Saint Clare's
Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy

Member of staff responsible: Mr Parkinson
Date policy written: June 2022
Date approved by the full Governing body: June 2022
Date to be reviewed: June 2024

Mission Statement

St Clare's is a Christ-centred family where everyone is valued and respected. We learn and grow, whilst strengthening our relationship with God and one another. Together in His love, we can achieve our full potential.

Play, learn and grow together with Christ

Prayer

"Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for God" [Catechism of the Catholic Church 2560]

"Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy." [Therese of Lisieux]

At the heart of the Christian faith is the belief in a God who communicates with people. God calls every human person into a loving relationship and as with every relationship, our relationship with God can only grow through communication. Prayer is the way in which we engage in communication with God. Christians believe that prayer is essential to human fulfilment for it is only in God that we can discover ourselves, our meaning and our purpose.

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You" [St. Augustine]

In Saint Clare's prayer consists of:

listening - being attentive to the voice of God.

speaking - expressing our heart's deepest longings and desires to the One who knows and understands us better than we know and understand ourselves.

reflecting - thinking about our relationship with God. Pondering on the actions of God in history and in the unfolding mystery of our lives.

resting – simply being consciously in the presence of God, knowing that we are loved.

One of the Early Fathers of the Church described prayer as "*… the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.*" These words of St John Damascene have become a classical definition of prayer and they point to the reason why, in a Catholic school, we begin and end each session of the day in prayer. Prayer can have a variety of forms and styles and express different things.

- Blessing and Adoration – the prayer which blesses God for the goodness which has been shown to humankind
- Prayers to express sorrow – the prayer which asks for forgiveness and which calls for the establishment of the Kingdom of God
- Intercession – consists in asking on behalf of another and ourselves
- Thanksgiving – acknowledging the gifts which God has given
- Praise – the prayer which praises God simply because God is

[CCC 2623 –2649

Liturgy

> *The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows*
>
> [This is the Liturgy 10]

"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. Liturgical celebration therefore should be brought all human symbols of expression - art, dance, poetry, music, gesture, stillness.

- Liturgy is the praise and worship of God.
- Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life and our lives.
- It is the right and duty of all baptised, both children and adults.
- The function of the liturgy is to build up members of Christ's body, to strengthen us in Christ.
- Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the whole person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.
- Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.
- In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.
- The purpose of adapting liturgy for children is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy of the parish.
- Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity.

Prayer and Liturgy

God is present and active in all authentic human experience. We already have a blessed life and worship is recognising and celebrating this reality in the Christian tradition. God is reached through the world and adored within it. Creating a sacred space for worship is to create a space where the unity of God and creation is reverently symbolised and celebrated. Worship and the words and rituals we use should not sever us from the ordinary circumstances of our lives but rather unite us more closely to them.

- Worship remembers and celebrates the marvellous things God works in our lives. It celebrates God's presence in our lives. Worship should not feel like an interruption from a different world. It is a response to life and can be spontaneous.
- Prayer and Liturgy 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 relationship made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the strength of the Holy Spirit.
- Worship is at the very heart of our school and will reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.
- Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship.
- All liturgies involve the praise, thanksgiving and adoration of God and are, therefore, acts of worship. However, not all worship will be liturgy as it may or may not include symbol and action.
- An assembly is any experience of gathering/assembling in school. It may include an act of worship.

Liturgy/worship in school

In light of this and our school mission statement, we understand the prayer and worship life of our school community to be central to all we do.

Through liturgy and worship we encourage the development of a personal relationship with God. As a result of this the following occur:

- develop an understanding of what it means to belong to a community;
- provide opportunities for enhancing spiritual growth and personal development through prayer and reflection;
- provide experiences of sharing values and celebrating significant events in the lives of individuals and the community;
- develop knowledge of and experience seasons within the Church's year;
- develop knowledge and understanding of scripture;

- develop and celebrate skills of creativity.

Good worship happens when everyone is fully involved in the preparation and celebration. Time for worship is in addition to the 10% curriculum time for classroom Religious Education, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Within St. Clare's liturgy and worship provides opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate and share.

We have 'Prayer Leaders' in Year five and six who support classes across school with the planning and delivery of worship as well as leading worship themselves. The children have annual training to support them in this role and time each week, to prepare meaningful and prayerful worship.

At Key Stage 1 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies and prayer times
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word
- the occasional celebration of Eucharist
- a range of types of prayer
- a range of styles of celebration
- opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship

At Key Stage 2 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies and prayer times
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites of the Mass and/or the Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite
- the occasional celebration of Eucharist
- a range of types of prayer
- a range of styles of celebration
- opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship
- opportunities for pupils to take leadership roles in worship
- opportunities to plan their own worship
- opportunities to share their planned worship with other classes

Prayer Experiences

Pupils 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 thank you for the wonder of my being' [Psalm 139]
Traditional prayers	Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary
Repetitive prayer [mantra]	'Jesus, I love you', repeated several times,
Meditation	Scripture reflection with use of imagination
Bodily prayer	Raising hands in praise, bowing, dancing, genuflecting
Prayer of the heart	Stillness to listen to God: 'Be still and know that I am God.'
Contemplation	Looking at trees, a sunset, an icon etc.
Gestures	The sign of the cross, the sign of peace
Hymns	Traditional and modern hymns
Music	Listening to quiet, reflective music
Litanies	For all creation: Thanks be to God
Processions	Gospel procession with sung 'alleluia'
Prayer services and liturgies	Using holy water, candles, incense and other symbols
Celebrations	Prayer, song, sharing food and drink, celebrating work

Timetable of Prayer and Worship

Day	Prayer and Worship	Led by
Monday	Whole School Liturgy Assembly	Mrs Charnley
Tuesday	Assembly or Class Worship	KS1 & KS2 Staff
Wednesday	Wednesday Word and prayer	Class teachers
Thursday	Child led prayer and liturgy in classes.	Children
Friday	Full School Praise Assembly with our weekly mission	Mrs Charnley/Miss Scott/Mr Parkinson