



PRAYER & LITURGY POLICY

St. George & St. Martin's Catholic Academy

Mission Statement

GROWING, LEARNING AND LOVING IN CHRIST;
UNITED IN PLAY, PRAYER AND PEACE.

Mission

Growing, Learning, Loving in Christ; United in Play, Prayer and Peace.

At St. George & St. Martin Catholic Academy, Christ is at the centre of all that we do. We aim to provide a rich educational and social environment which nurtures and challenges each child, enabling every individual to flourish and achieve their highest potential. Prayer and Liturgy are central to this mission and permeate the whole life of the school.

We work in close partnership with our parish of St. George and St. Martin and the Archdiocese of Birmingham to ensure that our school remains firmly rooted in the life of the Church.

Rationale

Prayer and Liturgy are central to the life of a Catholic school and form an integral part of each school day. In law, this is expressed through the requirement for daily collective worship. In Catholic schools, this takes the form of Prayer and Liturgy in accordance with the rites, practices and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church.

As stated in the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham:

“Religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Parents retain the legal right to withdraw their child from collective worship.

The Governing Body holds overall responsibility for Prayer and Liturgy. In practice, this responsibility is delegated to the Principal, RE Lead and Prayer and Liturgy Lead, with all staff contributing to the prayer life of the school.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy Through Collective Worship

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in a Catholic school are concerned with giving praise, thanks and reverence to God and forming pupils in a living relationship with Him. Prayer and Liturgy are the Church's response to God's invitation to communion, made possible through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Liturgy is the formal prayer of the Church, rooted in Scripture and tradition. Prayer includes a rich variety of forms through which individuals and communities encounter God.

Our provision aims to form pupils as praying people, capable of participating meaningfully in the liturgical life of the Church.

Prayer and Liturgy in our school aim to:

- Give glory, honour, thanks and praise to God
- Form pupils in habits of prayer and reverence
- Deepen understanding of Scripture
- Develop familiarity with the liturgical year and seasons
- Foster a sense of belonging to the Church community
- Prepare pupils for active participation in the sacramental life of the Church
- Nurture reflection on moral and spiritual issues
- Inspire pupils to live out Gospel values in daily life

All acts of Prayer and Liturgy will:

- Be faithful to the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church
- Be appropriate to the age and faith development of pupils
- Offer opportunities for active participation
- Reflect the liturgical year and the life of the parish and diocese

Structure of Prayer & Liturgy

Each act of Prayer and Liturgy follows the four-part structure articulated in the Catholic Prayer and Liturgy Directory:

Gather – Word – Respond – Mission

This structure reflects the Church's understanding that Prayer and Liturgy are centred on the Word of God and lead naturally to mission, shaping how pupils live out the Gospel in their daily lives.

Gather

The community comes together in God's presence. A prayer focus is prepared, including Scripture, cross, candle and appropriate liturgical colours. The Sign of the Cross begins the liturgy.

Word

The Word of God is proclaimed. Scripture is treated with reverence and given prominence. A reflection may help pupils connect the Word to their lives.

Respond

The community responds to the Word through prayer, reflection, silence, song, symbolic action or creative expression.

Mission

The liturgy concludes with a clear sense of being sent forth to live out the Gospel. This may include a prayer, commitment, hymn or practical action.

Provision at St. George & St. Martin

In addition to daily classroom prayer (morning prayer, grace before and after meals, end of day prayer), pupils participate in:

- Gospel-based assemblies
- Virtues-based assemblies
- Hymn practice linked to the liturgical calendar
- Whole-school Mass every two weeks and on Holy Days
- Celebration assemblies recognising pupils' gifts and talents
- Weekly class Prayer and Liturgy

Each classroom has a designated prayer focus reflecting the liturgical season.

Mass & The Eucharist

The celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of the life of the Church and holds a unique and central place in the prayer life of our school.

Pupils participate in whole-school Masses every two weeks and on Holy Days of Obligation and significant feasts. Families and parishioners are warmly invited to attend.

Opportunities are provided for pupils preparing for the Sacraments to participate in liturgies connected to their sacramental journey.

Pupil Participation & Formation

Pupils are progressively formed in planning and helping to prepare and guide Prayer and Liturgy in ways appropriate to their age and understanding.

They are supported by adults and given opportunities to:

- Select themes rooted in Scripture
- Choose appropriate symbols and music
- Plan responses to the Word
- Identify meaningful mission actions
- Evaluate and reflect on Prayer and Liturgy experiences

Home, School & Parish Partnership

Parents are recognised as the first educators of their children in faith. Families are invited to attend Masses, assemblies and liturgical celebrations.

We maintain strong links with our parish and diocesan community, ensuring that our Prayer and Liturgy reflect and support the wider life of the Church.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Prayer and Liturgy are monitored and evaluated termly by the RE and Prayer and Liturgy Leads, with governor oversight.

Evaluation considers:

- Faithfulness to Church teaching
- Quality of pupil participation
- Reverence and atmosphere
- Impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development

Provision is reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with the Catholic Prayer and Liturgy Directory.

Inclusion

All pupils are included in accessible Prayer and Liturgy unless withdrawn at parental request. Provision is invitational, respectful and accessible, while remaining faithful to the Catholic identity and mission of the school.

Health & Safety

Class teachers follow school Health and Safety procedures. Lighted candles are used only under adult supervision. Battery-operated candles are used in classrooms; real candles are reserved for Mass or supervised liturgies.

Appendices listed below

Policy Reviewed by: J. Bridgewater, D Farmer

Date: 23/2/26

Signed: *D. Farmer*

Headteacher

Date: 23/2/26

Signed: *J. Bridgewater*

RE Lead

Policy to be reviewed: September 2028

Appendix One – Planning Document

Date: Time: Place:			
Liturgical Season/Feast: Focus:			
Key Stage/Year: Adults present:			
			Think about...
 Gather	Bring everyone into the Holy place We come together as part of God's family. Make everyone welcome!		▪ Liturgical colours (Green, purple, white/gold, red) ▪ Prayer focus table ▪ Bible ▪ Cross ▪ Symbols/ objects/ pictures/ photos ▪ Candle ▪ Music ▪ Sign of the cross
 Word	How will God's Word be proclaimed? God speaks to us and we listen		▪ Bible Reading
 Respond	How we will respond to God's Word? What sort of prayer/action/song will we use? We respond to the Word of God.		▪ Prayer ▪ Singing ▪ Reflection ▪ Sacred Silence ▪ Dance ▪ Gesture/ action ▪ CAFOD story ▪ Drama ▪ Picture / photo ▪ Create
 Mission			▪ Gospel phrase ▪ Song ▪ Learn about CAFOD ▪ Tell others about CAFOD ▪ Action ▪ Campaign ▪ Prayer card ▪ Artefact ▪ Picture ▪ Big question

Appendix Two – Prayer & Liturgy Progression Document

Expectations to develop pupils' skills in planning and leading Prayer and Liturgy in each key stage.

Year Group	Expectations	Known prayers for the year group
Nursery	Children take part in liturgy each day, in small groups, led by their teacher or key worker. Children will begin to learn about the expectations for how we sit reverently and respectfully in a circle during liturgies. Children will begin to have an understanding of the colours of the liturgical year and what they represent. Children will take part actively in liturgies by making the sign of the cross. Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal.	At the end of Nursery the children will know the following prayers: • The Sign of the Cross • The Lord's Prayer • Hail Mary
Reception	Class liturgy is timetabled weekly. At the start of Reception, the teacher will use the teaching planning proforma to plan and deliver appropriate liturgies. Teachers will model, along with support staff to demonstrate how to act respectfully and reverently during liturgies. Children will build on their knowledge from Reception about the liturgical year and the corresponding colours. As the year progresses, children will begin to take ownership of setting up the prayer area at the beginning of the liturgy and packing it away respectfully at the end of liturgies. Children will also begin to take some ownership of what is placed on the prayer area and begin to explain why they have chosen certain items/religious symbols. Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal.	At the end of Reception, the children will know the following prayers: • The Sign of the Cross • The Lord's Prayer • Hail Mary
One	Class liturgy is timetabled weekly. From the beginning of year one, children will work in small groups using the	At the end of Year 1 the children will know the following prayers: • As above +

	diocesan A3 planner, facilitated by an adult. An adult will scribe the plan for them on the children's planner. Children will lead different parts of the worship, with help from their teacher. Teacher to model a liturgy at least once per half term, including whole school liturgies sent by the Prayer and Liturgy lead. The children will choose different religious symbols to signify the theme of their worship and will begin to explain the significance of what they have chosen. The children will have a good understanding of the liturgical year and the colours used in each season. With assistance from an adult, each half term at least one of each evaluation will be competed (self, peer and teacher). Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal.	• Morning Offering - KS1 • Grace before meals - KS1 • Grace after meals - KS1 • Prayer at the end of the day - KS1 • Glory Be
Two	Class liturgy is timetabled weekly. Children will work in small groups, facilitated by an adult, to plan and deliver weekly liturgies, using the A3 diocesan planner. Adults will scribe the children's ideas on the children's planning proforma. Children will begin to independently choose the theme for their worship and think about appropriate scripture to link with their theme. The children's knowledge of the liturgical year will be secure by the end of year 2. They will be able to explain the significance of each season and explain the colours that correspond to this. Teacher to model a liturgy at least once per half term, including whole school liturgies sent by the Prayer and Liturgy lead. With assistance from an adult, each half term at least one of each evaluation will be competed (self, peer and teacher). Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal.	At the end of Year 2, the children will know the following prayers: • As above + • Morning Offering - KS1 • Grace before meals - KS1 • Grace after meals - KS1 • Prayer at the end of the day - KS1 • Glory Be
Three	Class liturgy is timetabled weekly. Children will plan liturgies in small groups, facilitated by an adult, using the A3 diocesan planner and will record their ideas on the children's planning proforma. Children will independently choose their theme and think about appropriate scripture that links to the theme.	At the end of Year 3, the children will know the following prayers: • As above + • Morning Offering - KS2 • Grace before meals - KS2 • Grace after meals - KS2 • Prayer at the end of the day - KS2

	Children will begin to think of differing ways that they can respond appropriately to prayer. Children will be able to plan an appropriate go forth mission task linking to their theme. Teacher to model a liturgy at least once per half term, including whole school liturgies sent by the Prayer and Liturgy lead. Children will have secure knowledge of the liturgical year and will be able to begin to plan liturgies around the liturgical year. Each half term at least one of each evaluation will be completed by the children (self, peer and teacher). Children should be given the opportunity to plan and deliver worships based around their sacramental preparation of the Eucharist. Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal.	• The Apostles' Creed • An Act of Contrition • Angel of God • The Prayer of St Richard of Chichester • Act of Faith • Act of Hope • Act of Love
Four	Class liturgy is timetabled weekly. Children will plan liturgies in small groups, facilitated by an adult, using the A3 diocesan planner and will record their ideas on the children's planning proforma. Children will independently choose their theme and think about appropriate scripture that links to the theme. Children will think of differing ways that they can respond appropriately to prayer. Children will be able to plan an appropriate go forth mission task linking to their theme. Children will have secure knowledge of the liturgical year and will be able to begin to plan liturgies around the liturgical year. Teacher to model a liturgy at least once per half term, including whole school liturgies sent by the Prayer and Liturgy lead. Each half term at least one of each evaluation will be completed by the children (self, peer and teacher). Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal.	At the end of Year 4, the children will know the following prayers: • As above + • Morning Offering - KS2 • Grace before meals - KS2 • Grace after meals - KS2 • Prayer at the end of the day - KS2 • The Apostles' Creed • An Act of Contrition • Angel of God • The Prayer of St Richard of Chichester • Act of Faith • Act of Hope • Act of Love
Five	Class liturgy is timetabled weekly. Children will independently plan and deliver liturgies using the A3 diocesan	At the end of Year 5, the children will know the following prayers: • As above +

	proforma and record their ideas coherently on the children's planning proforma. Children will independently choose a theme and appropriate scripture to correspond and link with their theme. Children will be able to think of appropriate and prayerful ways of responding to the Word of God, including opportunities for spontaneous prayer. Children will be able to independently choose appropriate music and hymns to link in with their liturgy theme. Teacher to model a liturgy at least once per half term, including whole school liturgies sent by the Prayer and Liturgy lead. Each half term at least one of each evaluation will be completed by the children (self, peer and teacher). The children will use these evaluations to plan subsequent liturgies. Children will be able to plan an appropriate go forth mission task linking to their theme. Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal.	• The Rosary • The Magnificat • Come, Holy Spirit
Six	Class liturgy is timetabled weekly. Children will independently plan and deliver liturgies using the A3 diocesan proforma and record their ideas coherently on the children's planning proforma. Children will independently choose a theme and appropriate scripture to correspond and link with their theme. Children will be able to think of appropriate and prayerful ways of responding to the Word of God, including opportunities for spontaneous prayer. Children will be able to independently choose appropriate music and hymns to link in with their liturgy theme. Teacher to model a liturgy at least once per half term, including whole school liturgies sent by the Prayer and Liturgy lead. Each half term at least one of each evaluation will be completed by the children (self, peer and teacher). The children will use these evaluations to plan subsequent liturgies. Children will be able to plan an appropriate go forth mission task linking to their theme.	At the end of year six, the children will know the following prayers: • As above + • The Rosary • The Magnificat • Come, Holy Spirit

	Children will take it in turns to take their prayer bag home weekly and conduct a liturgy at home with their families, providing evidence in their prayer bag journal. Children should be given the opportunity to plan and deliver Prayer and Liturgy based around their sacramental preparation for Confirmation.	
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1. Introduction

We should never underestimate the ability of young people to be open to contemplative prayer. We need only find the right ways and means to help them embark on this precious experience.

Pope Francis



Spirituality is the recognition of a feeling or belief that there is something greater than oneself, something more to being human than a sensory experience, and that the greater whole of which we are a part is divine in nature. We are all spiritual beings in one way or another, as members of a Catholic school we have a duty to nurture pupils' inner spirituality and allow it to grow and blossom.

As Pope Francis highlights, in a time when many young people are searching for ways to express their spirituality in a way that is relevant to them, the way in which we facilitate prayer are of vital importance. In order for our pupils to have a positive experience of prayer it must be appealing to them and delivered in a way that is age appropriate and that they can relate meaningfully to.

At St. George & St. Martin's we have weekly planned Prayer and Liturgy sessions to facilitate this need. These can be teacher or pupil led. There is an expectation that all children participate fully at an age-appropriate level in planning and delivering Prayer and Liturgy.

The aim of this guide is to offer ways in which a sacred space can be created and the different ways we can facilitate praying and worshiping with young people.

2. The basic parts of a Liturgy

All liturgies should be structured around four main parts: Gather, Word, Respond and Mission.

1. Gather

The purpose of this initial part of the worship is to gather together as a community. This is your opportunity to set the spiritual atmosphere that should be maintained throughout the liturgy. It should always begin with the sign of the cross and the lighting of a candle to welcome God's presence. It should also be considered how the children will be sat so that they can engage fully in the liturgy. A theme should also be introduced at this part of the worship and religious artefacts relating to the theme should be displayed. It is a requirement that there is a focal point for prayer so this should be at the front of the classroom or in the middle of the circle if that is how the children are sat.

2. Word

This part of the liturgy is where we listen to scripture from the bible, a reflection or a responsorial psalm. It is a good idea to have a different voice from whoever is leading the liturgy so that the children have a new focus. If it is a particularly long reading it can also be useful to have an image displayed for the children to reflect on to maintain their focus. If the reading is taken from the bible, then the reading/gospel should be greeted appropriately as we do in mass.

It is also a requirement that 'the word' is in a prominent place on the prayer area and preferably on a stand so it can be seen. It is also a good idea to end the gospel with a short gospel reflection to make the meaning of the gospel relevant to the children's lives.

3. Respond

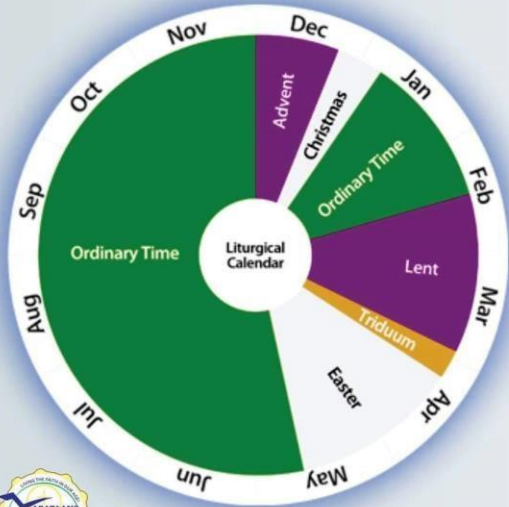
This part of the liturgy is in response to the scripture the children have listen to. For all children to participate fully it is important they have the opportunity to act in some way on what they have heard. This could be in the form writing a prayer, writing how they feel about a particular issue, passing a religious artefact and sharing their thoughts. It may be that you invite children to respond verbally or offer their idea up to the prayer space. This should be done reverently and maintaining a spiritual atmosphere. See section 5 for practical ideas for prayer in the classroom.

4. Mission

This final part of the liturgy brings the whole thing together and the idea is that we will now go and live out the message we have been focusing on. It may be that you end with a prayer, a relevant song/hymn or a special task or mission. The liturgy should always end with the sign of the cross.

3. Liturgical colours

WHAT IS A LITURGICAL CALENDAR?



The Liturgical Calendar begins every year during the month of November on the First Sunday of Advent and runs through to the Solemnity of Christ the King.

The "Lectionary," the Mass readings from the Holy Bible, follows a Sunday cycle and a weekday cycle. The Liturgical Calendar follows a three-year cycle, each year being represented by the letters, A, B, and C. During the year A cycle, the Gospel of Matthew is the primary Gospel that is used for the readings. In year B, Mark is the primary Gospel. In year C, Luke is the primary Gospel. The Gospel of John is proclaimed on particular Sundays in each of the years.

During the year, in addition to the Sunday worship, the Church also celebrates Solemnities, Feasts, and Memorials, which may be on any day of the week. These occur during the year to commemorate special events or persons that are highly revered by the Catholic Church.

c: National Shrine of St. Jude, Chicago

The colour of the priest's vestments and other garments around the Church change at different times in the Church's liturgical calendar. The prayer focus in each classroom should also change, in keeping with the liturgical colours of the Church. The Liturgical year cycle should be displayed at all times along with the relevant provided poster highlighting the key dates and themes of this part in the Church's year, along with appropriate prayer and hymn ideas.

Green – symbolising life, growth and hope and to be used during Ordinary Time.

Purple – symbolising penance and preparation and to be used during Advent and Lent.

White – symbolising purity, holiness, joy, innocence and triumph and is to be used during Christmas and Easter.

Red – symbolising fire and blood and it to be used at Pentecost (50th day after Easter Sunday), Palm Sunday and Good Friday (or liturgies relating to these events).

Additionally, it is appropriate to use red for liturgies relating to feast days of Saints who are martyrs.

Blue – To symbolise Marian feasts:

- 25th March – The feast of The Annunciation
- 11th February – The Feast of our Lady of Lourdes
- Blue may also be appropriate for worships dedicated to Mary and in the months of October and May.

4. Creating a prayerful atmosphere

It is important that a prayerful atmosphere is created and maintained throughout the liturgy. It is important to consider that this is special time set aside for time with God and our own personal reflection.

Seating

It is important, mainly based on what you will be doing in your liturgy/respond task, to consider how the children are sat. If at all possible, the classroom should be set up differently than it would in lessons just so there is a differentiation. One way of achieving this is by sitting in a circle. If this is not possible then it may be you need to consider if the children need to move for the respond task that you maintain a level of reverence and spirituality so it may be that the children make their offering a row at a time rather than a 'free for all.' Where possible, it is lovely to use our beautiful chapel and prayer garden as spaces for liturgy.

Lighting

The lighting of a room is a perfect way to create a spiritual and prayerful atmosphere. By turning off the lights and lighting candles, the atmosphere immediately becomes more peaceful, even if it is not very dark in the room. Wherever possible, it has more impact if the children enter the room once it has been prepared with the low level lighting/candles/ music etc.

Music

In Pope Francis's exhortation to young people he states 'Music is particularly important, representing as it does a real environment in which the young are constantly immersed, as well as a culture and a language capable of arousing emotion and shaping identity. The language of music also represents a pastoral resource with a particular bearing on the liturgy and its renewal. '

Soft, instrumental music playing in the background can have a calming influence on young people and can set the prayerful tone and atmosphere. Having this music playing as the children process in signals, without words, that it is time for us to welcome the presence of God into our hearts, silently, respectfully and reverently.

There might also be singing as part of your liturgy and this in itself can be a vital part of creating a prayerful experience. As St. Augustine says 'To sing is to pray twice.' Any hymns/songs selected should

be along the same theme that has been chosen for the liturgy so the meaning and purpose of the liturgy is reinforced.

Tone of voice

The tone, pitch and volume of your voice when introducing parts of the liturgy are very important. It is still important to speak clearly but slowing down your speech and lowering the volume of your voice signals to the children this is different to a lesson or assembly and help to create and maintain a spiritual atmosphere.