



Wednesday: Grandparents' Day – Our Faith Calls Us to Share

Each year, the Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week is designated as the day when the school community celebrates and pays tribute to grandparents and the role they play in handing on the faith to their grandchildren and in supporting the community of faith at home and in the parish.

Write a Poem, Prayer or Story

National Grandparents' Day in Ireland is celebrated in September every year. More details can be found at www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org. The people who organise this event would very much like to receive prayers/poems about grandparents to include in their celebration. You might like to spend some time today inviting the children to write a story/poem/prayer about their grandparents. These will be brought to the altar during Mass in Knock Shrine at the Grandparents' Day celebration next September. *Prayers and poems can be posted to: Catholic Grandparents' Association, The Mall, Castlebar Street, Westport, Co. Mayo (Tel: 098-24877).*

Good News Card

Make cards containing the words: ***'Thank you for sharing your faith with me'***
These can be taken home to grandparents or posted if living abroad or in another county.

A Special Memory

Encourage the children to think of a time when their grandparents shared something special with them. Invite them to write the memory down so that they can share it with their grandparents.

Prayer Service to Celebrate Grandparents' Day

This short prayer service can be adapted to suit the needs of your class/school community. It can also be adapted to be prayed even if you are not inviting the grandparents in on the day. You may like to involve as many of the grandparents as you can by inviting them to read various parts.

Leader We begin our time of prayer together by marking ourselves with the sign of our faith:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

As we light our candle this morning we remind ourselves that Jesus is always with us in everything we do.

This morning we give thanks for our grandparents, for all that they do for us and with us, for all that they teach us, for the love we share with them and for the faith we share together. We begin by welcoming them in song.

☪ 'This is the Day', *Alive-04*, page 327



Leader This morning we want to welcome all the grandparents who have travelled to be with us this morning. Whether you have had a long journey or you've just come across the road, whether it's your first time in our school or you are here every day, *tá céad míle fáilte romhaibh go léir*. We also take a moment to remember the grandparents who cannot be with us – those who could not travel, those who live far away, those who are sick either at home or in hospital, and those who are with God in heaven. They are all in our thoughts wherever they are this morning.

This year, the theme for Catholic Schools Week is **Catholic Schools: Places of Faith and Learning** and today we are focusing on how our faith teaches us to share. One of the ways we learn about our faith is to listen to the Word of God, so we are now going to listen to a story all about sharing.

Adapted from John 6:1-13

One day Jesus crossed Lake Galilee. He had been talking to people and healing the sick and he wanted to be alone for a while. But a large crowd followed him. Jesus went up on a mountain and began to teach his disciples. More and more people came and listened to what he had to say. Soon it was getting dark and Jesus realised that the people must be getting hungry. Jesus turned to Philip and asked him where they could find bread to feed all the people. Philip was surprised at Jesus' question. Even if they could find somewhere with enough bread he knew that they did not have enough money to buy so much bread. Then Andrew spoke up and told Jesus about the little boy that he had seen with five loaves of barley bread and two fish. The other disciples laughed and wondered what good that would be. There were more than five thousand men in the crowd and that wasn't counting the women and children. Five loaves and two fish would not be nearly enough, and anyway they had not even asked the boy if he was willing to give away his lunch.

Jesus told his disciples to get everyone to sit down. Then he called the boy to him and asked him if he would share his loaves and fish. We are not told what the boy said but he must have given them to Jesus. For the next thing that Jesus did was to take the bread in his hands and give thanks to God. Then Jesus divided the bread and the fish and the disciples shared it among the crowd. Everyone had plenty to eat. Then Jesus told his disciples to gather up the leftovers, so that nothing would be wasted. The disciples gathered them up and do you know they filled twelve large baskets with what was left over from the five barley loaves and two fish.

Leader The story we have just heard is one of many stories that we read in the Bible about Jesus. It is a good story for us because today we are asked to think about how our faith teaches us to share, and the little boy in the story helps us to see that as followers of Jesus our faith calls us to share everything we have with people we know and with those in the world who are in need of our help. We are baptised as children of the light and the invitation is to share that light in our world. As people of faith we are asked to believe that all we have is a gift from God and we are asked to share what we have with all we meet. We sometimes use the word 'mission' to explain how we share with others. We need help to carry out that mission and I believe that the people who have gathered with us this morning help you to share what you are, what you know and what you have with all those around you. They show you the way to be in the world, they give you good advice, they help you to be the kind of people Jesus would want you to be. So let us say thank you for them and let us give thanks to God for the gift they are in our homes and our communities. We could show our appreciation with a big clap ...

Leader We thank our very special guests for sharing their time and their presence with us today.

Now let us take the time to bring our prayers to God.



Response Lord Graciously Hear Us

We pray for all those who are gathered here, our teachers, the school staff and members of our family. We give thanks for all that they have shared with us ... Lord Hear Us. **Response**

We pray for our parents and grandparents who love us, care for us, and teach us by their words and deeds how to be like Jesus. We ask you to care for and protect them for us ... Lord Hear Us. **Response**

Bless all children everywhere, those here in our school, in our families and across the world. Today, we also remember children less fortunate than us who have no school at all to attend, who are hungry or in need of shelter and protection. Grant that we may do all we can to share what we have with them ... Lord Hear Us. **Response**

We remember those of our grandparents who are no longer with us. We ask Jesus to bless them, as they live forever with the saints in your heavenly kingdom ... Lord Hear Us.

Leader Today, on Grandparents' Day, we think of the faith and love that our grandparents share with us. They share their lives and gifts and play a special part in how we learn and live our faith. Lord, help us to share all that we have and all that we are. Help us to know the joy of sharing and giving to those around us. Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:

Our Father/*Ár nAthair*

Final Blessing

Leader As we come to the end of our celebration this morning we will pray our final blessing together. Invite the children to extend their hands over their grandparents and say:

Loving God,
Bless all *our grandparents*, those gathered with us here today, those who cannot be with us and those who have gone to be with you.
May they heed your call to share their wisdom and faith with us.
May they have courage and confidence to hand on your gifts of experience and knowledge of stories, songs and memories.
May they continue to learn and grow with us day by day.
Bless them with length of days and joy at the last.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Suggested closing hymn:

♫ 'Connected', *Alive-O4*, page 14