

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

“I have come that you may have life and have it to the full”

John 10¹⁰

The Business Plan for the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust states that a priority for the Board is to strengthen the distinctive Catholic ethos off each of the Trust's academies.

Prayer and Liturgy lie at the heart of that commitment. They give the essential roots to the community and help to define our distinctiveness. They provide the opportunities to gather together and to centre ourselves around a core of beliefs.

“The work of the Christian assembly is always to adore God in prayer, in thanksgiving and penitence.”

(Leiturgia - The Worshipping School)

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PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

Introduction

The Academies within the trust aim to provide an outstanding whole person education through which all are challenged to grow in wisdom, understanding, self-esteem and closeness to God. We achieve this through prayer and liturgy by ensuring that our academies are places where prayer and reflection, deepening our relationship with God, are woven into the warp and weft of school life. Worship, prayer and liturgy are integral parts of the Catholic tradition and therefore they are central to each academy and its character. This is expressed through opportunities for prayer and reflection (both privately and as a community), through assemblies, and through liturgies (sacramental and non-sacramental). Our worship as a Catholic school is seen as more than just a legal requirement.

Each Academy seeks to actively encourage the whole school community (pupils and staff) to share in the liturgical life of the Church and in so doing:

"promote and develop an appreciation of, and a more active involvement in prayer, worship and liturgy".

Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School

All pupils will experience prayer and liturgy in a variety of forms throughout their school life. Many of the occasions will be voluntary, although pupils will be encouraged to participate through word and action. Each pupil will be placed in situations where an experience of prayer takes place e.g. collective worship in class or form bases, whole school and Learning House/year group assemblies. The whole school community is invited to reflect on personal, social and global issues and consider its responses to them.

We believe:

- Our daily prayer and liturgy is an entitlement for all members of our community.
- Our prayer and liturgy derive their inspiration and their purpose from the Eucharistic Celebration of the Holy Mass. Within the Trust's Academies, prayer and liturgy will seek to foster student awareness of the value and significance of the Mass in their own spiritual lives.
- Prayer and liturgy will be based on the Gospel theme for the week. This includes regular assemblies, which should include that week's Gospel, or a part of it and be based around the Gospel theme for the week.
- Our worship as a Catholic school is seen as more than just a legal requirement. It is central to our Catholic education and forms an essential part of our school's overall provision for prayer and worship.
- As a Catholic school, whilst respecting the diversity of belief and commitment, our worship must be Catholic in character, reflecting the liturgical tradition of the Church and having Christ at its heart.
- A variety of experiences must be provided to all members of our community, influenced by pupils, teachers and visitors, such as: quiet reflection, silence, prayers, responses, music, songs, dance, drama, slides, video excerpts, Bible readings, short addresses.
- An appropriate, respectful atmosphere with a sense of order and occasion must be present during worship, including on entry and exit to liturgy.
- We should respond to the needs of the day and people within our community as well as to the liturgical calendar.

Academies within the trust will endeavour:

To take into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in prayer and liturgy:

- 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 faith or no traditions.
- to provide a focus for prayer and liturgy using artefacts, candles, symbols and lighting.

- to ensure that the theme, focus, delivery, length and resources are appropriate to the interests, age range, backgrounds and abilities of pupils.

MAIN PRINCIPLES - (Taken from 'Fit For Mission – Schools')

Liturgy & Prayer

- Sacraments and liturgy *'physically and spiritually incorporate us into the drama of God's plan of creation and salvation.'*
- We are asked to avoid a *'secular emphasis on the horizontal, pupil-centred dimension of personal and social reflection, to the exclusion of the vertical dimension of offering true and fitting worship that respects the dignity of God and the dignity of humanity.'*
- Worship is the action of Christ in which we participate
- Liturgy is a basic human need – we need 'signs and symbols to express and perceive spiritual realities'
- *'Liturgy is the action of the Church that uses rituals, symbols, music, drama, art and language to communicate the action of Christ, the word of God made flesh.'*
- Liturgy is about experiencing the *'presence of God'*
Liturgy is *'always the celebration of the Church, united with Christ'* – it should follow the liturgical seasons

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring Responsibilities

The RE co-ordinator or Senior Head of Learning House will be responsible for ensuring monitoring of each year class in the academy or form in the learning house on a termly basis.

The Headteacher or Chaplaincy Team Leader will be responsible for co-ordinating the annual pupil evaluation of prayer and liturgy with the support of the RE co-ordinator or Senior Head of Learning House

The Headteacher or Chaplaincy Team Leader will be responsible for leading the annual staff evaluation of prayer and liturgy.

The Head teacher will be responsible for leading the annual pupil questionnaire.

Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality, engaging and consistent prayer and liturgy provision • Worship in tune with the Church's seasons and significant dates whilst responsive to changing situations within the school and the wider community • Opportunities are provided for staff to develop high quality prayer and liturgy through allotted time in CPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly observation by Head teacher/RE coordinator of each year class or Senior Head of Learning House and Head of Learning House of each form • Annual pupil questionnaire and evaluation sample across learning houses • Annual Staff Evaluation

Appendix A: General guidance for staff on prayer and liturgy

Acknowledging the reality we face with collective worship

- An increasing majority of pupils have minimal or no relationship with the Church
- Pupils are heavily influenced by a culture that views all religion negatively or suspiciously
- Young people's experience of silence is extremely limited
- Staff have varying degrees of knowledge, understanding, skills and comfortableness with prayer
- Form time is short, there is often a lot of information to be delivered, and teachers are conscious that this is also time to develop relationships and get to know their pupils.
- The risk of prayer being side-lined or treated in a tokenistic way is high

Responding to the reality

- Pupils in our Primary Academies, depending upon family traditions may lack an experience of prayer and reflection. The role of the primary academies is, in part, to allow pupils to become familiar with the norms of prayer and liturgy.
- When the majority of pupils arrive in the secondary phase, they are still familiar with the norms of prayer and liturgy that they experienced at primary school. These are the foundations on which the secondary academy must build. If we don't nurture these in year 7, it will become increasingly difficult as they grow.
- It is essential that prayer is viewed as a natural part of the rhythm of the day in our Academies, therefore, it is advisable that there is a pattern in what teachers do, in terms of timing, length and structure.
- As pupils are familiar with 'circle time' from primary school, it is suggested that they use it as a model for form prayer at least once a week across both phases.
- All prayer and worship in the form should have four key elements:
 1. *A 'reverential milieu' or prayerful atmosphere*
 2. *Reference to the Scriptures (in tune with the Church's year)*
 3. *Opportunity to experience God's presence (including through sign and symbol)*
 4. *Participation (through word, action, listening, sharing)*
- In addition to this each act of prayer or liturgy should include a focus, such as a candle or icon or items on a worship table.

Prayer: some general principles

- The Our Father is the model of prayer for all. It centres around a relationship with God as our Father, consideration of God's will and a desire to reflect on our sins and to seek forgiveness.
- Prayer is the *'raising of the mind and heart to God'*
- Prayer is fundamentally about relationship
- Prayer should always involve some experience of quiet/silence

Prayer methods

- Meditation on the Word of God
- *'Practising presence'*
- Popular piety – such as The Rosary and Stations of the Cross
- Memorisation of basic prayers
- Memorisation of Scripture passages

- Lectio Divina
- Adoration
- Devotion to the Saints and martyrs

Good prayer / liturgy should include the following

- Creation of a *'reverential milieu'*
- Active participation
- Full awareness of what we are doing
- The Word of God
- Beautiful music for praise, thanksgiving, contrition, adoration, intercession
- Religious art

How to...

Creating the 'space' for prayer

- The Sign of the Cross
- Religious artefacts such as candles, icons, images, crosses or items on a prayer table
- Projected visual images reflecting the theme or stimulating interest
- An invitation, during quiet time, to shut their eyes or put their heads on the desk
- Some kind of marking of the moment into a different time such as a key word or phrase, a piece of music, the ringing of a bell

A basic structure

- The sign of the Cross
- A scripture reading (preferably from the reading of the week)
- A quiet moment in which to think about this, with the aid of some questions
- Sharing of thoughts/ideas if pupils feel able
- Closing prayer/reflection
- The sign of the Cross

How the structure might be varied and developed

- The sign of the Cross – prayer might also be introduced with some words or suggestions such as: 'Let us pray', 'Let us take a moment to recognise God's presence', 'Let's bow our heads'
- The teacher might use the written reflection from the weekly resources or a connected reading that develops the theme. S/he might on occasions use a sacred text from another tradition. When appropriate, the teacher could give an input on the Saint of the Day (see calendar of saints provided)
- This could be the point at which to focus quietly on an image or a piece of music or even a 'YouTube' clip connected to the general theme.
- If pupils are reluctant to share, it might just be necessary for the teacher to draw out some ideas for them and even on occasions to give them something to take away such as a prayer card.
- This could be quiet time, spontaneous shared prayer, prayers expressed through actions such as writing on paper leaves and putting them on a prayer tree, or just the joint praying of a familiar prayer such as The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be
- The sign of the Cross or another formal closing of prayer such as The Grace or something written by members of the form.

Circle time as prayer

- Preparing the space and time teacher should try to mark out this time as different from other circle times through the use of some kind of focus such as an icon, a cross, a lighted candle, settling music.

Structure and process

- Pupils move into the circle
- Teacher may start with a low-key mixing game
- Brief reminder of the circle time rules
- Sign of the cross
- A period of silence – we become aware of God's presence
- A round (possibly, though not necessarily, based on the theme of the week)
- Pupils are offered the opportunity to mention something/someone that they would like the form to pray for closing prayer (read by teacher or a member of the form)

Some suggested ways of encouraging prayer

- Pupils pass the speaking object round and say something/someone that they'd like to thank God for
- Pupils share the name of someone they would like to pray for (and possibly why)
- Pupils might share something that they have seen on the news that they would like to pray about
- Pupils give answers to a reflection question (e.g. 'Whom do we admire?' Or 'Why do you think people bully others?') – the question may be adapted from the prayer sheet and linked to the theme of the week
- The teacher (or a member of the class who has been warned in advance) would then draw the time to a close with a prayer to bring together everyone's intentions.

Ways of creating silent reflective time

- Teachers invite pupils to 'rest in God's presence' or 'know that God is with us'.
- Teachers could even get into the habit of beginning with the words of Jesus, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be among them."

Positive outcomes related to our Catholic ethos

- Development of understanding of faith and how it is lived out
- Development of positive attitudes such as gratitude
- Nurture of the ability to listen to others
- Encouragement to reflect on life and specific events to see God's hand in them , Enabling young people see all people as creations of God,
- Creating a willingness to help/serve others,
- Recognising the need for forgiveness and reconciliation.

PRAYER AND LITURGY MONITORING FORM (Secondary)

OBSERVING, RECORDING AND EVALUATING

Teacher:

Date:

Form/Class:

Theme/Event:

Objective:

Description:

- Pupil Prayer
- Staff Prayer
- Words/Readings
- Image
- Group Work
- Music
- Refection
- Scripture
- Symbolic Action
- Power Point

Resources used:

General questions to consider:

- Is it clear when the CAoW is taking place?
- Is there a clear theme or connection with the Gospel of the week?
- Is there an opportunity for pupils to reflect? Signs of engagement with collective worship
- Pupils settle quickly and behave respectfully
- Pupils listen and are not easily distracted – their eyes are on the leader
- The quality of silent times is good and comfortable
- Pupils share honestly and sensibly
- Pupils ask genuine, interested questions, not ones that are trying to catch the teacher out
- Pupils speak the prayers and don't mumble
- Pupils ask for the form to pray for friends, family, or areas of need
- Pupils approach the teacher with things to include in the prayer.

EVALUATION:

- What was good?

- Is this prayer and liturgy that could be shared with other groups?

REMARKS:

Signed: _____

Appendix C: Planning resources.

Planning Checklist for a Daily Act of Worship

Theme:

Date:

Preparation: When, where, who, what? What resources will I need? Create a focus.

Gathering: How will we begin? How will I create an atmosphere of prayer?

Listen: What will be the scripture focus and decide how to present it.

Respond: What will we do in response to listening to God's Word e.g. prayer and symbolic action.

Go Forth: What will I do to help the pupils take the message away with them?

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?

Go Forth:

- What do you want your friends to take away from this Act of Worship to remember its message?

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

CAFOD Resources: www.cafod.org/secondary

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

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle: www.edurcdhn.org.uk

Culham Institute: www.culham.ac.uk/cw/assemblies

You Tube resource: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vEjt280PDo

THE 5 MINUTE ASSEMBLY PLAN

GOSPEL/THEME FOR THE WEEK

What is the main message? How can you make it relevant? (Personal stories/Scripture/examples of saints)

RESOURCES/EQUIPMENT

Are you using a PowerPoint presentation or a video? Will you need sound equipment or a mic?

SHARING

(If in form groups)
Is there to be sharing?
If so, What? How?



PRAYER/REFLECTION

Will there be a prayer? If so will it be led or communal? Will you spend time in quiet reflection?

AIMS/TARGETS

What are your main hopes for the assembly? Will it be informative/reflective/fun (or a combination!)? What message do you want them to take away?

TIME PLANNER



READERS

Will you need students to read at any point? How many? Will they need to practice?

