



RCCDSB 2018-19 Summer Institute Opening Prayer ***Reverencing the Dignity of the Whole Person***

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon. At the beginning of today's session, let us pause for a few minutes to reflect on our 2018-19 board theme in light of God's word, and to ask God's blessings on our activity.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And let us pray. We thank you, O God for summer's rest, for renewed energies and new directions. Open our hearts to receive your word, that it might take root deeply in our lives; give our presenters wisdom as they share from the gifts and talents you provide, as we prepare for a new school year. We make this prayer to you in Jesus' name. Amen.

And now, let us listen to God's word.

READING (Mark 9: 33-37)

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION

Taken from *Renewing the Promise. A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education*, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, 2018.

"People often comment that when they enter a Catholic school they feel a special presence. This does not come from the building or even the religious symbols that are an important witness to our faith. The presence comes from Christ who is proclaimed by word and example, and is evidenced in the way people care for one another – 'see how they love one another.' Catholic schools witness to Christ and by doing so help to reveal Him to others." (P. 9)

Optional Reflection Question:

How have I seen people “care for one another” in Christ-like ways in schools where I’ve worked?
(Pause 30 Seconds)

“Catholic education forms communities of faith that help students experience the love of God. The more our students see and understand themselves as the beloved children of God, the more they will want to love God with all their hearts, minds and souls. This in turn moves them to love of neighbour which bears witness to justice and charity. Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” The more we love God, the more we love our neighbour and the more we engage in the community.” (P. 10)

Optional Reflection Question:

How have I seen staff helping students to “see and understand themselves as the beloved children of God”?
(Pause 30 Seconds)

“Catholic schools are places where children and young people may find solid and enduring values to give hope, meaning and relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship, and the certain knowledge of God’s unwavering love for us, provides a firm place to stand in shifting times. The promise is that this true encounter with Jesus can and does take place, each and every day within our Catholic schools. Together, we renew that promise by continuing to strengthen our Catholic schools as communities that exemplify the Good News of Jesus in word and deed.” (P. 15)

Optional Reflection Question:

What are some of the “solid and enduring values” we foster in students to help them live as disciples of Jesus – on the school yard, in the classroom and elsewhere?
(Pause 30 Seconds)

Optional Plenary Sharing (3-5 minutes)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray for the Church. That all who follow Jesus will have the wisdom to see past differences and courage to welcome him in their neighbour. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the world. That all God’s children will heed the Holy Spirit’s movement within their hearts toward unity in love and peace. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray in thanksgiving for summer’s rest, and for the grace to grow in reverence for the dignity of all whom we are called to lead and serve during this coming school year. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for all those struggling with illness and pain in body, mind or spirit – in our families, schools and communities. For their healing and accompaniment by hearts and hands reaching out in love. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for ourselves here – for all our needs, those of our loved ones and friends. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Gathering all our prayers – spoken and in the silence of our hearts – let us bring them confidently before God with one voice, using the words that Jesus taught us: ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

Please join in our 2018-19 Board theme prayer:

Most Blessed Trinity,
We praise You for having created us
In Your image and likeness
To shine forth as unique masterpieces
Among all Your creatures.
Your gift of faith
Bestowed on us at Baptism
Gives us eyes to see
The wonder of Your beauty in one another,
Minds to understand
The greatness of our neighbour's dignity,
And hearts to approach with reverence
All those entrusted to our educational care.
We ask You to bless and strengthen us
In our work for Catholic education.
May all that we do
Be marked with reverence
For the sacred dignity of students and staff
You have called us to lead and serve.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,
Amen.
(Optional: *Glory be...*)

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