

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God."
St John Damascene

Agreed by Governors: September 2023

To be reviewed October 2024

*As one family working together
to be the best that we can be,
we live, love and learn with Jesus.*

At St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Christ is at the centre of school life. We are a living, loving, sacramental community inspired by the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church, firmly rooted in Gospel values.

Legal Requirements

Collective Worship is a term which does not come from the Church and it relates to the legal requirements of the state surrounding Collective Worship which originated in the 1944 Education Act and is expressed in circular 1/94.

"Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes"

All schools in England are required by law to carry out a daily act of Collective Worship. For Catholic schools, this requirement is made explicit within the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and the Articles of Association. This legal document, under both statutory and canonical law, states that "religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church; and at all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ".

Withdrawal from Collective Worship

Parents have the legal right to request that their child be withdrawn from Collective Worship. This request must be made in writing by the parent/guardian. Withdrawal from Collective Worship does not necessarily mean that the child is physically withdrawn and they may, with the parents' agreement, remain present but not participate.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that prayer and liturgy consider the religious and educational needs of all who share in them:

- ✦ 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

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Prayer and Liturgy in this school are integral parts of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in our school community will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God and develop the following:

- ✦ contemplation of the mystery of God
- ✦ uniting our worshipping Eucharistic community
- ✦ developing the necessary skills of reverence, contemplation, reflection, interpretation, empathy, meditation which will enable our relationship with God to be deepened

Full participation in our faith will allow us:

- ✦ to grow in spiritual, moral, cultural, and liturgical understanding
- ✦ to grow in understanding of our living faith tradition
- ✦ to develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ
- ✦ to examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys
- ✦ to develop the skills of prayer

Implementation

All acts of worship should:

- ✦ give glory and praise to God
- ✦ be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants
- ✦ be kept to the point (and brief wherever possible)
- ✦ be clear in their liturgical focus and varied in their delivery

Whole school Prayer and Liturgy take place in the hall every week on Monday and Friday. On all other days, apart from Wednesday when it a phase liturgy, it takes place in class, at the start or end of the day. Content follows Gospel teachings and the liturgical calendar.

Prayer and Liturgy in our school follows the pattern detailed below:

Gather - how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/reflective music, lighted candles, statues, seated in a different format, sign of the cross, focus and examination of conscience etc).

Listen (word) - a reading from the Scriptures, breaking down the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to reflect the theme.

Respond (action) - a ritual movement with which everyone can join in and which matches the theme (gestures such as shaking hands, holding hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc).

Go forth (mission) - the sending out from the celebration, giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Each child in the school is invited to prepare and lead Class Prayer & Liturgy. Children in Key Stage Two have opportunities to lead Whole School Prayer & Liturgy sessions in assemblies.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- ensuring that every child in their class has the opportunity to lead Prayer & Liturgy throughout the year
- supporting groups of children to plan Prayer using the model: Gather- Listen-Respond and Go Forth
- keeping a copy of the planning and prayer reflections led by pupils
- adults will support planning in Lower KS 2, pupils Upper KS2 will plan independently

PUPIL & STAFF EVALUATION OF PRAYER & LITURGY

Before each act of Prayer & Liturgy, we should consider the appropriate elements below:

- does the content of the plan meet the needs of all present?
- is the focus appropriate and supported by suitable and ready resources eg music, IT?
- do readers/leaders have all they need and are members of support staff briefed?
- have invitations been sent to members of the community as appropriate?
- is the accommodation suitable and prepared in advance?

After each act of Prayer & Liturgy, we should consider:

- was it a positive, enriching religious experience for all present?
- has this prayer experience enhanced the spiritual and/or moral development of those present?
- was the timing and content appropriate for the age, ability and background of the children?
- did all parts of the session help to develop the Liturgical formation of participants?
- was it well-organised, led and presented?
- was there a sense of community, common ethos and shared values?

UNDERSTANDING OF THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

We ensure that pupils are aware of the Liturgical Calendar and key events in the Church. The symbolism of colours is made clear from the earliest days in our school: purple for penance (seen during Advent and Lent), red for Holy Spirit and martyrdom (seen at Pentecost), white, gold for important feasts, green for the ordinary times of the year, blue for Mary.

Some months of the year have a special focus. October is the month of the Rosary, November is the month of remembrance of the dead, May is the month when Mary is especially remembered and June is the month of the Sacred Heart when we remember especially the great love Jesus has for us.

Celebration of the Eucharist

Pupils celebrate Mass together with parents and parish community on a weekly basis.

Pupils play an active part in each Mass through reading, praying, singing, altar-serving and taking part in offertory processions. Each class takes it in turn to prepare and lead the celebration of Mass based on the liturgical year, focusing on solemnities, feast days and memorials of important saints.

The Prayer & Liturgy Team is responsible for:

- preparing Mass using Readings of the Day unless otherwise directed by the Parish Priest
- assisting the class teacher as needed in preparing the Mass with the children
- preparing Prayers of the Faithful following the recommended order:
 - for the needs of the Church
 - for the world
 - for those in need
 - for the local community
 - and a collective prayer.
- Storing the Mass plan in the Mass folder

Liturgy/Assembly

There are three weekly liturgies/assemblies.

On Monday morning, led by the headteacher, there is a whole school "Gospel" liturgy.

On Wednesday morning, led by class teachers, there is a phase liturgy based on the Gospel for the following Sunday and using the "Wednesday Word" to which all of our families have access.

On Friday morning, there is a whole school liturgy that reflects selected themes and also celebrates the children's God-given talents and achievements in and out of school.

Links with the Parish Community and Parents

Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in Masses, assemblies, workshops and fundraising activities.

Parents of children in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental preparation meetings and Commitment Masses.

As part of the Church community, the school has strong links with the parish.

We are fortunate that the school is next door to the Church and is very accessible for our children and families. Pupils and staff join the parish for regular Masses as well as parish celebrations. Our parish priest is a regular visitor to school.

Liturgies, celebrations and events relating to the Catholic Life of the school are shared in school newsletters and are published on the school website.

Prayer areas/Sacred spaces

There are dedicated sacred spaces throughout the school including our "Prayer Room".

Each classroom has a prayer focus area to support pupils in their prayer life and it is used daily in the prayer life of the classroom. It reflects the liturgical year and is adorned with appropriate artefacts, prayers and religious vocabulary.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

The fair and equal treatment of all individuals is integral to the Gospels' Revelations and the Church's message and is central to our school mission. All children are given equal access to opportunities for prayer and liturgy. A variety of approaches are used to try to meet the needs of all pupils including whole school, whole class, group, pair and individual prayer. Different styles of prayer are also explored from formal liturgies to private, reflective prayer. Resources are used to support children to access prayer and liturgy at an age appropriate and/or developmental level.

Health and Safety

There are risk assessments in place for the use of candles within the building and for visits to the Church.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The Religious Education team will monitor the implementation of this policy.

All staff and governors will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy in helping to improve the quality of prayer and liturgy throughout the school. Pupils will be involved in reviewing and evaluating prayer and liturgy on a regular basis.

The following will be monitored:

- ✦ time set aside for prayer and liturgy
- ✦ whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy
- ✦ whether prayer and liturgy are resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc
- ✦ staff development opportunities focused on prayer and liturgy and their impact
- ✦ prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer
- ✦ impact on pupils and members of the school community
- ✦ opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access worship and prayer
- ✦ records of themes and teachings of the Catholic Church covered in prayer and liturgy

Observation and monitoring records should be kept and should form part of the self-review process. Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and the GB with recommendations for future action.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy:

The co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- ✦ formulating a written policy
- ✦ ensuring there is a development plan for Prayer and Liturgy
- ✦ ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy are appropriate to the age, aptitudes, and family backgrounds of pupils
- ✦ ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy activities take account of the religious and educational needs of all who share them and that they are rooted in Catholic teachings
- ✦ organising themes for worship
- ✦ assisting the *Governing Body* in carrying out its legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and Liturgy

Communication

This policy will be communicated to:

- ✦ all members of the school community
- ✦ Parish priests or members of pastoral areas as appropriate
- ✦ new members of staff and will form part of their induction
- ✦ new parents, to promote positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy