



Catholic Schools Week 2018

Catholic Schools: Called to Be a Family of Families



Moment Four: Families of Joy

Assembly Resources

'Open your heart to faith and God will do the rest.'

(Pope Francis, general audience, St Peter's Square, 29 March 2017)

Prayer Space

Gather photographs from the family life of staff and pupils to show moments of joy.

These will be displayed in the prayer space and on PowerPoint. Play reflective music while photographs are displayed.

Leader: Invite the pupils to stand for the opening song. During the song, ask the pupils to bring the candle and Bible to the prayer space.

Opening Song:

'A Joy for all the Earth', World Meeting of Families Official Hymn

Welcome Address:

We begin by lighting our paschal candle to remind us that God is with us.

A few moments of silence.

Today we come together as a school community to celebrate the joy of belonging and being part of a family who loves us and to pray for all those we love.

The word 'joy' means to take great delight or happiness in something good. Our photographs show some of the great moments we have shared with our families and the great delight and happiness we feel in being part of a loving family.

In *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, Pope Francis tells us that the joy of love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church (1). He goes on to say, 'When a loving person can do good for others, or sees that others are happy, they themselves live happily and in this way give glory to God, for "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7). Our Lord especially appreciates those who find joy in the happiness of others. If we fail to learn how to rejoice in the well-being of others, and focus primarily on our own needs, we condemn ourselves to a joyless existence, for, as Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The family must always be a place where, when something good happens to one of its members, they know that others will be there to celebrate it with them' (AL 110).

Let us celebrate the joy of God's love for us and our joy in loving each other.

Opening Prayer:

World Meeting of Families Official Prayer



Gathering Ritual:

On the prayer space there are four unlit candles. Place the paschal candle/large candle in a prominent place as the four candles will be lit from this one.

Pupil: We welcome all who have come to share in this special prayer assembly with us. We gather to say thanks to God.

We offer you the light of hope. Carry this light of hope in your heart and share God's love in everything you say and do.

A pupil, using a taper, lights the first candle from the paschal candle.

Siblings/cousins: We offer you the light of love. We carry this light of love with you wherever you go and remember that there will always be a light burning for you at home.

Siblings/cousins light the second candle from the paschal candle.

Member of staff: We offer you the light of joy. We carry this light of joy out into the world through our relationships with family and friends, in our work and play and in our service to others.

A member of staff lights the third candle from the paschal candle.

Parish member/neighbour: We offer you the light of faith. Carry this light of faith out into the world and remember to be part of the Christian community and be a light for all the world.

A parish member/neighbour lights the fourth candle from the paschal candle.

Penitential Reflection:

For the times when we have let one another down by our words or actions.

Lord, forgive us.

Lord, forgive us.

For the times when we wandered away from God's path of truth and forgiveness.

Christ, forgive us.

Christ, forgive us.

For the times when we have ignored God's presence in our lives.

Lord, forgive us.

Lord, forgive us.

Scripture Reading:

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (1:39–45)

Glory to You, O Lord.



Mary Visits Elizabeth

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.'



The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection:

As a young Canadian living in France, Jean Vanier was at the forefront of what gradually became the widely accepted movement to de-institutionalise people who had developmental disabilities. Distressed by the scandalous conditions he saw in institutions, in 1964 Jean Vanier invited two men with developmental disabilities, Raphael Simi and Philippe Seux, to live with him in a small house in the French village of Trosly-Breuil. He named their house 'L'Arche' after Noah's Ark.



The three created a home life together, sharing daily tasks and times of relaxation as a family would. Before long, Jean, Raphael and Philippe welcomed more men and women with developmental disabilities and many young assistants from various countries who wanted to help and to share in this unique experience of living in community.

Vanier very quickly discovered that the people he had befriended had much to give him and much to teach him about life.

One of the early members of the L'Arche community was a young man named Claude who suffered from cognitive impairments that left him confused and presented him with many social and intellectual challenges. One day an assistant named Jean-Pierre took Claude and several other core members on an outing to the beach:

The ocean was at low tide, exposing an immense stretch of flat, sandy beach. The group began making designs in the sand. Claude drew a big circle with a couple of marks inside that could have been facial features.

'What's that?' asked Jean Pierre. With a big smile Claude replied, 'It's Madame Sun.' 'That's good,' Jean-Pierre said. 'Now let's see you draw joy.' Claude took a look around him at the wide beach that stretched out in both directions as far as the eye could see, turned to Jean-Pierre and said with a huge smile, but in all seriousness, 'There's not enough room!'

In the L'Arche community and in our families we can experience great joy – a joy so huge that even a wide-open beach could not contain it.





Prayers of Intercession:

Leader: Gathered together in love, as brothers and sisters in Christ, let us ask our loving father to listen to the prayers we make. The response to our prayer is: Fill us with joy.

1. We pray for the Church, that she may always be a role model in the world, as she seeks to spread Christ's Gospel message of love, peace and joy.
Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*
2. We pray for a growing love of each human person. May we learn to respect the dignity and worth of all human life from conception until natural death.
Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*
3. We pray that our young people will draw on the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit that they possess, and that the Spirit will gift them with peace, wisdom and a sense of joy in their lives.
Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*
4. Let us pray for people who are alone and filled with despair. May we give thanks that our friendship and love can fill their lives with the joy and hope we share. We ask God for the courage to reach out to those in need.
Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*
5. Let us pray for people who care for the sick. May we give thanks for their skills and for the love of those who look after us at times of illness.
Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*
6. We remember all our loved ones who have died and who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. Welcome them home, dear Lord, and grant them eternal happiness and peace in your presence.
Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*

Reflection: The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary:
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit (Hail Mary...)

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it done unto me according to thy word (Hail Mary...)

And the Word was made flesh.
And dwelt among us (Hail Mary...)

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.
That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ (Hail Mary...)

Leader: Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your son as man, so lead us through his suffering and death to the glory of his resurrection, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

**Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ,
We praise and thank you for our parents and our brothers and sisters
who you have given to us to cherish.
Surround them with your tender, loving care,
teach them to love and serve one another in true affection
and to look to you in all their needs.
We place them all in your care,
Knowing that your love for them is greater than our own.
Keep us close to one another in this life
and conduct us at the last to our true and heavenly home.
Blessed be God for ever.
Amen.

Song:

Magnificat/As I Kneel Before You