

Education Sunday

2017

Information and Resources

“Gathered in my name...”



'For where two or three are gathered in my name...



... I am there among them.'

Matthew 18: 20





I remember my first teacher, that woman,
that teacher I had when I was six years old,
in first grade.

I have never forgotten her.

She is why I loved school.
I visited throughout her life,
until she passed away...

**Pope Francis to students and teachers
from schools in Italy, 2014**

Overview

The theme of this year's Education Sunday is 'gathered in my name', a quote from the Sunday Gospel. This theme allows us to reflect on the truth that when pupils gather in Catholic schools, they are gathered in Jesus' name. This year, at Masses across the country, Catholics will hear about how children are gathering in Jesus' name, what happens at school and the values that run through every part of a Catholic education.

Dioceses rely on the generosity of the Catholic community each Education Sunday to support the work of the Catholic Education Service and education in the diocese. This makes Education Sunday a crucial event in the Catholic year, as well as an excellent opportunity to promote Catholic education.

In addition, Education Sunday is a crucial occasion to showcase the work 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 the Catholic community of the importance of education in the Catholic mission.

This year, the CES has produced a range of resources for you to use to help bring about a successful, prosperous Education Sunday, including:

- Mass booklet
- Social media guide
- Parish newsletter draft notice
- School class-work resources

This booklet includes some broad advice on how parishes and schools can celebrate Education Sunday. However, we recognise the individual gifts that each school and parish has, and for this reason we welcome innovative ways to showcase our excellent local schools in new ways you may think of.

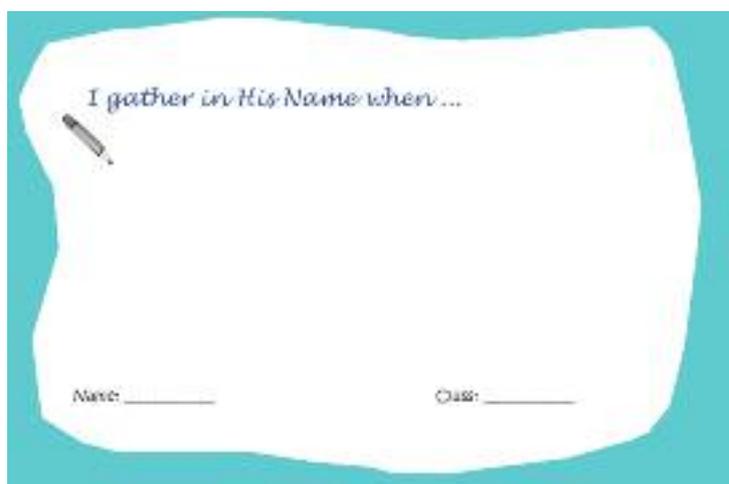
We hope you find this booklet useful, and have an excellent Education Sunday!



Education Sunday Actions

School Activities

Education Sunday is an excellent opportunity for schools to demonstrate their creativity, showing their individual gifts. The CES has produced resources for schools to use to help showcase their work. For example, we have produced the 'I gather in his name' cards, where pupils can write about how they gather in Jesus' name at school. This could include assemblies, out of class activities, etc.



'I gather in his name when...'

Other school activities can be based around preparation for Education Sunday Mass. Education Sunday Mass is an excellent opportunity for the local Catholic community to see Catholic school pupils taking part in the life of the Church.

We are encouraging pupils to wear their uniforms to the Mass, and where possible, pupils should take part as visibly as possible in the Mass, through actions such as the offertory, readings, bidding prayers etc.

These activities can all be promoted through social media, as laid out in the social media guidelines. Tweeting preparation for Education Sunday in the week leading up to it, for example, is an excellent way to remind twitter-active parents and community members that Education Sunday is soon.

Education Sunday is about a celebration of Catholic education, and every step taken to raise awareness of the work of Catholic schools, and the promotion of the theme that children 'gather in my name' is a successful Education Sunday action.

Class discussions

In secondary schools, engaging class discussions on the theme of 'gathering in His name' and what makes up the distinctive nature of Catholic schools.

Class debates on the principle of Church schooling and its role in the local community could be an intellectually provoking exercise for pupils in senior years, and would encourage free thinking and intelligent discourse on Catholic issues.

In younger year groups, pupils could be asked '*what makes a Catholic school Catholic?*'. These discussions would be aided by the variety of backgrounds among pupils, from Catholic to non-Catholic, as well as among those who have spent their whole lives at Catholic schools to those who have attended non-Catholic schools.



In primary schools, quizzes, group exercises, and other activities to explore their Catholic identity. Using resources such as the 'I gather in His Name when...' cards gives pupils the chance to reflect on the ways in which their everyday activities can actually have a more significant or spiritual aspect.

On the page opposite is another example classroom exercise, for both primary and secondary school students. There are two quotes, one attributed to St Teresa of Ávila, and one from Blessed Cardinal Newman, on the importance of mission, and doing God's work. A suitable exercise may be using these quotes to ask pupils about their understanding of mission, their mission, and the mission of the Church in education.

Class discussions

Consider the quotes from these two important Catholics, and consider how you, and the school, can carry out God's mission:

"Christ has no body on earth now but yours,

no hands but yours,

no feet but yours;

*yours are the eyes through which He looks with
compassion on the world;*

yours are the feet with which He walks to do good;

*yours are the hands with which He blesses all the
world."*

Saint Teresa of Ávila



God has created me to do some definite service.

*He has committed some work to me which He has
not committed to another.*

I have my mission.

*I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told
it in the next.*

I have part of a great work.

Blessed John Henry Newman

Reflection for students

This reflection was produced by Father George Bowen of the London Oratory.

This morning, you may have traveled to school sharing a bus or a train with lots of other people. They shared the experience of travelling, but they probably didn't have much else in common with you. Then everything changed when you went through the school gates. Every school day, you become part of something bigger than yourself.

Being in school

If you're wearing a school uniform, it helps to remind you that you're part of something greater. You have a special identity that makes you different.

Questions for class:

What is your school motto?

What does it mean to be sharing that motto with others in the school?

For next year's newcomers, how would you describe what is special and different about your school?



The images above, and Mary on the right, show saints gathered in prayer, like we do in Catholic schools.

Being gathered together

Your school is at its best when everyone is facing in the same direction, doing things gathered together. This happens most often when you're learning together in class. It also happens when you're playing together with friends in the playground. That's when you're sharing the experience of enjoying yourselves in conversation or in games.

But it also happens when you're praying together, and especially when you're praying together, you become something bigger than yourselves.

Questions for Class

When, where and how do you pray together in school?

Think of some ways in which you could deepen your prayer life in school.

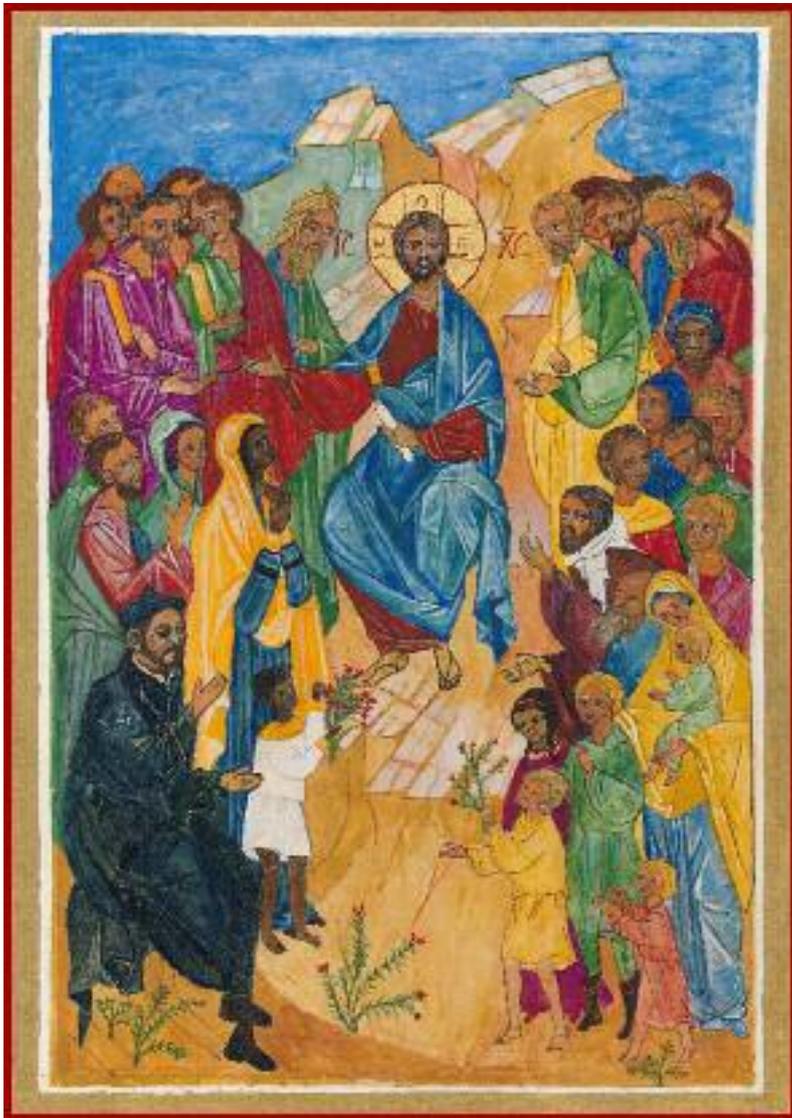
Being in Church

For those of you who are Catholics, every Sunday, when you enter your parish church, you become part of something bigger than yourself. Not everyone looks the same as they do in school, all young and in uniform. But all the people that gather together with you in church have lots in common with you. You've been baptised in Christ, and share the Catholic identity. And you all face in the same direction towards the altar. You're all praying together. But you are also gathered together with many others whom you can't see, but who are also facing the same altar.

Think of Catholics from all over the world who are celebrating the same Mass that Sunday. Think of all those who have to celebrate in secret, or who have to walk miles to get to church. Think of Pope Francis as he leads the Church on Earth. Think of all the Angels and Saints who join their prayers with you at the Mass. When we gather together for prayer in God's name, facing the same direction, facing the altar, God himself is amongst us.



Reflection for teachers



Christ the Teacher

An icon is a 'window into heaven, an image which reveals the face of God to us. Icons have been called theology in line and colour, and are said to be 'written by God with the hands of the artist,' as they are said to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

This icon was 'written by God with the hands of Sister Mary Stella' of Hyning Monastery, and is generously shared with us by the Jesuit Institute.

Reading the icon

In this icon, Jesus is shown in the traditional pose of the *Pantocrator* - the All Powerful.

He is shown seated on a mountain with a scroll in His left hand, showing that He is a teacher.

Christ's right hand is held open in the gesture from Roman rhetoric calling for silence; this is how senators or orators in the forum would signal to the crowd that they were about to speak.

This reflection is produced with the generous assistance of Father Adrian Porter SJ of the Jesuit Institute.

Jesus wears a red inner tunic and blue outer cloak, the red representing the earth and the blood of His human nature, and the blue representing sky, heaven and His divine nature. His gold sash represents His priesthood.

Around His head is the nimbus, or halo, which signifies Jesus' divinity. The cross drawn in red within the nimbus reminds us of Jesus' death - sacrificed on the cross for our sins.

Jesus' feet are shown planted firmly on the ground on the mountain, as in the song of Isaiah 'How beautiful are the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Sion, 'Your God reigns.'" (Isiah 42:7).

The eyes of Christ are painted differently in this icon: one is the stern eye of the Judge; the other is the compassionate eye of the Shepherd.

The Twelve Apostles are at the top of the icon, with Matthias replacing Judas. Peter is to the right, nearest Christ, painted in orange and green, the colours of the rock which was the name given him by Jesus in Matthew 16:18 - 'and I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church'.

Andrew, the first disciple to be called with his brother Peter, is to the left, facing Jesus. St John is represented without a beard. It is believed that John, and his brother James were Roman citizens (James was beheaded, a privilege of Roman citizens condemned to death), and they are shown wearing the gold colour of heaven, rather than the nobles' purple.

In this icon, Saint Ignatius of Loyala is seen in the lower left corner. His hands are painted one open and one closed, representing his gradual opening up to God at Loyala and Manresa, in the years 1521-23. The open hand represents his openness to God, and the closed shows that this process is not yet complete as he holds some things back.

At the bottom of the icon is a gap in the people circled around Jesus. This is the space for us, the people contemplating the icon. The icon invites us into the circle of saints, to be part of what is going on.

The earth and mountain are painted in bright fresh colours signifying 'a new heavens and a new earth.' (Isiah 65:17) God is transforming creation: 'Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.' (Isiah 43:19)

The sides of an icon are traditionally painted red, signifying the blood that Christ shed in order to achieve what we see in this image. The sides are anointed with Chrism (the oil used in sacraments and which bears the name of 'Christ') in a ceremony to 'christen' the icon.

Reflection

Colossians 1:15-20

He is the image (icon) of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He himself is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He might come to have first place in everything. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

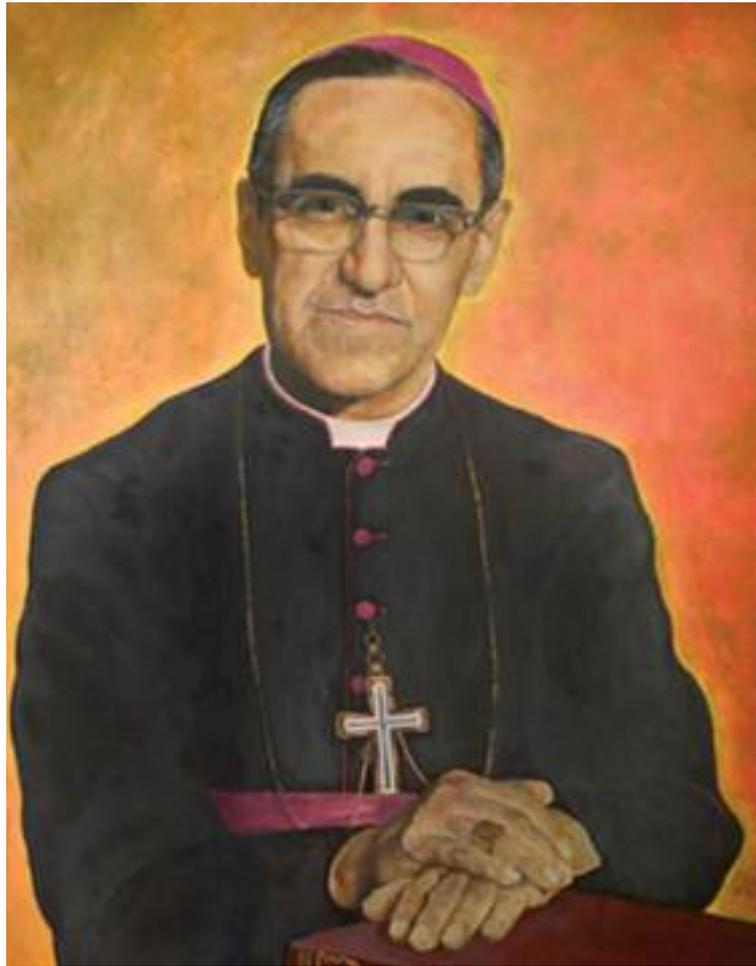
Hebrews 1:1-4

Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When He had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Prayer at the Icon of Christ

We reverence your spotless icon,
O gracious Lord,
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions,
O Christ our God,
because of your own goodwill you ascended the Cross in the flesh,
that you must deliver those whom you had created
from the bondage of the enemy.
We cry aloud unto you.
You have filled all things with joy,
O our Saviour,
for you came to save the world.

Amen



'We plant the seeds that will one day grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold
future promise.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our
capabilities.'

The Blessed Archbishop Oscar Romero

For more information on Education Sunday 2017, go to
catholiceducation.org.uk

