

Catholic Education Week 2020
Prayer Services and Reflection Activities for 2019-2020

ADVANCE KIT



“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

<<Que le Dieu de l’espérance vous remplisse de toute joie et de paix dans la foi, afin que vous débordiez d’espérance par la puissance de l’Esprit Saint.>> Romains, 15, 13



Catholic Education Week
May 3 – May 8, 2020
www.goodnewsforall.ca



Catholic Education Week 2020

Catholic Education: *Igniting Hope*

L'éducation catholique: *Allumer la flamme de l'espérance*

May 3 – May 8, 2020

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: *Igniting Hope***" is scheduled for the week of May 3 – May 8, 2020. The scriptural passage that guides our theme is, "*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*" Romans 15:13

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 new 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 2020, 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:

Advent:	<i>Our Hope in Christ ... Notre espérance, c'est le Christ</i>
January:	<i>The Hope Within Us ... L'espérance en nous</i>
February:	<i>The Hope Among Us ... L'espérance au milieu de nous</i>
March:	<i>Hope for the World ... L'espérance pour le monde</i>
April:	<i>A Future Full of Hope ... Un avenir rempli d'espérance</i>

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 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 2020, beginning in Advent 2019.

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.



Advent 2019

“Our Hope in Christ”

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- *Spark* ~ The City Harmonic (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVzrCGM_ill)
- *The Light of Christ* ~ Donald Fishel
- *Christ, Be Our Light* ~ Bernadette Farrell

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,

Who created light in the beginning and fashioned the solar system, so we may be reminded of lengthening nights, help us trust once more in the power of the birth of your Son.

May Jesus’ birth ignite hope in our lives again!

Amen. +

READING: A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For those who lived in a land of deep shadows – light! Sunbursts of light! You repopulated the nation, you expanded its joy. Oh, they’re so glad in your presence! Festival joy! The joy of great celebration, sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.

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

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Which line in the reading ignites hope within you?

Do you live in deep shadows or great light?

READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words then, that I would like to say to every young Christian, are these: “Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!”

Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* to young people, 2019, #1

Has Christ touched you, are you young at heart and full of life?

Do your words ignite hope in youth with whom you interact?

CLOSING PRAYER

Spirit of Jesus,

Bring calm to my mind, peace to my heart and silence to my soul.

In the silence may I hear your voice.

In the peace may I see your face.

And in the calm may I know your love for me.

Amen. +

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- *Go Make A Difference* ~ Steve Angrisano & Tom Tomaszek
- *All That is Hidden* ~ Bernadette Farrell
- *My Soul in Stillness Waits* ~ Marty Haugen



January 2020

“The Hope Within Us”

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- *You Say* ~ Lauren Daigle (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD_s4U5AAAw)
- *The Rising* ~ Bruce Springsteen (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmWYg4W9CaY>)

OPENING PRAYER

Lord our God,

You strengthen us with a hope that is always before us in the love of Jesus and in our caring for our fellow human beings.

You bring us hope in our darkest despair.

The gift of your Son is our ever present source of hope.

We thank you for this hope that is manifest in the world; especially in the love of people for each other.

May humanity continue to grow in hope through its service to one another.

Keep us ever mindful of your love and the hope that dwells among us.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen. +

READING: A Reading from the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:31)

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

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

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Singer/Songwriter, Bruce Springsteen, has many religious images and references in his lyrics. In 2002, he released a song in reaction to the terrorist attacks in New York on 9/11. He was prompted to write the song in reaction to the tragedy when a stranger said, “We need you now.” Songwriting is an art form that is often a voice of hope in despair. In the lyrics of this song, we

think of the hope that comes with the Resurrection of Jesus. Mr. Springsteen wrote to bring a message of hope to victims and responders who suffered in this moment of tragedy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmWYg4W9CaY>

Listen to the above recording of Sting singing *The Rising* at the Kennedy Awards in honour of the artist, Bruce Springsteen several years ago. Read the lyrics and consider the theme, “*The Hope Within Us.*”

The Rising by Bruce Springsteen

Can't see nothin' in front of me
Make my way through this darkness
Lost track of how far I've gone
On my back's a sixty pound stone
Come on up for the rising
Come on up for the rising
Left the house this morning
I was wearin' the cross of my calling
Come on up for the rising
Come on up for the rising
There's spirits above and behind me
May their precious blood bind me

Li, li, li, li, li, li, li, li – Li, li, li, li, li, li, li, li – Li, li, li, li, li, li, li, li

I see you Mary in the garden
There's Holy pictures of our children
May I feel your arms around me
A dream of life comes to me
Sky of blackness and sorrow (a dream of life)
Sky of glory and sadness (a dream of life)
Sky of memory and shadow (a dream of life)
Sky of longing and emptiness (a dream of life)

Can't see nothin' coming up behind
I can't feel nothing but this chain that binds me
How far I've gone, how high I've climbed
On my shoulder a half mile of line
Come on up, lay your hands in mine
Come on up for the rising tonight
Bells ringing filled the air
On wheels of fire I come rollin' down here
Come on up, lay your hands in mine
Come on up for the rising tonight
Faces gone black, eyes burnin' bright
Lord, as I stand before your fiery light

In the garden of a thousand sighs
Dancin' in a sky filled with light
May I feel your blood mix with mine
Like a catfish dancin' on the end of my line
Sky of love, sky of tears (a dream of life)
Sky of mercy, sky of fear (a dream of life)
Your burnin' wind fills my arms tonight
Sky of fullness, sky of blessed life

Who's voice is reflected in the beginning lyrics of the song?

What symbols of faith do you see referenced in the lyrics?

How is faith a source of hope in such darkness?

Why do you think this sky that has been empty is described as “blessed life?”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Throughout the world, many people bring hope through compassion and assistance in times of crisis and hardship.

Can you think of organizations that you are aware of that are a source of hope among us?
Consider the verse in the Isaiah scripture passage, “*He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless...*” Where do you see this source of hope in our world today?

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God,

Continue to strengthen us to be a source of hope.

You are the hope that dwells among us in the form of endless love and compassion.

May we bring this to others.

Amen. +



February 2020

“The Hope Among Us”

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- *Christ, Be Our Light* ~ Bernadette Farrell (Gather Hymnal #590)
- *We are the Light of the World* ~ Jean Anthony Greif (Spirit & Song, Volume 6)
- *They’ll Know We are Christmas* ~ Peter Scholtes (Gather Hymnal #735)
- *Send Me, Jesus/Thuma Mia* ~ Traditional South African Hymn (Gather Hymnal #674)
- *We are Many Parts* ~ Marty Haugen (Gather Hymnal #512)

OPENING PRAYER

God of hope and light,
Fill us with your love.

Illuminate our path so that we may discern the dreams and plans you have for us.

Guide our journey of faith.

Sustain us amidst the twists and turns, the bumps and detours.

Remind us that we do not travel alone.

Teach us to accompany one another in ways that encourage and inspire.

Empower us to see the hope among us that emerges when we are able to trust you, ourselves, and one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen. +

READING:

A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:5, 9-11)

For you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

For God has destined us not for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, as indeed you are doing.

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

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

God calls us to gather in community so that we can enable each other to grow in faith and love. Each one of us has gifts to offer and is important to God's work in our midst. In this reading, we are called to use our gifts to "*encourage one another and build each other up.*"

What gifts do I possess that bring out the best in others?

How does God call me to encourage and offer hope to others in my school community?

Do others perceive me as someone who is open and receptive to the ideas of others?

Am I an attentive and supportive listener?

Do I use words that are positive and that build people up?

Who is someone I can turn to if I am in need of encouragement and "building up?"

What qualities do they possess that enable them to bring hope to others?

READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Today, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring that hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope!

Pope Francis, Inaugural Mass, 2013

The Saints are not perfect models, but people through whom God has passed. We can compare them to the church windows, which allow light to enter in different shades of colour. The Saints are our brothers and sisters who have welcomed the light of God in their heart and have passed it on to the world, each according to his or her own "hue." This is life's purpose: to enable God's light to pass through; it is the purpose of our life too.

Pope Francis, Solemnity of All Saints Mass, 2017

In the readings above, Pope Francis uses light as a symbol of the hope among us. Light is a powerful image; it penetrates and illuminates all things. Light brings warmth and energy. Note that we do not need to be perfect in order for God's light to shine through us. We do need to share openly and honestly about our struggles and our triumphs. We need to be willing to offer words of blessing, appreciation, kindness, forgiveness, and grace. And we need to ensure that we are loving in our actions, as well as our words.

How do I "let my light shine" and share hope with the people I encounter each day (family members, friends, colleagues, students, and other members of the community)?

Are there ways I can improve my own vision so that I am able to see and recognize Christ in everyone?

What is one new gift, talent, or skill that I can nurture in myself, so that I might take further action to spread messages of hope and reflect the light of God for the world?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of compassion,

Open our hearts to the warmth of your radiant light.

Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace, so that we may be sources of hope for one another.

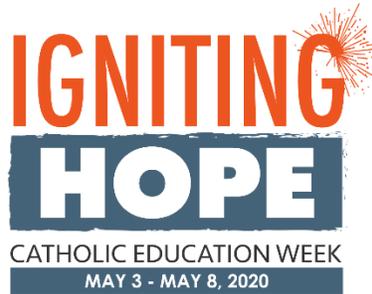
Guide us to be the loving people you call us to be, as we work together to build your kingdom, here on earth.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus.

Amen. +

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- *Go Make A Difference* ~ Steve Angrisano & Tom Tomaszek (Gather Hymnal #664)
- *Siyahamba/We are Marching* ~ John A. Behnke (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yn16ABWn20c>)
- *You are the Voice* ~ David Haas (Catholic Book of Worship III #576)
- *We are Called* ~ David Haas (Gather Hymnal #710)
- *You are the Light of the World* ~ Stephen Schwartz (Godspell, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doSC1G8pmlE>)



March 2020

“Hope for the World”

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- *Canticle of the Sun* ~ Marty Haugen (CBW III #542)
- *Morning has Broken* (CBW III #651)
- *Behold a Broken World We Pray* (CBW III #538)
- *They'll Know We are Christians* ~ Peter Scholtes (Gather #735)

OPENING PRAYER

God of the universe,

We praise and bless you.

Teach us how to be people of prayer and bring us together as disciples who believe that love is stronger than death.

Give us wisdom and courage to be messengers of hope to our world.

May we continue to dream that one day, our entire world will rejoice in hope.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, the light of the world.

Amen. +

READING: A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing, for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay, and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved.

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

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

How do you think that creation, including humanity, is subject to futility?

In what ways do you see creation (the world) in bondage to decay?

What is the “groaning in labour” happening in our world today, that is a portent or sign of the coming liberation of that bondage?

Where do you find signs of hope that creation will be redeemed?

READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In the homily at his papal inauguration, Pope Francis said,

“In Paul’s letter to the Romans, St. Paul speaks of Abraham, who, ‘hoping against hope, believed.’ Hoping against hope! Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like St. Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God, which has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock which is God.”

Pope Francis, Inaugural Mass, 2013

This mass took place on the feast of St. Joseph, and Pope Francis talked about St. Joseph as a protector, not only of Mary and Joseph, but of the whole church. How are we called to be protectors of the world?

How does this mission of being a protector of the world, manifest itself in our Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Help us to reach beyond our comfortable boundaries to those who long for your love and justice. In times of despair and doubt, bring us back to the Gospel.

Let us be marked with integrity in our vocation to be protectors of your world, and living signs of your joyful hope.

May we speak for our beautiful but wounded planet as caring family members, responsible citizens, and stewards of creation.

We pray in the name of your Father, the Creator, and your sustaining Spirit.

Amen. +

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- *God Created Earth and Heaven* (CBW III #512)
- *Go Make a Difference* ~ (Gather Comprehensive #664 / Spirit & Song #213)
- *Christ be Our Light* ~ Bernadette Farrell (Gather Hymnal #590)
- *Spirit Blowing Through Creation* (CBW III #415)
- *Stewards of the Earth* ~ (CBW III #634)



April 2020

“A Future Full of Hope”

SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- *Spark* ~ The City Harmonic (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVzrCGM_iII)
- *Pushing Back the Dark* ~ Josh Wilson (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhSbqu7yvV8>)
- *It Only Takes a Spark* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tadZ8nCLBsI>)

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, brother and friend,
You have made us Easter people through your resurrection.
We can sing Alleluia with our full voice.
Help us to spread hope and joy every day.
We celebrate in faith.
Amen. +

READING: A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah

I have it all planned out – plans to take care of you, not abandon you; plans to give you the future you hope for. When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I’ll listen. When you come looking for me, you’ll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me, and want it more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed.

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

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Do you believe that God has plans for you, plans of peace and hope?

Do you call on the Lord, search for the Lord?

READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Do not be afraid to set your sights higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God’s grace. For in the words of León Bloy, when all is said and done, “The only great tragedy in life is not to become a saint.” Gaudete et Exsultate – Pope Francis, page 22

To what is God calling you?

Do you believe that your weakness and the power of God's grace are enough?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of Easter joy,

We thank you for your Son, the light of the world.

May he reveal to us, the way to you, and may his light shine through us.

Heavenly Father, nurture us as we grow in your love.

Strengthen our faith to proclaim your glory.

Empower us to give witness, so that others may know your love.

Let us always remember our Baptismal call.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen. +

SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- *Go Make a Difference* ~ (Spirit & Song #213)
- *Everlasting God* (Spirit & Song #286)
- *Blessed be Your Name* (Spirit & Song #206)