

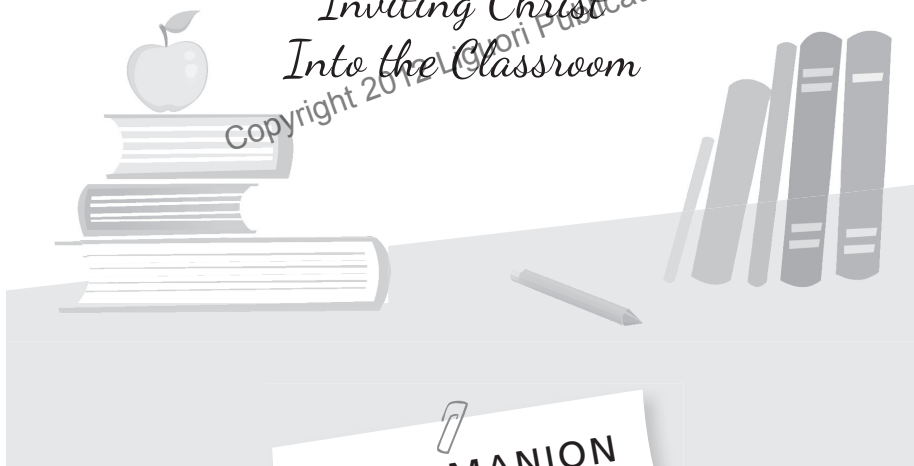


Prayers

Before the Bell

*Inviting Christ
Into the Classroom*

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First Edition



*Dedicated to my parents, who taught me
how to pray with words and showed me
how to pray by their actions.*

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Introduction

Praying with children is one of the most profound experiences an adult can have, perhaps because children pray so differently. Adults tend to beat around the bush with God. We might be afraid or feel we're unworthy. We aren't as honest as we could be. Children come forward fearlessly. Their words are direct and heartfelt. They bring honesty, sincerity, self-confidence, and wonder into their prayer.

This book helps parents, teachers, and catechists give students a structured moment of prayer each day of the school year. Ideally, the week could unfold as follows:

DAY 1 CLASSROOM PRAYER SERVICE

- ▼ Discussion question to prompt students to share their thoughts
- ▼ Scripture passage to highlight or illustrate the theme
- ▼ Prayer

DAY 2 PRAYER

DAY 3 PRAYER

DAY 4 PRAYER

DAY 5 PRAYER

Bishop Robert Morneau of the Diocese of Green Bay refers to the purposes of prayer as “whoops, wow, thanks, and help.” I love his approach, and the prayers in this book echo this pattern.

I hope you find this book to be a concise and convenient resource for use in Catholic schools, religious-education classes, other faith traditions, or any forum for prayer with young people. I also hope its simple style will lead children into their own experiences of prayer. Most important, may it help you welcome Christ into your classroom.

Betty Manion

Inviting Christ Into the Classroom

Lord Jesus,
we invite you into our classroom today.
Bless our minds and fill them with knowledge
and wonder about your world.
Bless our hands as they become your hands
of care and thoughtfulness to others.
Open our eyes to all
our education offers us each day,
and help us learn your ways.
Fill our mouths with kind words
that show appreciation to our teachers,
classmates, and friends.
Forgive us when we forget that you are our guest.
Thank you for dwelling in our hearts, our classroom,
and our school with your spirit, grace, and love.
May we serve you with our learning
and love what we do in your name.
We ask all of this through you,
our greatest teacher of all. Amen.



Section One

We Are God's Family

WEEK 1



New Beginnings

What will you do to begin this school year walking in love?

2 JOHN 1:4–6

I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth just as we have been commanded by the Father. But now...I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have found from the beginning, let us love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning—you must walk in it.

DAY 1

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of this school year.
Help us always appreciate the opportunity to learn
and the gift of gathering at a school,
a gift not available to every child.
May we never take our education for granted
and never complain about school.
Help us do our best
with all you've given us to learn this year.
We ask this through Jesus,
who always did his best. Amen.

DAY 2

Dear Jesus, bless our school, our teachers,
our classrooms, and the students
so our school will be a place of learning and love.
Help our teachers do their best
and guide us to be the best students possible.
May our classrooms be places of hospitality,
compassion, excitement, blessings, and joy.
May our minds and our hearts be filled with knowledge
of you, our world, and all that will
help us grow in faith with you.
We ask this through your Son,
the greatest teacher and student of all. Amen.

DAY 3

Dear Jesus, new beginnings give us a time to make new friends.
You taught us that friendship means
caring for others with our heart and soul.
Help us treasure our old friends
as we reach out to those we don't know.
Help us see that each of us is your child,
filled with your very special gifts.

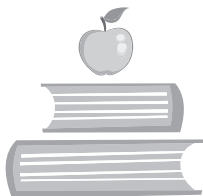
Help us use our gifts and recognize and honor
the gifts of our friends, new and old.
We ask this through you,
our God who is ever ancient, ever new. Amen.

DAY 4

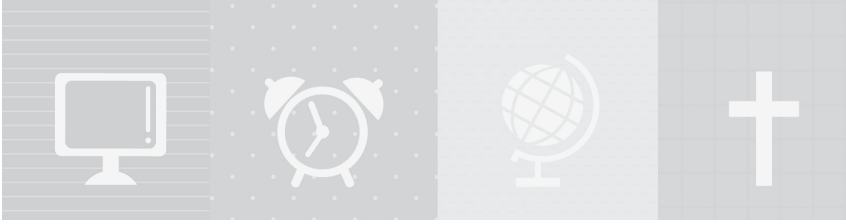
Dear God, how wonderful it must be to know all things!
Help us gain as much knowledge
as we can about you and your world.
Fill our minds with wonder
about all we don't know, and
help us be excited about all we will learn.
May we be humble about our abilities
and never be know-it-alls.
Thank you for the example of your son, Jesus,
who did know it all but never bragged about it. Amen.

DAY 5

Dear Lord, a new year means new opportunities
for us to grow as leaders.
Help us be leaders in our classrooms,
leaders in our school, and leaders in our world.
Leaders are wise, patient, and compassionate
and speak up for others.
Jesus was the perfect leader.
Guide our minds and hearts to act as he did.
Help us see every moment
we can be a leader for you,
where we can act with love and kindness to all. Amen.



WEEK 2



Be Who God Made You to Be

How can you use your talents to help your school or family?

ADAPTED FROM MATTHEW 25:14–26

A man who was going on a journey called his servants. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to a third he gave one talent. Then he went away. The servant with five talents used them to make five more talents. The one with two talents made two more talents. But the one with one talent dug a hole and buried it. When the master returned, the one with the five talents come forward with the five more. "Well done!" said the Master. The one with the two talents came forward and handed over the two more. "Well done!" said the Master. Then the one with the one talent said, "I was afraid, so I dug a hole and buried your talent in the ground. Here, it is yours." But his Master replied, "You lazy servant."

DAY 1

Dear God, thank you for blessing each of us
with special gifts and talents.
May we be like the wise servants
who used their talents in the best way,
and not like the unwise servant
who buried his talent and never shared it.
Help us use our talents to love and serve you. Amen.

DAY 2

Loving Father, through our baptism
you call us to serve each other as your children.
Help us see that we must be the best
we can be so others
can be the best they can be.
This means following you in faith and love and service.
Thank you for welcoming us into your family.
May we always use the gifts
you have given us to serve you and others. Amen.

DAY 3

Dear Jesus, you were blessed with many talents.
You showed us your gift of peacemaking
by showing us how to love everyone.
You showed us your gift of compassion
by caring for those who have less than we do.
You showed us your gift of preaching
by teaching us about faith and love.
And you showed us your gift of mercy
by forgiving all who made mistakes.
Thank you for teaching us how to share
your gifts with others.
May we never disappoint you. Amen.

DAY 4

Dear Holy Spirit, through you we are inspired
to be the best we can be.
Open our eyes to help us see our abilities
and each other's gifts.
Help us never disrespect the gifts
God has given us
and to never be jealous of others' abilities.
May we never take our gifts for granted,
and may we always remember to share them with others.
We ask this through Jesus, who shared his life with us. Amen.

DAY 5

Creator God, you began a good work in each of us.
Help us know our gifts,
deepen our understanding of them,
develop them, and share them with others.
If we do this in faith, we can
help you continue the masterpiece
of your kingdom on Earth.
As we use our gifts, guide us
to be your unique servant.
We ask this through Jesus,
your gift to the world. Amen.

