

# Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

## Prayer and Liturgy Policy

### Mission Statements

*"You are precious in my eyes"-Isaiah 43*

- *Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is committed to the widest and fullest education of all pupils in partnership between home, school, parish and community.*
- *Our school aims to create a happy, ordered environment where all members feel secure, valued and respect each other.*
- *Our school aims to be a positive force within the Catholic church inspired by the life of Christ in the Gospels.*

### **Intent**

To grow to love ourselves, each other and Jesus Christ as we develop and nurture in all members of the community a sense of stillness, reflection and prayer through which our relationship with God the Father can grow.

### **Objectives**

- To develop an awareness of the community and to grow in an understanding that we are all precious in God's eyes.
- To encourage children to reflect upon and celebrate the word of God.
- To provide continuous opportunities for children to develop prayer as a natural expression of their developing relationship with God.
- To encourage spontaneous prayer and reflection through various activities as a means of communicating.
- To develop a growing understanding of the celebration of mass and actively participate with the community.
- To know the formal prayers of the Mass, depending on year group, such as

⇒ The Sign of the Cross,

⇒ Our Father,

⇒ Hail Mary,

⇒ Acts of Contrition

⇒ Penitential Act

⇒ The Creed

⇒ The Gloria

⇒ Responses in various parts of the Mass

- To develop continuous opportunities for silent reflection and to develop in children a sense of stillness leading to meditation
- To develop a growing awareness of the choices we make and the consequences they have for others
- To develop an awareness of the church in our world today

## **Implementation**

### **The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Whole School Policy**

The act of Prayer and Liturgy is central to the life of the school. It is a way of affirming our individuality and our communal belonging to the Body of Christ.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children are given an equal chance to join in Prayer and Liturgy according to their age and ability.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

Individuals may withdraw from acts of Prayer and Liturgy but parents should keep the School's Mission Statement in mind when applying for a place at our school.

### **A Time to Reflect**

At Our Lady's, prayer plays a central role within the school community. On the days when children are not involved in an assembly, an Act of Prayer and Liturgy takes place in the classroom, chapel or the Worship Area. This is either led by the teacher or the children and is normally based on a theme. Wednesday Word is shared with the children every week and then sent home for families to use at home.

Our school assemblies bring the school community or part of the school community together in Prayer and Liturgy. Within each assembly, there is always an opportunity for Prayer and Liturgy where the children take part in a variety of prayer experiences. e.g. responding to scripture readings, the identification of prayer intentions, individual prayer, spontaneous prayer, silent prayer, traditional prayers of the Church, music and singing, drama, poetry etc.

Opportunities are provided for the children to participate in the celebration of Mass as outlined in the RE policy.

Prayers are said throughout the day and are developed within the community of each class. This gives each class, ownership of their Prayer and Liturgy life. Prayers of Adoration, where God is praised, Contrition, asking for God's forgiveness, Petition, asking God for a special favour and Thanksgiving, showing gratitude to God, are all included.

For five consecutive school days before Easter, Years two to six present their interpretation of the last days of Jesus' life for their parents and families and the rest of the school. This is done through scripture, prayers, acting, music, singing and dance.

Year 2 - Palm Sunday

Year 3 - The Last Supper

Year 4 - The Garden of Gethsemane

Year 5 - The Crucifixion

Year 6 - The Resurrection

Parents and families are invited to join our Prayer and Liturgy during class assemblies and at other special times.

Further celebrations include:

- ⇒ Harvest festival,
- ⇒ Remembrance Assemblies,
- ⇒ Christmas Nativities,
- ⇒ Special assemblies to welcome particular individuals to school
- ⇒ KS1 Liturgies of the word on Holy Days
- ⇒ Annual Leavers' mass for Year 6



Parents and parishioners will be invited through the school website, the parish bulletin, texts and personal letters from the children and teacher. We actively encourage participation. Prayer and Liturgy is for all to join as one community.

### **Teaching**

Throughout their time at school, children will experience a variety of approaches to Prayer and Liturgy – some will be teacher led, whilst others will be child led. We aim to develop a growing understanding and independence to enable children to plan their own sessions which will inspire others to reflect. All sessions include a reading from scripture or scripture through hymns.

We recognise that children need to develop these skills and therefore we spend time developing the tools linked with Prayer and Liturgy, especially choosing relevant scripture and appropriate resources.

### **Prayer Areas**

All classrooms have their own small table which is used as a focus in Prayer and Liturgy. The colour of the cloth covering the table is always linked to the liturgical year and teachers and children carefully choose a small amount of relevant religious artefacts to be placed upon it. Quiet areas around school provide daily opportunities for children to reflect. The worship area in the entrance is a place regularly used by children to write and say their own prayers. The school Chapel is used by classes to share daily worships and in recent years to host the Blessed Sacrament for adoration.

### **Time Allocation**

Approximately between five and ten minutes per day is spent in Prayer and Liturgy, depending on the age of the children in the class. This is in addition to various other prayers, including morning, lunch time and home time prayers, which are said on a daily basis. Children are encouraged to write and say their own prayers and are also encouraged to spend extra time planning their weekly liturgies.

### **Assessment**

No *formal* assessments are made of Prayer and Liturgy sessions although children are encouraged to reflect upon their contributions and consider how effective they have been. However, if a child says something very deep and spiritual, these can be noted down in the 'Growing in my Faith' section at the back of RE books (by the teacher, the teaching assistant or the child themselves) and can be used towards assessment.

## **Recording**

Children use planning sheets to record their liturgy. These are filed. Sometimes photographs are taken when appropriate. Other examples of liturgies are also recorded and kept. On our website teachers post examples of our prayer life in the **Engage** section which helps to develop parental understanding of how prayer is shared and developed.

## **Reporting**

Comments are made on the end of year reports to parents regarding the child's contribution to whole school and class liturgies.

## **Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

All children's contributions are valued and children receive assistance if necessary when planning their liturgies.

## **Information Communication Technology (ICT) Within Prayer and Liturgy**

ICT is a valuable tool which both children and teachers use to enhance Prayer and Liturgy sessions. PowerPoint including text or pictures or both is used effectively to provide visual stimulus.

## **Impact**

Children are developing a growing independence to pray through stillness. They understand the importance of spending time in God's presence and use prayer and liturgy to strive every day to bear witness to Christ and 'be the change they want to see in the world today'. They demonstrate reverence, sing joyfully and respect the need of others to pray. This nurtures the children to love themselves, love each other and love Jesus Christ.

## **Evaluation and Review**

It is the intention to review this document every two years in line with the whole school policy and the development plan.

Appendix A:  
**Information on Prayer**

**Why is Prayer necessary?**

Prayer is the foundation of Christian Life. Prayer is communication or communion with God. Through prayer we are drawn deeper into the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself taught us the need for prayer. In Gethsemane as He prepared Himself for the climax of His life, Jesus received the strength He needed in prayer to His Father, “Abba Father Take this cup away from me but let it be as you not I, would have it”. At moments of His public ministry when those in need were pressing around Him, Jesus went off to a lonely place and prayed there.

**What is Prayer?**

We can pray anywhere and at any time. The **first step** is to place ourselves, as we are, in the presence of God. The **second step** in prayer is to pray. This means speaking to the Lord, asking Him for our needs and thanking Him for the many gifts He has given to us. This leads to praise and adoration. The **third step** is to be silent so the Lord Himself can guide the direction of our hearts.

**How do we Pray?**

The best prayers are those that come from the heart. There are times however, when we find it almost “impossible” to pray: and then we need prayer books and the prayers we have learned by heart. Our children should have the opportunity to find out about and respond in a variety of ways to Jesus’ example and teaching with regard to prayer. They should be encouraged to explore the different forms of prayer, and to be helped to grow in appreciation of the importance of prayer in sustaining a living relationship with God. Children’s experience of prayer and worship in school, which for some of our children will be the only prayer experiences they will receive, will have a deep impact on their spiritual development as Christians, and a love of their Catholic heritage which they can take into their adult life. Their lives of Prayer Worship must be continually developed and fostered.

In prayer we become aware of God’s presence with us and his love for us. We listen to Him in order to discover His will for us and to express to Him our gratitude, praise, love and adoration.

We can foster the children’s life of prayer by helping them become aware of God’s presence in their lives and His love for them and by leading them to respond to Him in a manner appropriate to their age.

Children learn to pray chiefly by sharing in the faith and prayer of adult Christians, especially parents, priests and teachers. Therefore, we believe that we should go a step beyond teaching them prayers, we should pray with them in their presence.

We should encourage them to pray by themselves, especially in the morning and at night. There are many ways of helping the children to meet God Our Father in prayer:

Prayers of silence	own prayer
Spontaneous prayer	Prayers through gestures or actions
Prayers of the Church	Prayers through music and song

**Prayers of Silence:** To help the children participate in a prayerful silence, we can use various ways of focussing their minds on prayer. We can ask them to concentrate on an object, a picture, a lighted candle, some quiet background music or by giving them guidance about what to think: “Let’s think about”.

**Spontaneous Prayer:** Once we have begun it is often difficult to stop children praying spontaneously. The children may not be able to express their thoughts accurately at first, and they may initially be shy or embarrassed. Many of their prayers may be prayers of petition for a sick parent, grandparent or friend. At Our lady's we try to encourage them to pray not only for what they want, but also to pray that things will turn out as God knows best. We also encourage the children to express thanksgiving, love and praise to God the Father in their spontaneous prayer.

**Praying through gesture or action:** We encourage children to make even the simplest gestures thoughtfully so that the gesture or action is a prayer in itself.

Gestures that the children will be taught as they move through the school will include: making the Sign of the Cross, joining their hands, offering the sign of peace, bowing their heads at the name of Jesus, genuflection, hand gestures, processions etc.

**Formal /Traditional Prayers:** As the children move through school they will be taught and introduced to the commonly used prayers of the Church so that they are able to join in and participate in parish celebrations. The introduction of many of the responses of the Holy Mass, are incorporated into their classroom and assembly prayer and worship celebrations. Our aim is to help the children to develop a reverence and a positive attitude to praying.

**Praying through Music and Song:** Listening to reflective music can create an atmosphere conducive to prayer and reflection. The singing of hymns can be so joyful. "Singing hymns is praying twice". Reflective music and singing are both used during prayer and worship sessions.

*An act of Collective Worship with children should last about one minute for each year of the child's life: e.g. A maximum of 5 minutes for Reception/Year 1 children. A maximum of 10 minutes for Yr. 6 children.*