



Catholic Schools Week 2024

Catholic Schools: Communities of Service

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21–27 JANUARY 2024

JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANTS/P1 AND P2





Christian Faith	Word of God
<p>Mystery of God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 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>Sacred Scripture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• John 15:12-13• 1 Corinthians 12:4-6
Liturgy and Prayer	Christian Morality
<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 ...	<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, 1944-46, 2319, 2334; <i>CSRE</i>, 3a).



Monday: Service in our Community of Friends

Background for Teacher

The experience children have of community begins in the home and school as does their experience of God. The values of the gospel nourished in the home and school provide them with the example given by Jesus of kindness, love, forgiveness, acceptance and challenge to be our best selves. Followers of Jesus are called into community to be connected with one another through love. The gospel calls us from selfishness to connectedness with one another and with God. All the gifts that we each have been given by God are to be shared with one another in community for the good of all.

It is important that children learn how to be connected with one another by sharing their gifts and talents in each community to which they belong, often beginning at home and in school.



Connecting with *Grow in Love*

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Junior Infants/Primary 1,
theme 1: My Family

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Senior Infants/Primary 2,
theme 2: We Belong

Connecting with scripture

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

(Jn 15:12-13)





Consider

We are a community of friends in our class where we learn, play and eat together. God wants us to be friends and to care for one another.

Explore

Engage the children in discussion using the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a friend?
- What do you like doing with your friends?
- What do you share with your friends?
- Jesus is our friend. When do we talk with our friend Jesus?
- Jesus wants us to be good friends. How can we be better friends here in our class?

Prayer

Sit together in a circle as friends. Place a light in the centre representing Jesus who connects us together as his friends.

Make the Sign of the Cross to begin and read out the following prayer. The response to each line will be: 'Thank you, God, for my friends.'

We are friends together when we are kind to one another. *Response.*

We are friends together when we help one another. *Response.*

We are friends together when we play together. *Response.*

We are friends together when we share with one another. *Response.*

We ask God to help us to be good friends to one another. *Response.*





Tuesday: Service in our School Community

Background for Teacher

We are resourced by God with all that we need as a community through the gifts, talents and skills provided to individuals for the community. Each person serves according to the gifts given to them. Each person is unique and serves in a way that makes their school community a better place and each class and school special. It is important to acknowledge the contributions every member of the community makes and to thank God for each person.



Connecting with scripture

'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.'

(1 Cor 12:4-7)

Consider

Our school community is made up of many people who serve in a variety of ways, including our principal, teachers, secretaries, SNAs, caretakers, cleaners, parents and visitors. Everyone who serves and helps makes a real difference and is needed so that our school works well for everyone. God has given us the gift of each person who can make a special difference in our school.

Explore

Engage the children in discussion using the following questions:

- Who are the people who help us in our school?
- What do they do in our school?
- How might we help them with their job?

Staff/Volunteer Interview

Invite a member of staff or a volunteer to be interviewed by the class. Ask them the following questions:

- What do you like most about your job in the school?
- How do you try to share kindness and love in the school?
- Who shares kindness with you in the school?
- What kind words do you like to hear in the school (e.g. please, thank you, sorry, excuse me, would you like)?



Activity

Make a banner with the heading: *God Bless All Who Work in our School.*

Draw a picture of a person who works in the school and add it to the banner.



Prayer

Loving God,
Bless all who work in our school.
Bless our families and friends.
Bless all who pray for us in the parish.
Help us to love one another as God loves us.
Amen.





Wednesday: Service in our Family Community

Background for Teacher

The family is the basic cell of all community groups: school, parish, etc. Family members have a direct and indirect influence on attitudes relating to all of life, school and faith. It is important to consider and acknowledge the role of family members in the lives of children and the school.

On this particular day we give attention to grandparents and the role that they play in the lives of families and of children. We give thanks to God for the gift of grandparents and ask God's blessing on them in their role.



Words of Pope Francis

‘We must pay special attention to this: the children and the grandparents. Children and young people are the future, they are the strength, those who take us forward. They are the ones in which we place our hope. Grandparents are the memory of a family, they are the ones who gave us the faith, transmitted to us the faith.’

(World Meeting of Families 2015)

Consider

God's love is shown to children through the members of their family, particularly grandparents.

Explore

Discuss the role of grandparents in sharing God's love and belief in the children using the following questions:

- What do your grandparents do with and for you?
- What do you do for your grandparents?
- How could you thank your grandparents for what they do?





Activity

Make a thank you card for grandparents.

Thank you

I prayed for you today



Thursday: Service in our Local Community

Background for Teacher

Care for our common home, the earth, is well recognised as being of urgent importance now resulting from recent floods, destructive fires, growing desert ground even in countries that had fertile territory until this decade and resultant hunger and displacement of people. Every human action has a consequence that has a ripple effect so that it is necessary to consider our actions in relation to one another and the resources of the earth.

The Green Schools programme has provided wonderful education and experience for school communities. We must always seek to improve our relationship and attitude towards all our earthly resources as we acknowledge the gift of God creation for which we must care and add to its beauty through co-creation.

Words of Pope Francis

'[T]he earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rm 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gn 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.'

(Laudato Si', 2)

Connecting with *Grow in Love*

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Junior Infants/Primary 1, theme 2: Our World
– Creation story on pages 58, 59, 60, 64

Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Senior Infants/Primary 2, theme 1: Our World
– Creation story on pages 32, 33 & 43

Consider

How can the children care for the earth and add to its beauty in school and at home? God created the beautiful world in which we live as our shared home and trusts us with its care.





Explore

Ask the children to listen and look around the classroom and then ask them the following questions:

- What do you like most about your classroom?
- Is the classroom as clean and tidy as you would like it to be?
- What can we do to make the classroom look better?

Outside, ask the children to listen and look around the school yard and then ask them the following questions:

- God has created all that we see and hear – what can you see and hear that you like?
- Can you hear the birds?
- What colours do you see in the sky?
- Do we need to tidy or clean the outdoor space?

Activity

Choose and carry out an action that will make some improvement to the classroom or outdoor environment today.

Prayer

(Glory be ... from *Grow in Love*)

Sign of the Cross

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. (*Join hands in prayer.*)

As it was in the beginning ... (*Turn and extend left arm to the left.*)

Is now ... (*Extend hands to the floor.*)

And ever shall be ... (*Turn and extend right hand to the right.*)

World without end. (*Raise both hands and trace a circle with hands.*)

Amen. (*Join hands in prayer.*)

Sign of the Cross





Friday: Service in our Faith Community

Background for Teacher

This year has been dedicated to prayer 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 all to particular paths in life through the gifts and talents given to us. God gives us choices through these gifts and directs us along the best paths for us 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, experiences of different ways of living life and the good and faithful example of those who serve as priests or religious.

This is an exciting time to embrace God's call to whatever vocation best matches our talents, as it is a time of great challenge, change and opportunity to share the good news of the gospel in a world where many are searching for meaning and true purpose. God's call is heard and felt through every day experiences and encounters but can be missed if there is no space for reflection or trust in one's own heartfelt pull.

'Called to build a fraternal world' – Words of Pope Francis

'As Christians, we do not only receive a vocation individually; we are also called together. We are like the tiles of a mosaic. Each is lovely in itself, but only when they are put together do they form a picture. Each of us shines like a star in the heart of God and in the firmament of the universe. At the same time, though, we are called to form constellations that can guide and light up the path of humanity, beginning with the places in which we live. This is the mystery of the Church: a celebration of differences, a sign and instrument of all that humanity is called to be. For this reason, the Church must become increasingly synodal: capable of walking together, united in harmonious diversity, where everyone can actively participate and where everyone has something to contribute.

'When we speak of "vocation", then, it is not just about choosing this or that way of life, devoting one's life to a certain ministry or being attracted by the charism of a religious family, movement or ecclesial community. It is about making God's dream come true, the great vision of fraternity that Jesus cherished when he prayed to the Father "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). Each vocation in the Church, and in a broader sense in society, contributes to a common objective: to celebrate among men and women that harmony of manifold gifts that can only be brought about by the Holy Spirit. Priests, consecrated men and women, lay faithful: let us journey and work together in bearing witness to the truth that one great human family united in love is no utopian vision, but the very purpose for which God created us.

'Let us pray, brothers and sisters, that the People of God, amid the dramatic events of history, may increasingly respond to this call. Let us implore the light of the Holy Spirit, so that all of us may find our proper place and give the very best of ourselves in this great divine plan!'

(Message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2022)



Consider

What is a priest and what do priests do?

Explore

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

- What is your name?
- Where do you live?
- Do you have a family?
- Why are you a priest?
- What do you do?
- What do you like most about being a priest?
- When do you pray to God?
- Do you hear God talking to you?
- Can we do anything to help you as a priest?

Activity

Make a thank you card for the priest after the visit.

Prayer

Sign of the Cross

God our Father, thank you for Fr _____.

We ask you to bless him and care for him

As he helps to show us the way to live like Jesus.

Amen.

Sign of the Cross