

Catholic Schools Week 2011

Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2011

Theme: Rooted in Jesus Christ

Resources for the Post-Primary School
Community: Home, School & Parish

30 January–5 February 2011

Catholic Schools Week 2011



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Welcome

In Catholic Schools Week 2011 we reflect on what it is to be rooted in Jesus Christ. Jesus was a teacher. His followers call him teacher forty-five times in the Gospels. They perceive him as someone who could teach them, from whom they could learn. The questions and requests they made of him echo in our schools today.

Teacher, give us a sign;
Teacher, teach us to pray;
Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?
Teacher, which is the greatest commandment?

So what did Jesus teach? All of his teaching takes place through the words that he speaks and the encounters that are at the centre of his ministry. To teach as Christ taught is surely to speak words of honesty, words of forgiveness, words of compassion, and it is to encounter people wherever they are at and invite, cajole, liberate them to move on. Think of the Samaritan woman at the well, little Zacchaeus in Jericho, Matthew the tax collector in Capernaum, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Mary from the town of Magdala at the tomb on Easter Sunday morning – all people totally preoccupied with their own worries and concerns but who are challenged to move on through their encounter with Jesus. Such teaching is truly education – to lead people out of ignorance, out of hostility, out of self-centredness, out of certainty, out of fear, into somewhere new. To teach as Christ taught means inviting people to live without the crutch or the grudge or the closed mind. Such education is an endless task in all of our lives.

The theme of Catholic Schools Week 2011 suggests that all of our school communities need to be rooted in Jesus Christ. In his letter to Irish Catholics Pope Benedict XVI asks students and young people to root their lives in Christ: *'Seek a personal relationship with him within the communion of his Church, for he will never betray your trust! He alone can satisfy your deepest longings and give your lives their fullest meaning by directing them to the service of others. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and his goodness, and shelter the flame of faith in your hearts.'* Plants, trees and flowers that lose their roots are blown hither and thither. We too can be uprooted, lacking any true guidance in our lives, drawn this way and that, unsure how to respond. During this week we are asked to renew our roots in Christ. We can do so in many different ways in our homes, in our schools and in our parish communities as the resources in this booklet suggest. I invite you to participate in the events associated with this week in your area.

An old Irish proverb says that *'a wet and windy May fills the barn with corn and hay'*. Seeds are sown in Spring. As stem and stalk burst through the earth they are exposed to the weather. Rain and wind in May can batter and beat this young growth but the hidden roots beneath the surface grow stronger precisely because life is not easy above ground. The pulling and jarring determines whether this young life can survive in the real world. If we remain rooted in Christ then despite the vagaries of the weather and the difficult conditions in which we live, we can look forward to a rich harvest.

Michael Drumm
Chairperson
Catholic Schools Partnership

WELCOME

Before You Begin

The resources in this pack are intended for use with all those working in partnership with the school community. The resources are designed to be used with:

- Students in the classroom
- Staff members
- Parents
- Members of Boards of Management/Governors
- The wider parish community

In an effort to make these resources more accessible, the pack has been sent to all principals and priests. The different resources available for each target group are clearly defined within the pack. It might be useful for a meeting involving representatives from the staff, Board of Management/Governors, Parent Association/Council, parish team and school chaplain to take place before Catholic Schools Week begins. This would enable decisions to be made as to which elements of the resources your particular school community will highlight during the week. Some of the issues discussed at such a meeting might include:

- The Mass to begin Catholic Schools Week
- Communication with parents
- Parish initiatives or events to mark the week
- Time for staff and Board of Management/Governors to reflect on Catholic Schools Week.

We hope that you find the resources included in this pack helpful as you celebrate Catholic Schools Week this year. Copies of this resource are available to download *as Gaeilge* and in Polish on www.catholicbishops.ie/catholicschoolsweek.

These resources have been prepared by Mairead Ní Bhuachalla, Brigid Gilligan, Maura Gray, Tonya Hanly, Maurice Harmon, in consultation with the Steering Committee for Catholic Schools Week 2011. The members of the Steering Committee are:

Mr Lloyd Bracken, Monsignor Jim Cassin, Fr Ger Condon, Fr Martin Delaney, Fr Michael Drumm, Fr Paul Farren, Ms Tonya Hanly, Ms Maura Hyland, Mr Martin Long, Ms Maeve Mahon, Ms Bernie Martin, Mr Tony McCann, Mr Michael Redmond, Ms Maria Spring, Ms Orla Walsh and Sr Eithne Woulfe.

We thank Fr Thomas O'Byrne for the liturgical resources for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time.





Catholic Schools Week 2011

What Is Catholic Schools Week?

Catholic Schools Week gives us the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the tremendous contribution that our Catholic Primary and Post-Primary Schools make, not just to Irish society, but to the mission of the Church. It allows us to create a space where we can proudly articulate and celebrate our ethos and identity.

What Is The Theme Of Catholic Schools Week in 2011?

This year the theme for the week is '**Catholic Schools – Rooted in Jesus Christ**'.

The Catholic School is dedicated to the education and formation of the young. It seeks to lead students towards the fulfillment of their deepest longings. It is built on the belief that pupils begin to understand the fullest meaning of their lives when they are in touch with Christ. And so the words of the Pope, '*Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and his goodness, and shelter the flame of faith in your hearts*', has a special resonance for the education project of the Catholic School. In it the young person is introduced to the love of Christ and is invited to enter a personal relationship in which their trust will never be betrayed. And so the Catholic school is truly rooted in Christ.

Is Catholic Schools Week Only For Schools?

The events scheduled for Catholic Schools Week will take place in schools, in parishes, at diocesan and at national level. The resources in this pack help to extend the celebrations into homes all over the country. There are also resources to help dioceses and parishes to be involved in the celebrations. It is our hope that through using the many different resources offered that the key mission of schools in the Church, the home, in parishes and in the life of the nation will be highlighted during this week.

How Do I Get Involved?

Keep a look out in local and national media for activities connected to Catholic Schools Week. Ask your local school Principal/Parent Association/Board of Management/Governors representative how the school is celebrating Catholic Schools Week.

More information is available on www.catholicbishops.ie/catholicschoolsweek.



INTRODUCTION

How to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week as a Diocese

Some Suggestions

Send a letter to every school and every parish to encourage them to celebrate Catholic Schools Week while at the same time thanking schools for what they are already doing to promote Catholic education.

Consider a **Diocesan Mass** with representatives from every school, primary and post-primary, as an opportunity to give them that sense of being part of a wider community. This could be done on a deanery level.

The bishop might send a **personal letter** to every member of the Board of Management/ Governors thanking them for giving of their

time and encouraging them to reflect upon the Catholic ethos of the school and how they uphold it. Ideally this letter should be posted to the home of each person and not simply photocopied and handed out at a board meeting.

Use the **local media** in some way to highlight Catholic Schools Week: newspaper articles, radio interview etc.

Invite teachers, parents, Boards of Management/ Governors and Pastoral Councils throughout the diocese to an **evening event** on some topic related to Catholic education e.g., the *Irish Bishops' Conference Pastoral Letter, Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland*.





How to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week in Your Parish

Catholic Schools Week 2011 begins on Sunday, 30 January, the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. It is hoped that parishes throughout the country will respond to the invitation to celebrate the contribution made by Catholic Schools in their communities during the Sunday Liturgy and at other times during the following week. There are many different ways in which parishes might choose to do this and the following are just some suggestions that might help.

Sunday, 30 January

Celebration of the Eucharist for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

- Consider how best the schools in your community might become involved in this Sunday's celebration of the Eucharist. Arrange a meeting with the principals and teachers in the weeks prior to Catholic Schools Week and discuss the various ways that the work of Catholic Schools can be highlighted and celebrated during the liturgy on that day. The readings, prayers of the Faithful etc. for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time can be found on p. 30 of this book.
- There are also homily notes for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time in the January edition of *The Furrow*.
- Ask the choir to choose some music that the students will know. Talk to the teachers about suitable music.

Visual Display

- The schools in your parish might like to create a **visual display** for the church or parish hall. This display could be centred on the life of the school, outreach projects that the school is involved in, the saint after whom the school or parish is named, the present-day faith community or any other topic of their choice. The display could remain in place for the whole week and an invitation extended to the whole community to come and view it during this special week.

Liturgy Committee

- If you have a **Liturgy Committee**, make sure that they are made aware of Catholic Schools Week as early as possible so that they can help prepare the liturgy and music for the various celebrations you decide to have. Encourage them to ensure that Catholic Schools Week becomes part of the annual life of the parish. **It will always begin on the last Sunday in January.**



Parish Newsletter

- Ensure that Catholic Schools Week is well publicised by placing a note in the Parish Newsletter. Sample text might read as follows:

Sunday 30 January marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week. The purpose of the week is to highlight and celebrate the wonderful contribution that Catholic schools make to our local communities and society in general. This year's theme is '**Catholic Schools – Rooted in Jesus Christ**'. During the coming week, we invite you to join us in celebrating the contribution that our Catholic school(s) make(s) to the life of the faith community here in our parish.

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.

The School

- To mark the beginning of Catholic Schools Week, the school community might like to attend morning Mass in the local parish church. Parents might be invited to attend that Mass.
- Take the opportunity this week to **visit as many classrooms as possible**. This resource book will help you to find a focus for your visit as it offers a theme for each day's work. You might bless the throats of the students on the Feast of St Blaise in some of the classrooms.
- Ensure that Catholic Schools Week is on the agenda for the Board of Management/Governors meeting.

The Community

- Given that **St Brigid's Day** falls during the week, arrange an evening for families to make **crosses** in the parish or school hall and have a short prayer service. Alternatively, you could suggest to the Principal to invite some of the older members of the community into the school to show the students how to make the crosses.



The Catholic School ...

- Has at its heart the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ
- Builds an environment of care and concern for others that is rooted in Catholic social teaching
- Creates a safe and happy learning environment where every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to their full and unique potential as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God
- Seeks educational excellence while remaining faithful to their distinctive vision and approach
- Is an inclusive and respectful community, welcoming students of all denominations and of none
- Acknowledges the role of parents as the first teachers in the ways of faith and provides opportunities for their participation in the life of the school
- Works in partnership with parents and the parish community to keep the light of faith burning brightly
- Provides religious education programmes that confirm and deepen the child's understanding of the Catholic faith so that every child will be as articulate in their faith as in all other areas of the curriculum
- Nurtures the child's appreciation and understanding of the sacramental life of the Church
- Displays the symbols of our rich Catholic faith tradition
- Spends time as a school community in reflection, prayer, ritual, celebrating the Eucharist and other sacraments to develop the spiritual life of each person in the school community.

Based on *Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland* (A Pastoral Letter of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference)



Catholic Schools Week 2011

Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2011

For You at Home



Catholic Schools Week gives everyone involved in Catholic education the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution that our Catholic schools make to Irish life. This is the third year that we have marked this special week across the island of Ireland.

The aim of Catholic Schools Week is to create a space where we can proudly articulate and celebrate our ethos and identity. During this week we encourage you, as parents, to take time to reflect on what it means to have your child as part of a Catholic school community, and to consider how you can support the work being done in your child's Catholic school.

A Prayer for Your Family

*Loving God,
We thank you for the gift of our family.
Thank you for the love that binds us together.
Help us to always stay strong and true to each other.
Thank you for the example of love given to us by Jesus.
May his life inspire us to be the best parents we can be.
Thank you for our school community,
and for the teachers who guide and help our students to follow in your ways.
May our Catholic schools and families always be rooted in the Gospel message of love.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.*



Competition

This year, second-level students, individually or in groups, are invited to enter a competition for Catholic Schools Week. The project may highlight the following:

- The history of the school
- The achievements of staff and pupils
- The Patron Saint of the school

All projects will seek to show how the entire school community puts its faith into action.

Suggestions

- An art piece
- An icon
- A scrapbook
- Photography
- Essay (1,500 words max.)

Prize Money

Junior & Senior Cycle (2 sets of prizes)

1st €250 2nd €150 3rd €100

Open to all schools and year groups

Closing Date 25 February 2011

(No application fee)

Entries to Ms Bernie Martin,

Columba House,

Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Application form downloadable from

www.irishbishops.ie/catholicschoolsweek

**Be As Creative
As Possible!**



Thoughts for the Day

Monday

The theme for Catholic Schools Week this year is **'Catholic Schools – Rooted in Jesus Christ'**. The theme is inspired by the *Pastoral Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland*, which was published on 20 March 2010. We are reminded in this letter that Jesus loves each of us, so much so in fact that he offered himself on the cross for us. Perhaps this is an ideal week and an ideal time in our school year to remind ourselves of the love that Jesus has for us and the trusting nature of the relationship that it is possible to have with him. We pray for ourselves this morning as we strive to build and deepen our personal relationship with Jesus as we say *Our Father ...*

Tuesday

We are all on a journey. The greatest journey of all that each one of us takes throughout our lives is that journey of internal discovery. Today you might take time to reflect on your uniqueness and the journey that you are on. Are you happy with how you are travelling? Could you make changes? How do you contribute to the school community, the faith community to which you belong?

Wednesday

Emily Dickinson in her poem 'I never saw a moor' says 'I never spoke with God, / nor visited in Heaven; / Yet certain am I of the spot / As if the chart were given'. The poet's faith in something that she could not see is admirable. In a world of constant progress and learning of new facts it is sometimes challenging for us to achieve this depth of faith. Yet despite the changes in our world and the challenges these pose for us, the love that God has for us has never changed and he is always present with us. We pray today in the silence of our hearts for those who struggle with their faith. (*Pause for prayer*) Amen.

Thursday

As members of a faith community we witness faith in action daily, actions by people who have the courage of their convictions, the courage of their faith. Are you one of these people? We all know in our heart of hearts what is right. Do you choose to ignore that feeling or to act on it? Do you sell yourself short in the ignoring or do you have the courage of your conscience to find real freedom?

Today we pray for those people who do the ordinary things of life extraordinarily well. (*Pause for prayer*) Amen.

Friday

Our Catholic Schools are dedicated to the education and formation of each and every one of us. Every day people encourage you to be the best that you can be: parents ... teachers ... community leaders. Every day here in school you are exposed to new thoughts, new ways of doing things. Today you might take the opportunity to reflect on how you use this powerful knowledge. Do you take on life with an open mind? Do you take up every chance that you are given to learn? Do you take enjoyment from the challenges that you face to grow and to be the best that you can be? We pray together for all of us in this learning, faith community as we say: *Christ be with me ...*



Monday, 31 January

Opening Prayer Service

Sacred Space

To prepare for this prayer service and Catholic Schools Week you might like to assemble the following for a Sacred Space, which should be placed in a prominent position in the school after the service. Today we bring:

- A candle to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world (The logo for Catholic Schools Week can be found on p. 32. Cut it out and create a special Catholic Schools Week Candle by wrapping it around a suitable candle)
- A Bible, a book full of hope and powerful words of wisdom
- Holy water as we remember our baptism
- A crucifix to remind us of God's deep and lasting love for us and the sacrifice that Jesus made for us
- A textbook signifying all that we learn
- A Brigid's Cross
- A green cloth, as it is Ordinary Time in the Church Year
- An image of Jesus the Teacher
- Examples of the parables.

Opening Hymn

- ▶ 'Bind Us Together'
- ▶ 'We Are Gathering Together Unto Him'

Lighting of Candle

Response *Be still and know that God is here.*

Leader As we light this candle today we remember that God is always with us.
Response

Leader As we light this candle today we offer ourselves to you in trust and faith.
Response

Leader May the light of this candle surround us today and may it be a sign of hope in our world.
Response

Opening Prayer

Loving God, as we gather today we ask you to journey with us. Help us to be followers of your son Jesus, who sacrificed so much for us to prove that we could trust in him and in you. We trust now today that your hands are still reaching out to each and every one of us. May we always appreciate this gesture of guidance and love. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you, for God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but the spirit of power, of love and self-control. So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to our Lord. Rely on the power of God who has saved us and called us to be holy – not because of anything we ourselves have done but for his own purpose and by his own grace. Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me, in the faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us to look after that precious thing given in trust.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Psalm

Psalm 24 'Lord, make me know your ways'

Gospel Matthew 5:14-16

You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lamp stand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Prayer of Intercession

Place five candles in the Sacred Space and light one candle for each prayer read.

Response *Oh Lord Hear Our Prayer* (Taizé)

For our school community

We pray today for all of us here gathered. May we always be open to receive your light and love so that our school can be a living example of faith in action. *Response*

For leadership

We pray for the leaders of our country, our community and our Church. We pray especially for the leaders here in our own school community: our Board of Management/Governors, our Principal and Deputy Principal, our teachers and our student council. May they always make decisions based on justice and respect for the dignity of the human person. *Response*

For Missionaries and Volunteers

We pray today for all those people in our own country and worldwide who give up their time and in some cases their whole lives for the good of others. Grant them strength and compassion in their work. *Response*

For those who struggle with their faith

We pray today for those people who struggle to find God in the world around them, for those who find it hard to believe in the love that God has for us. Loving God, help them to feel the light of your guiding and comforting presence in their lives. *Response*

For Trust and Hope

Martin Luther King once said that everything which is done in the world is done by hope. There is much to be done in our world today. Loving God, help us to face the challenges and promises of the life which you have given us with resilience and courage. *Response*

Hymn

▶ 'Give Me Joy In My Heart'

Closing Blessing

May you always be inspired to stand tall in the sunlight
To seek out the bright face of beauty
To reach for the dream and the stars
To see the world through eyes of tenderness,
To love with open heartedness
To speak the quiet word of comforting,
To look up the mountain and to not be afraid to climb
To be aware of the needs of others
To believe in the wonder of life,
The miracle of creation
The rapture of love
The beauty of the universe
The dignity of the human being.
(Anon)

Closing Hymn

- ▶ 'Faith Of Our Fathers'
- ▶ 'Send Forth Your Spirit'
- ▶ 'Spirit Of The Living God'



IN THE SCHOOL

Who is Jesus Christ?

Do You Love Me?

You love me. And you want to show it. So you say it – with a word. The love you have exists inside of you, but if you want to express it to me, you have to transfer it from your mind and heart into words or actions.

That way your love enters the physical world. God loves you. And God wants to show it – with a Word. The love that God has for us is expressed in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He's God's love made into human form.

In Jesus, the mind and heart of God are placed right before our very eyes. We need only open our eyes to see how beautiful they really are.

We all think we have a very good understanding about who Jesus Christ is. But do we really know everything about him? Take a look at the different aspects to Jesus and see if there's anything you didn't already know.

Jesus Christ is both true man and true God. During his life on earth we can see that as a person, Jesus was like us in everything except sin (*Hebrews 4:15*).

He cried, he was tempted, he experienced hunger, thirst and tremendous physical pain; he felt the loneliness and frustration of being abandoned by his best friends.

Jesus became a complete person so that he could become fully one with us in our human existence (*Philippians 2:6, 7*).

But at the same time, Jesus is the Son of God. He allowed himself to be worshipped as God, something no other Jewish person would dream of doing.

When Thomas said to Jesus: 'You are my Lord and my God!' (*John 20:28*), Jesus did not say: 'No, Thomas, don't call me that.' Jesus accepted Thomas' worship.

Some people want to think of Jesus as merely a great moral teacher. But Jesus did not stop there. He said he was the Son of God many times

(*Matthew 26:63, 64*), and he even made himself equal to God the Father (*John 10:30*).

And he could not have been a 'great moral teacher' if he was lying or even crazy.

Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life! Without me, no one can go to the Father' (*John 14:6*). That's because he and God the Father, God the Holy Spirit are actually three persons united in one God. That is why we call God the 'Holy Trinity' (trinity meaning three).

Three people Jesus raised from the dead

- Jairus' daughter (*Mark 5:22-43*)
- A widow's son in the town of Nain (*Luke 7:11-15*)
- Jesus' friend Lazarus (*John 11:1-44*)

Eight miracles that show Jesus has power over nature

- Water turned into wine (*John 2:1-10*)
- He calmed a bad storm (*Matthew 8:22-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25*)
- He fed more than five thousand people with only five loaves of bread and two small fish (*Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:5-15*)
- He walked on the water in the middle of a lake (*Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:6-21*)
- He fed more than four thousand people (*Matthew 15:9-39; Mark 5:1-9*)
- He told Peter where to catch a fish with a coin in its mouth (*Matthew 17:24-27*)
- He caused the disciples to haul in a huge catch of fish (*Luke 5:1-11*)
- And then there was another big catch of fish (*John 21:1-11*)



Tuesday, 1 February

Feastday of St Brigid, Mary of the Gael

History

St Brigid is one of the three Patron Saints of Ireland. She is believed to be a native of Faughart in Co. Louth. Her father, Dubhtach, was a chieftain, and her mother's name was Brocessa.

As a child Brigid gave bread, butter, eggs and chickens to people in need. She loved the company of the wild animals and birds. Soon her friendship with animals and birds became known. She taught a wild fox to play games and tricks and she went to the court of the King of Leinster and gave the fox to the king. The king was amused by the antics of the fox.

Then her father decided it was time she got married. Dubhtach wanted Brigid to marry a poet. Poets were greatly honoured at the courts of the Irish High Kings. However, Brigid refused her father's request.

'I want to be a nun,' she said, 'I want to build a convent and a church, and I also want to build a school'. Dubhtach was disappointed and angry but Brigid told him she did not want a poet or anybody else as a husband. Instead she went with a group of her friends to become a nun.

St Mel, a friend of St Patrick, gave Brigid the nun's veil at Ardagh in Co. Longford. Ardagh, now a national heritage village, has a well-known training centre and convent farm called St Brigid's Training Centre. A variety of farming and household skills are taught there.

Brigid then founded her principal monastery in Kildare. Hundreds of priests, holy women and scholars flocked there. There were monks as well as nuns in St Brigid's monastery.

Some nuns worked on the farm, others looked after the sick, and others copied sacred books.

Brigid did not have enough land for all the work that was going on in her monastery.

She decided to ask the King of Leinster to give her some more land. She set off to meet him while he was out hunting at the Curragh in Kildare. The king got down off his horse to meet Brigid and her friends.

Brigid explained that she needed some more land. She would like good fertile land on which to graze her cattle. However, the king liked his forests and his hunting grounds. He did not want to give any land away.

Finally, Brigid asked the king, 'My Lord, will you give me as much land as my cloak will cover?' The king was amused and thought Brigid was making a joke. So, for fun, he agreed.

Brigid removed her cloak and spread it smoothly on the ground. The cloak began to grow and grow. The king was astonished, but the cloak continued to grow until it covered many acres of fertile land. We cannot be sure how many acres the king gave Brigid. In any case, we can be sure that he had plenty of land left for himself.

However, St Brigid had enough land to work at her monastery in Kildare. She continued to work there until she died in 525. Later a cathedral, a round tower and a high cross were built in memory of the monastery founded by St Brigid. St Brigid's feastday is held on 1 February each year. On that day people still make St Brigid's Crosses from woven rushes in her honour. There are many holy wells and places of pilgrimage dedicated to her throughout Ireland.

Prayer

Lord, you inspired in St Brigid such wholehearted dedication to your work that she is known as Mary of the Gael; through her intercession bless our country: may we follow the example of her life and be united with her and the Virgin Mary in your presence.



IN THE SCHOOL

Searmanas in Onóir Bhríd Naofa, 1ú Feabhra

Beidh crosa Bhríde agus uisce coisricthe in úsáid.

*Gabham molta Bhríde,
Ionúin í le hÉirinn,
Ionúin le gach tír í,
Molaimis go léir í.*

*Tig an geimhreadh dian dubh
'Gearradh lena ghéire;
Ach ar lá 'le Bríde
Gar dúinn earrach Éireann.*

*Lóchrann geal na Laighneach
'Soilsíú feadh na tíre,
Ceann ar ógha Éireann,
Ceann na mban ar míne.*

(Traidisiúnta, Veritas Hymnal 136)

*'Anois teacht an earraigh, beidh 'n lá 'dul chun
síneadh Is taréis na Féil' Bríde ardóidh mé mo
sheol.'* (Antaine Raiftearaí)

Cinnire Inniu, an chéad lá Feabhra, Lá Fhéile Bríde, Muire na nGael, Pátrún na hÉireann. Rugadh Bríd i bhFochairt láimh le Dún Dealgan sa bhliain 451, deich mbliana roimh bhás Phádraig Naofa. Taoiseach de chuid Cúige Laighean ba ea a hathair, Dúbhthach. Sclábháí ba ea a máthair, Brocseach. Críostaí ba ea a máthair agus baisteadh Bríd ina Críostaí. Bheartaigh Bríd a bheith ina bean rialta agus bhunaigh sí mainistreacha i gCill Dara agus in áiteanna eile. Tá an-chuid scéalta i dtaobh a cineáltais do bhochtáin, d'easláin, d'ainmhithe agus i dtaobh a muinín i nDia. Tá toibreacha Bhríde ar fud na tíre agus tá a lán nósanna ag baint le Lá Fhéile Bríde. Fuair sí bás thart faoin mbliain 524.

Beannú agus Dáileadh na gCros

*Déantar uisce coisricthe a chroitheadh ar chrosa
Bhríde agus deirtear an phaidir seo:*

*'Go raibh beannacht an Athar, an Mhic is an
Spioraid Naoimh ar na crosa seo, ar na háiteanna
ina bhfuil siad agus ar gach duine a fhéachann
orthu.'*

Dáiltear iad ansin agus deirtear an phaidir seo:

*'Go dtuga lasair Bhríde spreagadh duit.
Go dtuga crios Bhríde slánú duit.
Go dtuga cruthaíocht Bhríde slí duit.'*

Paidreacha Bhí creideamh láidir ag Bríd. Chuir sí a muinín go hiomlán i nDia agus tháinig Dia i gcabhair uirthi. Guímis go muiníneach chun Dé mar a rinne Bríd.

1. A Dhia, neartaigh ár gcreideamh, ár ndóchas agus ár ngrá. A Thiarna, éist linn. *A Thiarna, bí ceansa agus éist linn.*
2. Bhí Bríd cineálta leis na bochtáin agus na heasláin. A Dhia, cabhraigh linn aithris a dhéanamh uirthi. A Thiarna, éist linn. *A Thiarna, bí ceansa agus éist linn.*
3. Bhí grá ag Bríd d'ainmhithe, d'éin agus do gach rud a chruthaigh Dia. Múin dúinn, a Dhia, conas aire a thabhairt don imshaol. A Thiarna, éist linn. *A Thiarna, bí ceansa agus éist linn.*
4. Rinne Bríd réiteach idir dhaoine. A Dhia, taispeáin dúinn conas síocháin a chothú pé áit ina mbeimid. A Thiarna, éist linn. *A Thiarna, bí ceansa agus éist linn.*
5. A Dhia, tabhair saoirse ó chogadh, ó ghorta agus ó ghéarleanúint dóibh siúd atá ag fulaingt. A Thiarna, éist linn. *A Thiarna, bí ceansa agus éist linn.*

A Dhia, bhronn tú do ghrásta go fial ar Bhríd chun do ghrá agus do thrócaire a léiriú do mhuintir na hÉireann. Beannaigh ár dtír agus líon ár gcroíthe le do ghrásta ionas go mbeimid ábalta grá Dé a léiriú agus síocháin agus aontacht a chothú pé áit ina mbeimid. Sin é ár nguí chugat trí Chríost á dTiarna. Áiméan.

Duan Bhríde

*Dearc anuas, féach mar atáimid,
A Naomh álainn, féach sinn.
Feacaimid ár nglúna id' láthair.
Dearc mar mháthair ar do chlainn.
Cuidigh linn, a mháthair aoibhinn,
Bí choíche ag éisteacht linn,
A Naomh Bríd, a Chéile Chríosta,
Mar an faoileán ar an tuinn.*

*Níl aon áit 'na bhfuil na Gaeil
Ar an saol seo abhus, ná thall
Nach bhfuil grá acu'na gcroíthe*

*Ortsa, a Bhríd gheal, moch is mall.
Líon le grá an croí atá brúite.
Bain den tsúil atá fliuch, a deoir.
Stiúraigh, treoraigh, ardaigh sinne
Nó go dtagaimid id' ghlóir:*

Ceol Cecilia Sinnott

Aistriúchán Dubhghlas de hÍ



Prayer Service for St Brigid's Feastday

Hymn

▶ 'Light The Fire' – Anthem to St Brigid

(from *Light the Fire* by Liam Lawton. CD and booklet available from Veritas)

Lyrics

'There travels forth from the passages of hist'ry,
a woman's voice, that is heard across the plain;
That calls once more for a people of new vision,
to heal our wounds and to green our earth again.

'She spreads her cloak 'cross the land and far
beyond it,
a shadow cast on a people void of hope.
She speaks of peace and the chains that weigh
upon it,
and there her light shall glimmer from the oak,
and all that binds the people shall be broke.'

Refrain

'So light the fire of God's desire,
within all hearts let sorrows end.
So light the fire of God's desire,
God's chosen one, let peace on us descend.'

'And wells now dry shall issue forth with plenty,
to flow upon the sad and parching earth,
to make a prayer from that heart now tired and
empty,
to call on her to bring about new birth.
To make anew the greening of the earth.

'And we today need a prophet of new vision,
To lift the low, the forgotten child to heed,
To be the voice of the wounded and the weary,
To plant anew, a fresh and peaceful seed,
To dance the dance of God's own blessed Brid.'

Psalm (Psalm 104)

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
They flow in between the hills;
They give drink to all the beasts of the field;
The wild asses quench their thirst.
On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;
From the branches they sing their song.

From your dwelling you water the hills;
Earth drinks its fill of your gift.
You make the grass grow for the cattle
and the plants to serve our needs.

That we may bring forth bread from the earth
and wine to cheer our hearts;
Oil, to make our faces shine
and bread to strengthen our hearts.

The trees of the Lord drink their fill,
the cedars God planted in Lebanon;
There the birds build their nests;
On the treetop the stork has her home.
The goats find a home on the mountains
and the rabbits hide in the rocks.

You made the moon to mark the months;
the sun knows the time for its setting.
When you spread the darkness it is night
and all the beasts of the forest creep forth.
The young lions roar for their prey
and ask their food from God.
At the rising of the sun they steal away
and go to rest in their dens.
Men and women go out to their work;
to labour till evening falls.

How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.

Antiphon There lives the dearest, freshest,
deep down things.

Reading (*Isaiah 43:18-21; 44:3-4*)

No need to recall the past, no need to think
about what was done before. See, I am doing
a new deed, even now it comes to light; can
you not see it?

Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness,
paths in the wild. The wild beasts will
honour me, jackals and ostriches, because I
am putting water in the wilderness to give
my chosen people drink. The people I have
formed for myself will sing my praises.

Yes, I will pour out water on the thirsty soil,
streams on the dry ground. I will pour my
spirit on your descendants, my blessing on
your students. They shall grow like grass
where there is plenty of water, like poplars by
running streams.



IN
THE
SCHOOL



Silence ...

It is spring, Lord.
And my blood runs warm with the song of the
sap longing for a beauty I would become.
The buds are swelling on the bush,
and the sun is beginning to coax the colour
from where it's been curled against the cold.
There is a promise in the season I know no
name for except life,
and there is the mystery and the smile of it.
It is spring, Lord,
and something stirs in me,
reaching, stretching,

peaking through my defences, beckoning in
my laughter,
riding on past my fears, pulsing in my music;
and there is the mystery and the smile of it.
It is spring, Lord,
and I feel your power awakening within me.
Be with me in my reaching
so I will touch or be touched
this prayer time, this spring. Be a grace, a
warmth, a light to unfold my life to a new
beginning. (Anon)

German-Neues Testament

Find the following words

Epheser

Judas

Matthäus

Römer

Galater

Kolosser

Offenbarung

Timotheus

Hebräer

Korinther

Petrus

Titus

Jakobus

Lukas

Philemon

Johannes

Markus

Philipper

Y	S	R	Ö	M	E	R	A	B	R	R	P	R	H	S
H	V	E	V	D	L	F	K	I	G	Q	H	E	E	U
V	I	W	N	M	J	O	V	B	V	Z	I	S	B	R
O	F	F	E	N	B	A	R	U	N	G	L	S	R	T
I	K	M	D	X	A	U	G	T	M	N	I	O	Ä	E
K	G	Z	F	B	F	H	I	G	O	I	P	L	E	P
L	O	E	D	G	U	M	O	M	R	A	P	O	R	T
E	J	R	E	H	O	Y	E	J	Z	C	E	K	K	J
C	P	B	I	T	H	L	U	R	T	K	R	Z	I	U
S	F	H	H	N	I	S	U	B	O	K	A	J	A	D
K	U	E	E	H	T	S	U	Ä	H	T	T	A	M	A
N	U	K	P	S	A	H	J	K	Y	T	I	Y	T	S
S	R	C	R	K	E	R	E	G	A	L	A	T	E	R
B	N	J	U	A	P	R	F	R	N	H	Z	P	U	E
N	X	L	L	A	M	G	M	Z	B	J	M	Z	C	S



Wednesday, 2 February

Assembly for Catholic Schools Week

Introduction

Students are invited to bring holy water from their home or local parish church and place it on the sacred place in the bowl provided. Decorate the space with a candle, Bible and a cross. A special candle remembering grandparents, living and deceased can be lit at this assembly. If a member of staff is a grandparent they could light this candle.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, we gather today in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We pour the different holy waters into the bowl reminding us that we are baptised into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We are interconnected. This week we celebrate Catholic Schools Week in our country. We are glad that we belong to this school. We give thanks for all the people who belong to our school community and who help make it a very special place. Help us to always be the very best that we can be and to try to live as you want us to. Amen.

Suggested Opening Hymns

- ▶ 'Time And Time Again'
- ▶ 'We Are The Body Of Christ'
- ▶ 'Christ Be Our Light'

Reading A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy (2 *Tim* 1:6-8, 13-14)

I am reminding you to fan into a flame the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power, and love, and self-control. So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner; but with me, bear the hardships for the sake of the good news, relying on the power of God. Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me, in the faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. You have been trusted to look after something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

▶ 'On Eagle's Wings'

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke (17:5-10)

'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'Were your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and plant in the sea", and it would obey you.'

'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal immediately?" Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty."'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

or

Glory to you, Lord



IN THE SCHOOL

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction The Lord is eager to help and bless us, and so we bring our prayers before him.

Response *Lord, graciously hear us.*

1. We pray for our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, for our bishops, priests and all the teachers of the faith. We remember the order: may they be strengthened in their ministry to others.
Lord, hear us.
2. We pray for families everywhere, that they may be happy and blessed. *Lord, hear us.*
3. For the nurturing of human life in all possible ways, for an end to war and violence, and for a distribution of the world's resources. *Lord, hear us.*
4. For all those who have gone before us on life's journey – we remember past pupils and staff of May they be welcomed into their heavenly home.
Lord, hear us.
5. We pray for all those who have contributed to the life and story of *Lord, hear us.*
6. We pray for all our grandparents, living and deceased. May their light of faith live on in our lives now and forever.
Lord, hear us.

Reflection

A baby boy was born,
In a manger he did lay,
Wise men came to worship him,
This child in the hay.

A pre-teen only twelve years old
Went missing for three days,
His parents found him quizzing
Religious leaders and their ways.

A carpenter from Nazareth
Claimed to be God's Son,
Said he was the only way
To reach the holy one.

A man up on a hill
Died between two thieves,
Roman soldiers killed him,
No crime had he conceived.

A corpse lay in a grave
Outside Jerusalem's walls,
Most thought he was dead for good,
No decay he saw at all.

Over five hundred people saw him,
This man raised up to life,
In forty days God lifted him
Back up into the sky.

Two millennia later
This man is still alive,
He stands and knocks at your heart's door,
Will you let him come inside? (*Anon*)

Closing Prayer

Loving God, we give thanks for teachers, parents, priests, and all the people that make our school the wonderful place that it is today. We remember all those who were part of this school community in the past. We look forward to keeping the light of faith burning into the future.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Do You Believe in Food?

Food is an important ingredient in all our lives and it is interesting to chat with students about what foods they like to cook and eat. Do we ever think of cooking as a way to discuss religious traditions? In the pages that follow, Patricia Kieran and Catherine McNally offer us some cookery ideas that allow for opportunities to explore a faith story or religious tradition where food is a key ingredient. Recall the story and explore its meaning with the students. You may identify how members of a faith community celebrate this story or sacred text through religious festivals or ritual or faith-based traditions. You may try some of these during a Home Economics class.

You will need

- 1 packet strawberry jelly
- 1 packet lime jelly
- 1 packet blackcurrant jelly
- 1 packet orange jelly
- Boiling water (attention to safety)

Noah's Rainbow Jelly

This food activity is linked to the biblical story of Noah and the rainbow (*Gen 9:13-16*). *'I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world. Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings.'*

When you are making this rainbow jelly you might read the story of the flood to the students and discuss how the beautiful rainbow symbolises the covenant or relationship of love between God and God's people. Whenever we see a rainbow we are reminded of God's love. This simple-to-make jelly requires a kettle and a container to melt the jelly in. It is best if you have a heat-resistant plastic beaker for each student in your class so that you can add the different layers of jelly to all of the beakers at the same time. If you have access to a freezer it quickens the time in which the jelly will set. You can still make this without having access to a freezer but you will need to add different layers of jelly to the plastic beakers over a number of days to allow each layer to set.

Method Mix the strawberry jelly in a bowl with the required amount of boiling water specified on the packet. Let it cool. Pour a little of the cooling jelly mixture into the bottom of the plastic cups you have set aside for your class. Place these cups in the freezer and let them cool for a further 30 minutes until the jelly begins to set. Repeat the process with the lime jelly, adding the lime jelly on top of the lightly set strawberry jelly. Repeat the process with the blackcurrant and orange jelly. (Make sure the jelly layers are cool before adding next layer.)

You will need

- 100g butter
- 300g chopped onions
- 4 garlic cloves or 2 tsp of garlic puree
- 1 tsp salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1.5 litre of chicken or vegetable stock (use stock cubes)
- 900g frozen peas
- 3 tbsp chopped coriander, watercress or parsley, as preferred
- Optional: Add 1 finely chopped deseeded green or red chilli. Ensure that an adult deseeded and chops the chilli, for safety reasons.

St Patrick's Pea-Green Soup

St Patrick is the Patron Saint of Ireland and his feastday on 17 March is a national holiday. It is interesting to note that the word 'holiday' originates from the word 'holy day' and that in former times the only holidays that people had were holy days. This pea-green soup capitalises on the link between St Patrick and his work as an evangelist. Tradition tells us that he used the green shamrock as a catechetical resource to teach people about the Trinity. In popular imagination Patrick is associated with the colour green, which is the colour of life and growth. In popular culture the colour green is also associated with all things Irish. Patrick is linked by tradition to many churches and parishes throughout Ireland and there are many recipes associated with St Patrick's Day, such as boxty, potato cakes, colcannon etc. If you are making this pea soup with your class you will need access to a cooker and a liquidiser. This recipe should give twenty students a cup full of soup each. Note: students may not like the taste of chilli so it might be best to omit it from the recipe if the students are not used to hot and spicy foods.

Method Melt the butter. Add the onion, garlic and, if desired, chilli. Sweat over a low heat for 3 or 4 minutes until the onions are soft. Pour in the stock and bring the soup to the boil. Add the peas and boil for about 2 or 3 minutes until the peas are soft. Add the coriander/cress/parsley. Finally blend in a liquidiser until smooth.

You will need

- 1/4 cup butter
- 4 cups white marshmallows
- 6 cups Rice Krispies
- Packet of mini eggs to put in the nests

Easter Nests

Easter is the central Christian festival and celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Easter Story which tells of the resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of the Christian faith. Read an account of this story to students (*Mt 28:1-10; Lk 24:1-12; Mk 16:1-8; Jn 20:1-10*). St Paul says, 'If Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe (*1 Cor 15:14*). Easter is the Christian festival which celebrates the new life that all Christians are called to share with the risen Christ who conquered death. Symbols of new life abound at Easter (rabbits, chicks, lambs) and in this Easter nest recipe links are made between the Christian faith and the new growth and life evident in the season of spring. Eggs are ancient symbols of new life and the egg features as a food in the Seder or Passover meal. Eggs generally symbolise potency and birth. Easter eggs are symbols of the rock of the tomb out of which the resurrected Christ emerged. From early times Easter eggs were painted in bright colours, blessed, and were given to friends as Easter gifts. The resurrection celebrates the new life that Christians are called to share with the triune God. As you add in white marshmallows to this recipe you can remind the students that white is the liturgical colour for Easter.

Method Melt the butter in a microwave or a saucepan. Add marshmallows and stir until melted. Remove from heat. Add Rice Krispies. Stir well. Form your bird nest (you may wish to put the mixture into bun cases) and when cooled, add in your mini eggs. (Makes twenty+ nests.)



You will need

- 2 large cooking apples
- 50g blackberries (washed)
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 lemon/lemon juice
- 1–2 tablespoons caster sugar (to own taste)

For the crumble

- 150g flour
- 75g margarine
- 50g sugar

Creation Crumble

'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plant yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' (Gen 1:11)

This activity is suited to autumn, when apples and berries are in plentiful supply. Read the story of creation to the students and discuss the variety of fruits and vegetables produced locally. If you have Internet access, you may want to show the creation animation on <http://kids4truth.com/dyna/creation.aspx>.

A savory crumble can also be made, omitting the sugar in the crumble mixture. Pay attention to safety of students preparing fruit or vegetables with a knife or peeler.

Method Preheat oven to 180 C/gas mark 4. Wash, peel, core and slice the apples, place in a bowl of water and lemon juice (this prevents the apples from browning). Drain apples. Mix sugar and apples together. Place apples on the bottom of an ovenproof dish. Sieve flour into a bowl, stir in sugar, and rub in margarine until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Pour crumble over the fruit. Bake for 30–40 minutes.

You will need

- 2 carrots – scraped & sliced
- 4 sticks celery – washed & sliced
- 4 medium leeks – trimmed, washed & sliced
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 tablespoons wholemeal flour
- 1 clove garlic – crushed
- 1 400g (14oz) can chopped tomatoes
- 1 400g (14oz) can butter beans rinsed under cold water
- 1 teaspoon yeast extract
- Half teaspoon mixed herbs
- Salt & pepper to season

For the Topping

- 50 g (2oz) margarine
- 50 g (2oz) medium porridge oats
- 25 g (1oz) sesame seeds
- 25 g (1oz) chopped nuts
- 50 g (2oz) strong Cheddar cheese – grated

Vegetable Crumble

Cooking Time: 20 minutes. Serves: 4–6

Method Steam the vegetables until they are just tender. Drain them well. Meanwhile heat the oil in a large pan and stir in the flour. Add the garlic and the tomatoes, butter beans, yeast extract and herbs and stir well together. Gently stir in the steamed vegetables. Check for seasoning and add salt if required and freshly ground black pepper. Place mixture in an oven-proof dish.

To make the topping, melt the margarine, stir in the oats, sesame seeds and nuts and about two-thirds of the cheese. Sprinkle the topping over the vegetables and sprinkle the remaining cheese over the top. Bake for 20 minutes at 375 F (190 C/gas mark 5) until the cheese has melted and the top is golden brown.



IN THE SCHOOL

Wednesday, 2 February

Feast of the Encounter of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple



© Wikimedia Commons

The Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is celebrated on 2 February. The feast marks an event which took place early in the life of Jesus <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus>. It is one of the twelve Great Feasts http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Feasts_of_the_Orthodox_Church of the Eastern Orthodox Church http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church, and is at times called *Hypapante*, which means 'Meeting' in Greek.

The following has been adapted from the Melkite rite and offers a rich resource for celebrating this feast.

Read the following and answer the various questions throughout the text.

Introduction Forty days after Christ was born he was presented to God in the Jerusalem Temple according to the Mosaic Law. At this time as well, his Mother Mary underwent the ritual purification, and offered the sacrifices as prescribed in the Law. Thus, forty days after Christmas, on 2 February, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation called the Encounter (Meeting or Presentation).

The meeting of Christ by Simeon and the prophetess Anna (*Luke 2:22-36*) is the main event of the feast. It was 'revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ (*Luke 2:26*), and inspired by the same Spirit he came to the Temple where he met the newborn Messiah, took him in his arms and said the words which are now chanted each evening at the end of the service:

'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou has prepared in the presence of all people, a light for the revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to thy people Israel' (*Luke 2:29-32*).

What do we mean by 'newly present'?

On this day the Church remembers and makes newly present the Encounter of the Lord in the Temple.

- When we make something newly present, we bring it into our lives as it is happening to us at this very time. It is not a feast that we celebrate historically – but the celebration of an event that we experience in the present here and now. It becomes an opportunity for us to enter with the joyful expectation and holy anticipation that Simeon manifested on this day, into the very life of the Lord and to become a 'partaker of the divine nature' (*2 Peter 14*)

Why do we celebrate the feast?

- The celebration of the feast emphasises the fact that Christ, the Son of the Word of God through whom the world was created, now is held as an infant in Simeon's hands; this same Son of God, the Giver of the Law, now himself fulfills the Law, carried in arms as a human child.
- The celebration confirms that it is he whom the Law and the Prophets have spoken about, incarnate for our sake and saving mankind.

What is the feast announcing?

Discuss the following

- Jesus is proclaimed as the Savior before his people who have expected him.
- He comes in fulfillment of the Mosaic Law made for sinners.



The Icon of the Encounter

Gaze at the icon for a few minutes ...

Notice In the icon we see the presentation of Jesus Christ in the Temple with the Virgin Mary, St Joseph, Priest Simeon, and Prophetess Anna.

What special hymns do we sing that tell us what the feast is all about?

- The special hymns we sing are the Troparion, Kontakion and the Hirmos.

Go over the words and learn to sing these hymns:

- **Troparion** Hail, O Full of Grace, Virgin and Mother of God, from you has arisen the Son of Justice, Christ our God, enlightening those who stand in darkness. You too, O just elder Simeon, rejoice, for you carried in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, who grants us resurrection.
- **Kontakion** O Christ Our God, who through your birth have sanctified the virginal womb and have blessed the arms of Simeon, you have come today to save us! When wars prevail, keep your people in peace and strengthen our public authorities in every good deed, for you alone are the lover of mankind.
- **Hirmos** O Mother of Our God, hope and strength of all Christians, watch over those who place their hope in you, O most pure. Let us, O faithful, glorify the First-Born, the eternal Word of God, born of the Virgin all-pure for we have seen beyond the shadow and the letter of the Law a sign of Christ in these words: 'Everything male opening the womb shall be called Holy to the Lord!'

Why is the feast so important?

Discuss the following

- After Simeon sees the Lord, he prays, *'Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your words for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all peoples: a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel'* (Luke 2:29-32).

- Now that Simeon has seen the Saviour, the goal of his longing and the purpose of his life is fulfilled. He is ready to die.

What is the lesson for us in Simeon's words?

- If the Saviour is the goal of our longing as he was for Simeon, when we encounter him we are able to depart from the world in peace.
- Also, while we still live we can also part company with the cares, anxieties and misplaced priorities of the secular world, and take for ourselves the liberating values of the Gospels: 'The glorious freedom of the students of God' (*Romans 8:21*).

What is our role in the Encounter?

Discuss the following

How can we prepare our hearts to encounter Christ.

- Inspired by the same Holy Spirit as Simeon, and led by the same Spirit into the Church of the Messiah, the members of the Church also can claim their own 'meeting' with the Lord and so also can witness that they too can 'depart in peace' since their eyes have seen the salvation of God in the person of his Christ.

Some things to do

- Attend the parish Mass for the feast as a family
- Read and meditate upon the scripture readings for the day:
 - *Hebrews 7:7-17*
 - *Luke 2:22-40*
- Meditate upon the icon of the Encounter
- Make an offering of candles for the blessing of candles in honour of Christ, the Enlightener of the world. Today Jesus is called the Light of the nations by Simeon, so this feast is also the day that candles are blessed. The liturgy of the Light begins with the lighting and blessing of candles and continues with a procession.



IN THE SCHOOL

Thursday, 3 February

Feastday of St Blaise

Patron of Throat Illnesses

Many Catholics might remember St Blaise's **feastday** because of the Blessing of the Throats that took place on this day. Two **candles** are blessed, held slightly open, and pressed against the throat as the **blessing** is said. St Blaise's protection of those with throat troubles apparently comes from a legend that a boy with a fishbone stuck in his throat was brought to him. The boy was about to die when St Blaise healed him. Very few facts are known about St Blaise. We believe he was a **bishop** of Sebastea in **Armenia** who was martyred under the reign of Licinius in the early fourth century.

The legend of his **life** that sprang up in the eighth century tell us that he was born into a rich and noble **family** who raised him as a Christian. After becoming a bishop, a new **persecution** of Christians began. He received a message from **God** to go into the hills to escape persecution. Men hunting in the mountains discovered a cave surrounded by wild animals who were sick. Among them Blaise walked unafraid, curing them of their illnesses. Recognising Blaise as a bishop, they captured him to take him back for trial. On the way back, he talked a wolf into releasing a pig that belonged to a poor woman. When Blaise was sentenced to be starved to death, the woman, in gratitude, sneaked into the prison with food and candles. Finally Blaise was killed by the governor.

Blaise is the patron saint of wild animals because of his care for them and of those with throat maladies.

Prayer St Blaise, pray for us that we may not suffer from illnesses of the throat and pray that all who are suffering be healed by God's love. Amen.



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Activities

1. Examine the life of St Blaise and try to find out more about him.
2. Take time as St Blaise did to find out how you can help wild animals. Find out what is being done to support and protect the wildlife in your area. There is wildlife everywhere, even in cities. Even a birdfeeder can help God's creatures survive.
3. Using the bolded words in the passage, create a sentence with each word:



My place in the Catholic Family

An identity-forming and encouraging experience

Lesson Plan Objectives

For the students to:

- Generate ideas that relate to the topic of identity
- Identify themselves as being shaped in a particular way by their own families, their personal stories and relationships
- Be familiar with texts by two popes in relation to young people in Ireland
- Describe their connections with other people and God in their faith communities
- Reflect on ways to foster their relationship with God and other people in their faith communities.

Introduction

Brainstorm on the topic of identity:

- From where do I get my identity?
- Who fosters my identity?
- Does my faith give me a sense of identity?

Development

Identify some of the people who form that sense of identity and how they do so, either in positive or negative ways.

Introduce the following three texts either on an IWB or a handout:

- A.** When I look at you, I see the Ireland of the future. Tomorrow, you will be the living force of your country; you will decide what Ireland will be. Tomorrow, as technicians or teachers, nurses or secretaries, farmers or tradesmen, doctors or engineers, priests or religious – tomorrow you will have the power to make dreams come true. Tomorrow, Ireland will depend on you ...¹
- B.** Young people of Ireland, I love you ! Young people of Ireland, I bless you!²

- C.** ... seek a personal relationship with him ... because he will never betray your trust. He alone can satisfy your deepest longings and give your lives their fullest meaning ... Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and his goodness, and shelter the flame of faith in your hearts.³

Focus questions

1. What are your first impressions having read these texts?
2. Do they have any relevance to your life?
3. Who do you think wrote them?
(A and B: John Paul II's homily to the young people of Ireland in Galway, 1979.
C: Benedict XVI in his letter to the Catholics of Ireland, 2010.)
4. Do you feel that these statements invite you to have a part to play in the future identity of the Catholic Church, and if so, how?

You may wish to have the pupils listen to the homily of John Paul II to the young people of Ireland in 1979; it is available on: http://catholicbishops.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=874:september-1979-visit-of-pope-john-paul-ii-to-ireland&catid=59:audio.

Conclusion

- Write the main points from the discussion on the board.
- Write a letter in response to the Pope's letter to your local Bishop or Parish Priest. In the letter, share some of the main points of the discussions that were held in your class. Offer them some real suggestion on how the local church can help you to 'keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and his goodness, and shelter the flame of faith in your hearts'.⁴

¹ John Paul II (1979), Mass for the Young People of Ireland, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19790930_irlanda-galway-giovani_en.html (Last accessed 10 October 2010), n.1.

² Ibid., n.6.

³ Benedict XVI (2010), Pastoral Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20100319_church-ireland_en.html (Last accessed 10 October 2010), n.9.

⁴ Ibid.



Geography of Palestine

The Geographical Setting



Israel/Palestine

In this piece on Jesus the Galilean we are looking at Jesus in his historical, cultural, religious and geographical context; we are trying to situate what Jesus said and did in terms of the time and place in which he lived. We will look at the main geographical features of the land of Israel, also known as Palestine or The Holy Land – the land which Ernest Renan once called the Fifth Gospel. Today if you fly to Israel you land in the city of Tel Aviv, which is located on the eastern side of the Mediterranean.

Question

By what other name is Palestine known?

Coastal Plain

The coastal plain extends from north to south and is a relatively fertile plain. Jaffa oranges, for example, are from this coastal area. It varies in width from a few miles to thirty miles as you move to the southern extreme where it merges into the Negev Desert sand dunes. The picture on the right is of the more fertile northern zone. Looking southeast along the coastal plain just south of Mount Carmel you can see the various fields and orchards. In the distance you can see the hills rising beyond the coastal plain. These hills are the main feature of the geography of the land of Israel. They form a ridge running north/south down the spine of the country. At the northern end of this range of hills is Galilee; in the centre you have the hill-country of Samaria. Jerusalem is located just south of the hill-country of Samaria and still further south are the Judean hills. The best way to think about the geography of Israel/Palestine is to think of four strips running north and south: the first is the Coastal Plain; the second the Central hill-country; the third the Jordan River Valley; and the fourth the Jordanian Hills on the far side of the Jordan River Valley (also called Transjordan).

Question

Explain where Jerusalem is located.





Sea of Galilee

Here we are approaching the Sea of Galilee from the southwest. It is a freshwater lake which supports a considerable fishing industry. The major town below is Tiberias. It was a town of significance in Jesus' time as well. Capernaum is another town of historical significance that features in the stories of Jesus in the Gospels. It is also on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, north of Tiberias.

Activity

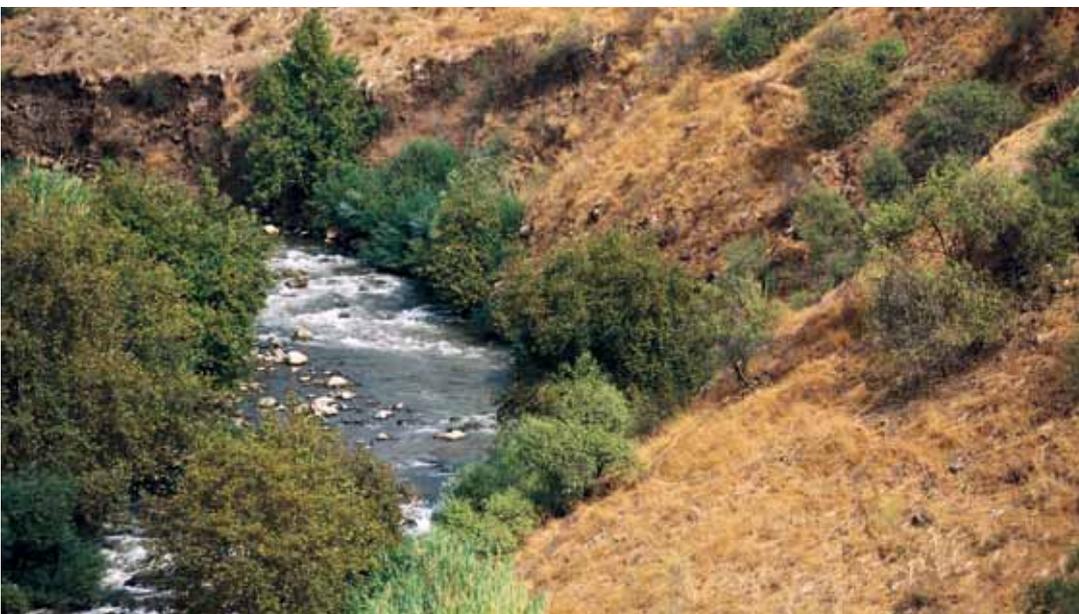
Write a short paragraph on the Sea of Galilee.

Jordan River Valley

Heading south from Galilee, we move along the Jordan River Valley. This valley is heavily irrigated, as can be seen in the picture of the river Jordan. To the right is the Central hill-country rising above the Jordan Valley plain. The Jordan River Valley is 689 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee and descends down 1,312 feet below sea level at the Dead Sea, which is the lowest place on the surface of the Earth.

Question

How many feet below sea level is the River Valley located?



Staff and Board of Management/Governors Reflection

The following might form the basis of a short reflection on Catholic Schools with staff and members of the Boards of Management/Governors during Catholic Schools Week 2011.

During the week dedicated to reflection upon Catholic Schools, the following pages invite you, as a Board of Management/Governors and staff, to reflect upon two of the four questions in relation to your own particular situation. It is suggested that you give a period of time to reflect on these issues during a board meeting and a staff meeting.

This year the theme chosen for Catholic Schools Week is **‘Catholic Schools – Rooted in Jesus Christ’**. This theme develops our discussions from last year and roots the Catholic school explicitly in the person of Jesus Christ. To begin, you are invited to return briefly to the discussion that was held last year around the notion of what it means to be ‘Catholic’ and to expand on that conversation if possible. The following may help to focus your discussion:

Catholicism is not a stand-alone reality. In his book *Catholicism* (1994), Richard McBrien stresses that the word ‘Catholic’ is a qualification of Christian and Christian is a qualification of religious and religious is a qualification of human. What is our understanding of the word ‘Catholic’? Does it refer to a person, or a community, a parish, a family that is rooted in the Christian tradition of Roman Catholicism?

Catholic education in general and Catholic schooling in particular has a history and a tradition that is handed down from one generation to the next. Each generation needs to reflect on that history and tradition, including the writings that have grown up around it, to see how relevant it is for the contemporary situation and how it can be developed in the future. The following extract is taken from *The Catholic School* (1977), and it focuses on that notion of Catholic Schools as rooted in Jesus Christ:

34. Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps people to direct their thought, action and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes their norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision makes the school ‘Catholic’; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal.
35. The Catholic school is committed thus to the development of the whole person, since in Christ, the Perfect Person, all human values find their fulfilment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all people has its origin in the figure of Christ. He is the One who ennobles humankind, gives meaning to human life, and is the Model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils.⁵

⁵ Franchi, L. (ed.), *An Anthology of Catholic Teaching on Education*, London: Septer, 2007, p. 130.



Questions for discussion:

1. 'Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school.' Each person works out of a certain philosophy of education. Where is Christ within that philosophy for you?
2. Benedict XVI in his letter to the Irish Church stated 'Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and his goodness, and shelter the flame of faith in your hearts'.⁶ How do we as a staff or Board of Management/Governors cultivate an environment to allow this to happen in our school?
3. How do we encourage our students and staff to bear witness to Christ as teacher and cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with the particular mission to serve all people? Does our school have a transformative role?

You may wish to begin or conclude your discussions with the following prayers:

Staff Prayer

*Jesus, our teacher and our Lord! You taught with authority and compassion. You touched the lives of so many people who sought understanding, healing and, most of all, someone who would listen. Help us to be that voice of authority and compassion in our school community.
May we touch lightly with your grace and your love the lives and spirits of those we teach.
May we always seek to see the best and expect only the best in each other and in our students.
May our hearts be open always to your voice and your love and may we, like all those called to teach unto justice, shine like the stars of heaven as beacons of hope in our school communities.
Amen.*

Board of Management/ Governors' Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ, we gather together in your name to work for the good of our school.
We know that you are with us as we reflect on the issues before us at this meeting.
May we be guided in all that we do by the gifts of wisdom and understanding, of right judgement and courage, bestowed upon us by your Spirit.
May the outcome of our work continue to ensure that our school community is a place of openness, compassion, justice and peace.
Help us to keep you ever at the centre of all that we do. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

⁶ Benedict XVI (2010), op. cit.



Catholic Schools Week in the Parish

Mass to Celebrate the Beginning of Catholic Schools Week, Sunday, 30 January

Entrance Antiphon

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Roman Missal*, p. 292)

Opening Comment

Our liturgy today marks the start of Catholic Schools Week. 'Catholic Schools – Rooted in Jesus Christ' is this year's theme. As we gather for our celebration of the Eucharist we give thanks for the many ways our schools have served our community, enabling it to be rooted in Jesus Christ – the seeds of faith sown, the seedlings of faith nurtured, and the blossoming of faith encouraged through recognition and affirmation. Yes, it is fitting to become aware of our roots, to give thanks and to celebrate.

Penitential Rite

C vii (*Roman Missal*, p. 394)

Opening Prayer

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Roman Missal*, p. 292) Second option [*Father in heaven, from the days of Abraham and Moses ...*]

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading *Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13*

The Prophet Zephaniah writes at a time when the Law of God had faded into the background. Zephaniah calls God's people to a new consciousness, calling them back to integrity and humility, to an awareness of God. This understanding must permeate every aspect of their lives. They are to bear witness to their God by living with justice and uprightness.

Second Reading *1 Corinthians 1:26-31*

St Paul addresses the factions that were emerging in that local church in Corinth. Some seeking miracles and others wisdom, Paul points out that the followers of the Way preach 'a crucified Christ'. Paul reminds them that it was not their nobility, their influence or their human wisdom

that was the reason they were called to discipleship, but God's grace. Jesus must be their wisdom, influence and boast.

Gospel *Matthew 5:1-12*

The Beatitudes are central to the preaching of Jesus. The context is formal. Jesus is deliberate. He went up the hill, he sat down, he allowed the disciples to join him, and then he spoke. All was well worked out. This formal teaching was not just for the instruction of the disciples, but was to be integrated into their lives so that they would be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. By our living and integration of what Jesus taught on the hillside, we, like the disciples, are witnesses to the happiness associated with the Kingdom of Heaven.

Homily

As a child and a teenager, I always questioned the dictum: 'School days are the happiest days of your life', and wondered had those using it really any knowledge of what they were talking about?

In the Gospel this morning, Jesus went up the hill and sat down. Sitting down was the official posture of a teacher in his day. We are told that Jesus was joined by his disciples. Jesus, the teacher, was schooling his students. During this lesson on the hill Jesus refers to being happy nine times. Jesus desired happiness for his disciples. The happiness Jesus spoke of was not a transitory, fleeting moment, having a 'feel good' sensation, but rather something much deeper and more profound. Beatitude happiness emerges from an evolving awareness of belonging to God, knowing that we are God's daughters and sons, God's beloved. Beatitude happiness is a deep, enduring and wholesome sense of blessedness that lasts and sustains us through life and leads to a faith-filled appreciation of everlasting life.

Jesus is our teacher. Pope Benedict XVI highlighted this in his letter to the Catholics of Ireland last March. He addressed encouraging words to our students and



young people; he wrote, 'Seek a personal relationship with him (Jesus) ... he will never betray your trust! He alone can satisfy your deepest longings and give your lives their fullest meaning ... Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and his goodness, and shelter the flame of faith in your hearts'.

Jesus instructed the disciples to go teach, a mantle we all share. The Catholic School has been, and continues to be, very important in the faith formation of our communities. We give thanks and celebrate the dedication of teachers, Boards of Management, Trustee Bodies and Parent Organisations. As we celebrate and give thanks, we look to the future and pray that our parishes and parish schools always be rooted in Jesus Christ, so that we can experience that deep happiness Jesus desired for us when he taught on the hillside. Rooted in Jesus Christ, we know that we are God's sons and daughters. Rooted in Jesus Christ, we are committed to justice and integrity. Rooted in Jesus Christ, our lives reflect the virtues of the Beatitudes. Rooted in Jesus Christ, school days and all our days are happy!

The General Intercessions

Introduction

As we hunger and thirst for what is right, we place our prayer before God, confident that we will be heard and answered.

Response *Lord, graciously hear us.*

1. For God's people, that living according to the Beatitudes, they may be strengthened in faith and be a source of inspiration for others. *Lord, hear us.*
2. For politicians and public servants, that in their administration they remain vigilant to the needs of those who are deprived, vulnerable and in need of special care. *Lord, hear us.*
3. For those who carry heavy crosses, those who are ill, those who mourn, those who cry out in pain, worry or torment, that they may be comforted, understood and healed. *Lord, hear us.*

4. For all who are involved in the delivery of Catholic education: parents, teachers, trustees, Boards of Management and parish communities, that working in unison their efforts may reflect Gospel values and be an expression of the Kingdom of God. *Lord, hear us.*
5. For pupils and students, that the spirit of God rest upon them to direct their learning and studies, so that they may grow in wisdom and knowledge, with a deep appreciation for the Christian values of love and service. *Lord, hear us.*
6. For our dead, that as reward for their goodness may they now inhabit the promised Kingdom of Heaven and live in the peace of God. *Lord, hear us.*

Conclusion

Father, we the humble of the earth, who seek integrity and strive to achieve justice, make our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ in whom we are rooted and who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Prayer over Gifts

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Roman Missal*, p. 292)

Preface – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
VI Preface 34 (*Roman Missal*, p. 437)

Communion Rite

Communion Antiphon

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Roman Missal*, p. 293) Second Option [*Happy are the poor in Spirit ...*]

Prayer after Communion

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (*Roman Missal*, p. 293)

Concluding Rite

Blessing

Prayer over People 19 (*Roman Missal*, p. 383)





Catholic Schools Week 2011
Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2011

Rooted in Jesus Christ

30 January–5 February 2011



Cut along the dotted line and
wrap around your prayer candle.
Be sure to remove wrapper before
candle burns to level of paper.

The members of the Steering Committee are:

Mr Lloyd Bracken, Monsignor Jim Cassin, Fr Ger Condon, Fr Martin Delaney,
Fr Michael Drumm, Fr Paul Farren, Ms Tonya Hanly, Ms Maura Hyland,
Mr Martin Long, Ms Maeve Mahon, Ms Bernie Martin, Mr Tony McCann,
Mr Michael Redmond, Ms Maria Spring, Ms Orla Walsh and Sr Eithne Woulfe.

Rooted in Jesus Christ

Resources for the Post-Primary School Community: Home, School & Parish

30 January–5 February 2011