

# **ST MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **LITURGY AND PRAYER POLICY**



***‘Growing Together in Faith & Love’***

**Reviewed September 2025**

## **Our Vision**

As a Catholic School we base our worship, ethos and curriculum around the teachings of Christ. Our Christian identity is a focal point and it is at the heart of everything that we do. We aim to make the Liturgical life of the school both creative and diverse to ensure that we stimulate and challenge the children in a spiritual way. The policy is to support the Liturgical life of the school by providing guidelines for various acts of prayer and liturgy from the individual, to class prayer times, to Masses with the Parish and the wider community. We also recognise the rich multicultural society within which we live. We reflect other cultures in our worship and teachings where appropriate. We compare faiths to enable us to deepen our understanding of our own faith

## **Our Aims**

- To value and encourage the whole school community to develop their God given potential
- To nurture and support each child in their faith journey as a worshipping community
- To promote and encourage the individuality of all, respecting ethnicity, attainment, age, gender, disability and background.
- To provide a learning environment and curriculum that is safe, stimulating, creative and challenging
- To create a partnership involving school, home and parish and the wider community
- To help each child develop a positive self-image with a healthy lifestyle to become confident individuals who will contribute to society
- To instil a lifelong love of learning

## **The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy**

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in our school community will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God and enable us:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To unite our worshipping community
- To strengthen our common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To develop the skills of prayer
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ
- To provide opportunities for pupils to discover the value of meditation and silence

## **Legal Requirements**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (This 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 school groups). We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that Liturgy and prayer and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear. The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be considered as part of the RE lesson (for time purposes).

Parents of pupils in St Mary Magdalene are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of liturgy and Prayer given at the school and any such request shall stand until such time that the parent's request is withdrawn.

## **The Spiritual Life of School**

Prayer occupies an important role in our Religious Education as a means of expressing, fostering and nurturing faith. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer, they are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world round them. We, at St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School aim to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed. Our classrooms, work areas and school entrance are welcoming, bright, colourful and creative so that our Mission Statement is being lived out through our surroundings.

## **Liturgy and Prayer**

Our school is a worshipping community. We provide the opportunity for the community to celebrate, pray, reflect and share together within God's family.

### **a) Personal prayer**

From the Foundation stage, the understanding of prayer as an open dialogue with God is discussed and developed with the children. Each classroom has a focal point for prayer. Children are given regular opportunities, appropriate to their age, to experience reflective, contemplative and/or silent prayer.

### **b) Corporate prayer**

Our children have frequent opportunities, in class and in assemblies, to share formal and informal prayers. Prayers are said together at the beginning and end of each school day and before and after meals.

During Liturgical Seasons and Holy Days of Obligation, children join in with prayers eg the Rosary. Children are encouraged to compose their own prayers to be shared by all. Opportunities that arise within lessons, discussion or current affairs, are used as foci for the children's prayer e.g., prayers for people involved in disasters within our world.

Children learn the established prayers of the church as appropriate to their age and development aided by their school prayer book. This gives them access to the rich prayer tradition of the church. Every staff meeting, briefing, phase meeting and SLT meeting begins with a prayer.

### **Prayer in the classroom**

We involve our parent body in our community of prayer through our website, travelling crib, Easter bag and the family prayer bags due to be launched in January 2026. Prayers will be said in class four times a day (Morning, Before Lunch, After Lunch and End of the Day). This follows the pattern of prayer within the Church. Children may be selected to lead prayers during this time.

Special Intention Prayer Times will be delivered by Class Teachers, when appropriate, to respond to the needs of the community or to a key event.

Child-Led Prayer takes place as a class act of prayer and this develops in complexity further up the school.

Each classroom in the school creates a prayerful environment by each having a prayer focus.

- It is required that this focus is dressed in the liturgical colours of the year as a visual sign to the children to show the change and the mood of the liturgical calendar.
- Teachers and children create an interactive display on the prayer focus; objects, images, candles which reflect the liturgical year and feasts.
- Each room in the school has a crucifix which reminds us all of the sacrifice of Christ for all of humanity; it reminds us that Christ is the foundation stone of Catholic education and that Christ is at the centre at everything we do.

### **Liturgical Prayer at whole school level**

In addition to the daily requirement of Liturgy and Prayer in our classrooms we provide Liturgy and prayer at a whole school level and for the different educational groups in the school.

Monday Assembly takes place for the Whole School each week. This Assembly provides the children with an opportunity for children to reflect upon the meaning of the Gospel from the previous Sunday. Assembly takes place for the Whole School once a month and is known as Gold Book Assembly. This Assembly focuses on celebrating the gifts and talents of children and how we can use these for the good of others. Children's names are placed in the gold book and they receive a special certificate.

Hymn Practice takes place every Tuesday. Over the course of an academic year, each class are allocated a Class Assembly to deliver to their parents.

Going forward we will ensure we plan for these occasions keeping the following points in mind:

- Structure – Gather Listen Respond and Go Forth (based on the Holy Mass model) – **See Appendix A and D for further guidance**
- Is the language being used suitable for the age group?
- Are the symbols being used relevant and meaningful?
- Can everyone identify and join in with what is happening?
- Can this celebration be related to the lives of the children?
- Is it meaningful?

### **Providing opportunities for Holy Mass to be celebrated**

We acknowledge and revere the most Holy Sacrament of the celebration of the Eucharist. We believe it is central to our roles as being members of the Body of Christ and the redeeming life graces and blessings it provides. We firmly believe in the importance of celebrating the Mass by:

- Encouraging all our school members to go to Mass regularly.
- Providing opportunities for school throughout the academic year.
- Celebrating Holy Mass on Feast Days and Holy days of Obligation when possible.
- Celebrating Mass at the key times of the school year.
- By teaching the structure of the Mass to the children.

We are all part of the Eucharistic Community. This is not just a matter of saying that Mass is important in our school but rather that it has a profound effect on our life as part of the community

### **Staff Prayer**

Prayer and reflection also forms part of the weekly Staff Meeting. Prayer is always planned in to INSET days.

### **Retreat Experiences**

This year we have asked One Life Music to visit school and we take part in their live streams to lead a whole school retreat in which Staff and Governors are invited to attend.

Staff are offered the opportunity to form their own faith during organised retreats. In July 2025 all staff attended a pilgrimage to Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.

### **Pupil involvement**

Taking part in Liturgy and Prayer implies more than simply passive attendance. It follows that an Act of Liturgy and Prayer should be capable of eliciting a response from pupils, even

though on a particular occasion some of the pupils may not feel actively able to identify with the act of worship. Bridgebuilder visit school during Lent to offer 'prayer spaces' for all pupils.

At St Mary Magdalene we are now aiming to enable the children to aid the planning process for Liturgy and Prayer and contribute ideas and suggestions e.g. theme music, prayers and activities at an age appropriate level. They should have a sense of belonging and help to create a calm, peaceful and positive atmosphere. All the children are encouraged to participate in the singing of hymns, the prayers and the time for reflection and thanksgiving. The prayers may be formal or informal and be developmental and age-appropriate.

### **Pupil Involvement Endpoints**

These are end points which staff should support children in achieving by the end of the academic year.

#### **EYFS**

- Pupils join with class liturgy and prayer worship
- Adult demonstrates a variety of approaches
- Children in EYFS, can prepare the focus - e.g. selecting the right liturgical colour of cloth, placing a candle and a Bible in the centre, with the adult placing any additional props.
- Child created resources may also be used where appropriate to support the prayer or liturgy e.g. a piece of material made by the children using a hand print or foot print.

#### **Year 1**

- Children work alongside adult to set up the prayer area choosing colour cloth/artefacts that suit the overall theme/mission
- They lead with the sign of the cross, the saying of adult chosen prayers
- Children may help to choose the songs sung with guidance, so they fit in the theme of the Worship

#### **Year 2**

- Children work alongside the adult to set up and lead the worship with more independence using the child-led prayer planner.
- They help to choose aspects of each part of and contribute to the writing of prayer and the leading
- Children take an active role in Mass leading the offertory and bidding prayers

### **Year 3**

- Pupils lead worship in their own class planned together with the adult, but with increasing independence.
- When given a theme, children will choose a scripture reading or other relevant reading/source as part of the Listen section of Prayer and Liturgy.
- They take a lead, under the supervision and guidance of the adult, to choose how to gather, listen, respond and go forth through use of the planning board with a focus on TWO aspects.
- Children lead Mass and write their own bidding prayers.
- The liturgy leaders contribute to the leading and evaluation of prayer and liturgy in school.

### **Year 4**

- Pupils lead worship in their own class, supported by the adult.
- Children will consider the liturgical year, current learning, holy days of obligation, feast days, saints' days, current news and values and virtues when selecting their theme, will consider how to respond to chosen scripture.
- Children write their own bidding prayers.

### **Year 5**

- Under the teacher's guidance and working to become more independent, children plan all four aspects, with support on how to Go Forth.
- They present their plans to an adult who supports them where needed.
- Pupil lead whole class worship in their own class with support of an adult if necessary.
- Pupils form prayer partners with EYFS and lead them in prayer and liturgy each half term.

### **Year 6**

- Children will independently plan and lead all four aspects of prayer and liturgy.
- Pupils lead worship in their own class with the oversight of the adult when planned.
- They lead in the year group of their prayer partners.
- They take a lead role in whole school Mass and Liturgical Prayer.
- They serve in Mass when needed.
- This year pupils will form prayer partners with Year 1 during Lent and lead them in prayer and liturgy.

### **Prayer Garden**

The Prayer Garden and Chapel offer pupils and staff a quiet place to contemplate and reflect during whole class and private prayer/ worship.

## **Assemblies and Celebrations**

### **Planning an Assembly**

When planning an assembly with the class or preparing an assembly for the school, a good starting point is either a theme relevant to the community who will be listening to the assembly or a celebration taken from the Liturgical Calendar either a Feast day, or the Gospel from the Sunday.

### **Displays for Gatherings**

If you are making a display for an Assembly during key Liturgical seasons, we encourage the use of colour to show the changes through the year reflecting the vestments and colours shown in Church.

Green – Ordinary Time

Purple – for Lent (sign of sorrow and kingship)

Cerise/purple – for Advent

White - Christmas

White and Gold – Eastertide

Pentecost - Red

In addition, key symbols, icons or visual aids could be used in the display e.g. bowl of water, pictures of the disciples, fishing net, fish to reflect on the Calling of the disciples.

### **Liturgical Music**

We are now aiming to expand our selection of music and books to support prayer and liturgy covering a variety of themes. Music can be used directly in prayer and liturgy or used as background music for quiet moments or meditation. The internet also has a wealth of music (YouTube).

The music should reflect the liturgical season and/ or the theme. It should be selected carefully. The music should also reflect the Congregation so that all can participate in the majority of the prayer or liturgy.

Members of staff should encourage children to take an active part in Worship leading the music or singing both in the classroom and for assemblies. This will also help the children grow in confidence and ability.



## **Conclusion**

Prayer is a dynamic interactive experience, which must not be allowed to become stale and repetitive. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, bearing this principle in mind.

## **Appendix A - Liturgy and Prayer Structure**

Your Liturgy and Prayer session is going to follow the liturgical structure: gather, listen, respond and go forth.

### **Gather**

#### **1. Prepare your sacred space.**

You will need to create a focal point to help your classmates focus during the prayer. Your sacred space should be related to the theme of your worship or the liturgical year. Think about the purpose and meaning by the objects that you place in your sacred space.

What can we include on our sacred space?

- Tablecloths relevant to the liturgical year.
- Relevant images or artwork.
- Handmade decorations related to the theme of your worship.
- A crucifix.
- A candle.
- Flowers.
- Special objects.
- A Bible.

#### **2. Think about ways to gather your classmates together and put them in a calm mindset so that they are ready to pray to God and reflect on their lives.**

What can we do to gather our class together?

- Play reflective music or sing a relevant hymn.
- Change the lighting to create a different, calmer atmosphere.
- Light a candle to remind your classmates of God's presence.
- Ask children to sit in a circle, a semi-circle or in lines.
- Think about if there is another safe space in your school where you could gather your classmates together, e.g. a prayer garden, or chapel.

### **Listen**

#### **1. You now need to choose a Scripture from the Old or New Testament.**

This can be a whole reading or just a couple sentences. Remember, the Scriptures are the primary source of faith and special sign of God's presence, so this is a very important part of your collective worship.

- Choose a reading from the 'themes' section. You may want to use your own reading related to a theme.

- If you are leading collective worship around Holy Week, Easter, Lent or Christmas then you may want to choose a reading from the ‘**Liturgical Year**’ section.
- If you are reading a Parable, make sure you remind your classmates what a parable is.

## **2. Add some creativity to your reading.**

You may wish to read the Scripture in a different way so that your classmates really understand the meaning behind it and remember it for a really long time so that they can apply the teaching to their own lives.

What can we do to creatively share the Word of God?

- Create a PowerPoint of a series of images to tell the story from the Scriptures (a little bit like a storyboard).
- Act out the story.
- Mime the story as it is read.
- Tell the story in your own words.
- Section the reading with your group- take it in turns to read the story together.
- Use the story as guided meditation. Before you begin reading the story, ask your classmates to imagine that they are a key person in the reading. Afterwards, you can ask your classmates what they heard and saw, how they felt and what they thought of Jesus.
- Use puppets to tell the story for younger children.

## **Respond**

This is a very special time as you are asking your classmates to respond to the Word of God that has just been read to them.

**1. Give your classmates some quiet time to reflect on the Scripture.** You could play some quiet music or play an instrument in the background.

**2. Ask your classmates a couple thought-provoking questions.**

- Do you think this Scripture has a moral?
- How do you think \_\_\_\_\_ felt when \_\_\_\_\_?
- How do you think this teaching applies to your own life?

**3. Prepare a reflective response activity.** Symbolism is very important here- everything should have a clear meaning.

- Ask the children to write or think of a personal prayer related to the theme.
- Give each child an object (e.g. stone) and ask them to say a prayer to God sharing a worry or gratitude, for example. You could create a class mountain using the stones and this could be displayed on your prayer table as a reminder all week.
- Children could each say one word that comes to mind after reflecting on the Scripture e.g. Honest, Grateful.
- Hand each child a teaspoon of salt/sugar. Ask them to prayer to God asking Him to forgive them for a particular sin or help them with a worry. They can place their salt/sugar in water and watch it dissolves- reminding them that God will take away your sins and worries.
- Add prayer to class prayer book.
- Use cut out shapes e.g. hearts, people, stars to write prayers and thoughts on.
- Draw a scenario/ image.
- Ask each child to say something nice and complimentary about another classmate- you can do this in a clockwise formation so that everyone is involved.
- You can make your response interactive. E.g. “stand up if you have ever...”
- Plant seeds- watch as they grow overtime

## **Go Forth**

This is also a really important part of your collective worship as you are asking your classmates to hold onto an element of the faith teaching in their daily lives. This could be something for them to do at home, school, in the parish, in their local community and in the wider community.

**1. Set a realistic and relevant mission for your classmates.** This should be something they can do to apply faith to life.

- Tell them to ‘go forth’ and share the teaching they reflected upon during your Liturgy and Prayer.
- Make a vocal promise
- Make an internal promise
- Invite someone lonely to play at lunchtime.
- Greet someone with a smile.
- Give out three secret compliments during that day.
- Say a prayer for someone in need.
- Do an action to show care for creation.
- Find a few minutes each day to thank God for their blessings.

## Scripture: Themes

<b><u>Peace</u></b> Romans 5 1-5 Isaiah 26: 3 John 14: 27  <b><u>Love</u></b> 1 Corinthians 13: 1-3 1 John 4: 7-12  <b><u>Acceptance</u></b> Psalm 139  <b><u>Courage</u></b> Psalm 11 Psalm 42  <b><u>Forgiveness</u></b> Matthew 18: 21-35 Acts 13: 26-39  <b><u>Patience</u></b> James 5: 7-11	<b><u>Righteousness</u></b> Romans 3: 10-26 Romans 10: 9-11 Romans 6: 11-23  <b><u>Salvation</u></b> Romans 10: 9-11 Titus 2: 11-14  <b><u>Wisdom</u></b> 1 Kings 12: 1-24 1 Kings 3: 6-28; 4: 29-31  <b><u>Friendship</u></b> 1 Samuel 18: 1-5 Ruth 1: 16-17  <b><u>Gratitude</u></b> Luke 17: 11-19 Corinthian 9: 11-12 Psalm 100: 4 Psalm 28: 7	<b><u>Parables</u></b> Good Samaritan Luke 10: 29-37  Lost coin, lost son, lost sheep Matthew 18: 10-14  Pharisee and the Tax Collector Luke 18: 9-14  Two sons Matthew 21: 28-32
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## Scripture: Liturgical Year

### **Advent**

John 1: 9

John 1:14

### **Christmas**

Luke 1: 8-20- The birth of Jesus is announced  
Luke 2: 8-10- The Shepherds are told about the birth of Jesus

Matthew 1: 18-25- The birth of Jesus

Matthew 2: 1-12- Three Wise Men

### **Ash Wednesday**

1 John 1: 9

### **Holy Week: Palm Sunday**

Zechariah 9:9

### **Holy Week: Maundy Thursday**

Luke 22: 1-65

### **Holy Week: Good Friday**

Psalm 22: 1-18

### **Holy Week: Easter Sunday**

Isiah 52: 7-10

Luke 24

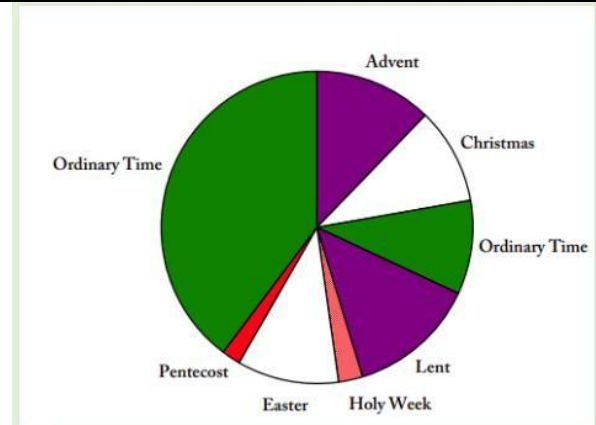
### **Pentecost**

Acts 2: 3-4

Acts 2: 38

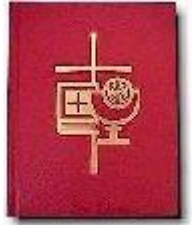
### **All Saints Day**

Matthew 5: 1-12



## Appendix B - Items used at Mass & Liturgies

### Books



#### Sacramentary

Contains the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion, and solemn blessings. Eucharistic prayers and prefaces for all of the masses including most special occasions.



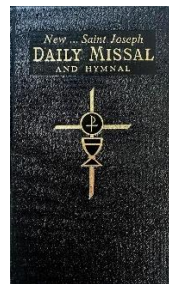
#### Book of the Gospels

Contains only the Gospel readings. It is used on more solemn occasions and is carried by the deacon if it is used.



#### Lectionary

Contains the scripture readings for Mass. It is carried in the procession by the Lector and placed on the ambo.



#### Hymnal/Missalette

Contains all the parts of the mass for a specific season in the liturgical year including instructions on when to stand, sit, or kneel.

### Objects



#### Chalice

The large cup used at Mass used to hold the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ.



#### Paten

A saucer-like disk which holds the bread which becomes the Body of Christ.



#### Ciborium

A vessel used to hold the Hosts which will be used for communion. They are also used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.



#### Communion Cups

Chalice like vessels used at communion when the people received from the cup. They are kept on the Credence Table and brought to the Alter at communion time.



#### Purificator

A white cloth used to cleanse the chalice. It resembles a napkin.



#### Decanter or Flagon

The bottle or pitcher like vessel used to hold the wine which will be consecrated at mass for the communion of the people. It is brought forth with the gifts.



#### Corporal

A white linen cloth on which are placed the vessels containing the bread and wine during Mass which will become the Body and Blood of Christ.



#### Pall

The stiff, square, white cover that is placed over the paten when it is on the chalice.



### **Tabernacle**

The shrine or receptacle either round or rectangular that serves as a place for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. It should be of solid material, opaque, secure and inviolable, fitting the architecture of the church in a prominent place.



### **Monstrance**

A sacred vessel designed to expose the consecrated Host to the congregation either for adoration in church or carrying in procession, particularly on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.



### **Censor and Boat**

The Censor, also known as the Thurible, is used at solemn occasion to incense the bread and wine after the offertory, the priest and congregation. The Boat holds the incense until it is placed in the censor by the celebrant.



### **Sanctuary Lamp**

An oil lamp or wax candle that burns near the tabernacle. It is always lit whenever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in churches or chapels as a sign of honour shown to the Lord.



## Appendix C - Vestments



### Alb

A long white garment which can be used by all liturgical ministers. It is a reminder of the baptismal garment worn when the new Christian “Put on Christ”.



### Cincture

A long cord used for fastening albs at the waist. It holds the loose-fitting type of alb in place and is used to adjust it to proper length. It is usually white, although the liturgical colour of the day may be used.



### Chasuble

The sleeveless outer garment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulders covering the alb and stole of the priest. It is the proper Mass vestment for the main celebrant and its colour varies according to the feast.



### Dalmatic

A loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves worn by a deacon on more solemn feasts. It takes its colour from the liturgical feast as listed above.

● **Green** - worn during “Ordinary Time”.

Ordinary does not mean ordinary in the sense of common or normal. Ordinary means counting, as in the 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.

● **Red** - worn on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost Sunday, and on the Feast Days of Martyrs including the Apostles and Evangelists.

● **Violet** - worn during Advent and Lent or at Masses for the dead.

○ **White** - worn during the Christmas, Easter seasons and celebrations of Mary, the Angels, Saints who were not martyrs, All Saints, Birth of John the Baptist, Chair of Peter, Conversion of Paul, St John the Evangelist and is the preferred colour for Masses for the dead.

● **Rose** - worn on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday/Mothering Sunday).

● **Black** - was traditionally worn at Masses for the dead. Now the preferred colour is White or Violet.



### Priest Stole

A long cloth “scarf”. According to the manner in which it is worn it is the mark of the Office of the priest or deacon. A priest wears it around the neck, letting it hang down in front.



### Deacon Stole

A long cloth “scarf”. According to the manner in which it is worn it is the mark of the Office of the priest or deacon. A deacon wears it over his left shoulder, fastening it at his right side.



### **Cassock**

A long black garment worn by Altar Servers under the Surplice.

Also worn by Diocesan Priests (Black), Monsignors (Rose), Bishops (Violet), Cardinals (Red), and the Pope (White).



### **Surplice**

This is a wide-sleeved garment, slipped over the head, covering the shoulders, and coming down below the hips. It is worn over the cassock.

## Appendix D – Child Led Prayer Planner

### Collective worship class planner

Date of worship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

**Gather**

**Listen**

**Respond**

**Go forth**

# Collective worship class planner

Date of worship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gather

How will you create a special 'space' where we can feel **welcome** and in which we can prepare to draw close to God e.g. using candles, music, artefacts, images etc.?

Focus / setting / ICT / Music / resources etc....

How? To what? How does it start?

## Listen

What would you like us to **learn** about God and

His world that will be inspiring and thought provoking? Which resources will you use e.g. story, drama scripts, poem, art etc.?

What scripture is used? How is it shared?

## Respond

How will you help us to **reflect** upon (think about) what God might be saying to us through our worship e.g. using questions, music, meditation, talk partners etc.?

How? Include—prayer and silent reflection

## Go forth

How do you think we might **respond** (be challenged or inspired to take action) as a result of worshipping together? How will multi-sensory prayer be used to help us draw close to God?

How? What? Why?