



Liturgy for *recognizing a graduate*

One of the many losses wrought by the global pandemic is our inability to recognize our graduates with in person ceremonies and celebrations. However, we can still celebrate them and their accomplishments in unique ways. As we send notes, make phone calls and reach out to tell them of our pride, many of us will also gather virtually and give thanks that they have reached this milestone.

This liturgy is designed to be used as a way to name particular gifts, accomplishments and hopes for our graduates. When family, friends and church groups come together virtually, they can share the words crafted while also using their own to lift up distinctive attributes and experiences of the graduate.

We pray for all of those unable to participate in so many of life's important rituals. We hope this resource reminds our graduates of God's love — and ours.

We come together not in the way we would want, but in the way we are able. We would rather be sitting in rows of chairs cheering for you as you cross the stage. We would rather be standing side by side for photos to mark your accomplishment. We would rather be in the same space, telling you face to face how proud we are of you, how excited we are for your future, how grateful we are to have you in our lives. Someday, we hope soon, we will be able to celebrate you in person, surrounded by all who cheer you on, but until then we want you to know we recognize this milestone, all the work and energy, all the change and challenges, all the memories and experiences that have gotten you to this point.

You are fearfully and wonderfully made, a unique reflection of God's image. We rejoice that God made you just as you are. We thank God for these gifts we see in you ... *(use these spaces to name those things specific to the graduate).*

You persevered through challenges, refusing to give up despite difficult circumstances. We recognize your tenacity and strength, especially when ...



You accomplished much during your time as a student, learning new skills, trying new things, making new friends, finding new passions. We celebrate your many achievements, including ...

Your curiosity and creativity are inspiring. We cannot wait to see where your questions lead you. We will be eager to hear about your explorations in ...

You have many people who love and care for you. We support you and we believe in you. We believe that you can ...

And we believe that you will ...

We know that you are God's beloved child, surrounded by the Holy Spirit and prayed for by us and by Jesus Christ. You are claimed and named by God. We trust God's promise that if we ask, we will receive and therefore we ask God to ...

We are people who live in hope, at this time of transition, when you begin a new phase of your life's journey our hopes for you are ...

We know that the road ahead will not always be smooth or easy or obvious, nonetheless, we have faith in your ability to navigate whatever lies ahead. We have faith in God's sure presence with you. We have faith in your willingness to ask for help when you need it, accept and extend mercy often and practice courageous kindness always. When you are afraid or anxious, unsure or struggling, we want you to know that you can call on ...

Those of us gathered today want you to know how valuable you are to us and to God. You are irreplaceable. While we are proud of all you have done to reach this goal, we love you for who you are. We ask that God will bless you with ...

We want you to remember ...

And remembering that nothing can separate you from the love of God, we pray:

God of every season, we ask your prayers this day for _____ as she/he/they graduates and look to the future, remind her/him/ them of all they have achieved so far. May these memories embolden and strengthen her/him/them when she/he/they faces challenges. Help her/him/them to know that she/he/they is beloved by you and by all of us. Comfort her/him/them in her/his/their grief at the loss of the rituals of cap and gown, ceremony and speeches, family



gatherings and celebrations with friends. Assure her/him/them of your presence, your power, your providence and your grace. Reveal to her/him/them a sure sense of purpose and peace, especially when she/he/they feels afraid and anxious. May she/he/they recognize the gifts you have given her/him/them, and may those gifts bring her/him/them joy, a joy that increases when they are shared with the world. Surround her/him/them with the Holy Spirit so that everyday she/he/they may know that they are beloved, beautiful and blessed to be a blessing. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Charge and benediction *(from the Book of Common Worship)*

Go out into the world in peace.
Have courage! Hold fast to what is good.
Return no one evil for evil.
Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering.
Honor all people.
Love and serve the Lord your God, rejoicing in the power of the
Holy Spirit.
The Lord bless and keep you.
The Lord be kind and gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

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