

Help Us Lead By Example

Teacher Background

The theme for Catholic Schools Week is **Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.** In this prayer, students will reflect on how they follow the example of Jesus, and how by their example they lead others to follow Jesus.

Give each of the students a copy of the Beatitudes handout. Divide the class into four small groups. Invite one group to focus on how Jesus lived the first four Beatitudes. For example, Jesus took time to pray. This showed his need for maintaining his relationship with God the Father. Have the second group focus on how we can live the first four Beatitudes. For example, out of our need for God we, too, take time to pray and reflect on his Word. Invite the third group to focus on how Jesus lived the last four Beatitudes. Ask the fourth group to focus on how we can live the last four Beatitudes.

Before gathering the students in the classroom prayer center, prepare the prayer table with a green cloth, a Bible open to Matthew 5, and a candle.



INTRODUCTION

- Invite the students to bring their Beatitudes handouts and to gather in the classroom prayer center.
- Light the candle and sing an opening song such as “Blest Are They,” “Lead Me, Lord” or a simple “Alleluia.”
- Lead the class in praying the Sign of the Cross, and then offer the following prayer.

**Lord, your Word challenges us to be examples of faith
by showing mercy to others,
by standing up for what is right,
and by being peacemakers.**

**Lead us always,
that by your example we may lead others
to live by the values of the Kingdom of God.**

**For you are Lord for ever and ever.
Amen.**



WORD OF GOD

- Sing an “Alleluia” sung at your school, and proclaim the Gospel (Matthew 5:3-10).
- Remind the students that the Beatitudes outline values of the Kingdom of God. These are values that all followers of Jesus are expected to live by. Review these values with the students, using their Beatitudes handouts as a reference.
- Invite one person from each of the four small groups to share his or her group’s thoughts about how Jesus lived the Beatitudes and how we can live the Beatitudes. Encourage volunteers to share additional thoughts and ideas.
- Then lead the students in prayers of petition, inviting them to respond, **“Lord, help us lead by example.”**

We give thanks for the opportunity to attend (*name of school*).
Help us to excel in our work and in our studies, we pray:

Lord, help us lead by example.

We give thanks for those who teach us about our faith
and who help us to grow as disciples of Jesus, and we pray:

Lord, help us lead by example.

We hear your call to serve others
and to work for justice and peace for all, and we pray:

Lord, help us lead by example.

We recognize that each person is created in your image.
Help us to treat all people with love, care, and respect, we pray:

Lord, help us lead by example.

We know that you alone are God.
As we come to know your will more and more each day, we pray:

Lord, help us lead by example.

Every moment of every day, in every situation,
and with everyone we meet, we pray:

Lord, help us lead by example.

**Help us lead by example, Lord,
so that others will come to know, love, and serve you.**

**Help us lead by example, Lord,
so that the needs of the poor and suffering are met.**

**Help us lead by example, Lord,
and one day lead us to share everlasting joy with you
in the Kingdom of Heaven,
where you are Lord, for ever and ever.
Amen.**



CONCLUSION

Conclude by leading the young people in praying the Sign of the Cross and by singing a song about the Beatitudes or another song of your choosing.



EXTENDING THIS PRAYER

1. Create a Beatitudes display in your classroom or in the hallway. Begin by assigning partners or small groups of three or four one of the eight Beatitudes. Give each pair or small group a full-sized piece of poster board and provide colored markers. Instruct the students to use their Beatitudes handout and to write their assigned Beatitudes across the top of their posters and the corresponding meanings at the bottom. Then invite each pair or small group to illustrate its poster with a drawing of young people living that Beatitude, or with words and images that describe that Beatitude's meaning. Label the display "Living the Beatitudes."
2. Cut apart a spare Beatitudes handout so that you have eight slips of paper, each containing one of the eight Beatitudes and its corresponding meaning. Put the slips of paper in a bag or a cup. Divide the class into eight small groups, and invite each group to draw one slip of paper. The groups are to create role-plays that demonstrate one way to live the Beatitude they have chosen. Invite the groups to present their role-plays to the class. You may wish to have them present their role-plays to other classes too.

3. Invite the students to silently read again the Beatitudes handout. Then invite them to vote on the top two Beatitudes they would like to work on as a class. For example, they could vote to work on being more meek—more gentle and patient with others. Or they could vote to be better peacemakers—working to bring God's peace to the classroom, to the school, and to their families. Challenge the class to make special efforts in their chosen Beatitudes, to be leaders of Christ-like living by their example. Make a point of asking the students every day of the coming week if and how they are meeting the challenge.