



Catholic Schools Week 2018

Catholic Schools: Called to be a Family of Families



Catholic Schools Week 2018 will run in the same format as previous years but with one important distinction. In 2018, Catholic Schools Week will be the high point of the primary and post-primary school catechetical programme, **Catholic Schools: Called to be a Family of Families**. The theme for Moment Two, Catholic Schools Week 2018, is '**Catholic Schools: Families of Faith**'.

As in previous years, each day of Catholic Schools Week has its own unique theme with associated resources for the following 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.

The daily themes are:

Monday: Our Family at Home

Tuesday: Our School Family

Wednesday: Grandparents: A Special Part of Our Family

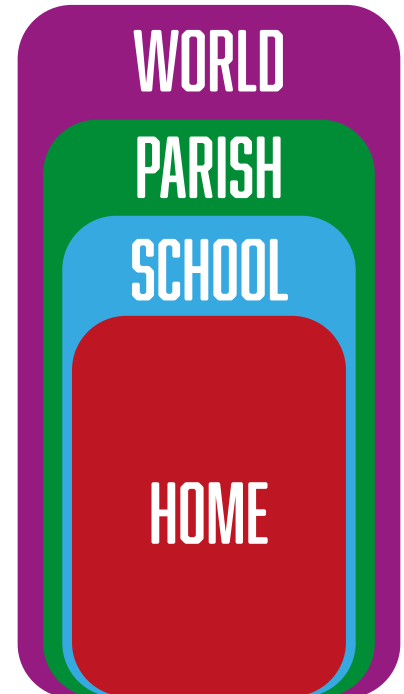
Thursday: Our Parish Family

Friday: Our World Family

In accordance with the daily themes, each lesson plan begins with a reflective quote from Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, which situates our learning within the context of Pope Francis' message. To further assist teachers with their engagement with the resources, a list of the relevant strands and strand units of the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (2015)* is provided for each of the lesson plans.

To assist schools with their celebration of Grandparents' Day, which is the Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week each year, an array of suggestions for class activities are provided as part of the resources.

Schools can also avail of a prayer service resource that is adaptable for use in a classroom or whole-school environment, as well as some concrete suggestions for organising parish celebrations on Sunday, 28 January.



- All resources will also be made available through the medium of Irish
- School resources will be made available in due course via: www.catholicschools.ie

The primary resources for Catholic Schools Week 2018 have been developed by Hazel O'Connor, Breda Holmes and John-Paul Sheridan



Thoughts for Each Day

Catholic Schools Week 2018

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 2018**. Throughout this week we will celebrate **Families of Faith**. Each of us belongs to a few different families. These are made up of the people who love and care for us. The first family we are part of is in our home. It is made up of our parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and anyone at home who cares for us. The members of our family at home are our first teachers in life and in faith and are very important to us all. Pope Francis tells us that no family is perfect but we are called to live in love and grow in love with one another.

**We thank you, Lord, for our families at home.
Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:
Our Father ...**



Tuesday

Today we are asked to think about how we are part of a family at school. Our school is a place of love and friendship. It is a place of learning, growing, playing and sharing. In our school family we learn more about the world around us, about the love of God and how to treat others as Jesus asked. Our school family is made up of our teachers, our principal, our classmates and all who make our school a special family to be part of, a family of families.

**We thank you, Lord, for our family at school.
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 a special place in our families. They are very important teachers who show us how to love, how to be caring and how to share. They teach us about the past and about the importance of family and how to cherish it. They 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.
Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:
Our Father ...**





Thursday

Today we think about how we are members of a parish family. Our parish is a community of people who are followers of Jesus, just like us. Our parish is a place of learning, support and care. We are called to gather as a parish family every Sunday at Mass and to work together to care for the members of our community. We become a member of our parish family through Baptism when water is poured over our heads and we are anointed with oil. Our church is the centre of our parish family. It is a place where we can pray and celebrate our family of faith.

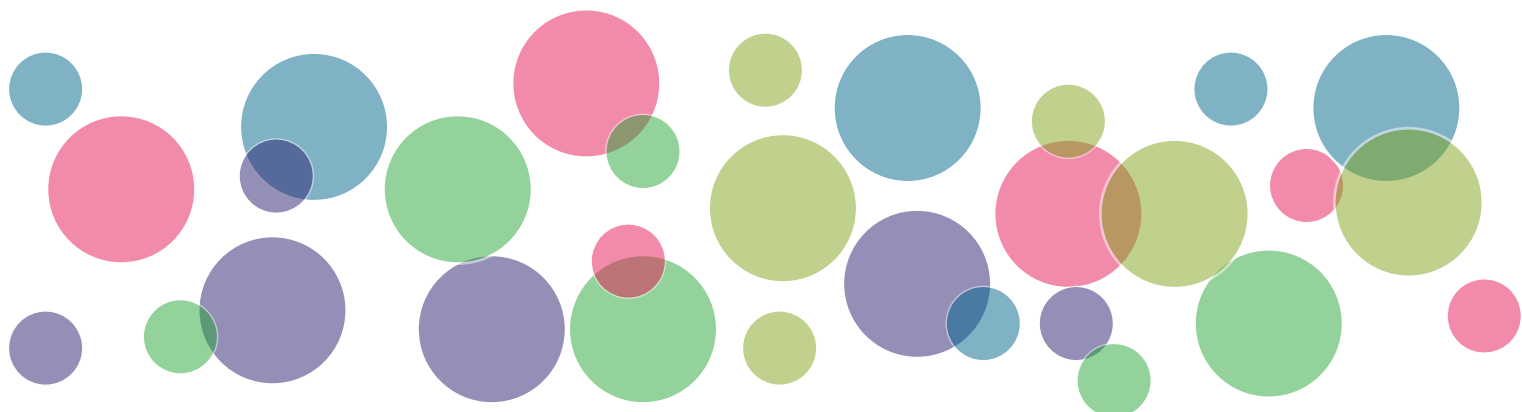
We thank you, Lord, for our parish family.
Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:
Our Father ...



Friday

As Catholic Schools Week comes to a close, we are asked to think about how we are part of a world family. As a world family we have a responsibility to care for the world we share, the world God created for us. This can mean planet earth itself or all the people and creatures who live on our planet. We are all one family and Jesus asks us to care for one another. To show this love, we have to work to care for our home and share it equally with all who live here.

We thank you, Lord, for our world family.
Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:
Our Father ...



Moment Two: Families of Faith

Boards of Management Reflection

Introduction

As those first responsible for the education of their children, Catholic parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best assist them in their task as Christian educators (CCC, 2229). In this way the Catholic school occupies a privileged place within the eucharistic community, the parish, as it moves towards assisting parents in fulfilling their duty of educating their children in the faith (CCC, 2226). In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis recognises that such an integral education is made 'difficult by current lifestyles, work schedules and the complexity of today's world, where many people keep up a frantic pace just to survive' (287). As members of boards of management it is easy to recognise that the frantic pace of life today, as well as today's consumerist culture, present many issues for school communities. In addressing these matters Catholic schools have a unique resource to assist them: God's gift of faith.

It is important that God's gift of faith continues to be nurtured amidst the Catholic school family. Members of the boards of management are entrusted with the noble duty of ensuring that their Catholic school continues to be a place in which one learns 'to appreciate the meaning and beauty of the faith, to pray and to serve our neighbour' (AL, 287). As members of boards of management in Catholic schools, we bear witness to this noble duty by creating an environment in which 'tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule' (CCC, 2223). Members of boards of management complement the work of parents by ensuring that Catholic schools facilitate 'an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgement and self-mastery – the preconditions of all true freedom' (CCC, 2223). God's gift of faith enables one to be truly free, to live a life that is reflective of authentic Christian freedom in an age that is dominated by superficial human relationships.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis reminds us that 'a mustard seed, small as it is, becomes a great tree (cf. Mt 13:31–2)' and that 'this teaches us to see the disproportion between our actions and their effects' (287). As members of boards of management in Catholic schools we must continue to ask God to act in our hearts, and pray that He continues to give us the strength to offer our creative commitment by which we cooperate with His divine plan in nurturing His gift of faith and passing it on to the next generation.

Reflections

- Are there any ways in which the Board of Management could do more to enrich the faith development of staff and students in the school?
- In what way could Board of Management meetings have a stronger faith dimension? (e.g. an opening prayer, ethos is discussed as an agenda item at each meeting)
- 'Couples and parents should be properly appreciated as active agents in catechesis' (AL, 287). Could your school enhance its engagement with parents concerning matters of faith development? If so, how?
- In supporting the school with the sacramental preparation of its students, are there any ways in which the Board of Management can encourage more active participation from parents?