
Catholic Education:
We Are
Called To
Love



**"If we love one another, God lives in us."
(1 John 4:12)**

April Prayer Service

As people of joy

*"If we love one another, God lives in us."
1 John 4:12*



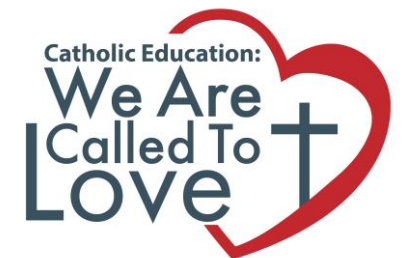
Suggested Opening Songs

Joy from the Rend Collective

https://youtu.be/VDiETOLBvxA?si=trLA5p7J_b-tQtwz

You are Joy by Warr Acres

<https://youtu.be/PL6o9HNbbv0?si=ZeaNLaga7hFij2SS>



Opening Prayer

God our constant Companion,
Your unfailing presence in our lives is the source of our deepest, lasting joy.
Far beyond moments of fleeting enthusiasm or exuberance, to know that you
are with us brings us a spiritual joy that struggles cannot rob us of – the joy
that comes from knowing how much you love us at every moment.
Make that joy radiant in our lives, and may it overflow into love for every
person we encounter, and especially for those who may need our love in a
special way this day.
Praise to you, Lord, Giver of Joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Reading: Isaiah 12:5-6

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

The Word of the Lord. ***R. Thanks be to God.***



Questions for Personal Reflection

What does an authentically joyful Christian look like to you? Sound like? Act like?

Sometimes we can (even unconsciously) communicate a version of Christian faith that is sombre, grim and joy-less. How does genuine joy contribute to evangelization?

What moments of genuine joy have I experienced this week that I want to thank God for?



Contemporary Reading

From Pope Francis' 2013 exhortation "On the Joy of the Gospel" (Evangelii Gaudium)

There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter. I realize, of course, that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved. The most beautiful and natural expressions of joy which I have seen in my life were in poor people who had little to hold on to. I also think of the real joy shown by others who, even amid pressing professional obligations, were able to preserve, in detachment and simplicity, a heart full of faith. In their own way, all these instances of joy flow from the infinite love of God, who has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ.



Questions for Reflection

A beloved Christian carol begins with the line, “Joy to the world: the Lord is come!” If, as Pope Francis suggests, Christian joy flows from God’s coming to us in Jesus, how can I ground myself more deeply in my relationship with Jesus?

Like Pope Francis, many people have noticed how some of those who seem to experience joy most profoundly are also those who often lack worldly riches and “things.” What do you think is the relationship between joy and living a life of Gospel simplicity?

The Holy Father says that joy adapts and changes at different stages of our lives. As you look over your life so far, what did joy look like when you were a child? What made you joyful? How are your ideas about joy different today? What Brings you genuine joy today?



Intercessions/Prayer of the Faithful

Let us pray for those who journey with depression and mental illnesses that can make it hard for them to experience joy: that they will receive the best of support and care and be accompanied by loving family members and friends. May a restored sense of joy be God's gift to them.

For this, we pray to the Lord...

Let us pray for our loved ones, who bring us joy by their presence, their words, their kindness, and their actions. May we cherish all the special people in our lives, and respond with love, gratitude, and generosity.

For this, we pray to the Lord...

Let us pray for our own daily witness to the Good News. May God's unshakeable love for us inspire the kind of joy that others will recognize in us, and may it draw Others to experience the same gifts we have received from our faith.

For this, we pray to the Lord...



Closing Prayer

Lord,

In a world often cloaked in sorrow and fear, you offer us the joyful news of your forgiveness, your care, and your love.

Root us always in that joy, and help us to lift the burdens of others, and to build up a world in which more and more people have opportunities to flourish and reasons to rejoice.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Suggested Closing Songs

One of the best-loved and most exuberant musical pieces celebrating joy is Beethoven's 1785 "Ode to Joy" from his Ninth Symphony. Even without understanding the German lyrics, you can enjoy the soaring musicality and energy of this flash mob version from 2012

<https://youtu.be/kbJcQYVtZMo?si=SnTL0Mj1zXJQsVaQ>

