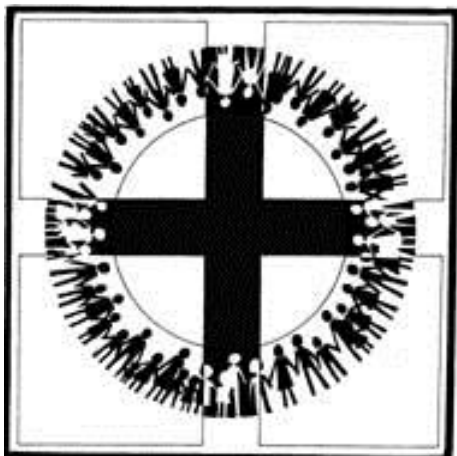


# *Children's Liturgy Resources To Celebrate The New School Year*



*Artwork by Tricia Murray*

## *Revised Edition 2011*

- **Specific Themes & Rituals**
- **General Rituals**
- **Readings**
- **Prayers**
- **Power Point Reflections**
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### **Specific Themes & Rituals**

The following themes may be helpful in planning your community's New School Year Liturgy. Each theme has specific scripture readings and a variety of ideas and suggestions, which may be integrated into your Eucharistic Liturgy or Liturgy of the Word. See the details below.

1. Like A Mustard Seed
2. Bless Us O God
3. New Beginnings – Seeds of Hope
4. A Community Of Love
5. Living Our Vision
6. Journeying Together
7. Growing Together
8. A Rainbow of Gifts – God With Us.
9. Light Our Way

### **Theme 1: Like A Mustard Seed**

**Symbols:** Seeds & soil:

- 1 seed tray with soil for each class
- Several small containers/bowls containing mustard seeds

### **Suggested Readings:**

**First Reading:** Colossians 1:9-12  
*You will reach your fullest potential...*

**Responsorial Psalm:** Sung (See Music Index below)

**Gospel Acclamation:** Community's selection

**Gospel:** Luke 13:18-21

## ***Parable of the mustard seed***

### **Suggested Prayers:**

#### **Opening Prayer:**

**Presider:** Let us pray.  
God of Abundance, you are the source of all goodness.  
At this time of new beginnings,  
help us to be open to the promises you hold for us during this new school  
year. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son.

**All:** Amen.

#### **Prayer of the Faithful:**

**Presider:** At this time of new beginnings, we place our prayers and needs before our  
loving God.

**Reader:** As we begin our new school year we pray that our Church leaders may be  
signs of inspiration to all people. *PAUSE* Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, bring forth your kingdom.

**Reader:** We pray for your abundant blessings on all members of our school  
community. *PAUSE* Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, bring forth your kingdom.

**Reader:** We pray for students and staff who are new to our school. *PAUSE* Lord,  
hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, bring forth your kingdom.

**Reader:** We pray that we will be open to your Spirit moving among us.  
*PAUSE* Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, bring forth your kingdom.

**Reader:** We pray for those who have experienced loss or tragedy during the  
summer holidays. *PAUSE* Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, bring forth your kingdom.

**Reader:** We pray for each family within this school community.  
*PAUSE* Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, bring forth your kingdom.

**Presider:** Lord, hear the prayers of your children who trustingly place their needs in  
your care. We make our prayer in Jesus' name.

**All:** Amen.

#### **Closing Prayer:**

**Presider:** Let us pray.  
Loving God, may we who have been nourished by your Word of Life be  
strengthened to live our lives in love and help to bring about your kingdom.

### **Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:**

#### **Welcome and Introduction:**

**Presider:** Welcome to (*name your school*) liturgy to celebrate the beginning of the  
new school year. We come with our hopes and dreams asking God to bless  
our school community. We look forward with great anticipation to all that  
this new school year has in stall for us. We ask our God to journey with us  
and help us to be kingdom people.

### **Penitential Rite:**

*A group of five students come forward and take up a pose in front of the assembly, crouching down like seeds.*

**Presider:** At this time of new beginnings, let us pause to reflect on how we have lived as Jesus would want us to. *PAUSE*

**Reader:** Lord, Jesus, you call us to begin again. Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

*The five students slowly move into a mid-standing position (at half height) to show seedlings growing*

**Reader:** Lord Jesus, you call us to grow in your love. Christ have mercy.

**All:** Christ, have mercy.

*The five students continue "growing" slowly to an upright stance using their arms like branches.*

**Reader:** Lord Jesus, you call us to new life. Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Presider:** May our God of compassion have mercy on us all and lead us to be kingdom people who follow in Jesus' way. We ask this in Jesus' name.

**All:** Amen.

*The five students return slowly to their place.*

### **Homily/ Breaking Open The Word:**

- Spend a few moments in silence to ponder the Word of God.
- Jesus used many symbols to teach the people about God. Today we have heard about the mustard seed which is one of the tiniest seeds.

*Have ritual leaders from each class come forward and take containers/bowls containing mustard seeds back to their class and pass them out to the members of their class. Play suitable instrumental music as this is happening. Direct all to hold it carefully in the palm of their hand. The music fades and the Presider continues...*

- Take some time to examine your mustard seed. If you have ever planted seeds or cared for a garden, you would know that it takes a great deal of patience and time waiting and watching for seeds to grow. As new, green life breaks through the soil, a seedling emerges! It grows little by little each day. It requires water and light. The seedling must be protected, nurtured and cared for. It has the potential to grow into a large, healthy plant.
- Jesus likens the kingdom of God to a mustard seed; to something that begins very small and seems almost insignificant yet has enormous potential. We experience God's kingdom right here among us. All are included in this kingdom. The kingdom is within us and all around us - the Kingdom is the Spirit of Jesus at work in us.
- As we hold our mustard seed, let us close our eyes and talk to God in the quietness of our hearts. You may wish to tell God your hopes for this new school year or ask God to help you to grow into the person God wants you to be.

*Allow sufficient time for this.*

*At the end of this time each class teacher or student representatives come forward to hold a tray of soil for each class group. Students are invited, row by row, to come forward and plant their seed in their class tray. Sing an appropriate hymn during this ritual, such as **See The Birds Of The Air** (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings). Following the liturgy, the seed tray can be taken to each classroom where students care for their growing plants.*

### **Final Blessing:**

**Presider:** Let us bow our heads and pray for God’s blessing for ourselves in this new school year. **PAUSE**

May God who journeys with us bless us with loving kindness as we begin this new year at school.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** May God who is present in each person in our school community help us to live as Jesus shows us.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** May God’s Spirit make our school a place of learning, living and loving.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** Let us go in the peace of Jesus to love and serve our God and to bring forth the kingdom.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Recessional Hymn & Dance:** **BRING FORTH THE KINGDOM** (Marty Haugen – As One Voice or Gather Australia)

### **Theme 2: Bless Us O God**

**Symbols:** A Blessing Candle and Holy Water

### **Suggested Readings:**

**First Reading -** 2 Peter 1: 2-4a; 5-7  
*God has given us all the things we need for life...*

**Sung Responsorial Psalm-** See music index below

**Sung Gospel Acclamation –** Community’s selection

**Gospel -** Luke 12: 22- 28; 32  
*How much more will God look after you...*

### **Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:**

#### **Preparation for the Liturgy:**

1) **Blessing Candle -** Purchase or make a large, white, processional candle with the school emblem and motto on it and the theme of the liturgy “Bless Us O God...” featured on it.

2) **Blessing Prayers -**

As preparation for this liturgy have each class teacher talk with the children about the theme for the liturgy. At an appropriate time within their class prayer, have them read the first reading for the liturgy from 2 Peter 1: 2-4a; 5-7. Having done so, have the teachers reflect prayerfully on the reading with the children, directing the children to think about the special blessing they desire for the school community in light of the reading. Having allowed time for this, have the teachers give each child a small piece of paper with the theme of the liturgy, "Bless Us O God..." written on it. The children are invited to write down anonymously, in a word or phrase, the blessing they desire. For example, "with kindness to each other..."; "in our efforts to do our best", "in our acceptance of one another", "with love..." (This will need to be adapted for the Kindy & Infant children. Have the children name their blessing and the teacher write it down for them on the piece of paper.) Have the teachers collect these blessings in small baskets (one per class) and bring them to the liturgy as part of the Offertory. Add to these baskets, a staff basket of blessing prayers, and if possible, a basket of blessing prayers from representatives of the parent community.

### **Welcome and Introduction:**

Feature the blessing candle in the Entrance Procession. When the Entrance Hymn has ended, have the Presider bless and enthrone the Blessing Candle as part of the Welcome and Introductory Rite.

### **Gospel Procession:**

As a suitable Gospel acclamation is sung, use the Blessing Candle to lead the Gospel Procession of the Word.

### **Prayer Of The Faithful:**

Before the liturgy, preview some of the blessings from each year level and use them as the inspiration for the Prayer of the Faithful. Let the last petition of the Prayer of the Faithful be a silent prayer, which invites the community to prayer in their own hearts for the personal blessing they desire of God for the year. Let the community response to the Prayer of the Faithful be: "**Lord, bless us in your love.**"

During the actual liturgy and the reading of the Prayer of the Faithful, have a student hold the Blessing Candle before the whole community. Each time the community response, "**Lord, bless us in your love**" is proclaimed, the Blessing Candle is raised high before the community.

### **Offertory:**

Before the presentation of the gifts of Bread and Wine, have class representatives bring forward the baskets of Blessing Prayers, together with representatives of the staff and parents of the community with their respective basket of Blessing Prayers. These are led by the Blessing Candle. The baskets are placed at the foot of the altar table. The gifts of Bread and Wine are then brought forth. The Presider then incenses the baskets of Blessing Prayers, the gifts of Bread and Wine and then the altar table. Following this, the community is then incensed.

### **Post Communion Reflection:**

Create a Litany of Blessings from a selection of the Blessing Prayers (see above in Preparation for the liturgy). Ensure that the litany is not too long and flows with a relevant communal response such as, 'Bless Us O God'. Use this Litany with one of the following options below.

#### **Option 1: PowerPoint Reflection**

Accompany the Litany of Blessings with relevant images taken from within the community. Have the Blessing Prayers written over the images or have a reader proclaim them as the relevant images appear. Accompany this with appropriate instrumental music.

#### **Option 2: Mime Freeze**

Accompany the Litany of Blessings with relevant mime freeze images. As each blessing is proclaimed, have some students embody relevant images. Accompany this with appropriate instrumental music.

### **Final Blessing and Procession:**

Following the Concluding Prayer of the liturgy, as part of the final blessing, the Presider moves amongst the community blessing all with Holy Water. Following this, as an appropriate Recessional Hymn is sung, (see music index below), the Blessing Candle leads the Procession out.

### **Ongoing Integration of the Theme**

By way of integrating the liturgy and keeping the prayer of blessing alive in the community throughout the year, at each School Assembly, or on special occasions or community events, have 3 or 4 of the blessings proclaimed as part of the assembly prayer ritual.

### **Theme 3: New Beginnings - Seeds of Hope**

**Symbol: A flower seed for each person in the school community.**

### **Suggested Readings:**

**First Reading - Romans 15: 13 – 14; 7**  
***Abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit***

**Sung Responsorial Psalm - See music index below**

**Sung Gospel Acclamation – Community’s selection**

**Gospel - Mark 4: 26 -29**  
***The Parable of the Seed Growing***

### **Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:**

#### **Welcome & Introduction:**

Following the entrance procession, the Presider welcomes the community in the usual manner. Having done so, a child comes forward to read the following commentary by way of focusing the community on the theme of the liturgy. As the commentary is read have representatives of each class or year level, assemble a banner which depicts the theme of the liturgy. (See below for details of this banner).

#### **Commentary Reader:**

**We the community of *(Name of school)* gather to ask God’s blessing upon us as we begin a new year together. In our new beginning we have many hopes in our hearts, that are like seeds planted in the earth.**

*A child comes forward and places a strip of soil on the banner. We pray today, that our hopes will grow in their own time and in their own way. Three children come forward and place three seeds at different levels of growth, on the banner. (see notes below) We pray that the Spirit of the God of hope will help all our hopes and dreams to blossom in this community for the good of all. A child comes forward and places a bright flower on the banner. Following this, children come and place the words, “Seeds of Hope” in a central place on the banner.*

#### **Homily Notes:**

Reflect with the children on the readings, in light of the theme of the liturgy, drawing out the mystery of God’s spirit at work in them; empowering life and growth in them, just as in the seed. Having done so, direct them to think about what they hope for in the life and growth they will experience together in the coming year. Take a few responses from them and highlight some of the main hopes and ideals for the community. Following this, class representatives come forward and take a basket of seeds to their class. The seeds are distributed to each class member. (See notes below re these seeds). The children are directed to hold the seed close to

their heart and to pray silently to the God of all hope, for the hope they have in their hearts for their community and for themselves. Having allowed time for this, the children are invited to hold their seeds in their hands as they pray together the Prayer of the Faithful.

### **Prayer of the Faithful:**

As preparation for the liturgy have each class group write down three hopes they have for the community in the coming year. Summarize and collate these into petitions for the Prayer of the Faithful. As each petition is proclaimed, have a child come forward and place a word on the "Seeds of Hope" banner, that expresses the hope within their prayer, e.g. respect, kindness, growth, etc

At the conclusion of these prayers, and as part of the offertory procession, have the class representatives who distributed the seeds, collect the seeds into baskets which are presented as part of the offering at the presentation of the gifts. (See below)

### **Preparation of the Gifts:**

Before the presentation of the bread and wine, class representatives bring forward in procession, their baskets of seeds. As they hand their baskets to the Presider, the seeds are then poured into one large basket, which is draped with thick, long, rainbow coloured ribbons, which hang from the basket. At this point the Presider holds the basket high as the commentary below is read. The basket is then placed at the foot of the table of offering and is incensed with the gifts of bread and wine. Accompany this ritual with appropriate instrumental music.

### **Commentary Reader:**

**We offer our seeds of hope to the God of all hope, knowing that God will bless our hope and bring forth new life and growth for all in our community.**

### **Recessional Procession and Blessing of The Garden of Hope.**

Just before the final hymn, the basket of seeds is held high before the community as the Principal of the school explains that the seeds will be planted in a special garden in the school and become their Garden of Hope. At this point, several children come forward and hold up the ribbon hanging from the basket. During the singing of the Recessional hymn, the community, led by the basket bearer and ribbon bearers, process out of the church to the garden where the seeds will be eventually planted. When they arrive at the garden, the basket is placed on the soil and the soil and seeds are blessed with holy water. Depending on time, preparation, and logistics, class representatives could begin the planting of the seeds there and then, or this could be done as a separate ritual on another occasion.

### **Notes:**

#### **Assembling the Banner**

Drape a large piece of white fabric over a display board or overhead projector screen. Use self adhesive felt or some form of adhesive fabric to create the following elements of the banner.

- A strip of soil
- 1 new seed without roots
- 1 seed with roots sprouting in the soil
- 1 seed with roots and a green shoot
- 1 flower with root
- The words - Seeds of Hope

#### **The Seeds and the Garden of Hope:**

Give some creative thought to this garden of hope, in terms of its location and visibility to the community, as well as its colour and texture. Use plants that reflect the seasonal nature of growth and hope by including sturdy native plants as well as some colourful perennial bulbs.

### **Theme 4: A Community Of Love**

**Symbol: Red candles enthroned in the \*shape of a heart (see below)**

- 1 per each class in the community, carried by a class representative
- 1 candle for the staff, carried by a member of the staff (If the community is very small then include a candle for each member of staff)
- 1 candle for the parents & families in the community, carried by a parent
- 1 candle for the Pastors and ministers in the community, carried by one of the ministers or servers

\*Cut out a large heart shape from a piece of polystyrene. Around its perimeter, cut out a hole for each of the candles and then spray paint the heart shape deep red. Place it on a table in a central position. Prop up the top of it slightly so that the shape of the heart can be seen.

### Suggested Readings:

First Reading - 1 Cor 13: 1- 7; 13  
*Love Is The Greatest Gift of All*

Sung Responsorial Psalm- See music index below

Sung Gospel Acclamation – Community’s selection

Gospel - Mark 12: 28 –34  
*The Greatest Commandment Is Love*

### Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:

#### Gathering Procession & Introduction:

During the Entrance Hymn, (see suggestions below) the procession proceeds to the sanctuary, led by the cross bearer, followed by the candle bearers, (led by the senior class representatives) servers, ministers, lectionary and Presider. The candle bearers stand in a line across the sanctuary until the Entrance Hymn has ended. Following this, the Cross is enthroned directly and closely behind the heart shape. The lectionary is enthroned in its allocated position. Having welcomed the community, the Presider introduces the liturgy.

#### Presider:

**As we begin a new year together here at** (name of school), **we welcome all our new members to our community and ask God to bind us together in love.** (Begin playing some appropriate instrumental music here and let it play on to the end of this ritual) **Each member of our community, the children** (the class representatives hold their candles high), **the staff** (staff member holds her/his candle high), **the parents and families** (parent representative holds the candle high), **and we the parish leaders and ministers** (the parish representative holds her/his candle high) **contribute in our own way to the life of our community.** At this point the candle bearers, beginning with the senior class representative, move in procession towards the sacred space and one by one place their candle in its allocated place in the heart shape immediately in front of the Cross. As this is happening the Presider says, **We pray in this liturgy, that united in the Spirit of Jesus, we will grow to be a welcoming and life-giving community of love.** When all the candles are in place the candle bearers bow to the cross and return to their place. (Fade out the instrumental music) The liturgy continues with the Penitential Rite.

#### Proclamation Of The Word:

Highlight the reading from Corinthians by having different children proclaim it to the community. Have the first child stand at the lectern and proclaim verse 1. This child remains there and watches as another child walks up to the sanctuary proclaiming verse 2 as he/she nears the sanctuary. Having proclaimed the verse, he/she simply stands there with hands by her/his side,



listening to the next child who is coming forward proclaiming verse 3. Have other children do the same for verses 3 – 7. Verse 13 is proclaimed by the child at the lectern who proclaimed verse 1. Having done so, he/she holds up the Lectionary before the community. All the children on the sanctuary point to it with their right hands and say together, **This is the Word of The Lord.**

### **Post Communion Reflection:**

Choose one of the following hymns and have children accompany it in dance. Alternatively, use PowerPoint Images of the school community which express the sentiment of the hymn.

**A Circle Of Love (F. Sandler – As One Voice/Vol 2)**

**Weave One Heart (Marty Haugen – As One Voice For Kids)**

**Love Is The Greatest Gift Of All (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)**

## **Theme 5: Living Our Vision**

**Symbol: The School Vision Statement**

### **Suggested Readings:**

**First Reading:** Habakkuk 2: 2- 3 *Write the vision down*

**Sung Responsorial Psalm-** See music index below

**Sung Gospel Acclamation – Community’s selection**

**Gospel:** Matthew 6: 19 –21  
*True Treasures*

## **Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:**

### **Gathering Procession and Introduction:**

During the singing of the Entrance Hymn (see below for suggestions), the school vision statement is brought forth in procession. When the hymn has finished, the cross, candles and lectionary are enthroned in their allocated places and the vision statement is held before the community. Having welcomed the community, the Presider directs them to be seated and then says,

**Today we celebrate the beginning of a new school year here at (name the school). We welcome in a special way, all the new members of our community (direct them to stand in their places) and are delighted to have you share in our life here at (name the school). Each one of us is called to share in the spirit and vision of (name the school), a vision that we strive to live and make real, so that all who are part of our community, may be blessed by the Spirit of Jesus, present here amongst us.**

The Vision Statement is then enthroned in the sacred space, which is draped in the school’s colours. The liturgy continues with the Penitential Rite.

### **Proclamation of the Word:**

As the first reading from Habakkuk is being proclaimed, use PowerPoint to integrate the school vision statement with the Word of God. Use quiet instrumental music throughout this proclamation. For example –

A person reads from the lectern the first part of the text from Habakkuk.

**“Write the vision down, inscribe it on tablets to be easily read...”**

*(Hab 2:2) PAUSE*

Scroll up on PowerPoint, line by line, the school vision statement. As it is scrolling up have someone read it as a voice over, slowly and reverently.

The reading from Habakkuk continues from the lectern...

***“Since this vision is for its own time only; eager for its own fulfilment, it does not deceive; if it comes slowly, wait, for come it will, without fail...” (Hab 2: 3) PAUSE***

Present a few PowerPoint images (not too many – perhaps 4 or 5 images only) that show the community living out the vision... Let these run up slowly and as they are being viewed by the community, have the reader simply say...

***The vision will come... wait for it... PAUSE***

***This is the Word of the Lord.***

Fade the music and PowerPoint image.

## **Theme 6: Journeying Together**

**Symbols:** School banner, backpack, school hat, drink bottle – symbols which speak of journey and school life.

### **Suggested Readings:**

**First Reading-** Genesis 28:13a –16  
***Truly Yahweh was in this place***

**Sung Responsorial Psalm-** See music index below

**Sung Gospel Acclamation –** Community’s selection

**Gospel -** Luke 24: 13 –35  
***The Emmaus Story***  
***(Story tell this Gospel and have two children take the part of the disciples).***

## **Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:**

### **Gathering Procession & Introduction:**

These symbols could follow the processional cross, candles and lectionary, as part of the gathering procession. At the end of the opening hymn, when the procession has assembled on the sanctuary, have the symbols displayed to the community and then enthroned in the sacred space. As this is happening the Presider could make an introductory statement such as the following.

**Presider:** We gather to celebrate our new school year and to invite our God to journey with us. We bless what has been in the past and look forward to our new beginning with anticipation, hope and enthusiasm. We walk together with companions who are already familiar to us and with new companions who have recently joined our community. Let us pray for God’s abundant blessings on all who are part of our school family as we celebrate our Eucharist this day.

The liturgy continues on with the Penitential Rite.

### **Preparation of the Gifts:**

These journey symbols could be ceremoniously brought from the sacred space to the foot of the Eucharistic table. Following this, the bread and wine could be brought forward to the Presider. Suitable instrumental music could be played throughout this.

## **Theme 7: Growing Together**

**Symbols:** A *native* sapling and glass water container

### **Suggested Readings:**

First Reading – Ephesians 3: 16-21  
*May Your Hidden Self Grow Strong*

Sung Responsorial Psalm- See music index below

Sung Gospel Acclamation – Community's selection

Gospel - Mark 4: 1- 9  
*Parable of the Sower*  
*(Have some children mime this story as it is being proclaimed).*

### **Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:**

#### **Gathering Procession & Introduction:**

These symbols could follow the processional cross, candles and lectionary, as part of the gathering procession. At the end of the opening hymn, when the procession has assembled on the sanctuary, have the symbols displayed to the community and then enthroned in the sacred space. As this is happening the Presider could make an introductory statement such as the following.

**Presider:** As we gather together to celebrate the beginning of our new school year, we give thanks to God for the life we share together. We ask God's blessing upon us all, that like this young tree, we will grow, not just through the learning and wisdom we receive, but especially through the love, care and support we give to one another in our community here at *(name school)*.

The liturgy continues on with the Penitential Rite.

#### **Recessional Procession and Planting of the Tree:**

After the final prayer and blessing, the whole community process from the Church to the place where the tree will be planted. This procession is led by the processional cross, candles and the tree and water, as a suitable recessional hymn is sung. When the community have assembled outside for the planting of the tree, ensure that all can see. Have the tree held high as the following is said.

**God of all life, just as this small tree holds the hope and promise of new life and growth, so we too, in our community here, hold the same promise of new life and so much growth together. May the planting of this tree and its growth throughout the year remind us of our own growth and new life. Amen.**

In silence the tree is planted.

As it is being watered the following could be said.

**Just as we care for this tree and nurture its growth, we ask you our God to help us to care for one another and do all that we can to help each person grow through the love, respect and support we show to all in our community. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.**

*(Perhaps the Principal could announce here that the whole community will care for the tree - that each class will be allocated a week or so throughout the year when they will be entrusted with the care of the tree.)*

By way of concluding this ritual, sing together the school song.

## **Theme 8: A Rainbow of Gifts – God With Us**

**Symbol:** 7 wide individual strips of fabric with each strip bearing one of the colours of the rainbow.

### **Suggested Readings:**

**First Reading -** Gen 9: 12-16  
*The Rainbow – The Sign of God’s Covenant*

**Sung Responsorial Psalm-** See music index below

**Sung Gospel Acclamation –** Community’s selection

**Gospel -** Matthew 25: 14-29  
*The Parable of the Talents*  
*(Have some children mime this gospel as it is being proclaimed).*

## **Suggestions For Integrating The Theme In Your Liturgy:**

### **Gathering Procession & Introduction:**

The strips of coloured fabric could be carried in the gathering procession by dancers who wave the fabric around as they follow the processional cross, candles and lectionary. At the end of the opening hymn, when the procession is assembled on the sanctuary and the cross bearer, candle bearers and lectionary bearer have placed their symbols in their allocated positions, have the dancers come forward and create a circular flow with the fabric, in such a way that the colours all blend. As this is happening the Presider could make an introductory statement such as the following.

**Presider:** We gather here as the community of (*name school*). Just as this rainbow is made up of different colours, which blend together to create something so beautiful, so too our community is made up of each one of us, who in our uniqueness and our differences, create a very special community. The rainbow is a sign of God’s covenant love, God’s promise to be faithfully with us.

At this point the dancers move to the allocated area where the rainbow will be hung. Each dancer, one at a time, places her/his strip of fabric in the colour order of the rainbow. As this rainbow is being hung the Presider says the following.

**Let us pray in our celebration today that the rainbow will be a sign to us, throughout the year, of God’s faithful love shining through one another, and that through this love we will help one another be the best we can, realising our hopes and dreams together.**

The liturgy continues on with the Penitential Rite.

**Post Communion Reflection - Rainbow Dance:** As a Post Communion reflection, the dancers come forward and take up their fabric strips, using them to dance to one of the following songs. (*When the dance is completed the dancers return their fabric, once again creating a rainbow*).

### **Song for Rainbow Dance:**

**Different Gifts** (Maggie Russell – As One Voice For Kids)  
**Weave One Heart** (Marty Haugen – As One Voice For Kids)

## **Theme 9: Light Our Way**

**Symbols:** Large lantern or lamp or ornamental lighthouse or a fire

### **Suggested Readings:**

**First Reading:** Deuteronomy 32:1-4, 10-12a  
**Responsorial Psalm:** The Lord is My Light (Carey Landry, Hi God 6)

**Gospel Acclamation:** Community's selection  
**Gospel:** Mark 4:21-23  
*Parable of the lamp*

**Suggested Prayers:**

**Opening Prayer:**

**Presider:** Let us pray,  
God who is Light,  
guide us lovingly on our way.  
As we gather to celebrate you in Word and Sacrament,  
make our hearts hopeful for the year ahead.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.

**All:** Amen.

**Prayer of the Faithful:**

**Presider:** Let us turn to God in prayer as we express our needs and longings.

**Reader:** Let us pray for our school community. As we begin a new school year, show us your way and your purposes. (PAUSE) Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, light our way.

**Reader:** We pray for a new year of peace and understanding between family members, neighbours and all nations. (PAUSE) Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, light our way.

**Reader:** We pray for leaders in faith who help us walk in the light. (PAUSE) Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, light our way.

**Reader:** We pray for all who teach and guide children and young people. (PAUSE) Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, light our way.

**Reader:** We pray for those we welcome as newcomers to our school community this year. (PAUSE) Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, light our way.

**Reader:** We pray for one another and the silent needs in our hearts. (PAUSE) Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, light our way.

**Presider:** Lord, light our way and hear the prayers of your faithful children. We ask this through Jesus your Son.

**All:** Amen.

**Closing Prayer:**

**Presider:** Let us pray.  
God who guides our way,  
you feed us in this holy meal. May the gift of Jesus himself strengthen us in faith for our journey. We pray this in Jesus' name.

**All:** Amen.

**Suggestions for Integrating the Theme into Your Liturgy**

**Welcome and Introduction:**

**Liturgy Leader:** Welcome to our Eucharistic liturgy to celebrate the beginning of a new school year. When we travel a new path, it is important that we are able to see the way clearly. We turn to Jesus who promises to help us by lighting our

way. Jesus helps us see clearly what is ahead. With hope and trust in Jesus, let us celebrate this joyful new beginning.

**Penitential Rite:**

**Presider:** As we begin a new school year, let us pause to reflect on how Jesus wants us to live (*PAUSE*)

**Reader:** Lord Jesus, you call us to walk in your light. Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Reader:** Lord Jesus, you show us the way. Christ, have mercy.

**All:** Christ, have mercy.

**Reader:** Lord Jesus, you call us to begin again. Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Presider:** May our compassionate God have mercy on us all and lead us in the way of Jesus who is light. We ask this in Jesus' name.

**All:** Amen.

**Homily/Breaking Open the Word:**

- Spend a few moments in silence to ponder the Word of God.
- Jesus used many symbols to teach the people about God. Today we focus on the symbol of light. *Where appropriate, hold the symbol (eg lamp) high for all to see.*
- How do we feel when we are in complete darkness, e.g. when the electricity is off? *Invite students to share responses to this question.*
- How do we feel when we have been in the dark and the lights are turned back on or a candle is lit? *Invite students to share responses to this question?*
- Jesus is the centre of our school community; he is like a central light or beacon to us. Let us take some time to consider how Jesus can light our way and help us on our journey. *Allow sufficient time for personal prayer and reflection.*

**Final Blessing and Dismissal:**

**Presider:** Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing. (*PAUSE*)  
May God who is light illuminate your way.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** May Jesus, the Light of the World, stay with you on your journey.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** May the Holy Spirit of God open your eyes and heart to the possibilities that lie before you.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** May our gracious God bless you, the father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Presider:** Let us go in peace and light to love and serve our God.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Music Relevant to the Theme:**

**Enflame Our Hearts** (Monica Brown – Quiet My Soul)

**God's Light** (Carey Landry – Hi God 5)

**God's Shining Stars** (Carey Landry – Hi God 6)

**Hearts On Fire** (Michael Managan – Sing Your Joy)

**Shine Among Them** (Andrew Chinn- Many Roads, One Journey)

**Stir Into Flame The Gifts Of God** (Carey Landry – Hi God 6)

**Tell The Good News** (Andrew Chinn- Wherever I Go)

**Together As One** (Andrew Chinn- This Day)

**We Celebrate With Joy** (Carey Landry – Hi God 5)

## **General Rituals For Integration In The Liturgy**

### **Welcoming New Community Members:**

An appropriate time to do this would be during the Introductory Rite just before the Opening Prayer of the liturgy. Perhaps the new staff members could be welcomed by inviting them to come forward and introducing them to the community. Following this, the Kindy/Prep children are given a special welcome and then any other new students with their family members who are in attendance could be invited to come forward together and be introduced to the community. If these numbers are large then simply have them stand in their places as each new student and family are named.

### **Special Blessings:**

Given the nature of this liturgy, there would no doubt be a special blessing of the whole community during the Dismissal Rite just before the final hymn. However, it may be appropriate to bless and commission particular groups within the community, new members to community, new school leaders, the Principal and staff, the volunteers and parents, the pastor and pastoral team of the community. Following is an example of one or two of these special blessings.

### **Blessing of the Staff:**

As part of the final blessing of the liturgy, have the entire staff come forward for a special blessing. The Presider extends his/her hands out to the staff as the following is said.

**Presider: May you be blessed with the strength and guidance of God's Spirit.**

**Staff: Amen.**

**Presider: May you be blessed with the wisdom of God's Spirit.**

**Staff: Amen.**

**Presider: May you be blessed with the love and compassion of God's Spirit.**

**Staff: Amen.**

**Presider: And may you be blessed with joy and peace as you generously attend to the education and the personal and spiritual wellbeing of the children of our community. We make this prayer through Jesus, who is our inspiration and guide.**

**Staff: Amen.**

The Presider then blesses the staff with holy water.

### **Commissioning and Blessing of the School Leaders:**

The new student leaders are called forth and the Principal presents them with the school flag and school mission statement, commissioning them to be the student leaders of the community. Following this a special blessing is given to them.

**Presider: May the grace of God's Spirit give you courage and strength.**

**Leaders: Amen.**

**Presider: May the grace of God's wisdom guide and direct you.**

**Leaders: Amen.**

**Presider: And may the grace of God's love be in your heart and lead you on to serve your community with respect and justice for all.**

**Leaders: Amen.**

The Presider then blesses the school leaders with holy water or anoints them with oil. Following this, the school leaders form part of the recessional procession, taking with them the school flag and mission statement.

### **Highlighting the Prayer of the Faithful:**

No doubt these petitions will be inclusive of the various groups within the community, such as the students, the staff, the new members of the community, the parents and families within the community, the pastor and pastoral team etc. By way of focusing the petitions here, have one representative from each of these various groups read the petition that relates to their specific group. However, before they read their petition, have them state, in one or two sentences, what their hope and dream is for the new year within the community. Give a simple to structure to this. For example;

***As a teacher here at (name the school), I hope and pray that we all learn from one another and help one another to be the best we can... PAUSE .***

***Let us pray...***

***We pray for all our teachers and staff members, that we may serve this community with generosity and be blessed with all that we need to minister here as Jesus did. Lord hear us.***

**All: *God of our journey, hear our prayer.***

### **Resources:**

Please refer to the Powerpoint list at [www.liturgyplanningimages.com](http://www.liturgyplanningimages.com) for any relevant Powerpoints for your liturgy. The most recent Powerpoint soon to be uploaded is an Image Reflection: *We Begin Again ... United In The Spirit Of Jesus.*

### **Additional Readings**

Genesis 9: 12 –16	<i>God's covenant...</i>
Genesis 28: 13a-16	<i>Truly Yahweh was in this place...</i>
Deuteronomy 32: 1-4; 10-12a	<i>Yahweh is faithful on the journey .. Like an eagle watching its nest...</i>
Ecclesiastes 3: 1 –8	<i>(Selections) There is a time for every season...</i>
Wisdom 9: 9-11	<i>With you is wisdom .. send her forth...</i>
Habakkuk 2: 2 – 3	<i>Write the vision down...the vision is for its own time...eager for its own fulfilment</i>
Zephaniah 3: 14; 17 – 18	<i>Shout for joy, daughter of Zion...Yahweh will dance with shouts of joy for you...</i>
Romans 15: 13- 14; 7	<i>Abound in hope</i>
1 Corinthians 12: 4-11	<i>The variety and the unity of gifts...</i>
1 Corinthians 13: 1 – 7; 13	<i>Love is the greatest gift of all...</i>
1 Ephesians 3: 16- 21	<i>May your hidden self grow strong...</i>
Colossians 1: 9-12	<i>You will reach your fullest potential....</i>
Colossians 1:27-29; 2:1-2;6-7	<i>The mystery is Christ among you...</i>
Colossians 3: 12-17	<i>You are God's chosen race...</i>
1 Thessalonians 5: 12-18	<i>Think of what is best for each other...</i>
2 Peter 1: 2-4a; 5-7	<i>God has given us all the things we need for life...</i>
2 Peter 1: 5b - 8	<i>Add goodness to your faith...</i>
Matthew 5: 13 –16	<i>You are the salt of the earth...</i>
Matthew 6: 19-21	<i>Store up true treasures...</i>
Matthew 7: 7- 12	<i>Ask and it will be given to you...</i>
Matthew 25: 14- 29	<i>Treat others as you would treat yourself...</i>
Mark 4: 21-23	<i>Parable of the talents Parable of the lamp</i>



Mark 4: 26- 29  
Mark 12: 28 –34  
Luke 6: 36-38

*Parable of the seed growing by itself*  
*The Greatest Commandment...love*  
*The amount you measure out is the amount*  
*you will be given...*

Luke 8: 4-8  
Luke 12: 22-32  
Luke 13: 18-21  
Luke 24: 13 –35

*Parable of the Sower*  
*Trust In God...*  
*Parable of the mustard seed...*  
*The Emmaus Journey...*

## **Prayers**

### **Penitential Rite:**

**Presider:** As we prepare to meet Jesus in the Word and in the breaking of the bread, let us pause to reflect on the times we have failed to love as Jesus did.

**Presider:** Jesus, at times we forget that you are on the journey with us.  
Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Presider:** Jesus, at times we fail to recognise you in our midst.  
Christ, have mercy.

**All:** Christ, have mercy.

**Presider:** Jesus, at times we do not see you in the other person nor in ourselves.  
Lord, have mercy.

**All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Presider:** God of mercy, forgive us our failings and give us loving hearts as we come to recognise you in one another.

### **Opening Prayer:**

**Presider:** God of new beginnings,  
we gather before you in this holy place as a faithful school community.  
Journey with us as we journey with you and one another. We make our  
prayer in the name of Jesus our companion and Lord.

**All:** Amen.

### **Prayer of the Faithful:**

**Presider:** As we begin our new school year, we bring our needs and longings before you, O God, knowing that you hear the prayer of your people.

**Reader:** We pray for all who lead us at *n.* school community.  
May the Spirit of God be their gentle guide. Lord, hear us.

**All:** God of our journey, hear our prayer.

**Reader:** We pray that each member of this community may seek to serve others with a loving heart as Jesus has shown us. Lord, hear us.

**All:** God of our journey, hear our prayer.

**Reader:** We pray for each person who is a member of this school community – for the students, the staff, the volunteers, the parents, and others who help and support us. Lord, hear us.

**All:** God of our journey, hear our prayer.

**Reader:** We pray for all who are new to our school that they may experience the loving presence of God in this school community. Lord, hear us.

**All:** God of our journey, hear our prayer.

**Presider:** God of our journey, you know our every need. Hear the prayer of your people; those spoken and those in the silence of our hearts. We make our prayer in Jesus name.

**All:** Amen.

### **Prayer Over the Gifts:**

**Presider:** Holy God, with our simple gifts of bread and wine we offer you ourselves. As we prepare to meet Jesus in the breaking of the bread may this Holy Eucharist bring us closer to you and to one another.

### **Prayer after Communion:**

**Presider:** Loving God, you have fed us with your Word and Holy Eucharist. In this our new school year, help us to journey in faith, to recognise Jesus in one another and to serve each other as He has shown us. We make our prayer in your Son Jesus' name.

**All:** Amen.

## **PowerPoint Reflections**

The following PowerPoint Reflections may be helpful to you.

They are available to members on [www.liturgyplanningimages.com](http://www.liturgyplanningimages.com) in the Scripture Reflection Category.

**One Body - Hymns and Song - Children**

***"I Have Come That You May Have Life ..."***

***"Love One Another..."***

***"Trust In God..."***

**Image Reflection: *We Begin Again ... United In The Spirit Of Jesus.***

## **Music Suggestions**

### **Gathering Hymns:**

**A Holy Song Of Joy**

**Celebrate and Dance With Joy**

**Come Together**

**Companions On The Journey**

**Come Gather & Praise**

**One Family**

**Radianting Hope**

**Sing and Dance**

**Sing New Songs of Joy**

**Shine Among Them**

**This Day**

**Together As One**

**We Rejoice**

**We Come Together**

Carey Landry – Hi God 6

Monica Brown – One Moment

Michael Mangan – As One Voice For Kids

Carey Landry

Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings

John Burland – One Family

Michael Mangan – True Colours

Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings

Michael Mangan – As One Voice For Kids

Andrew Chinn – Many Roads, One Journey

Andrew Chinn – This Day

Andrew Chinn – This Day

Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy

John Burland- Let's Celebrate Too!

### **Responsorial Psalms:**

**A Holy Song Of Joy**

**A Song of Praise**

**All The Ends of the Earth**

**I Will Praise You Lord**

**God Is Our Shelter**

**Let Us Go Rejoicing**

**Our God Is Good**

**Psalms 100 – Make A Joyful Noise**

**Praise God All You ON Earth**

**Shout For Joy**

Carey Landry – Hi God 6

Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings

Bob Dufford – As One Voice/Vol1

John Burland – One Family

Chris O'Hara – As One Voice For Kids

Carey Landry – Hi God 6

Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings

Linnea Good – As One Voice For Kids

Carey Landry – Hi God 6

Nathaniel Ford – As One Voice For Kids

**Sing To The Lord**  
**Sing To God With Shouts of Joy**  
**The Lord Is My Light**

Nathaniel Ford – As One Voice For Kids  
John Burland – One Family  
Carey Landry – Hi God 6

**Offertory:**

Instrumental music can be an effective option here instead of a hymn.

**Quiet My Soul** (Instrumental CD)      Monica Brown – Quiet My Soul

**Communion Hymns:**

**Emmaus Song**  
**Jesus Thank You**  
**Holy Table, Holy Bread**  
**One Bread, One Body**  
**One In Love**  
**Our Hearts Burn Within Us**  
**Share This Meal With Me**  
**Speak From Your Heart**  
**Take & Eat**  
**The Table of The Lord**

Monica Brown – Special Collection  
Carey Landry – A Wonderful Song of Joy  
Carey Landry – Hi God 6  
John Foley- As One Voice/Vol1  
Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings  
Andrew Chinn- Many Roads, One Journey  
John Burland – As One Voice For Kids  
Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings  
Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy  
Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy

**Thanksgiving/ Reflection:**

**A Circle Of Love**  
**Different Gifts**  
**For The Journey**  
**Gifts**  
**God of Our Journey**  
**God's Shining Stars**  
**Jesus You Live In Our Hearts**  
**Love Is The Greatest Gift Of All**  
**Rainbow**  
**We Want To Live Like You Jesus**  
**Weave One Heart**  
**We Celebrate With Joy**  
**Open Our Eyes To This Day**

F. Sandler – As One Voice/Vol 2  
Maggie Russell – As One Voice For Kids  
Gerry Holmes – As One Voice For Kids  
Andrew Chinn – Wherever You Go  
Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings  
Carey Landry – Hi God 6  
Damien Halloran & Maria Millward- One Voice For Kids  
Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings  
Andrew Chinn – Wherever You Go  
S. Wolf & M. Wetherald-Huston – As One Voice For Kids  
Marty Haugen – As One Voice For Kids  
Carey Landry- Hi God 5  
Carey Landry – A Wonderful Song of Joy

**Recessional Hymn:**

**City of God**  
**Go Now In Peace**  
**Hearts on Fire**  
**Till The End of Time**  
**Today Is Ours**  
**Together We Can**  
**True Colours**

Dan Schutte – As One Voice/Vol1 & Gather Australia  
Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings  
Michael Mangan – Setting Hearts on Fire  
Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy  
Trisha Watts & Monica O'Brien- As One Voice For Kids  
Carey Landry – A Wonderful Song of Joy  
Michael Mangan – True Colours