



Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2020 in Your Parish

Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony with God's Creation

Catholic Schools Week 2020 begins on Sunday, 26 January, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time and its theme is 'Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony with God's Creation'. This is the twelfth year of Catholic Schools Week and, while we gather each year to celebrate our schools, this year we gather in special way to celebrate the gift of God's creation and how we can be co-creators in making the world a better place. God's creation means the world around us and our relationship with it. Our relationships with those around us, our environment and how we treat our selves are all part of God's creation.

Called as a community to worship at the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2020, we are presented with a unique occasion to consider other ways in which the parish community can complement and support the work of the school community during this week-long celebration. While there are a variety of ways in which parishes can celebrate Catholic Schools Week, the following are some helpful suggestions to assist parishes with their celebrations.

Sunday, 26 January

Celebration of the Eucharist for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

The parish liturgy group will obviously be very useful in helping to prepare for this Mass. Encourage them to make Catholic Schools Week part of the annual life of the parish. It will always begin on the last Sunday in January.

Planning Meeting

Arrange a meeting with the principals and teachers of primary and post-primary schools in the weeks prior to Catholic Schools Week to discuss how to highlight and celebrate the work of each individual Catholic school in the parish during the liturgy on 26 January. If your parish does not have a Catholic post-primary school, consider how you might best involve students from your parish who attend post-primary schools in neighbouring parishes. Include a member of your parish liturgy group in this meeting. Some guiding questions may be: What does living in harmony with God's creation mean to me? How does my school try to model living in harmony with God's creation?





The Mass

Words of Welcome and Explanation

This might include a few words about the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2020 – 'Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony with God's Creation'. An explanation of the theme is available online at www.catholicschools.ie.

Opening Procession

It may be appropriate to have an Opening Procession on this Sunday. This could include symbols that represent the distinctive identity of each Catholic school in the parish. If a display area has been set up in the church to mark Catholic Schools Week, this is the ideal place to put the symbols presented in the Opening Procession.

Consider involving children/staff in the music during the Liturgy. A group of children might sing the Psalm and intone the Gospel Acclamation.

Liturgy of the Word

The readings, Prayer of the Faithful, etc. for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time can be found in the December/January edition of *Intercom*. *Tá siad le fáil as Gaeilge san áit céanna*. There are also homily notes for this Sunday in the January edition of *The Furrow*.

As this is the parish celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, it is appropriate that the usual Minister of the Word scheduled to read does so. This gives a visible sign of the Sunday Eucharist as a place where we are all nourished to go back to our communities of home and school and continue to announce the Gospel. Include a Prayer of the Faithful for Catholic schools and their work. Some young people might be invited to compose and read these prayers.

Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts

Consider inviting representatives from the three communities of home, school and parish to prepare the altar table and to present the gifts of bread and wine. This will be a visible reminder of the need for all three groups to work together so that we might all witness to the Gospel values that we profess as members of the Church.

Hospitality

This would be a good time to offer hospitality after Mass. Perhaps the Parents Association, Parish Council and other local groups would come together to coordinate this. The school is a vital part of the parish and the opportunity to come together as part of a community can be very valuable and heartening for everyone.





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Parish Newsletter

Ensure that Catholic Schools Week is brought to the attention of the wider community by placing a note in the parish newsletter. Include specific public activities planned in your parish. Sample text might read as follows:

Sunday, 26 January, marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2020. During this week we aim to celebrate the unique contribution that Catholic schools, both primary and post-primary, make to the mission of the Church in our local faith communities and throughout the wider church. This year's theme is 'Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony with God's Creation'. Our parish is joining in the celebrations by ...

Pupils from the parish schools might distribute the newsletter at Mass.

Display Area

Consider working with the school to create a display showing the unique work and identity of each parish school.

Boards of Management/Governors

Put Catholic Schools Week 2020 on the agenda for your next meeting. Use the resource for Staff and Boards of Management/Governors to reflect on the theme for this year. This resource is available for download at www.catholicbishops.ie.

The Pastoral Council

Bring Catholic Schools Week to the attention of the Pastoral Council and ask them how the parish might best celebrate it this year. Consider using the extract 'Catholic Schools: Building Community' from *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis* to enable a discussion about the role of Catholic schools and how they might be better supported by the faith community.

Where applicable, the chaplain might take the opportunity this week to visit as many classrooms as possible. The Catholic Schools Week resource will help you to find a focus for your visit as it offers a theme for each day's work. Encourage schools to participate in Grandparents' Day on 29 January.

