

# EDUCATION SUNDAY

Form and flourish



GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS  
AND PARISHES



# Contents

• Foreword	1
• Overview	2
• Showcasing schools	3
• Class activities	4
• Reflections	6
• Getting involved with the Mass	7
• Liturgy	8
• Homily	9
• Bidding Prayers	10
• Social Media Guide	12



# Foreword

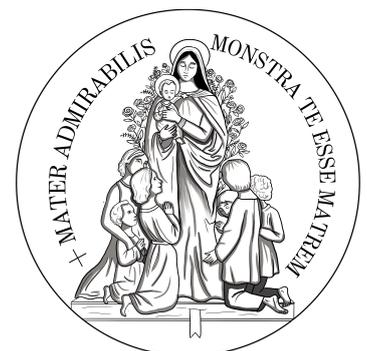
Education Sunday is one of the oldest Days of Special Prayer in this country's liturgical calendar. Established by the Bishops in 1848, originally on the feast of the Sacred Heart in June, and now celebrated at the beginning of the academic year. Although long associated with the annual collection for the work of the Catholic Education Service, its main purpose is to celebrate the work of Catholic education and to enable it to continue to flourish with the support of the whole Catholic community.

Catholic education is a precious legacy from our forebears, and a testament to their courage and foresight. In the mid-nineteenth century the Catholic Church in this country was a mainly poor and immigrant community, emerging from centuries of persecution. Education was rightly seen as the principal means of handing on the faith and improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural lives of the next generation. The Bishops made the education of the poor their top priority and, making huge sacrifices, Catholics set about raising funds and fighting for the right to re-establish a national network of schools and universities which we enjoy today.

Catholic education is a tremendous achievement to be celebrated. The Catholic Church is this country's largest provider of secondary schools and second-largest provider of primary schools. Catholic education is by far the largest charitable endeavour of the Church in this country: we give thanks for the many thousands of teachers, lecturers, academics, support staff, leaders, governors, advisers and others who have found their vocation in Catholic education, and without whom this endeavour would be impossible. Catholic schools continue to be true to their mission: they are more diverse than any other type of school, they recruit disproportionately more children from the poorest areas of the country and still consistently manage to be the highest performing schools in the country.

For Catholic education to continue to flourish, it needs to rely on the continued support of the whole Catholic community. As in previous generation, all Catholics need to be prepared to do their bit to support, promote and defend Catholic education. There are many ways to do this: whether by praying for vocations to Catholic education, responding to consultations or letting your elected representatives know your views, or encouraging a young person to teach in a Catholic school. In that way, we can all ensure together that our Catholic schools and universities will be there to form the next generation.

Paul Barber  
Director of the Catholic Education Service



# Overview

The theme of this year's Education Sunday is 'form and flourish'. This theme allows us to reflect on the ways in which education enables people to grow and excel throughout their lives, finding fulfilment through the continual discovery of vocation. Saint Thérèse exemplifies these themes and ideals. Saint Thérèse - who is sometimes called Saint Thérèse of the Roses or the "Little Flower"- is famous for her "little way". Saint Thérèse taught that each person can use their individual gifts - no matter how big or small - to live lives of holiness.

Education Sunday is a wonderful opportunity 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.

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.

## Resources include:

- A poster for your school and parish
- Parish newsletter draft notice
- A colouring-in sheets for children's liturgy
- A reflection for pupils and teachers
- Further ecumenical resources can be sourced at [www.CTE.org.uk](http://www.CTE.org.uk)

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 have, and for this reason we welcome any innovations in showcasing our inspirational local schools.



# Showcasing Schools

*Mass on Education Sunday is a wonderful chance for Catholic schools and parishes to work in partnership to showcase schools. This is an opportunity to make visible the links between the school and the parish.*

## You might think about:

- Encouraging pupils from Catholic schools to wear their school uniforms to Mass.
- Arranging for pupils to do the readings, sing the psalms and read the bidding prayers.
- Arranging for pupils to do the second collection.
- Placing student's art at the back of the church, the church hall or another prominent place.
- Having a student-led bake-sale in the church hall after Mass.
- Arranging for pupils to come in to church with their school banner.
- Having a teacher or pupil read out the appeal for the second collection.

This list is not exhaustive, and the features of different schools are to be celebrated and recognised.

Additionally, schools may wish to invite staff and volunteers to Mass, including teachers, teaching assistants, playground or home-time volunteers.



# Class Activities

*Following are some ideas for class-room activities and reflections aimed at animating the Education Sunday Mass and its themes.*

## The Readings

The Gospel in the lectionary for Education Sunday is Luke 14: 25-32.

The readings for the Mass are rich with themes that students can use to reflect upon their own experiences and the world around them.

It is suggested that teachers explore and reflect upon them with their classes prior to Education Sunday.

## The Wednesday Word

The Wednesday Word is an excellent resource that can be used in the class and at home to reflect on the issues and messages present in the liturgies.

The Wednesday Word is producing a special Education Sunday edition.



## Lectio Divina

More advanced age-groups could use Lectio Divina to draw out the themes in the readings and discern what the ways in which the readings speak to them.

Students can be encouraged to discuss the parts of the readings that they find difficult or challenging.

## Home-made Lectionary

In order to understand the order of the Mass, students of all levels could make their own lectionaries. Pupils could cut and stick readings, hymns and the order of the Mass into the right places and then add their own decoration in any way they liked. Pupils could then refer to their lectionary throughout the Education Sunday Mass.



# Suggested activities:

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is known as “The Little Flower”. She is a Doctor of the Church and she is the patron saint of missionaries, florists and the sick. Pupils and teachers can reflect on the following quote in order to think about what it means to be flourish, be authentic and discover vocation.



## Saint Thérèse of Lisieux said...

*“The splendour of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the violet of its scent or the daisy of its simple charm. If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness”*



### Group Discussion:

What do pupils think Saint Thérèse means in this quote? Teachers can weave in the themes of individuality, diversity, God’s love for everyone and the meaning of vocation in each of our lives into the discussion.

### Arts and crafts:

Younger pupils could draw a big flower with around five petals around a large circle. In the circle pupils could draw a self - portrait. In each of the petals they could draw each of the things that make them *them*... their hobbies, their favourite food, their aspirations, their favourite books, their favourite subject, etc.

### A prayer to Saint Thérèse

O Little Therese of the Child Jesus, please pick for me a rose from the heavenly gardens and send it to me as a message of love.

O Little Flower of Jesus, ask God to grant the favors

I now place with confidence in your hands . .

(mention in silence here)

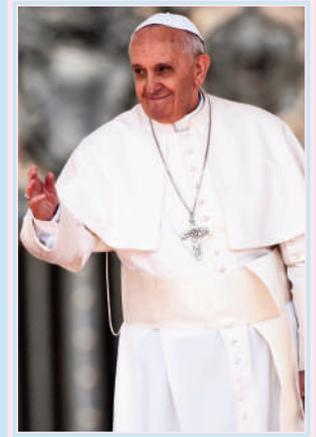
St. Therese, help me to always believe as you did in

God's great love for me, so that I might imitate your "Little Way" each day.

Amen

# Christus Vivit

*After the youth Synod which took place in Rome in October last year, the Holy Father released a post-synodal exhortation entitled 'Christus Vivit', Christ is Alive. Included are some quotes which can be used as starting points for group discussions.*



## On education:

“Education makes us raise questions, keeps us from being anaesthetized by banality, and impels us to pursue meaning in life.”



## On love:

“The salvation that God offers us is an invitation to be part of a love story interwoven with our personal stories; it is alive and wants to be born in our midst so that we can bear fruit just as we are, wherever we are and with everyone all around us.”



## On aspirations:

“The love of God and our relationship with the living Christ do not hold us back from dreaming; they do not require us to narrow our horizons. On the contrary, that love elevates us, encourages us and inspires us to a better and more beautiful life.”



## On vocation:

“To respond to our vocation, we need to foster and develop all that we are. This has nothing to do with inventing ourselves or creating ourselves out of nothing. It has to do with finding our true selves in the light of God and letting our lives flourish and bear fruit.”



# Reflection

*The following reflection is provided to help unpick the theme of Education Sunday, 'Form and Flourish' and the Gospel, Luke 14:25-33.*



We live in a world that bombards us with images and stories about what it is to be successful and to be happy. Many of these are based on empty promises, 'If you have this phone you will be popular and connected, if you drive this car you will be successful and attractive, if you look like this - people will want to be with you. But these are so often lies or empty promises. So many different studies in positive psychology tell us that our happiness and wellbeing is often linked to the quality of our relationships and the sense of purpose we have in life. In fact, as countries that are getting a richer report that happiness levels are stagnating or going backwards, we are starting to move away from measuring development in economic terms.

God has a dream for each of us, but that dream is not forced on us, we have to discover it and cooperate with God in fulfilling this dream. St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, gave some very good advice for us as we begin this process. To listen and learn about God's dream and to start flourishing first off, we have to become free. He talks about an 'interior freedom' where we become detached from any desires that will lead us away from God. We must practice being indifferent to some of these desires, to be rich, to be famous. Only when we are indifferent can we develop that inner freedom which allows us to spot the manipulative and false promises that ultimately make us unhappy and leave us feeling empty. When we become free we can 'discern' between God's dream for us and the empty promises that surround us all the time. Then we can make decisions about how to spend our time and attention that will help us to flourish.

There is a lot of wisdom and guidelines in this Ignatian tradition. We cannot learn about our attachments, and therefore inner freedom on our own. Some of these attachments are also very natural and powerful but nevertheless can stop us from flourishing. Sometimes even in our own families, we can be stuck in abusive relationships or dragged down by someone else's depression. Therefore, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus strong words about 'hating father, mother, brother, sisters and even his own life' can be seen in this context. If we become so attached to those things, at the expense of finding out God's dream for us, then we are not free and in fact those very things that we assume are good can prevent us from flourishing. Of course, if my family relationships are healthy, and I am free, then they will help and not hinder me from being happy. But sometimes these decisions are so complicated and difficult we cannot do this on our own, that is why St. Ignatius always insists that we find someone wise to accompany us and help us to discern, that we don't do it on our own. Even better if they have some experience of these traditions which have so much wisdom and experience.

- Father Tim Byron SJ

# Getting involved with the Mass

*There are many ways to bring pupils in to the Mass which serve to inspire and engage pupils and parishioners alike. Some things to think about are:*

- Including class groups in the selection of hymns
- Devising bidding prayers
- Including the school choir
- Having pupils read during the Mass
- Having pupils present the offertory
- Creating artwork that can be presented in the church or church-hall



Aside from the liturgy, other ways that your school and parish might celebrate Education Sunday are:

## **Bake-sale**

To include pupils after Mass, a bake sale could be hosted by pupils. Money raised could go towards the Education Sunday collection, or perhaps a charity that the school is involved with.

## **Exhibition**

If classes have made artwork surrounding the themes in the readings, then these might be displayed in the church hall for parents, pupils and parishioners to look at.



## **The second collection:**

It is suggested that the somebody connected to the school, be it the Head Teacher, a nominated teacher, a governor, parent or member of the PTA make a short appeal for the second collection.

## **Questions to reflect upon for the appeal:**

- What has my experience of Catholic education been?
- What are my favourite parts of the school I am involved in?
- What are the core values that drive my school?
- Do you feel like Catholic education makes a difference? How?
- What are the connections between my school and the parish?
- What inspires me in my work?

# Liturgy

Education Sunday – Sunday 8th September

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Dominica XXIII per Annum (C)



**Entrance Antiphon/  
Introit\*** Ps 118:137, 124 (145-152)

You are righteous, O Lord, and right is your judgement.

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**Reading 1**

Wis 9:13-18

Who can divine the will of the Lord?

---

**Psalm/Gradual**

Ps 89: 3-6. 12-14. 17 r.1

O Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to the next.

---

**Reading 2**

Phlm 9-10, 12-17

Have him back, not as a slave anymore, but a dear brother.

---

**Gospel Acclamation\***

Ps 118: 135

Alternatives: Ps 101:2  
OR John 15:15

Let your face shine on your servant and teach me your decrees.

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**Gospel**

Luke 14:25-33

None of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.

---

**Offertory\***

Dan 9:17-18, 20a, 22b; 10-11

Listen, Lord, to your servant's prayer. Let your face shine upon your sanctuary and look kindly upon this your people.

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**Communion Antiphon\***

Ps 41:2-3

Alternatives: Ps 75:12-13  
OR Jn 8:12

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God.

\* For the full liturgical texts (other than those in the Lectionary) see the *Processional* published by the Bishops' Conference 2012: <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Missal/Music/ProcessionalBook.pdf>



## Hymn Suggestions

All my hope in God is founded  
O God our help in ages past  
Christ is made the sure foundation (Off)  
As the deer yearns for running streams (Hurd)(Comm)  
Crucem tuam (Taizé)  
When I survey the wondrous cross

# Homily

*We have prepared some general bullet points which priests and deacons may like to use in preparing their homily of Education Sunday.*

## The Gospel and Education

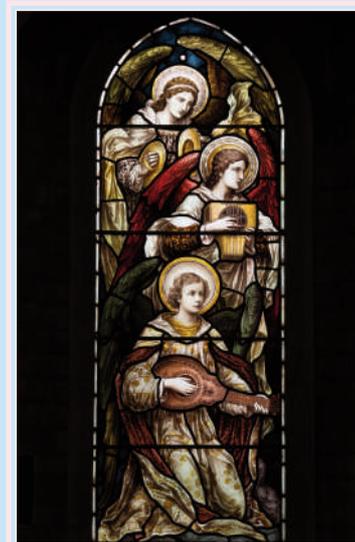
Church documents talk about a true education being one that prepares students for eternal life, as well as enabling them to discern and follow their vocation on this earth. In a Catholic school, we are told, 'there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom.' (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium). These sentiments can be found in the First Reading, where although 'a perishable body weighs down the soul' yet 'men have been taught what pleases you, and saved, by Wisdom.' This is echoed in the psalmist's prayer: 'Make us know the shortness of our life, that we may gain wisdom of heart' and in the Gospel Acclamation: 'Let your face shine on your servant, and teach me your decrees.'

Luke 14: 25-33 - In today's Gospel Jesus addresses a great crowd who have been following him. In the gospel Jesus lays out the challenges and the difficulties that come with being one of his disciples - from following him wholeheartedly. Following Christ is, in a way, counterintuitive. This is not the whole story. In this passage Christ is asking us to place him at the centre of all that we do, knowing that freedom flows from loving Christ and seeking to know Him. Catholic schools place Jesus at the heart of what they do by teaching the values of respect and kindness and fostering community.

## Theme of 'form and flourish'

At school we are given tools that we can utilise throughout our lives. The Holy Father has said "Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life." Time spent at school should not only equip us for life in the world but instil in us a love for knowledge and a desire to seek truth and wisdom.

Education is a lifelong pursuit and it is the job of parents and teachers alike to plant and nurture seeds which will continue to grow and flourish over a lifetime. True education should also recognise the different gifts and talents of each pupil. Catholic education has at its heart the mission to help students uncover the essence of who they are and what it means to be in fellowship with others, seeking vocation and celebrating differences.



## Quotes

"True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life." - Pope Francis

"Love follows knowledge." - Saint Catherine of Siena

"Catholic Education aims not to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberates students in the most profound meaning of human feeling." - Saint John Paul II

# Bidding Prayers

*You might like to use some of the following prayer suggestions. Alternatively, pupils could write their own prayers:*

- We pray for all teachers, that they find fulfilment and joy in their vocation as educators.
- We pray for all students, that they might be inspired throughout their education and that they flourish in all their endeavours.
- We pray for all politicians and leaders, that they might keep the needs and hopes of young people at the heart of their work.
- We pray that through education, young people might find direction and meaning in their lives.
- We pray for young people from across the globe, especially for those who through conflict, poverty or oppression, do not have access to education.
- We pray for our chaplains, who bring the gospel to those in all walks of life, in prisons, at sea, in schools, in universities and in the forces.
- We pray for those for whom education is a source of hope and new beginnings.
- We pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, that people might be attentive to the Lord's quiet call in their hearts.
- We pray, that inspired by the voices of our young people, we might all become effective stewards of our common home, the earth.



# Social Media Guide

*The following social-media guide will help your school/parish utilise Twitter for Education Sunday and beyond.*

If your school doesn't have a Twitter account, it only takes a few minutes to set one up. However, please ensure your tweeting, especially all photos of children, is in line with your online safety policy and that you apply appropriate security settings to your account. Twitter can be useful for engaging with parents, but also for promoting the work of the school.

Twitter is good for reaching a large audience, linking to other organisations and facilitating public conversations. Posts are short (maximum 140 characters) and you can also post photos and videos.

## 1. Set up a twitter account

- Use a brief and easy-to-remember Twitter handle (e.g. @CathEdService)
- Put key information in the "about" section – website and name of your school

## 2. Follow and get followed

- Follow and tweet/retweet people and schools who do similar work to your own. You must follow in order to get followed.
- Follow the Catholic Education Service on Twitter @CathEdService to find out what other Catholic schools are up to for Education Sunday. You can follow the Holy Father at @Pontifex, as well as your bishop, if he has Twitter.
- Some other good accounts to follow are @BBCeducation and your local newspaper. If you post lots of content about an interesting event at your school, a local journalist might decide to write a story about it.

#LoveCatholicEducation



@CathEdService

#EducationSunday



### 3. Be an active tweeter

- Use hashtags to maximise the visibility of your tweets.
- Tweet short updates about the work you're doing – keep your followers informed.
- Don't tweet too much, think about your audience and make sure access to the twitter account is secure. Also ensure the content of your tweets never reveals personal details of staff or students.
- Look at and use trending topic hashtags in your tweets to reach a wider community and join global twitter conversations.
- Don't forget to tweet about the religious aspects of your school, this differentiates you from many other schools. Photos from masses, collective worship or pilgrimages provide interesting content for your tweets.
- If you have photo and video content, do use it. People are much more likely to engage with a tweet if it has a visual component and isn't just a sentence. Once your account is up and running, get ready to tweet about Education Sunday. This year's theme is 'form and flourish', which gives plenty of scope for schools to tweet.
- Retweet @CathEdService's tweets, especially the infographics about Catholic education and school governance.
- You could get individual staff and students to tweet about why they love their Catholic school using the hashtags.
  - E.g. 'Headteacher Mrs Smith is celebrating #educationsunday with a special assembly, we'll be learning about St Thérèse of Lisieux'
- Providing you have permission, tweet photos of all the events you run around Education Sunday.



Wishing you a blessed Education Sunday!

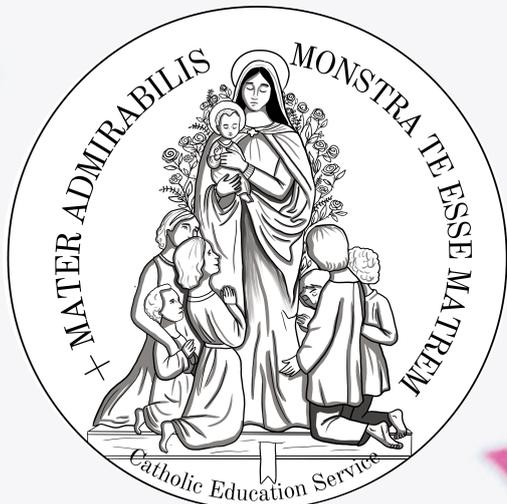


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For more information on Education Sunday 2019 please visit:

**[catholiceducation.org.uk](http://catholiceducation.org.uk)**

and

**[cte.org.uk](http://cte.org.uk)**