



Catholic Schools Week 2024

Catholic Schools: Communities of Service

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21–27 JANUARY 2024

FIRST AND SECOND CLASS/P3 AND P4





Christian Faith	Word of God
<p>Mystery of God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God sent Jesus to show us how much he loves us and to teach us how to love others.• God our Father sent his son, Jesus, to tell us the Good News.• Christians bless themselves in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.• God is our loving Father and Creator (Gn 1:26-7).• God is good (Ps 116:1).• God knows us and loves us (Ps 139).• God is my friend. <p>Mystery of Jesus Christ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus showed his love for God his Father by praying to God, by his actions and by his preaching of the Good News.• Jesus had many friends. <p>Mystery of the Church/Kingdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The way of life of the parish involves caring, sharing, and praying together (CCC, 2179; <i>Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education [CSRE]</i>, 2a).• The church is a special place where God's people gather to pray.• Our family helps us become friends of Jesus.• The priest/teacher helps us to become friends of Jesus (<i>Lumen Gentium [LG]</i>, 10). <p>Creation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God created everything there is: the earth, people, stars, animals, birds, plants and trees (Gn 1; <i>LG</i>, 2; CCC, 212, 290, 325; <i>CSRE</i>, 1b).• God cares for all creation (Wis 8:1; CCC, 303).• God's creation is good (Gn 1:31; CCC, 299, 339; <i>CSRE</i>, 1b).	<p>Sacred Scripture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• John 13:34-35• John 11:1-44• John 4:5-30• Luke 19:1-10• Matthew 26:17-30• Luke 1:46-50• 1 Corinthians 12:12-26• Ephesians 1:4-5
<p>Liturgy and Prayer</p> <p>Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God calls us to prayer and we respond (<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>, 18, CCC, 2567).• God always hears our prayers.• The church is God's house, where his family comes together (CCC, 1180; <i>LG</i>, 6; 1 Tm 3:15).• God's family gathers in the parish church to pray and celebrate (CCC, 1069-71, 2179).• The church is a holy place where people go to pray and talk to God (CCC, 1181) <p>Formal Prayers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sign of the Cross• Glory be to the Father ...• Our Father	<p>Christian Morality</p> <p>Human Dignity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God loves each one of us (Jer 31:3; 1 Jn 4:10-11; <i>CSRE</i>, 3a).• I am unique/special because God created me (CCC, 1004; Gn 1:26-7; Ps 137:14).• I am called to love God and to love others (Mt 22:36-40).• Every person is special in the eyes of God (CCC, 225, 356-61, 369, 1604, 1700-1, 1944-6, 2319, 2334; <i>CSRE</i>, 3a).



Monday: Service in our Community of Friends

Background for Teacher

We focus on friendship and the qualities that build good relationships and healthy connections with one another following the example of Jesus with his friends as recounted in the gospels.

Service of community in the parish context becomes a greater reality in the two years of preparation for the sacraments of reconciliation and first Holy Communion. The gifts that all have been given are for sharing with others in the larger community nourished by prayer and discussion in the home and school.

The children are learning to grow in deeper relationship with one another, with God and with the community of the parish as they prepare for the sacraments of reconciliation and first Holy Communion.



Connecting with *Grow in Love*

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – First Class/Primary 3, theme 2, lesson 5 and theme 5, lessons 1–3

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Second Class/Primary 4, theme 2, lesson 4–5 and theme 5, lessons 1–3

Words of Pope Francis

'Friendship is a generous, self-giving love, which leads us to seek the true good of our friend. A friend accompanies, encourages, shares with and helps the other person to grow, since one's capacity for self-giving increases.'

(cf. *Christus Vivit*, 151)

Connecting with scripture

'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

(Jn 13:34-35)





Consider

How can we model our friendships on and nurture them through the example provided by Jesus?

Friends care for one another and always look out for one another. Jesus provides us with many examples of how to be a good friend: through healing (Mary, Martha and Lazarus: Jn 11:1-44), sharing meals (the Last Supper: Mt 26:17-30), listening with care and respect (the Samaritan woman at the well: Jn 4:5-30) and forgiving (Zacchaeus: Lk 19:1-10). As members of the Church, we are called to live friendship in the same manner.

Explore

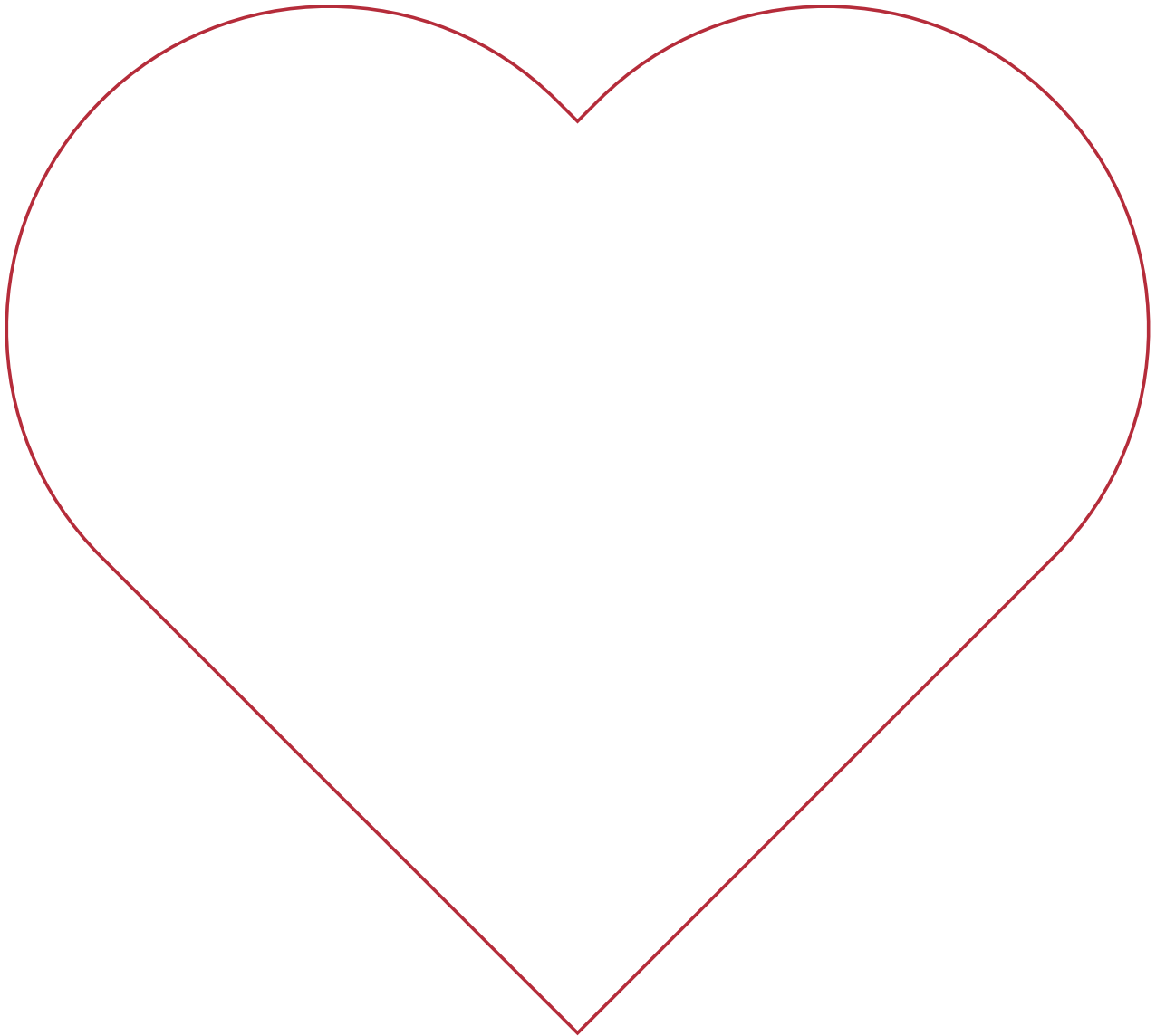
Read the account of Jesus and the fishermen (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – First Class/Primary 3*, p. 59) or the account of Zacchaeus (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Second Class/Primary 4*, p. 154-156) and discuss questions below:

- Who are the people in the account?
- What is happening between Jesus and the people/person concerned?
- If you were part of the scene in the story, which person would you like to be?
- What is the message for us in the story?
- How can we be better friends by doing what Jesus did with his friends in the gospel story?

Activity

Using the heart shape, write or draw a picture of what you will try to do to be a better friend. Form a large heart or a cross shape display with all the hearts.





Prayer

Hymn: 'Circle of Friends' (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – First Class/Primary 3*, p. 84;
Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Second Class/Primary 4, p. 44)

As members of God's family let us pray to God our Father: *Our Father ...*





Tuesday: Service in our School Community

Background for Teacher

God has given us the gift of each person in our school community, all of whom are unique, with something special to bring to the school. We all come with different gifts, skills and abilities. Our schools are places of great diversity, the place where children learn how to be with others, to respect and value everyone along with their differences or similarities. All belong to the Body of Christ with each having a place that nobody else can occupy. We are each made by God, treasured by God and given a great purpose to live in the world right where we are in the here and now. We encourage children to grow in appreciation of diversity and serve the purpose to be inclusive in all activity and interaction.



Connecting with scripture

Just as the body is made of many parts, it is still one body, like the Body of Christ. We are all part of the Body of Christ with each of us having a special and important part. The foot cannot say that it is not needed because it is not a hand, as both hands and feet are needed to do different things. The ear cannot say that it is not needed because it is not an eye and cannot see; the ear is needed to hear. God has given us a body with lots of different parts that work together. If one part of the body suffers, the pain is felt by all the body. We must treat every part of the body well so that we may live full and joyful lives as one healthy body.

(Adapted from 1 Cor 12:12-26)

Consider

We are all precious to God, and we are precious to one another. We are all members of the Body of Christ with each member having a special purpose and a difference that is valuable to all. The diversity in each class and in the school should be treasured with each difference understood as being a gift to us from God in the here and now.





Explore

Read the adaptation from the letter I Corinthians above. Discuss the following with the children:

- If our class is a body, what are the different talents and interests that we have (e.g. musical, sport, reading, comedy, science, languages, dance, drama)?
- What different cultures or nationalities are represented in the class? What have we learnt from the different cultures or nationalities (e.g. words from different languages, about different faiths, about different countries)?
- Do we always treat one another well?
- Is our class a happy place when people are not treating one another well?
- What does it say in the story when one part of the body suffers or is cut off? Is this like what happens when someone in the class suffers or someone is left with no one to play with?
- How can we change this?

Activity

Write down a change that the class decides to make, putting it where it can be clearly seen.

Prayer

Sign of the Cross

Read out the following prayer. The response to each line will be: 'Thank you, God, for making us special and different.'

God made us each different and like no one else. *Response.*

God has given us many different gifts so that we can enjoy different interests. *Response.*

God has given us friends who are all different so that we can learn from one another. *Response.*

God has given us a family that is different to other families so that we may grow in our own way. *Response.*

God has given us friends from different countries so that we may grow together. *Response.*

Hymn: 'Circle of Friends' (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – First Class/Primary 3*, p. 84; *Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Second Class/Primary 4*, p. 44)

Sign of the Cross





Wednesday: Service in our Family Community

Background for Teacher

We all belong to a family of one shape or another. We come from a family, grow as members of a family and gain experiences from each person and generation. Today we celebrate the gift of each member of our family, with a particular focus on grandparents and the grandparenting generation. We give thanks to God for the gift of grandparents and ask God to bless them in their role, particularly that of handing on the gift of faith.



Words of Pope Francis

‘The Lord trusts that young people, through their relationships with the elderly, will realise that they are called to cultivate memory and recognise the beauty of being part of a much larger history. Friendship with an older person can help the young to see life not only in terms of the present and realise that not everything depends on them and their abilities. For the elderly, the presence of a young person in their lives can give them hope that their experience will not be lost and that their dreams can find fulfilment. Mary’s visit to Elizabeth and their shared awareness that the Lord’s mercy is from generation to generation remind us that, alone, we cannot move forward, much less save ourselves, and that God’s presence and activity are always part of something greater, the history of a people.’

(Message for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 2023)

Connecting with scripture

‘I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

(Jn 13:34-35)



Consider

Grandparents are special gifts in the life of children. They show us how to care for one another and how to enjoy life together. Grandparents like to hear stories of the children's day, interests and activities. Grandparents have seen much in life and have experiences from which we can learn.

Explore

Discuss the generation levels: children, parents, grandparents, great grandparents. Encourage the children to think of a time when a grandparent or great grandparent shared a special memory with them. Write it down or draw a picture of it to share with grandparent.

Activity

Interview a grandparent (perhaps invite a grandparent into the classroom). Ask them to speak about their own time in school and some happy memories of their own childhood. If interviewing in second class, perhaps they might say something about their own first Holy Communion day.

Prayer Card

Decorate the prayer card and draw a portrait of a grandparent inside the card.

**God, our Father,
Bless our grandparents.
May they know how much they are
loved by God as they bring their love,
joy and hope into our lives.
Bless them with all that
they need each day.**

Amen.





Thursday: Service in our Local Community

Background for Teacher

Care for our common home and for all that lives on the earth is our responsibility. We are gifted by God with the beauty and resources of nature. We are charged to co-exist well with all living creatures, caring particularly for the vulnerable state of each species. As co-creators with God, we are charged with care for all that exists and for sustaining each species in its natural environment and seeking to ensure the continuance of each species. St Francis, though born in the twelfth century, provides a message and example that remains fully relevant in this century.



Words of Pope Francis

The divine Persons are subsistent relations, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things, so that throughout the universe we can find any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships. This leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections existing among creatures, but also to discover a key to our own fulfilment. The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity.

(Laudato Si', 240)

Connecting with *Grow in Love*

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – First Class/Primary 3, theme 9, lesson 1

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Second Class/Primary 4, theme 9, lesson 1





Consider

St Francis of Assisi cared deeply about the natural world seeing creation as the mirror of God. St Francis called all living creatures his brothers and sisters. God now trusts us with care of his creatures.



Saint Francis of Assisi (1181–1226)

Saint Francis was born in Assisi in Italy in 1181. His full name was Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone. When he finished school he joined the army and took part in a war where he was taken prisoner. When he was freed he went home to Assisi and spent time praying to God. He felt God calling him to give up things that he didn't really need. He founded the Franciscan order who preached to people about God. In 1223 he set up the first nativity scene in Greccio, Italy. Saint Francis is the patron saints of animals and the environment.

Explore

Mitzi and Padraig

Mitzi, a beautiful, white, curly haired terrier, likes to run in and out of the dog flap in the house. She chases the birds that land on the grass, growls at the cat that hisses at her and teases her from the top of the wall. She loves to roll in the muddy ground. Mitzi sometimes shakes off some of the mud in the house!

Padraig, who is nine years old, shares responsibility for the care of Mitzi. Padraig calls Mitzi in for her favourite dry nuts before Mammy puts his dinner on the table. He gives Mitzi a hug and ruffles her curly coat as she runs to her bowl. Mitzi jumps up, panting happily to say 'hello' to Padraig before she settles into eating her food noisily.

After dinner, Padraig and Granny call Mitzi for 'walkies', putting a lead onto her collar so that they may go for a walk together. Mitzi scampers around and tugs at the lead as she is really looking forward to a walk on the green with Padraig and Granny.





Read the story of Mitzi and Pdraig and discuss using the questions below:

- What does Pdraig do to care for Mitzi?
- Mitzi seems like a happy dog. What makes her happy, do you think?

Ask the children to talk about their pets and discuss how they care for them:

- Do you have any pets? What pets do they have?
- How do they care for pets (e.g. feeding, cleaning, exercise, keeping them company)?
- What do you need to think about before you get a pet (e.g. time, space, money to care for pet)?

Activity

Draw a picture of a pet, showing how to care for it.

Prayer

Sign of the Cross

Teacher reads the prayer line by line while the children repeat.

God, our Creator Father,
Thank you for the gift of pets and animals.
Thank you for the fun and friendship we share with them.
Help us to care for our pets and animals as St Francis did.
Help us to be kind to animals and to always treat them well.
Amen.

Sign of the Cross





Friday: Service in our Faith Community

Background for Teacher

This year has been dedicated to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. God calls men to become priests so that they may lead us in the celebration of the sacraments. God calls men and women to the religious life as religious brothers and sisters who pray for us and dedicate their lives to serving God found in those with greatest needs.

God calls us to particular paths in life through the gifts and talents given to us. God gives us choices through the gifts while directing us along the best paths when we open our hearts to really listen. God guides us along the path of life through prayer, advice of those whom we love and trust, experience of different ways of living life and the good and faithful example of those who serve as priests or religious.

Words of Pope Francis

‘The Church is an *Ecclesia*, the Greek word for *an assembly of persons called and convened*, in order to form the community of missionary disciples of Jesus Christ committed to sharing love among themselves (cf. Jn 13:34; 15:12) and spreading that love to all others, so that God’s kingdom may come.

‘Within the Church, all of us are servants, in accordance with the variety of our vocations, charisms and ministries. Our common vocation to give ourselves in love develops and finds concrete expression in the life of lay men and women, devoted to raising a family as a small *domestic church* and working as a leaven of the Gospel to renew the different sectors of society; in the testimony of consecrated women and men who are completely committed to God for the sake of their brothers and sisters as a prophetic sign of the kingdom of God; in ordained ministers – deacons, priests and bishops – placed at the service of preaching, prayer and fostering the communion of the holy People of God. Only in relation with all the others, does any particular vocation in the Church fully disclose its true nature and richness. Viewed in this light, the Church is a vocational “symphony”, with every vocation united yet distinct, in harmony and joined together in “going forth” to radiate throughout the world the new life of the kingdom of God.’

(Message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2023)





Connecting with scripture

God the Father 'chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will'.

(Eph 1:4-5)

Consider

What is a priest, and what do priests do?

Explore

Invite a priest or a religious sister or brother into the class or visit a priest. Prepare questions that the children may ask and provide the questions to the priest, sister or brother in advance. The following may be useful.

Questions for a priest:

- Why did you decide to become a priest? How did God show you the way?
- Who helped you make the decision?
- How did you become a priest? What happened at your ordination?
- What can a priest do that a person who is not ordained cannot do?
- What do you like about being a priest?
- Who can become a priest?
- When you talk or pray with God, how do you feel?

Questions for a religious sister or brother:

- Why did you decide to become a sister/brother? How did God show you the way?
- Who helped you make the decision?
- How did you become a sister/brother? What happened at your vows?
- Where do you live and work?
- What do you like about being a sister/brother?
- Who can become a sister/brother?
- When you talk/pray with God, how do you feel?





Activity

Just like the priest/sister/brother grew to know their gifts and to let them help guide them to a way of life that is best for them, we too are discovering our gifts and will find our own path. What you are good at and enjoy doing tells us what your gifts are. What are you good at? Write or draw your gifts in the boxes below.



**God has given
me many gifts.
Thank you God for
my gifts. I will try to
use them well.**