



St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Prayer and Worship Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: July 2023
Last reviewed on:	June 2023	
Next review due by:	June 2026	

Introduction

‘The first task in life is this: prayer. But not the prayer of words, like a parrot; the prayer of the heart: gazing on the Lord, hearing the Lord, asking the Lord.’ Pope Francis

Our Mission Statement is:

Learning and Growing with God by our Side.

Our school community is on a journey of faith as we learn and grow with God as our constant companion every day. In every aspect of our lives, we actively follow in Jesus’ footsteps and live out our faith as a Catholic community by demonstrating our core school values in our everyday lives: Faith, Friendship, Determination, Unity and Respect.

By law, all maintained schools must provide religious education and daily collective worship for all registered pupils and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development. However, in St Alban & St Stephen, collective worship is far more than a statutory requirement. It is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to pupils’ moral and spiritual development. Collective worship is an integral part of our school’s distinctive Catholic ethos.

At St Alban & St Stephen, we understand collective worship as being distinctive time during which we are able to pray and worship together as a Catholic community. During collective worship, we invite God’s holy presence into our lives; we deepen our relationship with God; we glorify and praise his name; we learn about the teachings of Jesus Christ as we live out the Gospel message; and we grow in the faith which we share, celebrating this in line with the teachings, festivals, feast days and celebrations of the Catholic church.

Aims

As a living, Christ-centred faith community, prayer and worship are therefore at the heart of the life of our school. Prayer and worship are essential for the Catholic life and mission of the school to thrive.

We aim to give our pupils a rich and wide experience of collective worship, enabling them:

- To promote the ethos and mission statement of our school and strengthen our shared values, encouraging a sense of belonging.
- To understand and experience Catholic practices and beliefs through prayer, liturgy and worship.
- To enrich their religious experience through consistent and vibrant prayer and worship sessions.
- To recognise that worship is about living our lives in a way which reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God, and all we do should give glory to Him.
- To uphold the Catholic tradition of Mass, the Holy Sacraments and being a part of the Holy Catholic Church.
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in God and His creation in the world around them.
- To contemplate the mysteries of their faith and explore their own beliefs.
- To provide children with consistent periods of spiritual reflection both collectively and individually.
- To invite children to participate fully, conscientiously and actively in the prayer life and worship at St. Alban & St Stephen and our local Parish Church, Ss Alban & Stephen.
- To celebrate important events in the Church’s calendar so that through regular prayer and worship, the rhythm of the Church’s year becomes a normal part of school life and of each pupil’s life.

2. Implementation : Organisation of Prayer and Worship

Acts of Collective Worship

In order to fulfil the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship and the aims of this policy at St Alban & St Stephen, we dedicate allocated time for both collective and separate acts of prayer and worship each day. Collective acts of worship can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in classes or Key Stages. Often, these collective acts of worship are called 'assemblies'. Assemblies will always include an act of collective worship as a part or as the entirety. However, some assemblies may also include aspects which are not part of collective worship eg school announcements.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from collective worship. However, given the importance of collective worship in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents need to be made aware of the fact that prayer and worship are woven throughout the fabric of our school day. As such collective worship can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

All collective worship is timetabled as separate from the curriculum teaching timetable, including the 10% of curriculum time requirement for Religious Education.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
EYFS / KS1	Gospel Assembly led by SLT	Pupil-led collective worship or class collective worship	Prayer followed by Singing Assembly	Wednesday Word / class collective worship	Family Sharing Assembly prepared by Class Teachers
KS2	Gospel Assembly led by SLT		Wednesday Word / class collective worship	Prayer followed by Singing Assembly	, pupil-led collective worship or (termly) Come and See sharing assemblies.

Both the children and adults at our school have an opportunity to lead and participate in daily worship sessions. We encourage all staff, including Support Staff and Learning Support assistants to take part in helping the children to plan and lead collective worship. Parents, governors, parish priests, parishioners, Diocesan representatives, representatives of other faith communities and other community groups and encouraged to be involved when and where appropriate, either by occasional participation or by specific invitation.

Whenever possible, collective worship takes place outside to remind us of our Creator God and our responsibility to care for God's Creation, of which we are all a part. Key Stage 2 children have access to the outdoor Prayer Garden, which is used for meditation , lunchtime prayer and acts of class collective worship.

Gospel Assembly

The Monday Gospel Assembly is led by the Head or other members of SLT. It is based on the previous day's Sunday Gospel and planned using the RCDOW Liturgy of the Word for Children or CAFOD Gospel resources,

linking the Gospel message to living out the School values. This assembly also includes Music of the Week, celebration awards and House Point announcements.

Pupil-led Worship

Pupil-led worship takes place at least once a week. Individual, pairs or groups of pupils (with varying degrees of adult support depending on need and age) prepare the act of worship using the School Format and resources. Pupil-led acts of worship are recorded in the Class Collective Worship folder. All pupils are supported to lead class collective worship over the course of the year. Pupil-Led Collective Worship is a time for the children to reflect on Gospel readings, lead prayers they have prepared and participate in worship together. The children set up a prayer focus using resources from the Class Collective Worship basket. They select a Bible passage that they would like their session to focus on. They may choose a text related to the time in the Liturgical Calendar, a Saint or a special person being studied or a theme they would like to reflect upon together, for example, one of the School values of friendship, faith, determination, respect or unity. The children take this time to discuss the Mission and support each other to live out its message. After each Pupil-Led Collective Worship session, the children leading evaluate the worship, seeking feedback from the children about what they enjoyed and how they could improve next time.

Progression in Pupil-Led Worship			
EYFS	Key Stage 1	Lower Key Stage 2	Upper Key Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher models and leads; At this age, children are facilitating worship, rather than leading it. They may lead certain elements / parts; Reverence for the Word of God in Scripture should be shown and expected from the earliest years. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers should be excellent role models in preparing and delivering Collective Worship; Teachers and pupils work together at first to prepare Collective Worship. Teachers withdraw support gradually. Pupils take over; Teachers direct what happens and withdraw direction gradually. Pupils take over; Teachers should provide themes and Scripture and oversee the children's efforts before delivery. Teachers can withdraw this provision if appropriate. 	
Children can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing a gather song; Make the Sign of Cross; Choose suitable artefacts from a very limited choice; Greet everyone; Set up focus table; Pass things round; Say prayers; Say who/what they want to pray for. 	In addition to EYFS, children can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose suitable artefacts from a less limited selection; Given the theme, choose an appropriate way to Gather/Go Forth (Mission) Teacher-input to help In addition, Year 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can explain the purpose, theme and focus; Can choose a suitable Gather, Word, Response, Mission 	In addition to KS1, children can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a suitable focus without limit of choice. They understand their choice and make appropriate use of liturgical colours; lead singing; Use audio-visual equipment etc.; write prayers and petitions etc. for inclusion that fit the theme; Choose suitable ways to Gather, Share the Word, Respond, Go Forth/Mission etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the set theme, pupils can now select appropriate Scripture passages (initially from a limited selection); By end of Y6, all elements should be in place. Pupils should be able to develop all parts of Collective Worship independently with understanding when given a theme or a passage from Scripture.

Wednesday Word Worship

This is based on the Wednesday Word resource sent out to all parents each week. During the act of worship, the Gospel message is reinforced and children are encouraged to share revisit the Gospel at home with their family.

Family Sharing Assembly

One class each week leads an assembly during which they share and celebrate their learning with their families, who are invited into school for the occasion. The assembly always includes prayer and may also include sharing of RE work and worship songs.

Class Collective Worship

Class collective worship on any other occasions is led by the class teacher. It may be themed around a Saint's Day or other religious occasion or theme.

In addition to these, to celebrate the learning from our Religious Education curriculum throughout the term, a key stage celebratory 'Come and See' Assembly takes place to share our topics, work and prayer. These special, reflective assemblies are led by the Religious Education Co-ordinators.

All acts of Collective Worship follow the following format:

Gather:

Gather so that every child can see the prayer focus for the collective worship. This should include the Bible and a cross.

Signal the start of the worship eg by lighting a candle, sharing an an image or using a sound like a rain stick, bell, chime bars or a singing bowl.

Make the sign of the cross. Say the school prayer or other relevant prayer.

Listen to the Word

This could be a Scripture reading, a Scripture verse linked to another story with a message, or a worship song based on Scripture..

Respond:

Share, reflect and respond. This could be through a worship song, prayer, Christian meditation, or discussion of an image or idea linked to your theme followed by a prayerful response to the Word.

Go Forth with our Mission:

All those taking part are given a challenge to go forth and live out the Good News and share God's love with others. with something that they can think about or do in their daily lives. This could be a small act of kindness, spreading the Word they have heard in the worship session or by finding some time in the day to talk to God. This may be displayed in the classroom to remind the children of their mission throughout the week. They may record their mission in the form of writing or drawing eg on a heart, cross or shaped piece of paper.

Monitoring

At least once a year, the school's provision of prayer and worship will be evaluated by the SLT and Governors to consider whether it fulfils our aims, meets the needs of all learners and enables all learners

to make progress in acquiring skills and abilities to participate fully in prayer and worship, and to organise and lead prayer and worship.

The School Liturgical Year and Other Religious Celebrations and Feast-Days

Collective worship involving Eucharistic Celebrations, Holy Days, Feast days and the Sacraments Collective worship is planned following the structure of the liturgical year, with reference to the Church's seasons, Holy Days of Obligation and Feast days. Mass is celebrated either in school or in the local parish Church of Ss Alban & Stephen with the whole school attending. Parents are also invited to celebrate Mass with their children. The partaking in Mass at Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Church is an important home-school link. It involves our entire school family in the celebration of our faith and continues the tradition of receiving the Holy Sacraments such as the Eucharist. Key Stage 2 pupils take turns to prepare and deliver the first reading and bidding prayers at each Mass, giving them the opportunity to have an active participation in the Mass and the practice of our faith.

	Event
September	New School Year Mass We return to school and celebrate Mass together in Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Church. Year 4 lead us in praying for the year ahead.
	Feast-Day of St Teresa St Teresa House gather together to learn about the life of their House patron saint and celebrate her feast-day.
October	Harvest Our Pupil Chaplains lead our Harvest assembly and present the food and money that we have collected to our local food bank.
	Our Lady of the Rosary Our Pupil Prayer Leaders help all KS1 and KS2 classes to pray the Rosary together.
November	Remembrance Day Our Pupil Chaplains lead our Remembrance assembly. Our Book of Remembrance for Holy Souls contains the names of loved ones we will be praying for.
	Advent As the church's liturgical year begins, we light our advent wreath during our Advent sharing assembly and make Advent promises. Pupils from each class lead prayers to remind us that we are coming out of darkness into light. The Prayer Leaders teach older classes how to pray the Angelus and pray the Angelus with other classes.
December	Christmas KS1 invite their grandparents to share in a special Christmas celebration with carols.
	KS2 remind us of the meaning of Christmas through Bible readings and carols.
	EYFS lead us in the Nativity.
January	Epiphany We return to school and in our Epiphany Mass in Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Church, we think about the gifts that God has given us.
	Feast Day of St Stephen We learn about St Stephen and in a special assembly held shortly after his Feast Day at the end of December, we reflect on how his faith can inspire us in our own lives.
February	Ash Wednesday Our Parish priest and Pupil Chaplains lead the liturgy at the start of Lent. Our foreheads are marked with an ash cross. During Lent, we collect for the CCS, supporting vulnerable local families.
	Sacrament Reconciliation Year 4,5 and 6 pupils take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and make their confessions.
March	World Day of Prayer

	Our Prayer Leaders lead prayer workshops for KS2 and prayers in KS1 as we unite and pray with Christians all over the world.
	Mothering Sunday Nursery lead a special celebration for their mothers and carers.
April	Easter Year 5 pupils perform an Easter Passion Play to share the events of Holy Week and retell the death and glorious resurrection of Jesus.
	Feast-Day of St Bernadette St Bernadette House gather together to learn about the life of their House patron saint and celebrate her feast-day.
May	Mary's Month of May Year 1 hold their Marian Procession and lay flowers at the feet of Our Lady.
	Ascension In a special Ascension Mass, we reflect on Jesus' ascension into Heaven.
	Pentecost In our Pentecost sharing assembly and RE lessons, we think about how we can use God's gift of the Holy Spirit.
June	Feast of St Alban We learn about St Alban and in a special Mass held on his Feast Day, we reflect on how his faith can inspire us in our own lives.
	First Holy Communion Celebration Mass We celebrate with our Year 3 Pupils in Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Church, giving thanks that they have received the sacrament of First Holy Communion
	Feast-Day of St Paul St Paul House gather together to learn about the life of their House patron saint and celebrate his feast-day.
	Feast-Day of St Peter St Peter House gather together to learn about the life of their House patron saint and celebrate his feast-day.
July	Year 2 Moving Up Service Year 2 share readings, prayers and memories with their families as they move to Upper School.
	Year 6 Leavers' Mass Year 6 lead a special Mass to give thanks for their time at St Alban and Stephen and to pray for the future as they take the next step on their journey.

Prayer

We also promote the Catholic tradition of prayer throughout the school day.

Each Key Stage learn and recite different prayers appropriate for their age group which progress as the children move through their time at St. Alban & Stephen. In addition to learning and using traditional Catholic prayers, children also learn that prayer can take many forms as we speak and listen to God, including song, dance, gesture and silence. Children are also encouraged to create and share their own prayers.

EYFS	Key Stage 1	Lower Key Stage 2	Upper Key Stage 2
The school prayer (said each morning)	The school prayer (said each morning)	The school prayer (said each morning)	The school prayer (said each morning)
Lunch time grace before meals	Lunch time grace before meals	Lunch time grace before meals	Lunch time grace before meals
End of school prayer (see Appendix 1)	End of school prayer	End of school prayer	End of school prayer
	Our Father	Our Father	Our Father
	Hail Mary	Hail Mary	Hail Mary

<p>Bless themselves making the sign of the Cross</p> <p>Bodily prayer eg raising hands in praise, being still, bowing, dancing, actions.</p>	<p>Bless themselves making the sign of the Cross</p> <p>Bodily prayer eg raising hands in praise, being still, bowing, dancing, actions.</p> <p>Spontaneous prayer- giving thanks and praise and praying for friends and family.</p> <p>Responses at Mass to the Word and Prayer of Intercession (Lord in Your Mercy- Hear our Prayer)</p> <p>Pentitential Act at Mass(Confiteor)</p> <p>Lamb of God</p> <p>Repetitive prayer (mantra) eg 'Come, Lord Jesus'.</p> <p>Praying using simple Scripture verses and the Psalms.</p> <p>Praying the Rosary</p> <p>Litanies</p> <p>Introduce images and symbols as a way into prayer using art, music, poetry and prose</p>	<p>Glory Be</p> <p>Bless themselves making the sign of the Cross</p> <p>Bodily prayer eg raising hands in praise, being still, bowing, dancing, actions.</p> <p>Spontaneous prayer- giving thanks and praise and praying for friends and family.</p> <p>Responses at Mass to the Word and Prayer of Intercession (Lord in Your Mercy- Hear our Prayer)</p> <p>Pentitential Act at Mass(Confiteor)</p> <p>Lamb of God</p> <p>Repetitive prayer (mantra) eg 'Come, Lord Jesus'.</p> <p>Praying using simple Scripture verses.</p> <p>Praying the Rosary</p> <p>Litanies</p> <p>Introduce the concept of making our lives a prayer.</p> <p>Learning that everything that we do can be given to God.</p>	<p>Glory Be</p> <p>The Nicene Creed</p> <p>The Angelus</p> <p>Bless themselves making the sign of the Cross</p> <p>Bodily prayer eg raising hands in praise, being still, bowing, dancing, actions.</p> <p>Spontaneous prayer- giving thanks and praise and praying for friends and family.</p> <p>Responses at Mass to the Word and Prayer of Intercession (Lord in Your Mercy- Hear our Prayer)</p> <p>Pentitential Act at Mass(Confiteor)</p> <p>Lamb of God</p> <p>Repetitive prayer (mantra) eg 'Come, Lord Jesus'.</p> <p>Praying using simple Scripture verses.</p> <p>Praying the Rosary</p> <p>Litanies</p> <p>Introduce the concept of making our lives a prayer.</p> <p>Learning that everything that we do can be given to God.</p>
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Prayer Focus

A prayer focus is a central part of each classroom. Every class has a dedicated area which provides a focus for prayer and reflection within it. It is changed regularly to reflect the seasons of the liturgical year and the religious education curriculum topic. The prayer focus enhances the religious and spiritual experience of our pupils, as it provides a key focal point for prayer and meditation throughout the school day. The prayer focus encapsulates the current learning and understanding of each class, demonstrating age-appropriate engagement and understanding of God's message. The prayer focus in every classroom is a testament to our Catholic identity and key beliefs as a school. The prayer focus should have:

- A cloth corresponding to the current time of the liturgical year
- A Bible appropriate to the children's age group and open on relevant Scripture
- A crucifix
- A candle
- A rosary
- Other religious artefacts as appropriate for the time and season such as a nativity set, an Advent wreath and candles, a scene depicting the last supper, a statue of Mary, Baptismal candles and shells.

- Children are also encouraged to contribute their own special objects to the prayer focus.

Above the prayer table the Religious Education display reflects and celebrates the learning for the current 'Come and See' topic. It should feature the School Mission Statement, driver words relevant to each year group, key vocabulary and examples of children's work in line with classroom organisation guidelines.

The prayer focus in each classroom celebrates and displays the work of all pupils, highlighting the importance of their Religious Education study. In addition to the prayer focus in every classroom, the whole environment is considered. The school environment features religious displays, artefacts and iconography to highlight and imbed the Catholic ethos of the school.

Each class also has a class prayer book, which is taken home by a different pupil each week with a range of prayer resources to encourage times of reflective, quiet meditation, prayer and worship at home. We ask families to send in a prayer that has been written by or is special to their child and family with photos of their prayer focus/time together.

To support the learning of our topics throughout the school, we encourage families to send in photographs of the children's Baptism, first Holy Communion and other special religious occasions they are part of, to share their participation in the Holy Sacraments and Catholic traditions outside of school. This highlights that the children are active participants in their faith and strengthens the bond between prayer life at school and at home.

Christian Meditation

During the school day, each class participates in silent meditation. This gives children some time to have space for peace and reflection, for example after a busy lunch time. Children focus on a meditative chant. The aim is for children to be able to meditate for as many minutes as their age, e.g. children in Nursery will, by the end of the year, be able to meditate silently for 4 minutes and children in year 6 will meditate for 11 minutes, although this is not possible on a daily basis. At the start of each year, classes begin with one minute of meditation which they increase when they are ready to progress.

Worship Music

Music plays an integral part in the religious life of the school and is used to enrich the times when we come together as a community to celebrate Holy Mass and assemblies. Quiet music is used at assemblies for times of personal meditation and reflection, to help the children focus their thoughts and feelings and to create an atmosphere of peace, tranquillity and calm where the children can talk to God. We use music and song as a form of individual and group prayer and encourage the children to see this as an offering of their gifts and talents to God the Father. The music for Holy Mass is a liturgy in itself and should therefore reflect the theme of the Mass for the day. In this way it becomes a continuation of the readings and of the Gospel message Jesus has for us. Through song the children are invited to share more fully in the celebration of the Eucharist and can make personal offerings and contributions to the Mass in a way that is both relevant and fulfilling.

Both the Easter and Christmas celebrations use music as a way of reflection upon these feasts. Music is a way of expressing ourselves to God, an expression of our love, joy, thanks, sorrow and praise. These feelings are shared throughout the world, among the wider community of the Church's Family and so

within the selection of music used in school. We try to represent and incorporate other cultures and their way of praising God, especially those of parents and children of our school community.

Pupil Chaplaincy Team and Prayer Leaders

Pupils in year 5 and 6 volunteer to be part of our Pupil Chaplaincy Team and Prayer Leader Teams. These roles are a key aspect to ensuring pupil participation and voice within the Catholic life and ethos of our school.

The Pupil Chaplaincy Team members will be involved in helping to organise religious events and services. The Pupil Chaplaincy Team update the school during whole school assemblies about their learning of Catholic Social Teaching, events and charitable appeals.

The Prayer Leader Team members support the prayer-life of the School, leading and modelling prayer in classes across the School and providing opportunities for quiet prayer at lunchtimes in our outdoor Prayer Chapel.

Through their interactions with peers across the school, half termly meetings with the Religious Education Co-ordinators and termly training provided by the Parish Priest, the Pupil Chaplaincy Team and Prayer Leaders ensure the views and ideas of the pupils at our school are communicated and heard by adults. The Pupil Chaplaincy Team and Prayer Leaders are advocates for their peers, and the ways in which they wish to express their faith. They are aware of their role as ambassadors of the Catholic faith, as well as their duty to support not only the wider community, but also their peers.

Staff

As well as staff Mass at the start of each school year, the weekly Staff Meeting, Phase and SLT meetings begin with a prayer to give staff a time for reflection during the busy week. Staff are aware and encouraged to live out the school's mission statement and vision in our interactions with one another. Staff are also encouraged to take part in the school's prayer life for themselves, as well as to model to the expectations of prayer and worship to the children. All staff are supported by the Religious Education Co-ordinators during staff induction. We share policies, offer planning support, provide opportunities to watch experienced staff leading worship and introduce the Religious Education scheme to new members of staff. Throughout the year we utilise staff meetings for planning time, updates to the Religious Education curriculum and updates from the Diocese. Further opportunities are provided for staff through Continuous Professional Development courses organised by the Diocese.

Responsibilities

Governors:

- To ensure that the school are upholding the legal requirement for an 'Act of Collective Worship' to take place daily.
- To monitor the quality and provision of collective worship (prayer and worship) at least annually working with the SLT.
- To agree and review this policy regularly.

Religious Education Subject Lead (Collective Worship):

- Take the lead in policy development.
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of resources to support with worship and prayer life.

- Coordinate and support class teachers to prepare and organise masses, services and religious celebrations, with assistance from the Music Leader; supporting the Pupil Chaplaincy Team and Prayer Leaders to lead these.
- Liaise with the Parish Priest to ensure they are available for Masses, Confession and class visits.
- Induct new staff in the prayer and worship life of the school.
- Supporting all staff with prayer life of the school.
- Regular monitoring of expectations and supporting any staff when necessary.
- Lead the Pupil Chaplaincy Team and Prayer Leader meetings and order resources for their activities.
- Lead by example, modelling to the rest of the staff team the importance of prayer life.

Class teachers:

- Promote the prayer life of the school, including giving time for daily prayers and meditation.
- Arrange for children (on a weekly rota) to organise and lead Pupil-Led Collective Worship.
- Lead any other acts of class collective worship during the week, ensuring that the daily acts of worship and prayer life of the school are in addition to the 10% of the curriculum time given to Religious Education.
- Lead by example, modelling to the children the importance of prayer life.
- Follow the procedures and arrangements set out in this policy to ensure that prayer and worship in class meets the needs of all learners and enables all learners to make progress in acquiring skills and abilities to participate fully in prayer and worship, and to organise and lead prayer and worship.

Appendix 1:



Our School Prayer



Dear God,

Bless all the children and staff in our school.

Bless all our loving parents, our school community
and parishioners.

Let us follow the shining examples of St Alban
and St Stephen.

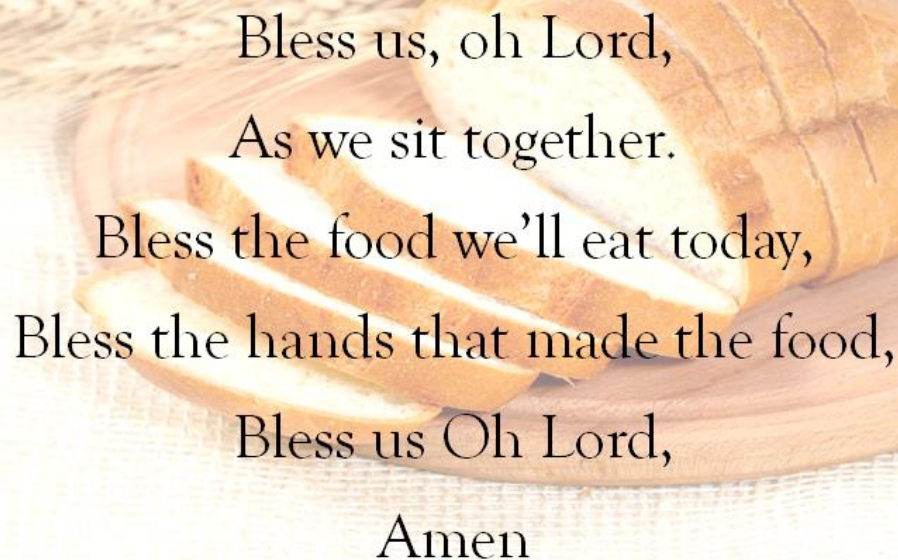
Help us to be the best that we can be and guide us as we stay
connected to you and Jesus in all that we do.

As a school, we are learning and growing with God by our
side.

Amen.



Grace Before Meals



Bless us, oh Lord,
As we sit together.
Bless the food we'll eat today,
Bless the hands that made the food,
Bless us Oh Lord,
Amen



Evening Prayer



God our Father, I've come to say,
Thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family
and all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night,
And in the morning send your light.
Amen

