PART III: PRAYER SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

There are times when it may not be possible or appropriate to celebrate the Eucharist or a Liturgy of the Word with a school community. There may also be some events or liturgical and scriptural themes that may be celebrated well using a prayer service. Times when it may be appropriate to use a prayer service include:

- Civic events (e.g., Remembrance Day, Mother's Day)
- Advent prayer and reflections (e.g., blessing and lighting of the Advent wreath)
- Lenten prayer and reflections (e.g., passion play or Stations of the Cross)
- New Year (e.g., blessing of the New Year or of the classroom)
- Marian devotion and prayer (e.g., rosary)
- Social justice reflections

Such celebrations allow for great creativity, such as incorporating many unique elements of fine art (choir, band, drama) or using student written reflections. There are also opportunities for students to assist in creating PowerPoint presentations. Prayer services provide an opportunity to reflect on current events or issues in our world (e.g., earthquake relief efforts, current military missions) and to pray for the needs of those involved. If a priest or deacon will be in attendance, consult him prior to the event and give him an active, prayerful role.

Take care to weave all the elements into a cohesive outline, stay with the message, maintain an orderly flow, and include prayer.

Several sample outlines or celebrations (in no way exhaustive of all the possibilities) are included on the following pages.

- Stations of the Cross for Lent: page 35
- New Year Prayer Service: pages 36-39

Sample Celebration: Stations of the Cross for Lent

For a Stations of the Cross script that can be used in a school gym celebration, please see the following link:

http://www.preachingpeace.org/documents/The_Way_of_the_Cross_Script.pdf

The script includes staging notes, gym set up, ideas for the accompanying PowerPoint, and suggested music.

Sample Celebration: New Year Prayer Service in Homerooms

Love one another as I have loved you.

Over the PA system and in homerooms on the second day back from Christmas break in January.

<u>Over the PA System</u>

Principal
The beginning of a new calendar year often inspires people to pause and reflect on their lives and their direction for the future. This morning, the _____ School Community is entering into a similar reflection through our New Year Prayer Service, based on our annual faith theme, "Love one another as I have loved you". I invite all you to listen to scripture, to pray, and to discern God's direction for your journey as a disciple of Jesus.

Leader of Prayer (Principal or Chaplain)
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray.
Loving God, we begin this new calendar year by honoring your holy presence. Open our eyes to see you, our ears to hear you and our hearts to love you. May your word renew and challenge us as we strive to love one another as you have loved us. We make these and all our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please continue our prayer service in your homerooms using the outline provided. You are asked to remain in your areas for the closing prayer, which will be done over the PA system.

<u>In Homerooms</u>

Homeroom Teacher
Please be attentive to the gospel reading for today.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

> **All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus and the disciples went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. There people were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?
I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.
They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching – with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

At once Jesus’ fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word (differentiate for different grade levels)
Homeroom Teacher
Today’s gospel reading reminds us that Jesus was indeed different from the religious leaders of the day. His teaching came both in word and action – he walked his own talk. Jesus’ authority was also clear to those who encountered him, and many responded positively to his authority and passion. His message of loving one another was quite radical for his time, and still is in ours!

Our gospel reading today shows a bit of how we might love as Jesus loved. First, Jesus was not afraid to speak about God. Other passages from scripture show that he spoke of God’s love, of God’s desire to be close to us, of God’s hope that we strive to live holy lives, loving others, praying, and knowing that God is always with us. Are we confident in our faith?

Second, today’s gospel gives us the example of Jesus responding without fear during his encounter with the man in the synagogue. He recognized the need for the man to be healed, and used his ability to heal him. Jesus’ actions matched his words. Are we willing to walk the talk of loving one another as we have been loved by God?

We are called, encouraged and challenged to be disciples of Jesus. This may seem like a tall order, but as Blessed Mother Teresa suggested, we can begin by responding to what is in front of us on a day by day basis.

- Respond to others positively, without gossip, rudeness or unkind words.
- Accept responsibility for the tasks that are ours to complete.
- Use our gifts and talents for goodness, justice and peace.
- Be realistic about our role in any given situation and act accordingly without rushing to blame or judge others.
- Take time for prayer and stillness, being open to listening to God’s direction in our lives.
- Show and speak our love for family, friends, peers and strangers.

These are a few ways we can live out our discipleship. This is how we will do God’s work in building God’s reign in the present moment. It is not complicated, but does require that we engage in the processes of listening, awareness, choice, prayer and praise, and being open to God’s guidance at every moment.

As we welcome this new calendar year, let us pray that we will each recommit to being disciples of Jesus, loving ourselves and others as God has loved us.

We begin at this moment by offering our prayers to God.

Student Reader
Our response is, "O Lord, help us to love others as you have loved us."
O Lord, help us to love others as you have loved us.

Divine Creator, inspire each of us to be living witnesses of your love for us in our words, our actions, our lives, we pray to the Lord.
O Lord, help us to love others as you have loved us.

Christ Jesus, give us minds and hearts open to your presence and direction in our lives, we pray to the Lord.
O Lord, help us to love others as you have loved us.

Spirit of the living God, help us to be courageous disciples by showing our love for our friends, families, school community and everyone we meet, we pray to the Lord.
O Lord, help us to love others as you have loved us.

Loving God, enfold in your gentle embrace all who are suffering with illness or loss, we pray to the Lord.
O Lord, help us to love others as you have loved us.

Homeroom Teacher
Loving God, you hear the prayers we have spoken, and those held in the quiet of our hearts. We are confident that you will respond; allow us to be open to the answers you give us. We offer these, and all our prayers, in your holy name. Amen.

Homeroom Teacher
At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Homeroom Teacher
Let us offer each other the sign of peace as we wait for the closing prayer over the PA system.

Over the PA system

Leader of Prayer (Principal or Chaplain)
Let us pray.
Loving God, every gesture of love and kindness contributes to building your reign. Help us strive to give our love, hope and help to those around us and to our world.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Throughout this day, throughout this year and throughout our lives, may the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord's face shine upon us and be gracious to us. May the Lord look upon us with kindness and give us peace.

And may almighty God bless us, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our prayer service is ended. Go in peace, disciples of Jesus, to love one another as God loves you!

Internet Resources

Sample prayers that may be accessed online include the following:

- Advent and Christmas Prayers:
  - http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/index018.htm.
- Advent Wreath:
  - http://www.scborromeo.org/prayers/adventwreath.pdf.
- Blessing of the Christmas Tree:
  - http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/prayers/view.cfm?id=449.
- Lent and Easter Season Prayers:
  - http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/index019.htm.
- Liturgy of the Hours:
  - http://www.universalis.com/.
- Stations of the Cross:
  - http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Stations-smallbooklet.pdf.
  - http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/index013.htm.
- Rosary (printable resource):
  - http://www.newadvent.org/images/rosary.pdf:
- Marian Prayers:
  - http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/index008.htm.
- Crowning of Mary:
  - http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/meditations/crownmed.html.

RESOURCES FOR PRAYER WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A Seasonal Book of Hours: Morning and Evening Prayer for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 2001.

An Everyday Book of Hours: A Four-Week Cycle of Morning and Evening Prayer. William G. Storey. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 2001.

As Morning Breaks and Evening Sets: Liturgical Prayer Services for Ordinary and Extraordinary Events in the Lives of Young People. Tony Alonso, Laurie Delgatto, Robert Feduccia. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 2004.

Blessings and Prayers for Children Who are Beginning to Pray with the Whole Church. Judy Jarrett Barrett. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications and World Library Publications, 1994.

Blessings and Prayers Through the Year. Elizabeth McMahon Jeep. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications and World Library Publications, 2004.

Celebrating the Lectionary Series. See www.cccbpublications.ca or www.ltp.org.

Children's Daily Prayer for Summer. Elizabeth McMahon Jeep. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications and World Library Publications, 2000.

Morning and Evening: A Parish Celebration. Joyce Ann Zimmerman, CPPS. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996.

Words for the Journey. Lisa Freemantle & Les Miller. Toronto: Novalis, 2009.

Words for the Journey for Kids. Lisa Freemantle & Les Miller. Toronto: Novalis, 2010.

Words for the Journey for Teens. Lisa Freemantle, Les Miller & Melinda Rapallo-Ferrara. Toronto: Novalis, 2011.