

PRAYER SELECTION AND SCHEDULING IN SCHOOLS

Background

St. Paul reminded the early Christian Church to “pray constantly, always and for everything ...”¹ The Catholic Church has and continues to acknowledge this responsibility by stating that prayer is the fundamental process through which we sustain a living and animated relationship with God — “prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”² Therefore, catechesis and permeation within the Catholic school relies upon prayer as the primary mechanism through which a loving relationship with God and the example of Jesus Christ will be known to students and the greater community.

For this reason, decisions regarding prayer selection for the classroom and publications to the greater community must complement the ability of the learner and greater community to understand the meaning of its contents and further understanding of the New Covenant of the Christian story — that Jesus has revealed the unconditional love of God for all of creation.

Procedures for Prayer Selection

1. All written prayers used for classroom instruction and for community publications must be attributable to the source / writer of the prayer.
2. Prayers will not isolate biblical stories, historical events, or an analysis of these at the expense of bringing further understanding of the salvific nature of Jesus Christ for all God’s people.
3. Special care in prayer selection, including print, visual, audio, and or digital modes must be taken not to offend people by race, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or their religious beliefs.
4. When requiring further clarification regarding the application of the previous expectations, principals are to consult with the Division’s Religious Education Consultant for further direction.
5. Application of this procedure does not diminish the relevancy and frequency of the use of prayer within our Catholic School Communities but only contextualizes its use so that prayer will remain the most meaningful and unifying mechanism through which personal and community communion with our Lord Jesus Christ can be nourished.

¹ Catholic Church. (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2742, p. 583.

² Catholic Church. (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2559, p. 544.

6. Nothing in this administrative procedure is to be interpreted so as to limit or be a waiver of the Greater St. Albert Catholic School Board's rights and powers pursuant the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to maintain the denominational character of Catholic schools.

Procedures for Prayer Scheduling

1. Prayer should be a daily part of school and worksite life and routines.
 - a. Prayer should begin the day – morning prayer should typically be offered with a reading, intentions, and an Our Father.
 - b. Prayer before meals – students and staff should offer thanks and blessings prior to meals
 - c. Prayer at the end of the day – students and staff should pause before the end of the day and offer prayer as a conclusion of the day's activities
 - d. Prayer prior to school or special events – prayer should be an integral part of the activities that happen beyond the school day and would be expected for, but not limited to, the following types of events:
 - i. Parent/School Advisory Council Meeting
 - ii. Awards Ceremony
 - iii. Sporting event (prayer said as a team before a game)
 - iv. Drama production
 - v. Special presentations
 - vi. Assemblies
2. Closing prayers may also be considered and added, as appropriate.
3. Prayer may be led by staff or students and may include traditional Catholic prayers, such as Our Father or Hail Mary.
4. Prayer for sports teams or academy classes may wish to refer to Appendix A – *Memo Regarding Faith Permeation in Schools: Prayer and Sports.*

References:

- *Alberta Human Rights Act*
- *Board Policy 1: Division Mission Statement, Values and Beliefs, Goals and Objectives*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- Catholic Church. (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana.
- *Constitution Act, 1867*



Memo Regarding Faith Permeation in Schools: Prayer and Sports

A Catholic School is defined by its unique mission to integrate faith within all aspects of school life. One of the simplest and most effective ways to bring faith into any classroom, activity, or event is through prayer. Prayer is simply lifting the heart and mind to God. In prayer, we remind ourselves that we are not sufficient on our own. It allows students a moment of mindfulness, a pause in the day, to consider their own needs and the needs of others. Prayer brings God into the day-to-day, centers us, and reminds us of the big picture - an essential aspect of why Catholic Education exists.

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools encourages prayer throughout the school day, but especially at the beginning of the school day, or prior to a team sporting event (practice or game).

Prayers need not be long or complicated. Coaches/instructors/athletes may wish to consider the following:

Beginning of game/session: gather all athletes (i.e., huddle, circle up, take a knee, etc.), and:

- a. Teacher leads/reads a short prayer ([see examples of prayers for athletes here](#)).

or

Recite a common prayer that everyone knows by heart (i.e., Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.).

- b. At the conclusion of the prayer the instructor coach says "St. Albert the Great"; players respond "Pray for Us".