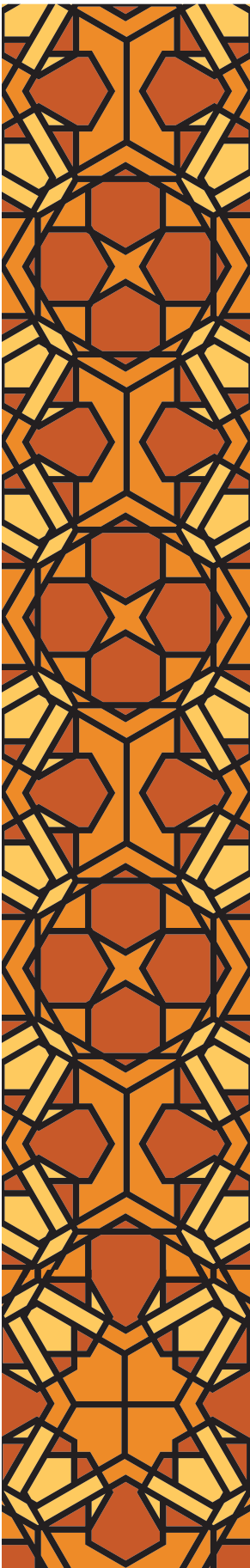




*Catholic Schools
Week*



**DAILY ACTIVITY
GUIDE**



Catholic Schools Week

OPENING PRAYER SERVICE

PRAYER

LEADER: In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Let us pray.

LEADER: Loving God, we come together today to thank you for the gift of Catholic Schools. As we begin to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, help us to be always aware of the blessing of our community and the chance for each of us to be members of it. We thank you for the opportunity to attend a school where we can live out your Gospel, and be shaped as your disciples. Amen.

LECTOR: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

“Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ After he placed his hands on them, he went away.” (Mark 19:13-15)

The Gospel of the Lord

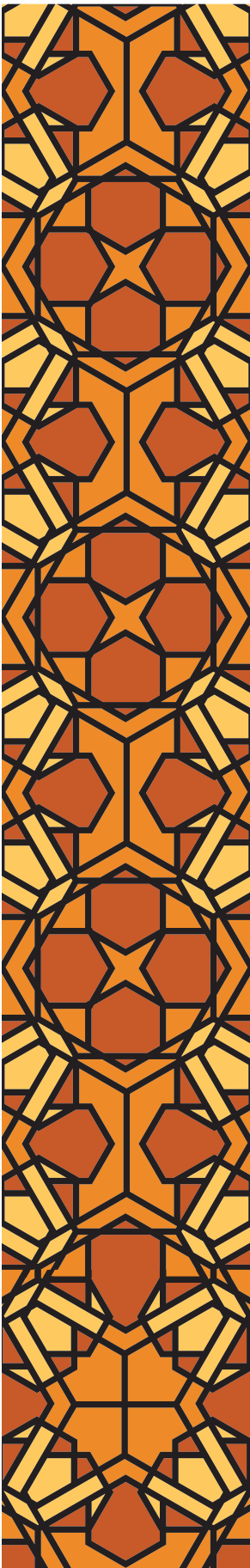
ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

ACTIVITY

Invite teachers to distribute the I Am Thankful For Our Catholic School Community Handout (page 3) to every student. Writing and drawing materials must be available to students at this time.

LEADER: At this time, you are being given a handout. On this handout, please draw or write one reason you are grateful to be a part of our Catholic School Community. Maybe you are grateful for the freedom to pray in school, or the chance to attend Mass with your classmates, or because your friends at school make you happy. Your finished work will be displayed around the school to share with our entire community, so be on the lookout for yours!

Allow approximately 10 minutes for students to work with materials, and then invite teachers to collect their classes' handouts and process up to the altar with the handouts as an offertory.



PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LEADER: Let us pray for our needs, and the needs of the world. Our response is “Lord, hear our prayer.”

For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to foster the mission of Catholic education. For this we pray,

ALL: Lord hear our prayer.

LEADER: For all those who teach in Catholic institutions, that they may recognize their work as a ministry, and respond to the call of the Gospel. For this we pray,

ALL: Lord hear our prayer.

LEADER: For all students in Catholic schools, that their time in school may help prepare them to be people who bring the Gospel into the world. For this we pray,

ALL: Lord hear our prayer.

LEADER: For all families, in thanksgiving for the sacrifices that they make to send their children to Catholic schools. For this we pray,

ALL: Lord hear our prayer.

LEADER: For pastors, that they may make the support of Catholic education a priority in their parishes. For this we pray,

ALL: Lord hear our prayer.

LEADER: For our nation’s leaders, that they may do what is right, and do their best to protect and encourage the growth of Catholic schools. For this we pray,

ALL: Lord hear our prayer.

LEADER: For all those intentions that we hold in the silence of our hearts. For this we pray,

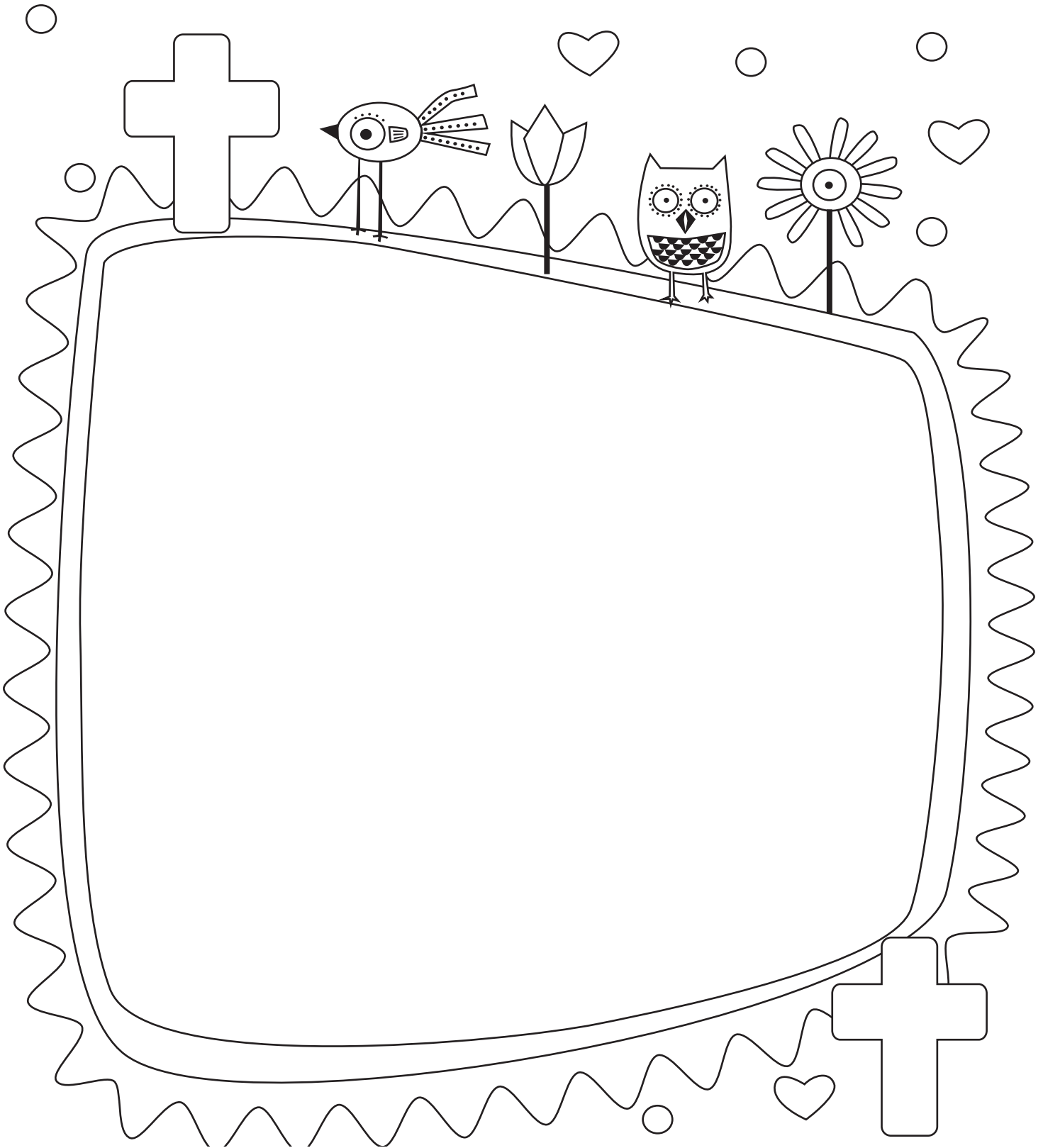
ALL: Lord hear our prayer.

LEADER: Lord, please hear our prayers and grant what is in accord with your will. Amen.

LEADER: Please join me in closing our prayer service by praying together that our Blessed Mother may oversee our education in faith, just like she did for her own son.

ALL: Hail Mary...

I am thankful for my Catholic School Community because...



CELEBRATING DAILY THEMES OF

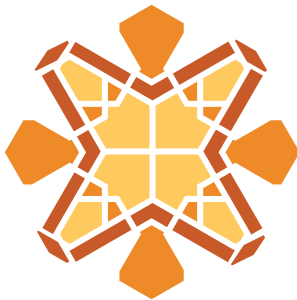
Catholic Schools Week

Each year, the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), marks the last week of January as “National Catholic Schools Week.” This designation reminds us to come together to pray and give thanks for the gift of Catholic education in our communities and nation. The NCEA designates themes for each day. The following are some ideas to incorporate these daily themes as you celebrate with your school or parish family.



SUNDAY Celebrating Our Parish

On Sunday of Catholic Schools Week, we come together to celebrate what is typically the supporting force behind our Catholic Schools: the parish community. If your school has a parish affiliated with it, this is a great day to have students sign up to greet parishioners before Sunday Masses or to share their experience of being students in the school. Have students wear their uniforms so they are easily recognizable. Another way to say “thank you” and celebrate the parish community is to have students outside of each Mass handing out donuts and thank you cards to the parishioners as they exit. This helps build a connection between our students and the parishioners who support their education.



MONDAY Celebrating Our Community

Monday will be the first day your school community comes together for Catholic Schools week, so make sure to open with the prayer service on page 1. As part of the prayer service, students will design a handout that will be displayed throughout the school during Catholic Schools Week.



TUESDAY Celebrating Your Students

Consider inviting your parish priest to visit each classroom and give the students a special blessing. Your efforts may be simple, like providing a special treat like cookies at lunch, or grand, like setting aside time for an all school talent show to showcase and celebrates the many gifts and talents God has blessed your students with!



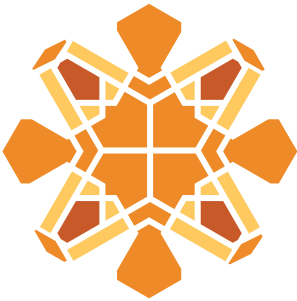
WEDNESDAY Celebrating Our Nation

On this day, make sure to pay special attention to those who serve our country. Discuss with students how those who serve our nation in the military give us the gift of freedom, and that freedom gives us the ability to worship and to go to schools in peace. Have each class design and write letters or cards to soldiers, thanking them for protecting our freedom to worship. After, mail them to a local hospital for recovering veterans. Remember that any correspondence from students should include only first names.



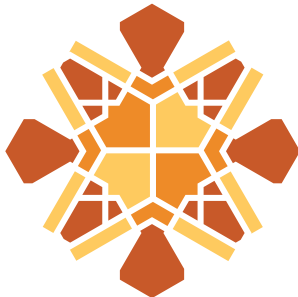
THURSDAY Celebrating Vocations

Host a “Thank You Celebration” for any priests or religious sisters or brothers affiliated with your school. Have students write thank you notes beforehand and sign up to bring in baked goods or treat. Then, have the priests and religious brothers or sisters share their own vocation story with the students. If you do not have anyone with a vocation in Religious Life affiliated with your school, have students write notes of appreciation to a local order, or to your diocesan seminarians! Remember that any correspondence from students should include only first names.



FRIDAY Celebrating Faculty and Staff

In celebrating Catholic Schools, we cannot neglect to celebrate the faculty and staff who work tirelessly to teach our students. On Friday of Catholic Schools Week, have the parish priests come give a blessing to each of your faculty members in front of the students. Then, have your student council write a thank you letter to each member of the faculty and hand deliver the letters to their classrooms or offices.



SATURDAY Celebrating Families

As Catholic educators, we know that the family is the lifeblood of our school community. Without parents making the choice to enroll in Catholic schools, and the sacrifices necessary to provide a Catholic education for their children, these schools wouldn't exist. On Saturday, consider inviting all families to an evening Catholic Schools Week closing Mass. If possible, offer refreshments or a meal for families to come together, enjoy each other's company and engage with the school community. Invite your school's president or principal to speak and to thank the families for making the choice of Catholic education.