

Graduation

Standing

Leader: We praise you, Lord! We give thanks to you with our whole heart!

Congregation: Great are your works, full of honor and majesty and studied by all who delight in them.

Leader: The works of your hands are faithful and just.

Congregation: Your precepts are trustworthy.

Leader: Our reverence for you is the beginning of wisdom.

Congregation: You are to be praised forever.

Hymn

Leader: All-knowing Creator, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, we praise you for the wisdom, power, and love displayed in the natural universe and in humanity, whom you have placed within it to care for it and nurture it.

Congregation: All glory to you, omniscient God!

Leader: Light of the world, we praise you for being the eternal truth.

Congregation: All glory to you, Christ our teacher!

Leader: Revealer of the deep things of God, we praise you for your gifts of awe and wonder which lead us on the path of true wisdom.

Congregation: All glory to you, Holy Spirit!

Hymn

Sitting

Leader: *(The names of the graduates are read)*, you have grown among us through the years, worshiped with us, and joined us as young members of the communities where we live. We congratulate you on your accomplishment and, more importantly, recognize you as young adults taking your place among us in the world.

Congregation: We have seen you grow and develop into young men and women with skills and abilities that we have proudly watched you acquire. We rejoice that you have been a part of us and are with us now as we recognize you this day.

Leader: Some of you, as parents and teachers, have been instrumental in their growing – teaching and sharing with them your beliefs and knowledge, moments of encouragement and growth, and experiences of the responsibilities of life.

Congregation: We have shared with them what God has shared with us, the hope for life, the blessing and knowledge we have in this world where we live. We have tried to share with them the love and concern for life the Almighty gives.

Leader: You, our graduates, have learned and grown. Soon you will celebrate your accomplishments as a class of young men and women. We pray that you will remember our witness and sharing, that you will develop your skills for the betterment of this world, and that you will witness with us what you have received from the Lord.

Graduates: We have learned, yet we know there is more of life to be discovered. We have grown, and we will continue to grow until our life comes to its end. We can never forget the witness you have given. We thank you for all you have shared.

Congregation: We ask neither for thanks for what we have done well, nor your forgiveness for what we have done poorly. The past is past. We ask, instead, your help in the transition to a new relationship. Our habit is to see you as children who need parental oversight. Your growth has been rapid. Be patient with us as we attempt to relate to you in a new way, as adult to adult.

Graduates: We have struggled these last years for new identities. Now we join you in the struggle for new relationships.

Congregation: The church also recognizes your new status. In years past, when you were younger, many people attempted to offer you the building blocks for the construction of your religious commitment. The faith we offered you was described in lofty words but demonstrated by us in often faulty ways. Now we ask you to search with us for ways to make our lives more relevant to the ideals we have described and our churches more effective in their sacred work.

Graduates: We will grow; we will develop; and with God's wisdom and Spirit, we pray that we can use our abilities to serve in the care of our communities and for all humankind.

Leader: There is a promise God has given, that he will be with us "to the close of the age," that he will be our God and we his people, that nothing, except our rejection of him, can keep us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Congregation: It is a promise we have been given, a promise we pray that we will honor and remember always, as we grow and develop the skills given by the God who gives us life.

Graduates: We dedicate ourselves to the joys, the privileges, and the duties of adulthood. We pledge to you and to each other support and

respect as we attempt to realize the full personhood and mature relationships to which God is calling us.

Hymn

Standing

Leader: Before you were even formed, God knew you. While in your mother's womb, God named you. At your birth, God's breath filled you with life. Today we celebrate what you have become at this moment in time. And so we pray:

Congregation: God of our beginnings, we thank you for the gifts of these graduates – their excitement, their awesome wonder and curiosity, their open speech and encouraging words. Their contributions have blessed and challenged us, and we have become a richer and more diverse community because of them. As they step forward into the world that waits, comfort their fears with the full knowledge of your divine presence. Strengthen their resolve to walk in the footsteps of Jesus as modern-day disciples in a world that needs their spirit. Guide their feet as they move through life, protecting them from the pitfalls of darkness while they help to lead future generations into the warmth and promise of your light. We ask this blessing upon each of them. Amen.

Portions of this liturgy have been reprinted with permission from the following:

☑ "Education Liturgy": The 1995 *Moravian Book of Worship*. Interprovincial Board of Communication, Moravian Church in North America, Bethlehem, PA. www.moravian.org.

☑ "You have grown among us through the years . . .": Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Synod Resource Center, 1005 Oxford Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54703; 715-833-1153. <http://synodresourcecenter.org/nwswrc.html>.

☑ "Before you were even formed . . .": National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc., 415 Michigan Avenue NE, Suite 40, Washington, DC 20017-4053; 202-636-3825. <http://www.nfcym.org/v3/nfcym/index.html>.