



## Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2025 in Your Parish

Catholic Schools Week 2025 will be celebrated from Sunday, 19 January, to Saturday, 25 January, with the theme of *Catholic Schools: Alive in Christ*. We pray for and support our local Catholic schools so that, together with us, the parish community, they will be alive with the joy and hope that is Christ. Jesus Christ calls us together as a living faith community so that our schools, parish and families may support and animate one another.

Catholic schools are intrinsically connected with the local parish community, and each of these actively serves the other. It is important to acknowledge and celebrate the living connection that exists between school and parish during Catholic Schools Week. Catholic Schools Week provides an opportunity for both communities to pray for one another and with one another. Some of the ideas below may aid in celebrating Catholic Schools Week in your parish.

### Celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday, 19 January (2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time)

The parish liturgy group, or another nominated parish representative, might consult with the local schools regarding possible ways of participating in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, perhaps by providing music and singing during the celebration, reading the prayer of the faithful, etc.

The second reading, from 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, speaks of the variety of gifts given to us by the Spirit. The gospel reading is a foretelling of the Eucharistic celebration in the account of the Wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-11).

Both readings provide inspiration for the themes of thanksgiving, the abundance of gifts given to us by the Spirit, the call to change so that we become more alive in Christ, the inclusive nature of Christ, the call to be Christian and the value of each person and each gift. This marries well with the *educare* purpose at the core of our schools: to bring out what is within, to bring out the divine qualities of the soul.



## The Eucharistic Celebration

### Words of Welcome

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2025 is ***Catholic Schools: Alive in Christ***. Our Catholic schools are places where faith is lived in service to one another in a spirit of inclusion, joy, hope and belief in one another as gifts from God. We welcome all present who represent our parish schools and thank God for the gift of the schools within the parish community.

### Entrance Procession

Set up a receiving space for the symbols presented in procession with a green cloth representing Ordinary Time and the ever-growing life in the school community.

Symbols representative of service highlighted in Catholic Schools Week might be:

- A school crest.
- A picture of a circle of friends.
- A religious education textbook as a cornerstone in learning about gospel values and service.
- A green school flag or a plant representing service to the care of the environment.
- A crucifix representing Christ's sacrifice for us and our call to make sacrifice as we aim to become more like Christ.

### Music and Song

A school group or an individual from the school might sing one of the hymns at the entrance or at the presentation of gifts.

### Liturgy of the Word

The readings, prayer of the faithful, etc., for the second Sunday in Ordinary Time can be found in the December/January edition of *Intercom*. Tá siad le fáil as Gaeilge san áit céanna.

As this is the parish celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, it is appropriate that the usual Minister of the Word scheduled to read does so. This gives a visible sign of the Sunday Eucharist as a place where we are all nourished to go back to our communities of home and school and continue to announce the gospel. Include a prayer of the faithful for Catholic schools and their work. Some young people might be invited to compose and read these prayers.

### Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts

Consider inviting representatives from the three communities of home, school and parish to prepare the altar table and to present the gifts of bread and wine. This will be a visible reminder of the need for all three groups to work together so that we might all witness to the gospel values that we profess as members of the Church.

### Welcome

Members of the school community might welcome members of the congregation as they enter and perhaps distribute the Mass leaflets or hymn sheets. Person to person contact is the foundation of all communities, including the parish.



## Parish Newsletter

Ensure that Catholic Schools Week is brought to the attention of the wider community by placing a note in the parish newsletter. Include specific public activities planned in your parish. Sample text might read as follows:

Sunday, 19 January, marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2025. During this week we aim to celebrate the unique contribution that Catholic schools make to their communities. This year's theme is ***Catholic Schools: Alive in Christ***. Our parish is joining in the celebrations by ...

## Display Area

Consider working with the school to create a display showing the unique work and identity of each parish school.

## Pastoral Council

Bring Catholic Schools Week to the attention of the pastoral council and ask them how the parish might best celebrate it this year. Consider using the extract 'Catholic Schools: Building Community' from *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis* to enable a discussion about the role of Catholic schools and how they might be better supported by the faith community. Where applicable, the chaplain/parish representative might take the opportunity this week to visit as many classrooms as they can, perhaps highlighting opportunities for young people, families and schools to connect actively in the parish.

