**Student Prayer Service: Pilgrims of Hope**

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*(For the Beginning of the School Year)*

**Leader (teacher/chaplain):**  
Welcome everyone. Today we gather at the start of a new school year to pause, to pray, and to remember that we are pilgrims on a journey together.  
This year, the Church invites us to celebrate the **Jubilee Year of Hope**.  
Hope is what helps us keep going when things are hard, it’s what lifts us when we feel down, and it’s what helps us dream of a brighter future.

Let us listen to some words from a famous poem about hope.

**Poem: “Hope is the thing with feathers”**

**By Emily Dickinson**

*Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all,*

*And sweetest in the Gale is heard,  
And sore must be the storm   
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm.*

*I’ve heard it in the chillest land   
And on the strangest Sea;  
Yet, never,in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.*

**Leader:**  
This poem tells us that hope is like a little bird that sings inside us.  
It never stops singing, even when life is stormy or difficult.  
Hope is a gift from God — it costs us nothing, but it gives us everything.

A group of hands holding each other

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**Prayers of Intercession**

**Reader 1:**  
We pray for our school community. May this be a place where hope grows through kindness, friendship, and learning.  
**Response (all):** *Lord, fill us with hope.*

**Reader 2:**  
We pray for one another as students. May we encourage each other, especially when times are hard, and remind each other not to give up.  
**Response (all):** *Lord, fill us with hope.*

**Reader 3:**  
We pray for our teachers and staff, who guide and support us every day. May they be strengthened in their work and encouraged by our efforts.  
**Response (all):** *Lord, fill us with hope.*

**Reader 4:**  
We pray for the world, especially for young people who live in fear, poverty, or war. May hope bring them peace, justice, and a future.  
**Response (all):** *Lord, fill us with hope.*

**Closing Prayer**

**Leader:**  
Let us pray together:

**All:**  
God of Hope,  
thank you for being with us at the start of this new school year.  
Help us to trust in your love when life feels difficult,  
to share hope with our friends when they are down,  
and to keep going, even when the road feels long.

May we be pilgrims of hope this year—  
walking together in faith,  
lifting one another up,  
and believing in the future you dream for us.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Hilda Campbell, Kandle Resources