

'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (Matthew 18:20).

St Mary & St Benedict RC Primary School, Coventry

Prayer and Liturgy Policy



This Prayer and Liturgy Policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body on 20th November 2025 and will be reviewed in Autumn term 2028.

Signed by:

Elizabeth Hancock

Chair of Governors

Date: 20.11.25

Pauline MacDonald

Headteacher

Date: 20.11.25

Diocesan Mission Statement

Forming Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice.

School Mission Statement:

The vision of St Mary and St Benedict Catholic School is to develop our children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural growth within a caring Catholic environment where life is centred around Christ's teachings. We endeavour to do this with the support of parents, staff, governors and the whole parish community, working as a team.

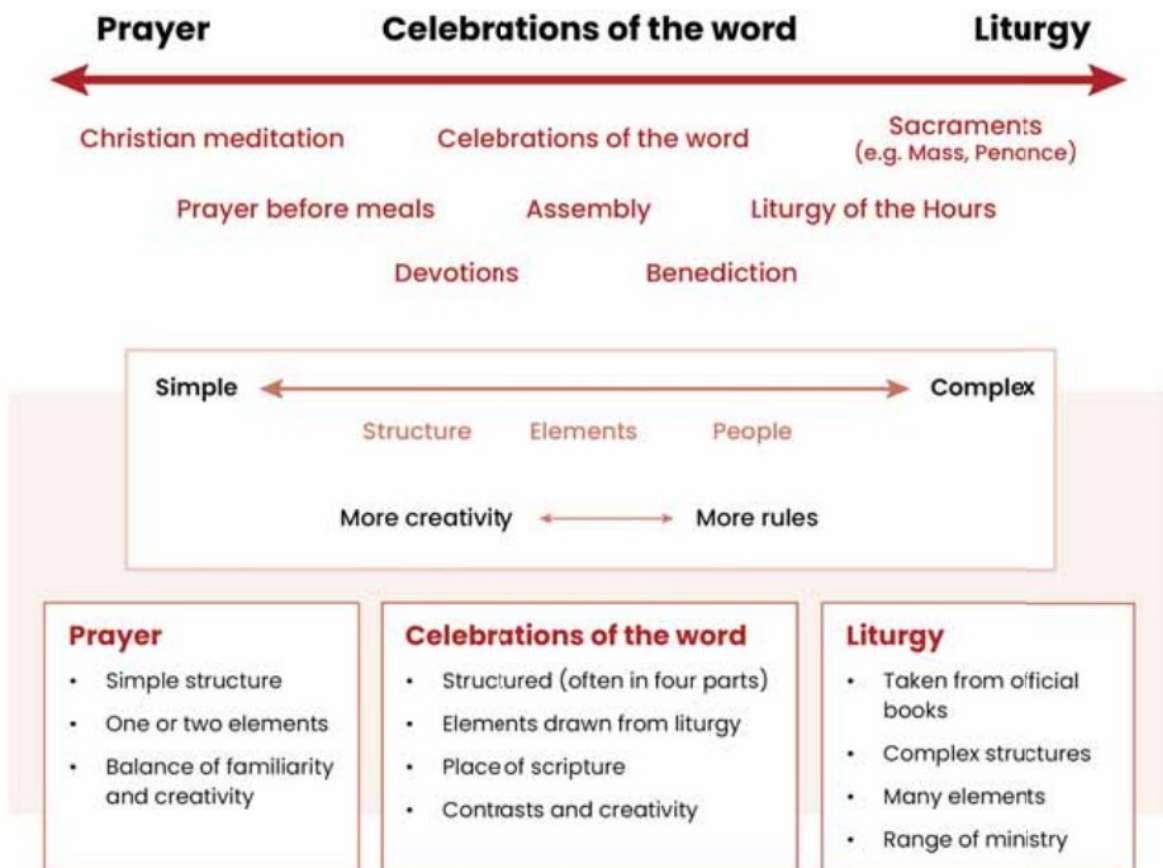
We will provide a caring, inclusive, supportive environment where each child's contribution is encouraged and accepted. We will provide a broad, rich and stimulating curriculum which will inspire each child to reach their full potential.

Together with Christ everyone achieves more

1. The Context of this Prayer and Liturgy Policy

1.1. **Introduction:** Prayer and Liturgy at St Mary & St Benedict RC Primary School goes beyond the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship for all pupils. Worship in this school is Christ-centred and an integral part of school life, rooted in the Catholic tradition, reflecting the values of the Gospel. It provides opportunities for pupils and staff to come together, often with parents and the parish community, to pray and worship God, fostering a deeper appreciation of themselves, their relationship with God and others, and reflecting on what is of value and importance in their lives. "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." ('Christ at the Centre' 2012)

1.2. **Understanding Prayer and Liturgy:** In line with 'To Love You More Dearly: The Prayer & Liturgy Directory' (page 8), we recognise a continuum of worship:



- **Prayer:** The "lifting up of the hearts and minds to God," involving our whole person. This includes communal prayer (e.g., morning/evening prayers, classroom prayers) with clear, simple structures, familiar texts, spontaneous prayers, and opportunities for silence. Long-standing Catholic devotions (e.g., Angelus, Stations of the Cross during Lent) are suitable.
- **Celebrations of the Word:** More formal structures, not directly taken from liturgical books, focusing on the proclamation of scripture. These include assemblies, carol services, and other gatherings, drawing upon liturgical elements (texts, symbols, gestures) with creative freedom. These typically follow a four-part structure: Gather, Word, Respond, and Mission.
- **Liturgy:** The most formal expressions, primarily Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, governed by liturgical books (e.g., Roman Missal, Lectionary). While some adaptation is possible, it must be within authorised parameters. Other liturgies may include parts of the Liturgy of the Hours (e.g., Morning Prayer) and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

2. Statement of Requirement

2.1. **Legal Requirements:** The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, including those in the sixth form (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; Instrument of Government, clause 2).

2.2. **Right of Withdrawal:** The law requires all maintained schools to recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(IA)). The school will follow the guidance set out in the CES Guidance on the right of withdrawal and seek appropriate advice from the Archdiocese of Birmingham. All such requests and reasons (if provided) will be recorded in termly reports.

2.3. **Pupil Entitlement:** The school's provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil pupils' entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar.

2.4. **Curriculum Time:** Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

3. Responsibility

3.1. **Governance:** The Governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.
- there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator).
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders.
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.
- they direct the promotion, monitoring, and evaluation of prayer and liturgy.
- they develop knowledge of the liturgical year and different levels of participation.
- they ensure daily prayer and liturgy are provided for all staff and pupils.
- they participate in the school's prayer and liturgy where practical.
- they ensure professional development for staff focusing on liturgical formation and planning.
- they oversee review and reflection processes, including pupil voice.

3.2. **Headteacher:** The Headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy.
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to.
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.
- they model good practice in participation and leadership.

3.3. **Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator (PLC):** The PLC is responsible for organising, leading, monitoring, and evaluating prayer and liturgy, providing support and resources. This includes:

- Developing an Annual Plan of Provision (APOP) for the school year, identifying liturgical seasons, key celebrations, and opportunities for Sacraments.
- Ensuring daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.
- Supporting pupils in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation.
- Ensuring appropriate and readily available resources for staff and pupils.
- Facilitating induction on prayer and liturgy for new members of staff as required.
- Providing access to effective training and formation opportunities for staff.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating prayer and liturgy, feeding findings back into future planning.
- Reporting monitoring and evaluation outcomes to the Headteacher and Governing Body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school.
- Collaborating with local clergy and parishes.
- Maintaining liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

4. Overview of Prayer and Liturgy Provision

At St Mary & St Benedict RC Primary School, prayer and liturgy are embedded in our daily, weekly, and annual rhythm. This section provides an overview of when prayer and liturgy take place, and the daily and weekly pattern of prayer and liturgy offered in the school. It also includes when Mass is celebrated across the year, when there are opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and when there are special liturgies. This section of the policy is similar to but less detailed than the Annual Plan of Provision. The Annual Plan of Provision will include, for example, dates, who is responsible, and much more detail.

4.1. Daily:

- Prayer at the start and end of the school day, reflecting the Liturgy of the Hours pattern.
- Grace before and after meals.
- Classroom prayer, using a dedicated prayer space (table with appropriate liturgical colours, crucifix, Bible, interactive elements), encouraging personal prayer.

4.2. Weekly:

- **Key Stage 'Gospel' Celebration of the Word:** At the beginning of the week, based on the Sunday Gospel and led by the Headteacher and other Senior Leaders.
- **Whole School Celebration of the Word:** At the end of the week, a gathering focusing on the Gospel theme, a liturgical commemoration, Gospel value/virtue, or national event, with scripture as the central focus. Led by the Headteacher.
- **Class-based Celebrations of the Word:** A dedicated time for prayer within the classroom, deepening the Gospel theme and linking with RE. Scripture is central. Prepared by children as appropriate by age and stage.
- **Mass:** Regular celebration of Mass for a group within the school community, weekly in Advent and Lent, with opportunities for EYFS. Opportunities to attend Mass in the parish church are provided when practical.
- **Staff Prayer:** Regular opportunities for staff to pray together, with staff rotating in preparing prayer. Prayer will always be included at every staff meeting.

4.3. **Over the Course of the Academic Year (Liturgical Year):** The Annual Plan of Provision (APOP), developed by the PLC, translates the policy into practical outcomes for the year, including:

- Reflection and action on previous year's monitoring and evaluation.
- Number and timing of Masses, including Holydays of Obligation and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (especially during Advent and Lent).
- Other services related to key dates in the school calendar (e.g., Carol Service, Stations of the Cross, May processions).
- Engagement with wider Church initiatives (eg. Jubilee Year).
- Music repertoire planning and practising, prioritising liturgical texts (e.g., Gospel Acclamation, Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations).
- Formation for liturgical ministries.
- Strategy for improving liturgical life.
- Forward planning.
- Celebration of Saints' days, particularly the school's patron saints and class saints, using appropriate liturgical colours.

5. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy will be furnished and maintained as such, and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

5.1. **Mass Supplies:** Provision for essential fittings (altar, ambo, cross), books (Roman Missal, Lectionary), vessels (paten, ciboria, chalice, cruets), linen (altar cloths, corporal, purificator, lavabo cloth), and perishables (altar breads, wine, water, candles). All items conform to Church norms and are stored with dignity and care.

5.2. **Participation Aids:** Use of hymn books, orders of service, and presentation software with clear, uncluttered designs, appropriate fonts, and respect for copyright. Screens will not detract from the liturgy's focal points.

6. Training and Formation

6.1. **New Staff Induction:** All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school.

6.2. **Professional Development:** Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

6.3. **Liturgical Ministers:** Pupils and staff undertaking ministries (e.g., readers, servers, musicians) receive appropriate formation, including spiritual reflection and practical rehearsal, to ensure they perform their roles worthily and confidently.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1. **Purpose:** Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly to ensure legal requirements are met, quality standards are maintained, and pupils receive a well-rounded experience of prayer for their personal and faith development.

7.2. **Responsibility:** The Headteacher, Governing Body, and PLC share responsibility.

7.3. **Schedule:** Monitoring takes place regularly, at least half-termly, covering different types of provision (liturgy, pupil-prepared prayer, staff-prepared prayer, voluntary prayer). All monitoring is formal.

7.4. **Process:**

- Observations of whole-school, class-based, and daily prayer patterns.
- Conversations and interviews with pupils and staff.
- Review of planning records (e.g., Annual Plan of Provision, Mass Planner, Celebration of the Word Planner, Pupil Prayer Planner).
- Review of school displays and portfolios.
- Collection of views from pupils, parents/carers, and other community members.
- Findings from monitoring identify strengths, developments, and actions.
- Impact of actions is reviewed and evidenced.
- Findings are reported robustly to the Governing Body as part of the Headteacher's report.

7.5. **Pupil Voice:** Pupils are actively involved in evaluating the quality of prayer and liturgy they plan and participate in.

8. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the Governing Body, at least every three years, to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the school community and align with Church guidance.

Appendix I: Common Prayers to be Known

The following prayers are introduced progressively across age phases, fostering familiarity and deepening understanding of the Catholic faith:

Age Phase 5–7 (EYFS/KSI)

- The Sign of the Cross
- The Lord's Prayer
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be
- Morning Offering
- Grace before meals
- Grace after meals
- Prayer at the end of the day

Age Phase 7–9 (Lower KS2)

- The Apostles' Creed
- An Act of Contrition
- Angel of God
- The Prayer of St Richard of Chichester
- Act of Faith
- Act of Hope
- Act of Love

Age Phase 9–11 (Upper KS2)

- Come, Holy Spirit
- The Rosary
- The Magnificat

Pupils are encouraged to become familiar with these prayers, though memorisation is not formally tested.

We will also teach children the Eternal Rest prayer, particularly during the month of the Holy Souls in November and when praying for someone who has died.

During Advent and Lent, the Walk with Me prayer is a key part of our school prayer repertoire.

Appendix 2: Key Principles of Liturgy (from 'To Love You More Dearly')

The five key principles of liturgy are that it:

1. Gives glory to God and we are made holy.
2. Is an action of the Holy Trinity.
3. Calls us to full, conscious, and active participation.
4. Is future-orientated and keeps our eyes on the Kingdom of Heaven.
5. Is an exercise of the priestly prayer of Jesus Christ to the Father.

Appendix 3: Gather, Word, Respond, Mission Structure

This four-part structure forms the basis of Celebrations of the Word:

- **Gather:** Preparing the community to pray, recognising God's call.
- **Word:** Proclamation of scripture, hearing God's message.
- **Respond:** The community's response through prayer, song, reflection, and action.
- **Mission:** Being sent forth, transformed by what has been heard and done, to live out the Gospel in daily life.