



Catholic Schools Week

UNITED IN FAITH AND COMMUNITY

UNITED TO SERVE

Teacher Background

The theme for Catholic Schools Week is **Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community**. In this prayer service, the students will reflect on how the school community is united in the call to serve those in need.

Before celebrating the prayer service, prepare the prayer table with a green cloth, a cross or crucifix, a candle, and a Bible open to Matthew 19. Divide the class into three groups, and assign each group one of the following Scripture passages: Matthew 19:21; Luke 14:13-14; or Deuteronomy 15:7-8. Invite the groups to discuss the meaning of the Scripture passage for their lives today. Give the groups time to practice reading aloud and together their assigned Scripture passages.

Before gathering the students in the classroom prayer center, remind them that part of a Catholic school education is learning to become more aware of the needs of others in our own communities, and in other parts of the world. Catholic school students have many opportunities to serve those in need.



Opening Prayer

- Gather the students in the prayer center, reminding them to bring their Bibles (or copies of their assigned Scripture passages) with them.
- Light the candle. Sing a song about serving the needs of others, such as “Go, Make a Difference.”
- Lead the class in praying the Sign of the Cross, and then continue as follows.

In all parts of the world there are people who do not have the basic necessities of food, shelter, and water. As a faith-filled community, it is our responsibility to learn about and serve the needs of others.

Let us pause and think about the ways we can serve those in need throughout the school year.

What are some of the groups—or who are some of the individuals—we try to help? (*Invite volunteers to respond.*)

Now think of needs we have not addressed. What else could we do to help and serve others? (*Invite volunteers to respond.*)



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Word of God

- Invite Group 1 to proclaim their reading (Matthew 19:21), and allow for a moment of silence.
- Invite Group 2 to proclaim their reading (Luke 14:13-14), and allow for a moment of silence.
- Invite Group 3 to proclaim their reading (Deuteronomy 15:7-8), and allow for a moment of silence.
- Invite volunteers to share the meaning of the Scripture verses for their lives today.



Prayers of Petition

Lead the students in prayers of petition, inviting them to respond,
“Lord, hear our prayer.”

We pray in thanksgiving for the opportunity to attend *(name of school)*.
Help unite us as a faith-filled community, we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray in thanksgiving for those who teach us about our faith
and who help us to grow as disciples of Jesus, we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for help in hearing your call to serve others
and to work for justice and peace for all, we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those in need,
may they have their needs met, we pray:
Lord, hear our prayer.



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Concluding Prayer

Pray together the Sign of the Cross, and sing a hymn that speaks of serving and caring for others.

**God our Father,
as students and as a teacher in this Catholic school,
we are united in our faith, which calls us to serve the needs of others.**

**Through the Holy Spirit,
grant that we will value our Catholic school as a faith-filled community
that guides us all to live the values of the Kingdom of Heaven.**

**We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**



Extending this Prayer Service

Option 1. Recall with the students the needs named at the beginning of the prayer service that they have not yet addressed as a class in their community service activities. Consider if there is one need the class could address, perhaps as a Lenten service project this year. Identify the need, brainstorm ways to work together to meet the need, and make a plan for the project.

Option 2. Celebrate ways the students have served others through school service projects and opportunities through the parish, with their families, or on their own. Have all of them trace on construction paper and cut out outlines of their hands. On each hand, have them write one way they have taken part in an effort to serve others in need. Encourage them to cut out as many hands as needed. Make a display of the hands in the classroom or in the hallway. Label the display “We Serve Others’ Needs.”

Option 3. Remind the students that every day offers simple ways to serve others at school, at home, at church, and in the neighborhood. Brainstorm with the class a list of simple ways to serve. Encourage the students to be more attentive to responding to these service opportunities each and every day.