

PRAYER SERVICE FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

LEADER: O God, we come before you with sincere hearts. Our faces turn to you in eager anticipation. We're full of hope. Be with us and guide us. Help us to develop into a person you can be proud of each day.

READER 1: As we try new subjects for the first time,

- ALL:
- *Open our minds to recall prior learning.
 - *Let us have confidence in our abilities.
 - *Make us enthusiastic and creative.
 - *Keep us calm and not boastful when showing our progress.

READER 2: As we meet new people,

- ALL:
- *Let us place value in those we meet and work with in groups.
 - *Give us a willingness to look beyond the size, shape, color of skin, or physical beauty of others, and to accept our own physical appearance.
 - *Let us not hide our talents and gifts, but share our best with others freely.
 - *Help us to recognize that beauty can be a handicap.

READER 1: As we work with teachers new to us,

- ALL:
- *Let us appreciate the skills, knowledge, and expertise they are willing to share.
 - *Open our hearts to adding to a positive atmosphere in the classroom.
 - *Keep us diligent in completing assignments on time.
 - *Be open to constructive criticism, not taking suggestions personally.

READER 2: As we engage,

- ALL:
- *Let us not isolate ourselves, but instead greet others so that they do not feel excluded.
 - *Help us to take note of those who are troubled and may feel defeated.
 - *Protect those being bullied and insulted.
 - *Do not isolate immigrants for we are all neighbors and God's children around the globe.
 - *Forgive our offenses and help us to let go of grudges. Give others a second chance.

LEADER: O God, fill us with patience. Let us hold our temper and be a peacemaker. Remind us to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Let us be an angel in the lives of others. If fear and anger well up inside of us, place a simple prayer, like the Our Father, in our hearts. The Great Teacher, Jesus, taught us how to pray. Let us resort to prayer before violence and hatred. We love you, God. Thank you for being our loving Father. Let us close by praying the Our Father together.

By Jean Grant for Today's Catholic Teacher. Jean Grant is a retired teacher from St. Charles, Missouri.