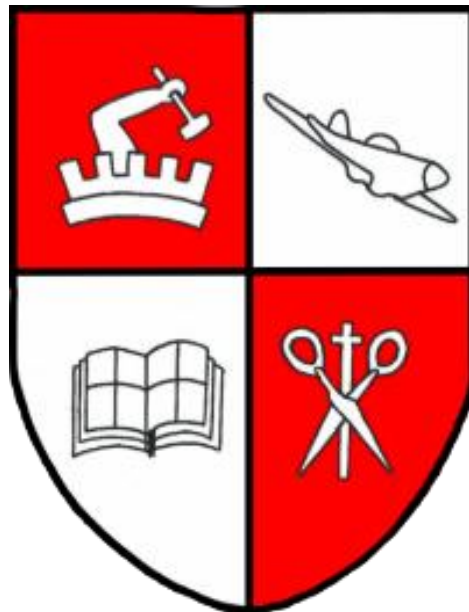


# ST. GERARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



## PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

### Our Mission Statement

*'With Christ at our side and St. Gerard as our guide we live,  
love, learn and pray together.'*

Reviewed: November 2023

## **Introduction**

The term “Collective Worship” is used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase used readily in a Catholic context. In this policy we substitute the term “Collective Worship” for “Prayer and Liturgy.” This Policy is truly concerned with communal acts of prayer and the liturgical celebrations of the Church that will form part of everyday life at St. Gerard’s Catholic Primary school.

## **Aims of Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer and Liturgy at St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School should provide an opportunity for every member of the school community to:

- Pray by giving praise thanks and intercession to God using traditional prayers of the Catholic Church and many other sources of prayer that will enable this to take place.
- Come to know and acknowledge the presence of God who is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Continue to nurture a relationship with God through words, symbols, song, gestures and silence.
- Take part in an educational experience that is rooted in prayer and the worship of God.
- Contemplate the mystery and transcendence of God who is ever close to us and ever beyond us.
- Develop a sense of wonder and awe at the presence of God amongst us and the gift of life itself.
- Explore the beliefs of the Catholic faith community and their own beliefs.
- Experience what it means to belong or take part in the worshipping community of the Church.
- Acknowledge joys and sorrows, the ordinary and darker side of life as part of a relationship with God.
- Learn how the Liturgy of the Church is structured and the meaning of the different parts of the liturgical rites.
- Be able to make links between communal prayer and liturgy and the daily life.
- Provide the children with the skills and opportunities to independently plan a liturgy.

## **Legal requirements**

Prayer and Liturgy is a legal daily requirement which is distinct from curriculum time. For Catholic schools this requirement is made explicit within the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham which states:

“Religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. ”

Prayer and Liturgy at St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School is more than a legal requirement. Prayer and Liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. Parents and Carers have the right to withdraw their child from the daily act of Prayer and Liturgy if they wish for children up to the age of 16. The DFE guidance can be found here: [Collective worship in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

## **How we meet our stated aims through the different forms of Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer and Liturgy is seen as an essential part of religious experience and is therefore an integral part of our school day. We aim to actively involve children in ways which are suited to their age and stage of personal, social and religious development.

### **Prayer and Liturgy may take a variety of forms:**

- **Whole School Masses**  
Children attend Mass as a whole school on days of Holy Obligation and for other celebrations such as St. Gerard's feast day or Marian occasions.
- **Weekly Gospel Assemblies**  
Our school week begins with a Gospel assembly led by our Headteacher.
- **Fortnightly 'Gifts from God' Assemblies**  
At the end of every two weeks, we end with an assembly in which we celebrate our God-given gifts and talents and our children's successes with star of the week certificates, house points, Maths awards, Catholic School Pupil Profile (CSPP) awards and any specific awards children bring in to share from home.
- **Class Masses**  
Each class celebrate a class Mass in their classroom once a year where we invite their families to join.
- **Group Masses**  
Nursery, Y1, Y3, Y5, and Reception, Y2, Y4, Y6 celebrate Mass led by one of the classes in church, every two weeks, where we invite their families to join.
- **SAINT Time**  
Weekly extended time of prayer happens in a variety of ways including SAINT time which stands for:  
**Silent Prayer**  
**Assemblies- Gospel Assemblies**  
**Intention** – Children have time to choose their own prayer intentions  
**News** – Children choose a topic from Newsround and respond to what they have learnt  
**Ten: Ten** – The daily prayer resource is used when appropriate
- **Stations of the Cross**  
Children in KS2 lead a whole school assembly during Lent, to introduce children to Jesus' Passion, breaking it down into stages that they can reflect upon and remember. Families, Governors and parishioners are invited to this Assembly.
- **Child led Prayer and Liturgy**  
If Mass is not celebrated that week, a Prayer and Liturgy service, planned and led by a group of children, will take place in classrooms. These may be focused around the Liturgical Season, a Saint's feast day, a particular theme, e.g. friendship, or around current local, national or global focuses. These prayer services follow the 'Gather, Listen, Respond, Go Forth' format.

- **Stay and Pray**  
Throughout the year, we offer 'Stay and Pray' sessions, where parents and families are invited to pray with their children in class.
- **Weekly Songs of Praise**  
In the words of St Augustine, "To sing is to pray twice." During this time, children practise hymns ahead of Mass or fitting for the current time in the Liturgical season. Children also learn how to play the recorder to accompany the hymns and Mass settings. These are led by teachers who begin and end each session in prayer.
- **Reconciliation Services during Advent and Lent**  
During the seasons of Advent and Lent, the children are given time for quiet reflection and an opportunity is then given for the children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In preparation for receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion, we ensure children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- **Daily Seasonal Prayer and Liturgy**  
During the seasons of Creation, Advent, Lent, Easter, and throughout the month of May, children participate in daily Prayer and Liturgy, which includes a range of readings, prayers and songs from One Life Music, led by the Class Teacher.
- **Sacramental Preparation**  
Parental meetings take place throughout the year to inform them of our Sacramental Programmes and what they can do to support their children. Sunday Commitment Masses are planned in throughout the year, led by the children in Year 3 and Year 6 ahead of them making their Sacrament. Children in Year 6 go on retreat to St Chad's Cathedral and Year 3 take part in a 'Virtual Retreat.'
- **Prayer Bags**  
To encourage families to pray together we use prayer bags which a child takes home on a rota basis. The prayer bags are designed to help each family to come together to pray and know from the inside that Jesus Christ is with us always. In each bag there is a prayer focus, a picture of their Class Saint, a poster promoting the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principles, and a prayer book for children to write their own reflection into.
- **Rosary Club**  
During the months of May and October, our GIFT Team encourage other members of our school community to gather together in prayer during lunch times to pray the Rosary.
- **May Procession**  
A whole school May Procession is held to honour Mary our Mother in Heaven, focusing on the event of the Rosary and ending with the crowning of Mary.
- **Weekly Religious Education lessons**  
Timetables are structured to ensure over 10% of the curriculum time is allocated to RE. During this time, teachers follow the curriculum strategy published by the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

- **World-faith Week**

Each year group has the opportunity to either visit a different place of worship, or have a visit from an external speaker. This all takes place in one week and at the end of the week, there is a Whole School Assembly where children share their learning.

- **Visit from the Parish Priest**

Throughout the year, our Parish Priest joins classes for certain topics in Religious Education lessons. Every year group invites our Parish Priest in to discuss the topics such as their role within the church, the sacraments as well as any other lessons where they can offer support.

- **Prayer Areas**

There are designated prayer areas around the school and in every classroom. Children are involved in deciding what goes onto these prayer areas as well as discussing how they are changed according to the liturgical year. These areas are monitored by our GIFT Team throughout the year.

- **GIFT Team**

Led by RE Lead Mrs Jones, St. Gerard's GIFT Team (Growing in Faith Together Team) is formed at the beginning of each year with representatives from each of the Key Stage 2 classes. These specially selected children play a very important role in Prayer and Liturgy, following a vocation to serve others and lead them in Faith. They lead Morning Prayer in their class once a week. They monitor prayer areas in classrooms and around school. They also help oversee the class prayer bags which are sent home with children on a rota basis.

- **Mini-Vinnies**

Led by Mrs Hepburn, our Mini-Vinnies group consists of children in Year 2 who hold meetings to organise different events throughout the year, such as carol singing at the local residential home and setting up donation points within the school to collect food for the local food bank. As well as this, each week, the children get to take home Vinnie Bear and with this, are encouraged to carry out acts of kindness within their local community.

- **CAFOD Club**

In response to Pope Francis' invitation in 'Laudato Si' the children in CAFOD Club, led by Miss Creamer, "work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us." CAFOD Club members meet every second Monday during the school term. As 'Stewards of Creation', they think about ways in which they can serve, care and respect our school and its surroundings, in order to live simply and sustainably, such as, litter picking, planting, and encouraging an energy saving culture.

- **Retreats**

Throughout the year, we endeavour to participate in a Whole School Retreat as well as a Whole Staff Retreat. Children in the Sacramental year groups will also participate in a retreat as part of their Sacramental preparation.

## **Inclusion and Opportunities**

At St Gerard's Catholic Primary School every child does matter, regardless of need, therefore we work hard to ensure that Prayer and Liturgy is inclusive to all members of the school community.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Throughout the year, there is a robust monitoring schedule which takes place. The RE Lead and members of the SLT will monitor the implementation of the policy. All staff will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy in helping to improve standards of Prayer and Liturgy within the school. Pupils will be involved in reviewing and evaluating aspects of Prayer and Liturgy in school with the RE Lead, and this will feed into any developments as we move forward. Each term the Headteacher and RE Lead meet to evaluate monitoring completed and set targets to further develop areas of Prayer and Liturgy within the school.

**Policy review date:** November 2025

**Headteacher:** Mrs Katrina Crowley

**Subject Lead:** Mrs Laura Jones

**Lead Governor:** Fr Mathew Pinakkattu

