



Prayer Service/Assembly to Celebrate the Beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2014

You Will Need

A large candle with the words Live, Learn, Share, Celebrate and Serve (*cf. final page of this document*)

A sacred space containing:

A holder for the candle and space to place each of the symbols that will represent the following words:

- Live** A book of the Gospels (this can be borrowed from your local church)
- Learn** Textbook, football, musical instrument, certificate for helping others, piece of art, anything that symbolises the different types of learning that happen in your school
- Share** A Trócaire box, Children Helping Children globe or other objects symbolising the way in which we share with others
- Celebrate** Bread and wine to symbolise how we celebrate our faith
- Serve** A bowl of water to symbolise our service of one another

One person to carry the lighted candle and place it in the sacred space

A number of children to place the objects in the sacred space

Two readers to comment on the objects

Five people to read the Prayer of Intercessions

Leader Good morning everyone, and welcome to our time of prayer together to mark the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2014. 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 while we sing:

Opening Song 'Christ Is My Light', *Alive-O3*, page 52

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 beginning a week of celebration. 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: Places of Faith and Learning**. Every day this week, we will take time to think about how our faith teaches us to live, learn, share, celebrate and serve so that we can be the kind of people that Jesus wants us to be and bring his love to the world. Every school is a place of learning, but what makes schools like ours different is that we are also a faith school. We are a school where faith is part of everything that we do, how we learn, how we play, how we treat each other, the kind of people we are. The two things are connected and this is what makes us the kind of school we are.



Some of the children in the school are going to explain this as part of our prayer today:

Child *Holds the book of the Gospels so everyone can see.*

Reader 1 When we listen to the Gospels we hear how Jesus wants us to live. In our school we try to live like this.

Children *Hold the objects that symbolise the different kinds of learning that happen in your school; a textbook, a football, a musical instrument, a certificate for helping others, a piece of art work etc, so everyone can see.*

Reader 2 In our school we learn lots of different things, English, Irish, Maths and many other subjects. We learn how to play games, how to play instruments and sing but we also learn how to look after one another, how to help one another, how to care for the earth and to paint and draw. In our school we learn to recognise and use the talents and gifts that God has given us so that we can be the best that we can be.

Child *Holds a Trócaire box, Children Helping Children globe or some other object that represents giving for your school from the sacred space so everyone can see.*

Reader 1 Jesus said to give your coat to someone who has none, feed the hungry, look after those who are sick, give shelter to those who have no homes. We learn to do this in our school when we support the work of Trócaire/Children Helping Children/St Vincent de Paul etc.

Children *Hold the bread and wine so everyone can see.*

Reader 2 In our school we celebrate in lots of different ways. We celebrate when we win, when we lose, we celebrate good news and good deeds and most importantly we celebrate our faith. This bread and wine reminds us that gathering together at Mass is the most important celebration of our faith and reminds us of how much God loves us.

Child *Holds the bowl of water so everyone can see.*

Reader 1 At the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of all his friends and showed us that we need to learn how to serve others. In our school we learn how to serve in many different ways: being reading buddies to the younger children, helping in the playground, cleaning up in the classroom or playground, welcoming people who are new to our country, parish or school. In this way we are doing what Jesus asked when he said 'do this in my memory'.

The people carrying the symbols remain standing so that all the symbols can be seen together at the end.

Leader Let us take a moment to look again at these symbols of our school as a place of learning and faith. We give thanks that our school is a place where our many different kinds of learning are all influenced by our faith in a God who loves us very much.

All symbols are then put into the sacred space and the children can return to their seats.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader We now turn to our God in prayer. The response to our prayer is: 'Lord, hear our prayer.'

Reader 1 We pray for our parents who are our first teachers in all things but especially in our faith. Let us pray to the Lord. Response.

Reader 2 We pray for our teachers and all who work in our school that they will continue to help make our school a place of faith and learning where we learn to be the best that we can be. Let us pray to the Lord. Response.



Reader 3 We pray for our priests, parish sisters and parish workers and all in our parish faith community that together we can continue to learn to live as Jesus wants us to. Let us pray to the Lord.
Response.

Reader 4 We pray for those who are worried, sick or who have not enough to eat that we will always do our best to support and help them in their time of need. Let us pray to the Lord. Response.

Reader 5 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 be the people that Jesus calls them to be. Let us pray to the Lord. Response.

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

Closing Prayer

Leader Loving God,
we know that you are always with us.
May we carry the light of Christ in our hearts,
in our minds and in our deeds,
so that our schools may be places of faith and learning
and we learn to be the best that we can possibly be. Amen.

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

LIVE

LEARN

SHARE

CELEBRATE

SERVE