



Catholic Schools Week 2016 at Home

Dear Parents and Families,

All this week, our school will be celebrating Catholic Schools Week. This annual celebration of Catholic education gives us all the opportunity to be more aware of the unique contribution that our Catholic schools make to Irish life. Our theme this year is **Catholic Schools: Challenged to Proclaim God's Mercy**. The theme is a reminder that Pope Francis has proclaimed a Jubilee Year of Mercy that began on 8 December 2015 and will end on 20 November 2016. During this year we are all called to be merciful as God the Father is merciful. This is not an easy task. To be merciful requires us to love unconditionally, to forgive even when we don't believe that forgiveness is deserved. That is why we say that our Catholic schools are places that are challenged to proclaim God's mercy. It acknowledges that it is a difficult thing to do, but reminds us that this is how God wants us to be. At school this week the children and staff are reflecting on how they can be the face of God's mercy to each other and to everyone who is part of the school community. The home is the first place where children learn about God and God's mercy, and that is why you are also invited to think about how you can be the face of God's mercy for all who live in your home and all whom you encounter every day. The following are some ideas for you to try to do with your child at home.

Monday: We are the face of God's mercy when we are kind and compassionate

To be compassionate, one must be aware of the needs of others. Today, encourage everyone in your home to open their eyes, to notice others as Jesus did, and to see where we can help others.

Tuesday: We are the face of God's mercy when we forgive and reconcile

Bring your child to visit the church today. Bless each other with holy water, light a candle and ask God's forgiveness for all the times when you have done something that hurt another member of the family. Pray this prayer together as a family:

Gentle God,
Help me to live as Jesus has shown me.
When I don't do the right thing, guide me back to your loving ways.
Help me to remember to always say sorry.
Amen.

Wednesday: Grandparents are the face of God's mercy

Today is Grandparents' Day. Take time to visit or call grandparent/s today. Tell them how much you love them and thank them for always being there for you.

Thursday: We are the face of God's mercy when we are fair and just

Think of something to do today that will make God's world a better place. Pick up some litter, switch off lights that are not needed, go for a walk with your child and notice the beauty of God's world.

Friday: We are the face of God's mercy when we live like Jesus

Jesus taught us about God the Father, and he showed us how important it is to spend time with God. If we spend time with God in prayer we will know how he wants us to live, we will be better able to be the face of God's mercy to the people we love and, more importantly, to the people we find hard to love. Say a prayer together today.

Your school and parish may have events to celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2016. Make sure you have a copy of the parish newsletter, or keep an eye on the school and parish website.