

Forgiveness Prayer Service

Opening Prayer: God our Father, you are always kind and ready to forgive. Help us to pardon one another. Give us the wisdom to change and grow in our ability to both forgive others and to be forgiven by them. Allow us to experience more fully your forgiveness as we struggle to become people of forgiveness in our world. By our words and actions and prayers, we need your grace to guide our hearts; so, we ask this through Jesus, your Son, who lives and dwells within each of us. AMEN

Old Testament Reading—Book of Sirach—verse?

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 11-12
Response: The Lord is forgiving and merciful

Second Reading—John: 19-23

Gospel Reading—Luke 17: 3-4

Description of gifts:

- Candle—to remind us that Jesus has shown us how to forgive those who have offended us
- Crucifix—a symbol of Jesus' willingness to sacrifice himself to atone our sins
- Hands & Dictionary—a reminder that we have the power to forgive through our actions and words
- Packet of seeds—a reminder that beauty can come from one tiny seed just as it can come from a tiny act of forgiveness

Universal Prayers:

Response: Forgiving Father, hear our prayer

- For our Holy Father on earth, the Pope, all the bishops and the clergy everywhere that they may transform our suffering world into a place of love, justice, forgiveness, and peace through their good words and good actions, we pray to the Lord
- For warring nations throughout the world, that they will have the courage to turn away from the cycle of violence and put faith in forgiveness, we pray to the Lord
- For the members of our school community that we may learn to truly love our enemies as Jesus taught us, we pray to the Lord
- For our families that they may continue to strive to make their homes places where children can hear God call them by name, we pray to the Lord
- For parents of Catholic children that they may accept their responsibility to be examples of Christ's enduring love and forgiveness for their children, we pray to the Lord
- For our families and friends, that they may respond fully to the call of our baptism by remaining open to God's call to serve, we pray to the Lord
- For those who have been wrongly blamed or left out, that they may have the courage and wisdom to forgive those who have caused them pain, we pray to the Lord.

Closing Prayer: God our Father; through this Eucharist, you have brought us closer together. Help us to be kind and forgiving towards each other by following Jesus who asks us to forgive our enemies. Fill our hearts with the courage to pardon ourselves as we pardon others. May we find peace in your forgiveness and the forgiveness we have shared with others. We ask this through Jesus, your Son, who lives and reigns with us forever and ever. AMEN.

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Northeastern Catholic District School Board

Growing our **Faith** through virtues

JANUARY/FEBRUARY
VIRTUE: FORGIVENESS

The Importance of Forgiveness:

The practice of forgiveness is an invaluable stepping-stone to peace. It is one means to healing one self and healing our relationships with others. Forgiveness can be characterized as: 1) a choice to reconcile, 2) an attitude about setting things right, 3) a compassionate way of communicating, 4) a specific action, and 5) an ongoing, lifelong process. Above all, forgiveness expresses kindness. Otherwise, without forgiveness tremendous amounts of resentment or hurt can build-up within.



Forgiveness is an important cornerstone of our faith as we reflect on the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made to forgive us all. In our Catholic schools we work to honour and model forgiveness in everything we do. As a Catholic community, we are fortunate to be able to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This is another opportunity for our students to engage in an honest dialogue with God and receive His forgiveness. In Luke 6:37-38 of the Bible, it is said: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you". In Matthew, Jesus tells his disciples the parable of the unforgiving debtor, summarizing: "If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (6:14) This pronouncement certainly inspired the passage: "forgive our trespassers, as we forgive their trespasses," in the Lord's Prayer and in the equally revered Prayer of Saint Francis: "Where there is injury, pardon;" and, "It is in the pardoning that we are pardoned.". Forgiveness is a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance towards a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.

Looks like: changing our actions and behaviours

Sounds like: saying sorry, accepting an apology from someone

Feels like: a sense of peace in our hearts

DEVELOPING CHARACTER THROUGH LOVE

The goal of this virtue:

- Let your actions be guided by the idea that Jesus said, "Let he who is without sin, cast the first stone".
- The first step to forgiveness is to take responsibility for your actions
- If you want to be forgiven, you need to make sure you forgive other people
- Live your life in a way that makes others know you are a follower of Christ
- By embracing forgiveness, you can also embrace peace, hope, gratitude and joy

"To err is human, to forgive is divine" Alexander Pope

Scripture readings:

- Father John—Suggestions here?
- Parable
- Stories of forgiveness in Bible

PRAYER CENTRE IDEAS FOR FORGIVENESS



- Create a Y chart for forgiveness. What does it look like, sound like and feel like?
- Create a forgiveness tree—students write situations requesting forgiveness and hang them on the tree
- Forgiveness rock garden—each student decorates rocks with personal reflections asking for forgiveness for something they have done.

BUILDING LOVE IN OUR HOMES AND SCHOOLS

Jesus tells us to “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”. We will remind students of the many examples of God’s forgiveness in the Bible. Our Catholic Schools will focus on praying for God’s mercy. Let us all be reminded to model God’s forgiveness for our children and to pray for peace and forgiveness in our world. Christ has called us to pardon others when some harm has been done. In fact, Jesus goes even further to say that we need to love our enemies. Please help us by praying for the staff and students as we explore this virtue

Forgiveness can be shown in momentary ways, as in immediately saying “I’m sorry.” Forgiveness can also be effective beyond the little run-ins of the day. Sometimes things we have done to others (or they to us) burden our heart or mental state. There are three kinds of forgiveness which characterize the action we should take:

1. Self-forgiveness that enables us to release shame, guilt, pride or the illusion that we are perfect and “without sin”
2. Forgiveness we extend to friend or foe alike and receive from them

Sometimes you have to be brave enough to set things right with another, or within yourself. It may be the only way to open and soften a closed and hard heart.

Try these 4 steps:

1. Look honestly and inwardly at a particular hurt you have not been able to forgive
2. Get in touch with your feelings about that hurt. Are they tinged with anger, shame, guilt, resentment, worry, embarrassment, pride or denial?
3. Imagine what it would be like if things were set right
4. Let the hurt go—forgive yourself or find a way within your heart to forgive another

Ways to Forgive

Forgiving Oneself

- Allow memories, images and emotions to come up in your mind that we have never forgiven yourself for
- Ask: Can I accept that I am just an ordinary human being with some bad and some good qualities?
- Acknowledge: I have learned and grown, and I am ready to open my heart to myself
- Forgive—I forgive myself for whatever I did, intentional or unintentional.

Forgiving Another

- Now imagine another person you want to forgive
- Ask: Can I accept this person as a human being with bad and good qualities as well?
- Forgive: from my heart, I forgive you for whatever you did, intentional or not. May you be happy, free of confusion and understand yourself and the world. Please forgive me for whatever I did to you, intentional or unintentional. May we open our hearts and minds to meet in love and understanding

Forrest McDowell Peace of Heart, Peace of Mind

Quotes about FORGIVENESS

“If we practice an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, soon the whole world will be blind and toothless” Mahatma Gandhi



“The best way to get the last word is to apologize” Anonymous

“The day the child realizes that all adults are imperfect, he becomes an adolescent; the day he forgives them, he becomes an adult; the day he forgives himself; he becomes wise” Alden Nowlan

“Humanity is never as beautiful as when praying for forgiveness, or else forgiving another” Jean Paul Richter

“I can forgive, but I cannot forget, is only another way of saying, I will not forgive. Forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note—torn in two, and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one” Henry Ward Beecher

Resources to support FORGIVENESS

David Gets in Trouble. Author: David Shannon

Franklin the Turtle Titles:
-Franklin Fibs, Is Bossy, Says Sorry, Finders Keepers, Homemade Cookies. Author: Paulette Bougeois

I Did It. I’m Sorry. Author: Caralyn Buehner

Mr. Peabody’s Apples. Author: Madonna

Ant, my Brother. Author: Betsy Byars

No David. Author: David Shannon

Star Boy. Author: Paul Goble

Timmy’s New Friend. Author: Andreas Dierssen



This is Just To Say: Poems of Apology and Forgiveness. Author: Joyce Kilmer

I’m Sorry. Author: Sam McBratney

Forgive and Let Go—Book about Forgiveness. Author: Cheri Meiners

The Forgiveness Garden. Author: Lauren Thompson

Martha Doesn’t Say Sorry. Author: Samantha Berger

Berenstain Bears and the Forgiving Tree. Author: Jan Berenstain

Forgiving a Friend: The Way I Act Books. Author: Virginia Krull

Book of Virtues for Young People: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories. Author: William Bennett

Books that Build Character: A Guide to Teaching Your Child Moral Values Through Stories. Author: William Kilpatrick

Bulletin Board Ideas:

Footprints

- Cut out 2 large footprints to represent those of Jesus. Have each student trace and cut out their footprint. On each footprint write:
- 1. What forgiveness means to them
- 2. What forgiveness looks like/ examples of forgiveness

God is Our Shepherd and We are His Lambs

- Brainstorm ways that we can show God how much we love him and how we can be like Christ (home, school, community). Uses sheep—each student selects one goal from list to try to be like Jesus

God is our Eraser

- discuss how pencils can all be different (size, shape, colour, etc).
- They all have one thing in common—an eraser for times they make mistakes
- Compare pencils to people. God is our eraser. When we ask for forgiveness, He takes away our sins. Create “pencil people”

“When you forgive, you in no way change the past—but you sure do change the future”
Bernard Meltzer

5 Links to Catholic Graduate Expectations

A Responsible Citizen

Acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions

Seeks and grants forgiveness. Accepts accountability for one’s own actions

A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community

Recognizes that “sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey” and that the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of redemption

A Collaborative Contributor

Finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good

Respects the rights and responsibilities of self and others

A Reflective and Creative Thinker

Recognizes there is more grace in our work than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges

A Caring Family Member

Relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner