

Policy for

Collective Worship, Liturgy and Prayer



Date of policy:

Autumn 2017

Next review:

March 2019

Review period – 2 Years

Committee:

Full Governing Body

MISSION:

“At St Modwen’s we Achieve, Believe, Care.”

Safeguarding: All staff plan their learning for pupils in this subject by adhering to the guidelines laid out in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018’. All staff are trained and told to adhere to the ‘Guidance for Safer Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings October 2015’

This Policy covers all offline and online activity by the same principles and is used in conjunction with our related policies for Equal Opportunities, Disability Access Arrangements, SEN and Inclusion, Racial Equality and Harassment, Catholic Life (including Prevent strategies and SMSC) and the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct.

Introduction

The Diocesan Department of Religious Education is pleased to be able to offer this guidance on Liturgy and Collective Worship in Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Our intention is to support schools in their endeavours to meet not only legal and diocesan requirements, but to provide quality experiences of prayer and liturgy that support pupils’ spiritual development. At the same time we would want to help every member of the school community develop their understanding of what it means to be part of the life of prayer and worship at the heart of the Catholic Church.

The term “Collective Worship” is used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase used readily in a Catholic context. In this policy we interchange the term “Collective Worship” with “Prayer and Liturgy, ” in accordance with diocesan guidelines. The guidelines we have used in formulating this policy are truly concerned with communal acts of prayer and the liturgical celebrations of the Church that will form part of everyday life in a Catholic school.

Prayer and Liturgy – Our Search for God and God’s Search for Us

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that we are in search of God. In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence and that they always bear a desire for the one who calls them into existence.¹ In reflecting upon the human relationship with God we must remember that God calls us first to come to him. “*Man may*

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2566

*forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to the mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart."*²

The Prayer of Jesus

It is in the life of Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God, that we see made manifest our vision for prayer and worship. His prayer is an act of praise and surrender to the Father. The gospels illustrate for us the reality of Jesus' life being lived out in accordance with His Father's will. He praises and blesses the Father in prayer, he thanks him for the wonders he has done; he spends time alone with him, and he asks the Father to help him complete his will even in times of trial and suffering. His prayer to the Father is always accompanied by a prayer for the world, those close to him and to ask forgiveness for those who brought him to his death on the cross. In this prayer of Jesus we see the depth of union that exists between him and the Father and indeed the whole human race.

In the prayer of Jesus we are also taught how to pray. *"Like a wise teacher he takes hold of us where we are and leads us progressively toward the Father."*³ The teaching of Jesus is a proclamation, a call to conversion. For all those willing to listen to his words he offers them the opportunity to place their whole dependence upon God the Father, and allow the Kingdom of God to come to them. He calls the world to a bold confidence in God. *Whatever you ask for in prayer believe that you receive it, and you will."*⁴ Jesus is saddened by the *"lack of faith"* of his own neighbours and the *"little faith"*⁵ However, he admires the Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman who demonstrate a bold confidence in him.⁶

*"When Jesus openly entrusts to his disciples the mystery of prayer to the Father he reveals to them what their prayer and ours must be, once he has returned to the Father in his glorified humanity. What is new is to "ask in his name"*⁷*Faith in the Son introduces the disciples into the knowledge of the Father, because Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life."*⁸*It means keeping the commandments of Jesus, it means abiding with him in the Father who, in him, so loves us that he abides with us. In this new covenant the certitude that our petitions will be heard is founded upon the prayer of Jesus."*⁹

The prayer of Jesus to the Father is a true prayer of self giving. The Last Supper on the eve of his Passion is a true reminder to us that in Jesus, God turns away from himself and offers his life for the life of the world. Pope Benedict describes this as love in its most radical form. At this Institution of the Eucharist Christ commands his disciples to, *"do this in memory of me."* He makes known to them that when they celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist they will come to know his complete giving and join their lives to his offering.

The Prayer of the Church

² *Ibid.* no. 2567

³ *Ibid.* no. 2607

⁴ *Mk 11:24*

⁵ *Mk 6:6; Mt 8:26*

⁶ *Mt 8:10; 15:28*

⁷ *Jn 14:13*

⁸ *Jn 14:6*

⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2614

From the time of Pentecost the apostles and those who came to share in their faith in Christ prayed together. They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and to the prayers.¹⁰ For those born into a new life in Christ, prayer and worship is essentially a community action, the action of the Church. At the same time, the Church recognises that the prayer it offers is always united with the prayer of Christ himself. St. Paul acknowledges in his letters that it is through Christ that the Spirit has been poured into our hearts and it is this same Spirit that makes us cry out, “Abba, Father.”

Prayer and Liturgy is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise, thanksgiving and intercession to God the Father through Jesus Christ his beloved Son, united in the power of the Holy Spirit who moves us to pray. Therefore it involves the “*raising of one’s mind and heart to God*”¹¹ engaging every aspect of ourselves as individuals and a community of people. In celebrating the liturgy of the Church, especially the Eucharist the salvation that Christ came to bring is made present and offered to all who participate in it, so that their lives may be restored and renewed in him.

Intentions of Prayer and Liturgy at St Modwen’s Catholic Primary School:

Our aims are to provide an opportunity for every member of the school community to

- Pray by giving praise thanks and intercession to God using traditional prayers of the Catholic Church and many other sources of prayer that will enable this to take place.
- Come to know and acknowledge the presence of God who is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Continue to nurture a relationship with God through words, symbols, song, gestures and silence
- Take part in an educational experience that is rooted in prayer and the worship of God.
- Contemplate the mystery and transcendence of God who is ever close to us and ever beyond us.
- Develop a sense of wonder and awe at the presence of God amongst us and the gift of life itself.
- Explore the beliefs of the Catholic faith community and their own beliefs.
- Experience what it means to belong or take part in the worshipping community of the Church.
- Acknowledge joys and sorrows, the ordinary and darker side of life as part of a relationship with God.
- Learn how the Liturgy of the Church is structured and the meaning of the different parts of the liturgical rites.
- Be able to make links between communal prayer and liturgy and the daily life.

PRAYER

Prayer should occupy an important role in religious education as a means of expressing and fostering faith. It is not a repetition of meaningless phrases. Through prayer we aim to help our children develop a personal relationship with God. This will not happen unless we create the right atmosphere. Children should be taught to pray in a meaningful way in order to develop a real sense of prayer. They should show a regard for the solemnity of their actions. Teachers should appreciate the value of a focal point in the classroom which will help direct

¹⁰ Acts 2:42

¹¹ Quotation from St. John Damascene

the children's minds to prayer. A special area should be created in each class containing such items as e.g. a crucifix, religious pictures, a statue, a lighted candle, an open bible etc.

It is important that every school day should begin and end with prayer. Children should receive the message from us that prayer is the most important part of the day.

Methods of Prayer

“Prayer is a living relationship with God, in, with and through Jesus Christ; an encounter which takes place in the intimacy of the heart of each person. All prayer, whether private or public is God’s gift, the action of the Holy Spirit in us and an expression of this living relationship. Prayer is an expression of the universal search for God and of the response of Faith to God’s Self-Revelation”.
Notes from the “R.E. Curriculum Directory”.

Children will be helped to discover various methods of prayer, both formal and informal, private and communal, silent and spontaneous and prayer through gesture. All these elements have their place in daily class prayer. Each teacher should be familiar with the recommended prayers and requirements in “Teach us to Pray”.

Elements of class prayer

1. Listening to the Word of God

Using short passages of scripture from the Bible. **This includes Ignatian Prayer as practised by the staff parish prayer partner programme and during staff training opportunities led by parishioners Max and Cecilia Jourdier**

2. Praising God

Using the Psalms, a Eucharistic prayer.

3. Guided Meditation

Allowing a quiet time for reflection is valuable for all our children. Guided meditations will be used, as seen in the scheme of work.

4. Intercession

Using children's own ideas or initiated by the children

5. Thanks

e.g. a beautiful picture, a page from the Bible may be used.

6. Saying Sorry:

To God and each other

7. Spontaneous prayer:

Opportunities exist across the curriculum: thanking and praising God for a piece of work well done, sharing the joys and sorrows of other children, asking God for help and guidance and his protection.

8. Formal Prayer

Prayers of the church, the prayers of the scriptures and the Psalms.

DEVELOPMENT OF PRAYER

Provision for the Early Years Children

- recognise prayer is listening and talking to god
- experience praying with others as celebration
- be able to join in simple prayers and hymns
- experience liturgical celebrations in a variety of simple settings.

Provision for Key Stage One

Opportunities to

- hear, use and join in prayers from scripture and tradition
- use their own words for prayer
- hear about and explore Jesus' prayer to his Father
- hear about and explore ways in which people pray in church

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Knowledge and understanding of

- simple prayers of love and sorrow
- some traditional prayers of the church
- how to pray together.
- speaking to God in formal prayer and in their own words
- that in prayer, God speaks.

Provision for Key Stage Two

Opportunities to hear about, explore and deepen their understanding of

- prayer in the Life of Jesus
- the prayer Jesus taught his friends and its significance
- a variety of prayers and prayer forms, formal and informal, used for personal and community prayer
- respect for celebrations of other faith communities and appreciation that prayer has a place in their life

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Knowledge and understanding of

- that Jesus prayed and taught his disciples to pray
- some traditional prayers
- the variety of forms of prayer in the church
- that other faith communities have significant celebrations and a variety of forms of prayer.
- Crucial to the children's spiritual development is their understanding of the role of prayer and meditation, including mindfulness, within this context

Formal prayer

Formal prayer places us in a tradition. We are part of a worshipping community and we wish our children to become familiar with many of the prayers of our Catholic tradition. Formal prayers should be taught to classes in accordance with Diocesan Guidelines.

Other traditional forms of prayer will be encouraged e.g. the Rosary in October, prayers for the dead in November, Stations of the Cross in Lent and prayers to Our Lady in May.

Prayer Services

Children should experience simple prayer services in the classroom from time to time. There are examples of these in several resource books including the Veritas R.E. programme.

Legal Requirements

Circular 1/94 sets out the current legal criteria for providing Collective Worship in schools. This states that a daily act of worship should take place at any time during the day either as a whole school or phase or class activity. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship and the school is duty bound to accept this right. However, liturgy and prayer are such an integral part of school life that parents and indeed prospective parents need to be made aware that it can never be confined to “timetabled slots” but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those specifically structured. It is the responsibility of the governing body to make arrangements for Collective Worship after consultation with the head teacher.

In a Catholic Voluntary Aided School, governors must also take account of the School Trust Deed which states that acts of Collective Worship shall be consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church. Foundation governors have a particular responsibility for seeing, so far as is practicable, that the Catholic character of the school is reflected in Collective Acts of Worship.

The daily Act of Worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and should not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. It must be distinctive and be able to be identified as such if it is to meet legal requirements. The governing body also has the discretion to allow Collective Worship to take place outside of the school for example in the church for special occasions.

Section 5 inspections are required to report on whether the school fulfils its statutory responsibility for Collective Worship. The content of Collective Worship will be inspected by the Section 48 inspection team.

Diocesan Requirements which we follow at St Modwen’s

The policy of the Archdiocese has always acknowledged that Prayer and Liturgy in schools must be planned to meet local needs of the school community. It is the responsibility of the head teacher and governing body to discover the best possible

provision that could be made for the school community. In making those decisions the following needs to be carefully considered.

- Opportunities on a regular basis for the whole school to gather together for Prayer and Liturgy.
- Opportunities for phase and class acts of Prayer and Liturgy to take place.
- Prayer to be integral part of the beginning and end of each day, as well as at lunchtime for all members of the school community
- Prayer and Liturgy is rooted in the Liturgical Calendar of the Church. This should include seasons, solemnities, feasts, memorials of saints and the ferial celebration of the Church's Liturgy.
- Prayer in the class room and in assemblies should always include the use of symbols and a focal point for prayer which should be appropriate to the liturgical season and content of that time of prayer.
- Staff at all levels of the school community should be involved in leading and participating in Prayer and Liturgy.
- Students should actively participate in prayer and liturgical actions and where appropriate lead the time of worship.
- Prayer and Liturgy is sometimes influenced by aspects of the RE Curriculum and other areas of the National curriculum. This reminds us that whilst Prayer and Liturgy is always concerned with nurturing our relationship with God it also takes on an important educational dimension.
- The celebration of Mass should be a regular part of the school's provision for Liturgy. In the Eucharist the school celebrates its Catholic identity and acknowledges that the source and summit of its life is found in the offering of Jesus Christ.
- Provision for Prayer and Liturgy should take into consideration the age and maturity of the students and appropriately provides for their different needs.
- Opportunities for Prayer and Liturgy should provide the school community with a chance to experience a variety of forms of prayer that help each individual foster their own relationship with God in the school community.
- Ensure that at least fifteen minutes each day is set aside for Prayer and Liturgy.

Structuring Prayer and Liturgy at St Modwen's

In every act of communal Prayer and Liturgy a four-fold structure is to be observed. The structure is based upon the principals of gathering together, listening, responding and going forth.

Gathering together

In our coming together for Prayer and Liturgy we acknowledge the presence of Christ with us in our act of gathering together. Our time of prayer is not simply personal, based upon our individual relationship with God, but it is also communal, for our life of faith is shaped through the faith we share in the community of the Church, we use the following structure in our liturgies, both during Assembly and in Class Liturgies:

1. Gathering

- Music, song, lighting of candles, use of incense, procession, blessing with holy water are all ways in which we can select to set our scene for prayer during the 'Gathering' element of the Liturgy Plan so enable us to enter into a time of Prayer together.
- We have a gathering prayer which can come from many sources including the use of a psalm. Psalms 145 – 150 are particularly appropriate as they remind us that our duty is to praise God when we come together to pray.
- We give due consideration to seating and posture for prayer and Liturgy so that the community has an awareness that it has gathered together to pray.
- The use of the focal point connected to the seasons of the Church's year and the appropriate feast day is used
- The leadership of the time of prayer and Liturgy may be shared, where appropriately with the students.

2. Listening

Our time of Prayer and Liturgy is about deepening our relationship with God and with one another. *"The invisible God out of the abundance of his love, addresses people as friends and converses with them, to invite them to communion with him and to receive them into that communion."*¹²

- In every act of communal Prayer and Liturgy God's Word should be proclaimed.
- In class prayer time, assemblies and other non-Eucharistic liturgies, consideration should be given to using scripture readings outlined in the Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church or from the Mass of the day or a reading closely associated with the current liturgical season, feast day or memorial.
- Over a period of time it might be considered helpful to introduce a series of readings from one Gospel, New Testament Letter or book from the Old Testament. In this way everybody benefits from a semi-continuous reading of the Word of God.
- The Word of God should be proclaimed from the Bible or the appropriate liturgical text books including the Lectionary and the Book of Gospels. Readings printed upon scraps of paper should be avoided as they fail to highlight the reverence we give to the Word of God.
- The reader should always have a good understanding of the meaning of the text. The reading in its entirety should be proclaimed by one reader, unless it is to be broken down into speech parts for the different voices in the reading.
- The reader should always clearly announce where the reading comes from and should use the appropriate liturgical conclusion to which the assembly makes the appropriate response. If the gospel is proclaimed it should be accompanied by the action of making the sign of the cross on the forehead, lips and heart.
- A few moments of silence should be given following the reading to allow everybody to reflect on what they have just heard.
- When the gospel is proclaimed, the appropriate sung gospel acclamation should accompany it. This will give due emphasis to the importance of the Word that is to be proclaimed.
- During assemblies and whole school non-Eucharistic liturgies the lectern might be used to proclaim the Word of God from and candles and a procession may accompany the proclamation of the gospel.

3. Responding

¹² Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, art. 2

One of the oldest and best definitions of prayer is: “raising the mind and heart to God.” This definition reminds us that at the heart of our communal Prayer and Liturgy is a relationship with God who has been made known to us as a relationship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In our responding to God’s presence in our gathering together and listening to the Word of God, we use a variety of forms of prayer. These include praise, thanks, intercession and contrition.

- Use a variety of forms of prayer that provide opportunities to give praise and thanks to God for the many blessings God bestows on us. The prayer of Zachariah and the prayer of Mary in the Magnificat are examples of praise and thanks.
- Look at a variety of traditional prayers of the Church and those of the saints and highlight those which have moments of praise and thanksgiving. The Canticle of creation by St. Francis of Assisi is a classic example, but there are many more in the treasury of the Church.
- Use interactive images with ICT to help younger children appreciate the wider world to give praise and thanks for and also intercession.
- Ensure that prayers of intercession are not limited to personal needs. The formulae used for the general intercessions in the celebration of the Mass may be very helpful. To pray for the Church, the world, other needs and local needs.
- Prayers of contrition can be based around the different traditional prayers of the Church including the various forms of the penitential rite used at the celebration of Mass and the psalms, especially Psalm 50.
- Responding should include some time for personal reflection and silence. Providing opportunities for groups of students to learn simple listening and breathing skills will be a good in helping them to enter into meditative and reflective prayer. Good posture for this type of prayer also needs to be taught. Indicating the need to sit in an upright position with feet firmly on the ground and hands held comfortably in the lap position.
- Using guided meditations taking scenes from the gospels can aid this type of prayer and help students enter into a scene from the life of Christ and let the words of the gospel speak to them in a new way.
- The use of appropriate background music and a symbolic focus is also beneficial to reflective prayer.
- The prayer of the Rosary can also be introduced through this type of reflection and meditation. Encouraging those taking part in the time of prayer to think about the scene reflected in the mystery and to use the traditional prayers that accompany it as background to the meditation and reflection that takes place.
- The use of symbols, actions and other gestures including song and where appropriate, liturgical dance is encouraged to emphasise the response that we make in prayer to the action and presence of God in our lives.

4. Mission and Going Forth:

In our liturgical celebrations, we offer praise to God; we are also strengthened in our mission to live as Christ in the world.

- We must remind children to ‘go forth and proclaim the Gospel’ as is heard at the end of Mass. We also remind children to ‘**Follow in the Footsteps of Jesus**’
- Each week we hold a rewards assembly for the whole school during which children are presented with a certificate if they have been selected for particularly living out our Catholic Mission. Children are selected for ‘Holy Spirit Assembly’, if they have demonstrated either a gift or fruit of the Spirit, a Jesuit Virtue or a Gospel Value.
- We should ensure regular reinforcement of the qualities and characteristics of nurturing human wholeness enables the children to use the vocabulary and

language associated with these positive behaviours and embeds our behaviour policy, firmly rooting Christ at the Centre.

Celebration of the Eucharist

In announcing the Year of the Eucharist Pope John Paul the Second reminded the whole Church that the Eucharist *“has always been at the centre of the Church’s life. Through it Christ makes present within time the mystery of his death and resurrection.”*¹³ Therefore the celebration of the Eucharist needs to be given a place of great importance in the life of a Catholic School.

The Eucharist should be celebrated by any Catholic school community on a regular basis. It should not be merely seen as a liturgical highpoint at certain times during the year, but as an essential ingredient to the life of a Catholic community.

In planning when the celebration of the Eucharist should take place with the school community the following should be considered

- Weekly Mass in school hall
- The major liturgical seasons of the Church year especially Advent, Lent, Eastertide and Pentecost e.g. additional services such as Ash Wednesday or Reconciliation
- Holy days of Obligation and other Feasts of the Lord
- Patronal or School Feast days

All the appropriate symbols associated with the celebration of Mass should be present. These should include candles, lectionary, altar cloths, sacred vessels, vestments and appropriate liturgical books.

Planning the Celebration of Mass

Which Mass should be celebrated?

In making preparations for the celebration of the Eucharist in school consideration should always be given to when the celebration is actually taking place within the liturgical year. The choice of readings and the prayers used for the Mass should take into consideration the season of the year, whether the day for the celebration of Mass is a solemnity, a feast day, a memorial of a saint or an ordinary weekday.

What Readings should be used?

In consultation with the parish priests at our regular liturgy planning meetings, we bear in mind the readings of the day; the liturgical season and the RE Curriculum when choosing Mass themes or readings.

The Directory for Masses with Children indicates that the Apostles Creed can be used at Masses on Solemnities where children make up the majority of people participating in the celebration of Mass.

The General Intercessions that accompany the Liturgy of the Word at Mass should follow the formulae outlined in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

¹³ John Paul the Second, Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, October 2004

- The intention should be for the Church, the world, other needs and local needs.
- The intention to pray should be announced followed by a period of silence and the response then made.

What Music should be used?

The overall aim is to ensure that there is a variety, as using the same things makes the messages within them less effective and the feel of the Mass slightly tired.

The use of music during the celebration of Mass needs serious consideration to be given to it. Planning music for Mass should not begin with favourite hymns known by the students, but be guided by the liturgical norms of the choice.

Against this background other music for the celebration of Mass can be chosen.

- If a gathering song is used at the beginning of the Mass it should be appropriate to the season and reflect what is being celebrated in the Mass.
- Different forms of hymns, songs should be used reflecting our cultural heritage as well as those which students find easy to sing.
- The Gloria should be sung on Holy Days of Obligation, Feasts of the Lord and other important feast days. It should not simply be sung at any Mass.
- The Lamb of God can be sung especially when it covers the fraction of the sacred host for Holy Communion.
- The choice of hymn and music at Holy Communion should always reflect what is taking place at this time and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
- Adding music and hymns to parts of the Mass where it has not been appointed should be avoided as this can detract from the gesture and prayer of that moment.

What Ministries should be used in School Masses?

The Eucharistic Liturgy demands the full, conscious and active participation of everybody gathered for the celebration. It does not mean that everybody has an individual task to do, but that they are able to participate in the celebration at an appropriate level.

- The priest should exercise his ministry of presiding over the celebration of the Eucharist and teaching through the homily. However, it may be appropriate for somebody other than the priest to offer a reflection so that all those who are present are able to reflect on the Word of God that has been proclaimed.
- Ministers of the Word should be appropriately prepared and should understand the Word that is being proclaimed. The text of a reading should be read by one reader unless it is split up in different voice parts.
- The Gospel should be proclaimed by the deacon or the priest. It should never be omitted and should never be replaced by a dramatisation.
- Altar servers and musicians are encouraged to exercise their ministries to the full in School Masses.
- Sometimes symbols, artefacts and students work are brought to the altar. These should never be placed on the altar where the Eucharist is to be celebrated as this should be left clear for the gifts of bread and wine alone.
- Other symbols could be brought to the altar at the beginning of the Mass.
- It is advisable that the procession of gifts at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist emphasises the offering of bread and wine as the sign of the offering of the people. Sometimes this symbolic action is lost when many additional items are brought in the procession of gifts.

- Everybody should be prepared to join in the responses of the Mass. Children will be introduced to the different responses at an appropriate level through their work in Religious Education.

The Directory for Masses with Children

This document was published by the Congregation for Worship in 1974 and provides the basis for differentiating the celebration of the Mass for younger people to understand and participate in. It provides appropriate guidance upon the parts of the Mass that might be shortened or omitted so that children may develop a sound understanding of what is taking place. In planning the celebration of Mass teachers and priests should take into serious consideration the requirements laid down in this document.

This policy was reviewed by governors December 2017 and will be due to be reviewed in March 2019 unless there is a change in diocesan guidance before then.