

Diocese of Elphin

Mass for the Beginning of the School Year

The following is intended as an example.

Please feel free to edit in the way which best suits the needs of your school.

Introduction

This is the Mass to begin our school year. In it we pray for each other and for the whole school family. We ask God to help us with our learning, our friendships, our sport, our music, our hobbies and with everything that is part of our school. Journey with us throughout this year. Give us hope as we look forward with anticipation and enthusiasm. Give us courage to walk together with friends who are already familiar to us and with new friends who have recently joined us. May your blessings fall on all who are part of our school community as we celebrate this Eucharist.

Entrance Hymn: This is the Day/ another appropriate hymn

Presentation of Symbols: *(This is the most appropriate time to carry forward symbols if you want to do this) – you could choose from any of the ones below or add your own symbols.*

Opening Commentary and Presentation of Gifts

I now invite our children to come forward to present their symbols and (**name of child**) will read a short reflection.

We bring forward the Bible. As we listen to your word Lord, help us to grow to be more like you.

We bring forward a Crucifix, representing the prayer life of the school. Lord bless the time we spend in prayer. May we always know your love for us and help us Lord to grow in faith, hope and love.

We bring forward a book representing our learning and knowledge. May we never grow tired of learning. Help us Lord to grow in Knowledge and understanding.

We bring forward a football representing the games that we play. May we always play fairly and include everyone in our games. Help us Lord to grow in strength and fairness.

We bring forward an art picture representing the creativity of each person in the school. May we always use our talents for the good of others. Help us Lord to grow in imagination and joy as we create.

We bring forward our circle of friends (*the circle of friends can be made with play dough*) representing our friendships. Help us to grow in peace and harmony. May we always treasure the gift of friendship and always give thanks to our greatest friend, Jesus.

We bring forward a candle representing Jesus, the light of the world. It reminds us that in baptism we are called to follow Jesus and that we are challenged to see God in all things. May we always carry the light of Christ with us in our hearts and bring it to everyone we meet.

We bring forward our school crest. We are grateful for the many gifts and blessing we receive through being part of this school community.

We bring forward a map of the world.- This is a reminder that as members of the Body of Christ we are part of a much wider community. Led by the Holy Spirit we should always be aware of the needs of others and be prepared to use our gifts and talents to help and support them.

Penitential Rite

We ask the Lord to touch us with his mercy.....

Your mercy Lord warms our hearts
Lord have mercy

Your mercy Lord enlightens our minds
Christ have mercy

Your mercy Lord changes our lives
Lord have mercy

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, as a new school year begins, we ask your help. May we always be aware of the needs of others in school and in our parish. Help us to listen and learn in our classes; do our very best in our homework; play our full part in school and class sports and come to know and love you more and more each day. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

First Reading

A Reading from the prophet Isaiah

I want to tell the whole wide world -'God has been good to me!'
I want to tell the whole wide world-'God is wonderful!'
I want to sing and to shout because I am so happy, for God has come to me and he is great!

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Response: Lord teach me your ways

The Lord guides us in the way we should go,
and protects those who please him.

If we fall we will not stay down
because the Lord will help us up.

Good people's words are wise
and are always fair.
They keep the law of God in their heart
and never depart from it.

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

May God give you the power through His Spirit for your true self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints come to realise the great love of Christ. Glory be to God whose power working in us can do more than we ask or imagine.

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Glory to you, Lord

One day Jesus said: 'I don't want you just to work for me and do as you're told. I want you to be my friends and be happy with me. 'But remember, you did not choose me; I chose you to be my friends and I want you to be friends with each other.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Homily

Prayers of the Faithful – A small selection of the prayers below

Let us make our prayers to God, as we pray at the beginning of our school year:

We pray for all who are new in our school, pupils and staff; may they be happy here and find friends. Lord hear us

We pray that we will come to know Jesus better and follow the example of love that he shared. Give us the strength and faith to make his love known here on earth. Lord hear us

As we begin this school year, we pray that we will always listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, which is a powerful guide in all the decisions we make. Lord hear us

We pray for all past pupils, especially for those who left last year; that they may get on well in their new school. Lord hear us

We pray for anyone who has died belonging to us. Lord have mercy on them and welcome them home to heaven. Lord hear us

We pray for all those children in our world today who, because of poverty, cannot attend school. May we never take for granted the gift of an education. Lord hear us

Faithful God, fill each and every one of us with the gift of your love so that this school community may be a better place because we are in it. Lord hear us

For all who work in our school, that they may share their knowledge in a spirit of gentleness and patience

For all at home, that their trust and love may always be an example to us

Lord help us to spread happiness at home, by our pleasant words and happy faces and by helping whenever we can. Lord hear us

Lord help us to spread happiness at school by doing our work well and by being kind and gentle with our friends. Lord hear us

Lord help us to spread happiness in the playground by letting others join in our games. Lord hear us

Lord help us to spread happiness in our parish by coming together each Sunday to pray. Lord hear us

Lord we pray for all children everywhere, especially the children who are sick, homeless and without food. May we, who have plenty, share with those who have nothing. Lord hear us.

May this school community, rooted by our faith in God, be filled with acts of kindness and gentleness, Lord hear us

Loving God, we put before you this morning any special intentions that we may have and we remember now for a moment anyone who has asked us to pray for them. Lord hear us

And now together we pray to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, to bless us as we begin our new school year.**Hail Mary**.....

Dear Jesus, you call us to be your friends. Your amazing love calls us to be true friends to each other. Through this school year, let us walk with you, let us talk with you, let us pray with you, and let us be guided by you. We ask this in your name. Amen

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God, with our simple gifts of bread and wine we offer you ourselves. As we prepare to meet Jesus in the breaking of the bread, may this Holy Eucharist bring us closer to you and to one another. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

God did not call us, each on our own.

God called us to be a family.

That we may be what God wants us to be, we pray;

Our Father.....

Communion Hymns: Do This in Memory, Happy in the Presence, etc.

Communion Reflection:

What will this year bring? We do not know!

It will bring its usual times of work and play,

experiences of success and failure,

all the things that are part of school life.

It is a new beginning;

the planting of a seed that will grow for a year,

the seed of fruit that will blossom in times to come.

It is a new hope;

hope for good work, for friendship, for fun, for learning.

In this coming year, may there be learning, prayer and fun.

May there be hard work, faith and friendship.

May no one in this school be lonely; may no one be left out in class;

may no one suffer through the others here.

As we begin this year in hope, in prayer and in friendship,

may the Lord begin it with us, be with us during it,

and successfully bring it to its conclusion.

Donal Neary S.J.

Prayer after Communion

Loving God, you have fed us through your word and sacrament. In this our new school year, help us to journey in faith, to recognise Jesus in one another and to serve each other as he has shown us. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The whole Mass has been leading up to this moment, when we go forth from here....

Jesus the Lord has made a difference in our lives; we go now to make a difference – to be the best people we can be.

Pause, followed by blessing and dismissal.

Blessing of Junior Infants (All Junior Infants stand.)

May God bless you as you begin your time here in (name of school.)

May Jesus be your friend to accompany you on your journey.

May the Holy Spirit inspire you in all your activities. **Amen.**

Blessing for Children

Loving God,

We ask your blessing upon these children.

We are thankful for their energy and their enthusiasm.

Gift them with open hearts to seek you and hear your word.

Help them recognize that living our faith is a way of life.

We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Blessing for Teachers and Staff

Loving God,

We ask your blessing upon these men and women, our teachers and staff.

We are thankful for their generous spirit, as well as their care for our young people.

Gift them with wisdom and patience in their ministry.

Help them to gently guide our children as they journey in faith.

We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Blessing for Parents and Guardians

Loving God,

We ask your blessing upon parents and guardians.

We are thankful for the love and care they have for their children.

Gift them with insight and perseverance as they share their faith with their children.

Help them to share an abundance of love with their children,

so that their children may come to know your love.

We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Blessing for Parishioners

Loving God,

We ask your blessing upon all of us.

Through our Baptism, we are responsible for helping each other come to know you.

We are especially responsible for all our children.

Help us to live as models of faith in action, as witnesses to your love,

so that these children may be inspired to live a life of faith.

We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

And may Almighty God bless us all, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord

Thanks be to God

Final Hymn: Christ be our Light / another appropriate hymn