



Prayer Service/Assembly to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2017

This prayer service can be used at the beginning, during or towards the end of Catholic Schools Week 2017. It could be held in a classroom, school hall or a prayer room. Members of the local parish community could be invited, including the parish priest or school chaplain. Parents and grandparents could also be invited as part of the week's celebrations.

Prayer Space Items

- Green or white table cloth
- A candle (brought in at the beginning of the prayer service)
- A globe (our common home)
- A plant or vase of flowers to symbolise the beauty of our world
- A picture of Pope Francis (or a copy of the letter *Laudato Si'* or a framed picture of the front cover)
- A Trócaire box, Children Helping Children globe or other objects symbolising the way in which we share our world with others
- A Bible to symbolise the Good News of Jesus Christ

Leader: Good morning everyone, and welcome to our time of prayer together to mark Catholic Schools Week 2017. We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us stand to welcome the light of Christ among us for our gathering this day while we sing our opening song.

Opening Song: 'Gathering Song', *Grow in Love*, Second Class, p. 88.

While the opening song is being sung the lighted candle is carried in and placed in the Sacred Space. After the opening song invite people to be seated.

Leader: We know that, just like us, schools all over Ireland are celebrating this special week. During this week the pupils, staff, parents, grandparents, members of boards and the people of the parish will show, in lots of different ways, that they are proud of their Catholic school. It is good to celebrate who we are and what we do.

The theme of Catholic Schools Week this year is **Catholic Schools: Learning with Pope Francis to Care for Our Common Home**.

Every day this week, we take time to think about how we can care for God's creation. Our world is a gift from God and he has entrusted it to our care. Pope Francis in his letter to everyone in the world, *Laudato Si'*, which means 'Praise be to You', reminds us of the gift of God's creation. Pope Francis is asking us to work together to create a better world for future generations and to take care of, respect and value our common home.

Reference to the Prayer Space can be made at this time, possibly asking the pupils what the symbols mean.



Leader: O God, how great and beautiful is all of your creation – from the smallest insect to the largest mammal.

You, God, have created for us a most magnificent world.

We praise you and thank you for our universe.

We promise to take care of your world by making responsible choices that will allow its balance and beauty to continue.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Leader: Let us listen to a reading from the Bible.

A reading from the Book of Genesis (1 and 2)

(This could be read by two pupils)

Reader: God is the beginning of all things. God made the heavens and the earth.

The earth was empty and dark, with water everywhere. Then God said, 'Let there be light.' And there was! There was evening and morning. This was the first day.

Next God put a wide space above the water. God called the space sky. This was the second day.

On the third day, God gathered the water into its own places. Now there were seas and dry ground. 'Let plants grow in the ground,' God said. And they did!

Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the sky for the day and for night.' God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. This was the fourth day.

On the fifth day, God made fish for the seas. He made birds for the sky.

On the sixth day, God made living things for the land. Then God said, 'Let us make human beings. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the living things on land.' God made the first human being from the dust.

God looked at all he had made. It was very good!

On the seventh day, God rested. He made that day a holy day.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.





Prayers of Intercession

Leader: We now turn to God in prayer.

The response to our prayer is: 'We thank you God, and we praise You.'

Reader 1: We thank you God for the beautiful world you have created for us. Help us to take the time to see the beauty you have made as a gift for us.

We thank you God.

Response

Reader 2: We pray that we will care for the world you have created for us. The care we give the earth shows you Lord how much we love you and the beautiful home you have given us.

We thank you God.

Response

Reader 3: We pray for our parents and grandparents. They watch over our home and are our first teachers in the ways of faith, and in how to cherish the world around us. May we follow their example as we grow and learn.

We thank you God.

Response

Reader 4: We pray for our teachers and all those who work in our school. Help them to continue to care for us and teach us about the wonder of your creation. Guide them to always see the special gifts and talents of all children they encounter.

We thank you God.

Response

Reader 5: We pray for those who have no home, no food or water. For people who have been forced to leave the place they live because of war, natural disasters, famine or drought. Help us to always share our home with others and help them in their time of need.

We thank you God.

Response

Reader 6: We pray for Pope Francis, for our bishop [insert name], for all priests and for all who work to share the Good News in our world. May they always have the courage to teach about the importance of caring for our common home.

We thank you God.

Response

Leader: Let us now pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:

Our Father...



Closing Prayer

Leader: Loving God, we thank you for the wonderful gift of our home.

As spring begins, help us see the beauty awakening all around us.

Help us to love and care for the earth and share it with all who live here.

Help us to be guided by Pope Francis, our teachers and families in how we live and how we learn.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, and our Lord.

Amen.

If the priest is present you might ask him to give a blessing at this time.

If the priest is not present, conclude:

We end our prayer time as we began, by marking ourselves with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us stand and join together and sing our closing song.

Closing Song: 'We Sing a Song to Brigid', *Grow in Love*, Second Class, p. 307.