



'Living and Learning through Christ'

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

At St Bernadette Catholic Primary School Catholicity permeates all aspects of teaching and learning. Our values and beliefs aim to provide a strong level of coherence and focus which enriches the whole child. High expectations are expected and articulated so that they are made explicit to all.

Our Mission

St Bernadette Primary School enables children to succeed and learn for life by providing them with:

- An inclusive ethos of support, challenge and encouragement where Catholicity permeates all aspects of school life.
- An opportunity to develop their relationship with God through worship, prayer and belonging to a Catholic community where Christian values are all encompassing.
- A broad, balanced and challenging curriculum.
- High quality innovative teaching from committed and enthusiastic staff, with a collaborative approach to learning and teaching.
- Up-to-date learning resources to match the requirements of the 21st century, both recreational and educational.
- An enriching program of extra-curricular activities and visits.
- A secure, supportive, challenging and stimulating environment which is stress free and happy.
- Spiritual and moral growth through a learning partnership between the School, Parish and Family.
- Clear and open channels of communication between staff, children and parents.

Aims and purpose

The aims and purpose of Liturgical prayer are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God within an overtly Christian community;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote the Catholic ethos and to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship.

Liturgical Prayer

We understand Liturgical Prayer 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 a relationship made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Worship is at the very heart of St. Bernadette Catholic School and must reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and we expect everyone to take an active part in the worship.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our worship on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Catholic Church. However, we conduct our worship in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold celebration assemblies that reflect other cultural traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Organisation of Liturgical Prayer

We celebrate a whole school act of worship on Monday morning. Separate key stage workshops are led by designated staff during the week. Each class holds a family Liturgical Prayer at least twice each year when parents and carers are invited to join the celebration and to actively participate in some manner, e.g. create a prayer, complete a Lenten promise/intention. Visitors are invited to lead acts of worship when appropriate. Father Matt (PP) leads acts of worship appropriate to the liturgical calendar and to meet the needs of the school. He leads whole school masses in church and in the school hall as well as individual class masses throughout the school year.

Children lead their own Liturgical prayer times in small groups regularly in class. They use child friendly resources and have support from their teacher to plan and lead a Liturgical Prayer that is meaningful to them.

While Friday's Celebration assembly is not a Collective worship the focus is on celebrating acts and deeds that follow in the footsteps of Jesus. This gathering plays an important part in promoting the school's Catholic ethos of inclusion and recognition of achievements.

Children are encouraged to organise and lead Liturgical Prayer with the following guidelines:

- Conduct acts of worship in a dignified and respectful way.
 - This is a period of calm reflection when we are quiet and thoughtful.
 - We listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer and hymns.
 - We create an appropriate atmosphere by using candles and other resources that act as a focal point.
- We go forth and follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

At Key Stage 1 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies and prayer times
- occasional liturgies reflecting the introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word
- the occasional celebration of sacramental liturgies
- a range of types of prayer
- a range of styles of celebration
- opportunities for pupils to take the lead in Liturgical prayer in groups

- opportunities for children to evaluate Liturgical prayer

At Key Stage 2 worship includes:

- short simple liturgies and prayer times
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite
- the occasional celebration of sacramental liturgies
- a range of types of prayer
- a range of styles of celebration

- opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship opportunities for pupils to take leadership roles in worship
- Upper key stage 2 pupils will form the Chaplaincy group and undertake responsibility for supporting Liturgical Prayer
- opportunities for children to evaluate Liturgical prayer

Appendix 1 provides ideas for involving children in Liturgical Prayer

Appendix 2 provides description of prayer forms and styles.

Appendix 3 breaks down the Liturgical Prayer into elements

For the sake of simplicity, we can divide Liturgical Prayer into four parts:

- **Gathering** – begin with the sign of the cross. How we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/reflective music, lighted candles, statues, etc.)
- **Word/Listen** – a reading from the Scriptures, organising the Word and prayers to fit in with the theme.
- **Reflect/Response** – time to reflect on the word and what it means to us.
- **Go Forth/Mission** – the sending out from the celebration giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend Acts of Worship or assemblies. Whilst all parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship, the school will seek to enter into discussions to ascertain the reasons for the request, and determine strategies to work around this for the benefit of the child, on the basis of the school's mission for tolerance and mutual respect.

Monitoring and review

It is the role of lead named school governor with responsibility for Religious Education and Prayer and Liturgy, the Head teacher and the RE Lead to monitor the policy and practice of Prayer and Liturgy.

Appendix 1:

Ideas for Involving Children in Liturgical Prayer

Prayer

- Prayer board
- Prayer tree

- Prayer box – children to select appropriate prayers
- Children writing prayers to fit the theme
- Producing favourite prayers using class books
- Suggestions for prayer- children volunteer to read prayer
- Responses

Class Involvement

- Preparation of whole Acts of Worship
- Group of children present story through drama
- Small group prepare worship in a particular theme
- Worship with children leading
- Children find/make visual aids for worship – e.g find images they would like to display on IWB
Dance, or Art work around a theme
- Poetry, mime, puppets
- Discussion – evaluation –children evaluate the Liturgical Prayer afterwards

Music

- Select appropriate hymns
- Select music for coming in and out
- Playing music or instruments
- Choosing objects for focus
- Sharing important events in life and children e.g. family events
- Birthday tree
- Making a school cross – banners, 'liturgical' cloth.

Some ideas ○ Keep it simple ○ Prepare beforehand – spend some time with the Scripture being used.

- If using a guided meditation become comfortable with the meditation offered, note changes you will make to fit the needs of the children.
- If space permits, allow the children to choose their position for prayer. This will help to establish their commitment to the time and could enable greater comfort and relaxation.
- Suggest that children take a few moments to compose themselves if they come to this time in a talkative or giggly state.
- Insert questions into meditations – these may be provided if you use a published meditation. Questions engage the children in the activity, enabling them to enter more fully into the Gospel scene and provide an opportunity to express their feelings. The answer usually will not be spoken out loud.
- End with a key statement or question for the children to think about – this is important to help the children understand that prayer is about developing a relationship with Jesus, their friend
- For spontaneous or informal prayers use language that is familiar to the children. Adapt phrases from psalms so they are accessible to very young children.
- Consider different ways of expressing prayer to avoid being stuck in the verbal mode e.g. dance, song, sitting quietly, & looking at a special book, art
- Consider developing an awareness of 'Sacred Space' – making the prayer area special with flowers, cloths, candles
- Think about ways to make 'Sacred Time' – with silence or music, with a procession, a notice on the class door, a notice in the class, a banner.....

Appendix 2:

Prayer

“Prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him” (CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 2560)

“Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”

(Therese of Lisieux)

Prayer Experiences

Pupils are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer, which are developed in ways which are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Type: Example:

Praying the psalms ‘I thank you for the wonder of my being’ (Psalm 139)

Traditional prayers Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary

Repetitive prayer (mantra) ‘Jesus, I love you’, repeated several times, slowly

Meditation Scripture reflection with use of imagination

Bodily prayer raising hands in praise, bowing, dancing, genuflecting

Prayer of the heart stillness to listen to God: ‘Be still and know that I am God’

Contemplation looking at trees, a sunset, an icon, work done in the topic

Gestures the sign of the cross, the sign of peace

Hymns traditional and modern hymns

Music listening to quiet, reflective music

Litanies for all creation: Thanks be to God

Processions Gospel procession with sung ‘alleluia’

Prayer services and liturgies, formal and spontaneous prayer using holy water, candles, incense and other symbols

Celebrations, prayer, song, sharing food and drink, celebrating work done.

One of the Early Fathers of the Church described prayer as “.the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” These words of St. John Damascene have become a classical definition of prayer and they point to the reason why, in a Catholic school, we begin and end each session of the day in prayer. Prayer can be of different types and express different things. The Catechism of the Catholic Church identifies the following forms of prayer:

- **Blessing and Adoration** – the prayer that blesses God for the goodness which has been shown to humankind

- **Petition** – the prayer which asks for forgiveness and which calls for the establishment of the Kingdom of God
- **Intercession** – consists in asking on behalf of another
- **Thanksgiving** – acknowledging the gifts which God has given
- **Praise** – the prayer which praises God simply because God is

(CCC 2623 – 2649)

A simple way to remember this is through the old acronym of A.C.T.S. The letters stand for adoration, contrition, thanksgiving and supplication.

Appendix 3 Elements of Worship at St. Bernadette

Creating the right atmosphere is vital. It can be difficult as it takes place in a room associated with other activities. These are a few hints which might help to create the right atmosphere.

A focal point for prayer

This is often a permanent feature in the classroom that changes to reflect;

- the liturgical year
- the current topic being explored

The focal point is usually attractively presented with appropriate coloured drapes, posters, artefacts, statues, flowers, the Word of God and a candle. Children can add their own pictures, prayers they have written, artefacts they have made from Lego or clay. All these are very real symbols coming out of the children's own experiences.

This is laying a foundation for developing an appreciation of symbol and is crucial for children's liturgical formation, because our liturgy is **full of symbol** – bread, wine, water, sign of peace, sign of cross.

In selecting items to use in creating a focal point it is important to consider:

- the size of artefacts, ensuring they are of appropriate proportions for the setting;
- colour** – the use of the appropriate liturgical colour should be considered:
 - **gold or white** - for feast days
 - **red** for the Holy Spirit and the feasts of martyrs
 - **violet** – for Advent
 - **purple** - for Lent and the expression of penitence
 - **green** – for ordinary time in the Church's year while not a liturgical colour
 - **blue** is traditionally used to indicate Our Lady

Candles are traditional symbols of Christ's presence among his people and are, therefore, appropriate for each act of worship.

Comfort

The response of pupils is likely to be more positive if they are comfortable. Sitting on carpet rather than on a cold floor will help. Older children may like to sit on chairs in a circle.

A room that is light, warm and airy is likely to elicit a more apt response than one that is dark, cold, dank, or all three!

Greetings and goodbyes

This gives the worship a definite start and finish.

Sign of the cross (can be a call to order and discipline..... need to begin with quality experiences) Lighting the candle An act of the presence of God

Music (or silence)

Think of the powerful silence of Good Friday.

There's no doubt that if we develop a sense of occasion then the whole experience of worship is enhanced.

Reviewed Term 5 2025	Next review due Term 5 2027
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