

'St Mary's Catholic Infant and Junior Academies are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.'



ST MARY'S
CATHOLIC INFANT AND JUNIOR ACADEMIES

Prayer and liturgy

Designation	Name	Date Approved	Date of Renewal
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Samantha Birchall	Sept 2024	Sept 2025
Chair of Governors	Mrs Vanessa Wells	Sept 2024	Sept 2025

What Prayer and liturgy is

At St Mary's we believe that God is present and active in all authentic human experience. We already have a graced life and worship is naming 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 marvelous 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 spontaneous response to life.
- 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 witness of the Holy Spirit.
- Worship is at the very heart of our school and reflects 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.

The Aims of Prayer and liturgy

We believe that Prayer and liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To reflect on personal issues
- To respond to and celebrate life.
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit.
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development

- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles of Prayer and liturgy

All Acts of Prayer and liturgy in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God.
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- Develop in pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead Prayer and liturgy rather than always participating or contributing in a taken way
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church. To do this, celebrations will:
 - Be short and appropriately paced, one minute for each year of child's age as a guideline, i.e. KS1 5-6 minutes, KS2 7-10 minutes.
 - Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Prayer and liturgy at St Mary's:

At St Mary's, there are many opportunities for Prayer and liturgy in different forms.

Time and space are set aside to:

- wonder at
- contemplate
- mark as special.
- come to terms with
- give worth to the mystery of life – faith they have explored.
- grow in awareness of and actively respond to the spiritual dimension of life.
- develop the capacities and skills to participate in and plan worship and celebrations.

Each day opportunities are taken for Prayer and liturgy in all classes. This will include the use of formal and informal prayer. The Prayer and liturgy at St Mary's follow the liturgical year. The scripture used reflects that used during Mass on the previous Sunday.

Class teachers will plan worship based on the scripture and targeted at an appropriate level for the age of the children. Children begin to lead Prayer and liturgy in class and are given the necessary support to help plan for their class.

There is an opportunity for worship based on current events or relevant needs of the class.

Within Infant and Junior assemblies, which occur once a week, time is dedicated to Prayer and liturgy in the form of prayer, song, and reflection. This allows children to engage in worship at an age-appropriate level and to celebrate with their peers.

The whole school community gathers weekly to worship and to celebrate the major festivals of Harvest, Christmas, and Holy Week. Members of the wider community are regularly invited to join us in worship and celebration.

There are regular opportunities for parents and families to join in worship. This takes place in 'stay and pray' sessions which occur throughout the year.

Refer to the Archdiocese Prayer and liturgy 'Guidance for schools' and 'Come and See' pages 28 – 32 for further guidance.