



St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Prayer and Liturgy Policy (Collective Worship)

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Our Mission Statement and Guiding Rationale

“Be like Jesus. Be your best. Be Safe. Be Caring.”

St Elizabeth's is a caring, Catholic school community, where we celebrate that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. Here, individuals are helped to achieve their full potential, through experiences and opportunities that nurture the whole person. These experiences include encountering the Word of God in a way that shapes life and mission. This guiding philosophy stems from our mission statement.

Introduction

At St Elizabeth's, Prayer and Liturgy is integral to developing the children's relationship with Christ. Gospel values, which are mirrored in the school's Franciscan values, are embedded in all that we do, with Christ at the centre. Prayer and Liturgy is central to our Catholic ethos and, therefore, staff are expected to lead and model good practice in prayer. Prayer and Liturgy provide an opportunity for all to reflect on God's word and to celebrate and respond to the beliefs and attitudes, which characterise Christian life. At St Elizabeth's, we strive to provide a rich variety of prayer and collective worship, which will deepen the pupils' sense of belonging to the faith community of our school and to the wider Church.

Children take an active role in planning, leading and evaluating Prayer and Liturgy. We believe worship remembers and celebrates God's work in our lives. It celebrates his presence amongst us today and allows pupils, staff and our wider community the opportunity to be joined with Him. In our school, Prayer and Liturgy takes many forms including daily prayer, liturgical prayer, meditation, song, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and celebration of the Eucharist. We strive to provide many opportunities for the children to encounter Christ in the Word, in Sacrament and in each other, to develop their relationship with God. Children are encouraged to meditate and reflect deeply on our Franciscan values and carefully consider how these will impact on their lives and the lives of others.

Definitions

Liturgy	Liturgical Prayer	Prayer	Collective Worship	Assembly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rite of the Church • Prescribed structure, gesture, words, symbols • Limited room for adaptation • E.g. Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Divine Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A communal prayer that follows liturgical patterns • Texts, symbols, gestures draw on the Catholic tradition • Greater freedom for creativity within these limits • E.g. Gather, Word, Respond, Mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be formal or informal, routine or spontaneous, private or shared • May include familiar prayers, prayers written for the occasion, spontaneous prayers, silence • Great scope for creativity • Catholic focus but greater opportunities for engaging all pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad term referring to any act of worship of a Christian character that takes place for the school community • May be used as an umbrella term to refer, in general, to: Liturgy, Liturgical Prayer or prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gathering or meeting of all pupils or groups of pupils • Usually held to present information or events to the pupils and often of a secular nature e.g. mark a historic event, visiting speaker, information on other religions, launch of school initiatives

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian Prayer and Liturgy in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. Yet it is much more than a legal requirement – it is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. We understand that simply holding an assembly, which includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that assembly and collective worship are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The law requires the act of worship be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' and under recent Government guidance (Nov, 2014)¹. We aim to include opportunities in Collective

¹ Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools: Departmental advice for maintained schools. (November 2014)

Worship and assemblies for pupils to explore and learn about British Values and other faiths. The act of worship is not designated curriculum time and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. The headteacher is responsible for arranging daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff to:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- Reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- Explore their own beliefs
- Respond to and celebrate life
- Experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- Develop a common ethos and shared values
- Enrich religious experience
- Grow in liturgical understanding and development
- Reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- Reinforce positive attitudes
- Participate fully
- Take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles

All acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Give children positive liturgical experiences appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.

In order to do this, celebrations will be:

- Kept small wherever possible or appropriate to personalise the experience
- Short and appropriately paced
- Simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Organisation of Prayer and Liturgy

In order to achieve the above, weekly prayer and liturgy is organised as follows:

	Type	Involves	Location	Led by
Monday	Key Stage Liturgical Prayer This is based on Sunday's Gospel and introducing the theme and mission for the week.	09:00 – KS2 15:00 – EYFS and KS1	Hall	Head teacher or member of SLT with the support of the Chaplaincy Team
Tuesday	Child-led Liturgical Prayer based on the theme for the week or day.	All pupils in class groups	Classrooms	Small group of pupils (4-6 chosen each week) Initially, EYFS will lead the liturgical prayer as a class
Wednesday	Sing and Praise Liturgical Prayer Children have the opportunity to learn liturgically appropriate hymns and reflect on their mission for the week.	All pupils	Hall	Music lead with the support of the Chaplaincy Team
Thursday	Class Liturgical Prayer This may be based on the class's reflection on the theme for the week, their class value, their recent work in RE or other events in the liturgical calendar.	All pupils and parents	Hall	Pupils in chosen class to lead once every 7 weeks with the support of class teachers and lay-chaplain.
Friday	Achievement Liturgical Prayer Children have the opportunity to celebrate their achievements and those of their peers and reflect on their mission for the week.	All pupils and parents	Hall	Head teacher or member of SLT with the support of the Chaplaincy Team

Planning

At St Elizabeth's, Prayer and Liturgy is planned following the themes of the Church's liturgical cycle on a 'Liturgical Planner', which is produced by the Collective Worship lead and informed by the 'Extra-Ordo-Nary' (produced by the NDCYS). Acts of Worship will be rooted in Scripture. It will feature prominently and connect directly with the theme.

The structure of Prayer and Liturgy is carefully planned to reflect the structure of the Mass.

Four key parts are to be included:

- Gather
- The Word
- Response to the Word
- Mission

In order to make Prayer and Liturgy accessible to all, those planning Acts of Worship are encouraged to also include four key elements:

- See
- Hear
- Think
- Do

These elements also reflect the structure of the Mass. Considering these elements help those planning Acts of Worship to be more creative.

There will be flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community for example, charitable events, worldwide issues/events etc.

Prayer and Liturgy is planned to develop pupils' skills to enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship. Children and adults will have numerous opportunities to use the planning resources before delivering their Act of Worship. Plans, evaluations and other pieces of evidence are to be kept and placed in Collective Worship folders.

Prayer and Liturgy is planned to provide opportunities for children to listen, reflect and be prayerful.

Recording

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded:

- On a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- Planning and evaluation proformas for class Prayer and Liturgy
- Through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Where possible, Acts of Worship will be evaluated, either informally through discussion and comment or using a liturgy evaluation sheet. These will be collated regularly in collective worship folders. Feedback from stakeholders is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and appropriate actions taken. The style and nature of our Acts of Worship will continually be open to the needs of the community and be open to incorporating new ideas and experiences, whilst always staying true to our Catholic ethos. When evaluating collective worship, the following elements will be considered:

- How engaging and inclusive was the collective worship? Was there something to 'see, hear, think and do'?
- How appropriate was the theme and the Scripture to the liturgical season?
- How did the collective worship make people feel?
- How could the experience of collective worship be enhanced or improved?

Resources

There are many resources available for planning liturgical prayer and collective worship. Each class has a 'Let Us Pray 2gether' box. This contains:

- A planning board
- Scripture cards
- Pack 1 cards (Gather, Word, Response, Mission)
- Pack 2 cards (See, Hear, Think, Do)
- Guide to liturgical themes

Planning and evaluation forms are also used for pupils to plan liturgical prayer and collective worship. These are stored electronically for staff to access and blank printed copies can be found in class collective worship folders.

Each class also has a liturgical prayer box. This contains:

- A set of liturgical-coloured drapes (green, purple, red, gold/white)
- Crucifix
- Candle

Additional resources are available centrally and within each classroom. Additional resources include: books, prayer cards, candles, cloths, crosses, praying hands, pebbles, shells etc.

Members from our Chaplaincy team are involved in monitoring and managing the resources for collective worship and liturgical prayer, and we aim to update these resources as regularly as possible.

Inclusion and Pupil Progression in Leading Prayer and Liturgy

A key principle of the Directory of Masses with children is to enhance the quality of worship by adapting, whilst maintaining authenticity to the Catholic tradition, thus encouraging participation. Therefore, worship and liturgy should be "suited to children's age and capabilities."

Children do not always understand all of the experiences provided in worship and liturgy, as they are aimed at a wide range of ages. They must, however, experience some elements that are relevant to them whenever they attend.

The Religious Education curriculum plays an important role in preparing pupils for worship by giving them the means to understand the religious language and significance of the actions. Particular attention should be given to the Word of God, and all readings used in worship and liturgy, so that it is proclaimed at a level appropriate to the pupils' age and capacity.

At St Elizabeth's pupils plan, prepare, lead and evaluate collective worship with growing independence. We recognise that younger pupils require more adult support and in this process and that the majority of our older pupils have grown in confidence and skill to lead this with very little adult support. We recognise this in our 'Guide to Progression in Collective

Worship' document. Staff use this to support pupils to grow in knowledge, skill and confidence of preparing and leading collective worship.

Prayer and Liturgical Retreats

Each week, the lay-chaplain leads one class in retreat. Each class has opportunity for a class retreat once every seven weeks. This is based on themes such as our Franciscan Values for each class, the liturgical calendar etc.

Celebration of the Sacraments

Eucharistic celebrations form a very important part of our Collective Worship. School leaders work with the parish priest to arrange dates for the celebration of Mass in school as regularly as possible. Opportunities for children to plan and participate are maximised and parents and other members of the school and Parish communities are encouraged to attend. The dates of Whole school or class masses are published on school newsletters throughout the academic year. The celebrations may take the following forms:

- Whole school Masses, ensuring we celebrate Holy Days of Obligation when they occur during the school year. Where Mass cannot be celebrated due to the schedule of the priest, an appropriate liturgical prayer will be used on Holy Days of Obligation.
- Class Mass, which is prepared by the children and teachers for the children and parents. These masses are smaller and give the children the opportunity to gather in their class to worship, learn about and pray for their school, family, friends etc.
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, providing opportunity for pupils, staff and parents to experience a sense of wonder and awe in encountering Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The school endeavours to provide opportunity for pupils and staff to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school during the seasons of Advent and Lent, where the availability of the parish priest allows. Whole school reconciliation services/liturgical prayer allows all pupils to join in with readings, prayers and hymns on this theme and provide opportunity for quiet reflection.

Child-Led Liturgical Prayer

Child-led liturgical prayer takes place weekly within the classroom setting for the class. The theme of these will reflect the liturgical calendar or celebrate a specific event or the end of a topic. These will involve formal and informal prayers with time also given for private prayer and reflection. Children plan, prepare and lead this form of collective worship. This is facilitated by an adult and the children grow in confidence to do this independently. Planning forms, evaluation forms, photographs, prayers and any other evidence is kept in class Collective Worship folders.

Class Liturgical Prayer

Class liturgical prayer also takes place weekly. Every seven weeks, each class has the opportunity to work together (with the support of the class teacher and lay chaplain) to plan, prepare and lead the whole school in liturgical prayer. The theme of these will also reflect the liturgical calendar or celebrate a specific event or the end of a topic. Planning forms, evaluation forms, photographs, prayers and any other evidence is kept in class Collective Worship folders. Parents/carers and governors are welcome to attend class liturgical prayer and their feedback is collected and collated by school leaders.

Daily Prayer

Daily prayers are said in each class, in the morning, before and after lunch and at home time. Each classroom also has a focal point for prayer. There is a crucifix and the Bible may be opened at an appropriate reading by the teacher and the children. This display, with the appropriate coloured cloth, changes to suit the liturgical season and provides a space within each classroom for children to say or write their own prayers.

Right of Withdrawal

As we are a Catholic School, and parents have applied to the school knowing this, we expect all children to attend assembly, mass and liturgies. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship.

Monitoring and Review

It is the role of a named school governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the subject lead and head teacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.

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