

## Staff Prayer for

### The Beginning of the New School Year

#### **Leader:**

As we gather this morning to begin this new school year we look around and greet the familiar faces and we also welcome those who are joining our staff for the first time.

We thank God for the blessings we have experienced during the summer holidays and we pray together for the year that lies ahead of us.

We pray for each other, that it may be a fruitful year, one during which we enjoy the friendship and support of our colleagues, while also imparting to our students, not only knowledge, but that real sense of belonging to a faith community which is the mark of the Catholic school.

#### **Reader 1:**

##### To Receive each Day as an Invitation

No day is ever the same, no day stands still: each one moves through a different territory and once a moment has flickered into life it vanishes and is replaced by the next...

The writing life is a wonderful metaphor for this.

The writer goes to his desk each morning to meet the empty white page.

As he settles himself, he is preparing for visitation and voyage ...

He has no idea what will come.

Yet despite his limitations, his creative work will find its own direction to form.

Each of us is an artist of our days;  
The greater our integrity and awareness,  
the more original and creative our time will become.

*John O'Donohue: Benedictus*

**Leader:**

Like the writer, the teacher meets the empty white page of young minds and each new day provides the opportunity to enable students to develop and grow both intellectually and spiritually. This is a challenge but it is also a great privilege. Often teachers never know just how they have touched a student - by their enthusiasm for what they are teaching, by their kindness, by their patience, by their own spirituality.

**Reader 2:**

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark.                      Mk.4. 1-8

Again Jesus began to teach beside Lake Galilee. The crowd that gathered round him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it. The boat was out in the water, and the crowd stood on the shore at the water's edge. He used parables to teach them many things, saying to them:

“Listen! Once there was a man who went out to sow corn. As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some of it fell on the rocky ground, where there was little soil. The seeds soon sprouted, because the soil wasn't deep. Then when the sun came up, it burnt the young plants; and because the roots had not grown deep enough, the plants soon dried up. Some of the seed fell among thorn bushes, which grew up and choked the plants, and

they didn't produce any corn. But some seeds fell in good soil and the plants sprouted, grew, and produced corn: some had thirty grains, others sixty, and others a hundred."

The Word of the Lord.

*Pause.*

**Leader:**

Jesus knew what it was to teach – and to be faced with blank stares! When his disciples asked him to explain what he meant, his somewhat exasperated response was: "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you ever understand any parable? (Mk.4:13).

Not all of our students will appreciate our efforts; but we may be sure that the seed we sow, not just in academic terms, but also pastorally and spiritually, will take root, sprout and grow in ways that we will never know.

**Let us pray together:** The Response to the prayers is:  
**Lord hear our prayer.**

1. That each member of our community may experience the warmth of welcome and the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ here in our school. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

2. That we may always encourage our students to pursue truth, to recognise their own gifts and to care for the common good. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

3. That through our educational programmes we may always seek to promote the development of the whole person. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

4. That, we will always be supportive of parents/guardians in their task of bringing up their children, and that, likewise, parents may respect and appreciate the dedication and hard work of teachers and all who work in schools. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

5. That our school may be a place which consistently promotes Christian love, responsible citizenship, respect for the environment and good stewardship of the earth. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

6. We pray also for all those connected with our school who have died (and especially for -----) May these, and all our own friends and relatives who have journeyed home to You, rest forever in Your eternal light. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** Let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us:

**Our Father...**

## **Leader: Final Prayer**

Loving God, as we begin another academic year, we ask your Holy Spirit to be with us, that we may always use the gifts you have given us to the best of our ability.

We pray for all the students we will be privileged to teach during the coming months and ask that we may try to see in each of them the many and varied gifts and talents with which you have blessed them. We make our prayer through Christ, Our Lord.  
Amen.

## Why a Teacher needs to pray?

Let me see if I've got this right.

You want me to go into that room with all those kids, and fill their every waking moment with a love for learning.

Not only that, but I'm to instil a sense of pride in their background, modify disruptive behaviour, and observe them for signs of abuse, drugs, and of course, a mobile phone. I am to fight the war on drink, drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, check their backpacks for weapons and raise their self esteem.

I am to promote the spiritual, emotional, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of all my students and thereby of society. I'm to teach them loyalty, good citizenship, give them a sense of justice and fair play, and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of 21<sup>st</sup> Century life by equipping them with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.

I am to check their heads occasionally for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of potential antisocial behaviour, offer advice, write letters of recommendation for student employment, college courses and scholarships, encourage respect for the cultural diversity of others, and oh yeah, teach - always making sure that I give every student my complete and undivided attention.

I'm required to be working - on my own time - summer and evenings and at my own expense towards additional qualifications, master's degree, doctorate – sure why not – I've nothing else to do! And after school, I am to attend endless meetings and participate in staff development training to maintain my current certification and employment status, teach extra classes, run the afterschool club, and coach the team.

I am to be a model of virtue larger than life, such that my very presence will awe my students into being obedient and respectful of authority... I do like to dream...

I am to pledge allegiance to supporting family values, a return to the basics, and the implementation of yet another revised curriculum. I am to incorporate technology into the learning, but monitor all web sites for appropriateness while providing a personal one-on-one relationship with each student.

I am to make sure ALL students complete ALL coursework and pass their exams in ALL subjects whether or not they attend school on a regular basis, or complete any of the work assigned.

I am to communicate frequently with each student's parent/guardian via homework diary, letter, phone, newsletter and report card.

I'm to do all this with the least amount of resources and of course no planning time and with a great big smile.

You want me to do all of this and you expect me to do it without praying???

## **A Teacher's Prayer** by Jill Wolf

I want to teach  
my students more  
than lessons in a book;

I want to teach them  
deeper things  
that people overlook-

The value of  
a rose in bloom  
its use and beauty, too;

A sense of curiosity  
to discover  
what is true;

How to think  
and how to choose  
the right above the wrong;

How to live  
and learn each day  
and grow up to be strong;

To teach them always  
how to gain  
in wisdom and in grace;

So they will someday  
make the world  
a brighter, better place.

Let me be  
a friend and guide  
to give these minds a start;

Upon their way  
down life's long road  
then I'll have done my part.

## ***A Teacher's prayer***

*This prayer is dedicated to all teachers*

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Enable me to teach with  
**wisdom**  
for I help to shape the mind.

Equip me to teach with  
**truth**  
for I help to shape the conscience.

Encourage me to teach with  
**vision**  
for I help to shape the future.

Empower me to teach with  
**love**  
for I help to shape the world.

**Amen**