

TIME TO PRAY

Seasonal Prayer Services for Middle Grades

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The Pastoral Center

*Dedicated to students everywhere,
that they may experience God's presence and love
in their lives through prayer.*

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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
---------------------------	----------

Fall	7
-------------------	----------

Live In Peace: Being Peacemakers in Our World.....	9
-----------------------------------------------------------	---

Works of Mercy: Remembering St. Vincent de Paul.....	11
-------------------------------------------------------------	----

The Little Flower: Honoring St. Thérèse	13
------------------------------------------------------	----

Mysteries of Light: Praying With Our Lady of The Rosary	17
----------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Give to Others: Helping the Poor	19
-----------------------------------------------	----

Honor the Saints: Celebrating All Saints Day	21
-----------------------------------------------------------	----

Give Thanks to God: Praising Our Creator at Thanksgiving.....	23
----------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Winter	27
---------------------	-----------

Light of the World: Lighting the Advent Wreath.....	29
------------------------------------------------------------	----

Live in Hope: Helping Others During Advent.....	31
--------------------------------------------------------	----

Waiting for Jesus: Praising God in the Advent Season	33
-------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Glory to God: Celebrating the Christmas Season	37
-------------------------------------------------------------	----

Journey of the Magi: Following the Star	41
------------------------------------------------------	----

Believe in Jesus Christ: Seeing God in Our Lives.....	43
--------------------------------------------------------------	----

You Are the Messiah: Honoring St. Peter.....	45
-----------------------------------------------------	----

Spring 49

Renew our Hearts: Giving of Ourselves During Lent 51

Take Up Your Cross: Living as Disciples During Lent 53

Life of Love: Remembering St. Katherine Drexel..... 57

Patron of Ireland Celebrating St. Patrick 59

Annunciation of the Lord: Honoring the Blessed Mother..... 63

God of Mercy: Celebrating a Reconciliation Service 65

Walking with Jesus: Praying the Scriptural Stations of the Cross..... 69

Signs of Easter: Rejoicing In the New Life of Easter..... 75

Road to Emmaus: Celebrating the Easter Season 77

Summer 81

Living in the Spirit: Celebrating Pentecost..... 83

Greatest Commandment: Sharing With Others..... 87

Sowing Seeds: Living the Word of God..... 89

Faith in God: Honoring St. Thomas..... 91

Hearts for Jesus: Caring About Others..... 93

Pray Always: Giving Thanks and Praise to God 95

Walking in Justice: Loving Others 97

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important things we do for students in our classrooms is help them learn to pray. We must help the students be people of prayer if they are to grow in faith and become everything that they were created to be.

Through prayer we lift up our hearts and our lives to God. We offer all that we have and all that we are to the God who created us and loves us. Prayer connects us with God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Prayer strengthens our relationship with God and with one another.

Prayer Services Involve Students in Prayer

Prayer services are a great way to draw students into prayer. Prayer services allow all the students to be actively involved in praying the responses and prayers. Students can proclaim the scripture readings and lead the intercessions. The prayer services in this resource include many ideas for helping the students learn to pray in different ways. The prayers give the students words to express their thoughts and feelings to God. Prayer services encourage students to pray together for their needs and the needs of others.

Prayer Services Encourage Students to Live Their Faith

Enrichment ideas are included within the prayer services to encourage the students to live their faith. Ideas such as hearts for Jesus, the prayer chain, thank you leaves, the cross prayer, and others help students explore who we are called to be as disciples of Jesus Christ. The themes of the prayer services speak to what students are learning. The prayer services are geared for students in grades three to six, but can be easily adapted for other grade levels. These prayer services are for all God's children.

Prayer Services Call Students to Be Gospel People

Scripture is stressed in the prayer services since as Christians we are called to live the Word of God. The gospel is the heart of each prayer service. All the prayers and readings take their direction from the gospel message. The gospel readings are taken from all four gospels so that students explore all of the gospels. These prayer services help students learn that we are to live the values of the gospel in our lives. A listing of all the gospel passages used in these prayer services can be found at the end of this resource.

Prayer Services Are for All Times and Places

The prayer services in this book can be used for prayer each week, each month, or each season of the church year. These prayer services can be prayed with individual groups of students, with several grade levels gathered for prayer or with an entire school or faith formation program. Families can be invited to celebrate these prayer services with the students. This book is a great resource for whole community catechesis, including parish programs, Catholic schools, Sunday programs, Vacation Bible Schools, family programs, or wherever students gather to give praise to God. Wherever there are students, there should be prayer.



FALL

The prayer services in the fall section will help get the year off to a great start for students, teachers, and catechists. These prayer services reflect what is going on in the liturgical year as well as in the lives of the students and the activities in the parish during September, October, and November.

The beautiful season of Ordinary Time calls us to live the teachings of Jesus Christ. The gospels that we hear proclaimed during this season call us to discipleship. They show us all what being followers of Jesus Christ is all about. Because Jesus Christ was the servant of all, we are called to serve others as he did. Ordinary Time is anything but ordinary. The word “ordinary” refers to the word “ordinal,” marking the season as numbered time. Ordinary Time calls us to be the people of God. We remember that we were created for life with God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

One of the prayer services in this section will help students pray for peace in our world. We join our prayers with others as we seek to live as peacemakers. Students can pray the rosary together using the mysteries of light to praise God for all he has done for us in Jesus Christ. Students will be encouraged to help the poor in a prayer service about giving. Another prayer service helps the students thank God for all our gifts and blessings. They can celebrate the example of the saints through prayer services honoring St. Vincent de Paul, St. Thérèse, and celebrating All Saints Day.

Activities in each prayer service involve the students and show them how to follow Jesus Christ in their lives. Students can make peace posters, roses for Jesus, and thank you leaves. A saint prayer table will help students learn about the example of the saints. An idea is also given for encouraging students to help others by providing birthday party items for children at a homeless shelter. Through their prayers and their actions the students learn to give praise to our God.

LIVE IN PEACE

Being Peacemakers in Our World

Opening Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus, we come before you today
and praise your holy name.

**All: We give you thanks
for all you have done for us.**

Leader: We know that you came for all people,
all races, all cultures.

**All: May we live always in in your peace.
Amen.**

First Reading

Reader: *A reading from the letter of Paul
to the Colossians (3:15-17).*

The peace that Christ gives is to guide you
in the decisions you make;
for it is to this peace that God
has called you together in one body.

And be thankful.

Christ's message in all its richness
must live in your hearts.

Teach and instruct one another
with all wisdom.

Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs;
sing to God with thanksgiving
in your hearts.

Everything you do or say, then,
should be done
in the name of the Lord Jesus,
as you give thanks through him
to God the Father.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Prayer (35: 1-3, 13, 19-21)

Leader: Let us now praise God
with our psalm recited in two parts.

**Left: Praise the Lord!
Praise his name,
you servants of the Lord,
who stand in the Lord's house,
in the Temple of our God!**

**Right: Praise the Lord, because he is good;
sing praises to his name,
because he is kind.**

**Left: Lord, you will always
be proclaimed as God;
all generations will remember you.**

**Right: Praise the Lord, people of Israel;
praise him, you priests of God!**

**Left: Praise the Lord, you Levites;
praise him, all you that worship him!**

**Right: Praise the Lord in Zion, in Jerusalem,
his home. Praise the Lord!**

Gospel Reading

Gospel reader:

*A reading from the holy gospel
according to Matthew (5:23-24).*

So if you are about to offer your gift to
God at the altar and there you remember
that your brother has something against
you, leave your gift there in front of the
altar, go at once and make peace with your
brother, and then come back and offer
your gift to God.

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection

Jesus Christ came for all people,
all nations, all races, all cultures.
We are called to be peacemakers in our world today.
We must also pray for peace.

If we have hurt someone by our words or actions,
we must ask forgiveness of them.

If we are holding grudges,
we must forgive in our hearts.
We are to live in peace in the name of Jesus Christ.

Peace Posters

Encourage the students to make peace posters before the prayer service. Provide 11" x 14" sheets of white poster board and have colorful markers on hand. Students can work in pairs to create posters with drawings and words that promote ways to live in peace. Display the posters in the area where the prayer service will be held.

Intercessions

Leader: We now offer our prayers and
our petitions to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our response to each petition is:
God of peace, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: For victims of violence,
may there be an end to the fighting
and injustice in our world. (R)

Reader 2: For leaders of nations,
may they seek peace with one another
for the good of all people. (R)

Reader 3: For those who live with discrimination,
may there be an end to the hatred. (R)

Reader 4: For the church throughout the world,
may we work for justice and peace. (R)

Reader 5: For all of us gathered here,
may we treat people of
all races and cultures with respect. (R)

Leader: May we also live in peace
in the ways shown on our peace posters.
We ask you, Lord Jesus Christ,
to hear all our prayers. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Leader: Let us offer one another
a sign of God's peace.

All: *(To one another)* **Peace be with you**
(Response) **And also with you.**

Prayer of St. Francis

Leader: Let us pray the beautiful
Peace Prayer of St. Francis.

**Left: Lord, make me an instrument
of your peace.**
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light,
and where there is sadness, joy.

Right: O Divine Master,
grant that may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying
that we are born to eternal life.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus,
you call us to be peacemakers
in our world today.
Let peace begin with each one of us.

All: Amen.

WORKS OF MERCY

Remembering St. Vincent de Paul

Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us pray. God of all people,
we come together today to celebrate
the love you have for each of us.
We remember that we are to
share that love with others.

All: Help us to live in your love.

Leader: You give us the example of
St. Vincent de Paul
who worked among the poor.
He tried to make life better for
those in need.
May we remember that we too are to serve
others in the name of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

First Reading

Reader: *A reading from the first letter of John
(4:7-11).*

Dear friends, let us love one another,
because love comes from God.
Whoever loves is a child of God
and knows God.

Whoever does not love
does not know God, for God is love.
And God showed his love
by sending his only Son into the world,
so that we might have life through him.

This is what love is:
it is not that we have loved God,
but that he loved us and sent his Son to be
the means by which our sins are forgiven.

Dear friends, if this is how God loved us,
then we should love one another.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Prayer (Psalm 146:1-2, 6-7, 10)

Leader: We now lift up our voices
in praise to God.

Left: Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, my soul!
I will praise him as long as I live;
I will sing to my God all my life.

Right: He always keeps his promises;
he judges in favor of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

Left: The Lord is king forever.
Your God, O Zion,
will reign for all time.
Praise the Lord!

Gospel Reading

*Before the prayer service, ask for volunteers to read
the parts of the narrator, the king, and a person. This
dramatic reading brings the gospel alive for students.*

Narrator: *A reading from the holy gospel
according to Matthew (25:34-40).*

Then the King will say to the people
on his right,

King: "Come, you that are blessed by my Father!
Come and possess the kingdom
which has been prepared for you
ever since the creation of the world.
I was hungry and you fed me,
thirsty and you gave me a drink;
I was a stranger
and you received me in your homes,
naked and you clothed me;
was sick and you took care of me,
in prison and you visited me."

Narrator: The righteous will then answer him,

Person: "When, Lord, did we ever
see you hungry and feed you,
or thirsty and give you a drink?
When did we ever see you a stranger
and welcome you in our homes,
or naked and clothe you?
When did we ever see you sick
or in prison, and visit you?"

Narrator: The King will reply,

King: "I tell you, whenever you did
for one of these least important
of these followers of mine,
you did it for me!"

Narrator: The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection

St. Vincent de Paul lived this gospel and saw Jesus Christ in others. St. Vincent lived in France and worked among the poor people in the towns and countryside outside the city of Paris. He brought food and clothing to those in need. He brought medicine to the sick. St. Vincent is an example to all of us of the importance of reaching out to others.

Classroom Collection

Some teachers in schools in low income areas do not have enough classroom supplies. Collect items needed by a teacher to enrich learning for the students in his or her class. In this way students who have more can share with students who have less. Encourage the students to bring in items and send a note home explaining this project. Students bring the items they are donating to the prayer service. Items such as the following are good: flash cards, phonics games, alphabet bingo, books for beginning readers, art supplies, calculators, plastic shoe boxes, dictionaries, chalkboard erasers, overhead markers, copy paper, manila envelopes, pencils, sticky notes, tape, staplers and staples. (You may wish to consult a teacher or principal to see what specific needs their school has.)

Leader: If you have classroom supplies to donate for the class we are helping, please bring them forward at this time. Thank you for sharing with others. *(Students bring forward donated items and place them in the collection box.)*

Intercessions

Leader: We ask the Lord to hear the prayers we offer today. Our response to each petition is: **God of love, hear our prayer.**

Reader 1: May we love one another as Jesus loves us.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Reader 2: May we live as followers of Jesus in all that we do.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Reader 3: May we make the world a better place one day at a time.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Reader 4: May we work for justice for all people in our world.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Reader 5: May we see the face of Jesus in each person we meet.

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Father of us all, we thank you for the gift of this day and the gift of one another. Help us to remember that all of us are brothers and sisters in Christ. Fill us with your love that we may reach out to others in your name. May we see you in others as did St. Vincent de Paul.

**All: Send us your Spirit
that we may live in justice
and walk in peace each day. Amen.**

THE LITTLE FLOWER

Honoring St. Thérèse

Opening Prayer

Leader: We celebrate the life of St. Thérèse
who was also known the Little Flower.

St. Thérèse tried to do her best
in the small things of everyday life.

She was a person of prayer
in all that she did.
She talked to God in her own words
and trusted that God knew
what was in her heart.

**All: May we live as Jesus Christ taught us
each day. Amen.**

First Reading

Reader: *A reading from the first letter of Paul
to the Corinthians (13:4-7).*

Love is patient and kind;
it is not jealous, or conceited or proud;
love is not ill-mannered
or selfish or irritable;
love does not keep a record of wrongs; love
is not happy with evil,
but is happy with the truth.

Love never gives up;
and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Prayer (Psalm 147:1-5, 7-8, 11-12)

Leader: Let us now praise our God with our psalm
recited in two parts.

Left: Praise the Lord!

**It is good to sing praise to our God;
it is pleasant and right to praise him.**

**Right: He has decided the number of stars
and calls each one by name.**

**Great and mighty is our Lord;
his wisdom cannot be measured.**

Left: The Lord is king forever.

**Your God, O Zion,
will reign for all time.
Praise the Lord!**

**Right: Sing hymns of praise to the Lord;
play music on the harp to our God.**

**Left: He spreads clouds over the sky;
he provides rain for the earth
and makes grass grow on the hills.**

**Right: He takes pleasure
in those who honor him,
in those who trust in his constant love.
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!**

Gospel Reading

Narrator: *A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark (9:33-35).*

They came to Capernaum, and after going indoors Jesus asked his disciples, "What were you arguing about on the road?"

But they would not answer him, because on the road they had been arguing among themselves about who was the greatest.

Jesus sat down, called the twelve disciples, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must place himself last of all and be the servant of all."

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

A Rose for Jesus

Talk with the students the week before the prayer service about the life of St. Thérèse. Ask them to imitate St. Thérèse by being kind to others without expecting a reward. Hand out "Rose for Jesus" cards to the students. Ask the students to fill out their cards with a kind act they will do for others and bring the cards to the prayer service. To make the "Rose for Jesus" cards use half sheets of paper card. Duplicate the cards so each student will have one.

Leader: St. Thérèse loved God with all her heart. She tried to be nice to everyone. She promised to spend her time in heaven doing good for people and showering them with roses.

As a sign that we will follow the example of St. Thérèse in caring about others, bring forward your "Rose for Jesus" cards and place them in the basket on the table. *(Students place their cards in the basket.)*

Intercessions

Leader: Let us now offer our prayers to the God who calls all of us to live a life of love. Our response to each statement is:
Lord, help us to be like St. Thérèse.

Reader 1: St. Thérèse prayed to Jesus through everything she did. Even while she was doing chores, she did them for Jesus.

All: Lord, help us to be like St. Thérèse.

Reader 2: St. Thérèse was always kind to others. Even when people criticized her or were ungrateful, she responded with kindness.

All: Lord, help us to be like St. Thérèse.

Reader 3: St. Thérèse turned to Jesus in times of happiness, in times of sadness, and in times of trouble. She was always faithful.

All: Lord, help us to be like St. Thérèse.

Reader 4: St. Thérèse was a holy person who shared her time with others. She was patient with other people and listened to them.

All: Lord, help us to be like St. Thérèse.

Reader 5: St. Thérèse loved everyone, including those who were not nice to her. She said her vocation was love.

All: Lord, help us to be like St. Thérèse.

Closing Prayer

Leader: God of all people, you gave us St. Thérèse as an example of holiness. She was patient and kind to everyone who came her way.

Help us to be like St. Thérèse and do the best we can each day. May we share the love of Jesus Christ with others.

All: Amen.



Rose for Jesus

I will do good for others like St. Thérèse by:

Name:



Rose for Jesus

I will do good for others like St. Thérèse by:

Name:



SPRING

The prayer services in this spring section will help the students journey through the Lent and Easter seasons together. These prayer services are for the months of March, April, and May. If the season of Lent comes early in a particular year, the Lenten prayer services in this section can be used earlier.

The season of Lent should be a time of prayer and a time of giving. It is a season of renewal and a time for growing in faith. We journey with Jesus to his life, death, and resurrection. Then we celebrate the glorious season of Easter as a time of hope and new life. God's promise to the people has been fulfilled in a way no one could have imagined. The church year helps us to celebrate all that God is and all that we are as God's people.

The prayer services at the beginning of this section will help students enter into the spirit of the Lenten season. Students are encouraged to lift up their hearts in prayer to our God and reach out to others. A reconciliation service is included to help the students celebrate this sacrament as a sign of God's forgiveness and mercy. The students will walk with Jesus Christ using the scriptural Stations of the Cross, which are based on the gospels. This is a meaningful experience for students, catechists, and parents. The students also learn about following Jesus Christ through prayer services honoring St. Katherine Drexel, St. Patrick, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus. With spring comes the beautiful Easter season which celebrates all that we believe. Prayer services are included to help the students give glory to God for the new life we have through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Activities in each prayer service encourage the students to become involved. A Lenten giving tree is suggested as a way for students to reach out to people in need. A prayer cross helps students make Lent a time of prayer outside the classroom. Shamrock prayers invite the students to pray to God in their own words. Proclaiming the Annunciation in parts pulls the students into this gospel story and reminds them that we too are to say yes to God in our lives. The signs of new life for the Easter prayer table help the students give praise to God in this glorious season.

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

Living as Disciples During Lent

Opening Prayer

Leader: God, Father and Creator,
during this holy season of Lent
we gather together to remember
all you have done for us.
We thank you for your unending love
for each of us.

You sent your Son, Jesus Christ,
to us as the Savior of the World.
We give glory to your name
through your Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

First Reading

Reader: *A reading from the book of Isaiah (42:1).*

The Lord says,
“Here is my servant, whom I strengthen—
the one I have chosen
with whom I am pleased.
I have filled him with my Spirit,
and he will bring justice to every nation.”

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Prayer (Psalm 138:1-5)

Leader: We now praise God with our psalm prayer.

**Left: I thank you, Lord, with all my heart;
I sing praise to you before the gods,**

**Right: I face your holy Temple,
bow down and praise your name
because of your constant love
and faithfulness,**

**Left: Because you have shown that your name
and your commands are supreme.**

**Right: You answered me when I called to you;
with your strength you strengthened me.**

**Left: All the kings in the world
will praise you, Lord,
because they have heard your promises.**

**Right: They will sing about what you have done
and about your great glory.**

Gospel Reading

Reader: *We listen to a reading from the holy gospel
according to Luke (9:23-25).*

And Jesus said to them all,
“If you want to come with me,
you must forget yourself,
take up your cross every day,
and follow me.

For if you want to save your own life,
you will lose it,
but if you lose your life for my sake,
you will save it.

Will you gain anything if you
win the whole world but are yourself lost?”

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord, Jesus Christ.

Intercessions

Leader: We remember today in our prayers
those for whom life is difficult.
Our response to each petition is:
Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader1: For those who carry the cross of poverty,
may they find a helping hand,
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 2: For those who carry the cross of injustice,
may they be treated fairly,
we pray to the Lord..

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 3: For those who carry the cross of sickness,
may they be comforted,
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 4: For those who carry the cross of war,
may they find peace, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 5: For those who carry the cross of
mental illness,
may they be healed, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask you, Lord, to hear our prayers
and our petitions.

We pray for all those in need
around the world.
Be with them and guide them
as they struggle to carry their crosses
each day.

All: Amen.

Lent Prayer Cross

*Duplicate on purple copy paper and laminate. Cut out
the crosses and place them in a basket.*

Leader: Come forward at this time
to get a Lent prayer cross.
We will pray this prayer now
and you can pray it at home
with your family
during this season of Lent.

*(Each student takes a prayer cross from the
basket.)*

Closing Prayer

**All: Jesus, during this holy season of Lent,
we ask you to be with us.
Help us to follow you always.
May we live in justice
and walk in peace. Amen.**

Lent Prayer

Jesus, during this holy season of Lent,
we ask you to be with us.
Help us to follow you always.
May we live in justice
and
walk in
peace.
Amen.

Lent Prayer

Jesus, during this holy season of Lent,
we ask you to be with us.
Help us to follow you always.
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Amen.