



**Good Shepherd Catholic
Primary & Nursery School**

PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

Last Review Date: January 2024

Next Review Date: January 2027

Mission Statement

LEARNING TOGETHER AS PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

At Good Shepherd, we will:

Follow the Catholic faith to become more like Jesus

Appreciate that we are all unique and celebrate our different talents

Inspire everyone to develop a love of learning

Treat others as we would like to be treated

Help everyone to become confident and resilient

Introduction

'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (Matthew 18:20). This familiar saying of Jesus provides the starting point for understanding prayer and liturgy and reminds us that whenever we come together to pray, sing hymns or listen to scripture, Christ is present. Prayer and liturgy is fundamental to Catholic tradition and is central to the daily life of our school that acknowledges and celebrates God's presence in our lives. As well as giving glory, honour, and praise and thanks to God, prayer and liturgy at Good Shepherd provide opportunities for spiritual growth and development through participation in a variety of forms of worship and prayer.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.' (Marcus Stock (2012), Christ at the Centre, Catholic Truth Society, 23.)

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that an act of worship, known at Good Shepherd as prayer and liturgy, is provided daily for all pupils. It can take place as a whole school or in groups such as classes at any time of day.

Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time, meaning that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

It is the right of parents to withdraw their child from 'Collective Worship', however, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents will be made aware that it is not confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured, within Come and See RE curriculum.

Aims

Prayer and worship at Good Shepherd aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- to develop a personal relationship with God, and foster and nurture other relationships
- contemplate the mystery of God
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- to explore their own beliefs
- to be respectful and reverent towards the beliefs of others
- to respond to and celebrate life
- to experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- to develop a common ethos and shared values
- to enrich religious experience
- to reflect and celebrate the Word of God at their own level
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development
- to reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- to reinforce positive attitudes
- to participate fully
- to take time 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles

Acts of prayer and liturgy at Good Shepherd endeavour to:

- give praise and honour to God
- be of high quality, fundamental to the life of the school
- give pupils meaningful opportunities to engage in the Sacramental Life of the Church
- give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, stage of personal, social and religious development and family context in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.
- develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead rather than just participating passively or contributing in a token way

In order to achieve our aims and principles, prayer and liturgy will be:

- properly planned
- appropriate to the age and groupings of the children
- a personalised experience wherever possible
- short and appropriately paced

Provision

“All those concerned with education should work and plan together to ensure that the children have some idea of God the supernatural, in proportion to their years and degree of maturity. They can have experience of human values which are involved in the Eucharist celebration by acting together as a community; exchanging greetings; the capacity to listen; to forgive and ask forgiveness; to express gratitude; experience symbolic actions; conviviality and festive celebrations.” (Directory of Children’s Masses)

Planning

As faith leader of the school, the Head teacher plans and leads the majority of whole school prayer and liturgy with reference to the Church's seasons, feast days and other significant dates. Class teachers lead the majority of key stage and class prayer and liturgy. From reception, children are actively involved in planning and leading worship, both in class groups and whole school settings.

Yearly Whole School Timetable

Events that all children participate in throughout the year are listed below:

- Holy days of Obligation Masses

September

- Beginning of School Year Mass

October

- Harvest Mass
- The month of the Rosary

November

- Remembrance month
- Advent day of reflection (date dependent)

December

- Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 Nativity
- KS2 Carol Service

January

- Epiphany Mass

March

- Ash Wednesday Service
- Lenten Services – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday,
- Stations of the Cross

May

- Crowning of Mary

July

- End of School Year Mass

- Good Shepherd Day

Individual Year Group Timetable

In addition to whole school events, some year groups participate in additional events throughout the year. These are listed below:

- Class liturgies – Reception to Year 6
- End of topic reflections – Reception to Year 6
- Chaplaincy group liturgies – Year 5
- First Communion Masses – majority Year 3
- Leavers Mass – Year 6

Weekly Prayer and Liturgy Timetable

	Prayer and Liturgy	Led by
Monday	Thought for the week	Head teacher
Tuesday		Parish Priest KS1 staff
Wednesday	The Gospel	Teaching staff
Thursday	Hymn practice (or) Come and See end of topic liturgy	Head teacher A class
Friday	Celebrations	Head and deputy head teachers

Prayer and Liturgy

Setting

Shared acts of worship should take place in an atmosphere of reflection and stillness; a setting which is conducive for prayer and celebration. Sometimes worship will be quiet and contemplative and at other times it will involve music, laughter and dance. The mixture needs to be creative and varied, joyful and reverent, penitent and spirit filled. During this time, we encourage each other to listen to God speaking to us and to respond.

Structure

Each prayer and liturgy is planned for following the four-fold pattern of worship: we gather, we listen, we respond, we go forth. Gather means how we come together, listen is when we hear the Word of God, respond is a time for reflection and go forth is what we take from the experience.

Examples of the four areas could include but are not limited to:

Gather

- preparing the space - music, lighting

- creating a focal point – a crucifix, Bible, candles, rosary, flowers
- making the sign of the cross

Listen

- listening to scripture
- acting out a Bible story
- using images to tell the story

Respond

- talking silently to God
- discussing how this relates to our lives
- thinking about links to other scripture
- saying a prayer
- making the sign of peace

Go Forth

- reflecting on what we would like to hold on to
- identifying ways of applying this to our lives
- showing the message through our words or actions

Spiritual Development

We encourage the children's spiritual growth and development through participation in prayer and liturgy where they will experience forms of prayer including formal, informal, spontaneous, private, shared, petitionary and meditative which are appropriate to their age and the occasion. Prayer and liturgy should also include asking simple searching questions that relate to children's everyday experiences, include subject matter that relates to the children's understanding of life, religion and worship, and include relevant current affairs. Time should be given for children to reflect on what they have heard and pray.

Whole School Environment

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment' (Christ at the Centre, Rev Marcus Stock, 2005)

Our Catholic faith is evident in religious artefacts and images displayed around the school. Crucifixes are displayed in all classrooms as well as other areas such as both halls and the staff room. There are displays in the school entrance, the main corridor and the main hall showing the importance of prayer.

Prayer Corners

Each classroom has an area dedicated for prayer and reflection. Prayer corners should be interactive and reflect the current Come and See topic. The colours reflect the liturgical year: purple during Advent and Lent, green during ordinary times and blue in the school entrance and halls during May. Gold is used during Epiphany and Pentecost.

Prayer corners must have the following:

- a Crucifix
- a bible appropriate for the year group
- a candle
- a class prayer book
- items relevant to current events e.g. poppies during November, prayers for peace during times of war, a rosary during October