



Catholic Schools Week 2026

Catholic Schools: Normal Lives, Called to Holiness

18–24 January 2026

Fifth and Sixth Class/P7



Strand Units – Level 4

LITURGY AND PRAYER	CHRISTIAN MORALITY
Prayer • Prayer is a personal relationship with God (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> [CCC], 2558, 2565). • Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God (CCC, 2559, 2562–3). • Contemplative prayer is a prayer of silent love being in God's presence. • Our attitudes and actions are influenced by praying (CCC, 2725).	Human Freedom and Responsibility • God calls us and we are free to respond (vocation). God's Graceful Presence and Assistance • Christians do good because it is right and out of love for Jesus (CCC, 1828). • The values and teachings of Jesus can help us to make good choices. Social Teaching of the Church • Jesus teaches his followers to have respect, tolerance and compassion.
CHRISTIAN FAITH	
Mystery of God • God's love is constant, unconditional and everlasting (Is 54:8; Jer 31:3; CCC, 220). • God is present to our inmost being: 'In him we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28; CCC 300). Eternal Life • 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.	Mystery of the Church/Kingdom • The Church declares certain people as saints because of their great holiness, because it is certain they are in heaven and because they are models of holiness for us (CCC, 2683). • Saints: explore St Brigid, St Patrick, St Vincent De Paul and a selection from the following or a similar list: St Catherine of Siena, St Teresa of Ávila, St Joan of Arc, St Benedict (patron of Europe), St Peter, St Paul, St Maximilian Kolbe, St Padre Pio, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), as well as other people who have shown Christian values at work, e.g. Rosa Parks, Dorothy Day, Nano Nagle, local holy people/saints.



Monday: Called to Holiness through Prayer

‘Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.’ (Luke 11:9)

Consider

Holiness begins with a relationship with God. Children will learn that prayer is the lifeblood of that relationship – from silent moments to joyful praise, from formal prayers to personal words shared with Jesus. Prayer can help in times of difficulty, still our minds and deepen our friendship with God. Prayer is an expression of our faith. Prayer is also a form of spiritual resilience and connection to God, especially in times of stress or anxiety. Through prayer we spend time with God and, in doing so, we deepen our relationship and come to realise that God is always with us.



Explore

1. What do you think the word ‘faith’ means?
2. Can you think of a time when you believed in something you couldn’t see or fully understand? How did that feel?
3. Why do you think faith is important in our lives?
4. What does it mean to have faith in God?
5. Can you think of a Bible story where someone showed strong faith in God? What can we learn from their example?
6. How do you show your faith in God in your daily life? (Prayer/showing kindness/sharing, etc.)
7. When do you pray? Who or what do you pray for?
8. Can you think of someone in your life who shows strong faith? What do they do that shows their belief in God?
9. When you pray, how does it help your faith to grow? (We can talk to God. This helps us build our friendship with God.)
10. What helps your faith grow stronger – people, prayer, reading the Bible, or something else?



Activity

(You may wish to play some gentle instrumental music in the background during this exercise.)

When we are troubled or concerned, our thoughts can feel like they are racing through our heads. At times like this, we can turn to God, and through prayer, we can find comfort and strength.

In our activity today we are going to explore a form of prayer called Taizé Prayer. Before we start we need to make a glitter jar.

You will need:

- 1 small clear jar
- Water
- Glitter

Fill the jar until it is almost full. Add a small amount of glitter to the water. Put the lid back on and make sure it doesn't leak. When it is time to pray shake the jar and then place it on the table in front of you.

When we are worried, our thoughts can be like the glitter in the jar after we shake it, racing around and all mixed up. When we feel like this, we can turn to God in prayer.

First of all, we will still our bodies. Settle into your seat and place both feet on the ground and your hands on your knees or on the table in front of you. Take a deep breath.

Now we will try and still our minds. Close your eyes. It is hard to stop thoughts popping into our heads. They are like the glitter in the jar floating around. To help still our minds we are going to give it something to focus on. Today we are going to use a phrase to remind us that God is with us. The phrase is: 'O Lord, hear my prayer.'

Invite the class to repeat the phrase together. Continue to repeat the phrase a number of times slowly and gently. Allow the class to sit quietly for a while repeating the phrase.



Tuesday: Called to Holiness through Love and Friendship

‘Make me to know your ways, Lord; teach me your paths.’ (Psalm 25:4)

Consider

Children understand how faith moves us to acts of love and witness in daily life and during crises (e.g. pandemics), living holiness through relationships, kindness, and responding to others’ needs with courage and compassion.



Explore

Use the following questions to have a class discussion around modern acts of service and sacrifice:

- What does it mean to serve others in today’s world? Can you give examples of people who help others in your community?
- Who do you think makes sacrifices for others today (e.g., parents, nurses, firefighters, missionaries)? What do they give up to help others?
- How can children your age show service or make small sacrifices for others? What are some ways you can help at home, at school or in your parish?
- Can you think of someone in your life or in the news who has done something brave or kind for others? Why do you think they chose to act that way?
- How do acts of service and sacrifice show love, like Jesus showed love? Can you think of a time when Jesus served or sacrificed for others in the Bible?
- Why do you think our faith encourages us to serve and help others, even when it’s hard? How can prayer and God help us be strong enough to serve others?



Story

Share the following story about St Maximilian Kolbe and his self-sacrifice in Auschwitz. He gave up his life to save another prisoner during World War II. His love and courage came from his deep faith in Jesus.

During World War II, a kind and brave priest named Maximilian Kolbe was taken to Auschwitz, a prison camp in Poland. Even though he was surrounded by sadness, hunger, and fear, Fr Kolbe never lost his faith in God or his love for others.

Fr Kolbe spent his days in the camp praying and comforting those around him. He reminded people that even in the worst places, God was with them.

One day, a prisoner had escaped, and as punishment, the guards chose ten men to die in his place. One of the chosen men cried out, 'My wife! My children!' Everyone stood in silence.

Then, something extraordinary happened. Fr Kolbe stepped forward and said, 'I will take his place. I have no wife or children. Let me go instead.' The guards were shocked, but they agreed.

Fr Kolbe was taken with the others to a small underground cell. They had no food or water. After many days, Fr Kolbe was the only one left alive. He was weak, but his spirit was strong. Finally, on 14 August 1941, he gave his life completely, just as Jesus did for us.

Class Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Fr Maximilian Kolbe was able to stay kind, hopeful and full of faith even in such a terrible place like Auschwitz? Encourage reflection on how faith gives us strength and purpose, even in hardship.
2. Fr Kolbe offered to die in place of another man. What do you think gave him the courage to do something so loving and brave? Encourage the children to consider how deep faith can inspire extraordinary acts of love.
3. How can we show love, kindness and courage in our own lives – at school, at home, or during hard times?
4. Fr Kolbe comforted others and reminded them that God was still with them. Why is it important to remind others of God's love, especially during difficult times?
5. What does this story teach us about living a holy life – not just through prayer, but through our actions toward others?

Activity

'Thank You' Prayer: Write a prayer for someone who helped others during hard times (e.g., doctors, carers, family).

Prayer Starters:

- Lord Jesus, I pray for ...
- Jesus, I ask that you ...
- Please bless ...
- God, thank you for ...



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

'Faith, hope, and love ... the greatest of these is love.' (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Consider

Children appreciate the importance of intergenerational faith and give thanks for the love and witness of grandparents. Holiness passed on through generations, love as a reflection of God's presence in family.



Explore

1. One special memory I have with my grandparent(s).
2. One thing I've learned about faith from them.



Activity Options

Choose one of the following activities:

1. Write a letter to your grandparent(s) to say thank you and to show your love.
2. Interview a grandparent (or older family member). Ask them 3–5 questions from this list and write their answers:
 - What school did you go to?
 - What games did you play?
 - What subjects do you remember doing at school?
 - What was your favourite subject? Why?
 - What do you remember about your Communion/Confirmation?
 - What was your favourite prayer as a child?
3. Write a short prayer for your grandparents: 'Dear God, thank you for ...'



Thursday: Called to Holiness through Courage and Service

‘The Lord is close to the broken-hearted.’ (Psalm 34:18)

Consider

Faith provides strength and courage in times of hardship. Faith also motivates us to service. We can respond to challenges with courage and faith and by trusting in God’s presence during grief and loss.



Explore

- Explore the idea of ‘putting on a brave face’ during tough times.
- What is one time you had to be brave or put on a ‘brave face’?
- What helped you feel better or hopeful again?
- Discuss the concept of loss during the lockdown. (Loss of meeting friends, family, freedom to go places, etc.)
- Did you know you can talk to God at any time – even when you’re sad, scared or worried? How do you think that could help?
- What would you say to God in a prayer when you’re feeling upset or confused?
- Have you ever felt God helping you feel calm, safe or brave inside your heart? What was that like?

Activity

You can talk to God any time, especially when you’re sad or worried. On the sheet provided, write a short prayer asking God for strength, peace, or comfort. When everyone is finished writing and decorating their prayer, invite the children to fold their page and place it in a box or envelope at the classroom’s sacred space.



My Prayer to God



Friday: Called to Holiness through Joy and Mission

‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace.’ (Romans 15:13)

Consider

Children recognise the joy of being disciples of Jesus and the hope that faith brings, especially through the resurrection. We are called to live with hope, share the gospel and serve joyfully.



Explore

1. What does it mean to have hope?
2. What are some of the things that you hope for?
3. What is something that gives you hope?
4. How can you share joy and hope with others at home or in school?



Bible Search

In the Bible there are many stories of hope. Perhaps the most powerful story of hope tells us about the resurrection of Jesus.

Divide the class into groups. Assign one of the following gospel stories to each group:

- Matthew 28
- Mark 16
- Luke 24

Allow the group time to find, read and discuss the story, then ask each group to share with the class what happened in the story they read.

After each group has recounted their story read the following to the class:

The story of Jesus' resurrection is the most powerful story of hope in the Bible. After Jesus died on the cross, his friends were very sad and afraid. They thought all was lost. But three days later, something amazing happened. Jesus rose from the dead. He was alive again.

This showed everyone that:

- God's love is stronger than death.
- Jesus keeps his promises.
- Even when things seem really dark or hopeless, God can bring light and new life.

The resurrection teaches us that:

- There is always hope, even after the hardest of times.
- We don't need to be afraid, because God is with us.
- Just as Jesus rose again, we can rise above our own struggles with his help.

So when we feel sad, worried, or stuck, we can remember the resurrection and know: 'Jesus is alive. He is with me. There is always hope.'

Activity

Cross of Hope: You will need jumbo or regular lollipop sticks, glue and markers.

1. Lay one stick across the other to make a cross.
2. Use glue to fix it in place.
3. Allow the glue to dry.
4. Write 'Jesus Loves Me' and your name across the front.

You could also allow the class to decorate the back of the cross with sequins, glitter or coloured buttons if you have them available. Display the crosses in the sacred space.