



Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2026 in Your Parish

Catholic Schools: Normal Lives, Called to Holiness

Catholic Schools Week 2026 begins on Sunday, 18 January, the second Sunday in Ordinary Time. This is a week to celebrate and acknowledge the wonderful contribution that our Catholic schools, both primary and post-primary, make to the mission of the Church in our local faith communities and throughout the wider Church. It is therefore important that we take this opportunity to celebrate that work when we gather as a community of faith at the beginning of Catholic Schools Week. It is also a moment for us to consider other ways in which the parish community can honour and support the school community during this week-long celebration. There are obviously a variety of ways in which parishes might choose to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, and the following are some suggestions which might help.

Sunday, 18 January **Celebration of the Eucharist for the Second Sunday** **in Ordinary Time**

The parish liturgy group can of course be involved in helping to prepare for this Mass. Encourage them to make Catholic Schools Week part of the annual life of the parish, as it is an occasion to celebrate the work of the Catholic school(s) in the parish.

Planning Meeting

Arrange a meeting with the principals and teachers of the Catholic primary and post-primary schools in the parish in the weeks prior to Catholic Schools Week to discuss how to highlight and celebrate the work of each school during the liturgy on 18 January. If your parish does not have a Catholic post-primary school, consider how to involve students from your parish who attend post-primary schools in neighbouring parishes. Include a member of your parish liturgy group in this meeting.



The Mass

Word of Welcome and Explanation

The words of welcome during the Mass might include a few words about the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2026 – *Catholic Schools: Normal Lives, Called to Holiness*. An explanation of the theme is available online at www.catholicschools.ie.

Opening Procession

It may be appropriate to have an opening procession on this Sunday. This could include symbols that represent the distinctive identity of each Catholic school in the parish. If a display area has been set up in the church to mark Catholic Schools Week, this is the ideal place to put the symbols presented in the opening procession.

Music

Consider involving students/staff in the music during the liturgy. A group of students might sing the psalm and intone the gospel acclamation.

Liturgy of the Word

The readings, prayers of the faithful, etc., for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time can be found in the December/January edition of *Intercom*. Tá siad le fáil as Gaeilge san áit céanna. There are also homily notes for this Sunday in the January edition of *The Furrow*.

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.

Hospitality

This would be a good time to offer hospitality after Mass. Perhaps the parents association, parish council and other local groups would come together to coordinate this.



Normal Lives, Called to Holiness

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, 18 January, marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2026. During this week, we aim to celebrate the unique contribution that Catholic schools, both primary and post-primary, make to the mission of the Church in our local faith communities and throughout the wider church. This year's theme is ***Catholic Schools: Normal Lives, Called to Holiness***. Our parish is joining in the celebrations by ...

Pupils from the parish schools might distribute the newsletter at Mass.

Display Area

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

Boards of Management/Governors

Put Catholic Schools Week 2026 on the agenda for your next meeting. Use the resource for Staff and Boards of Management/Governors to reflect on the theme for this year. This resource is available for download at www.catholicschools.ie.

The 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 might take the opportunity this week to visit as many classrooms as possible. The Catholic Schools Week resources will help you to find a focus for your visit, as they offer a theme for each day of the week.

Encourage schools to participate in Grandparents' Day on Wednesday, 21 January.