



I have to do a project
on the school's ethos.



On the school's *what*?

So this is a
voluntary school. I
wonder what that
means ...



So there are different
types of post-primary
schools?



That's what it says
in this pack!



It says here that it's
based on
conversations ...



Great ... that
means all we have
to do is talk!

Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School

A PROCESS CENTRED ON CONVERSATIONS

School Manual

Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School

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This icon is found throughout this manual. It indicates that these exercises are available to download and print from www.catholicschools.ie/secondlevelprocess/

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) has developed this process in support of understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic voluntary secondary school. It is a process based on conversations. It is not an exercise undertaken by outside experts, rather the school community is invited to articulate its own identity through a series of conversations. This process includes trustees, staff, students, parents, members of the Board of Management and the broader school community. It is not intended to be bureaucratic or mechanical; it is a shared reflection on the part of all members of the school community on what the ethos of the school really is. The process is intended to be life-giving and supportive. It will be led and guided by the school community and it will be characterised by honesty and open dialogue.

What is the incentive for schools to engage in this process? Those associated with Catholic schools often say that they can point to their ethos but find it hard to articulate what exactly it is. Today, all schools find themselves in challenging circumstances due to enormous social, cultural and economic changes. In this new cultural context every school needs to reclaim its identity so that it is not just reacting to the latest trend or fashion, it is truly articulating its self-understanding. One of the main pillars in this process is the importance of the founding story in every voluntary body. Research demonstrates that Catholic voluntary secondary schools which reflect on their founding story actually become better schools. This CSP process will assist and facilitate schools in articulating their school's identity and distinctiveness.

Voluntary secondary schools have significant resources upon which to draw when facing the future. The conversations that characterise this process intend to raise awareness across the school community of these resources. The most important is the founding intention of the school and the values that emerge from this. Catholic voluntary schools were established by citizens who sought to improve and transform society through education. They were committed to human flourishing and the common good. This process encourages schools to reclaim their freedom in reimagining their founding intention and, in doing so, discover what is distinctive in their service of the community and the common good in the twenty-first century.

The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS), the Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS) and the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) have all endorsed and support this process.

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

1. The patron/trustees invite the school to undertake this process and make clear their support and responsibility for it. Many trustees have already provided a lot of support to schools, and this process should be understood as building on the foundations that are already in place. It is best understood as a shared responsibility between trustees and the school community. Trustee support includes attendance of a trustee representative at some meetings in the school and providing a point of contact with the trustees.

Note

It is important to emphasise that this process adopts a whole-school approach. It intends to draw students, parents, staff, management and trustees into conversations.



What is a whole-school approach?

2. The process begins in the school with the Board of Management reading extracts from the booklet, *Catholic Education at Second-Level in the Republic of Ireland: Looking to the Future*, and viewing Videos 1 and 2 (see pp. 23–26). This could occur as part of the ordinary agenda at scheduled meetings or at a time specifically set aside for a discussion about the school’s ethos. Sufficient time needs to be devoted to this work on behalf of the Board of Management.
3. After these conversations have taken place the Board of Management, in consultation with the trustees, decides on how best to continue the process in the particular school. The main aim is to use the five resources (and any other resources provided by trustees) to commence conversations across the school community. These conversations can take place at scheduled meetings of board, staff, parents and students. However, in the case of parents and students, special gatherings might be arranged. Conversations on the resources can also be interwoven with aspects of the students’ curriculum.
4. The founding story of the school is reimagined by following the process described in this manual (see pp. 27–28). The school publishes a pamphlet that gives expression to the reimagined founding story of the school. This pamphlet should be published in an attractive format and extracts from it could be highlighted at different times during the school year through various media: notification boards, posters/visual displays, website and social media.
5. The school chooses three targets from this manual (see pp. 29–32) to facilitate conversations within the school community on developing and supporting the Catholic ethos of the school.

Note

This process uses a whole-school approach, yet it may be helpful to set up a group that will put the process into action. Experience suggests that such a group should include representatives of the school management team, staff, students and parents. Care should be taken that staff members are drawn from across the subject spectrum. There also needs to be a point of contact between such a group and the trustees of the school.

TIMELINE

- **Steps 1–3** should be completed over the course of one academic year. This is called Year 1 in this manual.
- **Step 4** should be completed over the course of the following academic year. This is called Year 2 in this manual.
- **Step 5** commences in the subsequent academic year. This is called Year 3 in this manual.

LOOKING FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE

- In each successive year, three further targets (see pp. 29–32) are selected. These are reviewed at scheduled meetings of the Board of Management and the staff. By doing this, the list of targets can be used to develop an ongoing plan. Advice will be available from the trustees on how best to develop the targets that the school itself has identified. Thus, it is intended that the school will have an ongoing method for understanding and living its ethos. When the process detailed in this manual has been completed, the school community will have a template to continue reflection over years to come.

AIMS OF THE PROCESS

YEAR 1

Aims

- To raise awareness among all members of the school community that we are a voluntary secondary school.
- To discover something of what it means to be a voluntary body in Ireland.
- To identify our school as part of a larger group of Catholic voluntary schools.

Resources

- Use all five resources with different groups as described on pp. 11–26. The main focus is on raising awareness of what it is to be a voluntary secondary school.

YEAR 2

Aims

- To raise awareness among all members of the school community of the founding intention of the school.
- To reimagine the founding story of the school and its relevance for today.
- To produce a pamphlet that expresses the reimagined founding story of the school as it has emerged in various conversations.

Resources

- Continue to use all five resources with different groups. The main focus is on reimagining the founding story of the school.
- The bullet-style summaries of conversations that were collected and filed during Year 1 are used as part of the process of reimagining the founding story of the school.
- CSP and/or trustees will arrange regional meetings where schools can share their experiences of the process.



YEAR 3 AND SUCCESSIVE YEARS

Aims

- The school selects three targets for attention during the coming school year in the context of its reimagined founding intention. These targets emerge from conversations in the school community and/or they can be selected from those listed on pp. 29–32 and/or the trustees may recommend one or more targets. These chosen targets form part of the agenda at future scheduled meetings of the Board of Management and staff. They could also form part of the conversation at scheduled interactions between the trustees and the school.
- At the end of the school year a short report (two pages) is prepared on the targets. This report is submitted to the Board of Management. The board makes it available to the whole school community and incorporates it into the school plan.
- In successive years, three other targets are selected each year as the basis for conversations. Thus, the school has an ongoing process for understanding and living its ethos.

Resources

- The key resource is the pamphlet developed by the school community during Year 2 on reimagining the founding intention of the school.
- The targets listed at the end of this manual and/or targets set by the school community and/or targets recommended by the trustees.
- CSP and/or trustees will produce materials linked to various targets, which will be made available to schools.
- CSP and/or trustees will arrange regional meetings where schools can share their experiences of the process.



USING THE RESOURCES WITH DIFFERENT GROUPS

The resource pack developed by CSP for Catholic voluntary secondary schools contains five resources comprising three videos, a booklet and a pamphlet. The five resources are:

1. *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (Video 1)
2. *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?* (Video 2)
3. *Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School* (Video 3)
4. *Catholic Education at Second-Level in the Republic of Ireland: Looking to the Future* (Booklet)
5. *Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools* (Pamphlet)

This manual shows how these resources can be used with different groups within your school: (A) Junior Cycle students, (B) Senior Cycle students and (C) Members of Boards of Management/staff/parents.

(A) JUNIOR CYCLE STUDENTS

Three of the resources are suitable for use with Junior Cycle students. These are:

- *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (Video 1)
- *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?* (Video 2)
- *Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools* (Pamphlet)

The following exercises will facilitate the students in understanding the material:

The Voluntary Sector in Ireland (Video 1)

Three exercises:

- Word search
- Questions on video content
- Vocabulary exercises

What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School? (Video 2)

Three exercises:

- Word search
- Questions on video content
- Vocabulary exercises

Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools (Pamphlet)

One exercise:

- Questions on pamphlet content

Exercises for use with the students can be found on pp. 11–17.

(B) SENIOR CYCLE STUDENTS

Four of the resources are suitable for use with Senior Cycle students. These are:

- *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (Video 1)
- *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?* (Video 2)
- *Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School* (Video 3)
- *Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools* (Pamphlet)

The following exercises will facilitate the students in understanding the material:

The Voluntary Sector in Ireland (Video 1)

- Group work – questions on video content

What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School? (Video 2)

- Group work – questions on video content and diagram

Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School (Video 3)

- Group work – questions on video content

Exercises for use with the students can be found on pp. 18–22

ENGAGING PARENTS IN THE PROCESS

It is most important that parents are engaged in the process. The resources can easily be used with groups of parents and/or given to individual parents to view/read at home.

While all stakeholders should be engaged in the process, particular attention should be given to parents. They are the key educators of their children. Parents should be active participants in understanding and living the ethos of the school.

USING THE PAMPHLET *FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY SECONDARY SCHOOLS*

This pamphlet is a simple resource but it can be used in many ways. The first step is to ensure that it is widely disseminated among the school community. Ten questions are answered and nine distinct factual numbers are provided. The school could highlight any one of these questions or numbers at different times during the year using various means: notification boards, posters/visual displays, website and social media.



YEAR 1

Aims

- To raise awareness among all members of the school community that we are a voluntary secondary school.
- To discover something of what it means to be a voluntary body in Ireland.
- To identify our school as part of a larger group of Catholic voluntary schools.

Resources

- Use all five resources with different groups as described below. The main focus is on raising awareness of what it is to be a voluntary secondary school.

USING THE RESOURCES WITH JUNIOR CYCLE STUDENTS



Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*

TEACHER NOTES

You will need:

- A copy of Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (5 min, 4 sec)
- Exercises 1, 2 and 3 for Video 1 (see below)
- A single class period

How to do the exercise:

- Watch Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*
- Complete exercises 1–3
- Work on the exercises not completed during class time could be done at home

Teacher Tip

Teachers can deepen their understanding of the material in Video 1 by reading pp. 14–16 of the CSP *Looking to the Future* booklet for second level.



EXERCISE 1

Question 1

How many sectors are there in Ireland and what are they called?

Question 2

Can you name three voluntary organisations?

Question 3

Can you name two public bodies?

Question 4

Ireland has a vibrant voluntary sector, but voluntary organisations face many challenges. Think about voluntary organisations and compile a list of their strengths and weaknesses.

Question 5

In what way do voluntary organisations benefit the community at both a local and national level? Give three examples.

Something to do ...

Find out more about the organisation called Pieta House. Why do you think that Joan Freeman set up the organisation?



EXERCISE 2

Pick a word from the box below to fill in each of the blank spaces. Each word has a number attached to it. This number tells you how many times a word can be used. Some words can be used more than once.



voluntary(4)	Bus Éireann(1)	living(1)	mission(3)	An Post(1)	public(2)
GAA(2)	RTÉ(1)	self-employed(1)	private(1)	sector(1)	non-profit(1)
	public benefit(1)	Jack & Jill Children's Foundation(2)			

- In the context of Irish life the word 'voluntary' refers to a specific _____. We have the _____ sector, the _____ sector and the _____ sector.
- The civil service, the revenue commissioners, local government, _____, _____ and _____ are all part of the _____ sector.
- Within the private sector people work to earn a _____ as employers, employees, or are _____.
- Once we understand the public and private sectors it becomes clear where the _____ sector fits in. Now that we have looked at the public and private sector we can see how they are different from the _____ sector.
- _____ bodies provide important services in a way that works for the good of the public.
- The _____ that voluntary organisations provide reflects the organisation's unique _____ statement or vision.
- The main aim of voluntary organisations such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, the ISPCA or the _____ is to provide a _____ public service.
- Jonathan Irwin founded _____ with a specific vision or _____ in mind.
- The vision, or _____, of the _____ is to encourage and help young people in playing Gaelic games.



EXERCISE 3

Find each of the words outlined below in the word search.

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

AN POST

PRIVATE

SECTOR

GAA

PUBLIC

VISION

MISSION

RTE

VOLUNTARY



Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?*

TEACHER NOTES

You will need:

- A copy of Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (5 min, 4 sec)
- A copy of Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?* (4 min, 14 sec)
- Two class periods
- Exercises 1–3 for Video 2 (see below)

How to do the exercise:

- Watch Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*
- Watch Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?*
- Complete exercises 1–3
- Work on the exercises not completed during class time could be done at home.

Teacher Tip

Teachers can deepen their understanding of the material in Video 2 by reading pp. 17–20, 30–33 of the CSP *Looking to the Future* booklet for second level.



EXERCISE 1

Question 1

Voluntary secondary schools have three characteristics: the first is that they want to provide some public benefit, and the second is that they are not owned or run by the State. What is the third?

Question 2

Can you name three religious orders that established schools in Ireland?

Question 3

Why is it important for the whole school community to reflect on the school's founding story?

Question 4

The founders of the first Catholic schools in Ireland were motivated by their faith in Christ. How do you think their faith led them to identify the particular needs that their schools addressed?



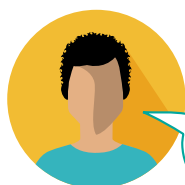


EXERCISE 2

Pick a word from the box below to fill in each of the blank spaces. Each word has a number attached to it. This number tells you how many times a word can be used. Some words can be used more than once.

voluntary(3)	public benefit(1)	State(1)	vision(2)	18th century(1)	
community(2)	Presentation(1)	Mercy(1)	Christ(1)	Loreto(1)	Jesuits(1)
Jesus(1)	poverty(1)	dignity(1)	whole(1)	founding(1)	
Ursuline (1)	ongoing(1)	future(1)	Catholic (1)		

- _____ organisations have three key characteristics.
- Voluntary bodies want to provide some _____. They are not owned or run by the _____.
- The work that _____ groups carry out is based on a _____ or mission statement as articulated by some individual or group.
- From the late _____ onwards, voluntary secondary schools were established in Ireland.
- Catholic _____ secondary schools were established in many towns and cities. Such schools were founded to help and respond to the needs of the Catholic _____.
- _____ voluntary secondary schools were established mainly by religious congregations.
- Some of these congregations were newly founded Irish organisations such as the Christian Brothers, _____ Sisters and _____ Sisters.
- Some Catholic voluntary secondary schools were founded by congregations that came to Ireland for the first time from continental Europe such as the De la Salle Brothers, Dominican Sisters, _____ Sisters, _____ Sisters and _____.
- It is important to remember that there would be no founders if it were not for _____.
- The women and men who founded the congregations and became patrons of Catholic schools were all inspired by their faith in _____.
- Voluntary schools need to come together as a community to talk about and reimagine the _____ intention of their school.
- The founders understood that education was the best way to help students out of _____ and to come to an awareness of their unique _____.
- The founders of Catholic schools recognised that the work they were starting would be reliant on a _____ of like-minded people who were motivated by the same _____ working together.



I have to complete the *what*?



Sentences!

- n. Schools need to provide space for all members of the school community to reflect on their _____ and mission on an _____ basis.
- o. The vision belongs to the _____ school community who can use it as a resource in looking to the _____.



EXERCISE 3

Find each of the words outlined below in the word search.

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

CEIST	FOUNDER	VOLUNTARY	MISSION	ERST	MERCY
	SPIRIT	ETHOS	LE CHEILE		

Pamphlet –

Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools



TEACHER NOTES

You will need:

- A copy of the pamphlet *Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools*
- A copy of questions 1–5 below
- A single class period

How to do the exercise:

- Read the pamphlet *Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools*
- Complete questions 1–5 below

Having read the pamphlet *Frequently Asked Questions About Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools*, answer the following questions.



Question 1

In what year was the first Catholic voluntary secondary school established in Ireland?

Question 2

How many Catholic voluntary secondary schools are there in the world?

Question 3

What does the Irish Constitution say about the role of parents in educating their children?

Question 4

Every Catholic voluntary secondary school has a patron, but what is the role of the patron?

Question 5

Read what Pope Francis says about Catholic schools. How would you explain to your friends what he says?

Project Work

- Find out more about your own school. When was it opened? Who established it?
- Make a poster for your class wall with some key facts about your school.
- Imagine you were asked to set up a school in your locality today. What would your founding intention be? Choose three things that you would like your new school to be able to achieve for its students.



USING THE RESOURCES WITH SENIOR CYCLE STUDENTS

Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*

TEACHER NOTES

You will need:

- A copy of Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (5 min, 4 sec)
- Group exercises for Video 1 below
- Diagram of *Sector Table* (p. 19)
- A single class period

How to do the exercise:

- Watch Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*
- Divide class into groups
- Give each group a copy of *Sector Table* diagram
- Complete group exercises

Teacher Tip

Teachers can deepen their understanding of the material in Video 1 by reading pp. 14–16 of the CSP *Looking to the Future* booklet for second level.



GROUP EXERCISES

Having watched Video 1 (*The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*), answer the following questions:

1. What have you learned about the voluntary sector? What questions are still in your mind about the distinctions drawn between the private, public and voluntary sectors?
2. Consider these three key characteristics of the voluntary sector identified in the video:
 - a. **The primary aim is not to make profit but to provide some public benefit**
What is the public benefit provided by the Jack & Jill Children’s Foundation and Pieta House?
 - b. **They are not owned or run by the State**
What are some of the implications of the fact that Oxfam, Trócaire, the ISPCA and the St Vincent de Paul Society are not owned and run by the State?
 - c. **The public benefit that they want to provide is based on a vision or mission as articulated by some individual or group**
Discuss the importance of the founding vision in the life of voluntary bodies like the Irish Cancer Society and the GAA. Why is it important for everyone in voluntary bodies to know something about their founding vision?
3. If a person or a group were to establish a new voluntary body in Ireland today, what needs in society do you think they might be likely to address?
4. Divide the class into groups. Study the chart overleaf. Ask each group to make arguments for the importance of one of the sectors.



SECTOR TABLE

Sector	Origins	Function	Funding
Public	The State and agents of the State	To cover areas of social action of little or no interest to profit-making bodies	The public finances of the State
Private	Profit-making individuals or companies	To create profit	Resources of private individuals, companies or institutions
Voluntary	Citizens with a mission and vision intent on addressing a particular need	To provide some public benefit	Sought from both the public and private sectors and individual donations

Video 2 – What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?

TEACHER NOTES

You will need:

- A copy of Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (5 min, 4 sec)
- A copy of Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?* (4 min, 14 sec)
- Group exercises for Video 2 (see below)
- A copy of the diagram *Schools by School Type in the Republic of Ireland* (p. 20)
- A single class period

How to do the exercise:

- Watch Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*
- Watch Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?*
- Divide class into groups
- Give each group a copy of the *Schools by School Type in the Republic of Ireland* diagram (p. 20)
- Complete group exercises

Teacher Tip

Teachers can deepen their understanding of the material in Video 2 by reading pp. 17–20, 30–33 of the CSP *Looking to the Future* booklet for second level.



Teacher Tip

Teachers can deepen their understanding of the material illustrated in the *School Type* diagram by reading pp. 9–13 of the CSP *Looking to the Future* booklet for second level.

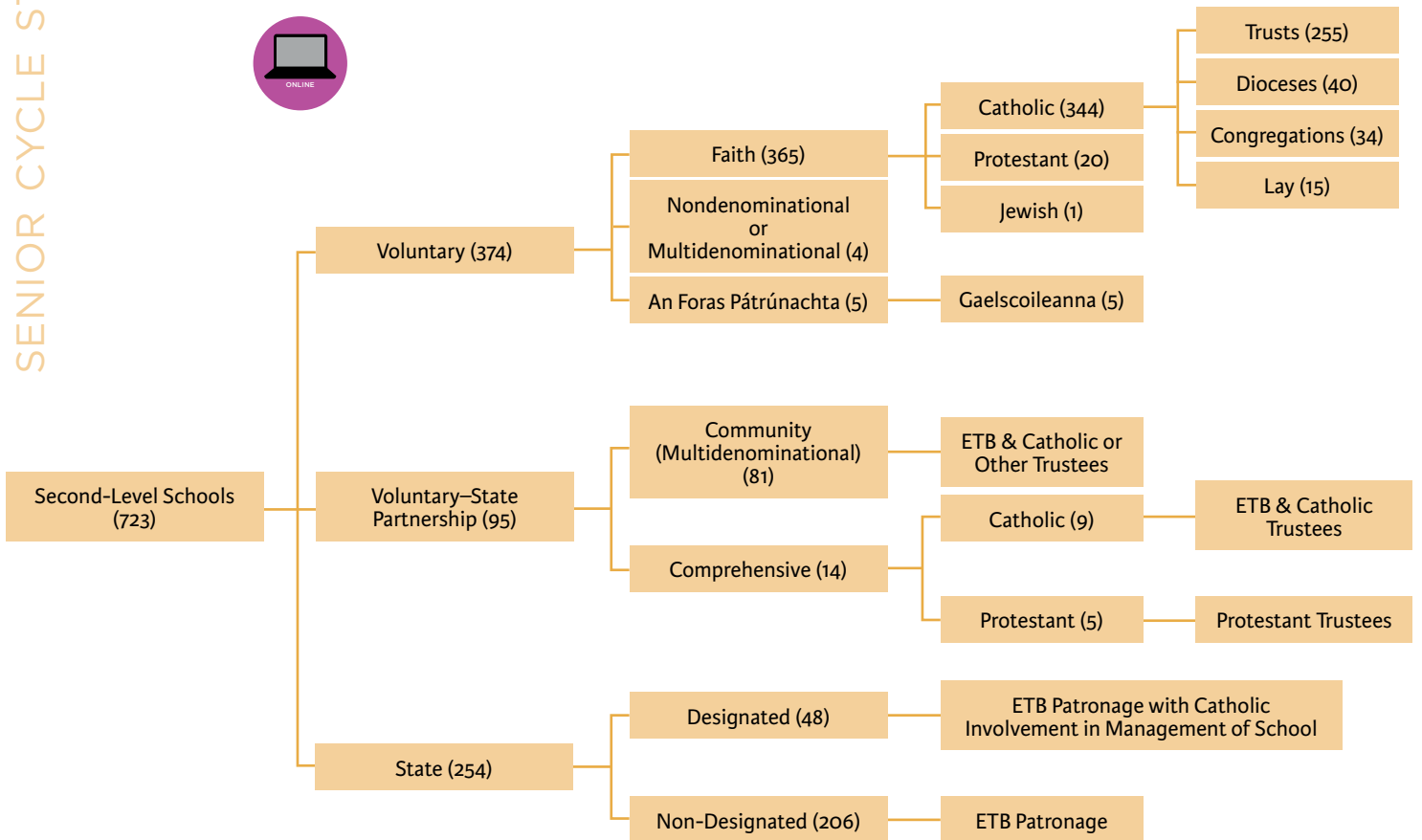


GROUP EXERCISES

Question 1

Having watched Videos 1 and 2, give each group of students a copy of the diagram, *Schools by School Type in the Republic of Ireland*, and get each group to answer the questions outlined on page 20.

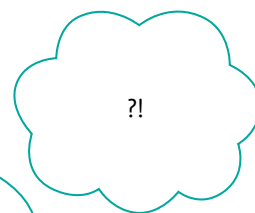
SECOND LEVEL: SCHOOLS BY SCHOOL TYPE IN REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 2014 (NUMBER OF SCHOOLS)



- In groups, answer the following questions:
 - Where does our school fit on this chart?
 - Can you identify one school known to you that forms part of the voluntary/State partnership?
 - Can you name one school known to you that is a State school?
- In groups, agree on the six words that you think best summarise your school today. Each group presents its list of words to the class. Then discuss what these words represent and how they are linked to the founding mission/vision of the school.
- You have been asked to go to a local primary school to give a talk about your school to incoming First Years. What information would you give about your school that would make them enthusiastic about starting next year? You can use the six words from the last exercise.



I know where my school fits on this chart – do you?



PROJECT WORK

Do some research on your school so that you can answer these questions:

- Who established your school?
- When was it established?
- What was the vision/mission that inspired those who founded your school?
- Who is the patron/trustee of your school?



Video 3 – Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School

TEACHER NOTES

You will need:

- A copy of Video 3 – *Continuing the Ministry of Christ in our School* (5 min, 26 sec)
- Group exercises for Video 3 (see below)
- A single class period

How to do the exercise:

- Watch Video 3 – *Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School*
- Divide class into groups
- Complete group exercises

Teacher Tip

Teachers can deepen their understanding of the material in Video 3 by reading pp. 20–29 of the CSP *Looking to the Future* booklet for second level.



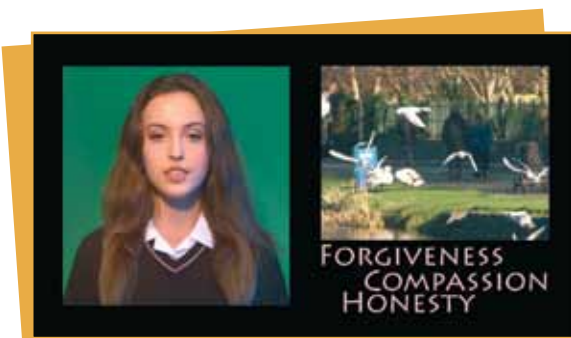
Having watched Video 3 (*Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School*), divide the class into groups and ask each group to discuss and answer the following:

Question 1

What was the title most used in reference to Jesus by his earliest followers?

Question 2

What did Jesus teach?



Question 3

In the video we heard the following:

Jesus taught that the kingdom of God, the reign of God, is at hand, that somehow God is present in our lives. He spoke about the blind seeing again, the deaf hearing, the dumb speaking, the lame walking, the sick being healed, prisoners being set free and good news being proclaimed to the poor. So Jesus brought healing and hope into a broken world.

In your groups, discuss and explain how we could do the following in our Catholic school communities:

A. Bring good news to the poor _____

B. Proclaim liberty to captives/the oppressed _____

C. Restore sight to the blind _____



USING THE RESOURCES WITH MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT/STAFF/PARENTS

Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

You will need:

- A copy of Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (5 min, 4 sec)
- A copy of the discussion questions below

How to do the exercise:

- Watch Video 1 – *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*
- Divide those in attendance into small discussion groups if there are more than eight people
- One member of the group is nominated to make brief, bullet-style summaries of the points raised in response to the four issues below
- These bullet-style summaries should be collected and filed



Having watched Video 1 (*The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*), there are some issues outlined below that you might consider in your group.

1. What have you learned about the voluntary sector? What questions are still in your mind about the distinctions drawn between the private, public and voluntary sectors?
2. Consider the role that these three key characteristics of the voluntary sector play in your school as identified in the video:
 - a. The primary aim is not to make profit but to provide some public benefit
 - b. They are not owned or run by the State
 - c. The public benefit that they want to provide is based on a vision, or mission, as articulated by some individual or group
3. Discuss the importance of the founding vision in the life of a voluntary body.
4. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of voluntary organisations.

KEY WORDS

Voluntary

Public

Private

Ethos

Profit

Non-Profit

Mission

State

Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?*

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

You will need:

- A copy of bullet-point notes from previous session
- A copy of Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?* (4 min, 14 sec)
- A copy of the discussion questions below

How to do the exercises:

- Read the bullet-point notes from the previous session
- Watch Video 2 – *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?*
- Divide those in attendance into small discussion groups if there are more than eight people
- One member of the group is nominated to make brief bullet-style summaries of the points raised in response to the four issues below
- These bullet-style summaries should be collected and filed



Having watched Video 2 (*What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?*) there are some issues outlined below that you might consider in your group.

1. What implications do you draw from the fact that a Catholic voluntary secondary school is not owned or run by the State?
2. How well is the founding vision/story of your school known among the broader school community?
3. What steps would be helpful in reimagining the school's founding intention? (see pp. 27–28)
4. What will the biggest challenges to the founding intention of your school be over the coming years?



Video 3 – Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

You will need:

- A copy of Video 3 – Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School (5 min, 26 sec)
- A copy of the discussion questions below

How to do the exercise:

- Watch Video 3 – Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School
- Divide those in attendance into small discussion groups if there are more than eight people
- One member of the group is nominated to make brief bullet-style summaries of the points raised in response to the four issues below
- These bullet-style summaries should be collected and filed



Having watched Video 3 (*Continuing the Ministry of Christ in Our School*), there are some issues outlined below that you might consider in your group.

1. What is your favourite Gospel story? What do you think it says to our school?
2. In the video we hear the following: 'Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God, the reign of God, is at hand, that somehow God is present in our lives. He spoke about the blind seeing again, the deaf hearing, the dumb speaking, the lame walking, the sick being healed, prisoners being set free and good news being proclaimed to the poor. So Jesus brought healing and hope into a broken world.' Pope Francis calls on us to continue this ministry of Christ. Can you identify ways in our school community through which we can help the blind to see, the deaf to hear and the lame to walk?
3. During the video we heard that: 'The word "education" actually means to lead out, to draw people out, to lead them on from where they are. This is exactly what Christ did.' What does this understanding of education mean for us in our school? What can we as educators learn from the teaching ministry of Christ?
4. In the video we hear: 'To teach as Christ taught is to challenge people to live without the crutch or the grudge or the closed mind. It's to invite people to move on from where they are, to somewhere better.' Through his teaching ministry, Christ liberated people by encountering them where they really were in their lives. In our school community we should try to truly encounter people where they really are in their lives and liberate them through such encounters. Can you think of any ways through which we can encounter people in this way in our school?



Booklet –

Catholic Education at Second-Level in the Republic of Ireland: Looking to the Future

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS

You will need:

- Copies of the CSP booklet *Catholic Education at Second-Level in the Republic of Ireland: Looking to the Future*
- Distribute copies of the CSP booklet to members of the group
- A copy of the discussion questions below

How to do the exercises:

- Read all sections of booklet outlined in questions 1–4, or read one section per meeting
- Divide those in attendance into small discussion groups if there are more than eight people
- Each small group gives feedback
- This feedback should be collected in bullet-style summaries
- These bullet-style summaries should be collected and filed



Four different extracts from the booklet are identified below. These could be read and considered at four different meetings.

1. Read pp. 9–13.
Take a close look at the diagram on pp. 12–13. Can you explain the different types of second-level schools that we have in Ireland? Allow members of the group to raise questions. Are you able to answer the questions raised?
2. Read pp. 14–16. (See also Video 1 *The Voluntary Sector in Ireland*)
Look at the diagram on p. 15. Discuss the similarities and differences between the three sectors. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the voluntary sector.
3. Read pp. 17–19 and 30–31. (See also Video 2 *What is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School?*)
Does the term ‘Catholic voluntary secondary school’ make more sense to you having read these pages? Can you agree on the three most important challenges facing your school from the list on pp. 30–31?
4. Read pp. 31–33 and 38–40.
What surprises you most in the ESRI report?
What implications would you draw from the funding situation of voluntary secondary schools?

KEY WORDS

Christ

Voluntary

Catholic

Public

Private

Ethos

Profit

Non-Profit

Mission

Inclusion

Liberating

YEAR 2

Aims

- To raise awareness among all members of the school community of the founding intention of the school
- To reimagine the founding story of the school and its relevance for today (see below)
- To produce a pamphlet that expresses the reimagined founding story of the school as it has emerged in various conversations

Resources

- Continue to use all five resources with different groups. The main focus is on reimagining the founding story of the school.
- The bullet-style summaries of conversations that were collected and filed during Year 1 are used as part of the process of reimagining the founding story of the school.
- CSP and/or trustees will arrange regional meetings where schools can share their experiences of the process.



REIMAGINING THE FOUNDING STORY OF OUR SCHOOL

One of the main pillars in this process is the importance of the founding story in every voluntary body. Therefore, it is important that Catholic voluntary secondary schools have a real sense of their founding intention and how it might be reimagined today. Some schools have already done a lot of work in this area, while for others this will be a new experience. The suggestions provided here will help schools address this issue.

It is important that reflection on the founding story of the school draws on the insights of all members of the school community – trustees, management, staff, students and parents. The following steps will facilitate the participation of various groups in this process.

1. Groups of students do research on the founding of the school. This could be undertaken as projects in Transition Year and/or as part of the curriculum in relevant subjects. The issues that need to be addressed include:
 - a. Who founded the school?
 - b. When was it founded?
 - c. Why did the founders decide to establish a school in this place? What was their key motivation?
 - d. What was the social, economic and cultural situation in the local area at that time?
 - e. From what backgrounds did the first generation of students come? Can you find any information about the earliest students who attended the school?

2. Study key events that have taken place over the lifetime of the school (buildings, change of location, growth in student numbers, change of trustees, sporting, or other achievements). Try to include important occasions such as school achievements, i.e. sports, music and academic. Collect a video/photo file of key events. By doing this, you will have compiled a visual archive of your school which can act as a stimulus when reimagining your founding intention. It could also be used to develop a visual/graphic articulation of your school's ethos which could be displayed on your website and/or on media displays in your school.
3. In groups, members of staff, students and parents are asked to identify the six words that best describe our school. The groups discuss what these words represent and how they are linked to the founding story of the school.
4. Senior Cycle students prepare a presentation on the ethos of the school for incoming First Year students. They also prepare a PowerPoint presentation of what they would say when attending a local primary school to speak to Sixth Class pupils.
5. Ask various groups to imagine setting up a completely new school. What needs in today's society would they most like to address?

Work on 1 and 2 above should be undertaken during the first term of Year 2 of the process, i.e. to be completed by Christmas. The results of this work are presented to the school community during Catholic Schools Week (which begins on the last Sunday of January). During this week, the group work described in 3 to 5 commences. Representatives of the trustees visit the school, and a facilitator draws together the various strands of reflection on the founding story.

This is an important phase of the process. The material that emerges in the project work under numbers 1 and 2 of this section (see box above) and the outcomes of the group work under numbers 3 to 5 of this section (see box above) need to be considered. Attention should also be given to the bullet-style summaries of the conversations that took place during Year 1 of the process (see pp. 23–26).

During the course of the spring term, the trustees and the Board of Management agree on the contents of a pamphlet that expresses the reimagined founding story of the school as it has emerged in the various conversations. This pamphlet might take various forms but the following is a structural guideline:

1. The original foundation of the school (100 words)
2. Important events in the history of the school (100 words)
3. The words/phrases that best describe our school today (50 words)
4. Looking to the future – what we hope to become (100 words)

The pamphlet should be published in an attractive format, and extracts from it can be highlighted at different times during the school year using various means: notification boards, posters/visual displays, website and social media.

The completed pamphlet forms the basis of work on the school's ethos from Year 3 onwards.



YEAR 3 AND SUCCEEDING YEARS

Aims

- The school selects three targets for attention during the coming school year in the context of its reimagined founding intention. These targets emerge from conversations in the school community and/or they can be selected from those listed below and/or the trustees may recommend one or more targets. These chosen targets form part of the agenda at future scheduled meetings of the Board of Management and staff. They could also form part of the conversation at scheduled interactions between the trustees and the school.
- At the end of the school year a short report (two pages) is prepared on the targets. This report is submitted to the Board of Management. The board makes it available to the whole school community and incorporates it into the school plan.
- In succeeding years, three other targets are selected each year as the basis for conversations. Thus the school has an ongoing process for understanding and living its ethos.

Resources

- The key resource is the pamphlet developed by the school community during Year 2 on reimagining the founding intention of the school.
- The targets listed below and/or targets set by the school community and/or targets recommended by the trustees.
- CSP and/or trustees will produce materials linked to various targets, which will be made available to schools.
- CSP and/or trustees will arrange regional meetings where schools can share their experiences of the process.

TARGETS TO SUPPORT A CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY SECONDARY SCHOOL IN UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING ITS ETHOS

From Year 3 onwards, the following targets are identified in order to facilitate conversations within the school community on developing and supporting the Catholic ethos of the school. They are gathered under three headings:

- 1. Our school's identity and distinctiveness are rooted in its founding story, and the life of the school reflects the inspiration and values of that story**
- 2. Our school continues the ministry of Christ**
- 3. Our school is in dialogue with the Church and the world around us**

Schools will already be achieving many of these targets. This should be recorded in the short, annual report on targets to the Board of Management and acknowledged in various conversations.

Schools should feel free to compose their own targets based on the conversations that form part of this process. Trustees might also recommend targets to schools.

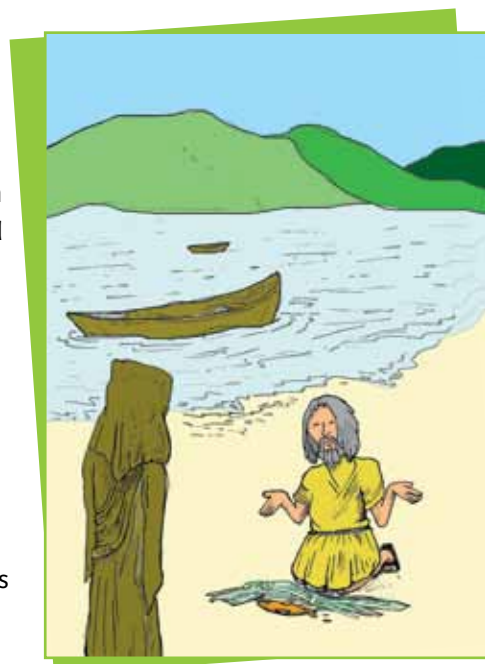


1. Our school's identity and distinctiveness are rooted in its founding story, and the life of the school reflects the inspiration and values of that story

- a. Members of the Board of Management, and of the staff, speak freely and confidently about the school's founding story and tradition.
- b. The school's identity and distinctive founding are clearly articulated on its website, in the mission statement and in all school policies and publications. The founding intention and ethos of the school is integrated into relevant self-evaluation and policy documents.
- c. Opportunities are provided through continuous professional development for all staff to deepen their understanding of the school's ethos.
- d. Opportunities are provided for parents to deepen their understanding of the school's ethos.
- e. Care and attention are given so that new staff are familiarised with the ethos of the school.
- f. New students are introduced to the school's identity and founding vision by senior students.
- g. Creative leadership in different subject areas (e.g. history, literature, art, music, religious education, etc.) provides age-appropriate projects on the school's founding story and its values.
- h. Daily school prayer regularly includes reflection on the founding vision and values.
- i. There are symbols and creative visual imagery of the Catholic heritage and founding story displayed in the school.
- j. The school community recognises and respects the founding stories of other schools and engages with local schools in their distinctive celebrations.

2. Our school continues the ministry of Christ

- a. The school makes explicit mention – in its literature, statements and oral communications at key events that the spiritual development of students is a central educational aim.
- b. The school provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.
- c. At school assemblies there is ongoing reflection on the Christian way of life. Opportunities are provided for students to learn about being a Christian in action today (e.g. invited speakers such as past students, Christian charities, or showing inspirational DVDs, etc.).
- d. There are Christian symbols (such as the crucifix, art works) in classrooms throughout the school and in places of gathering for school members.



- e. Through our mission statement we develop a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others. In continuing the ministry of Christ we help those who are most in need, and there are pastoral structures in place to care for students.
- f. Members of staff are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of Jesus Christ.
- g. The Board of Management and staff consciously educate themselves in contemporary research related to the faith and moral development of teenagers, through the staff library, staff meeting input, in-service and personal reading.
- h. Religious education and a chaplaincy service play an important part in the life of the school, and adequate resources are allocated in order to make appropriate provision for both.
- i. Religious education is integral to the school curriculum and is timetabled for two hours per week for junior and senior students. The school facilitates students who wish to undertake religious education as a subject in State examinations in both Junior and Senior Cycles.
- j. The key times of significance in the Christian liturgical year are celebrated in the school. Catholic Schools Week in January is incorporated into school activities.
- k. The school works closely with other Catholic schools locally, nationally and globally.
- l. The school, supported by the trustees, facilitates attendance at retreats and creative opportunities for faith development, for the Board of Management, students, staff and parents.
- m. There is a place of prayer/sacred space suitably situated and maintained within the school which is open to all in the school community. Various forms of prayer, and opportunities to pray, are facilitated for students, staff, parents and the Board of Management.



3. Our school is in dialogue with the Church and the world around us

- a. As a Catholic school we understand ourselves to be part of the larger Church community, as found in local parishes and the diocese. Developing deeper relationships with the local Church is part of our ethos.
- b. Catholic social teaching informs all aspects of the curriculum, with its emphases on the dignity of the human person, the importance of family life, solidarity with those in need, promotion of peace and justice, and the stewardship of creation.
- c. We are committed to a vision of society that goes beyond the radical individualism that dominates a consumerist culture. We seek a renewed ethics that fosters the interior life as the foundation of a deeper sense of solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care. The school invites all its members to draw from the vast Christian spiritual tradition of twenty centuries with its vision of authentic freedom, not based on satisfying immediate desires, but on developing responsible relationships and an openness to God.

YEAR 3

- d. Pope Francis, in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, calls on schools to respond to the educational significance of the ecology crisis. As a Catholic school we challenge all members of the school community to live a simpler life, not based on consumption and endless progress but on sharing the earth as our common home with all people.
- e. The school is an active participant in the work of Trócaire and local charities in heightening awareness of the call to human solidarity and the common good.
- f. We have a link with a school in the developing world.
- g. Trustees, management and staff are aware of the importance of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue in Catholic education, and give expression to these in the school through policies and varied activities.
- h. Dialogue with students of other faiths and more humanist and secularist beliefs is supported. We seek common ethical values as the foundation of justice and peace between peoples of various faiths and cultures. We celebrate our diversity and nurture a sense of mutual respect at our school assemblies.
- i. In our school we engage confidently but respectfully with people of other faiths and none in an honest dialogue about meaning and truth. We aim to move beyond mere tolerance to a deeper encounter between people. Visiting speakers from other denominations and faiths are invited in a spirit of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.
- j. We acknowledge major festivals associated with other faiths/traditions that are present in the school. The school calendar acknowledges these events in a public manner within the school. The school has an intercultural celebration each year that highlights the faiths and cultures present in the school.





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