

Catholic Education Week 2013

Prayer Services and Reflection Activities for 2012-2013

Advance Kit

Adapted for use in Renfrew County Catholic School Board



*'That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,
as you are being rooted and grounded in love.'*

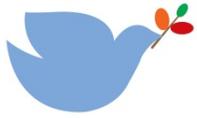
Ephesians 3:17



Catholic Education Week

May 5 - May 10, 2013

www.goodnewsforall.ca



Catholic Education Week 2013

“Catholic Education: Growing Together in Faith”

MAY 5 – MAY 12, 2013

Guidelines for using the Advance Kit

What is Catholic Education Week?

Each year, the Catholic community of Ontario celebrates Catholic Education Week with a week-long celebration of Catholic Education’s unique identity and distinctive contributions to the life of this province. This year’s celebration runs from Sunday May 5 – Sunday May 12, 2013.

What is the theme of Catholic Education Week?

The theme for Catholic Education Week this year is, “*Catholic Education: Growing Together in Faith.*” As we celebrate the Year of Faith with the rest of the Church, we remember that we are *rooted in Christ* through Baptism; we are called to ‘grow in faith’ and to bloom where we are planted. The scriptural passage that guides our theme is:

‘That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.’ Ephesians 3:17

What is the Catholic Education Week Resource Kit?

For a number of years OCSTA has developed and distributed a school-based Resource Kit of activities, prayer services and suggested resources based on the theme of the particular year. The Resource Kit is sent to Catholic school communities early in the year to assist them in their Catholic Education Week activities.

What is the Catholic Education Week Advance Kit?

This Advance Kit of **prayer services** and **reflection activities** is prepared by OCSTA and directed toward all Catholic educational partners (trustees, school board staff, school staff groups, parent groups, parish groups, associations, etc.). The purpose of this kit is to help these adult groups engage in prayer and dialogue in preparation for Catholic Education Week 2013. Users are invited to reflect on the theme of Catholic Education Week with prayer services and reflection activities – beginning in Advent and concluding in the month before Catholic Education Week.

Sub-themes of Catholic Education Week?

The Advance Kit has five prayer and reflection activities for the five months preceding Catholic Education Week, each activity reflecting one of the five sub-themes of Catholic Education Week:

1. **Advent – “Faith that is ... Rooted”**
2. **January – “Faith that is ... Nurtured”**
3. **February – “Faith that is ... Discerned”**

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

4. March – “Faith that is ... Witnessed”

5. April – “Faith that is ... Celebrated”

How can the Advance Kit be used in a local Catholic educational community?

Each service may be used to begin a meeting or gathering, or to provide an opportunity for the adult partners in a local Catholic education community to discuss the themes.

Each prayer service includes:

- Prayers that reflect the theme
- A scripture reading that connects with the theme*
- A personal reflection related to the scripture reading
- A theme-related reading taken from contemporary Catholic spiritual writings
- Questions for discussion or reflection based on that reading

Does the format of these prayer services always have to be followed?

The Advance Kit is a gift to be adapted and utilized in whatever way suits the needs of your local community. Feel free to use all, or any part, of the Kit in the five months prior to Catholic Education Week 2013, beginning in Advent 2012.

What approach should be taken to the discussion?

The Advance Kit is designed in Catholic education to help adult groups to sit down together to pray and reflect. In discussing the reflection questions found in this Advance Kit, it is important to allow for the divergent views and experiences that may emerge. Reflection sharing or discussions should be conducted in a gospel atmosphere of respect. Conflicting points of view should be heard and accepted without feeling the need for them to be resolved.

How can we help prepare for future Catholic Education Week activities?

OCSTA encourages all its partners to let us know about your group’s use of this Advance Kit by sending an email to OCSTA at the following email address: ocsta@ocsta.on.ca.

The Catholic Education Week Committee would also be pleased to receive your feedback on this Advance Kit as well as suggestions to improve its value to our partners in Catholic education.

These and all other Catholic Education Week materials are available at the OCSTA website: www.ocsta.on.ca.

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

*Note that the scriptural reading has been provided for your convenience; however, scripture should normally be read from a Bible or Lectionary.



“Faith that is ... Rooted”
Advent 2012

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Wood Hath Hope – John Foley, SJ

Only Hope – Mandy Moore, *A Walk to Remember* (CD)

OPENING PRAYER:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of all hope,

guide our advent journey,

lead us to deeper faithfulness,

lead us along paths of trust and holiness,

lead us to silent places where we can hear your voice speaking words of love and peace.

Guide us down to our roots,

to the source of deep meaning.

To the nurturing waters,

to true food for life.

Give us the strength of resilience,

the faith that when we are cut down

Your love will lead us to grow new shoots.

Let Your spirit flow through us this Advent season.

Let it prepare our hearts for Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace.

We pray in His name,

Amen.

READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse

and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of counsel and might,

the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness, he shall judge the poor
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth
and with the breach of his lips, he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness, the belt around his loins.
The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.
On that day, the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples;
the nations shall inquire of him
and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Isaiah refers to the new life that will grow out of roots. These roots of faith will give life to the Messiah. Who and what has nurtured your roots of faith?

READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Advent and Rootedness

The reading about the stump of Jesse reminds me of the Yellow Birch here in Southern Ontario. This relative of the more well-known white birch, grows in damp forests, often alongside cedars. A Yellow Birch often grows out of the stump of a dying tree. Its roots intertwine with the parent tree. As the older tree dies, it gives nourishment to the new birch.

Our faith life is rooted deeply in thousands of years of growth and sacrifice. As members of the Catholic education community in Ontario, we give thanks to those who have nurtured our faith; the priests, sisters, bishops, parents and students from previous generations, who fought for viable Catholic schools; our parents who passed on their faith to us; and our parish communities of faith.

These roots are intertwined and anchored to enrich the faith life of our generation. How can we nurture the faith of the next generation? – Les Miller

CLOSING PRAYER:

Gracious God,

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

bless our Advent journey.

Let this be a time of spiritual nourishment.

Let our roots draw up waters of peace and justice
to produce fruits of compassionate action.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, the Root of Jesse, Your Son.

Amen.

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS:

O Come Divine Messiah – Traditional

What A Strange Way to Save the World – 4Him, The Season of Love (CD)

– That's What Faith Must Be – Michael Card



“Faith that is ... Discerned”

February 2013*

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:

Come, Follow Me – Tom Franzac

Here I Am – Dan Schutte

That’s What Faith Must Be – Michael Card

OPENING PRAYER:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Loving God,

You call us again and again to follow You.

Open our ears to hear Your voice;

Open our eyes to see Your beauty;

Open our minds to grasp Your wisdom.

Grant us discerning hearts to recognize You as we journey.

Grant us strength to follow You faithfully.

We pray in the name of Jesus,

Amen.

READING: Mark 10:17-31

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother.’” He said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven; then, come, follow Me.” When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Jesus challenges the man.

What are the challenges that call me to live more fully by faith in my life?

How is our wider Catholic educational community...

- similar to the rich young man?

- different from the rich young man?

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

RESPONSE: Rembrandt's Aristotle With the Bust of Homer

In 1653, Rembrandt was commissioned to paint a portrait of Aristotle. Rembrandt selected a scene depicting Aristotle who was making a living as a tutor to Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedon. Aristotle faces us with a challenging expression. Who am I? Where am I going in my life? These are the questions of discernment. Aristotle's hand rests on the statue of the poet Homer, famous for writing the Iliad and the Odyssey. Around his shoulder, Aristotle wears a chain of office. He is a member of Philip's court. On this chain we can faintly make out Philip's image on the medallion. The tension in Aristotle's face is palpable; Am I an officer of the court or am I a creative teacher? Rembrandt may be projecting his tension here; Am I fulfilling a commission, or creating a work of art?

Within this portrait, we can find challenges with questions for discernment. For instance: Where does our path lie...

- as functionaries in the educational system, or
- as persons trusted to use vision and creativity to do the best for the students in our care?

In our faith lives, do we just follow the rules, or do we take the risk of following the Gospel?

Feel free to consider these questions in silence or in short discussion...



(Source Wikimedia: image in the public domain)

CLOSING PRAYER:

And this is my prayer,
that your love may overflow more and more
with knowledge and full insight
to help you to determine what is best,
so that in the day of Christ
you may be pure and blameless,
having produced the harvest of righteousness
that comes through Jesus Christ
for the glory and praise of God.

Amen.

St. Paul, Philippians 1:9 – 1:11

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



“Faith that is ... Witnessed”

March 2013*

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:

Servant Song – Donna Marie McGargill, OSM

The Servant Song – Richard Gillard

We Are Called – David Haas

OPENING PRAYER:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of all goodness,
give us the strength and wisdom
to see you acting in all of creation,
to hear the voices of voiceless,
to complete our prayers in loving action,
to translate our faith into works of justice,
to learn and live what it means to be *light for the world*.
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

READING: John 13:31-35

When he had gone out,
Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified
and God has been glorified in Him.
If God has been glorified in Him,
God will also glorify Him in Himself and will glorify Him at once.
Little children, I am with you only a little longer.
You will look for me;
and as I said to the Jews, so now I say to you,
‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’
I give you a new commandment,
that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.
By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.**

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

How does my life witness the love that lets people know that I am a person of faith?

READING: The Path of Witness, the Path of Discipleship

Notice the outcome of the commandment: 'If you love one another as I have loved you, then you will be My disciples and everyone will know that you are My disciples.' So, the measure of our discipleship to Jesus is not whether or not we support our country; not whether or not we did what everyone else did – but whether or not we love one another.

You do this well, so you are disciples of Jesus and I want to encourage you to keep on loving one another, to love everyone in your family, to love everyone in town, to love the people you don't like, to love everyone you will ever meet, to love every human being on the planet, to love the people the government tells us we're not supposed to love and to refuse to go along with the culture of hate and indifference and fear and violence and war, so that everyone will say, "Wow, those people (in our Catholic educational communities) are so loving; they are just like Jesus" and one day, when we reach the end of the road of love, we will be welcomed home into the house of love as we hear in the book of Revelation, where there are no more tears, no more suffering, no more pain, no more violence, no more empires, no more wars, no more nuclear weapons and no more death and we will be ready to spend eternity in the land of love, because we know how to love one another.

Father John Dear S.J. *Homilies*

http://www.johndear.org/sermons_homilies/loveOne05092004.htm

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION:

How does our Catholic educational community give witness to the love of Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER: A Prayer for Witnesses

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

may we, Your people,

bear witness to Your love for all.

May everyone we encounter in our daily lives

know that we are Christians by our lived witness

of Your love for us, in us and through us.

In our diversity, help us to rely on one another in love,

Just as we rely on You.

Help us grow in the gift of Your oneness;

As Your family, Your Church, Your people,

gathered in Your love.

We make this prayer to You in Jesus' name.

Amen. (Adapted from National Council of Churches: www.nccusa.org/witnesses2010/prayerforwitnesses.pdf)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS:

Prayer of St. Francis – Sebastian Temple

Go Make A Difference – Steve Angrisano and Tom Tomaszek

Hands – Jewel

My Own Two Hands – Ben Harper

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.



“Faith that is ... Celebrated”

April 2013*

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:

Christ, Be Our Light – Bernadette Farrell

The Light of Christ – Donald Fisher

OPENING PRAYER:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of light,

You bring joy amid our darkness.

Open our hearts more fully to the light of Your abiding presence,
that we might find true happiness and wisdom.

Grant us the humility to allow You to clothe us in Your beauty.

Grant us the strength to be witnesses to Your goodness in the world.

Grant us the wisdom to hear and speak Your truth.

Grant us hearts that overflow with love and care for the most vulnerable.

Grant us courage to co-create with You in this world You have wonderfully made.

Grant us an increase in faith, to dispel the darkness of doubt.

We make this prayer to You in the name of Jesus, Light of the World.

Amen.

READING: John 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word

and the Word was with God

and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through Him all things were made;

without him nothing was made that has been made.

In Him was life and that life was the light of all humanity.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.**

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

How do I reflect Christ's light?

READING: Our Struggle to Celebrate

What does it mean to celebrate something? To celebrate an occasion is to heighten it, share it, savor it, enlarge it. We also celebrate in order to link ourselves more fully to others, to be playful, to intensify a feeling, to bring ourselves to ecstasy and more commonly, just to rest and unwind. But, because of our incapacity to enjoy something, simply we often try to create that enjoyment through excess and seek the ecstasy of heightened self-awareness in the obliteration of our consciousness.

Small wonder we often trudge home with a hangover, emptier, more tired, more alone. A hangover is an infallible sign that somewhere we missed a signpost.

But we must continue to try. Christ came and declared a wedding, a feast, a celebration, at the heart of life. He shocked people as much by the way He enjoyed His life, as by the way He gave it up. In the end, He was rejected as much for His message of enjoyment as for His message of asceticism. That is still true today. We tend to read the gospels selectively so as to ignore Jesus' positive challenge to enjoy without guilt.

And in that lies our problem; because we are never challenged religiously and in the name of Jesus, to enjoy, deeply and without guilt, the very human pleasures of our lives, our healthy, God-given need for pleasure and enjoyment tends to go underground. We still seek pleasure and enjoyment, but now we split them off from what is religious and holy and 'steal them from God' rather than enjoy them simply and religiously. That is one of the main reasons why we substitute excess for enjoyment and an obliterated consciousness for heightened awareness.

God has given us permission to enjoy life and its pleasures. That truth too needs to be a central part of our religious teaching. Pleasure is God's gift, not the forbidden fruit.

Our Struggle to Celebrate <http://www.ronrolheiser.com/columnarchive/?id=443>

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION:

How do we celebrate life's simple pleasures?

- in our lives?
- in our Catholic educational communities?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Loving God,

You sent forth Your Son to bring hope to all peoples.
As Teacher, He upheld the importance of education.
As disciples, we look to Him for inspiration and strength.

* Adapted for RCCDSB use.

Thank You for the many sisters, brothers, priests and laypeople who have dedicated their lives in service to our Catholic schools.

Thank You for the trustees, administrators, educators and support staff who sustain our schools today.

Thank You for the parents who support and witness to the importance of Catholic education in their children's daily lives.

Thank You for the students who work hard to further their education.

Bless our schools and the many people who advance our mission.

May this building be a home for those who seek to grow in faith, knowledge and loving service.

May our community always support one another and extend hospitality to newcomers.

Fill our minds with the gifts of knowledge and wisdom.

May our understanding of the world help us to grow in their appreciation.

Fill our hearts with gladness.

May we always turn to you in times of celebration and times of need.

Fill our hands with the tools we need to serve others.

May we show them your unceasing love through our actions.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

St. André Bessette, pray for us.

St. Marguerite D'Youville, pray for us.

Canadian Martyrs, pray for us.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

(Adapted from Catholic Schools Week Prayer <http://www.thereligionteacher.com/catholic-schools-week-prayer/>)

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS:

City of God – Dan Schutte

You Are the Voice – David Haas