

Prayer and Liturgy Directory

FAQs

1. The CSI framework speaks about ‘liturgical norms’. What are these?

‘Liturgical norms’ refers to the Church’s normal way of doing things. These are the principles, instructions, and guidance that the Church gives for the liturgy which are found across a range of Church documents.

Observing clergy in church and school will often model well the Church’s liturgical norms, showing you how things should be done in school. For any specific queries, please ask your parish priest or other school clergy for guidance.

2. If the Mass readings of the day in the Ordo are too complex, long or contain difficult words or themes, can we use alternative readings?

When selecting the lectionary to be used at Mass, always refer to the Ordo which will give you the range of options available on any day (for example, an optional memorial in addition to the feria – or usual - readings). If other options are unsuitable or unavailable, consider celebrating a votive Mass. Always work alongside your parish priest when making such choices.

3. Can we still use drama during Mass?

Drama is a technique which is effective when used occasionally rather than regularly, and well prepared and rehearsed. Drama must never replace a scripture at Mass. However, it may be used to enhance pupils’ response to the liturgy of the word.

Care must always be taken to ensure drama is appropriate in content and proportionate in time. If the pupils in the drama speak, they must be able to be heard clearly by all present.

It is inappropriate to applause during Mass, but it may be appropriate to express thanks to those who have ministered at the end.

4. Is there a specific format for writing bidding prayers?

In the Prayer of the Faithful (bidding prayers) the assembly is invited to pray for the concerns of Church and the world. The pattern for use at Mass reminds us that the local Church is gathered in prayer united with universal Church. The recommended order for intentions given in the Roman Missal is:

1. For the needs of the Church
2. For the world
3. For those in need
4. For the local community

In England and Wales, it is customary to pray the Hail Mary after the last bidding prayer. If there is to be a prayer for those who have died, it should come as the last prayer before the Hail Mary.

[A good practice document](#) has been produced by the bishops' Department for Christian Life and Worship Liturgy Committee.

5. Are we able to take other things to the altar with the bread and wine during the offertory procession?

The presentation of the gifts of bread and wine is part of the liturgy. They are taken to the priest, who returns them to the congregation once they have been transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Artefacts and display items are better-suited to be taken up to the altar as part of the introductory rites.

6. Does the reference to 'not paraphrasing scripture' mean that the Wednesday Word cannot be shared in celebrations of the word?

At Mass, readings may be shortened if deemed too long or complex, in conversation with the parish priest. However, paraphrases must not be used and the Gospel reading never edited.

During celebrations of the word, which are not liturgy, school staff may find resources such as the Wednesday Word very helpful in supporting pupils to access and engage meaningfully with scripture.

7. Is it appropriate to include questions and answers during celebrations of the word?

Prayer is the raising of the heart and mind to God. Whilst celebrations of the word may offer pupils opportunities to silently reflect on key questions as part of their spiritual development (for example, Lectio Divina and Visio Divina), they are not an appropriate setting for comprehension-style question and answer sessions.

- 8. Some words during liturgical services can be altered to be more inclusive. For example, on Ash Wednesday, ministers could say, ‘Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return’ rather than the option referencing repentance, which is a religious concept some might not understand. Is this ok?**

When providing any form of liturgy to pupils, every step must be taken to ensure the liturgy is followed. In conversation with your parish priest, prayer and liturgy coordinators should choose the most appropriate wordings from those available which most suit their context.

- 9. If pupil-prepared prayer is an expectation of all pupils in our Catholic schools, how does this affect pupils of other faiths and religions?**

‘Pupil-prepared prayer’ is an inclusive term which relates to a range of roles pupils can undertake. For example, pupils may be a welcomer at Mass, prepare the prayer focus before a celebration of the word, or support the use of technology. Any pupil can undertake such roles. Pupils of other faiths and religions or none may not wish to write Trinitarian prayers and should never be made to.

- 10. Do pupils need to know the *Common prayers to be known off by heart*?**

Every effort should be made so that pupils have an increasing awareness of these prayers as they grow older. For most pupils, they will learn these prayers by heart due to the frequency they are prayed. However, some pupils, for example those with additional needs, may never learn them by heart.

Whilst there is an expectation that these prayers should be known, it is not desirable for pupils to be tested on their ability to say them off by heart. Schools need to be able to demonstrate that the prayers have been shared with pupils in various settings, who are familiar with them.

- 11. Who is responsible for signing off the APOP (annual plan of provision)?**

Whilst the headteacher is ultimately responsible for implementing the governors’ prayer and liturgy policy, it is the prayer and liturgy coordinator’s job to complete an annual plan of provision. Nevertheless, because the headteacher is responsible for ensuring the governors’ policy is correctly implemented, we advise all headteachers to check they are satisfied that the APOP fulfils the school’s requirements before it is issued to the wider community.

We envisage the APOP to be a working document which will be adapted throughout the year. Headteachers should regularly review it so that any changes align with the governors’ vision.