

Staffroom Prayer Prayer Leader Sheet



“I Shall Be There...”

Message to Catholic Schools for Education Sunday 2023

This year, the 10th September, marks the 175th celebration of Education Sunday for the Church in England and Wales.

Education Sunday, at the start of the new academic year, offers us an opportunity to pray to Almighty God for all people involved in Catholic education, to celebrate the achievements of the past and to ask Our Lord to bless the work of the year ahead.

This year, the resources for Education Sunday focus on the promise given by Jesus in St Matthew’s Gospel,

“Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.”

Matthew 18:20

As you gather today in your schools and universities, you can take these words to heart, for our Lord Jesus Christ always keeps His promise. You are gathered together in His name and He is with you as you work, learn, pray, grow and live out your mission.

The great desire of Jesus is to be with us and to invite us to enter into a personal relationship with Him, a relationship of love. When a person knows they are truly loved, a new confidence abounds.

St John Bosco, the great patron saint of young people and of education, once said,

“Without confidence and love, there can be no true education. If you want to be loved you must love yourselves, and make your children feel that you love them.” St. John Bosco

The mission of our Catholic schools, colleges and universities is to provide a holistic education which enables the lives of children and young people to flourish and for them to be formed into the men and women that God the Father has created them to be.

May our Catholic schools, colleges and universities always be places where children and young people discover that they are known and loved by the Lord in their uniqueness. May they be able to look back and recognise that our Lord Jesus Christ was present to them throughout their education. May the gift of faith inspire them, the gift of hope encourage them, and the gift of love sustain them as they strive to live out their unique mission in the world.

When young people leave our institutions, with Christ at their centre, may they do so with stronger faith and greater confidence, to share the love that they have received with others, in whatever vocation or work they undertake.

We owe much gratitude to all those who, over the past 175 years, have governed, led, taught and supported the children and young people in our Catholic schools, colleges and universities, and who have created the environments and opportunities for a loving encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ.

On this 175th Education Sunday, as we gather in the name of the Lord Jesus and have confidence that He is with us as He promised, let us give thanks to Almighty God for all the ways He has been present to us amidst the joys and sorrows of our life. Let us invite Him to be with us over the coming academic year.

Rt Rev Marcus Stock

Bishop of Leeds

Chair of the Catholic Education Service

Staffroom Prayer

Encouraged by words from Bishop Marcus, we now continue in prayer. This is the prayer for the week beginning 11th September. The Gospel on which these prayers are based is for 23rd Sunday of Ordinary time.

As we prepare ourselves for this quiet time of prayer and reflection, sit comfortably, breathe gently, try to clear your mind and find a sense of stillness.

MUSIC (1 min 30 secs)

Today's reading is from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18 verses 15-20.

'Jesus said to His disciples: "If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

"I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

"I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them."

PAUSE (20 secs)

The Gospel includes messages about day-to-day practicalities in the Church; dealing with issues and keeping good order. In school, we similarly have policies and guidelines to follow as we do our best to make our communities living examples of Christ's love. In our work lives and in our home lives we may face challenges and need a guiding path. It is in the last line of Jesus' teaching that He reveals the hope we need - whatever challenges we face, we can be sure that Jesus is with us.

PAUSE (1 min)

Jesus said that anyone who refuses to listen to the community should be treated "like a pagan or a tax collector". The twist in this message is that Jesus treated such people with great compassion and love. Take a moment to consider how this guiding principle, of treating someone with compassion, can influence your interactions with family, friends and the pupils in your care.

PAUSE (1 min)

Let us listen again to Jesus' words of hope...

"I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them."

PAUSE (20 secs)

Catholic schools are communities of faith where we gather in the name of Jesus. We are invited to acknowledge and welcome Jesus into our school community and to invite students and colleagues to experience Christ's love. The beginning of a new school year is a good time to reflect on your own personal relationship with Jesus.

Do you know Him well? Is He a stranger?

Does the talk of His presence make you feel uncomfortable?

Jesus promises to be with us. Remember, He is not present to us as a passive observer, or a harsh or condemning critic. He simply wants to invite us into a relationship of love with Him. Take a moment to reflect on what it means to you that Christ's presence is part of your school community.

PAUSE (1 min)

At the most difficult and challenging moments, we can be assured that God is present. Let's pray now for God's peace in our schools and in places around the world where there is conflict.

PAUSE (1 min)

Finally, take a moment to privately offer any prayers in your heart for yourself, a family member, a friend, your school, a colleague, a pupil or their family.

PAUSE (1 min)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.