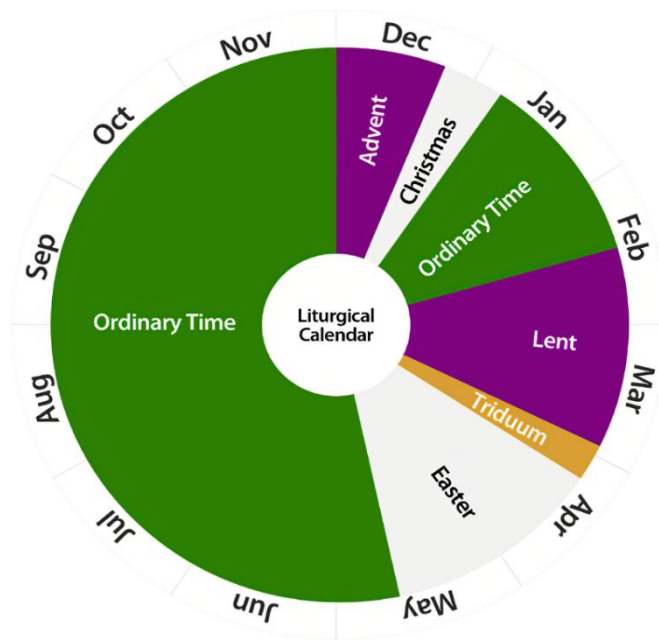




The Liturgical Year

A Guide for Prayer in School



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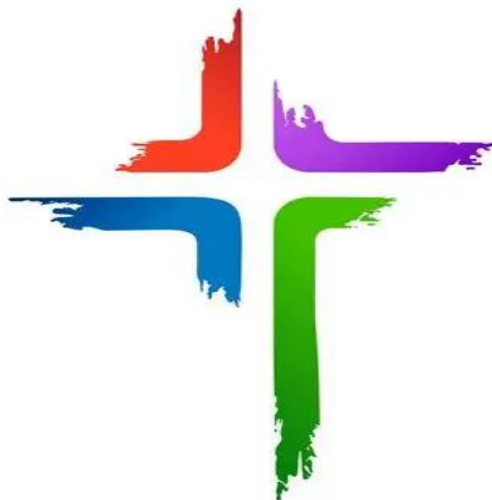
Introduction

The aim of this document is to help tutors, year heads and all those involved in facilitating prayer in our school to make the most of prayer spaces, whether they are in the classroom, or in a communal area, and to make sure that the prayer spaces reflect the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year.

Our school prayer life is based on the Liturgical Calendar, a cycle of seasons and days which celebrate and commemorate the life of Jesus Christ. The calendar organises the year into different liturgical seasons, with specific themes, colours, readings and observances for each: Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. In between these seasons are the periods known as Ordinary Time. The calendar also includes feast days for saints and other important figures in Christian history and other significant celebrations within the Church and it is often added to so that it reflects local and regional celebrations.

The simplest way to ensure your prayer space reflects the liturgical season is to change the cloth: purple for Advent and Lent, white for Christmas and Easter, green for Ordinary Time. At other times, as referenced in the information for each term, a blue or red cloth might be appropriate.

As well as identifying the liturgical season through the different coloured cloths, there are also suggestions for artefacts and images that could be added to the space. This shouldn't be a task for tutors, but rather something that pupils are responsible for. You might find that it becomes a habit for your pupils to seek out prayer space artefacts and prayer cards when they visit new places, or they may have objects at home that they would like to add to the space. If they take ownership of the prayer space and it feels personal to them, they will find deeper meaning in the prayer.



Prayer Spaces – general information

Basic elements

A cross or crucifix
A battery candle
A Bible
Coloured cloth

Other things you might add

A charity collecting box
A dish of holy water
A prayer jar/box/book
Prayer cards
Seasonal items

Classrooms are busy spaces and they contain lots of objects which can be distracting when we're trying to pray. The point of the prayer space is to provide a focus, to aid prayer. Each tutor base has a prayer tray, which can be moved to a prominent position during your time of prayer and then removed to an appropriate place so that it is not damaged or mistreated during the course of the school day. It's important to note that it's not a case of 'getting it out of the way', but rather, protecting it as a sacred item, to be treated with reverence and care.

The most appropriate place to store your prayer tray is probably near to your tutor group notice board, as this is the place where you are likely to also have your cross/crucifix and where community information and notices are displayed.

At the start of the school year, take some time to discuss with your pupils the content of the prayer tray and the space where it will be stored. You could start the year with an activity that would produce some item which could form part of the tray, like a prayer jar, or a tutor group prayer.

When we are gathered together in the Hall for prayer, a focal point should be created at the front of the room. A set of cloths, a standing cross, Bible and candle are provided for this and it is sometimes useful to create the space with these items to mark the start of the time of prayer (see appendix i for guidance on how to do this)



The Liturgical Year

Autumn Term

When we start school in September we are in ORDINARY TIME and the liturgical colour is **GREEN**. This season lasts until the beginning of ADVENT, on the fourth Sunday before 25 December, Christmas Day.

Dates to note:

2 September – 4 October

Creation Time

The period from 2 September until the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4 October is designated Creation Time. It is a time of special prayer and reflection on the environment. During this time, we will celebrate our first Youth Mass of the year, a Creation Mass, which takes place at St Gregory's on the closest Sunday to the Feast of St Francis.

During Creation Time, you could add images relating to the world, to creation, or to the environment on your prayer tray and you might like to add a plant or some flowers. You could ask pupils to prepare their own prayers, or to find an appropriate prayer online (there are some excellent Creation Time prayer resources on the CAFOD website).



SEPTEMBER

Liturgical colour: **GREEN**

3 September

The Feast of St Gregory the Great

Liturgical colour: white

Many of our pupils attended St Gregory's primary school and many are also parishioners of St Gregory's, our nearest church. You could mark his feast day by using the prayer of St Gregory in your morning prayer.

8 September

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Liturgical colour: white

Mary's birthday is celebrated on 8 September. You could mark the day by using an image of Mary as a focus for prayer, either on the prayer tray, or on your screen. As this is a feast day, the liturgical colour is white, but the colour blue is also traditionally associated with Mary.

14 September

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Liturgical colour: **RED**

This is our school feast day, which we mark by coming together to celebrate Mass.



OCTOBER

Liturgical colour: GREEN or BLUE

The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary. You might add some rosary beads to your prayer tray and you could also use your blue cloth.



2 September – 4 October

Creation Time continues until 4 October, the Feast of St Francis. There are resources in the Staff Shared Area which you could use to mark this feast, in particular the special prayer known as the Cantic of the Sun.

NOVEMBER

Liturgical colour: GREEN

November is a month of remembrance. During this month, we will remember in prayer those who have died as a result of war and also our friends and family who have died. A lunchtime Service of Remembrance will be held in the Chapel towards the end of the month. Some of your pupils might have memories of people they would like to share and you could record them on the prayer tray. If anyone has a prayer card they were given when someone died, they might like to add that to the tray, too. Be mindful that this can be a difficult time for some pupils and staff. If anyone needs additional support, please refer them to the pastoral team, or ask them to call into the Chapel.

1 November

The Solemnity of All Saints

Liturgical colour: WHITE

In the liturgical calendar, a solemnity is the highest rank of celebration, more important even than a feast day. On 1 November, we honour all the saints; those people who dedicated their lives to God and the service of others. You could ask your pupils about the saints they share a name with. This is especially relevant to pupils who have been confirmed recently (Year 9) or who will be confirmed next year (Year 8); ask them about the saint's name they chose/will chose as their confirmation name and see what they know about their saint. All Saints' Day is a Holy Day of Obligation, when all Catholics are required to attend Mass.

2 November

All Souls' Day – the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed

Liturgical colour – BLACK

This is a day dedicated to all those who have died, when Catholics all over the world remember loved ones, family and friends and give thanks for their lives. If you have collected the names of people (please, no pets) that your pupils would like to pray for, include this on the prayer tray today.

30 November

The Feast of St Andrew

Liturgical colour: RED

Some of our pupils and staff have a connection to Scotland, so you could ask them to provide something particularly Scottish to add to your sacred space; a thistle, or a piece of tartan. Use a prayer of St David in your morning prayer.

Last Sunday before Advent

The Solemnity of Christ the King – Youth Sunday

Liturgical colour: WHITE

On the last Sunday of the liturgical year is a double celebration – the Solemnity of Christ the King and Youth Sunday. As we move into the final week of ordinary time, you could add a crown to the prayer tray, or you could put the names of all your pupils onto the tray, celebrating them in prayer.



DECEMBER

Liturgical colour: **PURPLE**

Although we begin opening the doors of our Advent calendars on 1 December, the exact date for the start of Advent varies. It can start as early 27 November, or as late as 3 December. During Advent, the prayer tray should be kept clear of anything that isn't essential, indicating the emptiness that existed before Jesus came to earth. In the final week of school before the Christmas break, you could include a Nativity set in your prayer space, but without a baby in the manger (he doesn't arrive until the sun has set on Christmas Eve).



8 December

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Liturgical colour: white

This day is a celebration of the holiness of Mary. Catholics believe that because Mary was chosen by God to be Jesus' mother, she was pure and holy from the moment she was conceived, without the stain of original sin that the rest of us have. On this day, it would be appropriate to say a prayer to honour Mary (please note, our prayers *honour* Mary, we do not *pray to* Mary) and to have an image of Mary on the screen.

Spring Term

When we return to school we are in the season of CHRISTMAS and the liturgical colour is WHITE. This season lasts until the beginning of the Baptism of the Lord, when we will enter **ORDINARY TIME** and the colour will be **GREEN**.

JANUARY

Liturgical colour: WHITE, then **GREEN**

6 January

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Liturgical colour: white

Epiphany means 'appearance' and this solemnity marks the appearance of Jesus to the three kings, or wise men, or magi. You can still have your Nativity set in your prayer space and you could add the last three figures today. You could also include symbols of the gifts the Magi brought. Epiphany is also the time to mark doors with chalk as a blessing (see appendix ii for a short prayer service). The Epiphany is a Holy Day of Obligation. When it falls on a Saturday or Monday, the celebration is transferred to the nearest Sunday.



Sunday after Epiphany

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Liturgical colour: white

For the celebration of Jesus' baptism by his cousin John, you could add a bowl of holy water to your prayer tray. Your pupils could then use the water to mark themselves with the Sign of the Cross as a reminder of their own baptism.

18-25 January

The Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity

The eight days which come before the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul are a special time of prayer for Cristian Unity. Each year CTBI (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) come together with Christians across the world to produce prayer resources to mark this special time.

25 January

The Feast of the Conversion of St Paul

Liturgical colour: white

This feast celebrated the conversion of Saul, who was a dedicated persecutor of Christians, into Paul, one of the founders of the Christian Church, who spent many years travelling to bring the good news to the whole world.



FEBRUARY

Liturgical colour: **GREEN** and, possibly, **PURPLE**, if Lent begins in February

Dates to note:

2 February

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Liturgical colour: WHITE

This is the last time in the liturgical year that we focus on the infant Jesus. We remember how he was taken by his parents to the Temple, to fulfil the requirements of Jewish law. There, he met Simeon and Anna, both of whom had been waiting for the Saviour to arrive and both of whom recognised Jesus as that Saviour. If you have an image of a statue of the Holy Family, you could include it on your prayer tray.

MARCH

Liturgical colour: **GREEN** or **PURPLE**

Lent, like Advent, is a moveable feast. Sometimes it will begin in February and sometimes in March. Guidance for prayer during Lent and Easter follows March.

1 March

Feast of St David

Liturgical colour: white

Some of our pupils and staff have a connection to Wales, so you could ask them to provide something particularly Welsh to add to your sacred space, such as a vase of daffodils. You could also mark this feast day by using the prayer of St David in your morning prayer.

2 March

Feast of St Chad

Liturgical colour: white

Many of our pupils attended St Chad's primary school, so you might like to mark this day by adding an image of St Chad to your prayer tray, or to your screen display..

17 March

Feast of St Patrick

Liturgical colour: white

Likewise, some of our pupils and staff have Irish links. Although the liturgical colour is white, it would also be appropriate to use a green cloth, representing Ireland. Use the Prayer of St Patrick, or the hymn *Christ Be Beside Me*, based on the prayer.

18 March

Commemoration of Blessed Roger Wrenno and Blessed John Thules

On this day we remember the sacrifice made by Blessed Roger Wrenno and Blessed John Thules, two of the Lancashire martyrs who gave their lives during the Reformation. You could include a prayer for these and all martyrs in your morning prayer.

19 March

The Solemnity of St Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Liturgical colour: WHITE

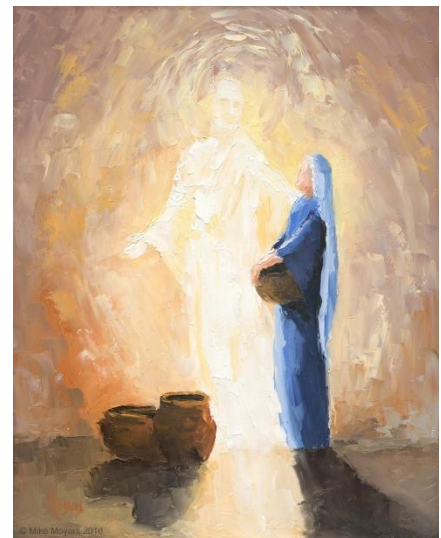
St Joseph has two special days in the liturgical calendar, the first of which recognises his role as Mary's husband. Just like Mary, Joseph received a message from God through an angel and he, too, says 'Yes' to God's plan. You could add a statue of Joseph to your prayer tray or display an image on the screen. Three of our primary schools are dedicated to St Joseph, so pupils from there might like to lead your prayer this week.

25 March

The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

Liturgical colour: WHITE

This is the day we when celebrate the announcement to Mary that she had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus and it comes exactly nine months before the celebration of Christmas.



LENT

Liturgical colour: **PURPLE**



Lent is the period of 40 days that begins with Ash Wednesday and finishes on Passion Sunday. Like Advent, it is a time of preparation, when we strip away all that is unnecessary in our lives that distracts us from our focus on God. Our prayer trays reflect this by being plain and free from ornamentation.

When a Feast Day or Solemnity falls during Lent, it is okay to mark those days by adding different colours and items to the prayer tray for that day.

Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday we will have prayer service throughout the school and we will be marked with ashes that are created by burning the palms used on Palm Sunday the previous year.



Holy Week

If it is practical, during Holy Week, statues, crosses and crucifixes should be covered with red or purple fabric.

Holy Week: Maundy Thursday

Liturgical colour: **WHITE**

On Maundy Thursday we remember the Last Supper. As well as sharing bread and wine with his friends, Jesus also washed their feet. You might include as a focus for prayer bread and wine (or something that looks like wine), or a bowl and cloth.



Easter

Liturgical colour: WHITE

The Easter season begins at the Easter Vigil when we recall the Resurrection. It continues for fifty days, until Pentecost. During this time, your prayer tray should be full of abundance (in contrast to the bareness of Lent); add flowers, images of spring and new life, perhaps even an Easter Garden with an empty tomb.



APRIL

Liturgical colour: **PURPLE** during Lent, WHITE during the Easter season.

In some years, Lent continues into April, in which case the prayer tray should retain its purple cloth. If we have already celebrated Easter, the cloth should be white.

23 April

The Solemnity of St George

Liturgical colour: **RED**

Add a red rose, or an image of St George to your prayer tray. Most people associate St George with slaying a dragon, but that is probably just a legend. In reality, we think he lived and died in Palestine under the persecution of Constantine. Display an image of St George and include Prayer of St George in your morning prayer.

MAY

Liturgical colour: WHITE during the Easter Season, then GREEN for Ordinary Time

May is also the Month of Mary, so we will often use BLUE cloths and artefacts relating to Mary.

Ascension Day

Liturgical colour: WHITE

Forty days after Easter Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of the Ascension, when Jesus was taken up into heaven. It is a Holy Day of Obligation.

The three Sundays after Ascension Day all have special significance:

Pentecost

Liturgical colour: RED

Fifty days after Easter we celebrate Pentecost, when the Holy spirit descended upon the disciples and they began their mission. Display symbols of the Spirit on your prayer tray: wind, flame and water.



The Most Holy Trinity

Liturgical colour: WHITE

On this special day we remember that God is three persons in one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As you make your prayer today, take special care over the Sign of the Cross.



The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ – Corpus Christi

Liturgical colour – WHITE

On this day we celebrate with greater joy than ever the Sacrament of the eucharist; that Jesus gave his life for us and that we are able to share in his Body and Blood every time we receive Communion.

The Solemnity of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Liturgical colour: WHITE

This solemnity is always celebrated on the third Friday after Pentecost. When we meditate on the Sacred Heart of Jesus,, a human, living heart, we are reminded of his unconditional, never-ending love for us. You could add an image of the Sacred Heart to your tutor tray. Many of our children will have attended Sacred Heart primary school; you might ask them to be involved in preparing a prayer for this day.

13 May

The Feast of the Dedication of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King

Liturgical colour: WHITE

A day of celebration commemorating our Cathedral in Liverpool. You could include a picture of the Cathedral on your prayer tray (there are some pictures of our children in the Cathedral for the Good Shepherd Mass in the Staff Shared Area).

25 May

Feast of St Bede

Some of your pupils might have attended St Bede's primary school, or who live in the parish. You could ask one of them to bring in a picture of St Bede for the prayer tray or display an image on your screen..

Summer Term

JUNE

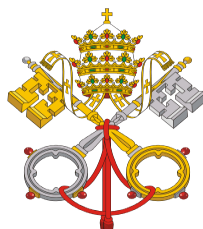
Liturgical colour: GREEN

29 June

The Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

Liturgical colour: RED

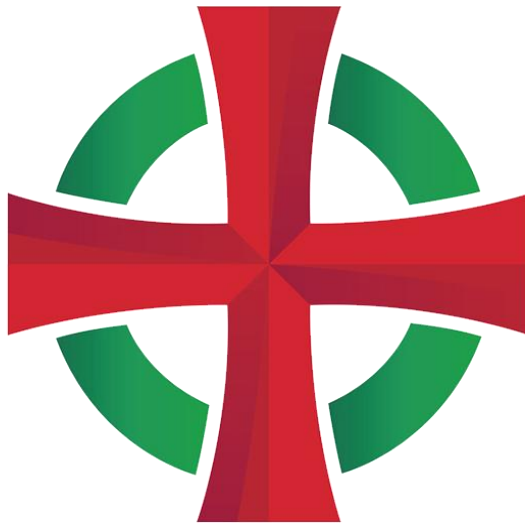
Peter and Paul are the founders of our Church. They are commemorated together in recognition of their dual mission, supporting each other. The symbols of St Paul are a book, representing the letters he wrote which form a large part of the New Testament, and a sword, which was the method of his martyrdom. The symbol of St Peter is a set of keys, a reminder that he was given the keys to heaven. This is a Holyday of Obligation.



JULY

Liturgical colour: GREEN

July marks the end of our school year. It's a time for reflection and thanksgiving. Remind your pupils to be thankful in their prayers and to look forward to the future in hope.



Appendix i

Setting the scene: assembling a sacred space at the start of prayer.

It can be useful at the start of the time of prayer to gather the group together and to set the scene by creating your sacred space, using symbols to represent God's presence.

Before you begin, have your area prepared: a raised area covered with the appropriate cloth. In the Hall, this would be on the stage. You can use an upturned box to create height. Have the symbols ready and give each to a pupil: a Bible, a Cross, a candle and any other symbol you might be using (for example, a bowl of water, a statue, a poppy wreath, or another appropriate item).

As your reader introduces the symbols, have a pupil bring each forward and place it on the space:

Reader: As we begin our time of prayer, we create a sacred space using symbols of our faith:

A Bible, a symbol of God's word alive amongst us;

A Cross, a reminder that Jesus gave his life for us;

A candle, to represent Jesus, the Light of the World.

Holy water, a reminder of the cleansing power of God's love

A statue of who we remember in our prayers today.

A poppy wreath, to remind us of all those who lost their lives in war, for whom we pray today.

We make together the Sign of the Cross, reminding ourselves that everything we do today is done in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Appendix ii

A prayer service for the Feast of the Epiphany

Prepare the space: in addition to the Bible, Cross and candle, you might also include representations of the gifts brought by the Magi, or the Magi figures from a Nativity set.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross

Reader 1: And by the light of that same star, three Wise Men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.

This star drew nigh to the northwest, O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay.

Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee,
And offered there, in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

Reader 2: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 2:1-12)

When Jesus was born, in Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, when Herod was king, some wise and learned men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the one,' they asked, 'who has been born to be king of the Jews? We have seen his star rising in the east and we have come to worship him.'

When Herod heard this, he was very disturbed, and the whole of Jerusalem was as well. He called together all the chief priests and scribes of the people and enquired of them where the messiah was to be born.

'In Bethlehem, in Judea,' they replied. 'That's what the prophet said,
"You Bethlehem, in Judah's land
Are not the least of Judah's princes;
From out of you will come the ruler
Who will shepherd my people, Israel.'"

Then Herod called the wise men to him in secret. He found out from them exactly when the star had appeared, then he sent them to Bethlehem. 'Make a thorough search for the child,' he told them, 'and when you find him, report back to me, so that I may go and worship him also.'

When they heard what the king said, they set off. There was the star, the one they had seen rising in the east, going on ahead of them. It stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the place and saw the child, with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. They opened up their treasure-chests and gave him presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

They were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their own country by a different route.

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection:

Reader 3: It is in the home that the first experience of love occurs; it is there that love is nurtured and grows. The Christian home is also the place where we experience spiritual growth. The Feast of Epiphany is a time when we bless our homes with a traditional chalk blessing. Today we will adapt the blessing for our school room.

May all who come to this room in (insert the year) rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is the Word made flesh, living among us.

All: Amen.

Reader 4: God of heaven and earth,
you revealed your Son to every nation by the guidance of a star.
Bless this classroom.
Fill us with the light of Christ,
that our concern for others may reflect your love.
Bless this school family,
and those we will welcome over the course of this year.
May we be blessed with health;
with kindness and goodness of heart;
with gentleness and compassion
We ask this through Christ our Lord
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Chalk the lintel above the door with the initials of the three wise men (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar) between the numbers of the year, whilst saying this prayer (amend for the appropriate year):

The three wise man, Caspar (chalk the C), Melchior (chalk the M) and Balthazar (chalk the B), followed the start to God's Son, who became fully human two thousand (chalk the 20 in front of the 'C') and 25 (chalk the 25 after the 'B') years ago. May Christ now bless this place and remain here throughout this year.

All: Amen.

(These initials also stand for Christus Mansionem Benedicat, Latin for 'May Christ Bless this House')