



St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

The Mission for St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is,

To ensure a loving and faithful learning community in which our children can become the person God created them to be. A community where we celebrate the dignity, worth and uniqueness of every individual. Where we grow and learn together with joy, in the love of Jesus. In this love, we strive to be courageous stewards of creation.

Therefore, the implementation of our prayer & liturgy policy plays an essential role in enabling us to strive towards achieving this mission for all the children in our care.

The Nature of Prayer & Liturgy

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school, names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It 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. It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Collective Worship' in schools. 'Collective Worship' is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context. Our hope is to foster a pattern of spirituality, which will continue into adulthood.

Legal Requirements

At St Bernadette's we celebrate a daily act of worship. We acknowledge this is a legal requirement. Parents have a right to withdraw their child from acts of worship.

However, given the importance of prayer & liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents need to be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that prayer & liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including Religious Education.

As a rule, prayer & liturgy will take place on the school premises. However, the Governing Body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, "on a special occasion".

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging rests prayer & liturgy with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

The place of prayer & liturgy in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that prayer & liturgy takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- 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 experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Prayer & Liturgy

At St Bernadette's we believe that our spiritual life will be alive and meaningful when it has a direct effect upon our daily life.

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

- to enrich religious experience
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development
- to reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- to provide times of stillness and silence in body and mind
- to contemplate something of the mystery of God
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues (opportunity to reflect upon feelings, negative as well as positive).
- to explore 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 values
- to reinforce positive attitudes
- to participate fully and enjoy moments beyond the ordinary and everyday
- to take time out to 'wonder at, and give thanks for God's creations', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give value to'.

Principles

All Prayer & Liturgy in this school will:

- raise our mind and heart to God
- celebrate the presence of God in our life and school community
- be a high quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- support learners' spiritual development
- give learners positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds. In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
 - be short and appropriately paced (learners' attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life, that is 5-6 minutes for Key Stage 1 and 7-10 minutes for Key Stage 2);
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings;
 - seek to involve learners in preparation and leadership.
 - Include some element of holy scripture.

Inclusion (EAL, SEND, Pupil Premium)

At St Bernadette's we recognise the value and importance of each person as a child of God and therefore, we strive to ensure that our acts of worship are accessible and relevant to all participants. To do this, we may give children equipment to hold to help them to be able to be still, adult support, or other special arrangements aimed at helping them to participate as fully as possible.

Pupils of Other Faiths

We recognise that some of our pupils may belong to different faiths and staff are sensitive to this when planning and leading acts of worship. Space and resources are available to allow all pupils to worship in accordance with their religion.

Organisation

We come together as a school family to worship on a Monday morning and a Friday afternoon. Once a week Reception Class and Key Stage One come together and Key Stage Two join together for worship. On other days worship takes place in each class.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer & Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the church's seasons, Religious Education Themes studied, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- in consultation with appropriate parties and with reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in learners skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship following the liturgical structure (Gather, Listen, Response, Mission).

Recording

Prayer & liturgy may be recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, learner groupings and resources
- a planner provides the template for all worship activities (ie Gather, Listen, Response, Mission)

- through displays, collections of learners' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.
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The Catholic Life of our school including the school's provision of prayer & liturgy is a standing item on the Faith & Community committee agenda and is monitored and evaluated to prepare for future developments and in order to consider whether it meets the needs of all learners and whether learners are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading prayer & liturgy.

Resources

Resources are the responsibility of the class teachers. A selection of resources are also housed in the Oratory and may be accessed at any time.

The Oratory is available for all year groups for small group, and voluntary worship (e.g. dinnertimes for staff and children).

Other resources are available in the hall and artefacts of other world faiths (e.g. Judaism & Islam) are available also.

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

When children attend residential visits they are encouraged to enter into short acts of collective worship. Prayer, 'talking to God', and praying according to his will (John 5:14) is a special part of the school family time shared.

Throughout the year children and staff can attend prayer-times, which take place at the end of lunch-time in the Oratory.

The Oratory is available for staff, children and parents to use for quiet prayer and contemplation at appropriate times.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations will highlight a special occasion and will often be celebrated with all learners. Children who do not receive Eucharist may receive a Blessing from Father David. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for learners to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations we work closely with Fr David. We believe that learners are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

At **Key Stage 1** Prayer & Liturgy includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites in the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word.
- School and Class Mass

At **Key Stage 2** Prayer & Liturgy includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites in the Mass or the Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite.
- School and Class Mass

The Leader for Prayer and Liturgy

The role of the Leader for Prayer and Liturgy includes;

- ❖ Formulating a written policy for Prayer & Liturgy.
- ❖ Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer & Liturgy which will form part of the School Improvement Plan.
- ❖ Ensuring that Prayer & Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of learners.
- ❖ Ensuring that prayer & liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory on Children's Masses'.
- ❖ Organising themes for prayer and liturgy.
- ❖ Assisting the Governors and Headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer & liturgy.

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- ❖ Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation.
- ❖ Undertaking an annual audit to provide information for future development
- ❖ Observing, on occasions, an Act of Collective Worship.
- ❖ Collecting evidence of worship planning for all year groups

Communication

- ❖ Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of prayer & liturgy.
- ❖ Reporting to and consulting with the Governors and Headteacher regarding matters of concern and development.

- ❖ Acting as consultant to colleagues.
- ❖ Promoting and encouraging positive attitudes towards prayer & liturgy.
- ❖ Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding prayer & liturgy.
- ❖ Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community.
- ❖ Liaison with the Parish Priest.
- ❖ Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre.

Professional development/ongoing formation

- ❖ Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship.
- ❖ Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back.
- ❖ Keeping up-to-date by personal reading.

Resources

- ❖ Evaluating existing resources.
- ❖ Developing the resources available for prayer & liturgy including visual aids for the interactive whiteboard, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- ❖ Budgeting efficiently.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer & Liturgy leader and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.

Signed: Mrs D Shoulder (Headteacher)

Signed: Mrs A Bramhall (Prayer & Liturgy leader)

Signed: Miss K Seddon (Chair of Faith & Community Committee)

Date: February 2023