



St Ambrose College

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

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St Ambrose College Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

At St Ambrose College, we will follow the example of Blessed Edmund Rice and his vision for education as laid out in The Eight Essentials.

We will provide a rounded, holistic and transformative Catholic education enabling all boys to grow in faith and reach their full potential as well educated, disciplined, compassionate and empowered young men who strive for excellence and justice in all that they do.

With the Gospels and the spirit of Blessed Edmund at the heart of what we do, staff, pupils, and families will partner together to celebrate the talents and individuality of all in our community and produce resourceful and resilient Ambrosians, equipped to make a positive impact in the modern world.

The Statement & Prayer and Liturgy

Our aim at St Ambrose College is for all boys to grow in faith and be transformed through their experiences inside and outside of the classroom. Everything undertaken at the college can be linked back to our mission statement and prayer and liturgy are no different. The gospels and the spirit of Edmund Rice are evident in the distinctive ethos which permeates all dimensions of life at St Ambrose College.

The Church calls all the faithful to “active participation” in the Liturgy. Primarily, this means participation in mind and heart, but the Church recognises that, especially for children, physical participation, alongside good catechesis, aids that involvement. In our College we seek to nurture this spiritual development through good preparation of appropriate involvement within the Mass and other liturgies.

Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Christ should be at the centre of every Catholic school. His Gospel is the reference point for its ethos and values; he offers the definitive example of the educator. Joining Christ in praise of the Eternal Father and united by the Holy Spirit in making intercession for the world through prayer and liturgy lies at the heart of the daily life of the school. The quality of the prayer and liturgy in school not only gives honour to God but forms the spiritual and ethical life of pupils and staff alike.

The words ‘Worship’ and ‘Collective Worship’ are no longer used as descriptions of religious activities in Catholic schools. In Catholic terminology ‘worship’ is not generally used to name and describe a distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises that everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do should give glory to God. Within this Policy the terms ‘Prayer’, ‘Liturgy’ and ‘Liturgical Prayer’ will now be used in place of ‘Collective Worship’.

Prayer and liturgy at St Ambrose College should be central to the life of the school and a feature of every school celebration. Prayer should be inclusive, educational and spiritual. It should be relevant to pupils' experience, involve them as participants and foster a sense of community within the school. Prayer and liturgy reflect the traditions of the Catholic Church, whilst taking into account the spiritual and education needs of all who share in it. In line with OFSTED guidance, we aim to support pupils with different religious beliefs in their prayer rituals.

Prayer should be linked to curricular activities and allow pupils opportunities to reflect on the educational aims of our school and should provide opportunities for individual reflection in an atmosphere conducive to the consideration of the transcendent and sense of mystery. Ultimately, it should be meaningful.

Pupils are encouraged to put their faith into practice with the duty to serve, echoed in several of The 8 Essentials of Edmund Rice Education. The advocacy work of the Edmund Rice International group is an example of our students responding to Catholic Social Teaching.

The role of the Chaplain and Chaplaincy Groups

At St Ambrose College we believe that prayer and liturgy are concerned with giving worship, glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response in word and action to God's invitation to enter into a relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. The liturgical life of the college is organised and monitored by the Lay Chaplain, Head of RE, Staff Chaplaincy Group and Student Chaplaincy Team, together with local clergy.

The Lay Chaplain works closely with the Senior Leadership Team, RE specialists and other staff members to prepare prayerful resources in order to support staff and students in leading prayer and liturgical prayer. Importance is placed on key events in the liturgical year and the need to meet sacramental obligations. Chaplaincy provision includes:

- Coordination of Staff Chaplaincy Group
- Coordination of Student Chaplaincy Team (including altar servers)
- Running of Social Justice Group
- Production of Form Prayer resources
- Quality assurance of 6th Form Thursday Thought
- Planning of Assembly Rota
- Form Mass preparation
- Preparation of weekly Mass
- Weekly 6th Form Prayers
- Justice & Peace group
- On and off site retreat opportunities
- Leading Edmund Rice International

The Chaplain is also responsible for developing a programme of retreats as well as a detailed programme of events giving students the opportunity to show service to others through acts of charity and advocacy. Currently, external retreats are attended annually at Castlerigg Manor by Key Stage 3 students. Year 7 students

also attend Half Termly retreats in our Chapel around the Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Education. Key stage 4 and 5 students participate in internal, staff-led retreats throughout the year.

At various times during the year, the Chaplain will develop resources to be used by tutor groups as part of a rota for use of the Chapel. Examples include remembrance services in November, praying the Rosary in October and May, and opportunities to reflect on reconciliation and choices during Advent & Lent.

Prayer, Liturgy, and Liturgical Prayer

The fundamental structure that recurs across prayer and liturgy is one of call and response: God speaks to his people in his Word (the Scriptures), and they respond. Their response may take many different forms - it could be praise, thanksgiving, or acknowledgement of the need to change. However, the basic pattern holds; it is God who takes the initiative and who speaks, and we who listen and respond.

In the liturgy this pattern is frequently expanded into longer structures by the addition of opening and closing sections. This creates a very flexible four-part structure, which can be expressed as:

- Gather (to establish who we are as a praying community and to recognise that it is God who has called us together)
- Listen
- Respond
- Send (transformed by what we have heard and done, we can make a difference in the world)

Liturgy in St Ambrose College

Liturgy is a formal act of the Church. The official liturgical books, such as the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, set out the structure to be followed, the words to be spoken, the gestures to be performed and the symbols to be used when celebrating a Liturgy. Liturgy celebrated at St Ambrose includes:

- Mass
- Reconciliation
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

School Masses are held every Thursday as well as for other special occasions such as St Ambrose Day. The weekly Thursday morning Mass in the central atrium is led by different tutor groups who have responsibility for preparing and contributing to the celebration.

For other Masses, the prayers, readings, music and various liturgical presentations are organised by the Lay Chaplain in conjunction with the local clergy, who continue to support the liturgical life of the school

Prayer in St Ambrose College

Prayer takes place, for example, at the beginning or end of the school day. Although such prayer times will have a clear structure, they may rely less on formal elements taken from the Liturgy. Texts used may include familiar prayers as well as prayers written for the occasion but there is also scope for spontaneous prayers, for example, intercessions. Giving space for appropriate silence forms part of the prayer. There is great scope for creativity: varying the focus and the format according to the liturgical year reinforces the essential Catholic focus of the school whilst providing opportunities for pupil engagement.

The college day and all lessons begin with prayer, which is central to our life and work in this Catholic College. At St Ambrose College, we believe that our community can be made distinctive by:

- praying with students
- helping students to reflect on their prayers;
- encourage students to create their own prayer
- enable students to participate in the liturgy;
- foster a quiet and prayerful environment;
- celebrate prayer and learning through assemblies;
- participate in staff prayer (including a rota involving all staff for whole staff briefings);

The college planner and staff handbook include a selection of prayers including new prayers for the beginning and end of the college day as well as a prayer which has been written alongside the college Mission Statement and echoes its themes. Prayer resources are available to all teachers. With these prayers to hand, staff are expected to lead prayers at the beginning of each day and at the beginning of lessons. Prayer at St Ambrose includes:

- Assemblies
- Thursday Thought
- Weekly Form Prayers and Reflections
- Stations of the Cross
- Retreats
- Formation Programmes
- Spiritual Conversation
- Morning Prayer
- Prayers at the start of lessons
- Briefing Prayers

Liturgical Prayer in St Ambrose College

There are occasions when it is more suitable to organise a non-eucharistic or para-liturgical services. Once again, the Chaplain will prepare an appropriate liturgy, often assisted by other departments but, crucially, involving a growing Chaplaincy Group made up of students. The most common examples would be services which are built around the proclamation of scripture and are based on the structure of the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass. They will draw upon elements of the Liturgy, such as its texts, symbols, and gestures which help to reinforce their Catholic nature. The various

elements may be used with greater creative freedom than in the Liturgy. Liturgical Prayer at St Ambrose includes:

- Rosary group
- Advent/Lent faith liturgies and/or reconciliation services
- Carol services

Assemblies

Assemblies are central to the prayer life of our College. An assembly rota is produced each year that includes assemblies organised by a combination of staff and students. This rota mostly follows the liturgical calendar (which includes all the main feasts of the Church's calendar) and themes are calendarised to assist those leading the respective assemblies. Other themes relate to elements of RSE/PSHE.

Whenever the school gathers either as the whole community or in year or other groups for an assembly, prayer should always be included. A school assembly will have a number of different purposes and it may be helpful to distinguish between an assembly where the focus is wholly prayer and one which deals with other matters. Whenever pupils gather it is good practice to include a prayer.

If there is only one assembly a week, then its main purpose should be to pray together. The liturgical calendar should inform the planning of these 'liturgical assemblies'.

Assemblies should always include the 'Gather, Listen, Respond, Send' elements.