

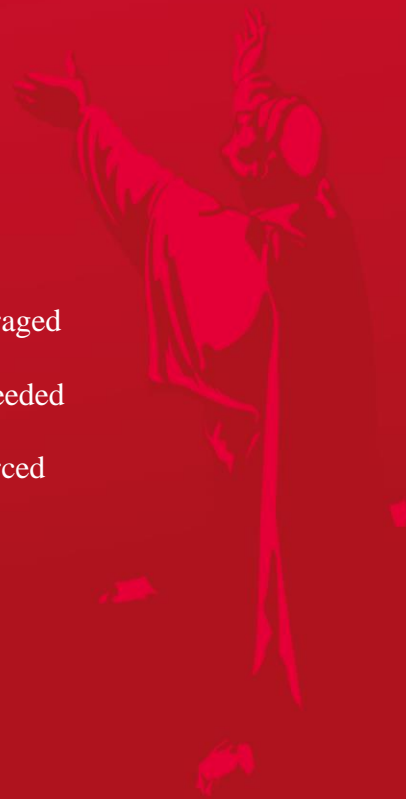


St Stephen's Catholic
Primary School

**Prayer, Liturgy and Meditation
Policy
March 2022**

Where the: 'Word of God, and the service
and strength of St. Stephen, guides our
steps and leads us in learning.'

We are a community where:
beauty and trust are treasured,
justice and tolerance are promoted
compassion and charity are encouraged
goodwill and loyalty are cherished
resilience and determination are needed
forgiveness and love are required
friendliness and respect are reinforced
faith and Spirit are shared.



Our Vision

Where the: 'Word of God, and service and strength of St. Stephen, guides our steps and leads us in learning. Amen'.

OUR MISSION

We are a community where:

beauty and trust are treasured,

justice and tolerance are promoted,

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forgiveness and love are required,

friendliness and respect are reinforced,

faith and the Spirit are shared.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers is an integral part of its teaching and learning and should enable a school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and develop a mature spiritual life' (Christ at the Centre, Rev. Marcus Stock, 2005).

St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School pride themselves on delivering high quality liturgical prayer and Masses, which create an atmosphere of serenity, peace and inner calm.

The Nature of Collective Worship and Liturgical Prayer

Collective Worship in a Catholic school celebrates God's presence in our lives. We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear. The act of worship can take place at any time during the day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups. For the purposes of this strategy, we will utilise the terminology of 'Prayer, Liturgy and Meditation', as Collective Worship is the common secular term for the act.

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. The local governing committee ultimately responsible for arranging Collective Worship, in consultation with the headteacher and the Prayer and Liturgy/Chaplaincy coordinator.

All children are welcomed and encouraged to have a close relationship with God and a variety of approaches are used in Prayer and Liturgy to suit all abilities and temperaments, regardless of academic ability.

The Place of Prayer, Meditation and Liturgical Prayer in the Life of our School

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. St. Stephen's endorse the belief that Prayer, Meditation and Liturgical Prayer considers 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.

Worship is an experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

The Aims of Prayer, Liturgical Prayer and Meditation

Collective Worship in St. Stephen's School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff to:

- Contemplate the mystery of God
- Reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- Explore personal beliefs
- Respond to and to celebrate life
- Experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- Develop a common ethos and shared values
- Enrich religious experience
- Grow in liturgical understanding and development
- Pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- Reinforce positive attitudes
- Participate fully
- Take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles and Practices

St. Stephen's School facilitates Prayer, Liturgical Prayer and Meditation in addition to the 10% Religious Education curriculum that it delivers to pupils. Prayer, Liturgical Prayer and Meditation is an important and relevant act in our daily celebration of our life together as a Christian and prayerful community.

In our provision for Prayer, Liturgical Prayer and Meditation we aim to:

- ensure that the teachings of the Gospels are readily communicated to the children, their families and visitors.
- experience a sense of belonging and community
- respond to and celebrate life, taking time to wonder
- use prayer as a reflective and personal experience in seeking to get closer to God by sharing in his living experience and reflecting on moral issues
- use the mediums of music, song, drama, story and prayer in promoting self-awareness and understanding of our daily role in seeking to live together in a growing Christian and Catholic environment.
- ensure children from other religious backgrounds to have the opportunity to pray.

In our school we expect the children and staff to take part in a daily act of worship.

All forms of Prayer, Liturgical Prayer and Meditation usually follow the format outlined below so that pupils will understand some of the basic principles and elements of Liturgy including:

- Gathering and greeting
- Liturgy of the Word
- Reflection/Mission
- Sending Forth

Following this format assists children in liturgical formation and enables them to follow a 'formula' when preparing their own liturgies.

Liturgical Prayer Time Tables

Collective Worship takes place in a number of ways. Monday's worship is purposely rigid in its approach and follows the liturgical calendar. The children explore the Sunday's Gospel reading and where possible, child friendly versions of the Gospel are used. Worship is planned with pupils, but where possible, delivered by the children on alternative weeks to the Senior Leadership Team leading liturgy. As Year 2 children progress throughout the academic year, there is an expectation that they will start to lead whole-school worship in the summer term, or sooner, if able.

Prayer, Liturgical Prayer and Meditation Weekly Overview

Monday's Liturgical Prayer Gathering

The school community meets each week in the hall on a Monday to hear the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. Teachers help pupils to plan the weekly liturgy and classes are on a rota system to ensure fairness, and the development of liturgical skills across the phases.

During whole-school collective worship sessions, children are: reverent, respectful, meditative and engaged. They take pride in presenting worship to

their peers and understand the importance of gathering together as a community.

Class-based liturgical prayer includes:

- A gathering song
- Mission Statement and vision
- 'Special People' to bring forward the year group candles
- A gathering mantra e.g., 'Year 3 are ready to pray' or another suitable statement
- Procession of the Gospel with a sung Gospel acclamation
- Reading or dramatisation of the Gospel reading by the children who have prepared the readings.
- A short prayer written by the children which explains how we can use the Gospel in our everyday life.
- A brief homily/explanation by a member of the SLT, which puts the Gospel into context.
- Prayers of Intercession.
- A final hymn

The Senior Leadership Team liturgy includes and is purposely rigid in its approach:

- A gathering song
- Mission Statement and vision
- A sung Gospel acclamation
- Reading the Gospel reading by the children who have prepared the readings.
- A brief homily/explanation by a member of the SLT, which puts the Gospel into context
- Prayers of Intercession
- A final hymn

The use of this strategy ensures that pupils are exposed to a combination of child-led worship and adult-led worship and pupils become liturgy ambassadors. Evangelisation is a powerful force and pupils' participation in liturgical prayer should never be underestimated.

Wednesday's Prayer – Statements to live by in Pastoral Care Groups

The school community meets together in classes most fortnights on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon to focus upon the statements, which are recommended by the Diocesan Education Service. The statements are used as a target for the rest of the week.

Our prayer sessions allow all pupils to engage in collective worship/creative prayer activities, in their house groups (St. George, David, Andrew and Patrick). The 'Statement to Live By' liturgy is planned by pupils and delivered during the fortnightly Pastoral Care sessions; during which, buddies care for their peers and the sense of respectful, prayerful silences is poignant. Children enjoy the sense of responsibility that comes with planning liturgy, which helps them to develop an increasingly developed attitude while demonstrating their understanding of the practical matters of prayer and spirituality.

The community often gather together and sit in a horseshoe or circle, depending on the nature of the focal point being displayed during the session. This is also an opportunity for prayer and praise through silence, reflection, singing, meditation and prayer.

Children are able to create focal points, welcoming actions and prayerful time for their peers. In addition to this, they also work cross-year group and develop leadership skills to coordinate a small team that guides the liturgy.

A rota has been designed to allow parents an opportunity to share in their children's 'Little Liturgical Prayer', at least once per term. Our Little Liturgical Prayer sessions encourage our children and parents alike, to enjoy a period of calm, silence and stillness at the start of a busy day.

Class Prayer Book

Each class from Reception to Year 6 has been given a class prayer book. Each pupil will be given the opportunity to take it in turns to write a prayer in the

book, at home, and return it to school the following day. The book will follow the class throughout their time in school.

Daily Class Based Prayer

Inside this little book of prayer, Our thoughts to God we give, And turn to him in times of need

To show us how to live.

Two minutes of your time to spare, Is all St. Stephen asks,

To come up with a heartfelt prayer, As one of your little tasks.

Each class teacher has a set of four prayers which are said throughout the course of the day. It is important to realise that these prayers do not 'punctuate' the day, but are there to provide opportunities of reflection and a 'pause for thought'.

The morning collective worship time together (after the register) is often a time where pupils may ask the class to pray for their intention and a time where they can share the class prayer book together.

Collective Worship in classes is permeated with 'meditation for children' and poignant silences and the daily class prayer book has been a big success, with families engaging in prayer writing and commenting: 'It has been big hit in our household!'

All pupils are encouraged to make the Sign of the Cross accurately and correctly. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Key Stage One Prayers:

From my head to my heart, shoulder to shoulder,
I belong to God Our Father. Amen.

Morning

Thank you, God, for this new day, In my school to work and play, Please by
with me all day long,
In every story, game and song, May all the happy things we do Make you our
Father happy too. Amen.

Morning

O my God I give to you, all that I say and think and do,
All my work and all my play,

I will give to you today. Amen

Grace Before Meals

Thank you for the world so sweet, Thank you for the food we eat, Thank you
for the birds that sing, Thank you God for everything. Amen

Grace After Meals

Thank you for the world so sweet, Thank you for the food we eat, Thank you
for the birds that sing, Thank you, God, for everything. Amen.

Evening Prayer

God our Father, I come to say, Thank you for your love today. Thank you for my
family

And all the friends you give to me. Guard me in the dark of night,
And in the morning send your light. Amen.

Dear Jesus,

Please keep us safe on our way from school tonight.
Amen

Key Stage Two Prayers: Morning

Other Prayers

Grace Before Meals

For sun and rain, for fruit and grain, For friends we love so dearly.
For gentle moments and kindly hearts, We thank thee, Lord, sincerely. Amen.

Grace After Meals

Thank you, God, for the food we have eaten, Thank you, God, for all our friends.

Thank you, God, for everything.

Thank you, God.

Amen.

Evening Prayer

O Lord God, bless our school.

That by working together and playing together,

We may learn to serve you and serve one another,

Amen

The following two prayers are introduced and taught to pupils in Reception.
The prayers are said during whole-school and class-based prayer.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Amen

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

In Key Stage 2, the prayers below may also be taught and referred to during prayer.

Act of Contrition

Oh my God,
Because you are so good
I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, And by the help of your grace
I will not sin again
Amen.

Prayer to Guardian Angel

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
To whom God's love entrusts me here,
Ever this day be at my side,
To light and guard, to rule and guide.
Amen.

Glory Be to the Father

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

God our Father, I've come to say Thank you for your love today. Thank you for my family
and all the friends you give to me. Guard me in the dark of night
and in the morning, send your light. Amen

Leader:

World without end. Amen.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith

Where there is despair, hope Where there is darkness, light And where there is sadness, joy

Eternal Rest

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.
Amen.

O Divine Master, grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood, as to understand
To be loved, as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
And it's in pardoning that we are pardoned And it's in dying that we are born
to Eternal Life
Amen

There are also a number of prayers included in the home-school reading diary which introduces pupils to alternative prayers to say. The class teacher should help support pupils to develop their prayer skills and expose them to a new prayer at least termly. The prayers include:

Prayer to St. Francis of Assisi – Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
The Rosary, Act of Contrition as well as The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds.

Meditation

When we participate in Catholic meditation, God allows us to experience natural, physical and human benefits as well. Meditation often reduces anxiety, which is the body's natural response to a real or perceived threat. It can be used to help a person prepare for taking action or to self-soothe after an action. It can also be used to relax, calm, support, and ground people when their anxieties are irrational. Meditation and relaxation can

lead to a decrease in blood pressure, respiration, heart rate, muscle tension, and obsessive thinking.

Meditation can be guided, with a script, or be conducted in silence.

A simple approach is:

'Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.'

Silent meditation can allow an opportunity for the presence of God to enter the life of the meditator and silence in the lives of children cannot be underestimated, given the current climate of screentime, social media, WhatsApp and other external factors.

Meditation should take place at least weekly, in class.

Class Focal Points

All classes have a focal point for prayer, near the front of their classrooms, appropriately dressed in the season's liturgical colours. Each table should have a Bible, or lectionary, a crucifix and a candle. Other religious artefacts, appropriate to the season, may also be on the table. It is important that focal points are changed regularly and link to the liturgical season of the church. Additional resources have been purchased to supplement class Collective Worship. These are available in the 'Pastoral Care' box.

'Come and See' End of Unit Liturgical Prayer

At the end of each topic every class also has the opportunity to celebrate the unit of work with a Diocesan liturgy (available on the Diocesan website) as well

as a child initiated celebration. However, teachers are encouraging children to produce their own liturgy based on the four key areas of liturgy as mentioned above and school has purchased supplementary resources from the Diocese of Nottingham, to support this. All class teachers have been given the 'Let us Pray' resource, from the Diocesan Education Service. Each teacher is now able to facilitate a child initiated liturgy. Pupils can select the card that they feel is appropriate to the Gospel reading and atmosphere that they want to create. Pupils take it in turns to lead the celebration liturgy. The end of unit liturgies need to be recorded in pupils books at the end of the topic.

Preparation for Collective Worship/Liturgy

Hymn practices are delivered in partnership with the school Chaplain and the Headteacher, who is a trained organist. Consequently, we ensure pupils know a wide repertoire of music and are confident in communal singing as well as cantoring parts of the Mass.

A liturgy planning sheet will be utilised to plan and prepare liturgical prayer and this is then recorded within floor books to document the school's progression and regularity of collective worship. Sometimes photographs may be used to show evidence or to prompt pupils' abilities to discuss, remember and articulate liturgical prayer.

Mass

Pupils are offered a range of worship including: Service of the Word and the Eucharist with Fr. Sean at Mass either in school, or at church. A combination of a simple meditative approach, appreciating the beauty of the Eucharist and whole-school occasions help pupils demonstrate liturgical literacy, knowledge and leadership of Mass. A series of Masses have been planned for the academic year of 2022 onwards, with pupils leading worship for the parish half termly basis, as well as Holy days of obligations within the school setting.

Children of Other Faiths

Children of other faiths are asked to respect the traditions of the Catholic church and are expected to participate as far as they are able to, in our worship. We recognise that there are children of other faiths attending our school, and we are respectful of their rights and traditions. It is hoped that all children in our setting will participate in daily prayer, liturgical prayer and meditation.

Special Education Needs and/or Disability

A variety of prayer types will be offered to suit pupils of all abilities and learning styles. By ensuring variety, the pupils with SEND will be accommodated for during Collective Worship as they would with any other lesson.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be copied to all staff. It will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by *the Religious Education Coordinator and SLT team* and updated regularly. Copies will be made available to parents upon request. A copy will be made available on the school website.