

Achieve Universal Primary Education

“In the schools teach whatever is necessary to equip the students for life.” St. Julie Billiart



What does “education” mean to you?

What connection do you see between fulfilling your dreams/goals and education?

What do you need to learn to be equipped for life?

A Reflection on Education

Prayers for Our World

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer:

O God,

Who out of nothing brought everything that is,

Out of what I am bring more of what I dream but haven't dared;

Direct my power and passion

To creating life where there is death,

To putting flesh of action on bare-boned intentions,

To lighting fires against the midnight of indifference,

To throwing bridges of care across canyons of loneliness;

So I can look on creation, together with you, and behold, call it very good;

Through Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen.



Notes for using this prayer:

The theme for November is the 2nd Millennium Development Goal: Achieve Universal Primary Education. Please take the suggestions below and adapt them to the needs of your learning community. Note: The closing prayer is based on "Bring more of what I dream" pg. 109 of Guerrilla of Grace: Prayers for the Battle by Ted Loder ISBN 0-931055-04-0.

For this prayer you will need:

- √ To decide if you will use a video or have students present a script for reflection (see A Reflection on Education below)
- √ To choose a leader for the prayer.
- √ To decide if you want to add music to this outline (a suggestion would be Josh Groban's *Don't Give Up* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Is7ila3srzI>).
- √ To decide if you want to do something with décor to create a focal point for the prayer. You may want to do something for décor to visually connect the internationality of Notre Dame Schools. A growing list of Notre Dame Learning Communities can be found at:
<http://www.sndeducation.notredameonline.org/Links.html>
- √ Copies of the readings below for the readers.
- √ Copies of the prayer guide (first page of this file) for those participating.

Introduction: (have leader of prayer read the following:)

Saint Julie often told her sisters "In the schools teach whatever is necessary to equip the students for life." She worked tirelessly to provide basic education in reading, writing, arithmetic, religion and lace-making to young women. Why? Because she had seen two generations reduced to poverty and illiteracy, begging on the streets because they had no job skills with which to support themselves. In her own time, and in ways that best used her gifts, Saint Julie was working towards making primary education available to all.

Today we are reminded that the second millennium development goal that has been set by the United Nations is to achieve universal primary education.

Why is education so important? Think about it. A basic part of our nature as human beings is to question, to search for meaning in life, to dream about a better future, to set goals and take steps to achieve those goals. Education helps us find answers, meaning, ways to make our dreams come true and so much more.

Let us spend a little time reflecting on our experience of education. Take a few quiet moments to reflect on the questions on our prayer guide.

(Music—Don't give up or something else—could be played at this point...)

A Reflection on Education:

A choice will need to be made: to show a short video as part of this prayer service. or to have two students do a dramatic reading. Another option would be to have images playing on a screen as the students do a dramatic reading.

At the link below you will find some power videos that could be used. As with all videos, please preview them carefully before using them.

http://www.sendmyfriend.org/kids/watch_films

In particular I would suggest the "Message to World Leaders" video. This video is designed so you can skip the introduction and begin it at 2:17. The dramatic reading is based on the script from this video (next page).

Reader 1: Everyone wants to go to school because everyone has a dream of what they would like to become.

Reader 2: But without an education many of these dreams will not come true.

Reader 1: Education is a human right.

Reader 2: But 80 million children are not in school.

Reader 1: So why are these children missing out?

Reader 2: For many children who are facing a daily battle for survival there is no time or money to spend on education.

Reader 1: The affect of AIDS on families has meant that many young people are looking after younger brothers and sisters instead of going to school.

Reader 2: If you are disabled it is difficult to get an education.

Reader 1: It is right that all disabled children, whether they are blind or deaf, should be able to go to school so that they can live a fulfilled life.

Reader 2: Sometimes the reason children are not educated is simply because they live in a ghetto.

Reader 1: Children in the poorest countries want to learn, but the simple fact is that they have to work to survive.

Reader 2: Their governments want to give them an education.

Reader 1: But those governments just can't afford to.

Reader 2: The richer nations promised to help.

Reader 1: But so far have only provided a fraction of the money needed.

Reader 2: All these children have learnt so far is that these leaders don't keep their promises.

Reader 1: So why is education so important?

Reader 2: It is the best way to end poverty and it can be the difference between life and death.

Reader 1: If every child completes primary education an estimated 7 million cases of HIV and Aids could be prevented in the next decade.

Reader 2: It's a proven fact that a child born to a mother who can read and write is more likely to survive past the age of five.

Reader 1: We need education: good education.

Reader 2: It is easy to achieve.

Reader 1: It would change lives.

Reader 2: And what we need to spend on education in one year is what the world spends in four days on arms.

Reader 1: In April 2000 186 countries met at the World Forum on Education in Dakar.

Reader 2: This is what they promised: everyone has the right to an education. By 2015, all children, especially girls, will receive a good quality primary education.

Reader 1: Millions of children have missed an education already because we are off track on these goals.

Reader 2: Millions more will miss out if we fail to act now.

Reader 1: In the 21st century we are the first generation that has the ability to give every person on the planet an education.

Reader 2: We know how to do it.

Reader 1: We know we can afford it.

Reader 2: The only question is:

Reader 1: If we will do it.

(Based on "Message to World Leaders" http://www.sendmyfriend.org/kids/watch_films)

Prayers for Our World:

Reader 1: I could be a doctor, but I'm a girl and my parents say I don't need an education.

Reader 2: That everyone may value education, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: I could be a teacher, but the school in our town was destroyed by bombs in the war that continues to rip my country apart.

Reader 2: That all nations will choose to channel money into education instead of war, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: I could be a lawyer, but my parents got sick and died. There is no one but me to care for my younger brothers and sisters.

Reader 2: For the millions of children left orphaned and head of household, that they may receive the help they need to receive an education that will equip them for life, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: I could be a journalist, but my family is poor and there is no money for school fees or uniforms.

Reader 2: That governments will work to make education affordable for all people, and in gratitude for those who donate school materials, uniforms and money for fees and scholarships, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: I could be a scientist, but my family needs me to go to work every day so we can eat.

Reader 2: That world leaders will see the link between lack of education and poverty and renew their efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: I could be a president, but there has never been a school in my village.

Reader 2: For all organizations, including the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, who are opening new schools where they are most needed, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: I see so many possibilities of who I could be, but there is no one to teach me the skills I need to achieve my dreams and goal.

Reader 2: In gratitude for our learning community, for our teachers and all those who teach us what we need to be equipped for life, we pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 1: Let us pray our closing prayer together....