



Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2016 in Your School

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 daily 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

New for Catholic Schools Week 2016

All resources are available to download on line at www.catholicschools.ie

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.

The poster included in this mailing can be the focus for your Catholic Schools Week 2016 Prayer Space. The doors on this poster are intended to represent the Jubilee Doors of Mercy. At the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis opened a door to help us to remember that we are all called to be the face of God's mercy to one another. When we act with compassion, forgiveness and justice, it is as if we were opening a door in ourselves that allows others to look through us and see God's mercy.

You can find more information about these doors on the back page of this flyer and online at www.catholicschools.ie.



Thoughts for Each Day

I Can Be the Face of God's Mercy

These reflections can be read out loud every day in each classroom or over an intercom system to the whole school community. They can be read by pupils or staff. The spoken reflection might be followed by a short period of Christian meditation.



Monday: Today is the first day of Catholic Schools Week 2016. Pope Francis named this year the Jubilee of Mercy and so this week in particular we are challenged to be the face of God's mercy in our school, our community and our world. God knows that we all sin but his mercy shows he will always forgive us and continue to love us no matter what. Today we focus on how we can be the face of God's mercy when we are kind and compassionate. When we are kind to others, we are living as God wants; we are also living how Jesus, through his life, showed us. When we think of others before ourselves, when we share, and when we love those around us, we are the face of God's mercy in our world.

Lord, help us to always be kind and compassionate.

Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father*



Tuesday: Today we are asked to be the face of God's mercy when we forgive and reconcile. Sometimes we do things that hurt others and they may do things that hurt us, but God asks us to forgive those who hurt us and seek forgiveness from the people we hurt. When we forgive, we can all be friends again and in this way we are living as Jesus asked us to.

Lord, help us to be forgiving and compassionate.

Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father*



Wednesday: Today is Grandparents' Day, and we are asked to think about how our grandparents are the face of God's mercy in our world. Our grandparents can play a special role in our lives. They are kind and caring and love us always. They teach us in the ways of faith and guide us on our life journey. In these ways and many more they are the face of God's mercy in our lives.

We thank you Lord for our grandparents, help us to be thankful for all they do and share with us.

Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father*



Catholic Schools Week 2016

Catholic Schools: Challenged to Proclaim God's Mercy



Thursday: Today we think about how we can be the face of God's mercy by acting justly and fairly. When we treat others fairly at home, in school and in the community we are acting as Jesus asked us to when he said, 'Act justly and love tenderly'. Many other people in our world live in unjust and unfair conditions – those in war-torn countries, those living through famine or drought and those who are hungry or homeless. These people need others to be the face of God's mercy and seek justice for them.

We pray that we may all work for justice and fairness in our world.
Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father*



Friday: As Catholic Schools Week comes to a close we are asked to think about how we can be the face of God's mercy when we live like Jesus. Trying to live like Jesus can be difficult. He told us to love one another, to be kind and caring and to forgive those who hurt us. Sometimes it is hard to forgive and to always love those around us, but as followers of Jesus we must always try to live as he showed us, and together we can make the world a better place by being like him and being the true face of God's mercy.

Lord, help us to be more like Jesus every day and to be the face of God's mercy alive in our world.

Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father*



Primary



Holy Doors in a Jubilee Year

Holy Doors are found in each of the four main churches or basilicas in Rome: St Peter's, St John Lateran's, St Mary Major's and St Paul's Outside the Walls.

Traditionally, Holy Doors are bricked up at the end of the jubilee year. The unblocking of the Holy Door in St Peter's began on 16 November 2015 so that it was ready for Pope Francis to unlock on 8 December 2015.



'It's a door that opens in the Church in order to reach out to those who, for many reasons, are far away.'

Pope Francis



The Holy Door of St Peter's with panels showing stories from the Bible