

Catholic Education Week 2012
Prayer Services and Reflection Activities for 2011-2012

Advance Kit

Walking in
the Light of
Christ



Catholic Education Week
May 6 - May 11, 2012



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association



Catholic Education Week 2012

“Catholic Education: Walking in the Light of Christ”

MAY 6 – MAY 11, 2012

Guidelines for using the Advance Kit

What is Catholic Education Week?

Each year the Catholic community of Ontario engages in a week-long celebration of the unique identity and distinctive contributions of Catholic education during Catholic Education Week.

What is the theme of Catholic Education Week?

This year’s celebration, entitled “*Catholic Education: Walking in the Light of Christ*” is scheduled for the week of May 6 – May 11. The scriptural theme is “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” taken from the book of Psalms (119:105). Jesus proclaims, “I am the Light of the World” (John 8:12). Our Catholic schools rejoice to walk in that Light, “a Light which overcomes the darkness with its radiance” (Matthew 4:16).

What is the Catholic Education Week Resource Kit?

For a number of years OCSTA has developed and distributed a school-based Resource Kit of activities, prayer services and suggested resources based on the theme of the particular year. The Resource Kit is sent to Catholic school communities early in the year to assist them in their Catholic Education Week activities.

What is the Catholic Education Week Advance Kit?

In order to help all Catholic educational partners engage in prayer and dialogue in preparation for Catholic Education Week 2012, OCSTA has prepared an Advance Kit of **prayer services** and **reflection activities**. Unlike the Resource Kit that is designed for students, the Advance Kit, sent early in the school year, is designed to help adult groups (trustees, school board staff, school staff groups, parent groups, parish groups, associations, etc) reflect on the theme of Catholic Education Week with prayer services and reflection activities beginning in Advent and concluding in the month before Catholic Education Week.

What are the sub-themes of Catholic Education Week?

The Advance Kit has five prayer and reflection activities for the five months preceding Catholic Education Week, each activity reflecting one of the five sub-themes of Catholic Education Week:

- 1. Advent – “Listening in the Light of Christ”**
- 2. January – “Learning in the Light of Christ”**
- 3. February – “Living in the Light of Christ”**
- 4. March – “Loving in the Light of Christ”**
- 5. April – “Leading in the Light of Christ”**

How can the Advance Kit be used in a local Catholic educational community?

Each service may be used to begin a meeting or gathering, or to provide an opportunity for the adult partners in a local Catholic education community to discuss the themes.

Each prayer service includes:

- .. prayers that reflect the theme;
- .. a scripture reading that connects with the theme;*
- .. a personal reflection related to the scripture reading;
- .. a theme-related reading taken from contemporary Catholic spiritual writings;
- .. questions for discussion or reflection based on that reading.

***Note that the scriptural reading has been provided for your convenience, however scripture should normally be read from a Bible or Lectionary.**

Does the format of these prayer services always have to be followed?

The Advance Kit is a gift to be adapted and utilized in whatever way suits the needs of your local community. Feel free to use all or any part of the kit in the five months prior to Catholic Education Week 2012, beginning in Advent 2011.

What approach should be taken to the discussion?

The Advance Kit is designed in Catholic education to help adult groups to sit down together to pray and reflect. In discussing the reflection questions found in this Advance Kit, it is important to allow for the divergent views and experiences that may emerge. Reflection sharing or discussions should be conducted in a gospel atmosphere of respect. Conflicting points of view should be heard and accepted, without feeling the need for them to be resolved.

How can we help prepare for future Catholic Education Week activities?

OCSTA encourages all its partners to let us know about your group’s use of this Advance Kit by sending an e-mail to OCSTA at the following e-mail address: ocsta@ocsta.on.ca.

The Catholic Education Week Committee would also be pleased to receive your feedback on this Advance Kit as well as suggestions to improve its value to our partners in Catholic education.

These and all other Catholic Education Week materials are available at the OCSTA website: www.ocsta.on.ca.

Walking in the Light of Christ

“Listening in the Light of Christ”

Advent 2011

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:

Be Still – David Kauffman

Breath of Heaven – Amy Grant

Listen, My People – Paul-Andre Durocher

OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God,

send Your Spirit of peace upon us
as we wait and listen.

We long to hear Your voice,
we yearn for Your grace.

Like Mary,

give us hearts of patient expectation,
give us hearts full of faith and wonder,
give us hearts made glad with joy and hope.

Teach us to listen for Your voice,
in the wisdom of the elderly and cry of the newborn,
in the poor and the outcast,
in the students in our care and their families,
in our colleagues and in our families.

May this Advent season be a time of patience and peace.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, our hope and our home.

Amen

READING: Luke 1:26-35

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you will name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over

the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be Holy; He will be called Son of God.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Mary listened to Gabriel’s message and pondered. Ponder. What a wonderful word! Over what messages of God are you pondering in your life now?

READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Mary and Listening

The Psalmist tells us, “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46) Being still in a frenetic world is our Advent challenge. We live in a land of deafening distractions, where messages of hope, faith, joy and love have become minor strains in a cacophony of jungles, car horns and rushing feet. The deeper call to slow down is overwhelmed by an outer call to hurry up.

Mary listens to Gabriel’s message. Most of us do hear the messages. But do we ponder them? Do we listen deeply? Do we listen with wise ears? In our schools, do we model good listening? Do we become still, so we can ponder how God is calling us? Let us spend some time in quiet now to listen and ponder.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Gracious God,

You speak to us in whispers and symphonies.

Teach us again to listen with our hearts,

to listen beyond words,

to listen into wisdom,

to listen for Your voice in baby’s cry,

to listen for Your voice in plea of the outcast,

to listen for Your voice in the anguish of a bruised creation,

to listen for Your voice in the students we serve.

We make this prayer in the name of the Child Jesus, whose love embraces us all.

Amen

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS:

Only Hope – Mandy Moore, (CD) A Walk to Remember

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – Traditional

O Come Divine Messiah – Traditional

What a Strange Way to Save the World – 4Him, (CD) The Season of Love



Walking in the Light of Christ

“Learning in the Light of Christ”

January 2012

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:

Come, Follow Me – Tom Franzac

Thy Word – Amy Grant

OPENING PRAYER:

God of the journey,

You sent us Jesus, the Great Teacher,
to show us the way to You.

To the farmers and fisher folk of Galilee,
Jesus taught using images of the land –
olive trees, shepherds and sheep,
grape vines and seeds sown –

in order to bring His listeners to an understanding of His message.

Yet, some continued to walk in darkness.

We pray that our hearts connect with the words and images
of the Great Teacher, Your Son.

May these words reveal Your life-giving truth
so that we may go forth,

illuminated by the knowledge of Your love.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, the Teacher.

Amen

READING: Matthew 11:25-27

At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

What wisdom can children teach us?

READING: Learning and Humility

Father Ron Rolheiser reminds us that our learning is good, but as leading learners we should be aware of the traps of being learned:

When we are “learned and clever” we can more easily forget that we need others and consequently don’t as naturally reach for another’s hand, as does a child. It’s easier for us to isolate ourselves. When we are less aware of our contingency, we more easily lose sight of the things to which God and life are inviting us. The very strength that intelligence and learning bring into our lives can instill in us a false sense of self-sufficiency that can make us want to separate ourselves in unhealthy ways from others and understand ourselves as superior in some way. And superiority never enters a room alone, but always brings along a member of her children: arrogance, disdain, boredom, cynicism. All of these are occupational hazards for the “learned and the clever” and none of these helps unlock any of life’s deep secrets.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION:

What are the characteristics of a wise Catholic leader?

CLOSING PRAYER:

God of all hope,
bless the learning and the wisdom
of our community.
May the light of Christ guide us,
may our prayers be completed in acts of justice and love,
may all we do lead to You.
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, Light of the World.

Amen

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS:

Blest Are They – CBW III #522
Holy Wisdom, Lamp of Learning – Beach Spring



Walking in the Light of Christ

“Living in the Light of Christ”

February 2012

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:

You Are the Voice – David Haas

Here I am Lord – Dan Schutte

OPENING PRAYER

Living God,

come and be light for our eyes.

Be the air we breathe;

be the voice we speak.

Come be the song we sing.

Be our path as we walk in Your light.

Your life was given for all people,

so that death would be overcome

and life would be eternal.

Fill us with Your vision

as people of justice, healing, forgiving,

light for the world.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord,

from whom all good things come.

READING: John 1:1-5

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Glory to You, Lord

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being with Him and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

What are the dark places in my life?
How does Christ help you to overcome this darkness?

READING

In the movie, *The English Patient*, there is a scene in which a young soldier (Kip) invites a nurse (Anna) on a date in war-ravaged Tuscany. Ron Rolheiser calls this scene a modern parable. The soldier invites her to walk on a path lit by small candles. They ride to a Church that has suffered bomb damage. Using his engineering skills, he rigs a block and tackle to raise her up towards the ceiling. Through the light of a flare, she can see the beautiful biblical scenes painted on the walls. She soars around the Church to the strains of angelic music. Anna responds with gratitude.

As educators we are like Kip. We invite our students to walk a path of light that leads to an encounter with the sacred. We use our skills as educators, to raise up our students, so that they can see the beauty of God in scripture, art and tradition.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION:

What are the ways our community can lead our students to Christ?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Living and eternal God,
You call us out of darkness
to live as people of light.
We raise our voices
and lift our hearts
to reveal Your life-giving truth and wisdom.
May we continue to walk
in the path of Your light,
as we build Your kingdom on earth.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord,
from whom all good things come.

Amen

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONG:

You Raise Me Up – Josh Groban



Walking in the Light of Christ

“Loving in the Light of Christ”

March 2012

SUGGESTED OPENING SONG:

City of God – Verse # P. 540 GP

OPENING PRAYER:

Loving and merciful God,
draw me into Your light.

Help me to release what no longer serves me
to make room for Your light to fill me.

Illuminate my mind with a knowledge of You
and grant me energy to see You
in all I do and in all those I meet,
in the pursuit of justice and in the light of peace.

As I journey through this school year, may You guide me always
to listen,
to learn,
to love,
to live and
to lead
in Your light.

Grant this, through Your Son, Jesus, the light of the world.

Amen

READING: John 13:33-34

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

How does the love of God enlighten your everyday life?

How do you carry on God’s love for others to help them live in the light?

READING: The Path of Love

“Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore, we must be saved by hope. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we must be saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe, as it is from our standpoint; therefore, we must be saved by a final act of love, which is forgiveness.” –Reinhold Niebuhr

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION:

What are the barriers to building a community of love within our community?

CLOSING PRAYER:

May God’s love enlighten you
to model to your community
the presence of the light of Christ
and His compelling compassion for all.

Amen

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONG:

City of God – Verse #3 GP 548



Walking in the Light of Christ

“Leading in the Light of Christ”

April 2012

SUGGESTED OPENING SONG:

The Light of Christ – Donald Fishel – CBW III #394

OPENING PRAYER

God of creation, give us Your wisdom to lead others into Your light. Help us to illuminate our leadership with the light of faith, understanding and patience. Strengthen us to lead our communities with the model of Christ’s light, so that the children in our care and their families may continue to grow in faith and knowledge of His love.

Amen

READING: Matthew 20:20-28

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons and kneeling before Him, she asked a favour of Him. And He said to her, “What do you want?” She said to Him, “Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your kingdom.” But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” He said to them, “You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you, must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you, must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came, not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.”

QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

What are the distinctive qualities of Catholic leadership?

READING:

Our children are not ours, they are God's children. In the end, we are only their guardians, all of us. God is the real parent and God's love, care and anxiety for them will always be in excess of our own. You are never a single parent, even if you are doing the parenting alone. God is alongside, loving, caring, cajoling, worrying, trying to instill values, trying to awaken love, worrying about what company they are keeping, concerned about what they are watching on the internet and spending the same sleepless nights that you are.

God's worry exceeds our own. –Father Ron Rolheiser, *Children in Our Care*

<http://www.ronrolheiser.com/columnarchive/?id=547>

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION:

How do we sustain our vision of Catholic leadership?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, in the night and in our rising, we know Your love and care. Continue to be the guiding light for our community. Walk with us in light as we seek to know You in every aspect of our lives.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name

Amen

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONG:

We Are Called – David Haas – Gather #301

