

# Create a Culture of Spirituality in the Classroom

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## Environment

Are there physical reminders of the sacred in the classroom?

Where is Sacred Space?



## Customs

What social habits or practices “season” class time with the sacred?

## Rituals

What routines integrate awareness of God into the daily events of school life?



## Sacramental Life

What special occasions are annually celebrated with class or school-wide Eucharist?

When does my class celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

## Personal Example

How frequently do I demonstrate my personal relationship with God?

## ... throughout the Liturgical Year

In the course of a year the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ: birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, promised return, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The liturgical cycle suggests a rhythm of Christian prayer that leads to Easter and flows from it. Easter is the central and most solemn feast of the year.

The seasons of the liturgical year are like a mini-series of salvation history. The six-episode story makes present:

- the ancient longing for the Messiah (**ADVENT**)
- the fulfillment of God’s promise to send a savior (**CHRISTMAS**)
- the public life and ministry of Jesus (**ORDINARY TIME I**)
- that led to his passion and death (**LENT**)
- the resurrection and ascension of Jesus (**EASTERTIME**)
- the fulfilled promise of the Father and Son to send the Holy Spirit to guide us until the end of the world when Christ will come again in glory (**PENTECOST/ORDINARY TIME II**).



# Some Practices for Ordinary Time

*65% of the liturgical year (34 Weeks) is Ordinary Time*

<b>Prayer Center</b>	Window sill, tiered corner shelving, table, top of a filing cabinet, . . .
<b>Prayer Dish</b>	Container to hold prayer intentions
<b>Table Centerpiece</b>	Liturgical color, symbols related to feasts that occur during Ordinary Time, i.e., picture of the Sacred Heart, birthday candle for Mary (Sept. 8), Crown of Christ the King (End of November), etc., a thought-a-day calendar, a miniature easel to hold a focus picture/quotation/symbol, . . .
<b>Class Motto</b>	Hang a banner of your class motto above the entrance to the common room, i.e., “Do whatever He tells you.” “That Christ may reign.” “Love one another.” “God-is-with-us-now.” “Dayenu!”
<b>Class Mantras</b>	Leader: God is good all the time! Response: And all the time, God is good!
<b>Bless the Hour</b>	Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Response: Let us adore God’s divine majesty. Glory be...
<b>Mealtime</b>	Pray Grace before and after meals.
<b>Morning Greeting</b>	Create a special morning greeting. For instance, “Good morning, Laurie. You are a gift from God.” (Laurie responds): “And everything God makes is good.”
<b>Prayer Before Class</b>	“Lord God of power and might, nothing is good which is against your will, and all is of value that comes from your hand. Place in our hearts a desire to please you and fill our minds with insight into love, so that every thought may grow in wisdom and all our efforts may be filled with your peace. Amen” (Opening Prayer of Mass for the 22 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.)
<b>Conversation Starter</b>	“May the Word of God be +in our minds, +on our lips, +and in our hearts throughout our conversation.”
<b>Sunday Gospel</b>	Discuss the ABCs of the Sunday Gospel: Attitudes, Behaviors, and Consequences of Choices.
<b>Annually Consecrate the Classroom</b>	Honor the Triumph of the Cross (Sept. 14) with class Mass in the morning. At school remove the crucifix from the wall and pray, “We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.” Allow each student to make a physical expression of reverence and then re-enthroned the crucifix.

# PROMOTE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER via the GOSPEL

## *Strategies for Applying the Sunday Gospel to Christian Character Formation*

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### Gospel ABCs

Gospel ABCs – *the Attitudes, Behaviors and Consequences that are suggested in a Gospel story* – is a technique for breaking open the Word, a framework for reflection, and a tool for children to use independently throughout their lives. The exercise can *form and inform* Christian Character. Prayer occurs when the issues raised are discussed with God and we listen for what God has to say before we draw a conclusion or make a resolve.

**For Example:**

**Zacchaeus, the Tax Collector (Lk. 19: 1-10)**

**ATTITUDES:** resourcefulness, creative hope, willingness to “go out on a limb,” compensating for and coping with a disadvantage, proactive, claiming his desire/need/curiosity to see Jesus . . .

**BEHAVIORS:** think outside the box, climb a tree, accept responsibility for past choices . . .

**CONSEQUENCES:** Zacchaeus received a personal invitation into relationship with Jesus, he converted, he made restitution . . .

### Beads of Discipleship

Create a *Christian Character Rosary*. How? (1) Determine a life lesson from a Gospel story. (2) Convert the lesson into a “Hail Mary” bead. (3) Combine a bead for each Sunday Gospel to create a rosary that reviews the liturgical year. (4) Perhaps make 6-inch circle beads to build a rosary around the perimeter of the classroom or hallway.

**For Example:**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, **Jesus who wants us to give second chances as he did for Peter**. (Jn. 21:17-17, Peter and Jesus on the Beach in Galilee)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, **Jesus who asks us, like the Scribes and Pharisees, why we hold onto hurtful thoughts**. (Lk. 5: 17-26, Paralyzed Man Cured)

# Gospel Journaling

Gospel Prayer allows the Word of God to intersect with our human experience. The result? Christian Character formation. A six-step process for Prayer Journaling includes:

1. Pray to become conscious of, and attentive to, the presence of God.
2. Read the scripture passage slowly and audibly – loud enough to hear my own voice.
3. Write a brief, unbiased summary statement of the passage.
4. Personal Analysis using “I-You” language:
  - What is Jesus saying in this passage?
  - What do Jesus’ words mean to me today?
  - Why do I think that Jesus is calling my attention to a particular idea, word, phrase, thought?
  - What is Jesus asking me to do?
5. Dialogue: Converse with Jesus about the issue(s) that the Holy Spirit stirred up in me. Ask Jesus to comment.
6. Resolution: Use “I-You” language to tell Jesus how I WANT to respond, what DIFFICULTIES I predict that I will encounter and HOW I will need his help.

## Ideas for Promoting Christian Character in the Classroom throughout the Liturgical Year

Consult the website, [www.ParentTeacherSupport.org](http://www.ParentTeacherSupport.org). From the Home Page, select NEWSLETTERS. There explore the newsletters that are titled, **RELIGIOUS ED CLASSROOM**, in particular, the following titles:

- Advent Wisdom (WINTER)
- Culture of Spirituality
- Lent to Pentecost (SPRING)
- Back to School (FALL)
- Ordinary Time
- Mary Ways