



## Catholic Schools Week 2017

Catholic Schools: Learning with Pope Francis to Care for Our Common Home

# Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2017 in Your School

The theme for Catholic Schools Week this year is **Catholic Schools: Learning with Pope Francis to Care for Our Common Home**.

It is hoped that this theme will help schools to gain an understanding of the Pope's encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*. This is Pope Francis' second encyclical. Its title means 'Praise be to you' and it has the subtitle *On Care for Our Common Home*.

The encyclical letter, published on 24 May 2015, discusses the harm humankind has caused on earth and calls on 'every person living on this planet' to make necessary changes in our lives to protect our planet.

*Laudato Si'* deals with many environmental issues including pollution, climate change, drought, loss of biodiversity and the decline in the quality of human life. Pope Francis is asking us to work together to create a better world for future generations and to take care of, respect and value our common home.

Pope Francis addresses his letter to 'every person living on this planet' in order to start an inclusive dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. Pope Francis calls on the Church and humankind to acknowledge the current environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. This encyclical is written with both hope and resolve, looking to our common future.

As Catholic schools, we can play an essential role in shaping the future of our planet by working together to care for our common home. Our world is a gift from God and we are called to act as both stewards and protectors during our time here. It is our responsibility to care for our world and make it a better place for the next generation. Through the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us of the necessity and importance of caring for our common home.

### The daily themes are as follows:

<b>Monday:</b>	<b>Seeing the beauty of our common home</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b>	<b>Caring for our common home</b>
<b>Wednesday:</b>	<b>Grandparents: Watching over our common home</b>
<b>Thursday:</b>	<b>Protecting our common home</b>
<b>Friday:</b>	<b>Sharing our common home</b>

As in previous years, the daily themes contain resources for the class groupings: Junior and Senior Infants/Primary 1 and 2; First and Second Class/Primary 3 and 4; Third and Fourth Class/Primary 5 and 6; and Fifth and Sixth Class/Primary 7.

Primary



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Each day's lesson/activity begins with a reflective quote from *Laudato Si'* (LS) to put our learning into context with the message of Pope Francis in his encyclical. The relevant strands and strand units of the *Catholic Pre-School and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (2015)* are also listed for each class grouping at the beginning of the material.

On Wednesday we celebrate **Grandparents' Day**. On that day we offer some suggestions for class activities.

A prayer service, for use in the school or classroom, is also available, as well as suggestions for parish celebrations for Sunday, 29 January.

The poster included in this mailing can be the focus for your Catholic Schools Week 2017 Prayer Space. The poster includes a picture of our common home surrounded by the key words/themes for each day of Catholic Schools Week 2017. An image of Pope Francis looking on reminds us of his call for us to care for our common home in his second encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*.

You will also find a label to place on a candle for your prayer space in the school, classroom or church.

In line with this year's theme for Catholic Schools Week and conscious of our responsibility to care for our common home, all resources are available to download online at: [www.catholicschools.ie](http://www.catholicschools.ie)

## Thoughts for Each Day

These reflections can be read out loud every day in each classroom or over an intercom system to the whole school community. They can be read by pupils or staff. The spoken reflection might be followed by a short period of Christian meditation.



**Monday:** Today is the first day of **Catholic Schools Week 2017**. This year we are learning with Pope Francis about caring for our common home. Our common home is not just the community or the country we live in, but our entire world. Caring for our home is so important that Pope Francis wrote a letter to remind everyone about our responsibility to love and care for the earth. Today we think of the beauty of the world that God created for us. Our world is a gift from God. From the shining sun to the twinkling stars, the deep blue seas and the snowy mountain tops, God made it all. From the colourful flowers to the beautiful animals, God made it all. We can see the beauty of God's world all around us if we stop and look. When we take time to see the beauty of our world we can learn how important it is and we can remember to thank God for the beauty of his creation.

Lord, help us to always see the beauty of our common home.  
Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father*



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**Tuesday:** Today we are asked to think about how we can care for our common home. God gave us the earth and the earth gives us many gifts which help us to live. It gives us water, food and energy. It gives us so much to help us care for ourselves, but Pope Francis asks us to think about how we can care for the earth. We can try to use only what we need and try to live our lives in ways that help the earth. We can do this by recycling, wasting less water and caring for plants and animals. The care we give the earth shows God how much we love him and the beautiful home he has given us.

*Lord, help us to care for our common home.*

*Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father*



**Wednesday:** Today is Grandparents' Day, and we are asked to think about how our grandparents have watched over our common home, just as they watch over us. Our grandparents can play a special role in our lives. They can be very important teachers who show us how to love, how to be caring and how to share. They can teach us about the past and about the importance of our common home and how to cherish it. They can teach us about the beauty of God's creation and help us to learn to care for it as we grow.

*We thank you Lord for our grandparents, help us to be thankful for all they teach us.*

*Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father*



**Thursday:** Today we think about how we can protect our common home. God has entrusted us with the care of the earth. We can protect and care for our home in all we do each day; for example, by reducing our rubbish, recycling and using the resources of our world carefully. We pray that God will give us the courage to make changes in how we treat and use the resources of our home so that every creature on earth can see the beauty of his creation and come to know their responsibility to be a steward of the earth.

*We pray that we may all work to protect our common home.*

*Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father*



**Friday:** As Catholic Schools Week comes to a close we are asked to think about how we can share our common home. Our world is a gift to all who live here: the people, the animals and the plants. Our world is not always shared equally: there are people who have no home, no food or water; people forced to leave the place they live because of war, natural disasters, famine or drought; plants and animals treated cruelly. In the letter he wrote to us, Pope Francis told us that 'we must share with others'. This reminds us of the words of Jesus, who told us to love one another, to be kind and caring. To show God how much we love him and how thankful we are for the home he has given us, we have to work to share our home equally with all who live here.

*Lord, help us to share our common home.*

*Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father*

Primary





## Catholic Schools Week 2017

Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2017

**Learning with Pope Francis to Care for  
Our Common Home**

29 January – 3 February 2017



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