Catholic Schools: Called to Serve

Catholic Schools Week 2015
Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2015

Resources for the Post-Primary School Community: Home, School & Parish

Catholic Schools: Called to Serve

25–31 January 2015

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Céad Fáilte/Welcome

The theme of Catholic Schools Week 2015 is **Catholic Schools: Called to Serve**. This call comes from Christ himself.

Jesus is called 'teacher' on forty-six occasions in the Gospels. It is the title most commonly associated with him by his first followers. So what did Jesus teach? In the villages, hills and valleys of Galilee he taught the people that the reign of God was dawning in their midst. He spoke of the reign of God as healing for the sick, hearing for the deaf, new sight for the blind, freedom for prisoners and good news for the poor.

All Christians are called to serve their brothers and sisters. This means helping them to stand up and walk on their own, exorcising their fear of the unknown and expanding their minds through education. It entails feeding them when they are too weak to feed themselves, opening their eyes to the reality of life, challenging them to let go of hurts and prejudice, and liberating those who are unjustly oppressed. It involves introducing them to ever-greater horizons of transcendence and beauty. This is how we continue the healing ministry of Jesus so that 'the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the good news is proclaimed to the poor' (Lk 7:22).

Pope Francis has declared 2015 a special year of reflection on consecrated life. He is the first pope to come from a religious order in over one hundred and fifty years, and he invites us to reflect on the past, present and future contribution of religious sisters, brothers and priests to our various communities. Religious orders are challenged to be a prophetic voice in the Church and in the world. It is clear that Pope Francis is just such a prophetic voice, not least because he challenges all of us to serve those most in need.

In *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) the pope says that the social dimension of the preaching of the Gospel is critically important. If we are truly Christian then we are called to live with others and for others. This is because God, in Christ, has redeemed human society and not just each of us as individuals. This is an important insight for Catholic education. Pope Francis states:

> No one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without influence on societal and national life, without concern for the soundness of civil institutions, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society. Who would claim to lock up in a church and silence the message of St Francis of Assisi or Blessed Teresa of Calcutta? They themselves would have found this unacceptable. An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. (*EG*, no. 183)

Catholic schools are called to serve. In celebrating this call during Catholic Schools Week 2015 you will find many helpful resources in this booklet.

Fr Michael Drumm
Chairperson
Catholic Schools Partnership

Introduction: Catholic Schools Week 2015

Catholic Schools Week has been celebrated in Ireland for the last five years. This annual event calls on Catholic schools to give expression in a special way to a particular aspect of Catholic education. This year the theme **Catholic Schools: Called to Serve** lends itself to examine what we understand by service and who it is our schools serve. To this end, Catholic education is called to self-reflect and refresh its mission.

Serve, as a word, is a call to action. As a concept, to serve is an integral element of Jesus' mission in the Gospels. Education is a platform from which all are called to serve – parents, teachers, students, community and the wider world. In particular, Catholic schools place at the centre of their ethos an identity with the mission of Jesus Christ, who continually calls all who hear his voice to serve. This week we contemplate some of the ways in which our mission to serve can be fulfilled:

SELF: In recognising our uniqueness and becoming aware of our personal relationship with ourselves and with God, we pay attention to the particular way God is calling us to be. This is at the heart of who we are, the secret of our divine mystery, which is often drowned out by the surrounding world. Our individuality within our school community offers talents and gifts which only we can give.

EUCHARIST: When we celebrate Mass, it is the beginning, not the end, of our Christian responsibilities. It is the beginning of our response to the visible Body and Blood of Christ, which calls us into a deeper relationship with him. Jesus is shown in the Gospels to be as knowledgeable as the elders. In imitating him, we seek knowledge to use for justice and the greater good.

REIGN OF GOD: Jesus preaches about the reign of God, that kingdom on earth where God's will is done. Through Jesus' ministry he has already shown us how to achieve that kingdom. The Catholic school strives to achieve the kingdom through support in learning and education and in valuing each student as a precious child of God.

VOCATION: In the Gospels, Peter is called by Jesus to be the rock on which the Church is built. Schools are places where we are nurtured and where we are continually called to be little rocks upon which, through our individual vocations, we can build and contribute to the mission of Jesus.

EVANGELISATION: We only tell stories to others that give us pleasure to tell. The Gospel is a story that has been told time and time again. It is a story of Good News, a story which calls us to be Good News for one another. Each class in the school timetable also provides an opportunity for us to discover new ways of being Good News, as every subject has its own story told by the teacher. Like the Gospels, these stories call us to realise our potential and achieve our personal best in life. But without the story of the Gospel, our hearts are empty. Education and faith are best when they are lived out together.

Catholic schools have a unique capacity to encourage personal growth and provide an understanding of the world to the young people they serve. The aim of a Catholic school is to provide a purposeful and holistic support to the development of our young people. It is an earnest endeavour to contribute to and serve in the Kingdom of God. Chris Richardson comments: 'Catholic schools are communities, where members are encouraged to make Christ present for each other.' It is through this service that the ethos of a Catholic school becomes less rhetorical and more of a lived reality.

Note for the Teacher

This resource is designed to support you in exploring what it is to be a Catholic school with your students. It provides an opportunity to emphasise the Christian call to serve under different subheadings: Self, Eucharist, Reign of God, Vocation and Evangelisation. To this end, this resource offers a starting point for this conversation. The following pages are offered by way of class plans and ideas, which vary in length and depth. This is to allow you, the teacher, to respond to your given professional context and area of interest. Feel free to use all or aspects of this resource according to your timetable and the needs and interests of your students.

Prayer for Teachers

1 Corinthians 13: A Teacher's Paraphrase

If I could explain everything perfectly to my students, but did not love each one of them, I might as well be talking to an empty room.

If I could find all the answers to educational problems and did not love, my efforts would be futile.

If I could buy every kind of educational aid and sacrificed to do so, but did not have love for my students, it would be a complete waste.

Love is patient when it is necessary to repeat a concept over and over to a student who is having difficulty.

Love is kind when an irate parent accuses and berates other teachers or me.

Love is not jealous when the other teacher has an entire class of well-behaved and extremely intelligent students, while mine seem not so great.

Love is not proud or boastful when my students improve greatly and really want to come to my class.

Love is willing to yield my schedule and plans to fit in with the needs of others.

Love does not scream at my class when they misbehave, but seeks to help them understand the importance of self-discipline.

Love does not broadcast all of my students' problems and misdeeds to those in the staffroom.

Love keeps trying, even when it seems a student will never understand the difference between an adverb and an adjective.

Teaching methods, bulletin boards, textbooks, yes, even computers, will eventually be discarded, but love is everlasting.

These three things I have learned through teaching: endurance, patience and love. And the greatest of these is love.

(*from* Servant Leadership for the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis)

Board of Management

The following is offered as a prayer to guide the management of schools during Catholic Schools Week and beyond.

Dear Lord,
Help us to be grateful for the opportunity to serve others through our ministry on this board.
Guide our meetings towards an understanding of ourselves and our abilities. Help us to use them in this service.
Open our hearts to be in communion with your will.
Inspire us to bring about your kingdom through the decisions that we make.
Help us to be brave in answering your call to live out our true calling to love through this work.
Let us use our term on this board to be wellsprings of the Good News to all whom we encounter.
As we journey in this role, with you by our side, strengthen us to honour the Catholic ethos upon which our school was formed.
Amen.

Thoughts for Each Day

Consider using these thoughts as a prayerful beginning to each day during Catholic Schools Week.

SELF

I am just one of many in my school community. There are many voices, many personalities, many people. But my voice is also important. My personality is unique and contributes to my school community in a distinctive way. Without me, our entire school community would be different. I am grateful for the ways in which I am different from everyone else. I thank God for the blessed imprint I leave on this place of learning. Help me to positively influence those around me through my special characteristics that make me who I am. Through God present in me, I pray that those who meet me will always feel at peace in my company.

EUCHARIST

We experience Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist. This then gives us strength to bring this experience to our lives outside of the church building. We must ask ourselves: have we shown kindness towards others? Have we stopped people from gossiping? Have we challenged bullying behaviour? Have we kept our promises? Have we reached out to people who have been excluded by others? Have we offered words of welcome to new members of our school community? By doing these difficult things, we live out the experience of the Eucharist in our daily lives.

REIGN OF GOD

Some Christians think that religion is a very private affair, just between the individual and God. However, when Jesus told a story about the reign of God and the people who would enter into the kingdom at the end of the world (Mt 25:31-46), he said people's entry would be based on only one thing: the extent to which they recognised him in the poor, the hungry, the sick, the homeless and the prisoner, and what they did to help him.

Our religious beliefs must be lived through our actions. In our Catholic schools the Good News of Jesus' love must guide all that we do, to help us as individuals and as a community to respond to the needs of others, knowing that in doing so we are both responding to Jesus himself and building the Kingdom of God on earth.

VOCATION

When someone calls your name, you stop, you look and you listen to hear what they have to say. You consider their words and see do they resonate with your thoughts and feelings. This conversation is a two-way thing. When we listen to God we open up a conversation around who we are and where our place in the world might be – who and where God might be calling us to be. This is a unique conversation that God is inviting each of us to have. Today, let us be grateful for the gift from God of our true uniqueness and pray for the openness to search for our place in the world.

EVANGELISATION

Today, we celebrate the Good News of the Gospel. Let us live the joy of the Gospel in all that we do. Help us Lord to be inspired by evangelisers gone before us and those who live today to be Good News. May we learn from their example and be a light for others, today and every day.

Links to Parish

Why is Catholic Schools Week important for your parish?

Over the past five years parishes throughout the country have responded with great enthusiasm and creativity to welcome members of the local schools to contribute to parish life in a special way during Catholic Schools Week (CSW). This can be done in a variety of ways: during the Sunday liturgy; by extending an invitation to the local ministering priests in the parish to come along to the activities in the schools; and by actively creating opportunities for the parish to connect with local schools.

Who is it for?

Resources are distributed to both schools and parishes in advance of CSW. It is hoped that both parties will actively seek to communicate with one another, to collaborate – even in simple ways – during this time when schools have an even greater opportunity to enrich and enliven the life of the local community, utilising all the energy, enthusiasm, gifts and talents that young people have in abundance!

It is clear to see that when schools and parishes work together in a collaborative way during CSW, the benefits can be far-reaching for everyone. Such activities allow students to recognise how they can contribute to parish life in real and effective ways.

As many parishes are already advancing with new traditions of this nature, it is clear that there are a wide variety of ways in which communities might choose to mark CSW. Inside this resource you will find some suggestions that might encourage you to make plans for CSW 2015.

Why a liturgy?

'Make the Mass *Yours*' is a practical, step-by-step guide, available online, to inspire students, their teachers and chaplains to get involved in the Sunday liturgy to mark the beginning of CSW. Log onto **www.catholicschools.ie** to download this resource, which highlights the role our young people play, recognising the valuable contribution they can make in their local parish.

Starting out on an activity of this nature is never easy and takes courage. Start small and keep it simple; as CSW is an annual event, you will have the opportunity to go bigger and better year on year!

Liturgy on Sunday, 25 January

Who can help?

- If there is a liturgy team/parish pastoral team, try to highlight CSW as early as possible so that they can be involved in preparing for the liturgy for this Mass.
- Arrange a planning meeting with representatives of each school – for example, management, chaplain, the RE co-ordinator and staff members – in advance of CSW to plan the event with parish council representatives/parish pastoral workers/members of the liturgy team. A Mass is provided on page 28, and there is a prayer service on page 31.
- Highlighting CSW in the local parish newsletter is a good way of bringing this significant week to the attention of the wider community. Include specific details about the activities planned in your parish. 'Make the Mass *Yours*' contains a sample wording to give you some ideas.

What other types of links could be made?

- **Display area** – utilise artwork created by students in the school to form a centrepiece for display at the Sunday liturgy/in the parish centre/in the school foyer to showcase the ways Catholic schools instil the 'call to serve' within our young people.
- **Parish pastoral council** – invite them to consider how they could give expression to CSW this year.
- **The school**
  - The RE team and chaplain might take the opportunity this week to highlight the theme of CSW 2015. The resources supplied will help you in this regard.
  - Celebrate CSW in the staffroom this week, perhaps with a coffee morning. Display the CSW 2015 poster in a prominent location.
  - Consider using the prayer for teachers on page 3 and the prayer for the board on page 4 during this special week to guide all concerned to reflect on their work in Catholic education.

Self

When we honour ourselves, we make God visible to others.

When we think about faith and service, we rarely think about service to self. The Gospels seem to always encourage us to reach out from ourselves to others. Jesus even goes so far as to say, 'whoever loses his life for my sake shall find it' (Mt 10:39).

What other examples can you think of from the Bible where people have given their full lives in different ways in the name of faith?

So, is there any room in the Christian life for self-centredness – for being present to and centred in self? Service to self is not a selfish exercise. It is about honouring the uniqueness of who we are and the gift that God has given to the world through us. This is how we make God visible to the world. Mary understood this when she said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord.'

Create your own Magnificat using Luke 1:46-55. It can be a sketch, a song/rap, a poem or a paragraph.

The ego is that part of us which is known as the false self. It gives rise to all fear and insecurity. It is also that part of us which is influenced by others and the world around us. But there is another part of us that is completely our own, not dominated by criticism or other negative thoughts. This is the part of us that is our unique selves, the place where God dwells. When we are true to ourselves, when we do not compromise who we are or what we believe, we are truly the person that God has loved into existence.

Take a spiritual 'selfie'! Sometimes when we see pictures of ourselves we look different to how we think we look. Likewise, when we take time to look within, we can see things that we are not always aware of.

Using your own Magnificat, list three positive qualities that God has gifted to you. Become aware of one instance where your words or actions may have been motivated by fear/insecurity/the influence of others.

Jesus is given numerous titles in the Gospels – **can you think of what they are?** (Son of God, Son of Man, the Christ, the Prophet, the King, the King of the Jews). One important title is Emmanuel. It means 'God is with us'. There are no conditions. He simply is!

John Main was a Catholic Benedictine monk who presented a way of Christian meditation. The purpose of this meditation is to silence the ego and to tap into the presence of God deep within us. In this way we begin to lose our attachment to our ego thoughts and in doing so we find true life within us; we find our authentic selves.

'The Glory of God is a human being fully alive' – *St Irenaeus, second-century saint.*

Be Still And Know That I Am God (Ps 46:10)

Meditation Practice

Introduction: Sit still and in an upright position. Sit relaxed but do not use this time to fall asleep. Rather, this time is to be used to become awake to who we really are. Close your eyes lightly. The mantra we will use is a prayer phrase – Maranatha. It means 'Come Lord'. As you begin to meditate, repeat the word in four equal syllables – MA-RA-NA-THA.

Do not think or imagine anything, spiritual or otherwise. If thoughts or images come to your mind, let them pass and return to your mantra; they are simply distractions.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence, where your love is revealed to all who call, 'Come Lord Jesus'.

Practice: Set a timer for a maximum of twenty minutes. Sit still and try not to move for this duration.

Closing Prayer: Glory Be.

Share your experience with the rest of the class, provided you are comfortable doing this. Spend some time offering prayers of petition for the special intentions of the class.

SELF

Match the quotation to its reference:

My soul magnifies the Lord.	**Matthew 10:39**
Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.	**Psalm 139:14**
He who loses his life for my sake will find it.	**Luke 1:46**
Emmanuel.	**Luke 2:19**
Be still and know that I am God.	**Matthew 1:23**
You are beautifully and wonderfully made.	**Psalm 46:10**

Affirmations

In affirming someone else's qualities, we declare them to be true. It is a positive exercise through which both parties benefit. The person who makes the affirmation does so from their authentic selves, where there is no jealousy, envy or agenda. The person receiving the affirmation feels validated and their qualities are reinforced. It is also an effective tool in conflict management.

- Divide the class into small groups – four to five per group.
- Let each person write an honest and positive affirmation for everyone else in the group.
- The affirmation ought to include a concrete example of how the person being affirmed has used/demonstrated that quality.
- Each person reads aloud what they have written and gives the written affirmation to the person being affirmed.
- Encourage the class to keep their affirmations to be presented at your school Mass/prayer service in thanksgiving.

Eucharist

Word Search

Last Supper
Mission
Mass
Body of Christ
Reconciliation
Eucharist
Salvation
Service
Thanksgiving
Justice
New Creation
Transformed

E	U	Y	N	T	R	T	C	Y	W	S	G	N	D	I
C	K	U	O	S	P	D	S	T	P	E	N	D	Y	T
I	R	C	I	I	Z	U	N	B	O	R	I	C	E	S
T	E	D	T	R	L	U	O	E	U	V	V	K	F	I
S	P	Y	A	H	K	D	I	C	F	I	I	O	T	R
U	P	I	I	C	T	N	T	N	O	C	G	V	X	A
J	U	I	L	F	D	O	A	O	U	E	S	U	F	H
I	S	D	I	O	G	I	E	I	D	Y	K	Y	U	C
Y	T	Z	C	Y	W	T	R	S	A	D	N	C	H	U
P	S	Q	N	D	G	A	C	S	P	W	A	O	B	E
X	A	E	O	O	A	V	W	I	E	H	H	T	A	X
C	L	J	C	B	Y	L	E	M	U	L	T	Q	K	V
B	X	J	E	V	A	A	N	S	G	H	K	D	V	U
D	E	M	R	O	F	S	N	A	R	T	B	D	X	W
A	R	E	F	R	H	Z	I	M	A	S	S	E	Z	T

What is the link between Eucharist and Service?

Eucharist is one of the sacraments of initiation. In the celebration of the Eucharist we remember the selfless love that Christ showed us by giving his life for us, but also that we have been promised eternal life. We gather, we celebrate, we share and are fed, and we go forward with a very specific mission. At the end of Mass the priest says 'go forth, glorifying the Lord by your life'. We are called to try to live what we have prayed and what we have shared. We are called to serve. When we meet the needs of our brothers and sisters we become 'One Body' in the Eucharist. We are united by our participation in the Eucharist.

Name one person in your life who always puts others first.

We are called to use our skills and talents to help others.

Describe a time when you used your skills and talents to help others.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

- Name one place where you have gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist.
- Describe a time when you have experienced someone's forgiveness.
- Discuss a time when you experienced suffering or pain.
- Comment on a time when you were connected with others at the celebration of the Eucharist.
- List times when you have felt like you belong to the Christian community.

By participating in the Eucharist, we are changed and become new people.

Describe a time when you felt changed by your experience of Eucharist OR research a person who has felt changed by their experience of Eucharist.

Explain the phrase to 'put on Christ'. How are we inspired by the Eucharist to follow Christ's way and be fully ourselves?

Jesus is the ultimate example of a Servant. At the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples' feet '... and he got up from table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it around his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing ...' (Jn 13:4-5).

At the time, his disciples did not understand what he was doing. But he was showing them a way to serve each other. Pope Francis imitated this message at the celebration of the Eucharist. On Holy Thursday 2013, he washed the feet of twelve young people in a detention centre. In 2014, he repeated this ritual in the Don Gnocchi Centre in Rome, a home for the elderly and disabled.

- What was Jesus saying to his disciples by doing something that only the lowest people in society normally did?
- How has Pope Francis showed his understanding of Jesus' message?
- Describe how you would feel washing the feet of someone in your class.
- This Gospel story is not simply about washing people's feet. Explain the deeper meaning of this story.
- List five things that you could do to show your understanding of this Gospel story, either in your school or in your parish.
- Create a poster, write a poem or compose a song that expresses the true meaning of 'The Washing of the Feet'.

The Washing of the Feet is a story that highlights the issues of equality and justice.

Dermot Lane said: 'A Eucharistic people cannot be indifferent to injustice and inequality.' Having gathered to celebrate the Eucharist we are sent out to serve others – 'Glorifying the Lord by your life.'

Discuss how you experience equality and justice in your school. What part do you play in ensuring equality and justice for all in your school community?

Give them something to eat yourselves
(Based on the work of Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap)

When we were preparing for our first Holy Communion we were taught that the Eucharist is not something that simply happens on a Sunday. It is something that causes us to act. Another Gospel passage that shows us how we are to serve others is the feeding of the five thousand.

> It was late afternoon when the Twelve came up to him and said, 'Send the people away, and they can go to the villages and farms around about to find lodging and food; for we are in a lonely place here.' He replied, 'Give them something to eat yourselves.' But they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we are to go ourselves and buy food for all these people.' Then he took the five loaves and two fish, raised his eyes to heaven, and said the blessing over them; then he broke them and handed them to his disciples to distribute among the crowd. (Lk 9:12-16)

From this story, reflect on the following questions:

- Name a time when you gave someone something to nourish them.
- Jesus involved the disciples in feeding the five thousand. Describe a time when someone took the time to teach you how to do something.
- Communion comes from the Latin word *munio,* which means 'burden or responsibility'. Write about a time when you found it difficult to be part of a community.
- We must see Christ in our everyday lives. Discuss when you showed/were shown Christ's love in your everyday life.

Look up Matthew 25:35-40 and write about a time when you ...

- Made someone feel welcome.
- Helped someone who was sick.
- Spent time with someone who was going through a hard time.

Silvester O'Flynn said that 'God's love is short-circuited if we do not pass it on.'

List ways in which you can try to circulate God's love in your community.

Ten Commandments for Online Behaviour

1. Be positive and joyful. Offer 'digital smiles' and have a sense of humour. As Pope Francis says, 'no "funeral faces" or "sourpusses"'!
2. Never bear false witness on the internet. Never 'like' a lie!
3. Fill the internet with charity and love. Seek to include a sense of charity and solidarity with the suffering in the world (*Ubi caritas et amor*).
4. Avoid aggression and 'preachiness' online; try not to be judgemental. Instead, try Pope Francis's approach of 'tenderness'.
5. Have a broad back when criticisms and insults are made. When possible, gently correct.

Catholic Schools Week 2015

Catholic Schools: Called to Serve

How can you serve today?

Self

Eucharist

Reign of God

Vocation
Evangelisation

6 Pray in the digital world! Establish sacred spaces, opportunities for stillness, reflection and meditation online.

7 Create connections and build community. Church has always been about 'gathering'. Share posts that have a powerful Gospel witness. Live the call to 'love one another'.

8 Promote behaviours that keep everyone safe. Use the internet responsibly!

9 Respect your dignity and the dignity of others in all that you do online.

10 The internet has the power and potential to bear witness – share the Good News online!

Adapted from Archbishop Eamonn Martin

Catholic Schools Week 2015

Catholic Schools: Called to Serve

Reign of God

Right from the beginning of his teaching and preaching, Jesus spoke to the people about the reign of God on earth. The phrase that Jesus used to portray God's reign was the '**Kingdom of God**' and the fact that this phrase occurs one hundred and sixty times in the Christian scriptures indicates that it is the single most important thing that Jesus talked about. What makes his focus on God's reign in terms of the Kingdom of God so unusual is that this phrase only appears once in the Old Testament, in Wisdom 10:10, and no other Jewish teacher or group had ever used this idea in their teaching.

Return to Nazareth: Luke 4:16-30
What Jesus thought about the reign of God is shown by something that happened in the synagogue in Nazareth soon after he had begun his work of preaching and teaching throughout Galilee ...

> One Sabbath day Jesus went to the synagogue for the usual religious service. He was asked to read and, taking the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, he found the place where it says: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. (Lk 4:16-19)

> When he had finished reading, the people waited to hear what comment he would make on the scriptures and they were astonished when he simply said: Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. (Lk:4:21)

The text Jesus had chosen was one with which they were familiar. It spoke of a future king (anointed one/ Messiah) who would establish the kind of kingdom that God wanted. In it every person would have his or her proper place, with no one excluded or oppressed on account of poverty or sickness. The people of Nazareth were delighted with Jesus' claim that a person who grew up in their village would be the long-awaited Messiah. However, this delight quickly turned to anger when it became clear that Jesus intended this kingdom not just for God's chosen people in Palestine but **for the whole world**.

> When they heard this all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up and drove him out of the town. (Lk 4:28-29)

Jesus never returned to Nazareth but for the next three years travelled around Galilee explaining, by actions as well as words, what the Kingdom of God was all about. He showed that the kingdom was not a particular place or country; rather, it was **a way of life** that would create the kind of world that God wants **for everybody**. The whole world would become one kingdom – the Kingdom of God.

In the story of the life of Jesus, there were three groups to whom he reached out in a preferential way:

1. The sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf, the dumb – those who were afflicted with **illness or physical challenges**;
2. The **poor** – the majority of the population of Israel, whose life was hard and who struggled to make ends meet;
3. Public **sinners**, notably tax collectors and prostitutes.

What these three groups had in common was the attitude of society towards them and the way they were treated by the society in which they lived. They were all despised, looked down upon and treated as second-class citizens.

Identify a group/groups that you feel may be looked down upon by Irish society today. Give reasons for your answer.

The Reign of God in Ireland Today

In November 2013, Pope Francis issued the first major piece of writing of his ministry as pope. It was a document called *Evangelii Gaudium*, meaning 'The Joy of the Gospel'. His message at the start of his ministry as leader of the Catholic Church reflects the announcement of the reign of God given by Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth:

> 'To whom should the Church go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, "those who cannot repay you" (Lk 14:14). There can be no room for doubt or for explanations which weaken so clear a message.' (*EG*, no. 48)

Photo: Brenda Drumm

One person in Ireland who has led the way in reaching out to the poor, despised and overlooked is Br Kevin Crowley, a native of Cork who founded the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin in 1969.

'We noticed people coming to our friary for help and I saw lots of people walking the streets by day with nowhere to go and nothing to eat. Some would come into the church to lie up against the radiators to try and get warm and then be moved on. I felt it wasn't in keeping with our tradition in the spirit of St Francis to do nothing and it gave me the idea to start a centre to relieve the hardship endured by the homeless.

'At first, there were around fifty callers a day for soup and sandwiches. Very quickly, the numbers got bigger and we had to make more space and now we cater for about seven hundred a day. From Monday to Saturday, callers to the centre can get a breakfast that could include porridge, tea or coffee, sausages, brown hash rolls or soup from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. We close for a short time to prepare for lunches from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., which up to five hundred might avail of. Children, of which there is a growing number, have a separate area for eating nutritional meals to ensure their protection.'

Once asked if he ever wondered if some people unfairly took advantage of the free service, Br Kevin replied: 'Our motto in the spirit of St Francis is that we don't ask questions. Indeed, when I did so on just one occasion, on seeing a woman pull up in a car to have a meal with her child, she burst into tears, saying she had everything she possessed inside the vehicle because she had been beaten up by her husband, thrown out and had no money nor a place to stay.'

Brother Kevin believes poverty today is worse than when the centre started almost forty-five years ago. 'One day a week we also give out food parcels, which could include milk, tea, bread, butter, cheese, pasta and other commodities. Two or three years ago, we had four hundred calling but now we have over sixteen hundred. As well as the homeless coming for food, we have the "new poor", those who have lost their jobs or are on the verge of losing their homes. We've had some very sad cases, such as a mother who had a son doing the Leaving Cert and a daughter the Junior Cert, who had to do exams one morning without breakfast because both she and her husband had just lost their jobs and what money they had they were trying to keep to pay the mortgage.'

At the Capuchin Day Centre, a welcome is assured for all, no one is ever turned away, no judgements are made and no one goes hungry. 'Government funding at €450,000 per annum hasn't increased since 2007 and our running costs are €2.1 million. We depend entirely on the generosity of the people. You might say I am the CEO or whatever, but my salary is nil.'

In 2014, Br Kevin has been nominated, along with the RTÉ soccer pundit and ex-international John Giles, for the Freedom of the City of Dublin.

(Main Source: *Southern Star,* 13 July 2013)

- Identify ways in which the reign of God as proclaimed by Jesus is evident in the work of the Capuchin Day Centre today. See **www.capuchinfranciscans.ie**.
- Can you suggest other ways in which you could respond to the challenge set by Pope Francis to build the Kingdom of God?
- Brother Kevin talks of a 'new poor'. What do you think he means by this?
- How can you be inspired by Br Kevin to use your gifts and talents to act for the Kingdom of God?

Vocation

Brainstorm with your neighbour what you understand by the word 'vocation'. Where have you heard it before? To whom does it refer?

Sometimes our understanding of a word can be influenced by a tradition. Vocation is often used to describe the choice to enter into religious life, to become a sister, a brother or a priest. But the word vocation is much broader than that. It means a *calling*, an invitation by God, extended to everyone, to a friendship with God. Vocation is a calling to be fully yourself, to allow yourself to flourish, bringing your uniqueness to the world. Vocation is a calling to be the best you can be. Now this is challenging stuff!

So what does this *calling* mean? It is not a loud siren demanding your attention, nor is it a command from a rulebook. Rather it is an invitation to begin a conversation, to begin a friendship with God and, by extension, the world around you. God wants the best for your life, which is unique and special, it is blessed. In the creation story we read, 'when he created them, he blessed them' (Gn 5:2).

Pause for a moment, close your eyes and think – in what way is my life blessed?

Each of your blessings is unique to you. Sometimes it may seem like others 'have' more blessings than you, they seem to have the right clothes, the right friends and the right attitude. But each of us is blessed in different ways, just like each of us is called in different ways to be fully our true selves. Our true selves are full of gifts and talents waiting to be developed. It is hard sometimes to find out exactly what they are.

Reflect on what you like doing. What gives you energy?

It might be music or drawing, reading and writing; it might be volunteering with the local sports club or with the SVP; it might be communicating with other people, debating or being on the student council. Finding out what makes you 'tick' is the first step in understanding your true calling in life. This process is sometimes called discernment.

Discernment is another concept heard mainly in religious circles. It means really listening to your heart, where God speaks, paying attention to your desires to learn your way of being in the world. Discernment is about choices. It is about seeing all that is possible for your life, yet listening to the gentle part of you that is calling you in a special way to 'have life and have it to the full' (Jn 10:10). It is that part of you that is calling you to get the most out of life and let go of things that might hold you back.

But how can we do this when we live such busy and full lives? Pressures from school, sports and social media can sometimes crowd our mind and claim all our time and attention.

The Daily Examen is a prayer method created by St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, especially for people whose lives are crowded with activity and distraction. It is devised in a way to help you to listen to your heart's desires and come to understand your deepest hopes in life, to come to love yourself and in so doing serve others. Let's try it!

1. **Find a quiet place**
   Go to a place where your phone, the internet, TV, family or school won't bother you. Make yourself comfortable, but not too comfortable – don't fall asleep!
2. **Identify a moment of gratitude**
   Name a moment you are grateful for today. Remember how you felt in that moment. Notice the feelings and simply be thankful for them, knowing that all gifts come from God.
3. **Ask for freedom**
   Ask for freedom from the things in life that distract us, trip us up or bias our judgement. Here we ask the Holy Spirit to guide our vision of things so we can see the events of our day as they really were, how we experienced them, and our own prejudices too.
4. **Review your day**
   Try to recall the events of your day as if you were watching a movie. What happened as you woke up, came to school, attended class, break, lunch, etc.? Pause on any significant moments – is God speaking to you in any of these moments?
5. **Talk with God**
   Tell God what is on your mind – your fears, your hopes, your desires. You might express gratitude for something that came up as you reviewed your day, or ask for forgiveness for something you said or did that was not fully you. This is a time for you and God; you might find yourself being called to be a bit different tomorrow, a bit less snappy or more grateful.
6. **Finish your prayer**
   End your time of prayer with an Our Father or a prayer you like.

Adapted from Busted Halo

The *Examen* is a practical prayer that is rooted in your reality. Saint Ignatius was also very keen on using the *Examen* to inform a 'way of proceeding' in the world. This means participating in prayer, working on your relationship with God, and matching that prayer with action in the service of others. For some, that might mean working on how they interact with people, seeking ways to understand another person's view or volunteering their time. For others it might mean looking at ways to support a global campaign against injustice. It is different for each individual, according to their gifts and talents.

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VOCATION

Respond to the following questions in your journal:
What actions could I take in the service of others?
How is God calling me to serve?

A person's vocation is unique to them, it is special and it can only be discovered by the person themselves. What you find life-giving, what you have energy for, where your passion lies, how you want to live your life, is something vitalised by faith, by building and trusting your relationship with God. The call is there, to answer it is up to you!

The tool below might help you begin the process of listening to your desires through prayer.

Adapted from the Diocese of Arlington

Evangelisation

During religious education class you have probably heard the word 'evangelisation' before. You might also remember that the Gospel writers were known as the evangelists.

Evangelists are described as 'Gospel writers (Mark, Matthew, Luke or John) who spread the "Good News of Jesus Christ"'.

Where might you have heard about evangelisation before?

Pope Francis wrote, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 'Evangelisation aims at a process of growth which entails taking seriously each person and God's plan for his or her life ...' (*EG*, no. 160).

From this, as followers of Jesus, we can understand **evangelisation as the act of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Good News of the Gospels, to all whom we meet**.

Good news is such a wonderful and positive thing! When you have good news can you easily keep it to yourself? When the tomb was found empty, when Jesus appeared to his apostles, when he sent the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' followers were simply full of joy. They ran into the streets to tell anyone who would listen that Jesus was Saviour of all, that he was risen and that all who believed in him would have peace in their hearts, that they would know true freedom and that they could look forward to eternal life.

Perhaps you might know the words from the hymn below:

> 'Go tell everyone the news that the Kingdom of God has come ... He sent me to bring the Good News to the poor, tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more ...'

When Jesus' followers were filled with the Holy Spirit their fears left them, they felt called by God to *go tell everyone* as they were no longer satisfied keeping the Good News to themselves. With this act of leaving the upper room, the tradition of evangelisation began.

Imagine if news presented by the media focused less on war, poverty or death and focused *more* on 'good news', how would that make you feel?

World's Best News is a website that features only positive news stories from around the globe. Check out the website at www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/2/140918-_WBN_newspaper_2014.pdf and find out about two positive news stories.

In pairs, with the person next to you, decide the content and write a report of a good news story from your school or local community.

Why Evangelise?

The Word of God, as written by the evangelists, is a good place to start when exploring what evangelisation can mean to us in today's context:

In Luke's Gospel, we read about Jesus in the synagogue where he stood to read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news' (Lk 4:18).

While in the Gospel of Mark the message is clear and simple: 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation' (Mk 16:15).

Why do you think evangelisation was an important activity in the early Church?

Notice how Matthew concludes his Gospel: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of time' (Mt 28:19-20).

Why do you think Matthew chose to end his Gospel in this way?

And finally, John makes it clear that we all have a part to play in bringing the Good News to others: 'You did not chose me, I have chosen you' (Jn 15:16).

Luke was represented by the ox, a doctor writing in Corinth for a community whose lives had been changed by the Good News.

Mark was represented by the lion. What do you associate with this symbol? Bravery? Mark was the first Gospel writer, in Rome where being a Christian held so much risk.

?

What symbol would represent your personality? Could you evangelise through what you write, like the four Gospel writers?

Matthew was represented as a man, a former rabbi writing in Antioch for a community where he strove to highlight how the Jewish scriptures and the teachings of Jesus were closely linked.

John was the eagle: 'And he will raise you up ...' Much like this beautiful hymn, John's Gospel is the most poetic of all the Gospels – it is creative, artistic and inspiring. His Gospel highlighted Jesus' divinity.

'Go make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19) was the theme for World Youth Day in Rio 2013. When Pope Francis addressed the millions of young people in attendance he referred to these words and, indeed, evangelisation. To those young people gathered to be with him, Pope Francis offered three simple ideas:

- Go
- Do not be afraid
- Serve.

Log onto www.catholicschools.ie to download his address notes.

The Word of God speaks to us today and has the power to inspire us as much as it inspired the early Christians. Have we forgotten to be 'bringers' of this Good News to others?

Irish people who evangelised in the past

Ireland, 'the land of saints and scholars', has a proud heritage of evangelists that made an impact on the faith, not only here in Ireland but throughout Europe.

Research a saint from your local area who was an evangeliser of their time, e.g. Columbanus. Create a display for your school's RE notice board on your research.

Who are the Evangelisers today?

The Church *exists* to evangelise. Through service, Catholics are reaching out to those who are marginalised by poverty and injustice, to those who are in prison, to the sick and to the vulnerable.

Pope Francis is calling us to live out the Gospel '... Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you' (*EG,* no. 164).

Reflect on the following for a moment: do we frequently take time to consider God by our side in our everyday lives? Could we be better bringers of his Good News? What would help us to achieve this?

Evangelisation for today's world

What does evangelisation mean to *you*? Is it still something that is relevant? Are there any evangelists today?

So what does evangelisation look like? Is it only people like Pope Francis who can evangelise in today's world? Why not you? You can spread Good News by *being* Good News, by greeting each person you meet with love, respect and kindness.

How we use social media can have a huge impact on others. Consider for a moment: do we use social media for the good of others? Do we focus on presenting the most attractive images of ourselves? How can we use social media to be Good News for others?

Log onto www.catholicschools.ie for your handout and tasks on kindness in social media.

Eucharist for Catholic Schools Week

Create a prayerful space for the celebration of the Eucharist. Change the appearance of the space to be used for Mass using banners and drapes.

Suggestions for Banner Quotations:

'Jesus came, not to be served, but to serve', 'Render service to the Lord',

SERVE: Self, **E**ucharist, **R**eign of God, **V**ocation, **E**vangelisation.

Background Music:

Have soft music/Taizé chant playing before the congregation enters the sacred space, e.g. The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace, *Laudate Omnes Gentes*.

Entrance Hymn:

Be Still for the Presence of the Lord.

Opening Procession:

Ask First Years to make banners of the crests of the national schools they attended and present them at the beginning of Mass to demonstrate the continuity of Catholic education in the parish.

Students bring up five lanterns, each representing one of the elements of a Catholic school's ethos – Self, Eucharist, Reign of God, Vocation and Evangelisation – to be placed on the ground in front of the altar.

1. We offer this lantern as a symbol of each individual **Self** in this school as a light that shines separately and brightly among all others.
2. We offer this lantern as a symbol of the **Eucharist,** which we share as a school community, the body and blood of Christ, the light of the world.
3. We offer this lantern as a symbol of the **Reign of God**, that the justice and compassion begun by Jesus may be upheld in all aspects of our school life.
4. We offer this lantern as a symbol of **Vocation**, our place in the world that is supported and nurtured in us by our parents, teachers and wider parish.
5. We offer this lantern as a symbol of **Evangelisation**, that all who visit our school and those who encounter us as students and teachers may see in us another Christ.

First Reading: (Is 52:13-15)

The Lord promises to lift up those who serve him.

Responsorial Psalm: (Ps 103:1-3, 21-22)

Psalm Hymn: May the Goodness of the Lord be Upon Us And Give Success to the Work of Our Hands (Ronan McDonagh).

Second Reading (Rm 12:2, 4-6a, 9, 10, 21)
Saint Paul encourages the Roman community to work together as the Body of Christ.

Gospel Acclamation
The Glendalough Mass (Lawton).

Gospel (Jn 13:34-38)
Love one another.

Homily

Prayers of the Faithful:

LEADER: This year, the theme of Catholic Schools Week is **Catholic Schools: Called to Serve**. As a school community working and living together, we bring our prayers to Jesus who continually calls us to serve each other in love and tolerance:

1. **CHURCH**: Lord, heal the divisions within our Church and bring her to wholeness. May all who seek refuge find your peace and true presence in the Church, the people of God. *Lord hear us* ...
2. **SCHOOL:** As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week and our call to serve, we pray for our school that the gifts of our students may be nourished. May all our students in this place of faith and learning develop a determination to serve the greater good in our world. *Lord hear us* ...
3. **SELF:** Lord, inspire me to honour myself every day and in every moment, so that in doing so I may reveal your uniqueness in me to everyone I meet. *Lord hear us* ...
4. **EUCHARIST:** Jesus, what love draws you from heaven to be with us in the Eucharist? Help us always to return your love and in receiving the Eucharist we pray with St Augustine that we may become what we consume. *Lord hear us* ...
5. **REIGN OF GOD:** We pray for peace in all the troubled areas of the world. We lift up to you all those who are in grief and who are suffering. We pray for the reign of God on earth so that every tear can be wiped away. *Lord hear us* ...
6. **VOCATION:** Lord, thank you for all those who, through their vocations of teaching and parenting, have cared for us and provided a Catholic education for us. Nurture within us a true sense of vocation so that we may understand our own calling in life. *Lord hear us* ...
7. **EVANGELISATION:** Lord Jesus, we thank you for our Catholic faith. We also thank you for the many ways your beauty is expressed through all the other world religions. Give us a sense of your true presence within us and within our wider school community so that we may bring your Good News to all those who seek you through us. *Lord hear us* ...

Preparation of the Gifts Hymn: This is My Body (Jimmy Owens/Damian Lundy).

Preparation of the Gifts:

We offer the Bread and Wine, fruits of the earth, that will be transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Holy Holy: (Lawton, The Glendalough Mass)

We Proclaim Your Death O Lord (Lawton, The Glendalough Mass).

Amen: (Lawton, The Glendalough Mass)

Communion Hymn: The Servant King.

Communion Reflection:

Who won the gold medal in the 400 metre race in the 1996 Olympics? Who won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2000? Who won the hurling All-Ireland Final in 1999? Now think about these questions:

- Who was your favourite teacher in primary school? Can you remember one moment in your life when a friend was very kind to you? Think of one moment when you were comforted and reassured by a parent.
- It will have been much easier for you to answer the last three questions in your heart because ultimately, people remember the qualities you have as a human being much more than the things you achieve, even if those achievements are gold medals. Nothing can compare to human compassion towards another person. As you journey towards fulfilling your vocation in life, always remember that you will be known first and foremost for how you serve others. Saint Paul reminds us that we shall be known by our works. Sometimes this means simply giving time to listen to someone. When others have served us, we have remembered those actions with love. Let us then build a community of love, as we serve one another.

Final Blessing:

(Representatives of the Catholic school community light smaller candles from the main candle and turn to face the congregation.)

Light a Holy Fire:

Receive this holy fire. Make your lives like this fire. A holy life that is seen. A life that has no end. A light that darkness does not overcome. May this light of God in you grow. Go in peace. May the Almighty protect you today and all days.

Adapted from Desmond Tutu

Recessional Hymn: Though We Are Many (Sexton, Eucharistic Congress Hymn).

Prayer Service for Catholic Schools Week

Opening Song: The Servant Song.

(The leader of the service welcomes the students and lights a candle to signify the presence of Jesus within the community. As (s)he lights the candle, the opening prayer can be said.)

Opening Prayer:

In our opening prayer this day we thank you God for Jesus,
who came to seek and save the lost;
to set the captives free; to feed the hungry;
to touch the sick with healing; to love the unloved;
to speak out at injustice and to give life where there was death.
Help us Lord, to be like your son Jesus; to see as he sees; and to act on his word,
building up the Kingdom of God on earth.
We ask for your help in these things.
Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:29-37

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

A lawyer wanting to justify himself asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers who stripped him, beat him and went away leaving him half dead. Now by chance, a priest was going down that road and when he saw him, passed by on the other side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, while travelling, came near him and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him. "Go and do likewise."'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes for reflection

Today Pope Francis is calling the Church, which means each one of us here today, to take more notice, to see the ones lying on the side of the road who are in need. Whether in:

- visiting poor migrants on the tiny island of Lampedusa
- washing the feet of prisoners on Holy Thursday
- inviting the poor for a meal at the Vatican, or
- challenging economic systems that deny the dignity of people and corrupt the earth

... he is inviting us to be moved with compassion, because he knows that this is what it means to be a follower of Jesus and this is what it means to be a member of the Church and it is this type of Church that the world needs.

To paraphrase Pope Francis, 'A Church that hurries by, too busy to be bothered, is a sick and weak Church.'

In what ways can we show compassion? Is our Catholic school too busy, too stressed, to be bothered about those in need?

(These and other questions may lead to a period of sharing of ideas among the group.)

Reflection Song: The Cry of the Poor (Foley SJ).

Washing of the Hands Ceremony:

(You will need a jug, a bowl of water and a towel for this part of the service.)

Leader: At supper with his disciples, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and told them that he was giving them this example of loving service so that they may do the same for others in need.

Today, we are being offered the opportunity to respond to this request of Jesus to 'copy what I have done to you' (Jn 13:15) by coming forward and washing the hands of our neighbour. As a sign of our future commitment to serve those who need our help and assistance, in our school, in our homes and in society, we will wash and dry the hands of the person who comes forward after us.

(The leader then approaches the jug and bowl of water and washes and dries the hands of the first student. This student waits at the bowl and does the same for the next student until all who wish to come forward have done so. When the final student approaches the bowl, that student can wash the hands of the leader.)

Prayers of Intercession:

1. We pray to Jesus our Lord to open our eyes that we may see you in our brothers and sisters. *Lord hear us* ...
2. We pray to Jesus our Lord to open our ears that we may hear the cries of the hungry, the cold, the frightened and the oppressed. *Lord hear us* ...
3. We pray to Jesus our Lord to open our hearts that we may love each other as you love us. *Lord hear us* ...

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, you see all people through the eyes of love.

Help us to be your body now on earth,

to seek out the lost, to see the silent tears of the suffering,

to listen to the lonely, to speak a word of comfort to the sad, to have a heart to love the unloved. This is what you have asked us to do.

Give us the strength to respond to your call to serve and to do your will on earth.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Closing Song: City of God (Dan Schutte).

This resource pack has been co-ordinated by Bríd Dunne in collaboration with Aisling English, Anna Maloney, Karen O'Donovan and Tom Ryan, in consultation with the Steering Committee for Catholic Schools Week 2015.

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Catholic Schools: Called to Serve

Resources for the Post-Primary School Community: Home, School & Parish

25–31 January 2015