



Moment Two: Families of Faith

Fifth and Sixth Class (P7)

Background for Teachers

[N]o family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love. ... All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families, and every family must feel this constant impulse. Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. (*Amoris Laetitia*, 325)

Pope Francis is the Bishop of Rome and the visible head of the Roman Catholic Church. According to recent Vatican figures, Pope Francis ministers to over 1,285 million Catholics across the world.¹ To keep in touch with all his flock, the Pope uses a variety of mediums. He addresses weekly audiences in person, he tweets, he broadcasts, and he writes documents and letters.

In 2016, the Pope wrote an apostolic exhortation, which is a document highlighting for Catholics the teaching of the Church. The title of this document is *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*. It teaches on love in the family. It recognises that all families experience challenges and difficulties, and significantly that no family is perfect! 'Perfect families do not exist ... This is a great legacy that we can give to our children, a very good lesson: we make mistakes, yes; we have problems, yes. But we know that is not really what counts. We know that mistakes, problems and conflicts are an opportunity to draw closer to others, to draw closer to God.'²

In August 2018, World Meeting of Families will be celebrated in Dublin, and throughout Ireland. The World Meeting of Families, which is held every three years, celebrates family life and the Church's commitment to supporting families. The theme chosen by Pope Francis for World Meeting of Families 2018 is The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World.

Catholic Schools Week 2018, in preparation for this unique jamboree, will celebrate the family. Pope Francis reminds us in *Amoris Laetitia* that the Church is a family of families. This week we will celebrate love in the family at home, the school family, the parish family and the universal family.

1. *The Pontifical Yearbook 2017 and the Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae* 2015, 06.04.2017.

2. Pope Francis' address to Festival of Families, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, 27 September 2015.



From the Curriculum: Level 4

Christian Faith

Mystery of God

- God's love is constant, unconditional and everlasting (Is 54:8; Jer 31:3; CCC 220)
- God calls us into a covenant relationship, seeking a free and personal response (CCC 396)
- The Church supports and nourishes faith (CCC 181; Believing as an 'ecclesial act')

Mystery of the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is active and present in our world where there are people who work for justice, peace, human rights and the care of creation

Creation

- God created human beings to live in relationship/communion with God, with other people and with the earth

Mystery of the Church/Kingdom

- The Church is the body of Christ. The head of this Body is Christ and all the members share his Spirit (LG 7; CCC 787–95: Church as Mystery and Sacrament)
- All Christians are called to witness to their faith in Christ in word and deed (DP 59, 82; EN 5)

The Word of God

Bible

- God communicates with us in sacred scripture, in the works of creation, in the person of Jesus and in the ongoing presence of the Spirit (DV 3, 4, 6, 12; CCC 51–3, 60, 79, 104, 257: revelation)

Liturgy and Prayer

Mass

- The mass is the heart and summit of the Church's life (CCC 1407)
- At Mass we receive spiritual strength and nourishment to love God and our neighbour (CCC 1359–61; 1392)
- The celebration of the Eucharist challenges us to share the goods of the earth with everyone, especially the poor, and to be concerned for the well-being of all creation

Christian Morality

Human Dignity

- Every Christian is called to develop his/her own gifts and carry out his/her own responsibilities and so become holy (LG 39–41; AG 28)
- A person is more precious for who she/he is than for what she/he has (GS 35)

Social Teaching of the Church

- Worshipping God and working for justice go hand in hand (GS 43; Is 58:5–9; Am 5:21–4; Mic 6:8)



Monday: Our Family at Home

Reflective Quote

I thank God that many families, which are far from considering themselves perfect, live in love, fulfil their calling and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way. The Synod's reflections show us that there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems. (*Amoris Laetitia*, 57)

Consider

Today we are focusing on our own families. Families come in all shapes and sizes. Each family is unique and made up of the people who love and care for us. No family is perfect but Pope Francis tells us that all families should 'live in love'.

Explore

Discuss with the class the prominent qualities and characteristics of a loving family (e.g. love, kindness, forgiveness, compassion). Explore with the pupils what actions show these qualities and how they see them in their own families.

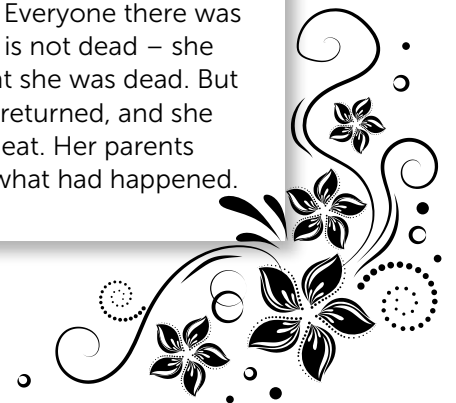
Make a list as a class and allow each pupil to record the qualities they can see in their families on Monday's activity page.

Activity

Read the story of the daughter of Jairus to the class (Lk 8:40–2;49–56).

The Daughter of Jairus

When Jesus returned to the other side of the lake, the people welcomed him, because they had all been waiting for him. Then a man named Jairus arrived. He was an official in the local synagogue. He threw himself down at Jesus' feet and begged him to go to his home, because his only daughter, who was twelve years old, was dying. As Jesus went along, the people were crowding him from every side. A messenger came from the official's house. 'Your daughter has died,' he told Jairus, 'don't bother the Teacher any longer.' But Jesus heard it and said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid; only believe, and she will be well.' When Jesus arrived at the house, he would not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother. Everyone there was crying and mourning for the child. Jesus said, 'Don't cry; the child is not dead – she is only sleeping!' They all made fun of him, because they knew that she was dead. But Jesus took her by the hand and called out, 'Get up, child!' Her life returned, and she got up at once, and Jesus ordered them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astounded, but Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened.





After reading the story of the daughter of Jairus, divide the class into groups. Assign each group one of the following characters:

- Her brother
- Her aunt
- A neighbour
- Her school friend
- Her grandfather

Assign one group the character of a reporter. They should devise questions to ask these characters in the following situation.

- A reporter comes to your door and asks you to tell 'your side of the story'. What would you say and how would you recount the story?

Give the children some time to devise their story and have one member of the group act out the character as they answer the reporter's questions.





Monday: Our Family at Home

Activity Page

Qualities of my Family at Home



Tuesday: Our School Family

Reflective Quote

Schools do not replace parents, but complement them. This is a basic principle: 'all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization.' (*Amoris Laetitia*, 84)

Consider

Our school is a family of friends, teachers and people who care for us. It is a place of love. The greatest commandment that Jesus gave us was to love one another. Loving everyone is not always easy and we have to try every day to love everyone around us and to remember our school is another family to which we belong.

Explore

On Monday we explored the qualities of a loving family and how we can see this in action in our homes. Discuss with the class what qualities and characteristics a good school family has. Explore with the pupils what actions might show these qualities and how we might see these in our school. Compare the characteristics and actions we can see in school to those we identified at home. Are there any the same or different?

Activity

There are many lessons we learn about love and family in school – some in the classroom, some in the yard or the hall and some on the sports fields. Break the class into groups, and ask them to discuss the following scenarios:

1. The junior infants teacher asks for volunteers to mind the class during break because it's raining and the little ones can't go outside. You want to spend the break with your friends. What do you do?
2. Your mother's friend has a little boy with special needs. During the summer, you played with him when he came over to your house. Now you're both in school and he wants to play with you. You want to hang out with your friends. What do you do?
3. Radu has just moved to Ireland with his family. He has no English and he doesn't know anyone. He also has scruffy clothes and second-hand runners. What do you do?
4. Teacher sends you into the classroom to get something and when you get there you notice one of your friends stealing some money from teacher's desk. What do you do?
5. One of the girls from your school is being called names by some of the boys on the school bus. The girl punches one of the boys and he is injured. She's now in trouble and might be suspended. Everyone is sticking up for the boy who got punched. What do you do?
6. On the way home, one of your friends takes a picture of another pupil and posts something hurtful on Instagram. What do you do?

Discuss these moral dilemmas with the pupils. Split the class into groups and assign each one a dilemma. Ask each group to describe how they should deal with the scenario, keeping in mind that our school is a family, and the actions and characteristics of a family previously explored.



Tuesday: Our School Family

Activity Page

1. The junior infants teacher asks for volunteers to mind the class during break because it's raining and the little ones can't go outside. You want to spend the break with your friends. What do you do?



2. Your mother's friend has a little boy with special needs. During the summer, you played with him when he came over to your house. Now you're both in school and he wants to play with you. You want to hang out with your friends. What do you do?



3. Radu has just moved to Ireland with his family. He has no English and he doesn't know anyone. He also has scruffy clothes and second-hand runners. What do you do?



4. Teacher sends you into the classroom to get something and when you get there you notice one of your friends stealing some money from teacher's desk. What do you do?



5. One of the girls from your school is being called names by some of the boys on the school bus. The girl punches one of the boys and he is injured. She's now in trouble and might be suspended. Everyone is sticking up for the boy who got punched. What do you do?



6. On the way home, one of your friends takes a picture of another pupil and posts something hurtful on Instagram. What do you do?



Thursday: Our Parish Family

Reflective Quote

The main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony. (*Amoris Laetitia*, 202)

Consider

We are born into our families but, as followers of Jesus, we belong to a bigger family and a community of believers or Christians. At a local level, this family is our parish. Our parish is our family of faith. As members of this faith family and followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to gather together to pray and to live out our faith by caring for all the members of our faith family.

Explore

Explore with the pupils, through discussion and investigation, the school and/or their home parish.

Items to explore include:

- The name of the parish and the churches in it
- A brief history of the parish
- Parish clergy and sisters
- Mass times

Activity

Create a poster/fact file for the parish noticeboard containing some of the following information from your investigation:

- The name of the parish and the churches in it
- A brief history of the parish
- Parish clergy and sisters
- Mass times
- Details of contact for baptisms and weddings
- Chair of the parish council/parish finance council/parish pastoral council
- The child safeguarding person
- Parish secretary and parish office times
- Details of voluntary organisations working in the parish (e.g. Cura, Accord, Society of St Vincent de Paul)
- Other pertinent organisations

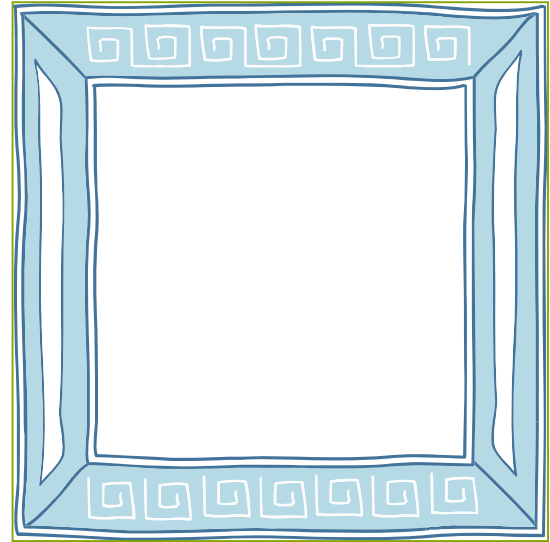
You'll probably need the assistance of the parish priest or the curate and others involved in the parish to complete this project.

Additionally, you could invite some of the members of the parish committees or organisations listed on the parish poster to talk about the work that they do for the parish family. Ask them to speak for five to ten minutes. Prepare some questions in advance for some of the class to ask when they have finished speaking.

Thursday: Our Parish Family

Activity Page

Our Parish Family Fact File





Friday: Our World Family

Reflective Quote

The better we live on this earth, the greater the happiness we will be able to share with our loved ones in heaven. The more we are able to mature and develop in this world, the more gifts will we be able to bring to the heavenly banquet. (*Amoris Laetitia*, 202)

Consider

As well as being part of a family at home, in school and in our parish, we are part of a world family. As a world family, we have a responsibility to care for the world we all share, the world God created for us. This can mean planet earth itself or all the people and creatures on it. Either way, we are all one family here on earth and Jesus asks us to care for and love one another and the world he created for us.

Explore

In 2016, Pope Francis wrote a document to remind Catholics of the teachings of the Church. The title of this document is *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*. It teaches us about love in the family. It reminds us that all families experience challenges and difficulties, and that no family is perfect! Pope Francis said, 'Perfect families do not exist ... a very good lesson: we make mistakes, yes; we have problems, yes. But we know that is not really what counts. We know that mistakes, problems and conflicts are an opportunity to draw closer to others, to draw closer to God.'

In August 2018, the ninth World Meeting of Families will be celebrated in Dublin and throughout Ireland. The World Meeting of Families, which is held every three years, celebrates family life and the Church's commitment to supporting families. The theme chosen by Pope Francis for World Meeting of Families 2018 is The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World.

- What do you think the World Meeting of Families will be about?
- Who is it for?
- What activities and events will there be?
- How can we get involved?

Find out more about the meeting at: www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/

Activity

Make an invitation to the World Meeting of Families using Friday's activity page. What information do we need to make an invite? Draw the logo for the World Meeting of Families on the invite.

Research where the last three World Meeting of Families took place and research these countries.

- How are these countries different from/the same as Ireland?
- What is the population and the Roman Catholic population of these countries?
- What activities took place for the World Meeting of Families in these countries?





Friday: Our World Family

Activity Page

You're invited!

