



Start of Year Prayer Service for Secondary Teachers

This prayer service is designed to take place in homeroom, religion class, school chapel or other appropriate gathering space. The prayer service can be shortened by omitting the time for meditation and small group faith sharing or by omitting time for participants to offer personal prayers of petition.

Supplies

- A Bible for the scripture reading
- A computer or similar device with internet access to play streaming music for meditation (optional)
- A crucifix to place in the prayer service room if one is not already present in the prayer space

Order of Prayer

Opening Rite

Welcome

(Prayer Leader) Welcome! As we, as a class, prepare to begin a new school year together, we join to ask for God's help and blessings upon all our efforts.

Sign of the Cross

(Prayer Leader) In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
(All Gathered) Amen.

Opening Prayer

(Prayer Leader) Heavenly Father, we turn to you and ask for your help and blessings upon our new school year in the _____ grade at _____. Bless our students and their families and give us the graces and blessings we need to work together to realize new growth and learning in faith, academics and more.

We ask all of this through Christ our Lord.
(All Gathered) Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

Scripture Reading (Note. A reading is provided below; however, you may choose another reading that fits with the theme of the school year or other topic.)

(Designated student or teacher) A reading from Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12: 12-27)

- 12 As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.
- 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.
- 14 Now the body is not a single part, but many.
- 15 If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body.
- 16 Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body.
- 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?
- 18 But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended.
(**Note. Shorter reading option ends here.)
- 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be?
- 20 But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body.
- 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you."
- 22 Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary,
- 23 and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety,
- 24 whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it,
- 25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another.
- 26 If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.
- 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it.

Reflection on Scripture

(The Prayer Leader/teacher) *Note.* Share a brief reflection based on the theme of starting the year as a class, with energy and togetherness. Integrate the key idea from Saint Paul's Letter that although we each have distinct roles in the class and different God-given gifts, we are all called to work together for faith and academic learning. Jesus is with us in this school every day and we are called to be his hands and feet and to work together as one for a common purpose.

Quiet Meditation

(Prayer Leader) Students, now we will take some time to deepen our reflection on the Scripture reading. I invite you to reflect on the faith-sharing prompts to prepare for small group sharing.

(Note. The prayer service leader may play some quiet music during this time. Instrumental music is suggested.)

Faith-Sharing Prompts

1. What gifts has God given me as a child of God to show His love in our school every day?
2. How can we work together as a group for the glory of God?
3. How can we be Christ's body as a class, and as individual parts of it in this school?

Small Group Faith Sharing

(Prayer Leader) Students, please move and form small groups of four. (pause until sharing circles are formed) Now I invite you to talk in your groups about the prompts for 10 minutes. I also ask that each group select a leader to keep time and ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak at least one time.

(Note. Time in small groups can be adjusted according to teacher observation of student engagement.)

Petitionary Prayers

(Prayer Leader) Students, now that we have completed our small group faith sharing, please go back to your seats. (pause) Now we turn to our Heavenly Father to ask him in a specific way for some of the graces and blessings we need.

(Prayer Leader) We pray for each of us gathered here today. Bless us Heavenly Father with a desire to work together as a class to increase our faith and academic learning. We pray to the Lord.

(All Together) Lord, hear our prayer.

(Prayer Leader) We pray that we will come to know more about the faith journey of the person(s) for whom our school is named. (Note. This may be a saint, church leader or other).

(All Together) Lord, hear our prayer.

(Prayer Leader) We pray, as students at _____ that we will appreciate and live the mission of our school, today and tomorrow.

(All Together) Lord, hear our prayer.

(Prayer Leader) Heavenly Father, we pray for those we know who are sick and in need of our prayers for health and healing. We pray to the Lord.

(All Together) Lord, hear our prayer.

(Prayer Leader) Heavenly Father, we pray for our Church and school leaders, that they may help us in our faith and academic learning and help us to be one body with many parts. We pray to the Lord.

(All Together) Lord, hear our prayer.

(Prayer Leader) If there are prayers that you would like to offer, please do so now. (Note. At this time, students may offer prayers using the format above.)

Our Father

(Prayer Leader) Please join me now in praying the Our Father.

(All Together) 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. Amen.

Closing Rite

Closing Prayer

(Prayer Leader) Heavenly Father, we offer our thanks for this time of prayer and ask again that you energize us to work together in our school and begin this year with hope and a positive vision for the future. Bless each one of us so that we can fully share the gifts you have given to us in the _____class/grade at _____. Let us all remember that we are Christ's body, and, individually, parts of it.

(All Together) Amen.

Sending Forth

(All together while also making the sign of the cross) May the Lord bless us, please keep all of us in this school safe and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

(Prayer Leader) Announcements (*Note.* The teacher may want to build on ideas for enhancing how students can work together towards the common mission and vision of the school.)