

National Day of Prayer for Inclusion Toolkit

Created in Partnership with the National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion & FIRE Foundation of Northeast Iowa

Please Join
Catholic Schools and Parishes across the Country in the
National Day of Prayer for Inclusion
of People/Students with Disabilities and the Families Who Love Them
as we ask for God's blessing on children, teachers, parents & families.

December 1st – Catholic Schools | December 2nd & 3rd – Parishes

Suggested Prayer

Living and True God,

You created all that is good and holy in your image, be close to us, your servants, who gather here today. Be our constant help and protection as we lovingly reach out to welcome and embrace all your children, regardless of their abilities, in our parishes and schools. Bless our children as they grow together in faith, knowledge and friendship and bless their parents and educators who guide them through challenges, who celebrate their special gifts and who encourage them to reach their potential. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy spirit, one God, forever and ever.

AMEN

About the National Day of Prayer

Our message:

Today we mark, as a national group of Catholics, a moment to stand with members of our faith who have disabilities and the families who care for them. We are One Bread and One Body. Everyone matters.

Our goals:

- To honor their lives. To cherish their sacred holiness. We know that life is a verb. In order to truly honor and cherish these members of our faith, we need to stand with them.
- We need to reach out and make our faith accessible to them.
- We need to actively support the families and caregivers.
- Most importantly, we need to make room at the table for these full participants - room in our Catholic Schools and room in our Catholic Parishes.

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Ways to incorporate the Day of Prayer in our Catholic Schools

As Catholics we are called to inclusion of all. The Catholic Church has called for broader integration of persons with disabilities into the full life of the church through increased evangelization, catechesis and by participation in the Church's sacramental life. Pope Benedict XVI supported this belief in his statement "No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, with in turn nurtures the soul of a nation." Our current Pope Francis has extended many efforts and statements calling for inclusion. His statement, "I called for inclusive education which makes room for everyone and avoids elitism in selecting the beneficiaries of its commitment." clearly recognizes the importance of having a world where we are all included as integral members.

These statements give foundation to our efforts to assist parishes and schools in their efforts to be inclusive of persons with disabilities and their families in providing evangelization, catechetical formation, and sacramental access.

What can we, the school community, do to include individuals with disabilities?

- Create a welcoming community for persons with disabilities.
 - Invite individuals with differences to join you in your activities or free time.
 - Invite individuals with differences to talk, or just be a good listener and friend.
 - Encourage individuals with differences and their families to use their gifts and talents to participate in committees, clubs, organizations, events, and then to participate throughout the year.
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Ways to incorporate the Day of Prayer in our Parishes

Call to Worship

Perhaps at the beginning:

Jesus reveals that we are not just recipients of God's goodness, but are invited actively to *participate* in His goodness. Christ engages us in a personal relationship *and* makes of us *ministers - to ALL*.

In this incident, of course, Jesus establishes a particular ministry. He ordains *apostles* ("ones who are sent"). Their mission is none other than the mission of Christ, which is fundamentally to communicate the mystery of God, to lead into God, expressed here in various acts of divine love:

Proclaim the kingdom, Cure the sick, Raise the dead, Cleanse lepers, Expel demons

We are *all* ministers, in different ways, however.

Why does Jesus like to associate us to His ministry?

Why does Jesus like to make of us instruments of His merciful love and His light? Firstly, it expresses greater love for us.

We are not *consumers* of Christ. We are *friends* of Christ.

Jesus shows respect for and trust in His friends, and He elevates them by association to His work.

Opening Song:

We are Many parts, all verses, and have a powerpoint to play along with it - very simple, photos only, pictures of different people, all parts of the world, all kinds of dress, all kinds of abilities, tall, short, etc.

Roman Catholic Readings for December 3, 2017

Reading I - Exodus 19:2 – 6a

Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5 (3c)

Gospel Reading Matthew 9:36 – 10:8

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and sent them out.

Concluding statement by priest or cantor:

We are called, as were the apostles, to pray for shepherds, and to go out and minister to the sheep.

Closing Song:

We are Many Parts (all verses; powerpoint if available)

The repetition is intentional - it takes all of us to create God's kingdom.