

Helpers on the Road to Independence

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, and welcome to this prayer service to begin this inservice for Early Childhood Educators and Educational Assistants.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen
And let us pray. O God, we turn to you at the start of this day, knowing that you alone have the wisdom to guide our reflections and direct our actions. And so, we place ourselves confidently in your hands as we consider how to best help our students along the road to independence. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen.

READING

A reading from the Gospel of Luke (Lk 10: 1-3, 9)

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. [C]ure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'the kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

The word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION

Imagine how the seventy disciples must have felt at the outset of this new mission. They were being sent out as messengers of hope and joy - to prepare people's hearts to receive Jesus, the promised Messiah. They were to cast out demons and heal in the authority and power of his name. Perhaps they wondered whether they were well enough qualified or had the right experience to handle the situations they would meet. They might have felt anxiety, along with the joy, hope and personal fulfillment of this new calling.

Jesus chose them for who they were, and wisely sent them out together. They could rely on one another as they worked to instill hope and bring wholeness in Jesus' name. Jesus in turn, would follow and preach the path to freedom, restoring dignity and purpose to those who sought his help.

We are not so different from these disciples. Each of us is called to give, so that others can be truly free, and experience their dignity as children of God. We provide the support and skills that enable students in our care to move on and find fulfillment at the next level in their development. Through it all, we have one another, to share wisdom, experience, and provide encouragement. We are sent out in the name of the believing community, to help its young people grow in knowledge and skills in the light of faith. We have the community's support, and most importantly, we have Jesus the Master, who calls us to make the Kingdom present in our

work each day. He has chosen us, and is with us in the power of his Holy Spirit, as we nurture the giftedness and worth of our students on the road to independence each day.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray for the Church. That all who share a common baptism might work to help one another grow in freedom, dignity and love.

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the world. That all God's children might have their hearts opened to one another's needs in justice and peace.

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all those whose dignity suffers because of harmful economic, physical or emotional dependence. May the Good News of Jesus move the hearts of all who have the means to help them regain their dignity and independence.

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for ourselves, that we might be filled with the wisdom and courage to help all those in our care this year grow in independence in the light of faith.

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

For our own intentions...

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us gather all our prayers, spoken aloud and in our hearts and unite them as one, using the prayer Jesus taught us: ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, we thank you for choosing us to share in the mission of Jesus your Son, through Catholic education. Help us to carry out our roles with confidence, as we strive to help those who look to us for support and encouragement move forward on the road to independence each day. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.