

Diocese of Elphin

Prayer Service for the Beginning of the School Year

Classes may like to create a list of dreams/hopes for the year and these can be put in a box and placed on the Sacred Space. Each year group could also carry up a symbol representing their class and place it on the Sacred Space at the beginning of the Prayer Service. Please note that this is a sample prayer service and should be adapted and cut to suit the particular needs of the school.

Introduction:

Today we celebrate a new school year. We pray for each other and for the whole school community. We will ask God for help in our work, our friendships, our hobbies, and with everything that is part of our school. We start by giving thanks. Before we begin, we will take a few moments of quiet to think of the things we are thankful for.

Pause for Quiet prayer

Opening Hymn: This is the Day/ Another suitable hymn

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.

Opening Ritual

We open this door to welcome all who may enter this space.

May we show your love to one another! **Bless us O Lord**

We open this window to welcome the opportunities that will come our way.

May your Holy Spirit fill us with energy and joy! **Bless us O Lord**

We open our books and look forward to all we will learn and understand.

Jesus, help each one of us to see more clearly! **Bless us O Lord**

Invite the children to close their eyes

We open our hands to all that we will do this year.

May we use them to help one another! **Bless us O Lord**

We open our hearts to all that God has in store for us.

May we always make room for God in our hearts! **Bless us O Lord**

We open our eyes to one another. May we see clearly that each one of us is special and loved completely by God! **Bless us O Lord**

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as we begin this new school year, we gather together to ask for your help in our learning and our playing, our listening and our friendships, our teaching and our sharing.

Thank you for the refreshment of the holidays, for the people we have met and the places we have been. We give thanks for our school, for it is a special place for us, Make it special for you also God and bring your peace, love and friendship to everything we do here. As we learn and play, be with us. Be with us in our laughter, be with us in our tears, be with us when we get things wrong and when we get things right. Be with us as we come to school and as we travel home. Be with us always God. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us make ourselves ready for what God is saying to us today....

‘Open the door of your heart; that the Lord may enter in.’

Brief pause

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.

Hymn: My Shepherd is the Lord

Reflection: *Some points you may wish to include are these:*

We need to know how deeply God loves us in order to share his love with other people.

To be deeply rooted in our faith helps us to withstand any problems we may encounter.

Our faith can be made stronger and more firmly rooted by listening to and reading God’s word and through our prayer life.

Jesus reminds us in the Gospel that being faithful means that we must act on that faith by doing good works.

Jesus has planted the seed of love in our hearts. May we grow in this love and bring it to all the places we go, in school, at home, in our parish, and everywhere.

Planting Of Bulbs:

God will work in you, his love will grow in you, and come to life just as these bulbs will grow and blossom and become beautiful flowers. So will you be beautiful in God’s eyes. You are very precious to him. He wants to see you grow this year.

Prayers of Petition:

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**.....

Let us pray

Help us Lord, to use well the talents you have given each of us. Help us bring them to our work so that we do it to the best of our ability. May all in this school feel valued, for who we are in your sight. May all we do be done in love. We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Let's listen now to a short 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.

Litany of Thanks:

Response: We give you thanks

For summer memories **(R)**

For your gift of creation **(R)**

For asking us to be your friend **(R)**

For showing us how to love and care for one another **(R)**

For offering us forgiveness **(R)**

For our families, friends and parish **(R)**

For our school **(R)**

Final Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you call us to be your friends. 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. In that way our lives will be planted in love and we will be connected by love to you, the true vine this year and always. **Amen.**

Final Hymn: Connected