



St Mary's Catholic Academy



***“Through the strength of God’s love and the power of prayer we are guided to do whatever He tells us.
Many hearts, one accord, growing and learning together for life to build the kingdom of God.”***
(School Mission Statement)

“Many Hearts, One Accord”
(School Motto)

Prayer and Liturgy Policy for collective worship in the Newman Catholic Collegiate

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God.”
St John Damascene

Our Mission – At St Mary’s we strive to create a nurturing and spiritually enriching environment where children can grow in their faith and develop a deep connection with God. Through daily communal and personal prayer, regular participation in liturgical celebrations, and the integration of Catholic teachings in the curriculum, the school aims to foster a strong sense of faith, reverence, and love for God. We strive to instill in our children a profound understanding of the sacraments, encourage active participation in Mass and other liturgical events, and promote a life of prayerful reflection, humility, and compassion. By nurturing the spiritual dimension of each child, we seek to empower them to become responsible and compassionate individuals who can positively contribute to their communities and the world at large.

St Mary’s Catholic Academy is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and a member of the Newman Catholic Collegiate, under the patronage of Bl St. John Henry Newman. Our priority is to help students to know Jesus Christ, his mission and his Gospel, which forms our way of living. Our vision for the Collegiate is summed up in the words **“Growing together for life”**.

Our school is a Catholic school, founded on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Specifically, St Mary’s Catholic Academy, seeks to live as Many hearts, one accord, our guiding principle. This policy document should be considered in the light of our School Mission Statement which outlines all that underpins our work.

St Mary’s is a caring, Catholic school community and we teach our children that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. We aim to foster an awareness and

understanding of the presence of God in each individual child's life and to encourage a personal response to that presence.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school is concerned with giving praise, thanks and reverence to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into communion with Him, made possible through the human and divine work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Collective worship, however, should also be used as a vehicle to promote the teachings of the scriptures, consider how to care for and respect our environment, recognise our God-given gifts and talents and understand how to live as Christians in love and peace, by valuing the diversity and unity of humankind, through loving tenderly, acting justly and walking humbly in the footsteps of Christ.

Legal Requirements

Collective worship is a legal daily requirement which is distinct from curriculum time. For Catholic schools, this requirement is made explicit within the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham which states: "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 have a legal right to withdraw their child from all or any part of collective worship. At St. Mary's the responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the Governing Body; however, in the life of the school, it is predominantly led and managed by the RE Team (including the Principal, Head of School and RE Leader), with each staff member and child taking some ownership and responsibility for prayer and liturgy.

Rationale

Collective worship will be an educational and spiritual experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. At St. Mary's we will continue to foster and deepen our children's personal relationship with God our Father daily in prayer. We do this by helping them to become aware of God's presence in their lives and of His love for them, by leading them to respond to Him in a manner suited to their age. This may be in one of the following ways:

- Prayer of silence
- Spontaneous prayer
- Praying through gesture or action
- Formal prayer
- Guided Meditations

Prayer will not be confined to an act of worship. Children are encouraged to pray in the morning and in the evening. Worship in St. Mary's is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition and faith system.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy through collective worship

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

- To give glory, honour, thanks and praise to God
- To contemplate the mystery and transcendence of God
- To reflect on spiritual, moral and ethical issues
- To explore, reflect upon and act on their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared Christian values
- To enrich religious experience
- To develop a liturgical understanding of the Catholic Church's context and structure
- To teach the meaning and purpose of prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition
- To take a full and active role in collective worship
- To value the wonder and awe of God's creation

All acts of worship in this school will:

- Be a spiritual experience, 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.
- Be appropriately paced and offer a range of spiritual and reflective experiences offered in a variety of groupings and settings.

A Worshipping Community

St. Mary's Catholic Academy is a worshipping community: we place prayer, worship and liturgical celebration at the very heart of our expression of Catholic tradition. We actively strive to provide a varied experience of worship and to promote engagement through the creative contributions of both pupils and staff.

We understand that, through prayer and collective acts of worship, we can develop our relationship with God and we can talk to Him in many ways. Therefore, it is our duty to provide every child with the opportunity to meet God through engagement in the spoken word, music, dance, drama, art and through silent reflection. We particularly value opportunities to nurture pupils in leading collective worship and developing prayer experiences of their own making.

We realise that, as one "instrument" of the Church, we cannot achieve this in isolation and therefore need to encourage a collaborative partnership between the home, the parish and the school. We recognise that each of these groups has a responsibility to fulfil its role and seek to support parents in this mission.

We believe that collective worship should take into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those that 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

Linking Home-School-Parish

Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their child, and are regularly welcomed into school to secure a strong partnership. They are invited to attend Mass, class assemblies and other liturgical celebrations, along with opportunities for reflection in the form of a Class Saint liturgy. Emphasis is placed on helping them to understand the vital role they can play in teaching their children the importance of worship and developing the prayer life of their children.

Class teachers set home learning tasks based on curriculum topics and religious learning (on a rota basis with other curriculum areas). Parents are encouraged to support their children wherever possible; this includes sharing the Ten: Ten parent resources which reflect the weekly Sunday Gospel message. A link to the parent newsletter is sent to parents, alongside links to the parish newsletter and relevant prayers and reflections.

A Mini Vinnies group has been established within school and we seek opportunities to work with the parishioners of our parish and members of the community. Joint projects include working together to make Rosary displays and bookmarks for each class, charity events, local community visits (eg. Care homes) and a well-established gardening club led by parishioners. We also have strong links with CAFOD and Fr. Hudson's, who come in to share liturgies, workshops and prayer services with our children.

Prayer and Liturgy at St. Mary's Catholic Academy

In addition to the four formal prayer times throughout the school day (morning, grace before and after meals and home-time), prayer and worship is an integral part of the day at St Mary's and is not separated from the rest of school life. Pupils all share in this important aspect of our daily experience. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer and are open to God. They respond in many ways to the world around them and their experiences at school should be full of opportunities for exploration and discovery. Teachers create an environment where these responses are developed, in recognition that they can form the beginnings of prayer. To this end, each classroom has a special prayer area that reflects the liturgical season. These spaces are intended to support pupils to initiate their own prayers. Prayer spaces in Years 1 to 6 have a class prayer book, where children are encouraged to express their own prayer intentions, which can be shared with their class as the children wish.

Each week pupils participate in:

- ✠ A Gospel-based assembly to enable all children to access and reflect upon the weekend readings, planned and led by the Principal and Head of School (Mondays)

- ✠ Class child led prayer and liturgy based on the theme of the Mass, Saints, class work and/or virtues planned and led by class teachers and/or children (Tuesdays)

- ✠ A whole school or class Mass (on a rota basis) (Wednesday)

✠ Key Stage 'Songs of Praise' Hymn practice, led by Music leader or class teachers and supported by Key Stage staff (hymns practised are linked to forthcoming Mass and the liturgical calendar) (Wednesdays)

✠ A whole school or Key Stage assembly based on the current virtues (Wednesdays)

✠ A God's given talents Assembly, recognising each child's God-given gifts and talents (Fridays)

✠ Daily opportunities for liturgy and prayer through Ten: Ten daily prayer resources and/or RE lessons/ class collective worship

Children from Year 3 to Year 6 take turns to lead collective worship throughout the year in class and Key Stage assemblies, and Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2 will take an active role in planning, leading and participating where appropriate – please see the appendix for the progression in child led worship throughout the school.

Liturgical Assemblies

During Advent and Lent, additional liturgies, led by classes, are held three times per week, to enable children to experience a fuller understanding of these seasonal times of preparation for Christmas and Easter.

Planning

Prayer and Liturgy at St. Mary's is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant liturgical dates and the curriculum.

Each act of collective worship follows a 4-part structure:

- 1) Gather
- 2) Listen
- 3) Respond
- 4) Go Forth

Staff and Key Stage 2 children are expected to follow this format for every assembly/ liturgy and are encouraged to record this on a Liturgy planning sheet (appendix one)

- Scripture will be the focus for most acts of worship
- Collective worship will relate to the school community in the light of the school's aims and mission, the virtues, curriculum, class saints and the liturgical calendar.
- There will be flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
- The school will aim to teach children the skills to enable them to prepare, organise, lead and evaluate worship.

Resources

Resources are monitored by the RE leader and new resources are ordered, within the budget, where required. There are a wide range of resources available to aid planning for prayer and liturgy, such as assembly books, access to ten:ten resources (staff have their own log ins), artwork etc. These can be found in the cupboards in the PPA room, in the

staffroom or in the Principal's office. Music resources/ CDs for collective worship are kept in the Principal's office and a copy of backing tracks have also been downloaded onto the staff's shared area of the school network. There are also resources from the Birmingham Diocese Education Service and several Internet sites that are also a useful resource for planning; these links have been distributed to all teaching staff, with recommendations to support planning and delivery of collective worship.

There is a central store in the hall for children to select artefacts and resources for their child led worship. Each class has several artefacts for their prayer areas such as candles, crucifixes, crosses, praying hands, rosary beads, statues, bibles etc. These may be shared amongst staff as they wish.

Mass and the Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations are a crucial element of our collective worship at St. Mary's. Opportunities for children to participate in the Mass weekly (on a rota basis), parents and other members of the school and Parish communities are encouraged to attend.

Eucharistic celebrations will take the following forms:

- Whole school Masses at the start and end of each term and for Holy Days of Obligation and special feasts
- Class Masses
- Children are encouraged to attend Saturday evening/ Sunday Masses throughout the year
- Masses for children preparing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion and Confirmation
- Our school also take representatives from Key Stage 2 to the annual North Staffordshire Combined Schools Mass and Good Shepherd's Mass and will take up opportunities to have an active involvement in these Masses.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Termly and annual monitoring schedules are completed and reviewed by the RE Team/ Leader, with input from SLT where required. Monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy takes place in a variety of ways: looking at class prayer, class RE journals, scrutinising RE books and planning, formally and informally monitoring acts of worship, pupil interviews and evidence of reflections on worship.

Termly meetings with the link governor, (Rebecca Page), are scheduled and minutes from these meetings are reported and shared with the RE Team/Leader, Principal, local governing body and Board of Directors. Actions from the previous minutes are discussed at the following meeting to ensure progress and impact.

The school's provision for prayer and liturgy is evaluated annually to consider how it meets the needs of pupils and whether it truly reflects the aims and mission of the school.

The RE Team/Leader may evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy in the school by conducting informal evaluations, with the permission and consultation with staff members throughout the school year. Staff are always invited to observe Senior Leader's assemblies, prayer times and acts of collective worship as good practice.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All children at St Mary's Catholic Academy have a right to be included in accessible prayer and liturgy unless withdrawn at parental request. Inclusion of all is a cornerstone of Catholic belief and of our own school mission statement. Worship should play an active role in developing an inclusive attitude in the children themselves.

Health and Safety

It is the responsibility of class teachers to follow school Health and Safety procedures. Lighted candles should only be used under adult supervision during Masses and acts of worship and a safety lighter should be safely stored away from children. Class teachers in EYFS, KS1 and lower KS2 should use battery operated candles in class, but real candles should be used at Mass. There is a Risk Assessment for Mass available on request.

RE Leader/ Team:

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

This policy was agreed by the Directors on

This policy will be reviewed

Signed _____ (Chair of the Board of Directors).

Appendix One

Liturgy Planning sheet

Date:	
Liturgical Season/Feast	
Key Stage/Year Groups	

[When are we celebrating? Who will be celebrating? Where will we celebrating? Environment]

	Resources/ Additional Information <i>[Which ministries are needed? What needs to be prepared?]</i>
Gathering <i>[To become a gathered assembly. To prepare us to participate—to listen and respond]</i>	
Listening <i>[Participating in the Word of God (readings from scriptures, singing the psalms), is common to all Catholic worship.]</i>	
Responding <i>[Our response can be made up silence, reflection, prayer, symbolic action or song.]</i>	
Mission/Going Forth <i>[In our liturgical celebrations we offer praise to God; we are also strengthened in our mission to live as Christ in the world.]</i>	

Appendix Two

Prayers taught to the children at St. Mary's:

EYFS						Year 1			Year 2					
Grace before Meals	Grace after Meals	Morning Offering	Prayer at the End of the Day	Our Father	Hail Mary	Sign of the Cross	Act of Faith, Hope & Love	Glory Be	Prayer to the Guardian Angel	Act of Faith	Act of Hope	Eternal Rest	Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi	The Joyful Mysteries

Year 3				Year 4				Year 5				Year 6			
Act of Love	Act of Sorrow (Contrition)	The Angelus	The Luminous Mysteries	Prayer to the Guardian Angel	Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester	The Memorare	The Sorrowful Mysteries	Regina Caeli	The Magnificat	The Glorious Mysteries	Diocesan Prayer for vocations	Hail Holy Queen	Prayer to the Holy Spirit	The Rosary	The Stations of the Cross

See the Overview of School and Parish Prayer (attach to the Policy)





Appendix Three

Progression for develop pupils' skills in planning and leading prayer and liturgy in each key stage



St Mary's and Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy
Progression in child led prayer and liturgy



	Preparation	We gather  gather	We listen  Listen	We respond  Respond	We go forth  Go Forth	Notes
EYFS		<p>Children to begin to lead daily prayers- 2 x prayer leaders who can begin the sign of the cross.</p> <p>Prepare the prayer table with the cloth to match the liturgy session and choose objects to match the theme of the liturgical season/theme of the prayer or liturgy.</p>		<p>1 minute meditation facilitated by adult- children could start to lead the meditation by ringing a bell at the beginning.</p> <p>Encourage opportunities for spontaneous prayer</p>		
KS1	<p>Children to use Child led worship board and resources to plan and lead liturgies, facilitated by adult.</p> <p>Beginning of Yr1 onwards, all children to plan liturgies in groups, facilitated by an adult.</p>	<p>Children to plan and prepare focal point for worship according to liturgical season or theme of the prayer/liturgy.</p> <p>Generate their own way of gathering to begin the liturgy.</p>	<p>If appropriate, choose readings to match the liturgical season or theme of the prayer/liturgy.</p>	<p>2 minute meditation facilitated by adult- children could start to lead the meditation by ringing a bell at the beginning.</p>	<p>As a class, plan the mission for children to go forth.</p> <p>Whole class to evaluate liturgy, recorded on proforma.</p>	
Lower KS2	<p>Yr4 – Children to use Liturgical Calendar and the</p>	<p>Children to plan and prepare focal point for worship</p>	<p>If appropriate, choose readings to match the liturgical season</p>	<p>Plan their own way to respond. 3 minutes meditation led by</p>	<p>Plan their own mission for children to go forth.</p>	

	<p>open Bible Topical Bible - Bible Verses by Topic (openbible.info) to support planning of class liturgies (if suitable).</p>	<p>according to liturgical season or theme of the prayer/liturgy being able to articulate reasons for choice.</p> <p>Generate their own way of gathering to begin the liturgy.</p>	<p>or theme of the prayer/liturgy.</p>	<p>anyone in class</p>	<p>Whole class to evaluate liturgy, recorded on proforma.</p>	
Upper KS2	<p>Children to use Liturgical Calendar to support planning of class liturgies. Children to use Open Bible online Topical Bible - Bible Verses by Topic (openbible.info) resource to select a reading linked to the theme provided on liturgical calendar. Children to then find the passage in Bible to add to their prayer focus. Children to generate their own gather, listen, respond and go forth according to the theme. They may use songs, actions, prayers, classroom resources within the liturgy.</p>	<p>Children to plan and prepare focal point for worship according to liturgical season or theme of the prayer/liturgy being able to articulate reasons for choice.</p> <p>Generate their own way of gathering to begin the liturgy.</p>	<p>If appropriate, choose readings to match the liturgical season or theme of the prayer/liturgy. Plan how the reading will be shared – drama etc.</p>	<p>Plan their own way to respond.</p> <p>3-4 minutes meditation prepared and led by anyone in class.</p>	<p>Individual/group evaluations of the Prayer/liturgy with follow up of recommendation. Children are encouraged to give reasons for their responses and recommendations.</p>	<p>Children encourage active participants throughout. Child led worship in UKS2 to overseen by an adult, and guided only when necessary.</p>