Moment Four: Families of Joy
Assembly Resources

'Open your heart to faith and God will do the rest.'

(Pope Francis, general audience, St Peter's Square, 29 March 2017)

Prayer Space

Gather photographs from the family life of staff and pupils to show moments of joy.

These will be displayed in the prayer space and on PowerPoint. As the pupils arrive at the assembly, play reflective music while photographs are displayed.

Leader: *Invite the pupils to stand for the opening song. During the song, ask the pupils to bring the candle and Bible to the prayer space.*

Opening Song:
'When Creation was Begun', *Grow in Love*, Junior Infants/P1, p. 263.

Welcome Address:
We begin by lighting our paschal candle to remind us that God is with us.

A few moments of silence.

Today we come together as a school community to celebrate the joy of belonging to and being part of a family that loves us and to pray for all those we love. The word 'joy' means to take great delight or happiness in something good. Our photographs show some of the great moments we have shared with our families and the great delight and happiness we feel as part of a loving family.

Let us celebrate the joy of God's love for us and our joy in loving each other.

Opening Prayer: World Meeting of Families Official Prayer

Gathering Ritual:
On the prayer space there are four unlit candles. Place the paschal candle/large candle in a prominent place as the four candles will be lit from this one.

Pupil: We welcome all who have come to share in this special prayer assembly with us. We gather to say thanks to God.

We offer you the light of hope. Carry this light of hope in your heart and share God's love in everything you say and do.

A pupil, using a taper, lights the first candle from the paschal candle.

Siblings/cousins: We offer you the light of love. Carry this light of love with you wherever you go and remember that there will always be a light burning for you at home.

Siblings/cousins light the second candle from the paschal candle.

Member of staff: We offer you the light of joy. We carry this light of joy out into the world through our relationships with family and friends, in our work and play and in our service to others.

A member of staff lights the third candle from the paschal candle.

Parish member/neighbour: We offer you the light of faith. Carry this light of faith out into the world and remember to be part of the Christian community and be a light for all the world.

A parish member/neighbour lights the fourth candle from the paschal candle.

Penitential Reflection:
For the times when we have let one another down by our words or actions.
Lord, forgive us.
Lord, forgive us.

For the times when we wandered away from God's path of truth and forgiveness.
Christ, forgive us.
Christ, forgive us.

For the times when we have ignored God's presence in our lives.
Lord, forgive us.
Lord, forgive us.

Scripture Reading:

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (1:39–45)

Glory to you, O Lord.
In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayers of Intercession:

Leader: Gathered together in love, as brothers and sisters in Christ, let us ask our loving father to listen to the prayers we make.

The response to our prayers is: fill us with joy.

1. Let us pray for children and their families everywhere. We give thanks for loving homes and the precious time we share together. May our family time together be a time of great joy.
   Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*

2. Let us pray for the gifts of creation. May we give thanks to God for every living thing and take care to protect and care for his world.
   Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy*.

3. Let us pray for people who care for the sick. May we give thanks for their skills and for the love of those who look after us at times of illness.
   Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*

4. Let us pray for people who are alone and filled with despair. May we give thanks that our friendship and love can fill their lives with the joy and hope we share. We ask God for the courage to reach out to those in need.
   Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*

5. Let us pray for all who rest in peace with God. May we give thanks that Jesus died and rose again so that we can live happily with him for ever in heaven.
   Lord, in your love: *Fill us with joy.*

Leader: Knowing that our heavenly father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

A few moments of silence.

Loving Father, you fill our lives with joy in your wonderful world. Help us to share all that you give us, so that we can make this world a happier place for everyone to love. Grant these our prayers through Christ your son. Amen.

Prayer:
Mary became the Mother of God when she said yes to God's invitation. We bring our prayers before blessed Mary, our mother in faith, as we say together the *Hail Mary ...*

Closing Prayer:
Lord Jesus Christ,
We praise and thank you for our parents and our brothers and sisters
who you have given to us to cherish.
Surround them with your tender, loving care,
teach them to love and serve one another in true affection
and to look to you in all their needs.
We place them all in your care,
Knowing that your love for them is greater than our own.
Keep us close to one another in this life
and conduct us at the last to our true and heavenly home.
Blessed be God for ever.
Amen.

Song: Give me Joy in my Heart