



Education Sunday 10 September, 2023



Catholic Education Service
Supporting Catholic Education Since 1847

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Foreword

Education Sunday is when Catholic Church congregations commemorate their predecessors of the 19th century, many of whom were living in poverty, paying for schools to be built.

Our parishioner forebears and their Bishops rightly saw education as the principal means of handing on the faith and improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural lives of children and young people. Their sacrifices helped re-establish the 2,175 Catholic schools and four universities that we celebrate in church on 10 September. Established by the Bishops in 1848, Education Sunday is one of the oldest Days of Special Prayer in the liturgical calendar of England and Wales.

In the 175 years since then the Catholic Church has become the country's largest provider of secondary schools and second-largest provider of primary schools. Catholic education is by far the largest charitable activity of the Church here, and we give thanks for the many thousands of teachers, lecturers, academics, support staff, leaders, governors, advisers and others who have found their vocation in Catholic education, and without whom this would be impossible.

Catholic schools continue to be true to their mission: they educate more pupils from the most deprived backgrounds; outperform national GCSE English and Maths averages by five percentage points; and are more ethnically diverse than other state-funded schools.

For this success to continue, however, the help of the whole Catholic community remains essential. As throughout history, all Catholics need to be prepared to support, promote and defend Catholic education. There are many ways to do this: in prayer for vocations to Catholic education; asking your diocese about becoming a school foundation governor; or encouraging a young person to become a teacher in a Catholic school.

In this way, we can hand on to the next generation the great educational legacy of those poor and immigrant Catholic communities of the Victorian era who built our schools and universities. Catholic education is indeed a tremendous achievement to be celebrated - happy Education Sunday.

Paul Barber
Director of the Catholic Education Service



Overview

This year our Education Sunday resources focus on the promise given by Jesus in St Matthew's Gospel:

Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.

Matthew 18:20

Education is a lifelong pursuit of the fullness of truth, beauty and goodness, for which a good start in Catholic schools and universities provides the foundation. Catholic education strives to do this while acknowledging Jesus' loving presence in the midst of the lives of the young people as they work, learn, pray, grow and live out their mission in the world. It enables people to grow and excel in character and virtue throughout their lives, and to find fulfilment while discovering their vocation.

Education Sunday is an opportunity to showcase the work and fruits of Catholic schools, especially locally. From a priest speaking in his homily about a local school, to pupils wearing their uniforms at Mass, Education Sunday can be the reminder to all members of the Catholic community of the importance of education to the Catholic mission.

Dioceses rely on the generosity of the Catholic community each Education Sunday to support education in the diocese and the work of the Catholic Education Service. This makes Education Sunday a crucial event in the annual Catholic calendar.

Resources this Education Sunday are inspired by the Gospel for Sunday 10 September, and are being provided free for primary and secondary schools and parishes by Ten Ten Resources. This content features short videos with words of encouragement to staff and students from Bishop Marcus Stock, Chairman of the Catholic Education Service, and will be available from Monday 17 July at: <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/education-sunday/>

For primary schools that subscribe to Ten Ten's Collective Worship resources, content for the week beginning 11 September will be the Education Sunday resources.



Celebrating schools in church this Education Sunday

Holy Mass on Education Sunday is a wonderful opportunity for churches and parishes to celebrate Catholic schools. Here are some ways in which this can be done:

- Encouraging pupils from Catholic schools to wear their school uniforms to Mass
- Going through the Sunday's readings, the psalms and the bidding prayers with pupils
- Devising their own bidding prayers
- Arranging for pupils to gather the second collection at Mass
- Placing students' art or crafts in the church, church hall or other prominent place
- Having a student-led bake-sale in the church hall after Mass
- Arranging for pupils to come in to church with their school banner
- Having a teacher or pupil read out the second collection appeal
- Having pupils present the offertory
- Including the school choir

Some questions to reflect upon for the appeal:

- What has my experience of Catholic education been?
- What are my favourite parts of the school I am involved in?
- What are the core values that drive my school?
- Do you feel like Catholic education makes a difference? How?
- What are the connections between my school and the parish?
- What inspires me in my work?

This list is not exhaustive, and features of particular schools could be identified and celebrated. Additionally, schools may wish to invite staff and volunteers to Mass, including teachers, teaching assistants, playground or home-time volunteers.



Reflection

The following reflection on reconciliation is by Fleur Dorrell, Catholic Scripture Engagement Manager for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and for the Bible Society. For further activities and resources on the Scriptures, visit www.godwhospeaks.uk

Scripture itself commands believers to seek reconciliation and unity. We are to be reconciled among ourselves and with everyone else. This theme starts in the book of Genesis with our relationship to each other and with the rest of the created world. It continues throughout the Bible as a golden thread that culminates in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. It is a central part of the New Testament Letters and of the vision of peace in Revelation.

In our readings for Education Sunday reconciliation is a common motif, particularly in Matthew's Gospel 18:15-20. We are reminded that how we live out our faith as individuals and as communities is equally important in the eyes of God. At school, we build community through our relationships with each other, with our teachers and guides, and in the work we are required to do. We share our knowledge and learning and we serve each other in times of need and joy. In this way we are reconciled to Jesus and to building up his kingdom on earth.

This reconciling kingdom brings with it a new model of unity: we do not judge anyone by the standards of the world. We are able to see the potential of every person, recognizing that each one is loved and called by God. It is so easy to pigeon-hole people, rather than to consider them as sacred and made in God's image, important and gifted, beautiful and blessed with potential.

God shows us what to do through Christ reconciling the world to himself, not holding our weaknesses against us. This is wonderful news. God is always ready to give us another chance. In the same way, may we give others another chance each day.



Liturgy

Education Sunday - 10 September 2023

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Reading 1:

Ezekiel 33:7-9 *If you do not speak to the wicked man, I will hold you responsible for his death.*

Psalm:

94:1-2, 6-9, r.7-8 *O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.*

Reading 2:

Romans 13:8-10 *Love is the answer to every one of the commandments.*

Gospel Acclamation:

John 17:17 *Your word is truth, O Lord, consecrate us in the truth.*

2 Corinthians 5:19 *God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, and he has entrusted to us that they are reconciled.*

Gospel:

Matthew 18:15-20 *If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.*



Homily

We have prepared some general bullet points which priests may like to use in preparing their homily of Education Sunday.

- Church documents talk about a true education being one that prepares students for eternal life, as well as enabling them to discern and follow their vocation on this earth
- Time spent at school should not only equip us for life in the world but instil in us a transcendent love for knowledge and a desire to seek truth and wisdom
- The Catholic history of education: Many of the first schools and universities were founded by the Church, which has always esteemed education as integral to the Christian journey

Quotes

“The mission of schools and teachers is to develop an understanding of all that is true, good and beautiful.” - Pope Francis

“Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore, seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.” - St Augustine of Hippo

“If young people are educated properly, we have moral order; if not, vice and disorder prevail. Religion alone can initiate and achieve a true education.” - St John Bosco



Bidding prayers

You might like to use some of the following prayer suggestions. Alternatively, pupils could write their own prayers:

We pray for the Church. We give thanks for the vision of Church leaders who placed the education of young people at the heart of Christ's invitation to 'make disciples of all nations'. May the Church continue to guide and inspire communities of faith, who gather in your name.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for the world and for young people everywhere, especially those who through conflict, poverty or oppression, do not have access to education. May you guide world leaders to recognise education as a source of hope for the future.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for our school and all Catholic schools in our area [You may like to list your local Catholic schools]. We give thanks for the dedication, example and inspiration of school leaders, teachers, and all who contribute to nurturing and supporting children and young people. May our school communities be filled with Jesus' compassion, love and joy.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for children and young people in our parish and in our school. Fill them with hope, courage, and determination to face new and exciting challenges and experiences as we start our new school year.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for those who are ill in mind and body in our parish. May they find comfort and hope in the tender love of Jesus. We pray also for those who care for them, that they may be blessed with the gifts of gentleness and patience.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for those who have died, especially those from our parish. May they rest with you in the peace and light of your glory. We pray also for those who mourn loved ones, that they may find comfort and peace.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer



Social media guide

The following tips can help your school/parish use Twitter for Education Sunday and beyond.

If your school doesn't have a Twitter account, it only takes a few minutes to set one up. However, please ensure your content, especially all photos of children, is in line with your online safety policy and that you apply appropriate security settings to your account.

Twitter can be useful for promoting the work of the school and linking to other organisations. Posts are short (maximum 280 characters) and you can also post photos and videos.

- Use a brief and easy-to-remember Twitter handle (eg @CathEdService)
- Put key information in the “about” section - website and name of your school
- Follow and tweet/retweet people and schools who do similar work to your own
- Follow the Catholic Education Service on Twitter @CathEdService to find out what other Catholic schools are up to for Education Sunday. You can follow the Holy Father at @Pontifex, as well as your bishop, if he has Twitter
- Some other good accounts to follow are @BBCeducation and your local newspaper. If you post lots of content about an interesting event at your school, a local journalist might decide to write a story about it
- Don't tweet too much, think about your audience and make sure access to the account is secure
- Make sure the content of your tweets never reveals personal details of staff or students
- Look at and use trending topic hashtags in your tweets to reach a wider community and join global conversations
- Don't forget to tweet about the religious aspects of your school - photos from Mass, collective worship or pilgrimages provide interesting content
- If you have photo and video content people are much more likely to engage with it if it has a visual component and isn't just a sentence
- Once your account is up and running, get ready to tweet about Education Sunday
- Retweet @CathEdService's tweets, especially about Catholic education and school governance
- You could get individual staff and students to tweet about why they love their Catholic school using the hashtags
- Providing you have permission, tweet photos of all the events you run about Education Sunday

