

Notes for the Teacher

General Introduction

The theme for Catholic Schools Week this year is **Catholic Schools: Challenged to Proclaim God's Mercy**. It is hoped that this theme will help contextualise the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis. The year began on 8 December 2015, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and will conclude on 20 November 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. Pope Francis wants this to be the year when we remember that our God is a God of mercy, a God of love and compassion, a God who forgives all and always forgives. God's mercy is for everyone; no one is excluded. This year we are invited to consider what that means for each one of us as a member of God's family.

We know that Jesus is the face of God's mercy. It is he who allows us to see how merciful the Father is. When we see how Jesus is with people whom others condemn and reject, we begin to glimpse the mercy of God. When we see the way that Jesus heals, the way he forgives, the way he loves, we see the mercy of God. We are called to be like Jesus so we, too, must try to be the face of God's mercy to those whom we meet. During this Catholic Schools Week, we will explore with the children how they can be the face of God's mercy in our classrooms, the playground, our school, our families and our community. Each day has a specific theme that, we hope, will help the children to come to understand how they can proclaim God's mercy every day. The themes are as follows:

Monday:	I am the face of God's mercy when I am kind and compassionate
Tuesday:	I am the face of God's mercy when I forgive and reconcile
Wednesday:	Grandparents are the face of God's mercy
Thursday:	I am the face of God's mercy when I am fair and just
Friday:	I am the face of God's mercy when I live like Jesus

As in previous years, the daily themes contain resources for the class groupings: Junior and Senior Infants/ Primary 1 and 2; First and Second Class/Primary 3 and 4; Third and Fourth Class/Primary 5 and 6; and Fifth and Sixth Class/Primary 7.

On **Wednesday** we celebrate **Grandparents' Day**. On that day we offer a prayer service and some suggestions for class activities.

General Note

Create a space for CSW 2016 on one of your noticeboards, either in the classroom or on the school corridor. This can become the space where the activities connected to CSW can be displayed. Use the template banner on the next page to help define the space.



Catholic Schools Week 2016

I am the face of God's mercy when ...



The following notes offer some specific direction for class teachers:

Junior and Senior Infants/Primary 1 and 2

The approach used in the Infant resources mirrors that used in the new *Grow in Love* religious education programme: **Let's Look, Let's Learn and Let's Live**. This will allow the teacher in the Infant Class to continue with the same pedagogy, and helps to maintain a consistent learning environment for the child.

First and Second Class/Primary 3 and 4

The aim of these resources is to help the children in First and Second Class/Primary 3 and 4 to consider how we can all live like Jesus. We break this down into ways to behave, things to do and actions to take. Specifically, we look at acting with compassion, kindness and justice, and being forgiving and fair. All of these are interlinked, each depending on and leading to the other.

The reason we are doing this is because we, children and adults alike, are baptised members of God's family, and as baptised people this is our mission, our calling, our 'job'.

You are the people of God; God loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Col 3:12)

We are told: *All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it (1 Cor 12:27)*, and it takes each one of us doing our 'job', playing our part, working together for God's kingdom, to form together the face of God's mercy. It only works if we do. Saint Teresa of Ávila reminds us:

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which to look out Christ's compassion to the world.
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good.
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless people now.

This week, we will help the children to reflect on what they can do to show God to others, to be the face of God's mercy for others, and how they can use their eyes, ears, hands, feet and heart to show God's mercy. This can be a time of reflection for ourselves, and on how we, in our own lives, are the face of God's mercy.



Third and Fourth Class/Primary 5 and 6

The lessons for Third and Fourth Classes are generally self-explanatory, with the exception of Thursday, when the following instructions might be of help:

Thursday: I am the face of God's mercy when I am fair and just

Today we are going to use a game from Cafod.org to explore how we can change the lives of people when we are fair and just. You can find more information at www.cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-schools/Fair-trade.

You might also like to look at www.developmenteducation.ie/blog/2015/03/top-10-facts-about-the-fairtrade-movement-in-ireland/.

Aims

To introduce the banana chain (what happens to a banana before it reaches the consumer) and to discuss the reality of 'who gets what' from the sale of bananas.

Key ideas

We are connected with people around the world through the things we buy and eat. Many products in our shops are made from raw materials imported from poor countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean Islands.

Many workers do not earn enough to meet their basic needs: food, shelter, clothes, medicine and schooling. This is unfair.

Fairtrade labelling has been introduced so that we, the shoppers, can guarantee that workers get a fair deal for their work and products.





Fifth and Sixth Class/Primary 7

Monday: I am the face of God's mercy when ... I am kind and compassionate

Explore the fruits of the Holy Spirit with the class; this may link with preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation (see *Alive-O*). Discuss the fruits with the pupils and how they are the actions of a Spirit-filled person. We are filled with the Spirit at Baptism and this is confirmed in Confirmation. Give the pupils, in groups or in pairs, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Invite them to write this word on one of the drawings of pieces of fruit. On the back they can write ways in which they can live out this fruit to show they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Tuesday: I am the face of God's mercy when ... I forgive and reconcile

God will always forgive us. However, as his people we must forgive those who hurt us and seek forgiveness from those we hurt. If we can do this we can be the face of God's mercy in our world. Explore the Parable of the Prodigal Son with the pupils. Discuss where forgiveness is evident, and if we would be so forgiving in this situation. Explore the meaning of the parable for us and link this to any previous parables you may have covered in class. You may choose to act out this or other parables to explore the messages Jesus has for us.

Wednesday: Grandparents are the face of God's mercy

Grandparents' Day is a very special day. Reflect with pupils on the importance of grandparents and indeed great-grandparents in their lives. They can often be very positive role models for us all. They model kindness, generosity and unconditional love. In this way they can be the face of God's mercy in our world. Discuss descriptive words for our grandparents with the pupils and write these words around a portrait of the grandparent the child has drawn. (Pupils could also bring in a photo of their grandparents.)

Thursday: I am the face of God's mercy when ... I am fair and just

On this day, explore the Bible quote: *Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God* (Micah 6:8). Discuss with pupils what they think this means. Discuss what justice is and whether we live in a just or unjust world. Encourage the pupils to explore this topic and how God wants everyone to be treated fairly and justly. Individually or in groups, get the pupils to use the template provided to name groups or individuals in our world who may be treated unfairly. Allow the pupils to focus on how these people could be helped and what organisations provide help for them.

Friday: I am the face of God's mercy when ... I live like Jesus

On this final day, explore the Eight Beatitudes with the pupils. These were given to us by Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount, and are a statement of how we should live our lives. Discuss each Beatitude with the pupils and explore what each means or what they are asking us to do. Ask the pupils to draw a symbol or emoji for each Beatitude and share these with a friend or the class. Finally, through discussion or a written activity, compare the Beatitudes with the Ten Commandments. (*Pupils should be able to highlight that the Commandments tell us what not to do, but the Beatitudes tell us how to live our lives.*)