November 2026

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2027 is *Invites: Opening hearts and minds to life in Christ*. As we look forward to celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2027, in the month of November we remember and pray, in a special way, for all those who have died and have gone before us in the hope of the resurrection. This resource aims to assist and support schools with activities and lesson ideas for the month of the Holy Souls. The moment of November is a time when we give special importance to remembering that God comforts those who mourn and that through the resurrection death has been defeated.



'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.' (Mt 5:4)

For Parishes

This moment can be situated within the liturgical themes of November and the Masses/liturgies around the feast of All Souls, remembering and praying for our loved ones who have died as well as those who have no one to pray for them. The prayer service (p. 10) could be used in a parish setting with children or young adults, or in the school, if appropriate.

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

Strand: Christian Faith
Strand Unit: Eternal Life

- God wants all people to be happy with him forever in heaven (1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 13:12; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [*CCC*], 1023).
- When we die, we go home to God (*CCC*, 1020).

Strand: Liturgy and Prayer
Strand Unit: Additional Prayers

- Prayer for the dead/for those who are sick and dying.

LEVEL 2

Strand: Christian Faith
Strand Unit: Eternal Life

- 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).

Strand: Liturgy and Prayer
Strand Unit: Liturgical Year

- On the feast of All Souls, the Church remembers those who have died and prays for them.

LEVEL 3

Strand: Christian Faith
Strand Unit: Eternal Life

- God wants all people to live happily with him in heaven forever, through the salvation brought by Jesus (*Gaudium et Spes* [*GS*], 18; *CCC*, 1026).
- Jesus rose from the dead in his own body and entered heaven so that 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).

LEVEL 4

Strand: Christian Faith
Strand Unit: 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.
- 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. *Lumen Gentium*, 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
November is a special month in the calendar of the Church in which we are invited to remember and to pray for the deceased, those we have known in our own lives who have gone before us in the belief of Christ's promise of resurrection, the promise that God's love is so great it conquers even death itself. We are also called to pray for all souls, including those who have no one to pray for them. As a Catholic school, we are invited to set aside time and space in this special moment of reflection and remembrance for our friends and family who are now with God in heaven.



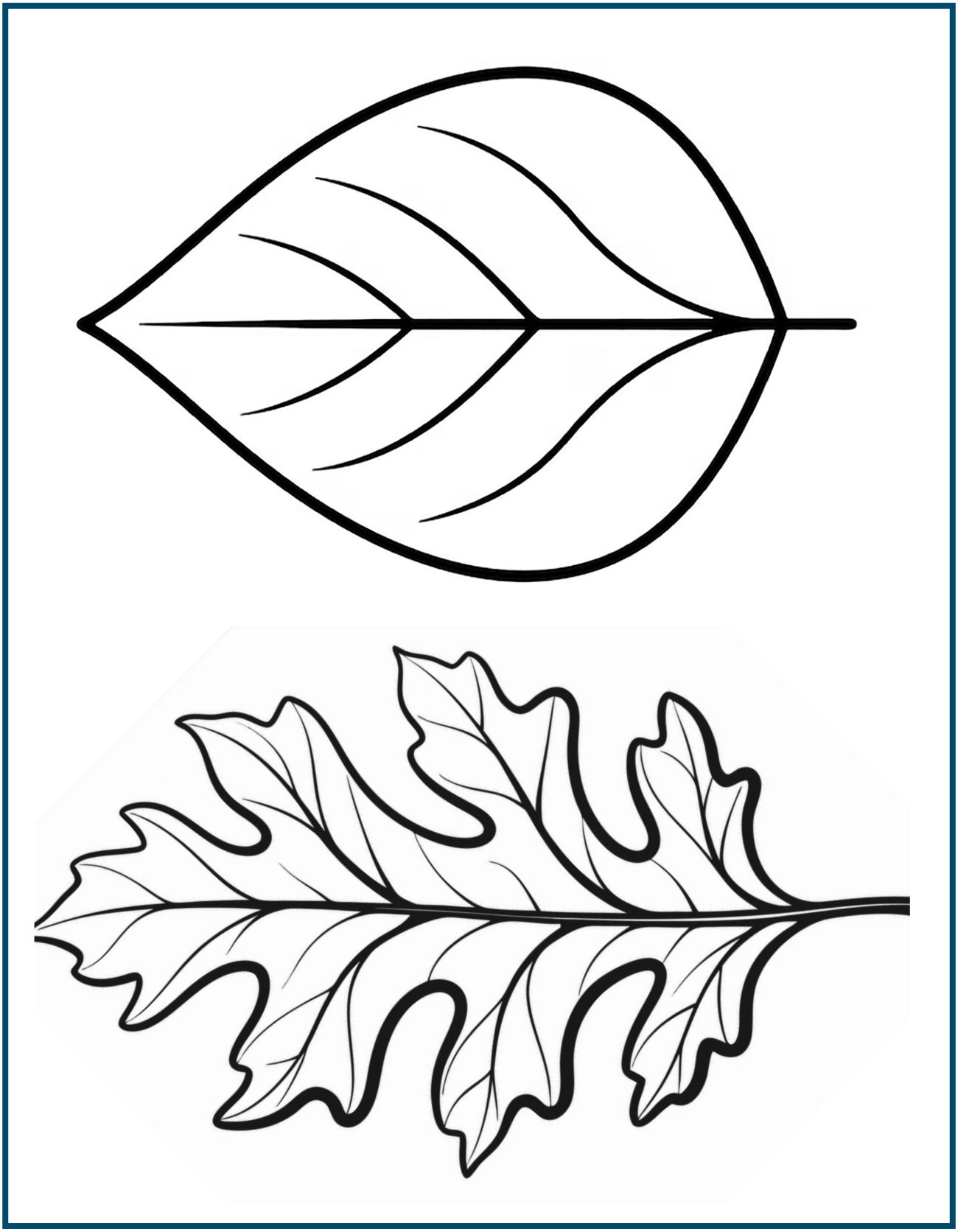
Teachers should use their own discretion when covering this material as the content may be difficult for some children, especially if they have been recently bereaved.

Explore
Explain that in the month of November we are invited to remember. We are invited to remember all those we love who have passed away. While it is difficult and sad when those we love pass away, it is important that we remember the joy and happiness they brought to our lives. We miss them, and we know that they have a very special place in our hearts and are now in heaven. When we think of them, we remember the happy times we shared together and how they made us feel so loved.

Activity
Use the Activity page below to create a tree of remembrance in your class or school.
Invite pupils to write or draw a person they know who has died on the leaf template. This can also be a picture or name of a pet, as some pupils will not have experienced the loss of a person they know. Cut it out, use a hole punch and some string or wool to hang the leaves on a branch of a tree.

Alternatively, they could be placed around the bottom of a bare tree or placed in a basket. Place the tree in a prayer space or in the school lobby for others to add to.

The Moment of November
Junior Activity Page



Senior Lesson
Third Class–Sixth Class (P5–P7)

Teacher's Notes
November is a special month in the calendar of the Church in which we are invited to remember and to pray for the deceased, those we have known in our own lives who have gone before us in the belief of Christ's promise of resurrection, the promise that God's love is so great it conquers even death itself. We are also called to pray for all souls, including those who have no one to pray for them. As a Catholic school, we are invited to set aside time and space in this special moment of reflection and remembrance for our friends and family who are now with God in heaven.

Explore
It is traditional to remember those who have passed away during the month of November. Explain.

In November we are invited to remember those we love who have passed away. November is a time of year when the world around us is becoming bare and beginning a rest period, the leaves fall from the trees, animals hibernate and the world around us quietens for a while. The world is in a stage of waiting, waiting for spring to arrive.

Spring brings new life and the world bursts to life. The four seasons come in a cycle each year, and each brings different weather and changes in the world around us.

Discuss what we see in the world around us in each season.
What are the signs of Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter?

In many ways, the cycle of the seasons is like the life of a person, with each season representing a time in our lives. Spring is the time when we are born, we are a new life, etc.

Discuss with the class how each season of the year could be a different part of our lives.

While losing a person we love is very difficult and sad, as followers of Jesus we believe that after death (winter) we are reunited with him in heaven, and we are part of a new spring with him where life is everlasting. We believe that death is not the end, just the end of our time here on earth, so when we remember those we love who have died, we remember the love and happiness they brought to our lives during all of the seasons of their lives.

Activities

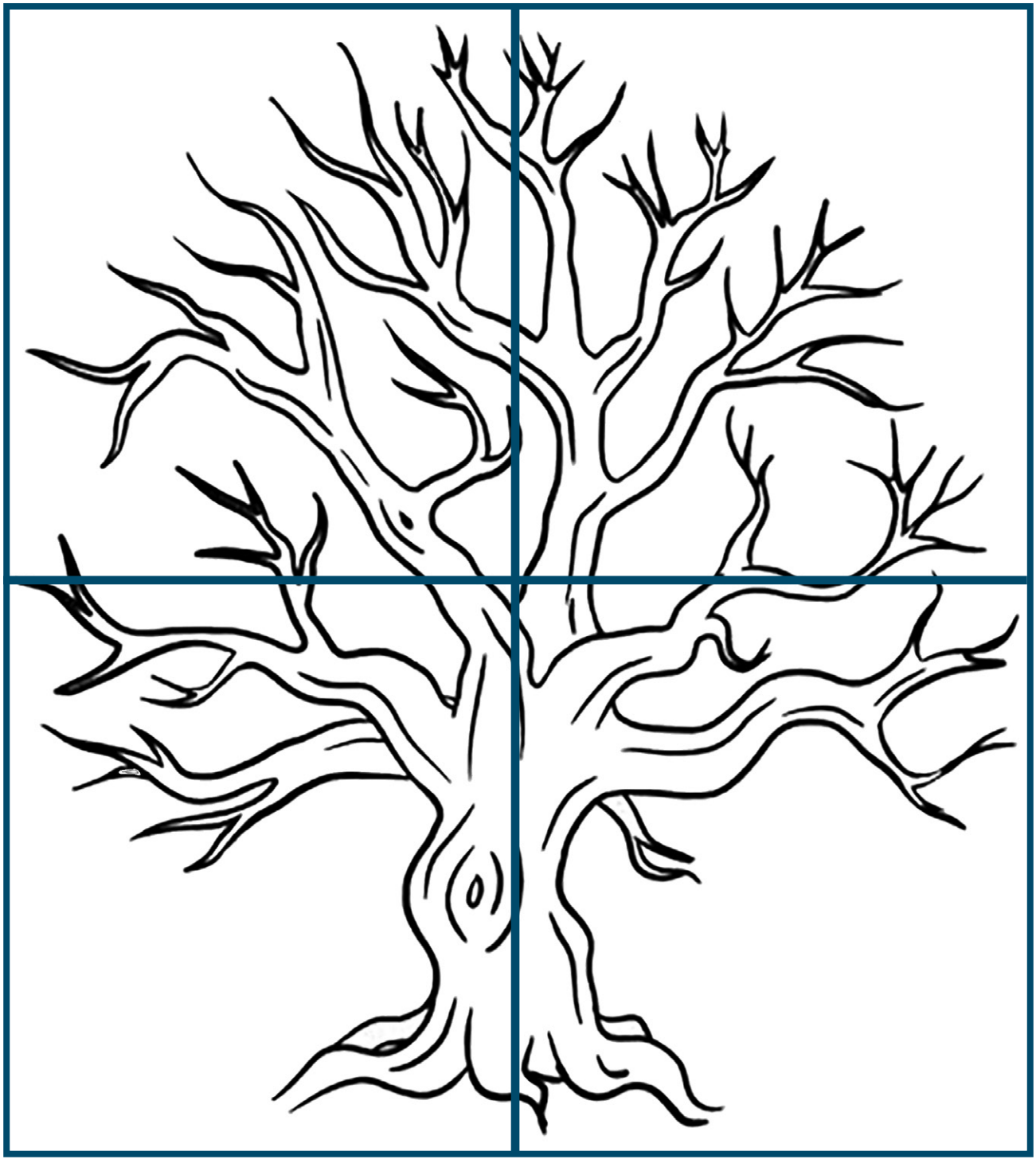
1. Use the activity page below to allow pupils complete each section of the tree to represent a different season and what we see in the world around us during that season.

2. The 'Letting Go' Nature Walk and Journal. Nature provides a perfect, tangible example of the lifecycle during late autumn. Take a crisp outdoor walk. Ask pupils to look closely at the trees. Discuss how the trees aren't sad to lose their leaves; they are simply trusting the cycle of life to bring spring back later.

   Let pupils collect a few deeply coloured fallen leaves, acorns, or twigs. Back inside, they can tape them onto a page or scrapbook. Next to the items, help pupils to write or dictate things they are grateful for in their own current 'season' of life.

3. Watch and listen to the story of 'The Fall of Freddy the leaf' by Leo Buscaglia at the link below. The story explores the cycle of seasons from the perspective of a leaf.
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8ZjVXyNbhI

The Moment of November
Senior Activity Page



Prayer Service

This prayer service could be held in a classroom, school hall or a 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 white tablecloth
- A table
- A candle
- Holy water
- A crucifix

Leader: Good morning, everyone. Today, we come together as a school to remember and 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 also 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: The Clouds' Veil (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 (Is 25:6-9).

On this mountain, the lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples a banquet 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 all 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 in 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 the 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,
and 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)