



Prayer and Liturgy

Revised: September 2016



Our Foundation Statement proclaims:

The School willingly accepts its responsibility to provide opportunities for the formation of each person in the community through the mission of integrating human development and the values of Christ

"For where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst."

Matthew 18:20

What we believe

"The declared aims of the School are to foster a growth and commitment to the love and service of Christ through the teachings, doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church" (Foundation Statement)

Introduction

Prayer and liturgy are a central and continuing part of our Catholic faith and identity and therefore are a fundamental aspect of our daily lives at Cardinal Allen. It is the means by which we maintain our relationship with God who is the source of our life. It is the principal way in which we share with each other the faith upon which our school community is built. Each member of the school community is unique in terms of her or his spiritual needs, faith development, interests and motivation.

The belief that is fundamental to the foundation of Cardinal Allen School is that we are called to know, love and serve God as Our Father in a living relationship with the Risen Christ and which is sustained through the enduring power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer and liturgy is therefore an essential part of the school's life. In addition, as a public sector school, we are bound by statutory requirement to provide for a daily act of worship in accordance with the 1988 Education Act. It is impossible to gather the whole school together on a daily basis. However, the school provides a variety of opportunities for shared prayer and worship. All our pupils are entitled to share in the full prayer life of the school. All our staff are expected to ensure that our prayer times are observed in a calm and dignified manner at appropriate times every day. This expectation is made of all colleagues, whatever their religious affiliation or curriculum area. If any colleague needs advice on these matters the Chaplaincy Coordinator, Curriculum Leader for RE and the Headteacher will provide support and assistance. The school provides all staff with the resources needed for classroom prayer. Normal practice will be to use the Form Room, the School Hall and the Chapel. But there will be occasions when it is appropriate to conduct prayers elsewhere. A spirit of reverence enabling participants to meet God should be observed whenever prayers take place.

Our aims

Prayer and liturgy should provide a variety of experiences including scripture and/or silence:

- Can be led by pupils, staff or visitors
- Can be offered for a class, a year group or the whole school
- Use a balance of quiet reflection, silence, scripture, prayers, responses, songs, music, dance, drama, 'power point' presentation or short address
- Provide a focus using artefacts, candles, symbols and lighting
- Ensure the theme, delivery, length and resources are appropriate to the interests, age, background and abilities of the pupils
- Set an appropriate tone with a sense of order and occasion, including entry and exit
- Encourage the free, conscious, active participation of all present.

Sacramental Liturgy

Reconciliation: Each pupil and member of staff is given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school each Lent. Where possible, the Sacrament will be offered at other planned times in conjunction with the availability of the Clergy of the Deanery.

Mass for the whole school community: School Masses, which all staff and pupils attend, are celebrated at the end of each term. These Masses are compulsory for the whole school. Pupils understand this and regardless of their faith affiliation, they are committed to attend and participate fully. Governors, colleagues from partner schools, parents and friends of the school frequently attend these Masses. All staff and departments are invited to collaborate in the preparation of liturgy.

Friday Mass: There is a Friday Mass every week at 8.10am. The mass is open to all staff, pupils and friends of the school.

Form Masses: These are celebrations focused on two or three Form Groups at a time and allow for a more intimate revelation of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and act as instructive occasions for pupils to learn more about our core values.

Mass of Welcome / Year 11 Leavers' Mass: These are important celebrations at the start and end of a pupil's time at Cardinal Allen. Family, friends, pupils and staff are invited to these Masses and they are truly inspirational occasions.

Masses in the Community: There are several opportunities throughout the year when Cardinal Allen pupils and staff lead or make a marked contribution to the liturgical life of our Deanery. These occasions are seen as important in reminding our community of the impact and value of Youth Ministry of pupils at Cardinal Allen.

Prayer

Assemblies: A key element in the content of our assemblies is an act of worship often linked to a talk or presentation about an aspect of the wider work of the Church. Responsibility for preparing and leading worship rests with those who have organised the assembly as part of a strategic annual programme.

Chapel Assemblies: These are bi-weekly for each child with three Form Groups attending each assembly. Prayer & Liturgy is organised by the assembly leader according to themes established by the School Chaplain according to a strategic calendar. The purpose of these assemblies is to give pupils a more intense reflective experience and, in particular, to utilise the opportunity for silent reflection as a medium for a deeper understanding of contemplative prayer.

Hall Assemblies: Each year group attends an assembly in the hall one morning per week, except when circumstances make the hall unavailable. These assemblies have a 'business function' but are always preceded or ended with vocal prayer.

Whole School Assemblies: These happen in two sittings and are led by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. These are occasions for reflection and prayer as well as celebrations of success for individual children.

Registration: Every pupil begins the day with morning prayers during registration and the afternoon begins with prayers at registration. Each Form has a Prayer Box filled with resources to facilitate prayer time. Pupils are given responsibilities in using these resources, leading prayer and can have support from a senior prefect.

The School Chapel: The School Chapel is open throughout the day during the school week and has resources for private and small group prayer. It has a facility for individual intentions. The Chapel is also used during RE lessons for prayer, reflection and meditation.

Meetings: Colleagues and Governors join in prayer to ask for God's blessing prior to all meetings.

Gathering as colleagues together

Morning Prayer in the staffroom: At Cardinal Allen each morning's Staff Briefing begins with a prayer. This collective act of worship, always respectful of the diversity of staff backgrounds and

beliefs, is a way of professing our shared values and reminding us of our common purpose. Shared prayer is a powerful means of comforting colleagues at times of illness and bereavement.

Staff Mass: These are celebrated at the end of each term and at the start of the school year. Further opportunities to celebrate together are taken when a whole school INSET is devoted to an aspect of our Catholicity.

The role of children

Children of all abilities are encouraged to play an active role in the liturgical life of the school and take part in Masses and non-sacramental liturgies. This may range from being a Eucharistic Minister, a Reader, a Singer or a Musician through to participating in offertory processions or visual drama presentations. Our pupils are invited to lead Form prayers, at least from time to time. Pupils are encouraged to ask for their own personal intentions to be remembered, for example, praying for a sick relative, or for success for the whole class as exams approach. We are the Church gathered, working in partnership with our families and parishes and sharing in our Church's great educational project which is to pass on a knowledge and love of our Faith to the next generation. We are committed as a school within the Catholic faith tradition to supporting social cohesion and recognising, affirming and celebrating the diverse nature of our society. This ethos is transparent in our curricular and extra-curricular work. It can also be seen in our approach to liturgy, religious education and the practical application of our faith through:

- Our Option for the Poor and Marginalised which is sustained through CAFOD, Fairtrade and other agencies
- Our openness to, respect for, and desire to learn about other religious and cultural traditions, resourcing opportunities for these experiences to happen.

The right to withdraw

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from Religious Education and collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE or collective worship at the school, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. We remain responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn from RE or collective worship, unless the child is lawfully receiving RE, or taking part in collective worship elsewhere. Parents do not need to explain their reasons for seeking withdrawal. The Headteacher will clarify the following matters with any parent wanting to withdraw:

- the religious issues about which the parent would object their child being taught;
- the practical implications of withdrawal;
- the circumstances in which it would be reasonable to accommodate parents' wishes;
- if a parent will require any advanced notice of such issue in the future and if so, how much.

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