foundation for success in any relationship. When we communicate openly and freely with each other, we learn to know each other as individuals. This principle also applies to our relationship with God. By talking to God, we can learn more about who He is and what plan He has for us.

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.

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.

At St. George's, Prayer and Liturgy is far more than a legal requirement, "it is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to pupils' moral and spiritual development." (Catholic education.org)

Britain is a multifaith, multicultural society and therefore Prayer and Liturgy still plays an important part of every school. Prayer and Liturgy offers schools the opportunities to explore the values at the heart of their ethos. It also gives pupils opportunities to reflect.

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. George's Catholic Primary School

We "seek to integrate life and worship. Our daily lives lead into worship; our worship must flow over into our lives."

(Assemblies Vol. One ~ J. Groden and C. O'Donnell)

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.*

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy in St. George'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 acts of worship in St. George'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.¹ Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

Planning, content and celebration

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.

¹ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

Opportunities for prayer and reflection

- Pupils pray 4 times daily; in the morning, at lunchtime, after lunch and at the end of the day
- KS2 pray the Angelus at lunchtime, followed by a mealtime prayer of thanks
- KS1 pray the Hail Mary at lunchtime in preparation for the Angelus at KS2
- Opportunities for prayer and worship are planned as part of the RE curriculum
- Children are encouraged to take ownership over prayer and as a school we promote pupil led prayer both within RE lessons and at other times that come together as a community.
- Prayers are offered at the beginnings of staff and Governors meetings.
- To ensure prayer is inclusive, the children are encouraged to sing the 'Our Father' in Makaton.

Children are taught daily prayers and also the prayers and responses of the Mass as appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Each classroom has a focal prayer table and an RE area, which reflects the liturgical colours. Children pray, together with their teacher, at the beginning and end of the day and at lunchtime the whole school stop at 12 noon to pray the Angelus or Hail Mary is Key stage 1. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer and individual reflection exist both in the classroom and during Prayer and Liturgy.

Prayer takes many forms and may be carefully structured or more informal. Children are encouraged to pray for the needs of others and for special requests. They may themselves ask prayers for particular intentions.

Above all, prayer is about communication with God: we both speak and listen to Him. It may take the form of adoration, thanksgiving, repentance or

intercession. Children and staff alike are encouraged to be drawn into prayer and worship through a variety of celebrations. These are enhanced by:

- *hymns*
- *reflective music*
- *silence*
- *spoken and sung prayers*
- *movement / dance*
- *scripture*
- *stories*
- *atmosphere – candles, icons, focal points*
- *drama.*

Parents play an invaluable role in leading their children in prayer. They are informed of the class prayers for their child and are invited to celebrate Mass and assemblies when their child is involved.

Assemblies

The timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below.

- *KS1 Assemblies (Mondays)*
- *Ks2 Assemblies (Tuesdays)*
- *Whole school hymn practice (Wednesdays)*
- *Whole school celebration assembly (Fridays)*

Assemblies are an opportunity for the children to come together as a school, upper/lower school or class groups to pray, celebrate and give some thought to God's word. Assemblies may be led by the headteacher, a teacher or special visitor and each assembly carries a spiritual message for the children to reflect upon and incorporate into their own lives. Assemblies follow the liturgical year, our school Values programme or the curriculum theme. They may also be used to focus on current issues and initiatives involving the whole school.

Key stage assemblies at the beginning of the week are led by the Headteacher and reflect the weekends Gospel. The Gospel values which we instil at St. George's are integrated into the theme of the assembly and sometimes visual resources from TEN:TEN are used to support a better understanding.

Each class prepares a class assembly during the year. The theme of the assembly is a reflection of their current RE topic or a current event within the church calendar (Pentecost, Advent). All assemblies contain pupil led prayer and a hymn relevant to the theme.

Each week the whole school gathers for Hymn Practice, lead by the R.E. Lead. Hymns are selected to reflect the church liturgical calendar, special events or the current Come and See theme. Children find hymn practise a positive way to connect with God in a creative way. Hymn practise often incorporates actions and dance to enhance the celebration. The liturgy team play an important role in the set up and delivery of the technological side of the worship.

Whole School Masses and Liturgies

Whole school Masses or services are held in the church or the school hall on Holy Days of Obligation and on special occasions. Pupils, particularly our Liturgy team, play an integral role in the planning and preparation of the Mass as well as an active involvement during the service.

Non – Eucharistic liturgies are held during the Seasons of Advent and Lent within each Key Stage. There are opportunities for older children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In addition to this, classes from yr2-6 prepare a class liturgy which is shared with a member of the senior leadership team and a governor. This is usually held within the autumn term and is an introduction of the class saint.

The whole school is involved in Christmas Concerts and Easter services, held within our school and at the church. We enjoy opening up our school to our parents and governors to celebrate these occasions,

- EYFS Nativity
- KS1 Nativity
- KS2 Carol concert
- Year 3 and 4 Stations of the cross
- Year 6 Leavers Mass

During May and October pupils and staff are invited to pray the Rosary. There are dedicated Rosary sessions which are led by the Liturgy team and the RE Leader. As a school we take time to recognise and remember Mary, Mother of Jesus as a role model for how we should live our lives with a humbleness and compassion.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Class Liturgies are attended by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or R.E. Leader and a governor.

Whole school and Class assemblies are attended by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and R.E. Leader.

Junior/Infant assemblies are monitored once a term by either the headteacher or R.E. Leader.

Resources

All resources for Worship and Prayer are located in the purple boxes in the main hall and the reception area. The R.E. leader ensures resources are up-to-date and prayers devised by Bishop Allen or Pope Francis are distributed to teachers and used in classes.

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'²

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.

Other opportunities

St George's church also offers children the opportunity to participate in a Nativity service on Christmas eve and also a child led Good Friday service.

Sacraments

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and The Eucharist is an integral part of the *Come and See* programme. However, full preparation is undertaken within the parish setting, being supported in school where possible.

Role of R.E. Co-ordinator in Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for Prayer and Liturgy
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy is part of our yearly Action Plan for Religious Education
- 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
- Supporting Early Careers Teachers in their development and understanding of Prayer and Liturgy
- 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
- 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
- Liaising with our Parish Priest, Fr Brett about masses and liturgical events
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community

- *Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education*
- *Leading and organising in service training and ongoing formation for Prayer and Liturgy and introducing the Religious Education Directory (R.E.D)*
- *Attending appropriate Diocesan courses, reporting back and leading staff training*
- *Keeping up to date by personal reading*
- *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*
- *Ensuring resources are being used effectively*

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the R.E. Leader and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every three years. However, due to the introduction of the new Religious Education Directory (R.E.D), which we will be introducing into our school in September 2024, this policy will be reviewed in one years' time.

This policy was agreed by the Governing Body on 15th September 2023

Review date September 2024