



Planning Meeting For Catholic Schools Week 2014

A staff meeting in early January will help to ensure that Catholic Schools Week is celebrated well in the school. The following areas might form the agenda for such a meeting.

Distributing the Resources to Classroom Teachers

One of the most important tasks for Catholic Schools Week is to ensure that each classroom teacher has access to the appropriate resources. Each school receives two copies of the resource book and it is hoped that teachers will photocopy relevant pages. The resource book is also available for download on www.catholicschools.ie.

The Theme

Catholic Schools: Places of Faith and Learning

A brief explanation of the theme can be found on page 2 of the resource book.

The Parish

Suggestions for parish involvement can be found on www.catholicschools.ie.

The Classroom

There are classroom activities for each day of Catholic Schools Week 2014. For the first time we have produced designated activities for each of the four strands of Junior/Senior Infants/Primary 1 and 2; First/Second/Primary 3 and 4; Third/Fourth/Primary 5 and 6; and Fifth/Primary 7 and Sixth Classes.

Grandparents' Day, 29 January

This year's theme highlights that all learning takes place in a values context. The values out of which the Catholic school community live and learn are Gospel values. These values are also those of the communities of home and parish that the children we teach inhabit. Each community mirrors and supports the values of the other and it in this context that children really learn what it is to be a faith-filled member of the Christian community.

On Grandparents' Day we acknowledge the key role that grandparents play in witnessing to and passing on the Gospel values that are the touchstone of our Catholic schools. The invitation to grandparents to visit the school during Catholic Schools Week affirms their role in this essential task. This event has quickly become the highlight of Catholic Schools Week for growing numbers of schools across the country. If your school has yet to participate in this event please consider doing so this year. A prayer resource to help celebrate Grandparents' Day can be found on www.catholicschools.ie.

The School Environment

How will those who visit your school during Catholic Schools Week know that something special is happening? This is an opportunity to identify areas of the school where sacred spaces, religious images and display boards might be updated, enhanced or added in preparation for the celebrations.



Poster

An A2-sized poster accompanies the resource book. The poster can be placed in the school sacred space to help create a focal point for the week's work. It is suggested that each day some of the classwork be added to the poster. Consider asking a different class to take responsibility for choosing the best or most appropriate piece of work each day. As each school receives two posters it may also make sense to have a separate poster for the junior and senior classes.

Prayer During Catholic Schools Week

The time spent in prayer is one of the unique aspects of a faith school. During Catholic Schools Week there are many opportunities to gather together to pray as a whole school or in class groups. For the first time this year we have provided a prayerful Thought for Each Day of the week. If your school has an intercom system it would be a very useful way to highlight the celebration of Catholic Schools Week. They can also be prayed by individual class groups or in an assembly setting. Weather permitting and in a smaller school context they might even be read aloud as the children line up to enter their classrooms at the beginning of the day. The Thought for Each Day can be found on page 4 of the resource book. There is also a suggestion that this be followed by a couple of moments of silent meditation. Details of how to do this with a class can be found on the inside back cover of the resource book.

Many schools like to begin and end Catholic Schools Week with a Prayer Service and you can find a resource for both of these on www.catholicschools.ie. There is also a Prayer Service for Grandparents' Day on this website.

Catholic Schools Week at Home

Parents are the first teachers in the ways of faith and they depend on the school community to support them in nourishing and nurturing their child's faith. It is important to involve parents in the activities of Catholic Schools Week where at all possible. There is a resource to be photocopied and sent home on page 3 of the resource book. Consider how best to distribute this to parents.

Staff and Board of Management/Governors

A resource to help staff and Board of Management/Governors to reflect on the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2014 can be found on www.catholicschools.ie.

Encourage members of the Board of Management/Governors and Parent Association/Council to be present at all events planned for Catholic Schools Week 2014.