



Catholic Schools Week 2022

Catholic Schools: Living Life to the Full

THURSDAY

# Living Life in Wonder and Awe

23 JANUARY – 30 JANUARY 2022





**Introduction:**

Most, if not all, people experience a sense of awe and wonder at some time in their lives – it could be a beautiful nature scene, an amazing piece of music, an unexpected gift or gesture of kindness. These moments can be experiences of the wonder of God and creation, providing insights into the heart of what surrounds us, experiences we might miss if we're too busy or distracted by our busy lives or by technology. The more of these experiences we have, the fuller our lives can be – even more so if we add an element of reflection.



In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis quotes the Canadian bishops, who said: 'From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe' (*Laudato Si'*, 85).

**Key Words:**

Wonder, awe, creation, life, fullness, balance.

**Activities:**

1. Listen to the song 'The Maker' by Chris August and answer the questions that follow.



A video of the song can be found here: <https://youtu.be/IH03GMmdMRI>.

Lyrics to the song can be found here: <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/chrisaugust/themaker.html>.

What image of God is conveyed in the song?

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In what ways does the songwriter think himself fortunate to experience this sense of wonder at creation?

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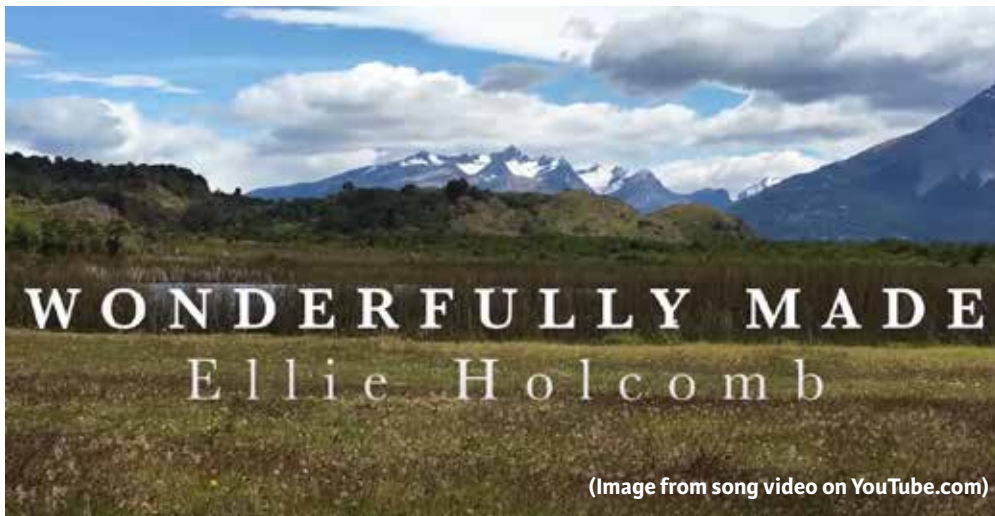
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2. Listen to the song 'Wonderfully Made' by Ellie Holcomb and answer the questions that follow.



A video of the song can be found here: <https://youtu.be/jrwSvQx3Xqs>.  
Lyrics to the song can be found here:  
<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/ellieholcomb/wonderfullymade.html>.



What shows that the songwriter isn't ignoring the challenges we face?

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How does the songwriter suggest that we can find wonder within ourselves?

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How does she link this wonder to religious faith?

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**Thought for the Day:**

‘For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders.’ (Psalm 139)

**Reflection:**

Sometimes, if we’re fortunate, we can see great and amazing wonders outside of ourselves – in nature, in people, in the arts. But we can sometimes forget the wonder within ourselves. We may fall into the trap of thinking little of ourselves. We may have low self-esteem. This can happen because we believe, rightly or wrongly, that others think little of us. But the deep personal love God has for us surpasses all of this. However, it can be a struggle to believe such wonderful things about ourselves without getting big-headed or arrogant about it, as some do. So, the challenge is to get the balance right. Will we rise to that challenge?

See related PowerPoint available for prayer/reflection/meditation.



**Additional Worksheet – Living Life in Wonder and Awe**

*Give your personal response to the following quotes on wonder and awe:*

‘For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders.’ (Psalm 139)

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‘From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe.’ (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 85)

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'Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life.' (Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 1)

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'All this he saw, for one moment breathless and intense, vivid on the morning sky; and still, as he looked, he lived; and still, as he lived, he wondered.' (Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*)

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'Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.' (John Milton)



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'If God were to appear in my room, obviously I would be in awe, but I don't think I would be humble. I might cry, but I think he would dig me like crazy.' (Marc Bolan)

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## Accompanying Notes

The theme of Wonder and Awe can be pursued in conjunction with other subjects as follows:

**English/Irish:** Students could explore nature poetry, including on any prescribed poetry lists, and compose their own expressions of awe and wonder.

**Music:** Students could listen to pieces of music that explore the wonders of creation or pieces of music renowned for inspiring people.

**Geography:** Students could explore the physical wonders of the world – natural or made by humans.

**Science:** Students could explore the marvellous complexity of creation – from the smallest particles to the vastness of the universe. Use the video 'Cosmic Zoom': [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgfwCrKe\\_Fk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgfwCrKe_Fk).

**Art:** Students could be invited to explore great works of art that create or depict a sense of wonder, or create their own art works on the same lines.

