

**St Anne's Catholic Primary School Nantwich**

**Prayer Policy**

**Prayer at St Anne's**

Where does prayer come from? '.... in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times).

According to Scripture, 'it is the heart that prays.' (CCC, 2562)

At St Anne's we emphasise the need to pray and we endeavour to provide different opportunities for prayer.

Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. The whole of creation is new to them and their days are full of endless exploration and discovery.

In Early Years, the main task of the staff is to recognise this for what it is – the beginnings of prayer – and to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed:

- rooms full of colour, sounds, shapes, natural objects, flowers, plants, sand and water
- adults who themselves respond in joy and thanks, sorrow and love, to the world around them, to each other and to the children.
- creating a focal point for prayer during each topic.

True prayer draws us to discover God within our deepest being, and calls us to walk with God in faith. Each person has to find the 'space within' where the encounter with God takes place. In *Here I Am*, the process offers specific opportunities for sustaining and deepening this natural aptitude.

Each child is unique and so each child prays out of that uniqueness. Each child's home and daily situation are different and so each child prays out of this difference.

It is in the time and space for prayer that children are helped 'to acknowledge difference, work with problems, come to terms with anxieties, grapple with puzzling experiences, question and challenge attitudes and values'.

**Relate:** Introduces children to the Christian experience of prayer and to traditional words. Scripture passages introduce Jesus as a man of prayer who teaches his disciples to pray. Children are introduced to the heritage of the psalms and the use of Scripture in prayer.

**Rejoice:** Prayer will be part of the celebration of every topic.

**Remember:** Children may choose a prayer as a way of remembering.

**Words for prayer:**

Informal words for prayer: the ordinary, everyday language of praising, thanking, asking and saying sorry is provided in the stories and activities. The prayers suggested take account of the need to avoid a simplistic, magical view of God, so that children are not left disillusioned when, for example, a sick or dying person, especially someone they love, does not recover. For example, 'Be near to ... who is sick.' 'Give your peace (love, strength) to ... who is dying.'

Formal words for prayer: are introduced gradually throughout the programme. Children will become familiar with them:

- by hearing them said and by joining in with them
- by singing them (many are set to simple tunes)
- by focusing on small phrases which are incorporated into the topic work when and where this is appropriate. For example, in the Eucharist topics, focus is on the Eucharistic Prayers, especially those for children. In the Reconciliation topics, the penitential rites are a focus.

**Prayer experiences:**

Children are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer:

Praying the psalms	<i>'I thank you for the wonder of my being' (Psalm 139)</i>
Traditional prayers	<i>Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary</i>
Repetitive prayer (mantra)	<i>'Jesus, I love you', repeated several times, slowly</i>
Meditation	<i>Scripture reflection with use of imaginations</i>
Bodily prayer	<i>Raising hands in praise, bowing, dancing, genuflecting</i>
Prayer of the heart	<i>Stillness to listen to God: 'be still and know that I am God'</i>
Contemplation	<i>Looking at trees, a sunset, an icon, work done in the topic</i>
Gestures	<i>The sign of the cross, the sign of peace</i>
Hymns	<i>Traditional and modern hymns are suggested</i>
Music	<i>Listening to quiet, reflective music</i>
Litanies	<i>For all creation: Thanks to be God</i>
Processions	<i>Gospel procession with sung 'alleluia'/Stations of the Cross</i>
Prayer services and liturgies.	<i>Formal and spontaneous prayer using holy water, candles, and so on</i>
Celebrations	<i>Prayer, song, sharing food and drink, celebrating work done</i>
The use of visuals	<i>Images, art, banners, displays, flowers, candles, can all enhance the experience of prayer</i>

## Prayer Policy Reviewed Autumn 2006

A list of traditional prayers to which children are introduced in Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, is as follows

### **Foundation Stage**

Sign of the cross.  
Morning, lunch and Evening prayers.  
Prayers before and after meals.  
Simple litanies of thanks and praise.

### **Key Stage 1**

*All those listed above, plus:*

Our Father.  
Hail Mary.  
Glory be to the Father.  
Morning & Evening prayer.  
Lunchtime prayer.  
Act of Sorrow.  
Simple examination of conscience.

### **Key Stage 2**

*All those listed above, plus:*

I Confess.  
Angelus.  
Eternal rest.  
Act of Contrition  
The Rosary.  
Stations of the Cross  
Litany of the Saints.  
Prayers used for sacramental rites.  
Prayers from the liturgy for special feasts.  
Saints' prayers; for example St Teresa of Avila, St Francis of Assisi etc.

### **Worship Guidelines**

- Worship should be spiritual – inclusive – educational.
- Give honour and glory to God.
- Have one clear aim – which is achievable.
- Have a clear structure.
- Pupil centred – related to their experience and concerns.
- Pupils should be involved as active participants.
- Foster sense of community – shared values – identity purpose – important for all the teaching staff to be present and helpers, if possible.
- Should be in line with the school's Mission Statement.
- A breathing space – time to be still to reflect in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.
- 'Special' time conducive to worship – attention to setting.

## **Prayer Policy Reviewed Autumn 2006**

- Pupils should be comfortable – consideration given to entering and leaving.
- Feed the spirit – through a variety of words, music, images, art.
- Opportunity for quiet prayer, meditation – use of silence.
- Relevance to the liturgical cycle/Here I Am.
- Leading the worship – head – teacher – children – visitor.
- A variety of groupings.
- Reflect the cultural background of pupils.
- Not too long – ‘quality’ time not ‘quantity’ time.

**Agreed by Governors:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Review Date:**