

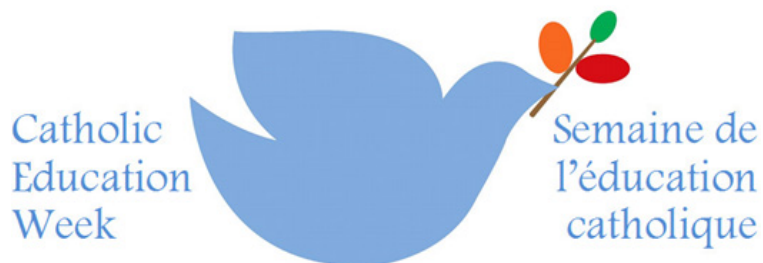
**Catholic Education Week 2018**  
*Prayer Services and Reflection Activities for 2017-2018*

**ADVANCE KIT**

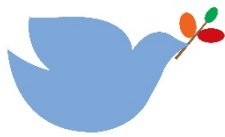


*"For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away,  
everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." Acts 2:39*

*<<Car la promesse est pour vous, pour vos enfants et pour tous ceux qui sont loin,  
aussi nombreux que le Seigneur notre Dieu les appellera.>> Actes 2, 39*



**Catholic Education Week**  
**May 6 – May 11, 2018**  
[www.goodnewsforall.ca](http://www.goodnewsforall.ca)



# **Catholic Education Week 2018**

## **“Catholic Education: *Renewing the Promise*”**

### **<<L’éducation catholique: *Renouveler la promesse*>>**

### **MAY 6 – MAY 11, 2018**

## **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: *Renewing the Promise*”** is scheduled for the week of May 6 – May 11, 2018. The scriptural passage that guides our theme is, *“For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” Acts 2:39*

### *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 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 2018, 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:

<b>Advent:</b>	<b><i>Remembering the Promise ... Faire mémoire de la promesse</i></b>
<b>January:</b>	<b><i>The Promise is Within You ... La promesse est en toi</i></b>
<b>February:</b>	<b><i>Praying the Promise ... Prier la promesse</i></b>
<b>March:</b>	<b><i>Living the Promise ... Vivre la promesse</i></b>
<b>April:</b>	<b><i>Proclaiming the Promise ... Annoncer la promesse</i></b>

*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 2018, beginning in Advent 2017.

*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.

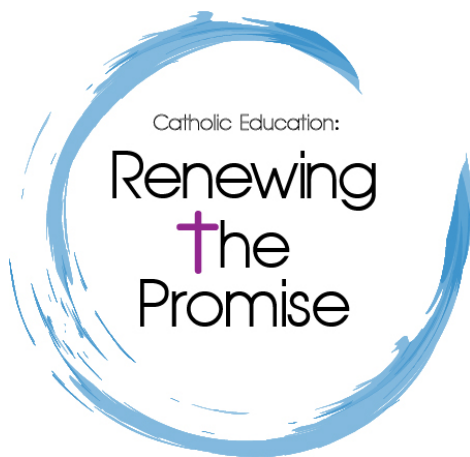
*How can we help prepare for future Catholic Education Week activities?*

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](mailto: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](http://www.goodnewsforall.ca).

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



## **Advent 2017**

### ***“Remembering the Promise”***

#### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O Come, Divine Messiah

Hold On to Love ~Jesse Manibusan

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

God of all times and seasons,

You sent the prophets to give your people a message.

An anointed one would come to Earth to show your people how to love.

Your people waited in darkness for your promise to be fulfilled.

We remember how your promise was incarnate, in Jesus, our brother.

Now we await his second coming. Amen. +

#### **READING: A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah**

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations... He will not grow faint or be crushed, until he has established justice in the Earth, and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

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

#### **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

For adults, Advent is a time of waiting patiently for the second coming of Christ. We have the benefit of Jesus' teachings and his gospel of love. How can Catholic schools continue to evangelize our staff and students during this Advent season? How can we continue to establish justice in the Earth?

## **READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

“We are at a decided advantage over Elizabeth and Mary. We have had more than 2000 years of Luke’s insights using the literal examples of expecting. We know what Christmas is bringing. We know that the Messiah has come and dwells among us. And it is that *knowing* that allows our waiting to be so joyful. Elizabeth and Mary did not fully understand all the ways their lives, indeed their world, was to change and yet, they were most joyful in their expectation of whatever it is that God is doing in their lives.

What’s interesting about Luke’s gospel, is that it starts by inviting us into the private lives of men and women and into an intimate conversation between Elizabeth and Mary to guide our own times of waiting. It places two obscure women at the center of preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Luke was an educated man, he knew full well what topics were acceptable in public discourse and which were to be private matters, and pregnancy was most definitely a private matter – a conversation left to women, sometimes catty women, who shame those who don’t give birth. And yet, Luke launches his gospel with just those private topics: Pregnancy! Virginity! Infertility! Post-menopausal women! Conception! Things that were generally kept behind closed doors. But Luke shares their story so that we may be able to experience joyful expectation.”

~Geraldine Luongo –

<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2009/12/advent-and-the-pregnancy-narratives-a-season-of-joyful-expectation>

This Advent, how can you better live in joyful expectation of Jesus’ coming? What can you do in Advent waiting?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Let us celebrate this season of Advent with patience and peace.

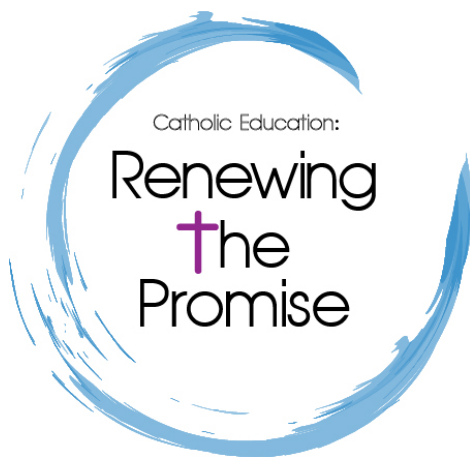
Remind us, Holy Spirit, that Christmas begins on its eve and until that time, we have this gift of joyful waiting.

In these December days, may we live as witnesses to Jesus’ love and faithfully remember the promise God fulfilled so long ago. Amen. +

## **SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS**

The Quiet Center ~Zack Stachowski

Dona Nobis Pacem



**January 2018**  
***“The Promise is Within You”***

**SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord ~Michael W. Smith

Here I am Lord ~Dan Schutte

**OPENING PRAYER**

God of all people,

You have anointed us with the seal of your love at our Baptism.

We thank you for your spirit and the gift of hope that lies within us.

Strengthen us, that we may hear your word and know it written in our hearts.

May we always be mindful of the promise given to us in Baptism, the promise that we carry within us.

We make this prayer in the name of your son, our Lord and brother. Amen. +

**READING: A Reading from the Book of Deuteronomy**

Surely this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in Heaven that you should say, “Who will go up to Heaven for us, and get it for us, so that we may hear and observe it?” Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say, “Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear and observe it?” No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

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

**QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

The symbols of Baptism remind us that we are called to God’s love to others. The candle reminds us that we are light for the world. Marked with new life in Christ, we hear God’s word and apply it to our lives. How have you experienced the word “near to you” in Catholic education? How has hearing the word strengthened you to live your faith? Why do you see the need to pass this promise on to future generations?

## **READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

“As a part of his mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an *instinct of faith-sensus fidei* which helps them to discern what is truly of God. The presence of the spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities, and a wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression.”

~Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, #119, Evangelii Gaudium

In this quote, Pope Francis speaks how this promise lives within us. How does the instinct of faith speak in your life? How do you think the word of God, the promise written on our hearts, has formed you as a person of faith? Do you think your “sensus fidei” influences your world view?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Loving God,

Thank you for your spirit dwelling within us.

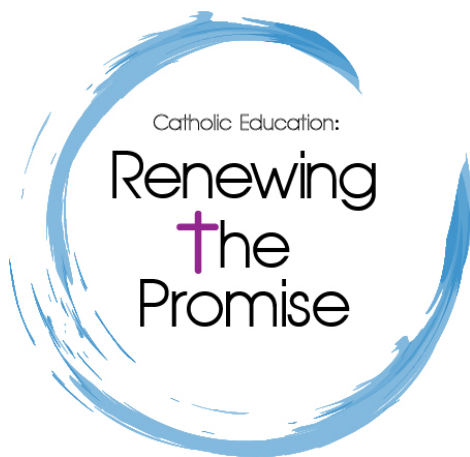
Continue to give us wisdom through your Holy word and shower us with your grace, that we may bring the joy of this promise to others.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus, brother, teacher and friend. Amen. +

## **SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS**

This Little Light of Mine

I Love You and You are Mine ~David Haas



**February 2018**  
***“Praying the Promise”***

**SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

Seek Ye First ~Karen Lafferty

Here I am to Worship ~Chris Tomlin

Celebrate God ~Carey Landry

**OPENING PRAYER**

Good and loving God,

You call us to be your friend and you desire a relationship with us.

Through prayer, we encounter you and you open our hearts to your infinite love.

Guide us and encourage us so we can be in union with you whom we will encounter one day – face to face.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. +

**READING: Matthew 7:7-8**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **R. Glory to You, O Lord.**

Ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks, receives, and everyone who searches, finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

In your relationship with God the Father, how do you ask, search and knock? What is given, found and opened for you?



## READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward Heaven; it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy.”

~St. Therese of Lisieux

This simple quote is loaded with meaning, but I want to focus on three things. It first of all demonstrates the faith of one who *is* in relationship with God, as she speaks of her heart, “surging” in prayer. Anyone who has ever been in love has known the experience of being “twitterpated” and experiencing a surge of the heart at the sight or even the mere mention of their beloved. Second, St. Therese points out that the one who prays, looks beyond him or herself, to Heaven... seeking to know the God who has created and continues to love us. It’s not simply a question of deep self-reflection, but is by its very design, aimed to this eternal “Other” we know as God. And finally, that it embraces trial and joy and focuses on the fact that prayer is not simply there for the easy times when God seems close to us, it’s also for the difficult times where God is quiet or when life is difficult, and God seems very far away. The point with prayer is to put in the effort to fall in love with God by turning to him in the blessed moments of our lives, the ordinary moments and the difficult ones.

~Mike Landry, Third Place Project, The Online Home of Mike Landry: Catholic Youth Minister, Speaker and Musician – <http://www.thirdplaceproject.com/youcat-prayer-in-the-christian-life/> (November 10, 2017)

How do you, as Catholic educator, help your students understand God’s desire to be in a personal relationship with them and the graces that flow from it? How is this relationship central to their faith life and to Catholic education?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord,

St. Francis de Sales once said, “In prayer, more is accomplished by listening than by talking. Let us leave to God the decisions as to what shall be said.”

Good and gracious God, we are listening (*sit in silence for a few moments*).

In union with the Holy Spirit, we share this prayer with you, through Jesus Christ your son.

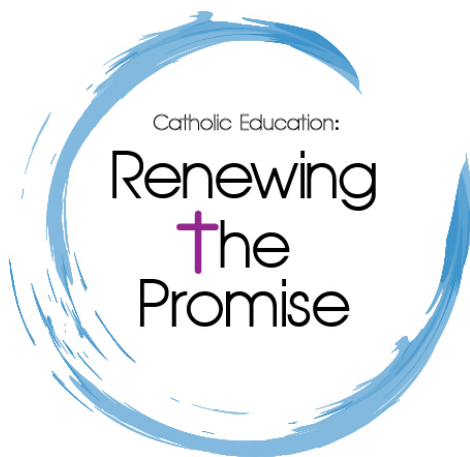
Amen. +

## SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

Sweet Hour of Prayer ~William M. Wollford

Open the Eyes of My Heart ~Michael W. Smith

Thank You, Lord ~Don Moen



**March 2018**  
***“Living the Promise”***

**SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

All Are Welcome ~Marty Haugen, Gather Hymnal #753  
God is Alive ~David Haas, Catholic Book of Worship III #591  
Gather Us In ~Marty Haugen, Catholic Book of Worship III #587  
God is Love ~David Haas, Catholic Book of Worship III #473  
They'll Know We are Christians ~Peter Scholtes, Gather #735  
I Will Never Forget You, My People ~Carey Landry –  
<https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/11116#tab:sheetmusic>

**OPENING PRAYER**

God of the desert,  
In this Lenten season, lead us through the dry places in our hearts where our faith has gone stale,  
where our hope has turned to despair, where our joy has turned to fear.  
Nourish us with loving reminders of the promises you made to us in Baptism.  
Warm us with a light we can reflect onto others when we use our gifts and talents to serve.  
Inspire us to live the promise, to put our faith into action so that we may become living  
testaments to your ways.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen. +

**READING: Luke 4:18**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke. **R. Glory to You, O Lord.**

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the  
oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

In this passage, Jesus shares his vision of his call to love God and neighbour. How am I called to live out the mission of Jesus today? What word or phrase in the gospel reading resonates with me the most in terms of my role in education?

Jesus and his followers have been called to bring good news to the poor. Who are the poor in our community? Can I expand my understanding of those who are poor to include those who are poor in spirit? What are some actions I can take in order to bring good news to the poor?

Jesus and his followers have been called to proclaim liberty to captives and free those who are oppressed. Who are the oppressed in our schools? In our communities? How can we change the structures that oppress others so that we can uphold the dignity and rights of all people as children of God? What are some ways I help make my school community a place of acceptance, love and belonging?

Jesus and his followers have been called to recover sight to the blind. What about my own “blind spots?” What are some of the ways that I may not see and recognize Christ in each and every person? How can I use this Lenten season to open my eyes to the ways in which I may need to become more welcoming and inclusive so that I can continue to put my faith into practice?

## READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

“It is impossible to work on your relationship with Jesus Christ without immediately sharing his broad concern about all the other relationships we need to foster and nourish. Our motto is not, ‘Be good to the ones you love.’ It is, ‘Be good to the ones God loves.’ You can’t cuddle with the Christ and shut out the poor. You can’t draw near to Jesus and draw away from the sick and suffering, the elderly and the ill, and the most vulnerable of the world. Therefore, if we open wide the doors to Christ for a new generation of believers, we automatically open wide the doors to all those Christ loves and cherishes the most, namely our neighbours.”

~Build Bethlehem Everywhere, page 42

Pope Francis has said that, “none of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice.”<sup>1</sup> How does this connect to the reading and our call to build God’s kingdom here on Earth?

What implications does this reading have for our school community and the actions we may need to take to “open wide the doors to all those Christ loves?” How can we ensure that we are opening wide our doors to *all* those Christ loves and not just to a select few?

Reflect on this sentence and its implications for putting faith into practice... “You can’t cuddle with the Christ and shut out the poor.”

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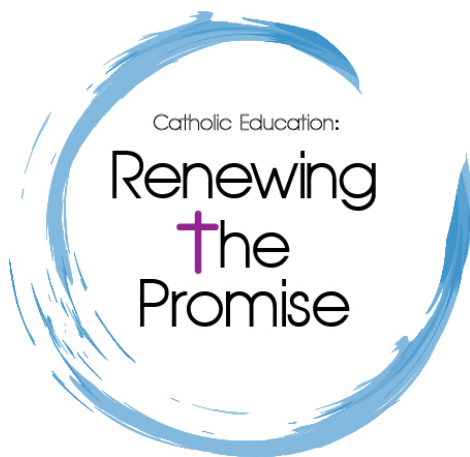
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/685768>

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Loving God,  
You who created everything this is good.  
You who stretch out the Heavens like a tent.  
You have made us for each other.  
You call us from our isolation into one community of love.  
Your voice is sure and strong.  
We come from many places and yet we are woven together in your spirit.  
Together, we hear the cry of the poor, bearing the weight of injustice.  
Together, we see the pain of the Earth as her beauty is destroyed.  
And together, we hear your voice most clearly...  
Calling us to join in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in need;  
Calling us to commit ourselves, as Ruth to Naomi saying, "Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay."  
O Lord, stretch the canvas of our hearts that we might make room for the suffering of all humanity and all of creation.  
Today, by your grace, we join our lives to those who labour in the fields – those who are weighed down by injustice and those who work to build the world according to your way.  
Lead us in the way of discipleship...  
The way of love, of faith, of justice and of peace...  
The way that has always been yours. Amen. +  
~Development & Peace: 50 Years of Solidarity Prayer

## **SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS**

You are Mine ~David Haas, Gather Hymnal #649  
You are the Voice ~David Haas, Catholic Book of Worship #576  
We are Called ~David Haas, Gather Hymnal #710  
We are Many Parts ~Marty Haugen, Gather Hymnal #733  
We are One Body, One Body in Christ ~John Michael Talbot –  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_2FZWQwM7U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_2FZWQwM7U)



**April 2018**  
***“Proclaiming the Promise”***

**SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone) ~Spirit and Song 265  
10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) ~Spirit and Song 270  
Your Grace is Enough ~Spirit and Song 374

**OPENING PRAYER**

Lord our God,  
Fill us with hope and joy as we celebrate this Easter season.  
Let us proclaim our voices in glorious Alleluias as we praise and glorify you.  
May the spirit of the resurrected Christ, fill our days with wonder and awe.  
May we be renewed in our faith as we go out as Disciples of Christ, proclaiming your glory.  
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen. +

**READING: Matthew 28:16-20**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **R. Glory to You, O Lord.**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

How do you feel about Jesus sending you out to proclaim God's glory? Are there things that make you nervous about your role as an evangelist? Where can you find support in your journey as Christ's disciple?

## **READING AND GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

"Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God."

~Evangelii Gaudium, The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis

Think about all the people you encounter on a daily basis; your family, friends, colleagues, students, parishioners and community members... How do you show God's love and joy in your encounters? Are you living your call to love and serve God? Are you evangelizing through word and deed? What do we learn about God through these encounters? Through evangelization?

We learn to love one another, as God loves us. We learn to be Christ's hands and feet on earth. We learn to answer the call to be Christ's disciples, to go out and spread the good news.

Let us take note of leadership from Pope Francis... This is a man who leads with courage, compassion and conviction. In his address from St. Peter's Square on May 18, 2013, Pope Francis said, "Today's world stands in great need of witnesses, not so much of teachers, but rather of witnesses. It's not so much about speaking, but rather speaking with our whole lives." Being a witness of faith and evangelization takes courage. Do not be afraid to fail. "If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents."

~Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium

## **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 and Song 213

Everlasting God ~Spirit and Song 286

Blessed be Your Name ~Spirit and Song 206