



Catholic Schools Week 2026

Catholic Schools: Normal Lives, Called to Holiness

18–24 January 2026

First and Second Class/P3 and P4



Strand Units – Level 2

LITURGY AND PRAYER	CHRISTIAN MORALITY
Strand Unit: Prayer • When people pray, they talk and listen to God and get to know and love God better. (<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i>, 139; <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> [CCC], 2653). • God calls us to prayer and we respond (<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>, 18; CCC, 2567). • God always hears our prayers.	Strand Unit: Social Teaching of the Church • I can use my gifts to help others. • I can be fair and just (CCC, 1944–5, 2255, 2319). • I can be honest, truthful and kind (<i>Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education</i>, 3b). • I can help people who are poor and people who are hungry.
CHRISTIAN FAITH	
Strand Unit: Mystery of the Church • The Saints: God's special friends who are part of the family of the Church in heaven (CCC, 828, 956–7, 960–2, 1195, 2013, 2030, 2683, 2692). St Patrick, St Brigid, St Columba (Colum cille). • 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.	Strand Unit: Mystery of Jesus Christ • Jesus helped the sick (Lk 17:11–19). • Jesus loved and cared for the poor (Jn 6:1–13).



Monday: Called to Holiness through Prayer

Consider

Prayer is how we speak and listen to God. It helps us grow closer to him and become holy. Jesus prayed often and taught his disciples the 'Our Father'. When we pray, we are called to holiness, as we can talk to God and listen to God.



Explore

Share the story of Jesus teaching the 'Our Father' using the following YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml9d05f4oxk>

Explain to the children: 'Jesus shows us that prayer is talking to God, saying thank you, asking for help, and listening.'

Discuss: 'When do you pray? What prayers do you know? What do you say to God when you pray?'



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Activity

Prayer Journal: Have each child make a 'Prayer Journal' by folding an A4 page. On the front, they can draw themselves praying. Inside, they can write or draw one thing they want to pray about this week. This journal can be kept in their religious education copybook.

Gather in Prayer: Quietly light a candle, pray the 'Our Father' together, and invite the children to offer their prayer silently.



Tuesday: Called to Holiness through Love and Friendship

Consider

To be a friend is to support, care for and show mercy to one another. Jesus taught us how to live this way in how he lived his own life. Jesus calls his disciples (his friends) to follow him in love and friendship.



Explore

1. Gather the children in a circle with a cross or holy picture in the centre.
2. Say: 'God calls us to be holy. That means to love God and to love one another. One way we show this is through love and friendship.'
3. Ask the students:
 - 'Who are your friends?'
 - 'How do we show our friends that we care about them?'
4. Affirm the children's answers and explain that Jesus shows us how to be a good friend.
5. Read the short, simple story from the gospels of Jesus and his friends (see text to the right), highlighting that Jesus loved his friends and they followed him.
6. Show a picture of Jesus with his friends.
7. Explain: 'Jesus teaches us to love one another, to share and to be kind. When we do this, we are being holy.'
8. Quick think-pair-share: 'What is one kind thing you could do for a friend today?'

Jesus and His Friends

One day, Jesus was walking by the sea. He saw two brothers, Peter and Andrew. They were fishing with their nets. Jesus said to them, 'Come, follow me.' At once, they left their nets and went with Jesus. Then Jesus saw two more brothers, James and John. He called them too. They also left their boat and followed him. Jesus loved his friends, and they stayed close to him. They learned from him how to love God and one another.

(Adapted from Matthew 4:18-22.)



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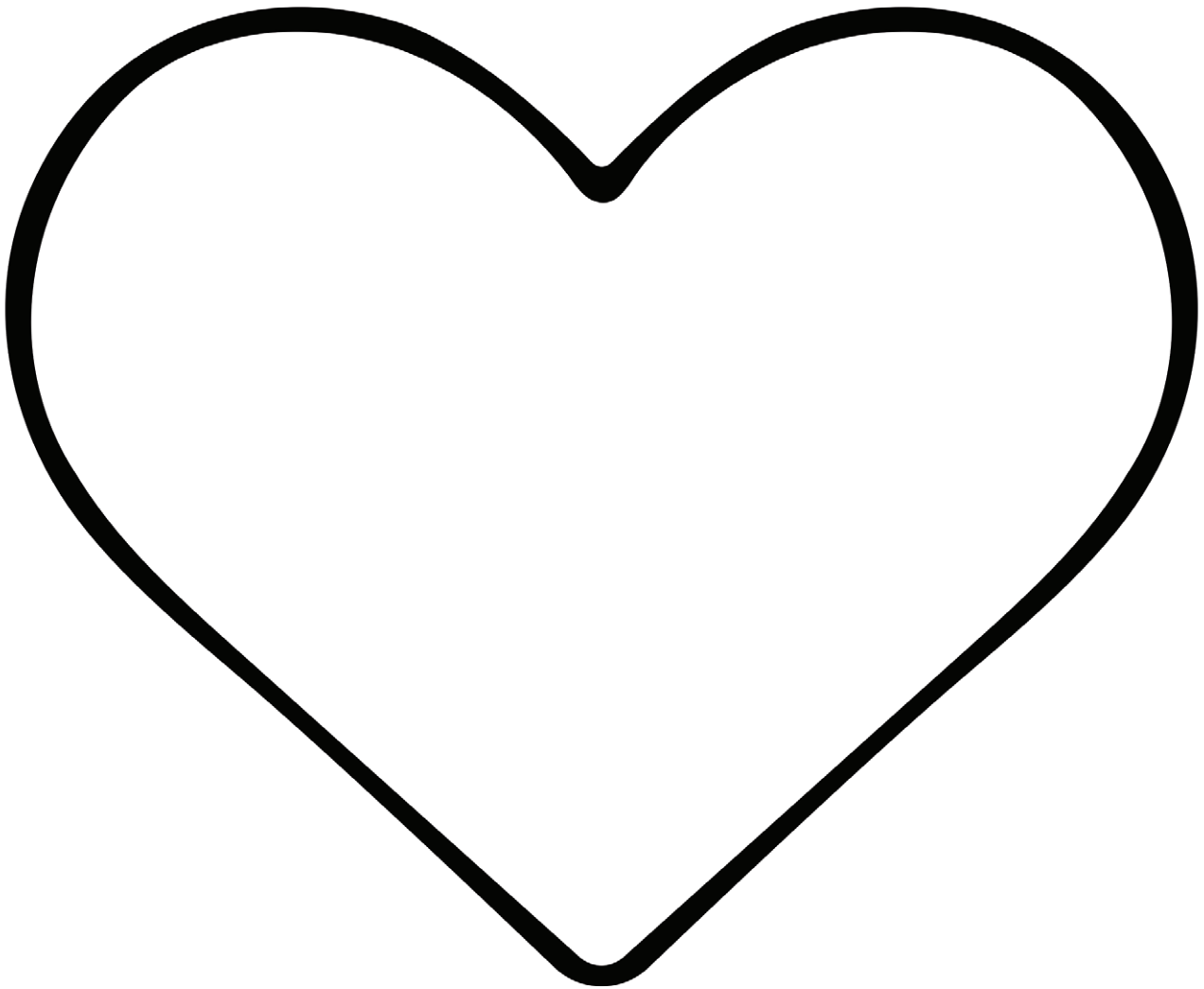
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Activity

1. Give each child a copy of the activity sheet below with the heart outline.
2. Ask them to draw or colour inside the heart a time they were a good friend.
3. Cut out and collect the hearts and place them on the sacred space.
4. End with a short prayer together: 'Thank you, Jesus, for my friends. Help me to love others as you love me. Amen.'



We are called to Holiness through Love and Friendship





Wednesday: Called to Holiness in Family Life (Grandparents' Day)

Consider

We are learning this week about how we are all called to holiness in our lives, to live a certain way and to be like Christ in our thoughts, words and actions. This includes in our family life. Our grandparents are very special members of our family who can show us what living a holy life looks like. On this Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week, we celebrate and remember the important role our grandparents play in our lives, caring for us, supporting and encouraging us to achieve our dreams and teaching us what holiness can look like in our lives. When we show our love, appreciation and care for our grandparents in our lives, we live holier lives.



Explore

Our grandparents are a blessing in our lives. In his message for the fifth World Day of Prayer for Grandparents, on 27 July 2025, Pope Francis told us:

How often our grandparents have been for us examples of faith and devotion, civic virtue and social commitment, memory and perseverance amid trials! The precious legacy that they have handed down to us with hope and love will always be a source of gratitude and a summons to perseverance.

Grandparents are such a precious gift in our lives. They care for us, support us and love us. They help us to become all we can be, encourage us and teach us so many important lessons.

Ask the children: What kinds of things do your grandparents teach you? Children can discuss this in pairs or small groups. Write their contributions on the whiteboard, with examples of words children associate with their grandparents.



Invite the children to pray Pope Francis' prayer for grandparents.

Dear Grandmother, Dear Grandfather,
May our Lord Jesus Christ be always close to you.
We thank you for all you have contributed to life
and for the gifts you continue to give to your families
and to our community.
We pray that your closeness to God will bring you
the health and the strength you need to continue
your journey on the road of life.
May you continue to enjoy your life, your work,
and your prayers.
May your memories always be happy and may you
achieve your dreams for the future.
One day we will all be united in God's kingdom,
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Activity

Select any one or more of the activities below to celebrate Grandparents' Day. 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: Encourage the children to draw and colour a portrait of them 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. Give the card to grandparents, or if they live far away, why not post it?

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.

Prayer

Write a prayer of thanksgiving for your grandparents.

Project

In linking with the SESE history curriculum, encourage the children to research one of their grandparents by surveying their grandparent where possible. If they cannot talk to their grandparent for whatever reason, they can interview their parents or relatives and find out details about their grandparent's life. Perhaps they can locate pictures of their grandparent, be it as a child, at their wedding or a photo of them with their grandchild. The children can then create a poster celebrating the unique contribution their grandparent has made to their life and to their family life.



Thursday: Called to Holiness through Courage and Service

Consider

There are many ways to be holy. Holiness includes service (helping others with love) and courage (being brave when it is difficult). We see examples of holiness in our lives and in role models like Brother Kevin Crowley. As he bravely followed the example of Christ, we too can be holy, serving others through kindness and mercy in our thoughts, words and actions.



Explore

Tell the story of the late Brother Kevin Crowley, who served the homeless for many years in Dublin. Explain in simple words: 'Brother Kevin showed holiness by giving food, care and kindness to people in need. He gave his entire life to serve others, just as Jesus taught us.'

The following YouTube clips highlight Brother Kevin's holiness in how he served the poor, the hungry and the homeless of Dublin.

Brother Kevin retires from role at Capuchin Centre:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnBSIOi7Uvg>

'I will carry the joys and the sorrows of the homeless' – Brother Kevin gets farewell at Capuchin Centre:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fgs4QUhkiXQ>

Ask the class: 'In what little ways can we serve others at home, in school, or in the playground?'



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Activity

Helping Hands: Have each child trace their hand on a sheet of paper. Inside, they can draw or write one way they can serve (e.g. tidying, sharing, helping at home).

End with a short prayer: 'Jesus, help us to be brave and to serve others with love.'



Friday: Called to Holiness through Joy and Mission

Consider

Mission means sharing the Good News of Jesus. We are called to do this joyfully, just like the women at the tomb who told the disciples that Jesus is alive. We joyfully proclaim the Good News that the kingdom of God is here, where we are called to live justly and serve one another joyfully. It is our mission to bring about this kingdom each day. St Carlo Acutis is an important example of being called to holiness through joy and mission.



Explore

St Carlo Acutis was made a saint last year. Ask questions such as:

- 'What is a saint?'
- 'Do we know any saints?'
- 'Do you think we can be saints?'

Play the St Carlo Acutis' Super Mission! video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9PHighnhk44

Discuss how the students can show holiness in their thoughts, words and actions.

Activity

Friendship Chain: Give each child a strip of coloured paper. On it, they can write or draw one way to show love and friendship (e.g. sharing, helping, kind words). Link the strips to form a class 'Friendship Chain' to display.

End with a short prayer: 'Jesus, help us to love our friends as you loved your friends. Help us to live as St Carlo Acutis did, with holiness and joy.'