



Saint GREGORY'S
Bath

Worshipping Together A Policy for Prayer & Liturgy

In Christ we flourish

Reviewed Spring 2022

Rationale

Our community exists to lead young people to flourish through Christ. (School Mission Statement, 'A People of Hope' and 'A Future Full of Hope', page 3). We are guided by the teaching of Pope Francis in 'Fratelli Tutti' on fraternity and social friendship as well as the Apostolic Exhortation 'Christus Vivit' which all proclaim a path towards Christ for all young people through encounter and experience.

A fundamental part of our role as a community is to ensure that all within it develop their personal relationship with God. This can best be achieved by ensuring that our school provides ample opportunities, both formal and informal, for private prayer and communal acts of liturgy or worship.

Introduction

Prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honour and thanksgiving may be given to Him. All forms of prayer and liturgy should strengthen this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ. All forms of worship are this community's response to God, who invites us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a Catholic school we create ways in which all have the opportunity to get closer to God, to see that 'the Kingdom of God is within'¹ each of us, and explore the personal relationship that the loving Father offers to each of us. 'God loves you. Never doubt this, whatever may happen to you in life. At every moment you are infinitely loved.'². Lasallian spirituality invites us through call and response to be aware of God's presence in the whole community, and in times of prayer open our hearts to Jesus. These call and responses: *Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God...and let us adore him; Live Jesus in our hearts...forever*, are central to a Lasallian centred spirituality as a praying school. Everything we do should be underpinned by the desire to deepen faith, enable communion and strengthen mission.

Legal Requirements

We embrace the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all students. This requirement is fulfilled through a variety of communal prayer in tutor groups, lessons and assemblies. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfill this requirement. The school uses a

structure for collective worship which incorporates elements of liturgical prayer. All forms of prayer and liturgy are aligned with the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church. The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be considered as part of the RE lesson (for time purposes).

In this voluntary aided Catholic School, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the Headteacher.

Diocesan Guidelines

We are a part of the wider pastoral mission of the Diocese of Clifton. The vision of Bishop Declan is outlined in 'A People of Hope' and 'A Future full of Hope' through which we are reminded that prayer should be inclusive and that students should be offered opportunities to explore the richness of our spiritual heritage (page 6). In addition to this the Bishop urges Catholic schools to have "Liturgical celebrations that connect with pupil's lives as well as being faithful to the traditions of the Church" (page 7). A key theme of 'A People of Hope' is the need for Catholic schools to engage with spiritual development and formation; liturgy is one way of promoting spiritual development.

As a Catholic School in the Diocese of Clifton we will use all forms of prayer and liturgy to promote 'Called to be a people of hope', 'A future full of hope' and all directives from Bishop Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton Diocese. We use as a guidance for our prayer and liturgy a varied calendar of appropriate themes throughout the year, which as a norm are guided by and in line with the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that prayer and liturgy takes into account 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.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Taking part in prayer and liturgy which foster community cohesion and reinforce the

virtues and values of Christianity are both a spiritual and moral aid to students. Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life, our identity as a Catholic school and central to our Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Prayer & Liturgy

The aim of all forms of prayer and liturgy in the school is to promote a sacramental vision of life through which we celebrate God's presence in our community. One of the five core Lasallian Values is '*faith in the presence of God*' captured in the call to prayer '*Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God*'. We recall the words of Jesus himself who said that, "When two or three are gathered in my name, there am I amongst them."³ Another of the Lasallian Core Principles is 'inclusive community' and it is the school's mission to ensure that all students feel invited to engage with heart and mind. St John of the Cross encouraged an understanding of 'God dwelling within...a gift that we are awaiting an awakening to. It is hidden, but there...we must find and awake that inner dwelling.'⁴ All aspects of prayer and liturgy in St Gregory's recognise the breadth of prior spiritual experience whilst celebrating the rich liturgical traditions of the Church.

We do this in order to contemplate the mystery of God; to unite our worshipping Eucharistic community and to develop the necessary skills of reverence, contemplation, reflection, interpretation, empathy and meditation. This will enable all to be reflective about their own spirituality, inform their own beliefs and respect the beliefs of others. All forms of prayer, liturgy and worship are as such an important part of a Catholic school's distinctive character.

Full participation in our faith allows us:-

- To grow in spiritual, moral and cultural development
- Develop a greater liturgical understanding;
- To grow in understanding of our living faith tradition;
- Develop community cohesion by recognising a shared identity of core values and beliefs;
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ;
- To examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys;
- To develop the skills of prayer;
- Develop an interior and exterior model of Christianity

A key Catholic understanding of participation in prayer and liturgy talks of "full, conscious and

active participation". These aspects coming together bring about a gathering:

- that involves the whole community and wider Church;
- enables an appreciation of what is taking place and why;
- and opens our hearts to an encounter which send out/goes forth into the world

Implementation

All acts of worship should:-

- Give glory and praise to God;
- Be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants;
- Be concise and clear in their Christian message;
- Be clear in their liturgical focus
- Be dynamic and varied in their delivery;

Prayer and Liturgy at St Gregory's is arranged as follows:

The school has a calendar of weekly spiritual themes guided by the liturgical year, feast days and traditions of the Church, our House saints, important Lasallian days and other national/international events of interest which align with Catholic Social Teaching.

- Tutors are expected to lead prayer with their tutor groups each morning. The school's Memokeeper message platform contains a prayer relevant to the weekly theme provided by the Chaplain. In addition, staff are provided with a copy of useful books such as 'Praying Each Day', 'YouCat prayer book' to help them in this and receive themed resources each week from the Chaplain.
- Teachers are expected to lead students in prayer at the start of each lesson and before lunch. A handbook of prayers appropriate to lesson starters and praying before lunch is provided to all staff. This handbook also contains formats, guidance and support for how to lead a time of prayer.
- Students lead one registration period a week with a prepared collective worship to their peers. They are supported by staff including their Tutor, Head of Year and Chaplain.
- A collective worship assembly based on the weekly spiritual theme takes place each

day of the week, alternating for year groups. This assembly is led by senior leadership or staff associated with the theme. Throughout the year students take the lead on an assembly with the support of their tutor and the Chaplain.

- The Chapel is open all day for personal prayer.
- At break time each day the Chaplain leads a variety of prayer for those who wish to voluntarily participate. These include both liturgical prayer such as the Rosary, divine office, Stations of the Cross and Lectio Divina as well as other open and informal ways of praying.
- Whole School Mass is celebrated at least three times per academic year in accordance with important feasts of the liturgical calendar. These include at the beginning of the school year and on all Holy Days of Obligation (when a priest is available) which fall during term time.
- A weekly class Mass takes place in the Chapel on rotation for each tutor group of the school.
- Reconciliation Services take place in both Advent and Lent, giving both staff and students the opportunity to go to the sacrament of confession.
- In addition to liturgies of reconciliation, whole school liturgies are organised for Advent, Ash Wednesday and the end of Lent term.
- For Holy Days of Obligation, should they be unable to be marked by a whole school celebration of Mass, the school endeavours to offer a voluntary Mass at lunch.
- Year 5 & 6 transition and taster days start with an opportunity for prayer and reflection.
- Prayer services are organised and led by the Chaplain in the Chapel at other important times of the year and times of local/global significance e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day, conflict, etc

Students are actively encouraged to participate in prayer and liturgy with their own prayers and intentions. Often, teachers will invite a class to verbally offer intentions during a time of prayer. On other occasions, tutor time may be used to include all students in the preparation of a collective contribution to Masses, liturgy, assembly or part of Chaplaincy activities which could be displayed in the chapel or other prominent places around the school.

Chaplaincy Opportunities

The school employs a Lay Chaplain to lead Chaplaincy in the school through positive engagement with students and staff. The Chaplain aims to provide outreach opportunities and encourage active participation in the mission of the Church, ensuring that the experience of faith is all encompassing and apostolic in nature. He is a spiritual and pastoral leader in the community for both staff and students. In the school Chapel the Chaplain organises prayer and activities for every break and lunch time throughout the week which include, Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, Lectio Divina, meditation and creative workshops. At other times older students are encouraged to be proactive in leading worship, reflection and sessions.

On occasions a Liturgy of the Word including distribution of the Eucharist takes place. The Governing Body is wholly responsible for determining whether this is to be celebrated. The Governing Body assert the primacy of the Eucharist as being the central liturgical act of our Catholic faith community. However, where appropriate, they have determined that the Liturgy of the Word with the distribution of the Eucharist may be celebrated in the Chapel as part of our voluntary provision. This will not replace the school Masses mentioned above. The same general principles apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as to other acts of school worship and opportunities for students to participate should be maximised.

Policy Monitoring and Review

In this voluntary aided Catholic School, it is the overall responsibility of governors, in consultation with the Head teacher, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and opportunities for quality collective worship are being delivered. Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the school's Trust Deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

This policy is monitored by the Head of RE and is evaluated and reviewed every two years. Governors review reports on the prayer life of the school on a regular basis. This forms part of the Headteacher's report to governors.

The following will be monitored:-

- Time set aside for prayer and liturgy;
- Whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy;
- Whether collective worship is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc;
- Staff development on collective worship and its impact;

- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing students into prayer;
- Impact on students and members of the school community;
- Opportunities for students to develop the necessary skills to access and lead worship and prayer;
- Records of themes and teachings of the Catholic Church covered in prayer and liturgy

Observation and monitoring records should be kept and should form part of the self review process. Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and governors with recommendations for future action.

Right of Withdrawal:

Parents have a right in law to remove their child from all or part of the religious education programme or collective worship. While the governors respect this right, and will make individual arrangements if necessary, we would strongly discourage parents from considering this option since it runs counter to the mission of the school and its Instrument of Government.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy (Chaplain):

The co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- Formulating a written policy;
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of students;
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the Catholic teachings;
- Assisting the governors and Headteacher in carrying out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to:

- All members of the school community;
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction;
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy

This policy should be read in conjunction with Governors Policies on Behaviour for Excellence
Mission Statement/School Creed

Appendix 1

Definitions

Liturgy

Liturgy literally means 'work of the people' and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action.

Prayer

Prayer may be an individual experience or, if it is an activity with others, may form part of an act of worship. One of the early fathers of the Church described prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or requesting of good things from God." These words of St John Damascene, now found in the catechism, illustrate why we begin and end each day with a prayer. St Therese of Lisieux describes prayer as a "surge of the heart; a simple look turned towards heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love; embracing both trial and joy."⁵

Collective Worship

Collective worship is concerned with giving glory, honour 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. St John Vianney used a powerful metaphor for differentiating between private and collective prayer – "private prayer is like straw here and there: If you set it on fire it makes a lot of little flames. But gather the straw into a bundle and light them, and you get a mighty fire, rising like a column into the sky;"⁶. Worship is at the very heart of our school and must reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

Appendix 2

Prayer Experiences

Students 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>'I thank you for the wonder of my being' [Psalm139]</i>
Traditional prayers	<i>Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary</i>
Repetitive prayer [mantra]	<i>'Jesus, I love you', repeated several times, slowly</i>
Meditation	<i>Scripture reflection with use of imagination</i>
Bodily prayer	<i>Raising hands in praise, bowing, dancing, genuflecting</i>
Prayer of the heart	<i>Stillness to listen to God: 'Be still and know that I am God.'</i>
Contemplation	<i>Looking at trees, a sunset, an icon, work done in the topic</i>
Gestures	<i>The sign of the cross, the sign of peace</i>
Hymns	<i>Traditional and modern hymns</i>
Music	<i>Listening to quiet, reflective music</i>
Litanies	<i>For all creation: Thanks be to God</i>
Processions	<i>Gospel procession with sung 'alleluia'</i>
Prayer services and liturgies	<i>Formal and spontaneous prayer using holy water, candles, incense and other symbols</i>
Celebrations	<i>Prayer, song, sharing food and drink, celebrating</i>

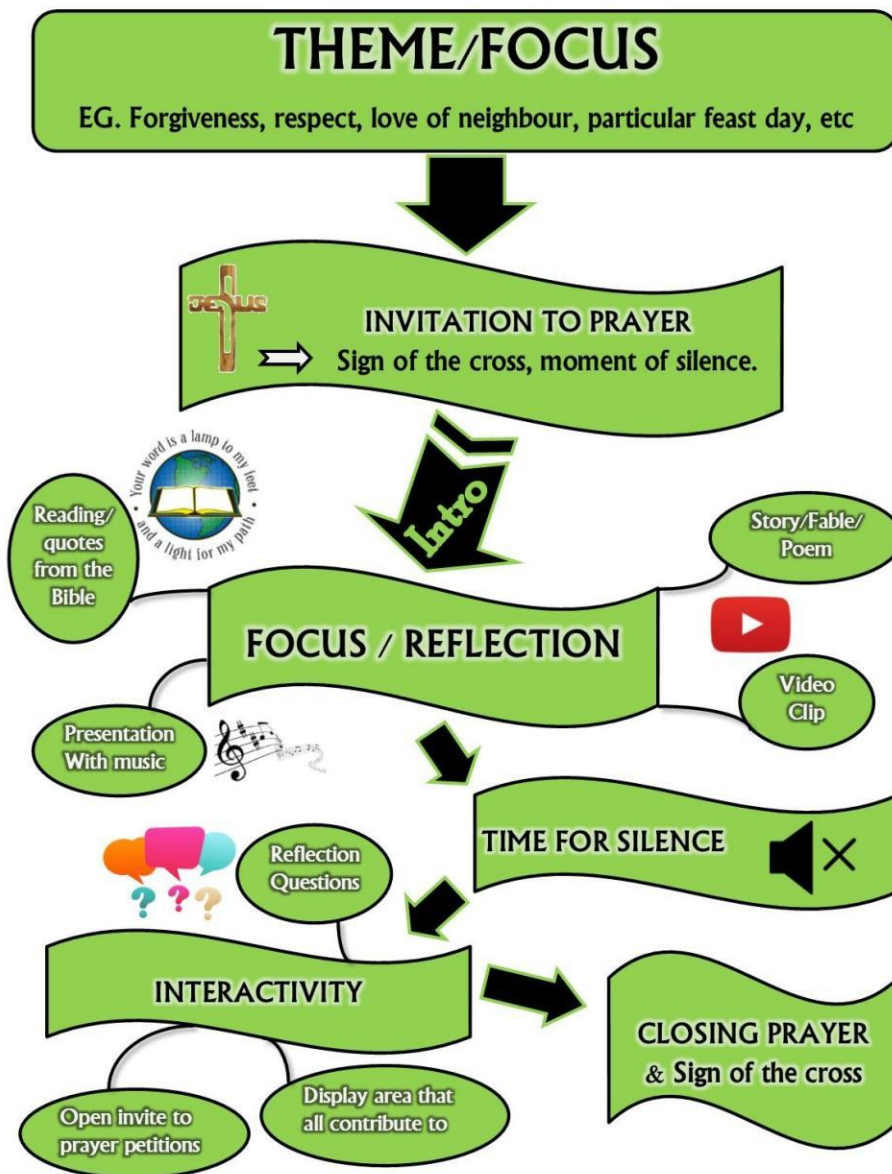
work done

Appendix 3

Collective worship in our school usually follows the pattern or variation of the pattern detailed below: -

TUTOR TIME COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDE

Before starting anything, set the tone - is there a visual display area or a relevant picture on the screen, maybe appropriate music - so that everyone is ready for engagement?



Appendix 4

Five Lasallian Core Principles.



1. Luke 17:21
2. Christus Vivit 112
3. Matthew 18:20
4. CB 1:7-8
5. St Therese of Liseux
6. St John Vianney