

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Policy for Prayer and Liturgy

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy 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.

'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.'

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily 'act of worship' offered for all pupils. 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. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, liturgical prayer and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between 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. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St. Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Prayer and 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.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles

All acts of prayer in our school will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;

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- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church. Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

In order to do this, celebrations will:

- Be kept small wherever possible to help to personalise the experience.
- Be short and appropriately paced.
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Organisation

Prayer and Liturgy at our school follow a variety of formats and each can be held at different times of the day. Formats include:

- Class prayers at the beginning of the day, before lunchtimes and at the end of the school day
- Celebration of the Word - whole-school or class-based acts of collective worship with a focus on scripture (see below)
- End of topic 'Rejoice' acts of worship, as part of the 'Come and See' curriculum
- Celebration of the Word - Class-based worship with parents
- Special whole-school assemblies to celebrate some feast days and Holy Days of Obligation
- Weekly hymn practice
- Spontaneous or 'ad hoc' acts of prayer and liturgy which respond to events in school and the outside world

Daily Acts of Collective Worship

A prayer table is intended to act as a focus for pupils during these times of worship. Items placed on this table will include a cloth, a candle, a hand-painted El Salvador cross and the Good News Bible. There might also be relevant copies of God's Story or Church's Story and any other artefacts which represent or compliment the theme of the worship.

Daily acts of collective worship follow this pattern:

- Gather - We come together as part of God's family. Everyone is welcome.
- Listen - God speaks to us and we listen. Scripture will be read directly from the Rainbow Good News Bible.
- Respond - We respond to the Word of God. The children are given time to contemplate what they have heard and respond to it in a variety of different ways, including silent reflection.
- Go Forth - We want to share the Good News! The children go forth with something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives. The children have a deep understanding of the revelation of God's presence.

The reverent atmosphere for prayer might be assisted by music, artefacts, displays of children's work. Include an opportunity for prayer and quiet reflection. Sometimes worship will be quiet and contemplative and at other times involve music, dance and drama.

Planning

We subscribe to TenTen, which we use as the basis for most daily liturgical prayers. Teachers adapt and enhance the TenTen resources when necessary, ensuring that the four elements of Gather, Listen, Respond and Go Forth are all included. Teachers also plan their own liturgical prayers in response to the Church's seasons, the 'Come and See' and 'To know You more clearly' curriculums, significant dates, current events and in response to events in school.

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Whole-School Acts of Collective Worship

Wednesday afternoon - led by a member of SLT, the Head of School or the Executive Headteacher.

Friday afternoon - led by a member of SLT, the Head of School or the Executive Headteacher. This is followed by a short celebration assembly. The two gatherings are distinct from one another.

Class-Based Acts of Collective Worship

On those days when pupils do not have an assembly, the class teacher leads a daily act of worship in class. This act of worship takes place for approximately the number of minutes equivalent to age (e.g. 6 year olds = 6 minutes) at a time appropriate for each class. These times are not prescriptive across year groups or Key Stages. The class teacher is responsible for this daily act of worship. Children are taught to contribute to the planning and leading of worship according to their age and stage.

Recording

Prayer and liturgy evidence is stored on our school shared drive. Here, teachers can save and access samples of planning, and a bank of resources for daily acts of worship and feast days. These resources include music, images, videos, ideas and a selection of fully-prepared acts of worship created by the teaching staff at our school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and liturgy is regularly monitored via pupil voice and staff voice. Additionally, the RE Lead will take part in acts of worship in each class, using the 'Collective Worship Experience Form' as recommended by the Archdiocese.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).