

enlightening the mind



Artwork: Christ and His Mother Studying the Scriptures, Henry Ossawa Tanner (c. 1909)

EDUCATION SUNDAY 2022
Guidance for Schools and Parishes

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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, it is 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.

This year is the 175th Anniversary of the beginning of State funding for Catholic schools, and the founding of what is now the Catholic Education Service. At that point in history, our 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 the 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 generations, 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 'enlightening the mind'.

It is taken from the words of this Sunday's Gospel acclamation, *'May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.'* (Ephesians 1:17-18).

As Catholics in education, we trust God as the Source of all enlightenment and our capacity to enlighten others. He is both the means and our end of enlightenment, and every educator and student participates in this gift. With enlightened minds, we can begin to see the plans and paths set ahead of us, and how best to live in accordance with them.

Education is a lifelong pursuit of the fullness of truth, beauty and goodness, for which a good start in Catholic schools and universities provides the foundation. Catholic education strives to open the mind and fills it not only with knowledge and wisdom but also the curiosity and capacity to seek ever more of them. It also enables people to grow and excel in character and virtue throughout their lives, and to find fulfilment while discovering their vocation.

Education Sunday is an opportunity to showcase the work and fruits 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 all members of the Catholic community of the importance of education to 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 annual Catholic calendar.

Resources include:

- A poster for your school and parish
- Parish newsletter texts
- A prayer card for pupils
- Further ecumenical resources can be sourced at www.CTE.org.uk

In this booklet you will find some broad advice on how to celebrate Education Sunday. We however recognise the individual gifts that each school and parish has, so we welcome any innovations, especially in showcasing inspirational local schools and education initiatives.

Showcasing Schools

Holy Mass on Education Sunday is a wonderful opportunity for Catholic schools and parishes to work in partnership to showcase schools.

You might think about:

- Encouraging pupils from Catholic schools to wear their school uniforms to Mass.
- Going through the Sunday's readings, the psalms and the bidding prayers with pupils.
- Arranging for pupils to gather the second collection at Mass.
- Placing students' art or crafts at the back of the church, church hall or other 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 newsletter text/second collection appeal.

This list is not exhaustive, and features of particular schools could be identified and celebrated.

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

Class Activities

Below 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 15:1-32, which includes the Parable of the Lost Sheep, the Parable of the Lost Coin and the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

These parables are rich with themes that students could use to reflect upon the message of Christ and how it relates to how we should act with forgiveness, friendship and fellowship in our communities and schools. It is suggested that teachers explore and reflect upon them with their classes prior to Education Sunday.

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.

Saint Thomas Aquinas is a Doctor of the Church, known as the Angelic Doctor. He is aptly the patron saint of academies, schools, universities, students and learning. Pupils and teachers can reflect on the following quote in order to think about what it means to have enlightened minds, be authentic and discover vocation.

The Angelic Doctor said:

“Three things are necessary for the salvation of man: to know what he ought to believe; to know what he ought to desire; and to know what he ought to do.”

Group Discussion:

What do pupils think Saint Thomas means in this quote? Teachers can weave in the themes of wisdom, words and deeds, virtues, truth and error, and vocation into the discussion.

Arts and Crafts:

Younger pupils could prepare a self-portrait labelled with their beliefs, desires, and ideas of how an ideal virtuous character looks. They could incorporate their talents, their strengths and weaknesses, their aspirations, their hobbies, their favourite books, their favourite subject, etc.

A student’s prayer for enlightenment, written by St. Thomas Aquinas:

Come, Holy Spirit, Divine Creator, true source of light and fountain of wisdom!

Pour forth your brilliance upon my dense intellect, dissipate the darkness which covers me, that of sin and of ignorance.

Grant me a penetrating mind to understand, a retentive memory, method and ease in learning, the lucidity to comprehend, and abundant grace in expressing myself.

Guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to successful completion.

This I ask through Jesus Christ, true God and true man, living and reigning with You and the Father, forever and ever.

Amen.

Reflection

The following reflection is by St. Ambrose of Milan, taken from the Office of Readings, and may help you to unpick the theme of Education Sunday, 'Enlightening the Mind'

St. Paul says: *It is the same God that said, 'Let there be light shining out of darkness', who has shone in our minds to radiate the light of the knowledge of God's glory, the glory on the face of Christ.*

We have heard where Christ shines in us: He is the eternal brilliant illumination of souls, whom the Father sent into the world so that His face should shine on us and permit us to contemplate eternal and heavenly truths – we who had been plunged in earthly darkness.

What shall I say about Christ, when even the apostle Peter said to the man who had been lame from birth *Look upon us?* The cripple looked at Peter and found light by the grace of faith: unless he had faithfully believed he could not have received healing.

When there was so much glory to be seen among the Apostles, Zacchaeus, hearing that the Lord Jesus was passing by, climbed a tree because he was small and weak and could not see the Lord through the crowd. He saw Christ and he found light. He saw Christ and instead of robbing others of their goods he began to give away his own.

Why do you turn your face away? Let us read it thus: even if you do turn your face away from us, Lord, its light is still imprinted upon us. We hold it in our hearts and our innermost feelings are transformed by its light.

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 their own bidding prayers
- Including the school choir
- Going through the readings in advance
- Having pupils present the offertory
- Creating artwork or crafts 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 with which the school is involved.

Exhibition

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

The second collection

It is suggested that 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 11th September

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Reading 1 Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14 The Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he threatened.

Psalm Ps 50: 3-4. 12-13. 17. 19. Luke 15:18 I will leave this place and go to my father.

Reading 2 1 Tim 1:12-17 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Gospel Acclamation Eph 1:17.18 May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.

2 Cor 5:19 God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, and he has entrusted to us that they are reconciled.

Gospel Luke 15:1-32 There will be rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner.

shorter Luke 15:1-10 There will be rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner.

Homily

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

- 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.
- Time spent at school should not only equip us for life in the world but instil in us a transcendent love for knowledge and a desire to seek truth and wisdom.
- **Luke 15:1-32:** In today's Gospel Jesus invites all to the banquet of God and reminds us that He will call and find even the lost. With the eyes of our minds enlightened, we can consistently follow the call of the Shepherd to live the best life He has called us to.
- **Theme of enlightening the mind:** At school the minds of students are opened and filled with knowledge and are set on course to pursue their vocation.
- **The Catholic history of education:** Many of the first schools and universities were founded by the Church, which has always esteemed education – and the enlightenment of the eyes of the mind – as integral to the Christian journey.

Quotes

“The mission of schools and teachers is to develop an understanding of all that is true, good and beautiful.” - Pope Francis

“Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore, seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.” – St. Augustine of Hippo

“If young people are educated properly, we have moral order; if not, vice and disorder prevail. Religion alone can initiate and achieve a true education.” – St. John Bosco

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 the eyes of their mind might be enlightened so that they can see what hope God's call holds for them.
- 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. It is good for reaching a large audience, linking to other organisations and facilitating public conversations.

Posts are short (maximum 280 characters) and you can also post photos and videos.

- 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.
- Follow and tweet/retweet people and schools who do similar work to your own.
- 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.
- 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 'enlightening the mind', 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.
- Providing you have permission, tweet photos of all the events you run around Education Sunday.

May the eyes of your mind be yet more enlightened this Education Sunday!