November 2025

PRAYING WITH *the Holy Father*

Monthly Intention Lesson Plan developed for
Middle School and High School Students

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
UNITED STATES | CANADA APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

Produced for the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
in collaboration with St. Joseph Ministries

November 2025

For the prevention of suicide.

Opening Prayer

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross
- Prayer: The Daily Offering

> Father, here I am. I know you are always with me. I place my heart in the Heart of your Son, Jesus, who gives Himself to us in the Eucharist each day. May your Holy Spirit make me His friend and apostle, available for His mission of compassion. Take, Lord and receive all of my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings this day -all I am and possess- in communion with my brothers and sisters in the Pope's prayer network. With Mother Mary, I pray for the mission of the Church, for our bishops, and for the Pope's intention this month. Amen.

Introduce Intention

The Holy Father's November 2025 Intention
Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

The Pope Video

- If time allows, watch the Pope Video produced for this month.
- The video is available at https://thepopevideo.org/

Reflection

Deacon Ed Shoener is the President of the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers CatholicMHM.org

This month, the Pope prays for the prevention of suicide. My daughter Katie lived with a serious mental illness called bipolar disorder for over 11 years, but she finally lost the battle to suicide at the age of 29. In her obituary, I wrote this:

"So often people who have a mental illness are known as their illness. People say that "she is bipolar" or "he is schizophrenic." Over the coming days as you talk to people about this, please do not use that phrase. People who have cancer are not cancer, those with diabetes are not diabetes. Katie was not bipolar – she had an illness called bipolar disorder – Katie herself was a beautiful child of God.

The way we talk about people and their illnesses affects the people themselves and how we treat the illness. In the case of mental illness there is so much fear, ignorance, and hurtful attitudes that the people who suffer from mental illness needlessly suffer further.

Our society does not provide the resources that are needed to adequately understand and treat mental illness. In Katie's case, she had the best medical care available, she always took the cocktail of medicines that she was prescribed, and she did her best to be healthy and manage this illness – and yet – that was not enough.

Someday a cure will be found, but until then, we need to support and be compassionate to those with mental illness, every bit as much as we support those who suffer from cancer, heart disease or any other illness. Please know that Katie was a sweet, wonderful person that loved life, the people around her – and Jesus Christ."

Amazingly, Katie's obituary went viral and was seen by millions. It spoke to the hearts of people who live with mental illness or grieve the death of a loved one to suicide.

Since Katie's death, I joined with others to establish the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (CMHM) to help parishes around the world offer mental health ministries that provide spiritual accompaniment to people experiencing mental illness, including those who struggle with suicidal thoughts.

We pray that mental health ministry becomes an integral ministry in the Church that is available in every Catholic parish and community. We pray for the elimination of the stigma and discrimination that people living with a mental illness encounter.

Sacred Scripture

- Read Psalm 34:18 or Isaiah 41:10

Note: Invite one of your students to read the scripture entry.

Saint Connection

Saint Dymphna is known as the patron saint for those struggling with mental and emotional difficulties.

- St. Dymphna showed deep compassion and is remembered as a comfort to those in distress.
- Churches and communities across the world have looked to her as a model of care and as an intercessor for healing and hope.
- Her life encourages us to reach out in compassion, be attentive to those who suffer, and offer love and support wherever it is needed

Discussion

Invite students to reflect on this sensitive intention with care.

- Why is it important to support those struggling with sadness or hopelessness?
- How can we help create a loving, understanding community for everyone?
- What resources or trusted adults can someone turn to if they need help?
- How might you reach out to someone who seems lonely or discouraged?

Extension Activities:

- Learn about ways to support mental health and share resources with the class.

Closing Prayer

- Prayer:
    - Loving God, You know the struggles of each heart. Inspire us to be sources of comfort, hope, and understanding for those experiencing despair or loneliness. Through the intercession of St. Dymphna, may all who are suffering find the support, care, and love they need, and come to see the beauty of the life You have given. May our community be a place of welcome, kindness, and hope. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross