



## November 2023: The Month of the Holy Souls


The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2024 is *Catholic Schools: Communities of Service*. As we look forward to celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2024, we take time this November to remember and pray for all those who have gone before us in the hope of the resurrection. This resource aims to assist and support schools with activities and lesson ideas for the month of the holy souls. The Month of November gives us the time and space to remember that the sorrow of death will give way to Christ's promise of eternal life with God.

'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more ...'

(Rv 21:4)

### For parishes

This moment can be situated within the liturgical themes of November and the Masses/liturgies around the Feast of All Souls and remembering our loved ones who have died as well as praying for those who have no one to pray for them. The prayer service (p. 9) could be used in a parish setting with children or young adults.



**Resources:**

- Relevant content from the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*
- Junior Lesson (Junior Infants–Second Class/P1–P4)
- Senior Lesson (Third Class–Sixth Class/P5–P7)
- Prayer Service of Remembrance





## The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
<p><b>Strand: Christian Faith</b> <b>Strand Unit:</b> Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• God wants all people to be happy with him forever in heaven (1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 13:12; <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> [CCC], 1023).</li><li>• When we die we go home to God (CCC, 1020).</li></ul> <p><b>Strand: Liturgy and Prayer</b> <b>Strand Unit:</b> Additional Prayers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prayer for the dead/for those who are sick and dying.</li></ul>	<p><b>Strand: Christian Faith</b> <b>Strand Unit:</b> Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jesus promised new life here on earth and after we die.</li><li>• We believe that when we die God calls us to heaven (CCC, 1011).</li><li>• God's plan is that when we die we will live on with God, Jesus, Mary and the angels and saints in heaven (CCC, 1024).</li></ul> <p><b>Strand: Liturgy and Prayer</b> <b>Strand Unit:</b> Liturgical Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On the Feast of All Souls the Church remembers those who have died and prays for them.</li></ul>
LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
<p><b>Strand: Christian Faith</b> <b>Strand Unit:</b> Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• God wants all people to live happily with him in heaven forever, through the salvation brought by Jesus (<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> [GS], 18; CCC, 1026).</li><li>• Jesus rose from the dead in his own body and entered heaven so we might join him one day and share in eternal life (CCC, 666–7).</li><li>• The Lord Jesus said, 'Whoever believes in me shall have eternal life and I shall raise him up on the Last Day.' Christians believe and hope that they too will rise to new life with the risen Jesus. This is called eternal life (1 Cor 15:23–4).</li><li>• 'Just as Christ is risen and lives forever, so all of us will rise at the last day' (CCC, 1016; 1 Cor 15:54–7).</li><li>• Christians believe that when they die they shall be with Christ, and they shall see God (1 Cor 13:12).</li></ul>	<p><b>Strand: Christian Faith</b> <b>Strand Unit:</b> Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All that is good in our present world will survive in the kingdom of heaven.</li><li>• Every act of kindness, generosity and service contributes to the building of the kingdom.</li><li>• The happiness of heaven consists of living with God and with all the blessed forever in a relationship of knowledge and love (CCC, 1024, cf. 1026–7).</li><li>• The body will die but will rise again (in a renewed form) at the end of time (Resurrection of the body; cf. <i>Lumen Gentium</i>, 48; CCC, 988–90, 1020).</li><li>• By God's grace and mercy, Christians have the secure hope that all those who loved God and others have found true life with God in heaven (GS, 18).</li><li>• The Church prays for the salvation of everyone (CCC, 1058).</li><li>• Catholics pray for the souls in purgatory on All Souls' Day and all through the year.</li><li>• The Church commends the dead to God's mercy and offers her prayers, especially the Eucharist.</li></ul>



## Junior Lesson

### Junior Infants–Second Class (P1–P4)

#### Teacher's notes

The Moment of November focuses on how we, as followers of Jesus, remember and celebrate those who served God in this life and who have died and gone home to God in heaven. We pray to the saints and pray for those who have died.

We trust in Jesus' promise that those who have died will be with him in heaven. Those who have died are connected with us through the communion of saints as we pray for and to them every day and at every celebration of the Eucharist. The communion of saints is all who have died and are now with God in heaven.

#### Feast of All Saints

The canonised saints of the Church are held before us as examples of how to live ordinary lives well. The saints were as human as each one of us, and they lived on earth as we do. The saints give us a sense of hope as they were usually people who never gave up on doing the right thing.

#### Consider

Explore the origin and traditions of Hallowe'en regarding how it connects with the feasts of All Saints and All Souls. Develop the discussion using the points and questions below along with the November seasonal lesson in *Grow in Love*.



1. Discuss the origin of Hallowe'en (All Hallows' Eve) as a time when:
  - we mark the end of a season of growth in nature and the end of life on earth for those who have died.
  - we celebrate the new growth that will rise from the sleeping winter and new life with God in heaven for those who have died.
2. What is a saint?
3. How do we remember those we have loved who have died?





## Explore

We celebrate the Feast of All Saints on 1 November, remembering all who lived good lives while among us on earth. They were all ordinary people who lived lives doing what was right, saying what was true and standing up for people who needed help while remembering that God was with them at all times. We all know some people who are living near us today who are like the saints. We can pray to the saints to ask them to help us to live our lives well.

On 2 November we celebrate the Feast of All Souls, remembering everyone who has died, especially our loved ones who have died and gone to God in heaven. Though they are gone from us, they remain connected with us in our prayers, in our hearts and in our memories. We pray for them every time we go to Mass and in our own personal prayers.

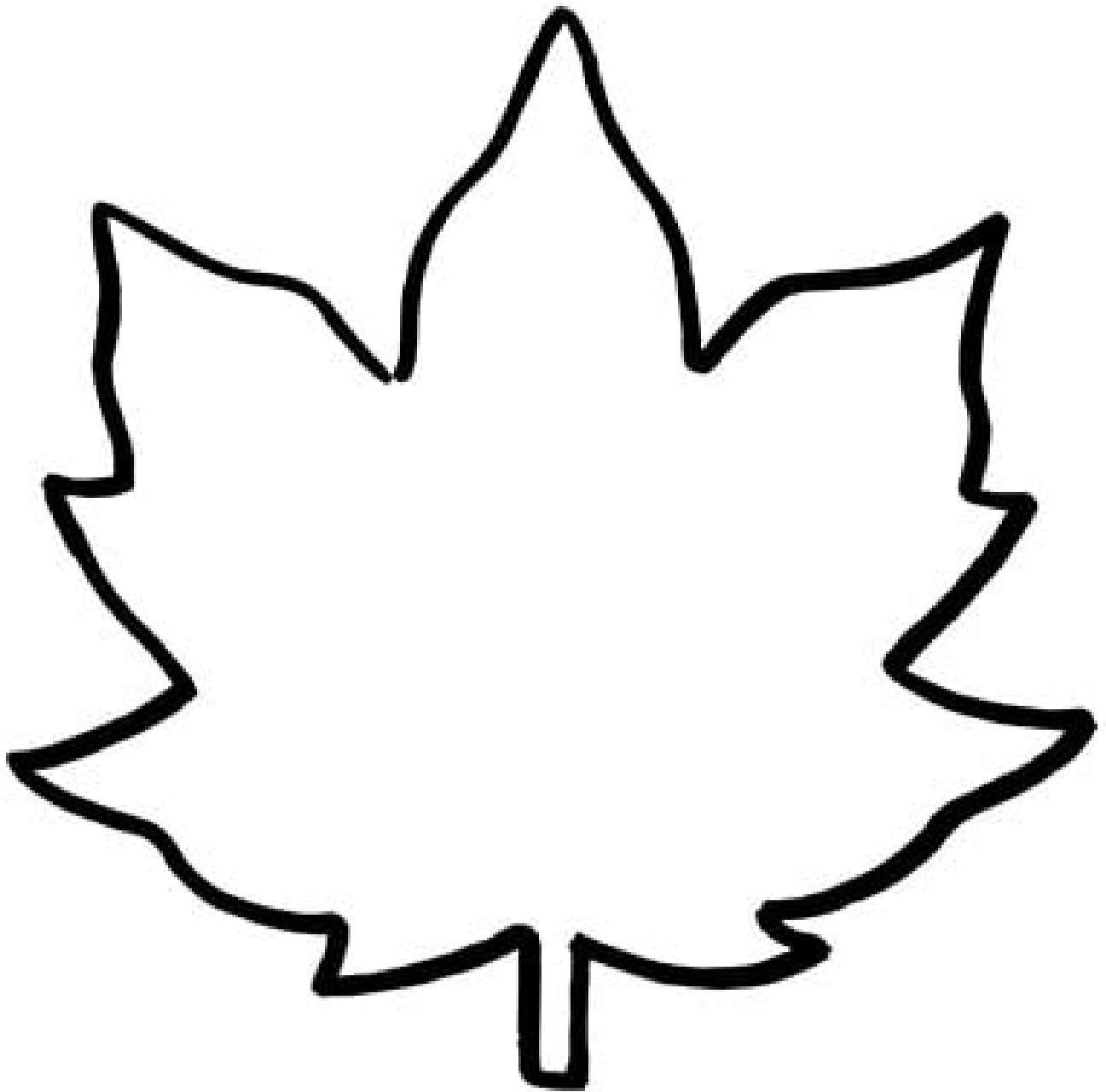
## Activity: Prayer tree of remembrance

We remember the people we loved who are now with God in heaven. We thank God for the gift of each person, and we ask God to hold them close in heaven. On the Junior Activity Page, write the name or draw a picture of someone you have loved who has died on the leaf provided so that they may be added to the tree of remembrance in the class or school sacred space. You might like to remember someone who has no one to pray for them instead.





**The Moment of November**  
**Junior Activity Page**





## Senior Lesson

### Third Class–Sixth Class (P5–P7)

#### Teacher's notes

November is a special month in the calendar of the Church in which we are invited to remember and to pray for the deceased. We remember those saints we have known in our own lives who have gone before us in the belief of Christ's promise of resurrection: that God's love is so great it conquers even death itself. We are also called to pray for all souls, including those who have no one to pray for them. As a Catholic school, we are invited to set aside time and space for this special moment of reflection and remembrance for our friends and family who are now with God in heaven.

Saints are people who live as Jesus called us to. They try to make the world a better place for everyone, showing God's love in their thoughts, words and actions. They are role models to us all in how to be more like Jesus. We know about famous saints like St Patrick and St Brigid, but we see saints every day in our lives. They are the people who show us what the kingdom of God is meant to be like, where no one is made to feel excluded or unwelcome.

(Note: Teachers should use their own discretion when covering this material as the content may be difficult for some children, especially if they have been recently bereaved.)

The following YouTube playlist offers a number of animated videos on saints of the Catholic Church, detailing their lives and stories:

[www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlcJ9ErzdpkfVKCiVi584kJbxlqJLkT8A](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlcJ9ErzdpkfVKCiVi584kJbxlqJLkT8A)



#### Consider

Discuss some of the features of this special month of remembrance with the class using these key questions:

1. What is a saint?
2. Do we know any saints? (St Patrick and St Brigid are useful prompts here.)
3. Are there any saints we see in the world today? (Examples or prompts here may be Fr Peter McVerry SJ or Brother Kevin Crowley).



## Explore

Explain the reason for celebrating the Feast of All Saints.

The first of November is a special day in the Church year called the Feast of All Saints. It is the day the Church prays for all those people who have lived like Jesus and are now with God in heaven. We go to Mass on this day and remember all those who lived and died in Jesus' love.

We see saints in our own lives, people who show Jesus' love to others, who are kind and helpful. Some of these people are our friends, our neighbours or members of our family. Some of these people were so holy and were such examples of Jesus' love and mercy that the Church said they were definitely in heaven and called them saints. Do you know the names of some of these saints? What do you think makes a saint?

Help the children understand that we all can be saints in our lives. Saints are people who love Jesus and share his love with others. Ask the children to think of ways to live like a saint at home, at school or in their community, village or town. When the children have given examples, say: God calls each of us to be saints. We become saints by doing things like those we just mentioned. That is what God wants for all of us.

Carlo Acutis could be made a saint in a few years. He passed away at the age of fifteen in 2006. He had great faith in God, and the Eucharist (Holy Communion) was very special to him. He is an example of what it means to be saint-like, even though he was only a few years older than children in sixth class.

## Activity

Using a KWL chart, ask what we know about Carlo and what we want to find out. Watch the following video on the life of Carlo Acutis: <https://bekids.mt/blessed-carlo-acutis/>. Brainstorm and discuss the lessons we can learn from Carlo's example.

## Additional activity

In November we remember the people we love who have gone before us. We miss them and we know that they have a very special place in our hearts. When we think of them, we remember the happy times we shared and the way they made us feel so loved. To help us remember those we love who have died, and to pray for them in heaven now, we will write the name or draw a picture of someone we love who has died on the sheet on the Senior Activity Page. This could be a family member, a friend, a neighbour or a pet. This can also be for those people who have no one to pray for them.

Decorate an old cardboard box (e.g. a tissue box) and place the names of those loved ones who have died in it. Explain to the children that this is our prayer box for November, and that each day we will take a few moments to pray silently for our loved ones, because in November, we remember.

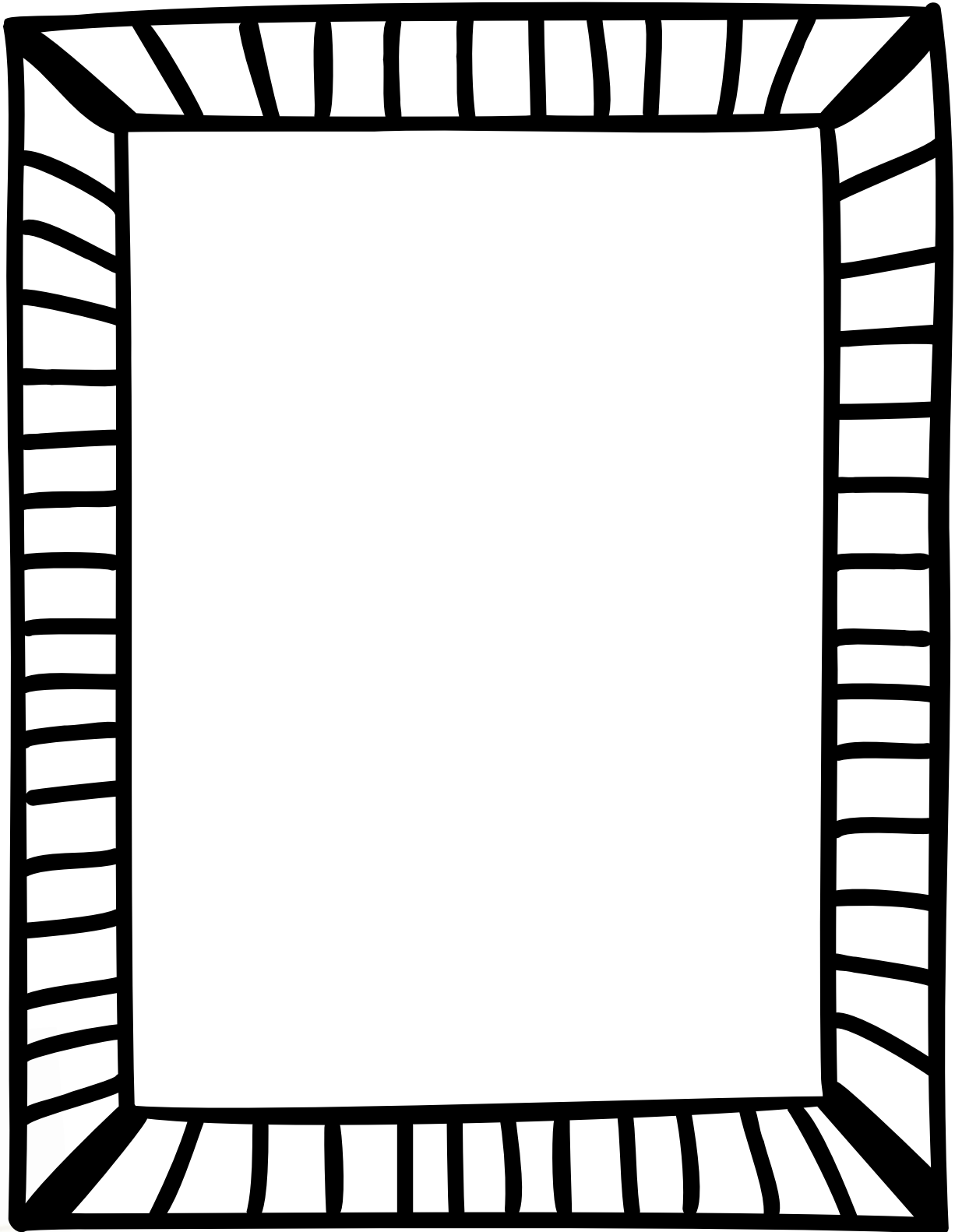
If there is an opportunity, bring the class to Mass during a school day in November. Ask the priest if the class can place the prayer box at the foot of the altar during the Mass.





## The Moment of November

### Senior Activity Page







## Prayer Service

This prayer service may be held in a classroom, school hall or prayer room. Set up a sacred space at the centre or front of the place of gathering with the following items:

- A bible
- A violet cloth commemorating those who have died
- A candle
- Holy water
- A crucifix
- Some remembrance drawings or the remembrance tree/box.

### Opening hymn

'This Little Light of Mine' (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – First Class/Primary 3*, p. 290) or  
'The Clouds' Veil' (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Fourth Class/Primary 6*, p. 417)

### Opening prayer

**Leader:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** We light a candle in our sacred space as a sign that God is with us and in us in our gathering as we remember all who have died.

**Leader:** We are gathered here as friends of Jesus and members of God's family. We remember all who have died and pray that they are now with God in heaven. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

### Reading

**Reader 1:** A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor 13:12).

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

The Word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

### Reflection

1. We cannot know the true beauty of God in this life.
2. God has promised that we will be with him for all time where we will see him face to face.
3. We believe that all who have died are invited to come home to God in heaven to live in everlasting love.





## Remembering those who have died

**Leader:** We will take time to pray for and remember those who have died: members of our families, friends, neighbours, all who are named on our remembrance tree and those who have no one to pray for them. The response to each prayer is: 'We remember them.'

**Reader 2:** When we watch the sun rise and set. (*Response*)

**Reader 3:** When we hear the wind blow. (*Response*)

**Reader 4:** When we see the beauty of nature. (*Response*)

**Reader 5:** When we look at the sky and feel the sun on our skin. (*Response*)

**Reader 6:** At the beginning of the year and when it ends. (*Response*)

**Reader 7:** Those who have died are now a part of us as we remember them. (*Response*)

**Leader:** We bring our prayers for and our memories of those who have died before God, our loving Father, as we say/sing: Our Father/Ár nAthair ...

## Closing prayer

**Leader:** We give praise and thanks to God for the gift of each person who has lived among us. We trust in God's great love for us as we follow in the footsteps of the saints who lived good and loving lives on earth. May all who have died Be happy with God in heaven. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

## Closing hymn

'Remember Them' (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual Senior Infants/Primary 2*, p. 268) or 'There are many rooms in my Father's house' (*Grow in Love Teacher's Manual – Third Class/Primary 5*, p. 350)

