

to teach

vt 1. To impart knowledge or skill; to instruct. 2. To provide knowledge of; instruct in. 3. To cause to learn by example or experience. 4. To advocate or preach.



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Welcome back to a new and exciting school year. This year, all schools and parishes are focusing their affirmation efforts on the theme *Sowers of God's Peace*. The *Sowers of God's* kit from USCCB Publishing contains prayer services,

classroom ideas, retreat outlines, and parent/child materials that help schools celebrate the work of teachers throughout the year. Explore ways to use these materials in Catholic schools in this issue of *To Teach*.

RECOGNIZE AND AFFIRM THE WORK OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

"The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace."

Jas 3:18

Affirmation fosters an ongoing spirit of gratitude, and it keeps the entire community attuned to the mission of Catholic education. As a new school year begins, consider the ways teachers form children and youth every day in the classroom.

- As *evangelizers*. They proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to young people.
- As *instructors*. They explain, define, and present the teachings of the Church to their students.
- As *collaborators*. They support the work of parents in the religious formation of their children.
- As spiritual *companions*. They walk with their students and one another in the journey of faith.

Recognition and affirmation can—and should—take place throughout the year. For example . . .

- during the week of—or after—Catechetical Sunday
- during Catholic Schools Week
- during the school's celebration of its patron saint
- at the end of the school year

SOWING GOD'S PEACE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Global tensions and the threat of terrorism keep us all on edge. This year's theme, *Sowers of God's Peace*, is all the more timely. Imagine sowing the seeds of God's peace. The image comforts, inspires, and empowers. It reminds us that we *can* make a difference as we join together to cultivate the Good News of Jesus in the world around us.

Catholic schools are especially fertile ground for doing this. Page 6 of the *Sowers of God's Peace* manual has a reflection on this theme. It includes five suggestions for being a sower of God's peace. Based on those suggestions, here are some ideas for cultivating peace in your school.

1. Pray for Peace. Prayer is not an add-on to a Christian's day. It is integral to the life we live as disciples of Jesus. As an educator, decide upon a simple prayer for peace that can be offered each school day. The prayer might change with the passing of the seasons.

2. Build Community. Foster the sense of community throughout your school. Include a simple faith-sharing activity as part of faculty and/or school board meetings, or spirit-building activities that promote unity and common purpose. Revisit your school mission statement, and rally your faculty, students, and parents around it.

3. Act for Justice. Choose a school service project that serves those in need. Involve the entire school in it. Adopt a "No bullying" policy, and brainstorm ways to publicize and enforce it.

4. Choose Peace-filled Language. Cultivate ways of speaking that promote civil behavior in all school situations. Decide upon conflict resolution techniques based on mutual respect.

5. Promote the Ministry of Religious Education. Strengthen your school's Catholic identity by highlighting religious formation. In your school newsletter, spotlight a different class in each issue and provide a synopsis of their religious education.

At a Glance



“Sowing the seeds of God’s peace is a day-to-day process. As people of hope, we believe the Lord will help our seed-sowing efforts so that the Word will take root, blossom, and spread. My prayer is that each of us will be filled with strength and hope as we continue to try to do Christ’s work of bringing the Gospel into a world that needs a true and lasting peace.”

—Archbishop Daniel Buechlein
Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Keep a copy of the *Sowers of God’s Peace* kit for use in classrooms, at faculty meetings, and at school boards. The kit includes the manual and features:

- A commissioning rite for within Mass or outside Mass. Consider commissioning teachers and administrators during the opening school year Mass.
- Prayer services for Advent/Christmas, Ordinary Time, and Lent/Easter. Use these prayer services throughout the year in the classroom or in grade-level gatherings.
- Suggested ideas, activities, and resources that can be used in the classroom during Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter.
- Special suggestions for peacemaking for Catholic Schools Week.
- Samples of “Car Chat,” a family discussion resource for Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter.
- A colorful *Sowers of God’s Peace* poster, printed in English and Spanish. Display it in classrooms and hallways as a way to promote the *Sowers of God’s Peace* theme.

THE BOOKSTORE

SOWERS OF GOD’S PEACE CATECHETICAL SUNDAY KIT

(Including the manual)
English/Spanish Kit
No. 5-511, \$12.95

ENGLISH AND SPANISH CERTIFICATES
For presentation to educators in recognition of the vital work that they perform.
English: No. 5-513, \$0.50
Spanish: No. 5-514, \$0.50

ENGLISH AND SPANISH PRAYER CARDS

Available in packages of 50 for distribution throughout school.
English: No. 5-515, 50/\$6.00
Spanish: No. 5-516, 50/\$6.00

**ENGLISH/SPANISH “SOWERS OF
GOD’S PEACE” POSTER (REVERSIBLE)**
No. 5-512, \$3.00

For delivery in time for the September 21 Catechetical Sunday observance. Call to request rush service; added charges will apply. Supplies are limited. Returns are not accepted.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Written by Pope John Paul II, this prayer asks for the intercession of Mary to bring an end to evil in all its forms and to reveal the light of hope to all the world.
English: No. 5-490, card, 100/\$10.00
Spanish: No. 5-863, card, 100/\$10.00

A ROSARY FOR PEACE

This beautiful prayer book includes the joyful, sorrowful, glorious, and luminous mysteries with reflections on each of the mysteries drawn from liturgical texts. Also includes the prayers of the rosary. It is a perfect gift for students, teachers, volunteers, or yourself.
No. 5-571, 48 pp. (est.)
1-9 copies, \$3.95 each
10-24 copies, \$2.95 each
25+ copies, \$1.95 each

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: A SCRIPTURAL ROSARY

This brochure brings together two wonderful traditions of the Catholic Church—praying the rosary and celebrating unity within diversity. Includes prayers for 15 mysteries and instructions on praying the rosary. Focuses on the three themes of the bishops’ statement *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*—conversion, communion, and solidarity.
English: No. 5-467, 8-panel brochure, 10/\$4.00
Spanish: No. 5-870, 8-panel brochure, 10/\$4.00

A SCRIPTURAL ROSARY FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

Using the biblical themes of peace and justice, this 32-page booklet contains reflections on 15 mysteries of the rosary.
English: No. 5-233, 20 pp.
Spanish: No. 5-234, 20 pp.
1-9 copies, \$1.95 each
10-24 copies, \$1.50 each
25+ copies, \$1.00 each

When ordering, use the code “F487” on your order form or give this code to the sales representative. Quantity discounts are available on all publications. Call toll-free 800-235-8722 for more information. To order these resources or to obtain a free catalog of other USCCB titles, call toll-free 800-235-8722. In the Washington metropolitan area or from outside the United States, call 202-722-8716. Visit the bishops’ Internet site located at www.usccb.org. Para ordenar recursos en español, llame al 800-235-8722 y presione 4 para hablar con un representante del servicio al cliente, en español.



BEING SOWERS OF GOD'S PEACE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

for Principals & School Boards

- Acknowledge faculty members *throughout* the year. Use the checklist on page 6 of the *Sowers of God's Peace* manual to enhance your celebrations and focus greater attention on the work of forming children in faith and values.
- Use the commissioning rite (page 15) of the manual in a Mass or prayer service at the beginning of the year to recognize and affirm teachers. Invite a parent and/or school board member to speak about teachers' contributions to the well-being of the school-children and the community. Ask the pastor to distribute certificates to each teacher.
- Photocopy the reflections on the readings for Catechetical Sunday (page 11). Use them for a faculty meeting in early September. Choose one or two ways to be sowers of God's peace throughout the year.
- Host retreats or prayer services for faculty, parents, and school boards during the seasons of Advent/Christmas, Ordinary time, and Lent/Easter. Use the retreats and prayer services in the *Sowers of God's Peace* manual. Involve volunteers from each of these groups in the planning.
- Distribute "Prayer for Catechists" (page 20) cards to parents at a kick-off event for the school year. Use them as part of a blessing for teachers and parents as they begin the year.
- Schedule a conflict resolution seminar for faculty members. Check with the Superintendent of Schools or other diocesan leader, or consult with school board members about ideas for facilitators and resources.
- Look ahead to Catholic Schools Week. Incorporate ideas for peacemaking from the *Sowers of God's Peace* manual (page 26) into school plans. Brainstorm ideas with faculty members or parent advisory boards.

for Teachers

- Display the *Sowers of God's Peace* poster in your classroom. Ask students to give their thoughts about the symbolism of being sowers of God's peace in the picture. Ask them, "What does the light shining from the Word of God mean?" Discuss ways to let the light of peace shine throughout the school.
- Bring the parable of the Sower and the Seeds (Mt 13:3-9) to life. Divide the class into the groups of "seeds" that fall upon different types of ground. As the story is read, have the students act out the ways the seeds either wither or grow. Later talk about the things that help us grow as sowers of God's peace.
- Copy and distribute the information about "Car Chat" to parents. Encourage them to use the materials during the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter seasons. Material can be downloaded from the USCCB website www.usccb.org/publishing/catsun.html
- Keep the "Prayer for Catechists" (page 20) on your desk. Pray it often, especially on days when you are feeling tired or discouraged.
- During Catholic Schools Week, use the suggestions for peacemaking activities on page 26 of the *Sowers of God's Peace* manual. Collaborate with other teachers to develop a schoolwide celebration of peace.
- Have students create a mural of God's garden of peace. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each one a section of the garden to illustrate based on different settings—a desert, a mountainside, a tropical forest, or an underwater locale. Encourage them to show how God's peace can flourish in each place.
- Use the "What's in a Bowl?" activity (page 33) during Lent to increase student awareness about world hunger. Conduct a classroom canned goods collection and arrange for students to deliver their donations to a local soup kitchen or food pantry.





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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

A new feature in the *Sowers of God's Peace* kit is “Car Chat”—a Scripture and prayer resource that parents can download from the USCCB website and use in the car. By sharing Scripture within the family, you give the seeds of peace another opportunity to take root and flourish. Here are some ordinary activities that happen in and around school life, ones that can be transformed into “teachable moments.”

- As the school year begins, teachers and administrators lay out the rules of behavior for students. Use this as an opportunity to reflect upon the Great Commandment, which bids us to love God and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Try to frame school rules in a greater context of love and mutual respect.
- Conflict is inevitable in any setting where people come together; schools are no exception. After a fight erupts, use it a day later as an opportunity to discuss alternatives to violence. Do this without putting anyone “on the spot” by creating imaginative scenarios. Show a film or television clip of an argument and ask students to create peaceful ways of resolving conflict.
- Be on the lookout for ways in which students sow seeds of God's peace, and be ready to affirm them. Write them a note, acknowledge them publicly, or let their parents know about their good deeds. By the end of the first quarter, aim for having a “sower of God's peace” story for each student in your class.

“It is . . . the special function of the Catholic school to . . . develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity.”

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