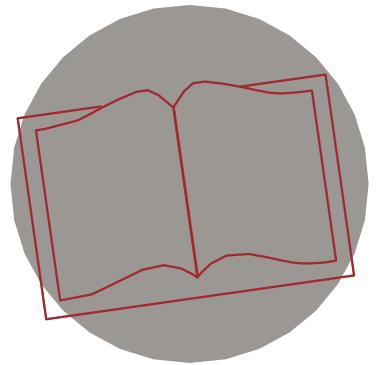


Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Date: June 2025

Co-ordinator: RE Leader

Review date: June 2026



Our Mission Statement



Legal Requirements

The legal requirement is that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that prayer and liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering. At Holy Family, responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy rests with the governing body after consultation with the Head of School.

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. Prayer and liturgy in this school is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Prayer and liturgy

We believe that prayer and liturgy in our school community will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God and develop the following:

- contemplate the mystery of God;
- unite our worshipping Eucharistic community;
- develop the necessary skills of reverence, contemplation, reflection, interpretation, empathy, meditation which will enable our relationships with God to be deepened.

Full participation in our faith will allow us:-

- To grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding;
- To grow in understanding of our living faith tradition;
- 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.

Implementation

All acts of worship should:-

- Give glory and praise to God;
- Be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants;
- Be kept to the point (and brief wherever possible);
- Be clear in their liturgical focus and varied in their delivery;

Definitions (To Love You More Dearly)

- **Prayer:** has been traditionally described as 'lifting up of the hearts and minds to God', which means it involves our whole person- our head as well as our heart. These can be structured or traditional, (Example: The Lord's Prayer) or extempore.
- **Celebrations of the Word:** celebrations, which are created for the school community and not directly taken from the liturgical books of the church. (Example: Assemblies, Carol Services)
- **Liturgy:** A formal act of the Church. (Example: Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation)

Prayer and liturgy in our school may follow the pattern or variation of the pattern detailed below:-

Gathering - how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/ reflective music, lighted candles, statues, sign of the cross, focus and examination of conscience etc);

Word, or listen - a reading from the Scriptures, breaking the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to fit into the theme;

Response/Action - a ritual movement that everyone can join in with that fits with the theme (gestures such as shaking hands, holding hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc);

Send/Mission - the sending out from the celebration, giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Celebration of the Eucharist

This takes place weekly in school for individual classes and at the beginning and end of terms, on holy or celebratory days in the hall for the whole school. Special Masses are also arranged.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to prayer and liturgy, taking account of the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1996 and the school standard framework 1998. It is the overall responsibility of the Governance Committee, in consultation with the Academy Principal, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and opportunities for quality prayer and liturgy are being delivered. Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are in accordance and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church. This policy is monitored by the RE Leader and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff every two years. The Governors should review reports on the prayer life of the school.

The following will be monitored:

- Time set aside for prayer and liturgy; (Liturgical Calendar arranged annually)
- Whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy;
- Whether prayer and liturgy is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc;
- Staff development on prayer and liturgy and its impact;
- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer;
- Impact on pupils and members of the school community;
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access 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 the governors with recommendations for future action.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Prayer and liturgy:

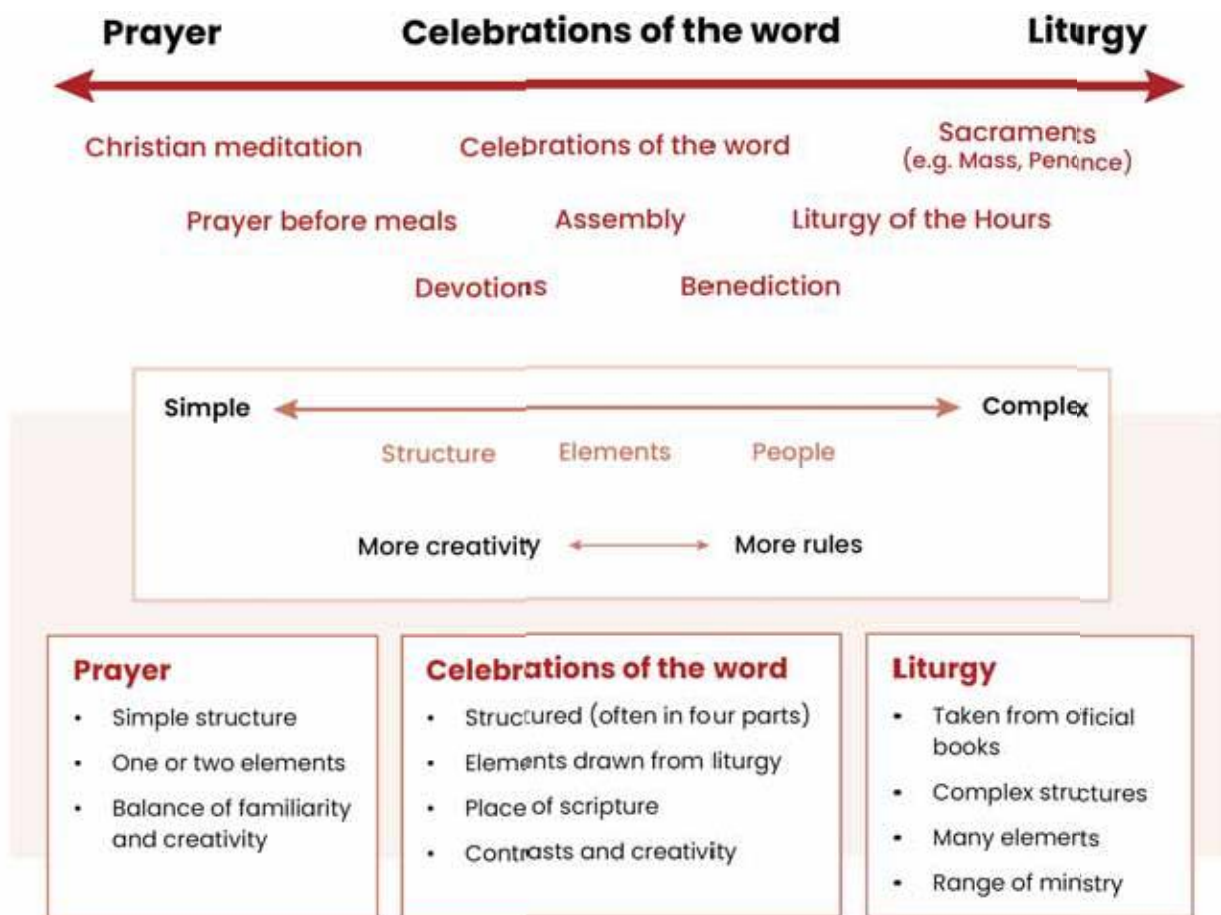
The co-ordinator will be responsible for:-

- Formulating a written policy;
- Ensuring there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy;
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils;
- 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;
- Organising themes for worship;
- Assisting the governors 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;
- Parish priests or members of pastoral areas as appropriate;
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction;
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy.



Key elements of prayer and liturgy

Ritual

Ritual is a fundamental human activity. The word designates a structured group activity that uses words, gestures, symbols, and movement that have been used by others over time. Human beings use rituals to express some of the things that are significant to them, such as their shared identity. Rituals highlight the things that are most important to people, and reinforce and pass on the values, beliefs, and inner relationships of their group. Rituals are learned by participating in them.

Scripture

One of the distinctive aspects of Catholic prayer and liturgy is the centrality of scripture. Scripture has its proper place in all liturgy or celebrations of the word.

For the Mass and other sacramental celebrations, the readings which are proclaimed are found in the Lectionary. This is a series of volumes for Sundays, weekdays, the celebration of the Saints, and other occasions. For some celebrations, such as a holyday, the readings are laid down and may not be changed; on other days there may be a number of choices to be made. Any choice needs to strike a balance between the integrity of the scriptural passage on the one hand and the needs of the participants (the pupils) on the other. The Directory for Masses with Children offers a number of options, such as the omission of a reading other than the Gospel or the shortening of the text. Care should be taken when editing a text so that the reason for it being chosen is not lost.

Pride of place is given to the proclamation of the Gospel. The importance of the Gospel is signified in Catholic liturgy by various actions. These include standing up and singing the Acclamation. Consideration may be given to incorporating some of these actions whenever a Gospel passage is proclaimed in prayer or liturgy.

- The proclamation of scripture is essential to the liturgy and celebrations of the word.
- Scripture readings cannot be replaced by other texts.
- When the Gospel is proclaimed, it should be a high point and celebrated with signs of reverence.

Symbol

The use of symbols is central to Catholic prayer and liturgy. Symbols are usually drawn from the natural world – for example, water, light, bread and wine, and oil.

Authenticity: in celebrations of the word and liturgy, symbols are meant to be used. For example, the symbolic use of light is to illuminate, highlight, and provide a clear focus. Therefore, candles and other lights should have a symbolic function rather than being merely decorative.

- Maintain the focus: within prayer and liturgy, symbols need their own space so that they can speak. It is best to use one appropriate symbol as a clear focus rather than many, which can introduce confusion.
- Generosity: make sure that the symbol is able to engage with and affect the senses of participants. A minimalist approach (a drop of water, a dab of oil, a symbol that cannot be seen) is unlikely to produce the desired impact.

The body in prayer and liturgy

Our participation in prayer and liturgy is not restricted to the words we say and sing, but involves our whole bodies. All our senses can be engaged: by the smell of incense, the splash of water, and the taste of the bread and wine as the Eucharist is received. Through the beauty of art and music, our eyes and ears can be drawn deeper into the mystery we celebrate. Without words, our bodies can be vehicles of prayer.

. Thus, standing and singing together at the beginning of Mass not only helps us to be a sign of the unity of those who gather, but also to become one body in the liturgical celebration.

There are three aspects to the ways in which our bodies participate in prayer and liturgy:

Movement: liturgy is not static and will involve a number of movements from one place to another. The Mass can be seen as a series of processions (Entrance, Gospel, Gifts, Communion, Sending out).

Posture: in the liturgy, we adopt a number of postures: standing, kneeling, sitting. We do these in common (unless impeded). Each has its significance: standing as a sign of the risen Christ and of reverence; kneeling as sorrow, humility, and adoration; and sitting as a sign of openness and listening. Other postures include bowing and genuflecting, both of which are signs of reverence.

Gesture: the sign of the cross, how we hold our hands in prayer, and the sign of peace are all gestures found in the liturgy. Pupils learn these so that they are comfortable making them and understanding them.

- It is important to be attentive to the physical, embodied aspects of prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils should be confident in the postures and gestures of prayer and liturgy, and use them in expression of their faith and prayer.

Silence

Pauses for silent prayer and reflection play an essential part in any prayer or liturgy. These can be the brief pause between one part and the next; the pause for prayer or petition in the Collect or the Intercessions; longer periods of reflection after the readings or Communion; or sustained periods of silence as found in Christian meditation or Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

In each silence there is a purpose, to reflect on what we have heard or experienced and to prepare us for what comes next. It is an opportunity to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking in our hearts. Staff and pupils need guidance on how best to use these times and how to develop their participation in the silence.

- Times of silence should ideally be found in any prayer or liturgy.

Making choices

To assist with choosing music, three kinds of judgements may be used: liturgical, musical, and pastoral.

- Liturgical: is this music right for this moment in the prayer or liturgy? Are the words appropriate? Does the form of the music fit the form of the liturgy? (If the music is accompanying another liturgical action, it lasts as long as the action. If the music cannot easily be concluded at this point but will play for a number of minutes more, there is a mismatch.)
- Musical: is this a good piece of music? Does it set the text appropriately? Can it be sung by the pupils? Within the music being considered, are there opportunities to develop pupils' musical gifts?
- Pastoral: is the music right for this community? Is it suitable for this age group – does it reflect the capacity of the pupils? Is it appropriate for this particular celebration? What can be done to draw on the diverse nature of the community? What links can be made with local parishes to share repertoire and good practice?

Structures

The fundamental structure that recurs across prayer and liturgy is one of call and response: God speaks to his people in his word (the scriptures), and they respond. Their response may take many different forms: it could be praise, thanksgiving, or acknowledgement of the need to change.

However, the basic pattern holds; it is God who takes the initiative and who speaks, and we who listen and respond.

In the liturgy, this pattern is frequently expanded into longer structures by the addition of opening and closing sections. This creates a four-part structure, which can be expressed as:

- Gather
- Word or listen
- Response
- Send

We need to be sent so that, transformed by what we have heard and done, we can play our part in the Church's service to the world. This four-part pattern is very flexible. Each part can be simple or elaborate. To gather, we might just light a candle and be silent, or make the sign of the cross, or our gathering might be the Introductory Rites at Mass. For celebrations of the word, the context of the celebration may therefore affect the relative weight of the different parts. A leaving celebration, for example, may extend the dimension of sending.



Celebration of the word

The focus of this is a proclamation of the scriptures and a congregational response. At its simplest it might consist of a moment of gathering to centre minds and hearts, a short reading, a time of silent reflection, and an invitation to move back to the rest of the day. However, fuller patterns are also possible, with a more developed introductory section (as at Mass) and the inclusion of intercessions as a response to the reading. At its most complex, this pattern can be expanded into the typical carol service, where there is often a sequence of readings, to which carols and prayers form a response.

A celebration of the word will form the basis of many longer times of prayer, including assemblies or special liturgies to mark times in the school year.

Understanding

This is a celebration which focuses on God speaking to us through the scriptures, and which creates space and form for our response.

Celebrating

The proclamation of scripture is the high point of the celebration. What precedes it (gather) prepares the community to listen attentively; what follows the proclamation allows for our response. Silence will be a key element, either as part of the preparation or to allow time for individual reflection. To say that God still speaks to us in the scriptures today means that those responsible for devising and leading the liturgy seek to enable participants to make connections with their own lives or with current broader issues through reflection, response, or prayer. The concluding section of the celebration reminds participants that what they have heard and prayed impacts on their everyday lives.

- The proclamation of the word is central to all celebrations.

The celebration of the word provides the model for a range of times of extended prayer.

Assemblies

Whenever the school gathers, either as the whole community or in year groups or other groups for an assembly, prayer should always be included. A school assembly will have a number of different purposes, and it may be helpful to distinguish between an assembly where the focus is wholly prayer and one which deals with other school matters. Whenever pupils gather it is good practice to include a prayer.

If there is only one assembly a week, then its main purpose should be to pray together. This can be based around a celebration of the word. The Lectionary, the liturgical calendar and the Cycle of Prayer should inform the planning of these 'liturgical assemblies'. Alternatively, it might be based upon a Catholic devotion, such as a reflection on the Stations of the Cross.

In some schools, there may be more than one assembly a week. So long as one of these assemblies is focused on prayer, then the other assemblies can have a different focus. For example, schools might have an awards assembly, an information assembly, a motivational assembly, a public health and safety assembly, and a class assembly that celebrates learning.



Mass

The Mass is the source and summit of the life of the Church. The Mass, also known as the celebration of the Eucharist, is the most important action of the Church and from its celebration, the life of the Church flows. It is important therefore that the Mass is celebrated worthily and well.

Understanding

The Order of Mass is made up of two parts which form one single act of worship: the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. In the liturgy of the word, the community listens to the scriptures to hear what God has done and is calling us to do; this is reflected upon in the homily and prayed for in the Intercessions. At the start of the liturgy of the Eucharist, the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. In the Eucharistic Prayer, thanksgiving is offered to God the Father for our salvation through the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. The Mass is a sacrifice, and the Body and Blood of Christ, together with his soul and divinity, are after the consecration truly, really, and substantially present under the species of bread and wine. In the Communion Rite, the community prepares to receive Christ in Holy Communion so that it may become what it receives.

The structure of the Mass can be related to the Gather, Word, Response, Send model introduced above, but it makes clear that in each part there is a purpose and a forward movement. We gather not as an end in itself, but so that we can be ready to hear the word, give praise and thanks to God, and receive Christ in Holy Communion.

Celebrating

The different elements and parts of the Mass, with its distinct yet interconnected rites and variable prayers, make it one of the most carefully regulated liturgies in the Church. Celebrating the Mass, therefore, calls for the working together of the priest and other ministers who have been well prepared. The Order of Mass

The preparation for the celebration of the Mass will draw upon the liturgical texts: the readings and the prayers. This is best done in collaboration with the priest celebrant. Avoid trying to impose a 'theme' upon the celebration rather than reflecting upon what aspect of the Paschal Mystery is the focus of this particular Mass. Consideration will need to be given to who will be taking part. Where this includes those who are too young to receive Holy Communion, try to ensure that the quality of the celebration engages and nourishes all those who are invited to take part.

Music is integral to the celebration of Mass. Focus on singing the key parts, which reflect the structure of the Mass, the Gospel Acclamation and the Acclamations in the Eucharistic Prayer. Ensure that pupils are familiar with the musical settings of these key parts that are given in the Missal itself, and which can be used at any Mass. More elaborate musical settings might be used on more important occasions, but must use the wording of the texts used in the currently approved Roman Missal.

- The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.
- The celebration of Mass should be well prepared and worthily celebrated.

Reconciliation

The Church's Rite of Penance offers two versions of this liturgy that are best suited for use in school. The first is a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, with a liturgy of the word leading to an opportunity for individuals to make confession. The second is a penitential service, a liturgy of the word only without confession, providing opportunity for those present to reflect on their lives in the light of scripture. This second type can be used as a preparation for individuals to go to celebrate the Sacrament, perhaps in their home parish, or simply as encouragement to live more faithfully.

Brief description

During Advent and Lent, in preparation for Christmas and Easter respectively, the Church places a particular focus on the call of each Christian to imitate more closely the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Responding to this call involves an acknowledgement of the failure to live up to Christ's example. It is, therefore, appropriate that especially during these seasons the Liturgies of Reconciliation should be celebrated in schools.



Other times of prayer

Throughout the day there are opportunities for short times of prayer. These often mark the time of day and the rhythm of the school timetable.

Beginning and ending of the day

To begin and end each school day in prayer helps to put the whole day into perspective. There are three basic models of prayer. Each usually begins and ends with the sign of the cross and includes a pause for silence. Always consider the current liturgical season and how it might affect the prayer. The three basic models are:

- A single prayer, suitable for the time of day (such as the Morning Offering), or one which may be drawn from the writings of Saints (e.g., Saint Teresa of Avila or Saint John Henry Newman) and prayed from memory.
- A simple structured pattern of prayer, with perhaps a short reading or psalm verse, prayer for others and a concluding prayer.
- A time of prayer which has some more spontaneous elements, such as improvised prayers or intercessions.

Grace before and after meals

This is a good Catholic tradition thanking God for the food provided and remembering those in need. There are many resources available.

Angelus

This prayer is traditionally said at 6am, 12 noon, and 6pm each day. It recalls the Incarnation, when the Word was made flesh and lived among us.

Classroom prayer

Where there is a prayer focus within the classroom or other space, this may provide an aid to prayer. These may be formal times of prayer, or pupils could be encouraged to use the space as the focus of their personal prayer.

Forms of prayer and devotion

The Church has a long and varied tradition of devotions to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Saints. These can include:

- Advent wreath
- Christmas crib
- Epiphany chalking of the doors
- Stations of the Cross
- Easter garden
- Stations of the Resurrection
- May processions in honour of Our Lady
- Rosary
- Corpus Christi procession
- Statues and icons
- Pilgrimage

Many devotions relate to the liturgical year. Their purpose is to provide times of prayer, which often draw on all the senses and lead us back to the liturgy with a deeper prayerful understanding of what we celebrate.



Individual prayer

Alongside communal prayer, the Church teaches the importance of encouraging personal prayer. Indeed, there is a relationship between the two. Within any liturgy or time of prayer there will be times for personal

reflection and prayer, but the school will also facilitate the individual prayer of its pupils. In turn, personal prayer will enhance communal prayer. For example, some schools have developed opportunities for pupils to experience meditation in the Christian tradition.

In facilitating individual prayer, a school may consider:

- Time: allowing moments within the school day for individual prayer, formally or informally at break times.
- Space: where there is a chapel this may be used for individual prayer. Consider how prayer that takes place in the classroom or another space might be conducive to reflection and silence.
- Content: pupils will need guidance about how to pray by themselves, and encouragement to do so. They might use a mixture of familiar prayers, spontaneous prayer, and silence.

Gradually develop the practice of silent prayer with pupils.



Common prayers

Care is taken that the list of prayers given below is introduced gradually according to each Key Stage, with sensitivity to the age, personal development, and capacity of the pupils in the school. **(see Appendix 1)**

Even where prayers are known by heart, there will be circumstances, such as in the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, where assistance might be necessary.

The prayers and responses of the Mass should be familiar to Catholic pupils. However, in the celebration of the liturgy, we hold a corporate memory of the texts. Prayers we may not be able to remember individually we are able to recite together with confidence.

It is important that pupils encounter during their time at school a wide range of prayers. They should have a familiarity with the common texts of the Catholic tradition, but also appreciate that there are many ways of praying and languages of prayer.

We will provide a student prayer book which contains the prayers listed below, alongside other prayers.. The prayer book can be given to students as a gift to be valued and to be used. It can be important to know some prayers by heart as well as to know where to turn to express in prayer the hopes and fears of growing in life and faith. With sensitivity to their age, personal development, and capacity, pupils should know the following prayers:

- The Sign of the Cross
- The Lord's Prayer
- Hail Mary
- Glory be
- The Apostles' Creed
- An Act of Contrition
- Angel of God
- Eternal Rest
- Morning Offering

- Grace before meals
- Grace after meals
- Come, Holy Spirit
- The Angelus
- The Rosary
- Hail Holy Queen
- The Magnificat
- The Memorare
- Act of Faith
- Act of Hope
- Act of Love
- Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you

The full texts of these prayers is given in Appendix 9.5, together with a recommended scheme for introducing the prayers according to age, which takes into account where texts are introduced in the RE Curriculum Directory.

Planning

Long-term planning

In the Annual Plan for Provision, the aims and objectives of our school's prayer and liturgy policy are translated into practical desired outcomes for the school year. It will also include:

- reflection and action on the monitoring and evaluation of the previous year
- the number and timing of Masses to be celebrated during the year
- provision for holydays of obligation
- opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- other services relating to key dates in the school calendar
- engagement with Church initiatives (such as the Year of Mercy)
- music repertoire planning
- formation for liturgical ministries
- developing a strategy for improving a particular aspect of the liturgical life of the school
- forward planning.

Medium-term planning

This is the detailed planning of the prayer and liturgy of each term. This will include:

- checking dates and confirming that the necessary people (such as priests for Mass) have been contacted and are available
- ongoing liaison with key staff, for example, those responsible for music
- looking at the logistics and other details for some events

- planning in more detail daily and/or weekly prayer, and resourcing prayer focuses
- reviewing and evaluating the previous term
- monitoring the implementation of the more strategic aspects of the long-term plan.

Short-term planning

This involves the preparation of any particular liturgies, whether the Mass or assembly or classroom prayer. Different types of prayer and liturgy will require different processes of preparation and therefore different amounts of time. Planning should consider monitoring, reflection, and evaluation on what has been celebrated.

Monitoring and record keeping

The quality of the celebration will be evident in how the community participates in prayer and liturgy and the impact on their lives.

The school will keep records of monitoring prayer and liturgy and pupils and staff will keep pupil planning sheets, photographs, videos, newsletters, evaluations and pupils voice for record keeping.

RESOURCES

Further guidance can be found here:

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Preparation/index.shtml>

Additional advice about the use of PowerPoint:

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS/Guides/PowerPoint.pdf>

Sample PowerPoint Order of Mass:

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/Resources/Schools/Mass-full.ppt>

Sample Order of Mass:

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/Text/index.shtml>

Mass preparation sheet

[Planner General.indd](#)

The *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* brings together a number of common prayers:

Traditional Prayers

[Liturgy Office | Traditional Prayers](#)

Liturgy Preparation

[Liturgy Office | Resources for Liturgy Preparation Groups](#)

Liturgical Calendar 2024-25

[Liturgical Calendar | 2024-2025](#)

Solemnities, Feasts and Memorials

[Liturgy Office | Background Calendars](#)

Appendix 1

Age phase	3-5 (EYFS)	5-7 (KS1)	7-9 (Lower KS2)	9-11 (Upper KS2)
Prayers	· The sign of the cross · Respond with Amen · Begin to join in with Hail Mary · School prayers	· The Sign of the Cross · The Lord's Prayer · Hail Mary · Glory be · Grace before meals · Grace after meals · School prayers	· The Apostles' Creed · An Act of Contrition · Angel of God · Come, Holy Spirit · School prayers	· Morning Offering · The Rosary · The Magnificat · Act of Faith · Act of Hope · Act of Love · School prayers
Advent and Lent 12 noon	.	· The Angelus	· The Angelus	· The Angelus
Rosary during the month of October	· Hail Mary	· Rosary beads and prayers	· Rosary (mysteries)	· Rosary and Hail, Holy Queen (mysteries)
Lent and Advent		· Act of contrition	· Simple morning prayer once a week	· Morning prayer once a week