

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Collective Worship (Prayer and Liturgy)



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we come together in the spirit of gratitude, acknowledging that each person is uniquely gifted and cherished by God. As members of the family of St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we are bound by the following guiding principles:

- **Welcome in Jesus' Name:** We open our hearts and arms to all, recognising that every soul is a beloved creation of the Divine.
- **Work in Jesus' Community:** United in faith, we labour together to build a community that reflects the love and teachings of Jesus.
- **Follow Jesus' Example:** In all our endeavours, we strive to emulate the compassion, humility, and love exemplified by our Lord.
- **Learn with Jesus as our Inspiration:** We seek wisdom and knowledge, guided by the light of Christ, knowing that true understanding flows from a heart rooted in faith.
- **Grow in Faith with Jesus as our Leading Light:** Through prayer, reflection, and study, we nurture and strengthen our faith, allowing it to guide us in all aspects of life.

Our prayer and worship in St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School are dedicated to giving glory, honor, praise, and thanks to God. It is a heartfelt response, both in word and deed, to God's gracious invitation to enter into a profound and transformative relationship with Him. This sacred connection is made possible through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the ongoing guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This devotion to prayer and worship is an integral part of our school's life. It places Christ at the very core of education, thereby fostering and sustaining the vibrant Catholic ethos that permeates our community. Through our collective efforts, we endeavour to make this ethos palpable and meaningful in the lives of all who pass through our doors. Prayer and Liturgy at our school are informed by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *To Love You More Dearly*.

As we journey together, let us draw strength from the words of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who declared, "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). This promise inspires us to embrace each day with renewed faith, purpose, and love.

Incorporating Catholic Social Teachings (CST) into every facet of our curriculum Prayer and Liturgy is paramount in fostering a holistic education that aligns with our school's deeply rooted values. CST provides a moral compass that transcends academic subjects, guiding our students towards a profound understanding of compassion, justice, and the dignity of every

individual. By infusing CST principles into subjects ranging from science to history, we not only impart knowledge but also cultivate a sense of responsibility towards society. Through this integrated approach, students learn to view the world through a lens of solidarity, prioritising the well-being of the marginalised and vulnerable. This holistic educational experience empowers our students to become not only knowledgeable scholars but also compassionate advocates for positive social change, ensuring they carry the transformative teachings of CST into their lives beyond the classroom.

The Daily Act of Worship the Legal Requirement

In accordance with the law, we adhere to the following provisions:

Daily Prayer and Liturgy: Pursuant to Section 70 of the 1988 Education Act, it is mandatory for all pupils, including those in the sixth form, to partake in daily Prayer and Liturgy.

Non-Curriculum Designation: Acts of Prayer and Liturgy must not be designated as part of the curriculum. Specifically, within the framework of a Catholic school, these moments of Prayer and Liturgy are distinct from the allocation of curriculum time designated for Religious Education.

Parental Rights to Withdrawal: It is imperative to recognize and honor the legal entitlement of parents to withdraw their children from Prayer and Liturgy should they choose to do so.

Foundation Governors' Responsibility: In addition to the aforementioned requirements, foundation governors in voluntary aided Catholic schools bear a statutory responsibility to safeguard and nurture the religious character of their schools, as stipulated by law.

The Aims

The daily act of worship at St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School is designed to offer an opportunity for all pupils and staff:

To Contemplate the Mystery of God: Providing a space for reflection on the profound nature of God, and offering honour, praise, and gratitude to the Divine.

To Delve into Spiritual and Moral Reflections: Encouraging thoughtful consideration of spiritual and ethical matters that are pertinent to individual growth and societal harmony.

To Explore Personal Beliefs: Fostering an environment where individuals can earnestly examine and understand their own faith and beliefs.

To Embrace and Celebrate Life: Providing a platform to respond to life's moments and celebrate its richness and complexity.

To Foster a Sense of Belonging and Community: Nurturing a feeling of belonging, and cultivating a spirit of unity and community among all members.

To Cultivate a Unified Ethos and Shared Values: Developing a common set of principles and shared values that underpin the fabric of our community.

To Hone Essential Skills: Instilling the skills of reverence, contemplation, reflection, interpretation, empathy, and meditation, which are vital for personal and spiritual growth.

To Deepen Religious Experience: Enriching and deepening the religious experiences that form an integral part of our collective journey.

To Augment Understanding of Liturgy: Growing in comprehension and appreciation of the sacred rituals and practices within the liturgical context.

To Reiterate Prayers Rooted in Catholic Tradition: Strengthening the connection to prayers that hold a significant place in the rich tapestry of the Catholic tradition.

To Foster Positive Attitudes: Instilling and reinforcing positive attitudes that guide interactions, relationships, and personal growth.

To Cultivate Awe, Wonder, and Inspiration in the Person of Christ: Nurturing a sense of profound reverence, marvel, and inspiration in the presence and teachings of Christ.

Principles

Conciseness is Key: Ensure brevity in sessions.

Consistency is Paramount: Maintain a regular schedule.

Simplicity is Central: Keep it straightforward.

Embrace Diversity: Offer a range of experiences.

Engage the Young Hearts: Involve children actively.

A Liturgical Structure

- We Gather – how we come together, the setting, the environment
- We Listen – the Word of God is proclaimed

- We Respond – the response to the Word leads into a time of prayerful reflection which may be accompanied by a symbolic action
- We Send – giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives

Good Practice

Thoughtful Planning and Evaluation: Demonstrating careful planning and assessment of provisions.

Clear Theme and Message: Ensuring a distinct and coherent message is conveyed.

Seasons, Feasts, and Relevance: Exploring Church traditions alongside themes relevant to students' lives within the context of faith and teachings.

Fostering Values and Actions: Encouraging activities like community engagement, forgiveness, gratitude, and symbolic gestures.

Creating Sacred Space: Establishing a sacred atmosphere with focal points and meaningful music.

Elevating Scripture: Giving prominence to Scripture in worship sessions.

Utilising Liturgical Responses: Incorporating liturgical responses and actions.

Diverse Approaches: Employing varied methods such as storytelling, imagery, dance, drama, and music.

Multi-Form Prayer: Providing opportunities for individual and communal prayer in various forms (e.g., spontaneous, litany, meditation).

Student Leadership and Preparation: Enabling students to lead and skilfully prepare acts of worship.

Structured Liturgy: Following a structured format: We Gather, We Listen, We Respond, We Go Forth.

Empathy and Consideration for Others: Encouraging reflection on the needs of others.

Affirming Relationships: Cultivating an environment for collective sharing of joys and sorrows, strengthening relationships.

Fostering Shared Ethos and Vision: Promoting a unified ethos and shared vision.

Effective Visuals and Music: Making good use of visual aids, storytelling, scripture, and engaging music.

Utilising Silence for Reflection: Employing silence effectively for contemplation and prayer.

Age-Appropriate Language: Using language suitable for the age group.

Conducting Gatherings Appropriately: Ensuring proper etiquette during gathering and dispersal.

Engaging the Senses: Stimulating the senses to enhance the worship experience.

Learning through Worship: Emphasising worship as a learning experience without overshadowing its core purpose.

Exemplary Adult Role Models: Setting a positive example through adult behaviour.

Inclusive Participation of Adults/Parents: Actively involving other adults/parents in worship, not just as observers.

These points encapsulate the good practices for effective worship at St. Michael's.

Planning a Daily Act of Worship using a Liturgical Structure

We Gather



Prepare a sacred space: (images, words, music, and lighting to remind us of the presence of God.)

Create a Focal Point: Use various elements like cloths, projected images, photographs, paintings, the Book of the Gospels, crucifix, statues, rosaries, lighted candles, special objects, and fresh flowers to provide a central focus for prayer. Visual images serve as powerful catalysts for a deeper connection with God.

Utilise Liturgical Colours: Employ liturgical colours to align with the seasons and feasts of the Church. For example, green for ordinary time, purple for Advent and Lent, white/gold for Christmas and Easter, red for significant occasions like apostles, martyrs, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Pentecost, and white/blue for Our Lady.

Incorporate Seasonal Symbols: Integrate symbols of the season, such as red poppies, autumn leaves, seashells, and symbols associated with Baptism. This practice emphasises finding God's presence in all things.

Reflective Music: Play calming and reflective music that encourages contemplation. Participants can either listen quietly, use sign language, or join in singing as they gather.

Light a Candle: Illuminate a candle as a symbolic representation of God's presence and love in the sacred space. Experiment with Gathering Arrangements: Arrange seating patterns in various ways, such as forming a circle, utilising theatre-style seating, creating a semi-circle, organising small groups, or having classes collect individually before coming together. Each class can bring their own candle or symbol to contribute to a central display. Make the Sign of the Cross: Initiate the worship by making the sign of the cross, invoking the presence of

the Holy Trinity. Breathing and Stilling Routine: Lead a routine of relaxation and concentration on breathing. Inhale God's peace, and exhale any worries. Encourage stillness both internally and externally.

Pass an Object Around: Enhance focus by passing around an object, such as a pebble or picture, to hold the attention of participants.

Form a Circle of Connection: Use a rope or a hula hoop to create a physical circle, ensuring that everyone is connected. Participants can stand or sit within this circle.

Outdoor Space: If possible, gather in an outdoor area to experience a unique connection with nature and God's creation.

Contribute to a Display: Encourage individuals to bring an item, like a pebble or coin, to contribute to a communal display.

Set the Scene: Establish a context for the worship session, creating a mindful transition from silence or quiet reflection to the next stage of the gathering.

Prayer Box for Intentions: Provide a prayer box for participants to write down their prayer intentions. These can be placed at any time during the day and brought into the next worship session.

Class Invitation: Consider having a class extend an invitation to others to join them in the sacred space, fostering a sense of community and inclusivity.



We Listen

The Scriptures are a primary source of faith, a special sign of God's presence and should be given prominence.

- Listen to a reading from the Old and New Testament (sometimes it is sufficient to present just a few sentences).
- ICT e.g., project a single image or a series of images to tell a story from the scriptures with key questions to consider: What do I see? What do I feel? What do I like?
- Prepare a PowerPoint of images and phrases with background music that makes the Scripture of the day relevant to the world we live in.
- Mime the story as it is read
- Act out the story
- Sections narrated by pupils or 'part-speaking'

- Gospel story presented as a news report
- Use guided meditation. This is a way of praying with Scripture. Do a stilling exercise, invite the pupils to listen to the story and as they do to imagine they are someone in the story. What do they see, hear, did Jesus speak to them, what was he doing? etc.
- Ensure the reading has a message or theme
- Create a 'visual story' or read Gospel story and place pictures on a display
- Use same reading over the course of a week's worship
Use hymns and songs that tell the story
- Hot seat a character



We Respond

Remember, this is a special moment to answer the call of the Word of God in prayer. Ensure that children are provided with quiet time to absorb the message and respond from within. Creative movement is encouraged to express praise, joy, sorrow, thanks, sadness, and love.

Silent Conversation with God: Invite the children to communicate silently with God, sharing their feelings and thoughts. If silence proves challenging, softly play background music to create a peaceful atmosphere.

Quiet Thanks and Praise: Encourage the children to express their gratitude and praise for God's gifts silently in their hearts.

Reflection and Seeking Forgiveness: Invite children to reflect on times when they may have distanced themselves from God's presence, hindering the growth of God's kingdom. Ask for forgiveness and seek guidance.

Prayers for Others: Encourage the children to lift up prayers for the needs and well-being of others.

Spontaneous Circle Prayer: In certain situations, promote spontaneous prayer. Treat this as a circle time activity, passing a heart, stone, or similar item around the circle.

Litany-Style Prayer: Utilise a litany-style prayer format, starting with phrases like 'For... we thank you, God.' and 'For the times... we are sorry.'

Prayerful Signs, Gestures, or Actions: Incorporate meaningful signs, gestures, or actions to accompany prayers or songs.

Mantras or Repetitive Phrases: Introduce a mantra, a specific word, or a phrase for repetition. Allow students to choose their own.

Traditional Prayers: Introduce traditional prayers that have been passed down through the history of the Catholic Church. It is valuable for students to participate in and become part of this tradition.

Passing the Sign of Peace: Encourage the exchange of a sign of peace among participants.

Collective Artwork or Collage: Create a collective collage or artwork based on a story. For example, use cotton wool balls to form a lamb's body or use collage materials to depict a community garden.

Planting Seeds: Engage in the symbolic act of planting seeds, representing growth and renewal.

Placing a Stone at the Cross: Provide an opportunity for participants to place a stone at the foot of a cross, symbolising their prayers and intentions.

Reflect and Write on Leaves for a Wonder wall/tree: Participants can write reflections or prayers on leaves and assemble them into a prayer tree, creating a tangible representation of their collective spirituality.

Physical Touch and Connection: Incorporate touch through handshakes, holding hands, linking arms, clapping hands, and other gestures.

Personal Prayers on Post-its: Provide post-it notes for individuals to write down their personal prayers and intentions.

Expressive Dance: Encourage expressive movement through dance, allowing p



Here, children gather to contemplate what values they wish to embody, understanding how faith is put into action within the school, home, parish, local, and global communities. They seek ways to integrate their faith into everyday life.

Action Linked with the Word: Children are encouraged to engage in an action related to a chosen word, such as a prayer, deed, or passing on a gesture of kindness.

Memento as a Reminder: Children may select a memento like a card, shell, prayer, or candle as a tangible reminder of their faith commitment.

Living Mission through Personal Example: Children embody their faith through personal acts of forgiveness and kindness, serving as a living mission in their communities.

Spreading the Word: Encourage children to share their faith experiences and lessons with others, fostering a culture of faith-sharing.

Symbolic Handshake: Utilise a handshake as a symbolic gesture of goodwill and shared faith.

Follow-through Commitment: Emphasise the importance of ensuring that children follow through on their commitments and promises.

Vow of Commitment: Children may express their commitment through meaningful words or phrases that resonate with their faith journey.

Reflect on Impact: At a later time, encourage children to reflect on how their mission or acts of faith have positively impacted others.

Gratitude Moments: Prompt children to take moments in their day to express gratitude to God for blessings and opportunities.

Prayer for Someone in Need: Encourage children to offer a prayer for someone who is facing challenges or in need of support.

Expressions of Love: Urge children to convey their love and appreciation to their parents, reminding them of the importance of family bonds.

Caring for God's Creation: Inspire children to demonstrate care for the environment by picking up litter or engaging in eco-friendly actions.

Courtesy and Respect: Encourage children to remember and practice common courtesies like saying "please" and "thank you".

Kind Gestures: Prompt children to greet others with a warm smile, spreading positivity and kindness.

Helping at Home: Encourage children to actively assist with tasks and responsibilities at home, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and care.

Inclusive Invitation: Encourage children to invite someone who may be feeling isolated or lonely to join them during break time.

"Go Forth!" - Serve, Proclaim, Witness: Instil the expectation and excitement of actively living out one's faith through service, proclamation, and being a witness to others.

Helping Older Pupils to Plan an Act of Worship

Gather:

- What music might you play?
- How will you arrange the pupils?
- Will you light the candle(s)?
- Can you find an appropriate image, picture, poster/artefact for your prayer focus?

Listen:

- Who will read?
- What will you read? (Scripture, story, poem etc.)
- Will you act out the reading or use a PowerPoint presentation?

Respond:

- How will you help your friends to reflect on what they have read? Make sure you give some silent time.
- Will you say prayers that need a response?
- Who will lead the prayers?

Send:

- What do you want your friends to take away from this Act of Worship to remember its message?
Can the Minnie Vinnies go forth with actions?

Helping Younger Pupils to Plan an Act of Worship

- Choose a theme: e.g. God gives me strength, give praise to God, God's wonderful world, Love your neighbour etc.
- Something to look at: art, image, quote of inspirational person.
- Something to listen to: music of modern artist to explore
- Something to say: prayer, write a spiritual intention
- Something to do: pray for someone, consider to help other in need
- Something to remember: write thoughtful prayer, share good news with others etc.

Prayer Leaders alongside the RE lead create termly themes for the children to use on a weekly basis based on the children's interests and the liturgical year.

- Using praying basket
- Discussions with peers on relevant topics/ focus
- Praying cards
- Songs of modern artist
- Using sacred object

Useful Website Resources for the daily act of worship:

Mission Together: www.missiontogether.org.uk

Spirit of the Season: www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS

Church House Publishing: www.chpublishing.co.uk/schools

CAFOD Resources: www.cafod.org/primary

Catholic Education Service: www.cesew.org.uk

Teacher NET: www.teachernet.gov.uk

The Bishops of England and Wales Liturgy office: www.liturgyoffice.org.uk

Ten Ten Resources: www.temtenresources.co.uk

The Education Commission:

<https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/policies/> CARFLEO Catholic Association
of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario:

<https://carfleo.com/2020/03/28/song-prayers/>