

Board of Management/Governors and Staff Reflection

The following is offered as a basis for a short reflection on Catholic schools with staff and members of Boards of Management/Governors during Catholic Schools Week 2014.

The theme of Catholic Schools Week 2014 is Catholic Schools: Places of Faith and Learning. All Catholic schools must have both of these dimensions to them. If one or other was missing then it would no longer be a Catholic school. However, it is good for us to consider the relationship between the two. Sometimes it is tempting to consign our faith dimension to the time spent in prayer, sacramental preparation, religious education and all the liturgical celebrations that are so much part of the Catholic primary school. Pope Benedict XVI explained the two dimensions of the Catholic school beautifully in his address to children during his visit to the UK in 2010:

'In your Catholic schools, there is always a bigger picture over and above the individual subjects you study, the different skills you learn. All the work you do is placed in the context of growing in friendship with God, and all that flows from that friendship. So you learn not just to be good students, but good citizens, good people. As you move higher up the school, you have to make choices regarding the subjects you study; you begin to specialise with a view to what you are going to do later on in life. That is right and proper. But always remember that every subject you study is part of a bigger picture. Never allow yourselves to become narrow. The world needs good scientists, but a scientific outlook becomes dangerously narrow if it ignores the religious or ethical dimension of life, just as religion becomes narrow if it rejects the legitimate contribution of science to our understanding of the world ...'

In this year's resource we have reflected on these two dimensions through a focus on the following words:

- Live:** The school as a place where we learn to live according to Gospel values
- Learn:** The school as a place where all our learning is informed by a Catholic philosophy of education
- Share:** The school as a place where we learn to share all that we have been given by God
- Celebrate:** The school as a place where we celebrate our faith in prayer
- Serve:** The school as a place where we learn to serve each other, to do as Jesus did and 'wash each other's feet'.

Staff and Board members might use these words as a basis to begin to reflect on the way the school is living up to its mission of being a place of faith and learning.



Prayer For Teachers

Lord Jesus,
Guide us in our work so that
the young people before us may grow to become
all that you have called them to be.
May our teaching encourage them to embrace life
in all its beauty and mystery.
May our patience with them allow them to
learn from their mistakes.
May our listening to them help them to
respect themselves and others.
Through the gift of your Spirit
inspire us to love what we do,
to be a support to one another
and to never give up on a child in our care.

Prayer For Board Members

Lord God,
We give thanks for the
opportunity to serve this school community.
May we use the gifts you have given us generously
for the good of all who are teaching and learning here.
Guide us in our work of creating a place of faith and learning
where each person feels welcome
and comes to know that they have something to contribute
to the beautiful enterprise that is the education of the young.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.