



Catholic Schools Week 2024

Catholic Schools: Communities of Service

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21–27 JANUARY 2024

THIRD AND FOURTH CLASS/P5 AND P6





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">• Genesis 1:29-31• Mark 3:13-14
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>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

Consider

We all belong to a family and we all like to have friends. We can also be part of sports teams or clubs. In our Catholic school, we are called to help and be kind to each other, as each person should feel welcome, included and cared for. We are a community where we are all invited to live our lives to the full. We do this together, supporting and caring for each other in our thoughts, words and actions.

Today we celebrate the fact of God's love for each of us and how he made each of us special and unique, and that we are made to work with others to be the best we all can be.

Explore

Remind the children that our Catholic school should always be a kind and happy place for everyone. Ask the children for examples of what it means to be a good friend. Sometimes people find it hard to make friends.

Jesus shows us what it means to be a true friend. The story of Zacchaeus shows us how Jesus saw the goodness in a person that others didn't like because he had been mean to others. The story can be found on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VeVXCnxHrU>.

Discuss with the class why Zacchaeus wasn't liked by people, why people didn't see him as a good friend and how Jesus invited him to meet him.

Some people find it hard to make friends and get excluded from things. If we want to be good friends to each other, what lessons can Jesus teach us about how to treat others? In our Catholic school, how do we show what it means to be a good friend?

Activity

Complete the following worksheets on the story of Zacchaeus:

<https://navanroadparish.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Zacchaeus-Activity-sheet.pdf>.





Tuesday: Service in our School Community

Consider

Our Catholic school is a community. This means it is a group of people who work together, care for each other and try to live as Jesus taught us to. We are all different and we all add something unique to make our school community special.

Some of our pupils are born in Ireland, and others are born in other countries. We are very lucky that Ireland is a safe country that isn't facing horrible things like wars and conflicts. Some of our school communities have students who had to leave their homes due to things like war, famine and danger. In our Catholic school, everyone is welcome, and together we care for each other. That way, we live as Jesus taught us to.

Explore

Together as a class, watch the following video from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_P9huLYmSo. Discuss what this video was about, and what the children's thoughts and feelings are about it.

Our Catholic school is a place where we welcome everyone, no matter where they come from, what they believe or what colour their skin is. Some children might feel lonely or left out, or be going through a difficult time when they join their school. How can we use our talents and gifts to serve each person in our school community?

Brainstorm with the children about what actions could be taken or are already being done to make the school community more welcoming, e.g. playing with others on yard, paying compliments to people, celebrating when we succeed or others succeed, using kind words and actions in school.

Activity

Students can be invited to write three things they would feel worried about if they were refugees. The following YouTube video, 'My Name Is Not Refugee', could be used to help prompt ideas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9n1plse2K4>.

Each child can then be invited to draw and colour on an A4 page a poster of what they can do to serve their friends, both old and new, in our Catholic school community.



Wednesday: Service in our Family Community

Consider

We are learning this week about how our Catholic school is a special community, where we are called to serve one another as Christ taught us to. Our Grandparents are very special members of our family community. Today our Catholic school community celebrates all of our grandparents and the role they play in handing on the faith to their grandchildren and in supporting the community of faith at home and in the parish. We are called to serve them as they have served and cared for us over the years.

Explore



Words of Pope Francis

Let us salute grandparents. Young people salute their grandparents with great affection and they thank them for the ongoing witness of their wisdom.

(Rio de Janeiro, 26 July 2013)

Hope and a future presuppose memory. The memory of our elderly people sustains us as we journey on.

(Message to participants in the 47th social week of Italian Catholics, 2013)

Our grandparents are a blessing in our lives. Grandparents take care of us as we grow older and teach us many important lessons in life. They have seen and experienced many changes in our world, both good and bad.

Ask the children what kinds of things their grandparents have taught them. Prompts such as care, generosity, faith, love and prayer can help children to name the unique experiences and lessons they have learned from their grandparents.

Discuss the ways that grandparents show their love for us and also the ways that we can show love and care for our grandparents.



Activities

(Note: Teachers should use their discretion in relation to these activities if pupils have recently lost grandparents or are not in contact with grandparents. All classes can engage with the following activities at different levels. Choose an activity to suit your class.)

Portrait of Granny and/or Grandad and me:

Ask the children to draw and colour a portrait of themselves and their grandparent or grandparents, focusing on a happy time they shared.

Thank you card:

Encourage the children to make a thank you card for their grandparents with a focus on the positive influence grandparents have had on their lives. Cards can be given to the grandparents or posted to them if they live far away.

A special memory:

Encourage the children to think of a time when their grandparents shared something special with them. Invite them to write the memory down so that they can share it with their grandparents.





Thursday: Service in our Local Community

Consider

In all the universe and in all of the explorations of science, we live on the only planet that seems to be suitable for human life. The picture of the 'pale blue dot' (<https://science.nasa.gov/resource/voyager-is-pale-blue-dot/>) shows Earth from six billion kilometres away. The picture reminds us that our world is precious and needs to be protected. We see the effects of climate change every day on the news and on social media and we are the only ones that can work together to help protect the environment around us.

In our Catholic school, we are reminded that when humans cause pollution through greed and wastefulness, the world around us suffers. In his letter *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis tells us the painful truths that 'the earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth'. How does our Catholic school serve our local community, especially in working to protect our environment?

Explore

As a class, watch the following David Attenborough video about the wonderful world we live in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auSo1MyWf8g>. Ask the children what images in the video they liked the most and why. Discuss what people can do to make sure the world can stay as wonderful as it is. The world is part of God's creation and it is important that we keep the world clean and healthy.





Read the following passage from Genesis 1:29-31:

God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

God saw that creation was very good. People are called to care for our common home by our actions. This means that we should not litter and throw things away when they can be recycled. We should not waste water and electricity. Brainstorm what the classes in our school can do to make sure that we protect creation.

Activity

First, watch the following video about Pope Francis' letter on caring for our common home, *Laudato Si'*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFKnZP7ldLk>.

Brainstorm ways our Catholic school can care for and serve our local community and environment. As a class, decide on a weekly target that will help to keep our home, school and parish a clean and happy place (e.g., a litter pick in the local community, encouraging those who can to walk or use bikes to come to school where it is safe and appropriate). At the end of term and after achieving several targets, the children can write a letter to Pope Francis explaining the ways they worked towards serving their local community and caring for their common home. The address for postcards is: His Holiness Pope Francis, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City.





Friday: Service in our Faith Community

Consider

Our Catholic School is a place where we come together to learn many things, including about Jesus and his Church. Some men and women serve our faith community in special roles that we call religious life. We have a special name for being called to serve Jesus as priests, nuns and monks: vocation.

Explore

Some people say that they felt a calling or a vocation to their job. Nurses, teachers and SNAs are examples of people you might say have a vocation to their job. In the Church, vocation has a special meaning.

Read Matthew 3:13-14 to the class:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptised by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?'

Explain that Jesus appointed followers to continue his mission to proclaim the Good News of God's love and mercy. We might know of some people who responded to that call in our own faith community. Brainstorm on questions such as:

- Are there nuns or monks in our parish?
- Are there priests who say Mass in our parish?
- Who gives us our first Holy Communion or confirmation?
- What made these people want to live the special life of priesthood/sisterhood?

Activity

Explore this video made by the Sacred Heart of Jesus Sisters to explain the idea of vocations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLS2_oXP82c.

Invite the local priest or religious sister or brother in to the classroom. Discuss with the class prior to their arrival what kind of questions they could ask the invited person about their vocation and share these questions with the priest, sister or brother in advance. Questions might include:

- When did you decide you wanted to be a priest/nun/brother?
- What do you do if you feel you have a calling from God to do something with your life?
- What does vocation mean to you?
- What do you like about being a priest/nun/brother?
- What don't you like about being a priest/nun/brother?