Catholic Education

Becoming Artisans of Peace

Prayer Services and Reflection Activities for 2026-2027

ADVANCE KIT

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."
(Matthew 5:9)

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)
"Heureux les artisans de paix, car ils seront appelés enfants de Dieu." (Matthieu 5,9)

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2027 Catholic Education Week

Catholic Education: *Becoming Artisans of Peace*
L'éducation catholique: *Devenir artisans de Paix*

May 2 – May 7, 2027

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: *Becoming Artisans of Peace*"** is scheduled for the week of May 2 – May 7, 2027. The scriptural passage that guides our theme is, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."* (Matthew 5:9)

What is the Catholic Education 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 new year to assist them in their Catholic Education Week activities.

What is the Catholic Education Advance Kit?
In order to help all Catholic educational partners engage in prayer and dialogue in preparation for Catholic Education Week 2027, 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:

Advent: ***Peace from God***
January: ***Peace within***
February: ***Peace with others***
March: ***Peace in our communities***
April: ***Peace in the world***

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. The prayer services include:

- → 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 the contemporary Catholic spiritual writings
- → Questions for discussion or reflection based on that reading

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 2027, beginning in Advent 2026.

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 email to OCSTA at the following email 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 on the OCSTA website at: www.goodnewsforall.ca.

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

Catholic Education:
BECOMING ARTISANS of PEACE

Advent 2026

"Peace from God"

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this time of prayer during the Advent season. The theme "Peace from God" is one of the subthemes for Catholic Education Week and one of the candles that we light during the Advent Season symbolizes PEACE.

Our theme for Catholic Education this year is inspired by Pope Leo's call for all of us to become active artisans of peace. In a world wounded by conflict, division, and indifference, Pope Leo invites us to build bridges where there are divisions and to reflect Christ's heart of peace in every encounter.

Our Catholic faith teaches us that we can become artisans of peace because God, who *is* Peace, created us in his image and likeness. When we choose peace, we reflect the peace that God has gifted to each one of us. Peace comes directly from God through Jesus Christ and remains with us through the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in John's Gospel, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you" (John 14:27). Peace is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit and when we build bridges with others, we reflect God's peace within us.

We pray today, during this Advent season, that we may grow more deeply in our own baptismal vocation as peacemakers to help radiate the peace that Jesus brought into this world through his incarnation, and to bring healing, reconciliation, and hope.

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- **Peace be With You –** https://youtu.be/DXjkA0XncRw
- **Let There be Peace on Earth –** https://youtu.be/_AMvzan3EKM
- **O Come, O Come Emmanuel -** https://youtu.be/Ley1aOPDHCE?si=jrJl24dsXLGcWXxe

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, in this sacred season of Advent, quiet our anxious hearts and fill us with your perfect peace. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, help us to trust in your timing, surrender our burdens, and become active artisans of your peace in a world longing for hope. May your presence dwell within us, guiding our steps as we work to build bridges of peace in our relationships. May our words and actions say to everyone we meet: "Peace be with you."
We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Prince of Peace.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

A reading from Saint Paul's Letter to the Colossians.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord. ***R. Thanks be to God.***

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- How can you let the peace of Christ rule in your heart during this Advent season and beyond?
- Take a moment to consider the five virtues mentioned by St. Paul (compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience). How do these virtues bring peace in our own hearts and how do they help us build bridges of peace in our families, our workplaces, our parishes, and in our community?
- Which one of these virtues comes most naturally to you?
- Which one of these virtues do you find hardest to live out?

Spend some time thanking God for the gift of his peace and ask him to give you the strength to live out these virtues so that you may become an active artisan of peace in your family, workplace, parish, and community.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

With the joy and hope of Advent, let us bring our prayers before God, who sends us forth to be artisans of peace. The response to our petitions is:
R. Lord, hear our prayer, and grant us your peace.

- For the Church, that it may be a sign of peace and hope in the world, and that all members may share the peace of Christ with others.
  We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For leaders and governments, that they work together to bring peace and justice to all people, especially those living in fear or conflict.
  We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For those who feel afraid, lonely, or anxious, that they may experience the comforting peace of Jesus and find support in their community.
  We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For ourselves, that we may be courageous in sharing Christ's peace in our families, schools, and neighborhoods.
  We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For those who have died, that they may rest in the eternal peace of God's love.
  We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For the intentions we hold in the silence of our hearts.
  We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

God of Peace, send your peace upon us and strengthen us to be your instruments of peace in the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER
And let us bring before the Father all our needs, using the words Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE
The sign of Peace is an ancient gesture of greeting and reconciliation among the faithful. When we celebrate Mass, we share a sign of peace after the Our Father and before Communion. The sign of peace symbolizes the Church's desire for peace and unity.

We also remember with the sign of peace, that we do not come to our prayer today as an outsider or as an observer. We are invited to make the peace and unity that Christ has shown us real in our school, in our family, and in our community.

Let us offer each other a sign of Christ's peace.

CLOSING PRAYER
Loving God,
Thank you for being with us as we gathered in prayer.
As we go back to our classrooms and our workspaces, help us to become artisans of peace as we reflect the peace you have gifted to us to life through our words and our actions.
When we say, "Peace be with you," may your peace live in our hearts, today and always.
We ask this through Jesus, who is coming to bring peace to the world.
Amen.

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS
- **Come Jesus, Prince of Peace -** https://youtu.be/UaWX-k11GWo?si=v6Ed7-N6AvHRDQJ_
- **Wonderful Counsellor -** https://youtu.be/ixoeH-SRJU?si=tmpzbEfJrHA2juhZ
- **Let There be Peace on Earth –** https://youtu.be/_AMvzan3EKM
- **Instrument of Peace -** https://youtu.be/d0ZYPpqcIP0?si=XJuzjUbbWyfuxYEJ

Catholic Education:
BECOMING ARTISANS of PEACE

January 2027
"Peace Within"

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- Lord of All Hopefulness (Jan Struther / Traditional Irish) – https://youtu.be/LzsVkJciwfw?si=LMbCfZFM1aSvh3Eb
- Christ Be Our Light (Bernadette Farrell) - https://youtu.be/7eeBHrn2Dt0?si=8lCO5QQfhZ0c2A78
- Center of My Life (Paul Inwood) - https://youtu.be/B5Zo548rT8o?si=vWiVjK-GCeO7ZfTd

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,
We come to you with grateful hearts today.
Give us the eyes to see the many ways you bless us.
Give us the wisdom to remember your presence
And give us the courage to rely on your strength.
Teach us to rest in your deep love as we seek your greater purpose.
So that in all circumstances, your peace fills our hearts to overflowing.
We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 138 1-3,7-8

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
I bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;
you stretch out your hand,
and your right hand delivers me.

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Just like Psalm 138, true inner peace begins with gratitude. It doesn't mean a life free of troubles, rather, it's the awareness of God's steady presence guiding and strengthening us through them. When we abide in God's love and entrust our lives to his greater purpose, we find inner peace.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to give thanks whole-heartedly? What is one specific blessing in your life today for which you are deeply grateful?
- Recall a time when you were 'walking in the midst of troubles' and called on God for help. In what ways did he answer? How was your strength increased?
- You are loved by God, blessed, and created for a purpose. How might remembering this bring you inner peace in times of discouragement?

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader: Resting in the presence of the One who stills the storm, let us bring our intentions to the Lord.
The response is: ***R. Lord, hear our prayer.***

- For the Church and all spiritual leaders, that they may offer a witness of quiet trust and courage in a turbulent world. We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For all Catholic educators, administrators, and educational support staff: that God may preserve them from burnout, grant them wisdom, and refresh their spirits daily. We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For the students entrusted to our care, especially those suffering from trauma, anxiety, or difficult home lives: that our calm presence may reflect Christ's peace to them. We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For our school communities: may our schools be havens of compassion, where every adult and child feels welcomed and valued in the peace of Christ. We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For all educators who carry anxiety, fatigue, or discouragement within them: may God's grace soothe their hearts and renew their vocation. We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

- For the students entrusted to our care, especially those suffering from trauma, anxiety, or difficult home lives: that our calm presence may reflect Christ's peace to them. We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

Leader: God of quiet strength, You call us to serve in Your vineyard. Deepen our faith, steady our hearts, and remind us that all our labour rests in Your hands. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Divine Teacher,
You who called your apostles to teach all nations, we bring before you the hearts of all adult educators.
In our mission to guide and accompany our learners, we often carry heavy burdens.
Lord, please put your peace in our hearts.
When the demands of our ministry cause us to feel worried and anxious,
When our minds race over curriculum, student needs, and daily struggles,
We feel overwhelmed and worn down, as if sinking and unable to free ourselves.
Calm us, Lord.
Slow us down and grant us the peace that only you can provide—a peace the world cannot give.
No matter what hardship we face in our classrooms or lives, you are greater than any obstacle.
We bring our worries to you, trusting that you can transform our struggles into grace and work good from every trial.
We trust your infinite goodness, wisdom, and care.

As faithful servant-educators, we place ourselves and our work entirely into your hands.
Fill our hearts with your peace, that we may reflect your light, calm, and hope to all those we teach.
Amen.

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- *Be Still, My Soul* (Jean Sibelius / Katharina von Schlegel)
  https://youtu.be/JtDxY6OhTcU?si=Wr95NygqSdwQUCbM
- *Servant Song* (Richard Gillard)
  https://youtu.be/SIhhxhPOwfc?si=3oVox0vgZjftCWpQ
- *My Peace* (Keith Routledge)
  https://youtu.be/9sqrCIb2VwE?si=G8Jl1htrkSTX6G5E

Catholic Education:
BECOMING ARTISANS of PEACE

February 2027

"Peace with others"

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- Peace be With You – https://youtu.be/DXjkA0XncRw
- Let There be Peace on Earth – https://youtu.be/_AMvzan3EKM
- The Summons: https://youtu.be/VFXAmB_Iq7k?si=oveyxbQ4xeulPDXJ
- Make Me A Channel of Your Peace (2 versions) Katherine Jenkins / Kim Taylor

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,
As we enter the month of February,
we pause in gratitude for your presence in our lives and in our Catholic school communities.
Fill our hearts with the peace of Christ.
Help us to see each person with compassion,
to listen with patience,
to speak with kindness,
and to forgive with generous hearts.
May the peace we receive from you shape our classrooms, our relationships, and our work together.
Make us instruments of your peace,
so that through our words and actions, others may encounter your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

LITANY OF PEACE
As we gather together this February, we ask God to renew our hearts so that we may share Christ's peace with one another.

Our response is: "Lord, make us instruments of your peace."

Leader: When our days are busy and we need patience with one another.
All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: When someone needs to be heard with compassion and understanding.
All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: When misunderstandings or disagreements create distance between us.
All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: When we have an opportunity to forgive, begin again, and restore a relationship.
All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: When our students and colleagues need encouragement, kindness, or hope.
All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: When we are called to build welcoming and inclusive Catholic learning communities.
All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: Loving God, help us to follow the example of Jesus. May we bring your peace into every conversation, classroom, meeting, and relationship.
All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Colossians 3:12-15
A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive each other. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

The word of the Lord. ***R.*** **Thanks be to God.**

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Saint Paul reminds us that peace with others grows through compassion, kindness, patience, forgiveness, and love. As Catholic educators, we are invited not only to speak about these virtues but also to witness them in the way we teach, lead, collaborate, and care for one another. February offers us an opportunity to pause and consider how the peace of Christ can take deeper root in our hearts and in our school communities.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What does it mean for me to let the peace of Christ "rule" in my heart, especially during challenging or busy moments?

Where in my relationships with colleagues, students, families, or members of the community am I being invited to listen more patiently or respond with greater compassion?

How can I intentionally create a more peaceful and welcoming environment through my words and actions?

Is there a relationship in my life where forgiveness, understanding, or a fresh start may be needed?

What is one concrete practice I can adopt this February to become a stronger witness of Christ's peace?

Examples of Personal February Practices

Begin each school day with a short prayer asking God to help you be an instrument of peace.

Choose one intentional act of kindness each day for a colleague, student, family member, or community member.

Pause and listen fully before responding in a difficult conversation.

Offer forgiveness or take a first step toward reconciliation where a relationship has been strained.

End each day by reflecting on one moment when you experienced or shared Christ's peace.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
The response is: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: Trusting in God's love, let us offer our prayers for peace in our hearts, our relationships, our schools, and our world.

For the Church, that it may continue to proclaim Christ's peace and inspire all people to live with compassion, mercy, and love.
We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

For leaders throughout the world, that they may seek peaceful solutions, protect human dignity, and work for justice and reconciliation.
We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

For all those experiencing conflict, loneliness, grief, fear, or division, that they may encounter people who bring comfort, understanding, and hope.
We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

For our Catholic school communities, that our classrooms, staff rooms, meetings, and relationships may be places where each person feels welcomed, respected, and valued.
We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

For educators, that we may model the compassion, patience, forgiveness, and peace of Christ for our students and for one another.
We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

For those who have died, that they may rest forever in the peace of God's loving presence.
We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

For the intentions we hold in the silence of our hearts.
We pray to the Lord. ***R.***

Leader: Loving God, hear the prayers we offer and help us to become instruments of your peace. Strengthen us to build relationships rooted in compassion, forgiveness, and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God,
Thank you for gathering us together in prayer.
As we continue through this month of February,
help us to carry the peace of Christ into all that we do.
Give us patience when relationships are difficult,
courage to seek reconciliation,
and generous hearts that choose compassion and kindness.
May our words bring encouragement,
our actions build community,
and our presence help others know they are valued and loved.
Send us forth as instruments of your peace,
today and always.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- Let There be Peace on Earth – https://youtu.be/_AMvzan3EKM
- Peace be With You – https://youtu.be/DXjkA0XncRw

Catholic Education:
BECOMING ARTISANS of PEACE

March 2027

"Peace in our Communities"

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- Peace Prayer, Peace Prayer, Tom Booth and Laura Huval
- Make Me a Channel of Your Peace, Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (Prayer of St. Francis)
- Act Justly, Act Justly -- Pat Barrett
- Let There Be Peace on Earth, Let There Be Peace on Earth

OPENING PRAYER

God of harmony and unity,
You gather all people into your warm and loving embrace.
Guide us to be credible witnesses of your love, building peace through our words, our choices, and our actions.
Bless our school, home, and parish communities as we work to live out the call to become artisans of peace.
May our communities be places where peace grows, where creation is cared for, and where every person is welcomed with dignity and love.
Nurture us always in your ways of peace.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians (Colossians 3:12–17)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the

Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord. ***R.*** **Thanks be to God.**

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

This reading reminds us that we are called to live as Jesus taught us, with kindness, compassion, patience, and love. We are all invited to be artisans of peace, bringing Christ's love into our homes, schools, and parishes. Through our words and actions, we can help build communities where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and valued. Even small acts of kindness and forgiveness can make a difference and help bring Christ's peace to those around us.

Reflecting on Living Like Jesus

"Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." **(Colossians 3:12)**

Jesus shows us how to treat others with love and respect. By practising these qualities each day, we can help create peaceful relationships at home, at school, and in our parish communities.

- How can I show greater kindness, patience, and compassion to the people I encounter each day?
- How can I better reflect Jesus through my words and actions at home, at school, and in my parish?

Reflecting on Building Peace Through Love and Forgiveness

"Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." **(Colossians 3:14)**

Love and forgiveness help bring people together. When we listen to others, forgive one another, and treat everyone with respect, we help build stronger and more peaceful communities.

- ❖ How can I help create a spirit of love, forgiveness, and belonging in my home, school, and parish?
- ❖ Is there a relationship in my life where I am being called to show greater understanding, patience, or forgiveness?

Reflecting on Becoming Artisans of Peace
***"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body."* (Colossians 3:15)**

Being an artisan of peace means taking small, meaningful steps to make the world around us more peaceful. With Christ as our guide, we can help bring people together, care for those in need, and build communities rooted in love and respect.

- ❖ What is one thing I can do to help bring peace to my home, school, or parish?
- ❖ How can I encourage others to work together to build communities where everyone feels welcomed, included, and valued?

CONTEMPORARY READING
"Today more than ever, our societies need **'artisans of peace'** who can be messengers and authentic witnesses of God the Father, who wills the good and the happiness of the human family."

– Pope Francis, *Message of the Holy Father Francis for the celebration of the 52nd World Day of Peace (1 January 2019,)* #5.

"The witness of fraternity and peace that friendship with Christ awakens in us casts off indifference and spiritual laziness, helping us to overcome closed-mindedness and suspicion. It also builds bonds between us, urging us to work together, from volunteerism to 'political charity,' to build new living conditions for all…To that end, dear friends, let us listen to the voice of God within us and overcome our selfishness, becoming active **artisans of peace.** That peace, which is a gift of the risen Lord (cf. *Jn* 20:19), will become visible in the world through the common witness of those who carry his Spirit in their hearts."

– Pope Leo XIV, *Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for the 40th World Youth Day (23 November 2025)*

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

*The readings above discuss the phrase **"artisans of peace"** in context and can guide us to a deeper understanding of the meaning of this phrase and its implications for us this year. Based on the two short readings above, one could infer that artisans of peace…*

- ➔ are messengers
- ➔ are authentic witnesses
- ➔ contribute to the good of others
- ➔ are invested in the happiness of others
- ➔ are inspired by their friendship with Christ
- ➔ are collaborative
- ➔ are passionate and energetic
- ➔ are introspective
- ➔ are open-minded
- ➔ trust God
- ➔ are committed to taking meaningful action

- ❖ What implications can these descriptions have for the young people in our Catholic schools? How can we ensure that our school community is a true community of peace and belonging in which students are nurtured and guided to reflect the characteristics above and become artisans of peace?

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

(the journey we can each make toward becoming artisans of peace)

- ➢ For each of the *artisans of peace* descriptions above, consider the extent to which you think you exemplify the characteristic or behaviour at home, at school, and in your community. Which one resonates with you the most? Which one seems more difficult to live out?
- ➢ What is one new gift, talent, skill, or behaviour that you can nurture in yourself this year on your journey to become an artisan of peace?

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
The response is: Lord, hear our prayer.
Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, that all members of the Church, Pope Leo XIV, bishops, priests, religious, and lay faithful may follow Christ, the Prince of Peace, and become witnesses of God's love, justice and mercy in our world. We pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For world leaders, that they may work together to promote peace, justice and respect for all people. We pray to the Lord,
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For educators and students, that our Catholic schools may be places of peace and belonging, where kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and respect guide our relationships and inspire us to become artisans of peace in our communities. We pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are suffering or feel alone, that they may find comfort, hope and support through the kindness and care of others. We pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For our faith communities, that we may work together to build peace through our words and actions, helping everyone feel welcomed, valued and loved. We pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all the intentions we hold in the silence of our hearts. We pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God,
We thank you for your peaceful presence within us.
Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace as we journey to become artisans of peace.
Teach us to be visible signs of your love in our homes, schools, and parish communities, reflecting Christ's heart in every encounter.
Where there are divisions, guide us to build bridges of understanding.
Where there is loneliness, help us to create spaces of belonging.
Guide us to be the loving people you call us to be
as we work together to build your kingdom here on Earth.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- Go Into the World - Go Into The World
- City of God - City of God
- The Servant Song - The Servant Song
- Lord, Make Me an Instrument - Lord, Make Me an Instrument
- Go Make a Difference - Go Make a Difference

Catholic Education:
BECOMING ARTISANS of PEACE

April 2027

"Peace in the world"

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- "Let There Be Peace On Earth" (sung for Pope Francis by the Young People's Chorus of New York City in 2015)
- "In Christ There Is No East or West" (Lyrics by John Oxenham; sung by Tony Alonso)
- "Dona Nobis Pacem" (Latin: "Grant us peace"; sung by the choir of St. Francis de Sales parish in Ajax)

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray.
God, who desires peace for all your children,
look at our world and its brokenness,
its polarization, and its pain.
Pour your peace into the hearts of peoples and their leaders,
that they may pursue peace energetically and wisely.
Show us how we may help to fashion peace
through the words we speak each day,
and the choices we make.
Help us to be among the artisans of peace
whom Jesus proclaimed blessed,
and may the Spirit guide us to be
the kind of healers and builders our world so badly needs.
We ask all of this in the name of Jesus,
who came to bring us true reconciliation,
and who Himself is our Peace.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING
A reading from the letter of St. James (3:17-18)

Brothers and sisters: where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

The Word of the Lord. ***R. Thanks be to God.***

PERSONAL REFLECTION BASED ON THE SCRIPTURE READING
Those who sow peace will reap a harvest of justice or righteousness—and is not the opposite also true? Those who sow righteousness and justice will contribute to a harvest of peace for everyone. More than 50 years ago, Pope St. Paul VI famously said, "If you want peace, work for justice" (Message for the 5th World Day for Peace, 1972). We know that true peace is more than just the absence of armed conflict; it is the Biblical "shalom," when things are as they are supposed to be, in the lives of individuals, families, communities, and our larger world. It means working to ensure that everyone has the basics that they need for a life of dignity and flourishing. It is a world in which no one is deprived of their rights or their freedom … where no one is hungry or without shelter, food, or suitable work. Global peace begins with ensuring people in our own neighbourhoods, towns, and cities are consistently treated with respect and kindness, and working to change systems that leave many people marginalized, unheard, or in need.

THEME-RELATED READING TAKEN FROM THE CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC SPIRITUAL WRITINGS
"We cannot allow the word 'peace' to become an empty word. It asks something of us, requires something of us. 'Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare. It calls for the courage to say yes to encounter and no to conflict: yes to dialogue and no to violence: yes to negotiations and no to hostilities: yes to respect for agreements and no to acts of provocation: yes to sincerity and no to duplicity. All of this takes courage, it takes strength and tenacity'." (Pope Francis, quoted in the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' 2015 statement "A Church Seeking Justice: The Challenge of Pope Francis to the Church in Canada")

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

- The Church understands peace-making very broadly and inclusively, as a task intimately connected to promoting justice, respect, dignity, and compassion. How do I communicate and model this in my daily work (in the classroom or elsewhere)? Are there new ways I might be able to do this?

- Pope Leo often speaks of the need for our words to be "disarmed and disarming". How does the way I speak help to shape and sustain relationships that are more peaceful and less conflictual?

- The Biblical reading from the Letter of St. James says that the wisdom that comes from God is "pure … peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy". When I look around our world, who are some people that I think embody that kind of God-given wisdom and those qualities? Who models that vision well today?