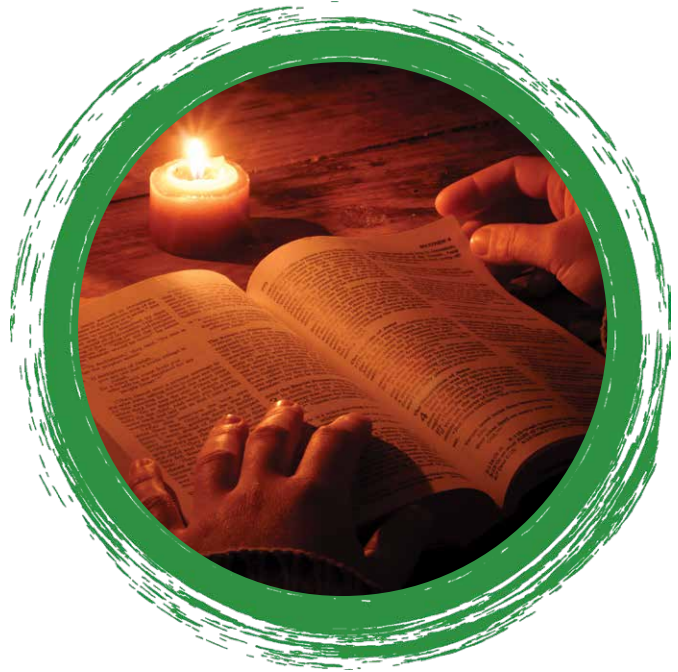




November 2024: The Month of the Holy Souls

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2025 is *Catholic Schools: Alive in Christ*. As we look forward to celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2025, the month of November offers us a moment to remember and pray for the Holy Souls. In November we remember and pray for those who died hoping in the promise of the resurrection. We also pray for the happy repose of the souls of all of our loved ones who have gone before us. During the hustle and bustle of school life, this resource gives schools the time and space to remember that the sorrow of death will give way to Christ's promise of eternal life with God.



'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'
(Jn 11:25-26)

For Parishes

This moment can be situated within the liturgical themes of November and the Masses/liturgies around the feast of All Souls 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>Strand: Christian Faith Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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).• When we die we go home to God (CCC, 1020). <p>Strand: Liturgy and Prayer Strand Unit: Additional Prayers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayer for the dead/for those who are sick and dying.	<p>Strand: Christian Faith Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus promised new life here on earth and after we die.• We believe that when we die God calls us to heaven (CCC, 1011).• 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). <p>Strand: Liturgy and Prayer Strand Unit: Liturgical Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the feast of All Souls the Church remembers those who have died and prays for them.
LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
<p>Strand: Christian Faith Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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).• 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).• 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).• '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).• Christians believe that when they die they shall be with Christ, and they shall see God (1 Cor 13:12).	<p>Strand: Christian Faith Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All that is good in our present world will survive in the kingdom of heaven.• Every act of kindness, generosity and service contributes to the building of the kingdom.• 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).• 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).• 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).• The Church prays for the salvation of everyone (CCC, 1058).• Catholics pray for the souls in purgatory on All Souls' Day and all through the year.• The Church commends the dead to God's mercy and offers her prayers, especially the Eucharist.



Junior Lesson

Junior Infants–Second Class (P1–P4)

Teacher's Notes

The Moment of November reminds us that through the promise of resurrection, we come to new life in Christ. God's love is so great that not even death cannot overcome it.

Jesus promises that all who believe in him will return home to him in heaven when they die. Those we love who have died are now in heaven with Jesus and we can pray for them and to them.

Throughout the month of November, and on the feast of All Saints and feast of All Souls (1 and 2 November), we remember family and friends who have gone before us to eternal life with God.

Saints are people just like us. They lived good lives, cared for others, prayed and tried to make the world a better place. We know about St Patrick and St Brigid. Maybe our school or local GAA club is named after a saint. Who are the saints of today? Who are the people who show us what the kingdom of God looks like? Are they famous or are they people we see in our own lives?



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.

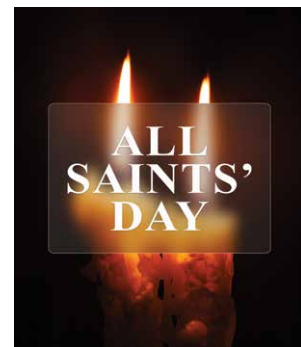
This YouTube video of Lego characters explains the origins of Halloween and All Hallow's Eve: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy66_pgeORA.

Consider

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

1. What is a saint?
2. Do we know any saints?
3. Does anyone know why we celebrate Halloween on 31 October?

(It is the day before All Saints' Day) If the children are not sure, give them a hint by writing 'All Hallow's Eve' on the board.)





Explore

Explain the reason for celebrating the feast of All Saints: the first of November is a special day in the Church called the feast of All Saints. It is the day the Church prays for all those people who have died and are now with God in heaven. We go to Mass and remember that all these holy people are happy with God.

Everyone who has lived and died in Jesus' love is a saint. Some of these people are members of our family, our friends and our neighbours. We do not know the names of all the saints. Some of these people were so much like Jesus that after they died, the Church said they were definitely in heaven. Do you know the names of some of these saints? (Answers will vary.)

Help the children understand that we are all saints in the making. Saints are people who love Jesus and share his love with others. We can all live like the saints even while we are still on earth. Who can think of one way to live like a saint at home? At school? In your 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.

Activity

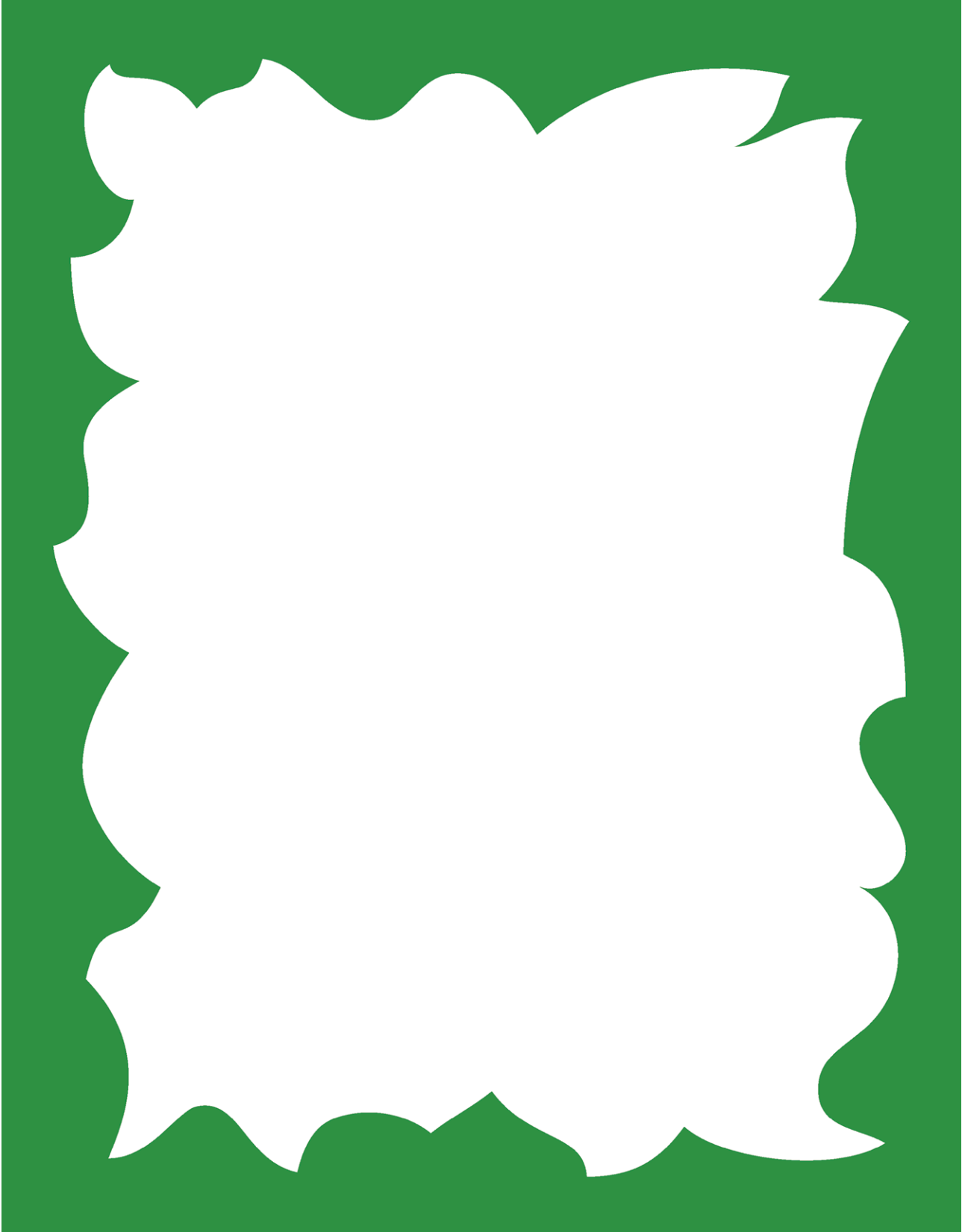
In November, we remember the people we love who have gone before us. To help us remember those we love who have died, and illuminate our hope that they are now in heaven with God, we will write their name or draw a picture of them on the sheet on the Junior Activity Page (p. 5). This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or a pet. It can also be for those people who have no one to pray for them.

Display these sheets in the class prayer space.



The Moment of November

Junior Activity Page





Senior Lesson

Third Class–Sixth Class (P5–P7)

Teacher's Notes

The Moment of November focuses on how we as followers of Jesus are communities of hope. We live in the hope of the resurrection, that those that have gone before us will be brought into the new and eternal life with God that Jesus promises.

Jesus tells us that all who believe in him will return home to him in heaven when they die. Those we love who have died are now in heaven with Jesus, and we can pray for them and to them.

Throughout the month of November and on the feast of All Souls (2 November), we remember family and friends who have returned home to heaven. We also remember those who have no one to pray for them.

Sometimes it can be difficult to live with this hope, especially when someone we love passes away. As Christians, we can see the truth of the promise in the miracle of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead. As well as examining this miracle, this lesson will focus on how we can remember loved ones who have died, especially during the month of November.

In many ways our lives are like the seasons of the beautiful world God created for us. We are young and growing in the spring of our lives, blossoming in the summer and growing older and maturing in the autumn. The Bible tells us, 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven' (Eccl 3:1).



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.

Consider

Begin the class with a brief discussion around what we as Christians believe happens after we die or someone we love dies. Where do we go? What happens at a funeral?

Note: 'We believe that: when we die, God calls us to heaven' (CCC, 1011); 'God's plan is that when we die we will live on with God, Jesus, Mary, the angels and saints in heaven' (CCC, 1024).

Whether it is a member of our family, a friend or even a pet, it can be very difficult when someone we love dies. It is completely normal to feel sad, angry, lonely or confused after we lose someone.

Jesus promises that all who believe in him will return home to him in heaven when they die. Those we love who have died are now in heaven with Jesus and we can pray for them and to them.

Throughout the month of November and on the feast of All Souls (2 November), we remember family and friends who have returned home to heaven.



Explore

We can learn a lot about Jesus' promise from the miracle of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mk 5:35-43):

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. 'Your daughter is dead,' they said. 'Why bother the teacher anymore?'

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, '*Talitha kum!*' (which means 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!'). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Watch an animation of the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UQ8la6HG_o.



Activity

Write an account of the miracle as if you were present or report the miracle for *The Galilee Gazette* on the Senior Activity Page (p. 8).

Additional Activity

Take some time to think/talk about people you love who have died. This could be a family member, a friend or even a pet. The children can draw a picture or write the name of someone they want to remember. Place these drawings and names in a box at the sacred space in the classroom.

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 box of names at the foot of the altar during the Mass.



Prayer Service

This prayer service could be held in a classroom, school hall or prayer room. Alternative options include streaming the prayer service from one classroom to the rest of the school or each class hosting their own prayer service.

Prayer Space Items

- A remembrance tree/book/box
- A Bible/Children's Bible
- A table
- A white tablecloth
- A candle
- Holy water
- A crucifix

Leader: Good morning, everyone. Today, we come together as a school to remember and to pray for all of our family members, friends, relations and neighbours who have died. We also pray for those who have no one to pray for them. We remember them especially during this month of November as we remember the promise of the resurrection, that every tear shall be wiped away. We know that God's love is greater than death, and we pray that those who have died are now resting gently in the arms of God.

We begin our prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Song: I Watch the Sunrise (or any appropriate hymn)

Leader: Today we remember those who have passed away and place our prayer box on our November altar. Jesus teaches us that God's love is greater than death. We now listen to God's Word.

Reading: A reading from the prophet Isaiah (25:6-9):

On this mountain the lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples a feast of rich food ... On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations; he will destroy death for ever.

The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek; he will take away his people's shame everywhere on earth, for the Lord has said so.

That day, it will be said: 'See, this is our God in whom we hoped for salvation; the Lord is the one in whom we hoped. We exult and we rejoice that he has saved us.'

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.



Leader: Together, we pray for those who have died. The response to each prayer is 'May the light of Christ shine on them.'

All: May the light of Christ shine on them.

Reader 1: For all our family members and friends who have died. (Response)

Reader 2: For all past teachers and staff of this school who have died. (Response)

Reader 3: For all those in our parish and community who have died during the past year. (Response)

Reader 4: For those who have died and have no one to remember them. (Response)

Reader 5: For all those who we miss and think of each day. (Response)

Reader 6: For all those whose names are included on our November prayer box. (Response)

Leader: We know that Jesus prayed constantly to his father in heaven. He asked us to pray to God the Father too. And so, as Jesus taught us, we dare to say:

All: Our Father/*Ár nAthair* ...

Leader: Loving God, we thank you for the lives of our loved ones who have died. We remember with happiness the love and joy they brought to our lives. We ask you to care for those who are missing them at this time, and bless them with hope in the promise of the resurrection. May we one day be reunited with them in heaven, where every tear will be wiped away. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Reader 7: May the Lord support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done! Then in his mercy, may he give us a safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at last.

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

All: Amen.

Closing Song: My Shepherd is the Lord (or another suitable hymn)