

UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING THE ETHOS IN A CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



A Process Centred on Conversations



Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Primary School

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A PROCESS CENTRED ON CONVERSATIONS

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INTRODUCTION	7
STEPS IN THE PROCESS	10
FACILITATION MODELS	12
AIMS OF THE PROCESS	13

SECTION ONE | SCHOOL RESOURCES

Ethos Reflection	16
Student Lesson Plans	
Lesson One	21
Lesson Two	25
Lesson Three	29
Lesson Four	36
Lesson Five	41
Concrete Suggestions for Each Target	46

SECTION TWO | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Board of Management Checklist	68
Facilitation Team Checklist	69
End of Year One BoM Process Report Form	70
End of Year Two (and Onwards) BoM Process Report Form	71
Glossary	72
Useful Publications and Resources	74



This icon is found throughout this booklet. It indicates that these exercises are available to download and print from: www.catholicschools.ie/understanding-and-living-the-ethos-in-a-catholic-primary-school/

What is the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP)?

The Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) is an association established by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious of Ireland (now known as 'Association of Missionary and Religious of Ireland' or AMRI). It was formally launched in 2010. Its aims are to:

- Foster coherence in Catholic education at a national level;
- Provide a unified voice for Catholic education in the public forum and with educational bodies and the Government;
- Support Catholic educators in the core activities of learning and teaching in order to foster high quality lifelong learning and faith development for all learners;
- Support the roles of governance, trusteeship and management.

The CSP has a council of twenty-one members representative of the various stakeholders in Catholic schools. This council is charged with implementing a strategy that will achieve the aims of the CSP. In this way, the CSP is best understood as an umbrella body that provides strategic thinking on major issues facing Catholic schools.¹

The Question of Ethos and Different Types of Schools

There is no such thing as a value-neutral education. All schools, whether established by the state or by one or other voluntary group, necessarily and implicitly espouse a vision of the human person and give expression to a particular ethos by their choices, actions and priorities. Some people argue that schools should have no role in the public sphere of education; however, those who would exclude religion from school also espouse their own ethos. They impart a world view, a philosophy of life, just as much as the person of faith.

Throughout the world, democratic societies provide funding and legal protection for a plurality of school types. The spectrum of provision covers a broad range, from schools provided by the state itself to various forms of communal and voluntary groups who come together to give expression to a particular vision of education. Many of these groups owe their inspiration to religious beliefs.

Schools with a religious ethos exist in almost all countries except those where they are outlawed by non-democratic regimes. In many nations, as in Ireland, they form a central part of the education system. While in almost all democratic societies they receive funding from the state, such schools provide a real public service through their contribution to the development of a vibrant civil society.²

¹ See: www.catholicschools.ie

² See: Catholic Schools Partnership, *Catholic Education at Second-Level in the Republic of Ireland: Looking to the Future* (Veritas: Dublin, 2014), 9.

How is the Ethos of a Catholic School Distinct from Other School Types?

What distinguishes the Catholic school is that its concept of the human person is rooted in the teaching of Jesus Christ as embodied in the Catholic faith community. Each person is a spiritual being who comes from God and whose destiny is to be with God when this life is over. The ideal of the Catholic school proposed here is one whose ethos or characteristic spirit is rooted in its 'Christian concept of life centred on Jesus Christ: He is the One who ennobles people, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils'.³

The Catholic school also seeks 'to promote the Christian concept of the world whereby the natural values, assimilated into the full understanding of man redeemed by Christ, may contribute to the good of society as a whole'.⁴ In this way Catholic schools have a robust spiritual and moral value system. This is appreciated not only by the Catholic parents, but also by laypeople of other religions or none who want their children to be educated in a Catholic school.

The Catholic school welcomes diversity and strives for inclusivity. It is open to people of other denominations, other faiths, and none, welcomes them into its community and respects their beliefs. The religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected, and this freedom is explicitly recognised by the Church. On the other hand, a Catholic school cannot relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Christian education; this is its right and duty.⁵

While it maintains its own ethos and provides religious education and formation in the Catholic faith, the Catholic school sees this diversity as an opportunity for dialogue and understanding with those of different faiths. Building on what Pope Francis refers to as a culture of encounter and enriching its intercultural education, Catholic schools seek to cooperate with parents of other traditions who wish to provide religious instruction for the children in their own tradition. This welcoming ethos explains why Catholic schools are among the most inclusive schools in Ireland today.⁶

What is the Ethos Process Developed by the CSP for Catholic Primary Schools?

Today, all schools find themselves in challenging circumstances due to enormous social, cultural and economic changes. In an age dominated by media and information technology, significant new pressures are brought to bear on children, on family structures, on religious practice, on employment and, not least, on behaviour in the school classroom. In this new cultural context every Catholic school needs to be aware of its identity and its relationship to tradition so that it is not just reacting to the latest trend or fashion but can truly articulate its self-understanding. The process presented in this document is intended to help you as a school community to do exactly this – to articulate who you are in an age that is dominated by secularism and privatisation.

³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, Rome 19 March 1977, n. 33–37.

⁴ Vatican II, *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum educationis)*, Rome, 28 October 1965, n. 2.

⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, Rome, 7 April 1988, n. 6.

⁶ ESRI and Educate Together, *School Sector Variation Among Primary Schools in Ireland* (2012).

Why should Catholic Schools Participate in this Process?

This ethos process is not intended to be bureaucratic or mechanical; it is a shared reflection on the part of all members of the school's community on what the characteristic spirit of your school really is, not what it is supposed to be – it is an opportunity for your school to ask where you are in terms of your characteristic spirit, where you are going and what you are going to do to get there. It moves towards facilitating a school in understanding and living its characteristic spirit. Such a process is an important part of the overall development of the school and can contribute in various ways not only to school self-evaluation, but to the school community's self-understanding of the lived reality which each member of the school experiences on a daily basis.

Another important and unique aspect of the process is the fact that it is not an exercise undertaken by outside experts. Rather we invite the whole school community to articulate its own identity in light of the vision of the Catholic school as expressed by the CSP. In this way, the process better enables schools in taking ownership of the ethos of their school community. For instance, the process includes patrons, staff, pupils, parents, members of the board of management and the broader local community of which the school is a part. The key focus of the proposed process is on pupils, their welfare and education, and how these might be improved through reflection on the school's characteristic spirit.

What is this Document?

In 2012, the CSP launched an ethos process for Catholic primary schools called *A Process for Understanding, Supporting and Taking Ownership of the Characteristic Spirit in a Catholic Primary School*. Since its initial launch, the process has been utilised by many Catholic schools in the Republic of Ireland. However, in 2015, the CSP decided that the ethos process should be revised in light of the experiences of Catholic primary schools that used the process as well as the theological and educational developments that have transpired since its initial launch in 2012. With this in mind, the process was subjected to significant revision as well as to a small-scale pilot in five individual schools each in a different diocese. Finally the process was subjected to a large-scale pilot in the Diocese of Kilmore among its sixty-nine Catholic primary schools. Following the success of both the small-scale and large-scale pilot, as well as the rich consultations that took place between the CSP and various stakeholders in Catholic education, final amendments were made to the process, all of which took account of the real experience of schools that used the process. We invite you to engage with the revised ethos process which aims to better facilitate schools in understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic primary school.

'The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes.)'

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953)
Philosophical Investigations, n.129.



STEPS IN THE PROCESS

Following the eight steps below will enable your school to participate fully in the process of understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic primary school.

1. Invitation from the Patron

The patron invites the school to undertake the process of understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic primary school. This process is best understood as a shared responsibility between the patron and the school community. Patron support includes the establishment of the diocesan liaison team which will provide a point of contact between the patron and the school, including the attendance of a patron representative from the diocesan liaison team at some meetings in the school.

2. Board of Management Initiates the Process in the School

The process begins in the school with the board of management completing the 'Ethos Reflection' resource. This could occur as part of the ordinary agenda at a scheduled meeting or as part of a special meeting specifically set aside for a discussion about the school's ethos. It is important that the board of management devotes sufficient time to this process.

3. Identification of a Facilitation Model

The board of management completes the 'Ethos Reflection' resource and then selects one of three suggested facilitation models to best promote this process in your school.

4. Ethos Reflection


Once the board of management has chosen the facilitation model that best suits the particular school, the facilitators/leaders of the process (those individuals outlined in the facilitation model) complete the Ethos Reflection resource.

5. Identification of a Characteristic

The facilitators/leaders consider the outcome of their engagement with the Ethos Reflection resource in conjunction with that of the board of management. Following this review, the facilitators/leaders recommend one of the five characteristics for the school community to work on over the coming year and seek board of management approval.

6. Engage the School Community

Following the board of management's approval of the selected characteristic for the coming year, the facilitators/leaders engage with: a) staff, b) parents, and c) fifth/sixth class pupils on the chosen characteristic by asking each group to complete the section of the Ethos Reflection resource that pertains to the chosen characteristic.



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

7. Identify a Target

The facilitators/leaders review the input of the various groups to the Ethos Reflection resource and recommend a target from within the chosen characteristic for the school community to focus on for the coming year. The board of management approves the target and the school community groups listed above engage with the target with the assistance of the appropriate suggestions listed in the process manual under 'Concrete Suggestions for Targets'. These are only suggestions; schools are free to work on their chosen target in their own unique and creative way.



Other helpful resources that may be of interest to those undertaking this process can be found via:

www.catholicschools.ie

Resources such as:
Catholic Schools Week Lesson Plans
FAQs about Catholic Schools
Research on the Future of Catholic Primary Schools

8. End of Year Report

At the final meeting of the school year, the board of management considers a report from the facilitators/leaders on their school's progress in using the process. The board of management completes the report form provided in the process manual and files this report in the schools records. The board of management should also provide the patron with a copy of the report and communicate any progress made in the process 'Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Primary School' to the whole school community (i.e. newsletters, parent teacher meetings, etc.)



Important Note for Schools

This process adopts a whole-school approach. As such, the CSP invites schools to use this process within the context of Catholic Special Schools as well as in Special Units within Catholic Primary Schools. Each of the lesson plans provided has flash cards for non-verbal students. Furthermore, each of the lesson plans is explicitly linked with specific aims and objectives of Level Four of the Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (2015) as well as the Special Education Curriculum Guidelines. Conscious of the fact that our Catholic Special Schools are diverse communities, we suggest that where applicable students could engage with the resources provided for adults as part of this process (i.e. Ethos Reflection).

FACILITATION MODELS

From engaging with schools in meaningful dialogue, the CSP has identified the three models of facilitation that have been most successful. It is important to note that the models proposed below are merely suggestions. The board of management can either choose one model of facilitation from the three suggested below or members of the board of management can create their own model of facilitation to best suit their school context.

Note: If a teacher is to be part of any facilitation group s/he must be employed on a permanent contract.



AIMS OF THE PROCESS

<p>YEAR ONE</p>	<p>Aims: Launch the process; choose a facilitation model, and complete the Ethos Reflection exercise; identify one of the five characteristics to reflect on and from within that characteristic select a target to bring to life in their school.</p>	<p>Resources: Ethos Reflection; Student Lesson Plans; Concrete Suggestions for Each Target.</p>
<p>YEAR TWO</p>	<p>Aims: Complete the Ethos Reflection exercise for a different characteristic to that of year one, and identify a target from within that characteristic to bring to life in their school.</p>	<p>Resources: Ethos Reflection; Student Lesson Plans; Concrete Suggestions for Each Target.</p>
<p>YEAR THREE</p>	<p>Aims: Complete the Ethos Reflection exercise for a different characteristic from year two, and identify a target from within that characteristic to bring to life in their school.</p>	<p>Resources: Ethos Reflection; Student Lesson Plans; Concrete Suggestions for Each Target.</p>
<p>YEAR FOUR</p>	<p>Aims: Complete the Ethos Reflection exercise for a different characteristic from year three, and identify a target from within that characteristic to bring to life in their school.</p>	<p>Resources: Ethos Reflection; Student Lesson Plans; Concrete Suggestions for Each Target.</p>
<p>YEAR FIVE & ONWARDS</p>	<p>Aims: Review progress to date; repeat the Ethos Reflection exercise; review the facilitation process; choose a facilitation model; identify one of the five characteristics and from within that characteristic select a target to bring to life in their school. The following years (six, seven and eight) will be a repeat of years two, three and four.</p>	<p>Resources: Ethos Reflection; Student Lesson Plans; Concrete Suggestions for Each Target.</p>

SECTION ONE SCHOOL RESOURCES



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



A-E = Characteristics
A1-E10 = Targets



ETHOS REFLECTION

A: The school is founded on a Catholic understanding of education

The spiritual development of pupils is a central educational aim in Catholic education. The school values a broad curriculum and co-curricular activities in order to foster a deeper sense of the whole person, life and reality as a whole. Staff and pupils seek excellence, including academic achievement, in the context of a broad Christian philosophy of education. The school seeks to nourish the person through a varied academic curriculum, involvement in the arts, physical education and sporting activity, and a commitment to moral development and personal responsibility. In a more multicultural society Catholic schools welcome all that is positive in this new diversity and instil an attitude of respect for the good of the other and the importance of the spiritual and religious dimension of education.

<h3>Targets</h3> <p>Please ✓ in appropriate box</p>	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
<p>A1. The school understands all pupils, as human persons made in the image of God, are called to share in God's love forever by following the example of Christ.</p>				
<p>A2. Values inspired by the Gospel, such as dignity, forgiveness, justice and option for the poor, are integral to decision-making within and on behalf of the school.</p>				
<p>A3. The school consciously attends to the moral development of the pupils in its policies and planning.</p>				
<p>A4. Pupils of other faiths and world views who are members of the school community are welcomed into the life of the school as the board of management, principal and staff are aware of the importance of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue and the place of encounter and learning from other traditions in Catholic education.</p>				
<p>A5. All members of the school community – teachers, parents, pupils and staff – are aware of their responsibility to cooperate and collectively work towards the realisation of the common educational project of building up the Kingdom of God and the experience of God's love.</p>				
<p>A6. Excellence in school life is an ideal to which we aspire while acknowledging that it must be understood, written and spoken about not as an absolute measure but as the best that each individual child is capable of attaining.</p>				
<p>A7. The school works in close partnership with other Catholic primary schools in the same geographical area.</p>				
<p>A8. Education is written and spoken about by the principal and the teachers as something broad and holistic; as embracing the academic, physical, social, spiritual and religious development of the child from a Christian perspective.</p>				



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

ETHOS REFLECTION

B: The school is a Catholic community

Schools are communities made up of pupils, parents, staff, board members, patrons/trustees and others associated with the school. Parents are the most important educators of their children. Catholic primary schools are rooted in parish communities where they are an important part of local life and foster a sense of shared responsibility for Catholic education.

<p style="text-align: center;">Targets</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please ✓ in appropriate box</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This is very true of our school</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This is true of our school but we can do better</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">We are weak on this issue</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This has never been part of our school</p>
<p>B1. <i>Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland</i> is based on a vision of partnership between home, school and parish. Catholic pupils are prepared for the sacraments in accordance with this vision. Catholic pupils are prepared for the sacraments through a partnership of home, school and parish.</p>				
<p>B2. The school is active and visible in parish and local community events.</p>				
<p>B3. The contribution of parents to the life of the school is encouraged and welcomed in accordance with the vision of <i>Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland</i>.</p>				
<p>B4. Child safeguarding is a priority in the school so as to ensure that there is a safe and caring environment for pupils and employees – supports are provided for individual members of the school community to foster their deeper development.</p>				
<p>B5. The members of staff of the school are confident in articulating its Catholic ethos.</p>				
<p>B6. There is an active, living link between the school and the local Catholic parish community, which in turn supports the school.</p>				
<p>B7. Issues relating to the Catholic identity of the school appear frequently on the agenda for board of management meetings.</p>				
<p>B8. Meetings within the school (board of management, staff, parents' association, etc.) usually begin and/or end with prayerful reflection.</p>				

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



ETHOS REFLECTION

C: The school is an agent of personal growth and social transformation

The school community is committed to growth in moral awareness and to the search for justice, integrity and care for the earth. There is emphasis on pastoral care and student support, not least for those who are educationally disadvantaged. A dialogue between faith and contemporary culture is fostered in an age-appropriate manner.

Targets Please ✓ in appropriate box	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
C1. All school planning and policy development is clearly linked to and inspired by the school's mission statement.				
C2. Visitors to our school experience an atmosphere that reflects the values of justice, forgiveness, integrity and respect for the needs and rights of pupils, parents and members of staff.				
C3. Our pupils, in a spirit of mutual respect and trust, can approach staff and share concerns.				
C4. The school participates in and supports justice and peace initiatives such as Trócaire's Lenten campaign.				
C5. Pupils receive an age-appropriate introduction to media studies as they learn to critique what they see on their TV and computer screens (e.g. how cartoons and advertisements work; the models of 'success' and 'happiness' being promoted) and are invited to reflect on the uses, influences and dangers of modern means of communication: Internet, Facebook, Twitter, mobile phones.				
C6. The school teaches pupils to care for creation by encouraging authentic changes in lifestyle such as 'avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices.'				
C7. As a Catholic school we challenge all members of the school community to live a simpler life, based on sharing the earth as our common home with all people.				
C8. Pope Francis teaches that a passionate concern for our world cannot be supported without 'a spirituality capable of inspiring us'. In stimulating pupils towards exercising a greater concern for our world, the school community is animated by the Church's rich spiritual heritage.				



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

ETHOS REFLECTION

D: Religious education is an integral part of the life of the school

The religious education provided in the school is inspired by *Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland*. The religious education programme includes faith formation, prayer and sacramental experiences, and a growing awareness of being stewards of God's creation. There is support for staff, principals, pupils, parents and members of boards in opening their hearts and minds to the presence of God, as religious education is not just a school subject but embraces the whole journey of life.

<p style="text-align: center;">Targets</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please ✓ in appropriate box</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This is very true of our school</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This is true of our school but we can do better</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">We are weak on this issue</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This has never been part of our school</p>
<p>D1. There is a policy statement in the school on religious education which includes faith formation, prayer, sacramental experiences and awareness of the stewardship of God's creation. This is stated as a developmental, year-by-year policy and integrated with relevant policy documents across other aspects of school life.</p>				
<p>D2. The religious education programme receives its allotted time for each year and the school follows the curriculum and textbooks approved by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.</p>				
<p>D3. The principal or the RE representative work with class groupings in planning the work for the year and this is clearly stated and communicated to parents, staff and the local parish as a basis for mutual understanding and a partnership approach.</p>				
<p>D4. The school participates in Catholic Schools Week each year and continues to utilise the resources developed for Catholic Schools Week throughout the school year.</p>				
<p>D5. At the beginning and end of each school day and at other specified times during the day, there is time devoted to prayer and/or reflection.</p>				
<p>D6. There is a developmental programme in the school on environmental and ecological education, which is inclusive of religious education, as the school promotes 'a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature' in accord with Pope Francis' encyclical <i>Laudato Si'</i>.</p>				
<p>D7. Adult members of the school community participate in opportunities for spiritual support and growth provided in partnership with the diocese and other bodies.</p>				
<p>D8. The school makes explicit mention – in its literature, statements and oral communications at key events – that the spiritual development of pupils is a central educational aim.</p>				

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



ETHOS REFLECTION

E: We are called to be followers of Christ

The vision that underpins all aspects of school life informs us that the human person is made in the image of God (*Imago dei*) and is called to share in God's own life forever. All Christians who are part of the school are invited to constantly rediscover what it is to be a follower of Christ and to give witness to the centrality of the Gospel. The school continues the mission of Christ entrusted to the Church to go and teach.

Targets Please ✓ in appropriate box	This is very true of our school	This is true of our school but we can do better	We are weak on this issue	This has never been part of our school
E1. The school has a mission statement clearly rooted in the mission of Christ.				
E2. All members of the school community are cherished and valued as Christ would welcome them.				
E3. At regular school assemblies there is ongoing reflection on the Christian way of life.				
E4. Members of staff are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of Jesus Christ.				
E5. Children are introduced to and experience a variety of ways of praying including guided reflections, periods of silence and participation in the liturgy.				
E6. The seasons of the Christian year are highlighted by appropriate and relevant spiritual celebrations to which all in the school community are invited.				
E7. There are Christian symbols (such as crucifix, art works) in each classroom and place of gathering in the school.				
E8. Copies of the Bible are available for use in senior classes and the Bible is always treated with respect in the school community.				



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

STUDENT LESSON PLANS

LESSON ONE: Our School Values the Whole Person: Our Minds, Our Bodies and Our Souls

From the Aims of the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*

Lessons for fifth/sixth classes with adaptable suggestions for use in special schools and classes.

Level 4

Strand: Christian Faith

- Develop respect for family and community values in other religions.

Strand: Word of God

- Understand how Sacred Scripture is taught and handed on in the living tradition of the Church.

Strand: Christian Morality

- Understand moral life as an expression and consequence of our relationship with God.
- Explore how Christians' relationship with Jesus, their beliefs and values affect their words and actions, as exemplified in their lives.
- Begin to incorporate moral ideals of conduct into their identity.
- Develop their understanding of factors that call for, influence and promote moral behaviour.

Teacher Notes

This lesson focuses on helping pupils to explore how their school values every child in the school and how our school tries to educate each child in body, mind and soul. In order to do this, you will need a copy of the school's schedule, which should be displayed in school, or alternatively you can use the adapted version below.

Introduction

Begin the lesson by exploring with the pupils that our school is a Catholic school.

Ask pupils what they think this means. What makes a Catholic school a Catholic school? How might we know our school is a Catholic school? How is that different from other schools? Record some of the responses and write them on the whiteboard.



General Guidelines for Special Classes/Schools

For children with greater needs, an appropriate starting point can be introducing a simple prayer at the beginning and end of each day as part of their daily schedule. A visual resource of a picture and the words to the prayer can be present to help achieve this. In doing this, the children see prayer as part of their daily routine. These lesson plans are suggestions, and the special class teacher can adjust, differentiate or add to these resources as they see fit.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



Development

Explore with the pupils that there is a description of what a Catholic school is. This is called the schedule of a Catholic school. This description is displayed in every Catholic school so everyone who comes into the school can see it. Show the document to the pupils in its original form or use the adapted version below.

Schedule of a Catholic School – Adapted

A Catholic school aims to promote the growth and development of every pupil. The school works to develop every pupil's mind, body and soul, including a relationship with God and with all other people. The school models a life based on the person of Jesus and teaches religious education and helps pupils form in the Catholic faith.

If using the original schedule, teachers may need to take some time to explore and unpack the language, but for the purposes of this lesson the key sentence in relation to Catholic schools is:

[A]ims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people.

Or, from the adapted version:

The school works to develop every pupil's mind, body and soul, including a relationship with God and with all other people.

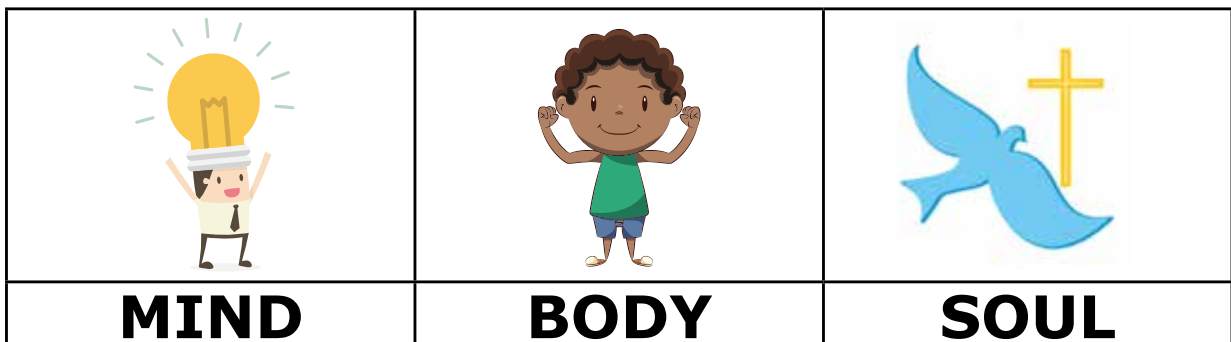
The schedule tells us that Catholic schools develop pupils in mind, body and soul. Take each of these three words (on flash cards attached) and brainstorm with pupils how their school educates them in mind, in body and in soul. Create a list for display in the classroom.

Conclusion

To conclude the lesson, ask pupils how our school can help them develop more in mind, in body and in soul. Use the following questions as a starting point:

- Are everyone's talents and gifts recognised?
- Are pupils and parents from all faiths and world views welcome and cherished in our school?
- Do we follow the command of Jesus to love each other as he loved us? Do we care for those who are poor, work for justice, and act ethically?
- How can we make sure every pupil in our school can grow in mind, in body and in spirit?

Discuss with pupils that this list of suggestions can be fed into the overall CSP process.





SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSON ADAPTION

Special Education Guidelines

Strand: Christian Morality

- Have an awareness of belonging to a 'class' or to a 'group'.

Attending	Responding	Initiating
The child should be enabled to:	The child should be enabled to:	The child should be enabled to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in turn taking activities/games• become aware of rules in the school and community that may concern him/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in activities that require everyone to give and share something• observe appropriate school and community rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• care for and cooperate with each other• independently observe community and school rules

Pupils Attending

Introduce the six picture flash cards to pupils. Support pupils in matching the six cards into pairs under the headings of mind, body and soul. Support pupils attending to an awareness that our Catholic schools help us to grow in mind, in body and in soul.

Pupils Responding

Introduce the three flash cards of mind, body and soul (in picture format). Talk about how our school is a Catholic school so every pupil is helped to grow in mind, in body and in soul. This is done in many different ways. Introduce the six category cards to pupils and allow them to take turns to match the different cards to either mind, body or soul.

Pupils Initiating

Introduce the three flash cards of mind, body and soul (in picture format or word format). Talk about how our school is a Catholic school so every pupil is helped to grow in mind, in body and in soul. This is done in many different ways. Introduce the six category cards to pupils and allow them to take turns to match the different cards to either mind, body or soul.

SECTION ONE

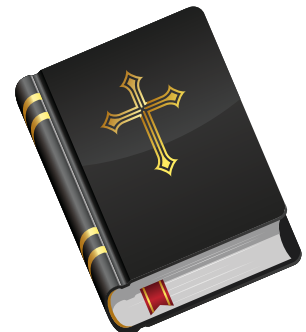
SCHOOL RESOURCES



MIND

BODY

SOUL





STUDENT LESSON PLANS

LESSON TWO: Our School is a Christian Community

From the Aims of the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*

Lessons for fifth/sixth classes with adaptable suggestions for use in special schools and classes.

Level 4

Strand: Word of God

- Understand how Sacred Scripture is taught and handed on in the living tradition of the Church.

Strand: Christian Morality

- Develop their understanding of factors that call for, influence and promote moral behaviour.
- Develop an awareness of social justice, ecological justice, universal solidarity and responsibility.
- Examine the relationship between Jesus' example, Christian moral values and contemporary culture.
- Explore how Christians' relationship with Jesus, their beliefs and values affect their words and actions, as exemplified in their lives.
- Develop their understanding of the Church as a community of faith.

Teacher Notes

This lesson focuses on the Catholic school as a Christian community, but also as part of a larger Christian community. The lesson will focus on a reading from the Acts of the Apostles which describes the early Christian community and then invites pupils to see what characteristics mentioned are visible in our school community as well as our larger Christian community.

Introduction

Begin the lesson by reminding pupils that our school is a Catholic school and in this lesson we will be exploring how our school is a Christian community itself and part of a bigger Christian community of the parish and the world Church. Ask pupils what they think a Christian community is. Record responses on the whiteboard. The Bible tells us in the Acts of the Apostles (2:42-7) what the early Christian community was like after Jesus died and rose again. This piece of Scripture can tell us the main characteristics of a Christian community even in the modern world.

Development

To develop the lesson, distribute the lesson two activity page and allow pupils to read the piece of Scripture independently or in groups. Continue by asking the pupils to pick out what we can tell about the Christian community from this piece of Sacred Scripture. How did the Christian community live and act?

Conclusion

To conclude the lesson, ask pupils if they can see any of the characteristics of the early Christian community in our school? This is a good way to see if our school is a living Christian community. Discuss further how the school might grow more as a Christian community by trying to be more like the early Christians. A list of suggestions can be fed into the overall CSP process.

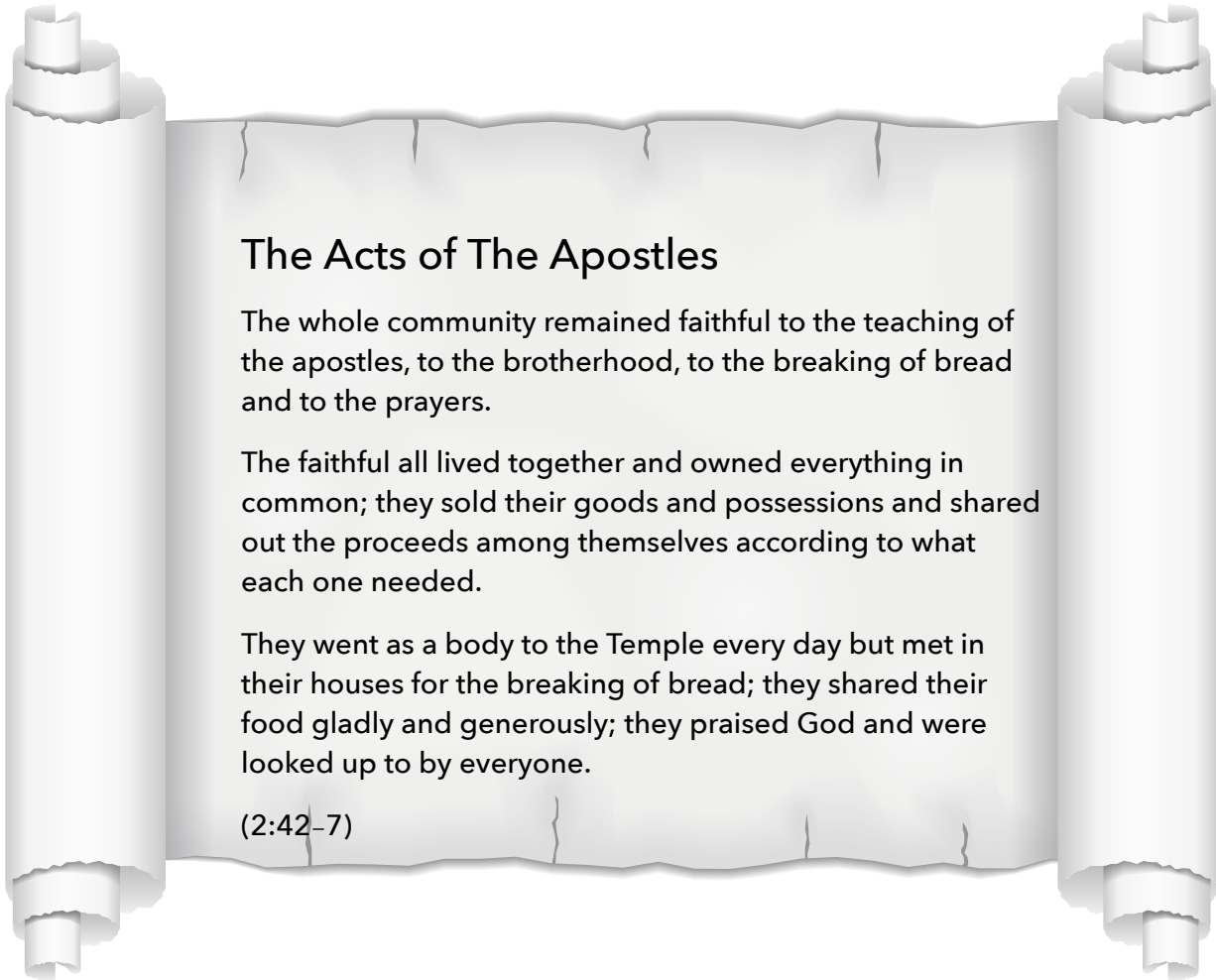
SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



LESSON TWO: OUR SCHOOL IS A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

ACTIVITY PAGE



The Acts of The Apostles

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone.

(2:42-7)

From the Scripture extract, what do we know about how the early Christian community lived?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSON ADAPTION

Special Education Guidelines

Strand: Christian Morality

- Have an awareness of belonging to a 'class' or to a 'group'.

Attending The child should be enabled to:	Responding The child should be enabled to:	Initiating The child should be enabled to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in turn taking activities/games• become aware of rules in the school and community that may concern him/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in activities that require everyone to give and share something• observe appropriate school and community rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• care for and cooperate with each other• independently observe community and school rules

Pupils Attending

Read the Scripture piece from the Acts of the Apostles (activity page) and use the flash cards to illustrate the story to pupils.

Pupils Responding

Introduce the flash cards corresponding to the Scripture piece. Explore what the pictures mean with pupils. Read the Scripture piece from the Acts of the Apostles (activity page) and allow pupils to take it in turns to hold up or point to a picture which corresponds to different key words in the Scripture piece.

Pupils Initiating

Read the Scripture piece from the Acts of the Apostles (activity page) with pupils. Read the story a second time and use the flash cards to highlight key words and terms with pupils. If appropriate, use the flash cards to discuss ways that the early Christians lived and examine if we do the same things in our lives in school and at home.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



Ten cartoon-style figures of people in traditional, colorful clothing, arranged in two rows of five. They appear to be holding hands or standing in a line.	A woven wicker basket filled with various types of bread, including loaves and rolls, along with stalks of wheat.
A cartoon illustration of a stone building with a prominent archway in the foreground. There are some green bushes and trees around the building.	A cartoon illustration of a small, white church building with a dark roof and a steeple topped with a cross.
A cartoon illustration of two hands clasped together in a prayer position, with gold cuffs visible at the wrists.	A cartoon illustration of a red sign with the word "SOLD" in white capital letters, mounted on a wooden post.



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

STUDENT LESSON PLANS

LESSON THREE: Our School Helps Us to Grow and Teaches Us to Act Justly

From the Aims of the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*

Lessons for fifth/sixth classes with adaptable suggestions for use in special schools and classes.

Level 4

Strand: Word of God

- Understand how Sacred Scripture is taught and handed on in the living tradition of the Church.

Strand: Christian Morality

- Develop their understanding of factors that call for, influence and promote moral behaviour.
- Develop an awareness of social justice, ecological justice, universal solidarity and responsibility.
- Examine the relationship between Jesus' example, Christian moral values and contemporary culture.
- Explore how Christians' relationship with Jesus, their beliefs and values affect their words and actions, as exemplified in their lives.
- Develop their understanding of the Church as a community of faith.

Teacher Notes

This lesson focuses on how Catholic schools are called to help pupils to grow as individuals and as Christians, in particular how to act and live justly in our world. The lesson will focus on a quote from the Bible. The quote from Micah (6:8) tells us how we should live and the lesson will then move on to allow pupils to see how they are already learning to live out this command or how they could do so.

Introduction

Begin the lesson by reminding pupils that our school is a Catholic school and in this lesson we will be exploring how our school as a Christian community helps us to grow and teaches us to act justly in the world.



Read the quote from Micah to the pupils or display it on the IWB. Ask pupils what they think it means.



Break down the quote word by word with pupils to help decipher what it means and what God is asking of us:

Act: To do or behave.

Just: To be fair or upright; to do what is right.

Mercy: To forgive or show compassion.

Walk: To move forward in steps.

Humble: Not viewing yourself as better than others.

In summary, the quote from Micah tells us that God is pleased when we act or behave in a fair and forgiving way.

Development

To develop the lesson, distribute the lesson three activity page and allow pupils to work in pairs to come up with ways that we already live out the words of Micah in our school. This could be:

- **Acting justly** by raising money for charities like Trócaire or listening to both sides of a disagreement and trying to help people solve the issue.
- **Showing mercy** by forgiving people for things they do wrong because we all make mistakes or helping others or sharing with others in school who need our support.
- **Walk humbly** by helping someone that is struggling without expecting anything in return or by loving people as they are or by accepting our own limitations and imperfections.

Conclusion

To conclude the lesson, ask pupils if they can think of any other ways that the school as a Christian community could live out the words of Micah.

A list of suggestions can be fed into the overall CSP process.






SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

LESSON THREE: OUR SCHOOL HELPS US TO GROW AND TEACHES US TO ACT JUSTLY

ACTIVITY PAGE

How do we live out the words of Micah in our school?		
		
Act Justly	Love Mercy	Walk Humbly
Can you think of any other ways we can live out the words of Micah in our school?		



SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSON ADAPTION

Special Education Guidelines

Strand: Christian Morality

- Have an awareness of belonging to a 'class' or to a 'group'.

Attending The child should be enabled to:	Responding The child should be enabled to:	Initiating The child should be enabled to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in turn taking activities/games • become aware of rules in the school and community that may concern him/her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in activities that require everyone to give and share something • observe appropriate school and community rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care for and cooperate with each other • independently observe community and school rules

Pupils Attending

Read the Scripture quote from Micah and use the flash cards (either with the language of the quote or the simplified version below) to illustrate and explain to pupils how the quote is asking us to live.



Pupils Responding

Introduce the picture-only flash cards corresponding to the Scripture piece. Explore what the pictures mean with pupils and allow pupils to take it in turns to hold up or point to a picture which corresponds to the three key actions in the Scripture piece.

Pupils Initiating

Read the Scripture piece with pupils. Read the piece a second time and use the flash cards to highlight the key action words with pupils. Ask the pupils to identify things we do in school each day to live out these words from the Bible.



Be Fair



Love and Forgive



Be Gentle





Act Justly



Love Mercy



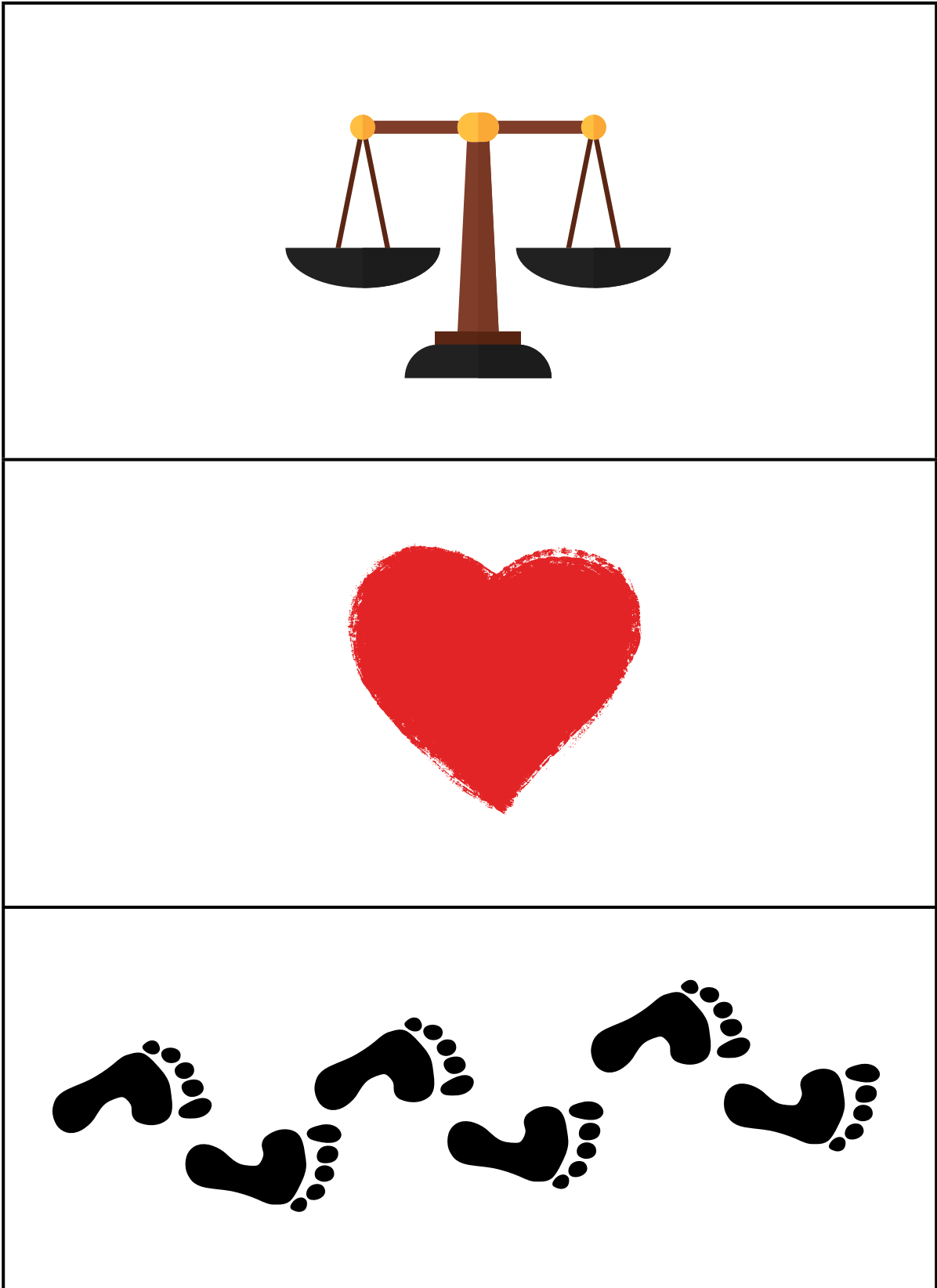
Walk Humbly





SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



STUDENT LESSON PLANS

LESSON FOUR: Religious Education is Important in Our School

From the *Aims of the Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*

Lessons for fifth/sixth classes with adaptable suggestions for use in special schools and classes.

Level 4

Strand: Christian Faith

- Develop their understanding of the Church as a community of faith.
- Understand how to express their own faith in the presence of others and to respect the expression of faith and/or belief on the part of others.

Strand: Liturgy and Prayer

- Make connections between liturgical practices of the Church community and the beliefs and teachings proclaimed.
- Develop their understanding of personal and communal prayer.

Strand: Christian Morality

- Explore how Christians' relationship with Jesus, their beliefs and values affect their words and actions, as exemplified in their lives.
- Develop their understanding of factors that call for, influence and promote moral behaviour.
- Develop an awareness of social justice, ecological justice, universal solidarity and responsibility.
- Explore how Christians' relationship with Jesus, their beliefs and values affect their words and actions, as exemplified in their lives.
- Develop their understanding of the Church as a community of faith.

Teacher Notes

This lesson focuses on how religious education is an essential part of Catholic schools. Religious education in Catholic schools aims to form pupils in the Catholic faith. This formation is based on supporting pupils to build a relationship with the person of Jesus and become aware of the beliefs and traditions of the Church.

Introduction

Begin the lesson by reminding pupils that our school is a Catholic school and in this lesson we will be exploring all the different things we learn in school. Begin a brainstorming session or mind map of all the different things we learn in school. This can include the traditional subjects such as English and maths, as well as specific skills such as being a good friend.



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

Development

To develop the lesson, explore with pupils that often subjects have symbols and signs associated with them and give some examples. For example, when we think about maths we often think of a plus or division sign. Distribute copies of activity page one and allow pupils to come up with symbols for the things listed. Focus on religious education. Religious education in a Catholic School is about much more than our daily lesson. It involves getting to know the person of Jesus and learning about the Christian community and how to live as a follower of Jesus. Part of religious education in a Catholic school is about welcoming and including everyone who comes to our school and treating others as we would like them to treat us.

Conclusion

To conclude the lesson, talk about each of the pictures on activity page two and explore each one to see if they are part of religious education in our school.

Church: Do we learn about/go to the church as a school/class? Participate in celebrations in our parish, serve Mass, etc.?

Statue of Mary: Do we have statues or symbols in our school that remind us we are a Catholic school?

Bread and Wine: Do we prepare for First Communion and receive communion regularly?

Trócaire Box: Do we support local charities, help those in our community, participate in the Trócaire Lenten campaign?

Baptismal Font: Do we learn about the importance of the sacraments and being a member of the Christian community?

Sacred Space: Do we have prayer spaces in our classroom/school?

Easter and Advent: Do we celebrate special times in the Church Year? Do we know about times like Advent and Easter?

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



LESSON FOUR: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT IN OUR SCHOOL

ACTIVITY PAGE ONE

Draw a symbol to represent the different things we learn in school

Maths	
English	
History	
Being a good friend	
Religious education	
Art	



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

LESSON FOUR: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT IN OUR SCHOOL

ACTIVITY PAGE TWO

A simple line drawing of a small white church with a steeple and a cross on top.	A blue and white line drawing of the Virgin Mary, standing with her hands at her sides and a halo of stars around her head.
A golden chalice filled with red liquid, with a round loaf of bread resting on its base.	A blue box with the text "JOIN THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE" and a collage of diverse people's faces.
A grey, ornate stone ciborium with a wide, shallow bowl and a pedestal base.	A photograph of a religious display table with a blue backdrop, a crucifix, a chalice, and other items.
Three colorful Easter eggs with different patterns: one with blue and white stripes, one with pink and green stripes, and one with yellow and green stripes.	Four lit candles in shades of purple and pink, arranged in a row on a green holly leaf wreath with red bows.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSON ADAPTION

Special Education Guidelines

Strand: Christian Morality

- Have an awareness of belonging to a 'class' or to a 'group'.

Attending	Responding	Initiating
The child should be enabled to:	The child should be enabled to:	The child should be enabled to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in turn taking activities/games• become aware of rules in the school and community that may concern him/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in activities that require everyone to give and share something• observe appropriate school and community rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• care for and cooperate with each other• independently observe community and school rules

Pupils Attending

Use activity page two as flash cards to explore with pupils the different things we learn as part of religious education in our Catholic school.

Pupils Responding

Introduce activity page two as flash cards to explore with pupils the different things we learn as part of religious education in our Catholic school. Allow pupils to take it in turns to hold up or point to a picture as a teacher describes each picture.

Pupils Initiating

Introduce activity page two as flash cards to explore with pupils the different things we learn as part of religious education in our catholic school. Question pupils on what each picture means. Allow pupils to take it in turns to hold up or point to a picture as a teacher describes each picture.



STUDENT LESSON PLANS

LESSON FIVE: We are Called to be Followers of Christ

From the Aims of the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*

Lessons for fifth/sixth classes with adaptable suggestions for use in special schools and classes.

Level 4

Strand: Christian Faith

- Develop their understanding of the Church as a community of faith.
- Grow in awareness and understanding of their Christian spirituality.

Strand: Liturgy and Prayer

- Make connections between liturgical practices of the Church community and the beliefs and teachings proclaimed.
- Develop their understanding of personal and communal prayer.

Strand: Christian Morality

- Explore how to live the new covenant in Jesus (the Law of Love), the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes with faith, hope, and love (CCC, 1812).
- Develop their understanding of factors that call for, influence and promote moral behaviour.

Teacher Notes

This lesson focuses on being called to follow Christ's example in our own lives. Jesus demonstrated through his words and actions the need for us to care for one each other. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom where love, solidarity and friendship abide and where everyone is welcome. Jesus prayed to God and we too are called to pray. Prayer is simply talking to God; and Jesus teaches us that God will never leave us or stop loving us. He is always there to hear us.

Let's Look

Begin the lesson by discussing with the children what it means to be a follower of someone. Some people are role models or people we look up; for instance, Lionel Messi, Brother Kevin Crowley, Katie Taylor. Talk about those role models: how do they make us feel? Then discuss Brother Kevin and Katie Taylor. They are role models to many people today and many follow them but one of the things that they both do is pray. Loads of sports stars bless themselves, such as Mo Salah of Liverpool. As a Muslim, he prays before each game.

Watch this short video about the famous Liverpool footballer Mo Salah (4 min. 26 sec.)

[youtube.com/watch?v=B7xXqKMiR7Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7xXqKMiR7Q)

There are lots of instances of Mo Salah praying. Ask the children why they think he prays. What difference does it make to him?

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES



Let's Learn

To develop the lesson, explore with pupils how prayer was so important to Jesus. We have different kinds of prayers. Some we learn like the Our Father and Hail Mary. With some prayers we thank God for things. Others are prayers such as Prayers of the Faithful which are asking God to help us in some way. Ask the pupils why they think Jesus prayed. Explain that his own prayers didn't immediately get answered. On the cross he prayed but he died. But this was followed by the Resurrection. Did it make any difference to Jesus? Who did he pray to? Why would we pray to Jesus today and why do people pray to Jesus? Do you think Jesus listens to your prayers?

Explain to the pupils that today we are going to think of something we would like to pray for. It could be for someone you know who is going through a difficult time, or something you're worried or anxious about. Distribute the activity page or blank pieces of A4 paper and give the pupils a few minutes in silence to reflect on what it is they want to pray for. Ask the pupils to write their prayers and fold their pieces of paper. They do not have to tell anyone what their prayer is as it is between them and God. Collect the prayers and place them into a box at your sacred space.

Let's Live

To conclude the lesson, discuss why we had to think in silence about what we wanted to pray for. Was it easier to think about these things when the room was still and quiet? Is it important for us to sometimes have quiet time to ourselves to think about things like this? Ask the pupils if there are places where it is easier to pray. Can we chat with God anywhere (in the school, on the yard, pitch, classroom)?



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

LESSON FIVE: WE ARE CALLED TO BE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

ACTIVITY PAGE

A large rectangular frame with a decorative border of black scrollwork and floral motifs. Inside the frame, the text "I pray for.." is written in a black cursive font at the top left. The rest of the frame is empty, intended for a student to write their prayer.

I pray for..

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSON ADAPTION

Special Education Guidelines

Strand: Christian Faith

- Develop their understanding of the Church as a community of faith.
- Grow in awareness and understanding of their Christian spirituality.

Attending	Responding	Initiating
The child should be enabled to:	The child should be enabled to:	The child should be enabled to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in turn taking activities/games• become aware of rules in the school and community that may concern him/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate in activities that require everyone to give and share something• observe appropriate school and community rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• care for and cooperate with each other• independently observe community and school rules

Pupils Attending

Talk about people that are important in our lives and that we care about. This can include parents, friends or teachers/SNAs. Explain that God cares about us too and that we can talk to God whenever we want.

Pupils Responding

Pupils can draw a picture of themselves with the person or people they care about praying and, if appropriate, include Jesus in the picture because Jesus cares about us too.

Pupils Initiating

Question the pupils on what they drew. Explain that we can say prayers to God if we are worried or anxious because no matter what, God will always love us and listen to us.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

PRAYER



JUSTICE



FAITH



MERCY



TABLE FELLOWSHIP



CHARITY



SACRED SPACE



PETITION BOX



SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS FOR TARGETS

This section provides clear suggestions to assist schools in addressing their chosen target. Below, you will find that each target from the self-reflection resource has a correlating action by which each key characteristic (A–D) can be brought to life in your school. It is important to make clear that these suggested actions are merely that – suggestions to assist schools by enriching the lived reality of its Catholic ethos – and it is at the school’s discretion how many of the suggested concrete actions they use.

A. THE SCHOOL IS FOUNDED ON A CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION

A1. The school understands all pupils, as human persons made in the image of God, are called to share in God’s love forever by following the example of Christ.

- i. There is an open atmosphere of welcome and acceptance pervading the school, which can be felt tangibly by visitors and the school community alike.
- ii. There are no factors built into school policy which would positively or negatively discriminate against another individual.
- iii. All school programmes are inclusive in all aspects.
- iv. There is a proactive approach to valuing inclusivity in the school and the necessary resources are made available to facilitate such ethical education through the promotion of social justice, personal integrity and growth.
- v. The school community is strongly challenged by the values of Christ, and responds to this challenge in all its endeavours, which leads it to be an open and welcome Christian environment for all.

A2. Values inspired by the Gospel, such as dignity, forgiveness, justice and option for the poor, are integral to decision-making within and on behalf of the school.

- i. The BoM, principal and staff ask challenging questions when making decisions which affect the lives of the children.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- ii. Inclusion: there is evidence that students from all faiths and world views and all socio-economic backgrounds and cultures are welcome to attend school.
- iii. Respect for others and self: this is promoted at all times through the school code of conduct and pervades the life of the school in all its dealings with people.
- iv. Compassion and forgiveness: they are promoted as core values of our human relationships and important to the resolution of conflict.
- v. Peace, joy and mercy: a felt presence in the school among the whole school community.

A3. The school consciously attends to the moral development of the pupils in its policies and planning.

- i. The BoM and staff consciously educate themselves on contemporary research related to the moral development of four- to thirteen-year-olds, through the staff library, staff input, in-service and personal reading.
- ii. Students receive education and formation in the area of moral development so they can reinforce this aspect of school life.
- iii. Parents receive literature from the school about the importance of ethical and moral development so that they can reflect on how they might support this aspect of school life from the home.
- iv. School rules and policies include reference to the moral development of the students.

A4. Pupils of other faiths and world views who are members of the school community are welcomed into the life of the school as the board of management, principal and staff are aware of the importance of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue and the place of encounter and learning from other traditions in Catholic education.

- i. Visual displays and art work around the school, on the school website, in school literature, clearly show the school community as welcoming all peoples, beliefs and cultures.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- ii. The school is committed to learning from the lives of pupils and parents from different cultures, religions and world views.
- iii. All pupils and parents are taught about the founding beliefs and vision of the school and are encouraged to have a healthy respect for this alongside the DES curriculum.
- iv. All pupils are welcome to attend and contribute appropriately to sacramental celebrations and the spiritual life of the school in its many guises.
- v. During religious education lessons pupils of other faiths and none are encouraged to share their views and opinions and healthy dialogue is supported. World religions feature on the school curriculum as the school is committed to learning from the world views, faiths and beliefs of all its pupils.

A5. All members of the school community – teachers, parents, pupils and staff – are aware of their responsibility to cooperate and collectively work towards the realisation of the common educational project of building up the Kingdom of God and the experience of God’s love.

- i. Each classroom has a sacred space where pupils and teachers can pray and reflect together.
- ii. The whole school community participates in the Society of Missionary Children initiative, ‘Mission Month of October’.
- iii. At school assemblies students, teachers and staff participate in Christian meditation; i.e. repetition of the sacred word ‘MA-RA-NA-THA’ (‘Come Lord’) silently for three minutes in appropriate posture.
- iv. Representatives from local and national charities are invited to the school to talk to the pupils about their work within the community.

A6. Excellence in school life is an ideal to which we aspire while acknowledging that it must be understood, written and spoken about not as an absolute measure but as the best that each individual child is capable of attaining.

- i. All staff and personnel are up to date on all legal requirements and attend all relevant training recommended for the upkeep of excellence within the school.
- ii. Excellence is rewarded in the life of the child in a realistic, age-appropriate and Christian holistic manner.
- iii. The school regularly reviews research, and excellent practice in other schools, with a view to staying open and dynamic, and serving the complex needs of the whole school community.
- iv. The school practises regular self-evaluation through varied means - questionnaires, online surveys, on paper and live feedback from the whole school community.

A7. The school works in close partnership with other Catholic primary schools in the same geographical area.

- i. The school invites other local Catholic schools to attend creative and imaginative dramatic, musical, ecological, liturgical and ecumenical events.
- ii. The school works in partnership with the transition year students of local Catholic secondary schools for such projects as homework clubs, prayer/meditation workshops, sacramental preparation, moral development lessons, peace and justice clubs, peer mediation programmes, buddy system, transition from primary to secondary support, sports clubs, etc.
- iii. The school liaises with local secondary schools to provide important information to sixth class pupils for the continuation of their physical, academic, social and spiritual needs.
- iv. The school works in partnership with other primary schools with programmes like Green School, Rainbows programme, sacramental preparation and in the sharing of resources.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

A8. Education is written and spoken about by the principal and the teachers as something broad and holistic; as embracing the academic, physical, social, spiritual and religious development of the child from a Christian perspective.

- i. Education from a Christian perspective is clearly thought out, written up and highlighted in school documentation - website, handbooks, homework journals, letters home, school brochure, etc.
- ii. All school policies consider the academic, physical, social and spiritual aspects of the individual where appropriate and relevant, and all personnel are knowledgeable on all four aspects.
- iii. The principal and teachers are trained in speaking about education from a broad Christian perspective and are confident in applying and demonstrating the vision to the practical everyday life of the school.
- iv. The broad and holistic development of the child is taken into consideration while discussing all aspects of school life at staff meetings, parent-teacher meetings, BoM meetings and particularly when making decisions which affect the school community.
- v. Award ceremonies and student award schemes acknowledge all four aspects of the child's development; for example, spiritual awards for volunteering work, kindness and caring shown to others, and time given to prayer and reflection are given equal importance alongside academic awards.

B. THE SCHOOL IS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

B1. *Share the Good News - The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* is based on a vision of partnership between home, school and parish, and Catholic pupils are prepared for the sacraments in accordance with this vision. Catholic pupils are prepared for the sacraments through a partnership of home, school and parish.

- i. The school encourages children and parents to attend local parish events and sacraments.
- ii. Parents/guardians are invited to attend and contribute in a real way to the sacramental preparation meetings.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- iii. Parents are involved with preparation through journal work with their children.
- iv. The views of parents/guardians are sought by the school and parish and sacramental events are evaluated in light of the needs of the group of children.

B2. The school is active and visible in parish and local community events.

- i. The school could create its own flag, symbolising their mission statement or vision of education. It would be recognised by the local parish/community when the school is in attendance at events.
- ii. School children are actively encouraged to participate in community events with parents - helping the local St Vincent de Paul, Catholic Girl Guides/Scouts, active elderly, etc.
- iii. The school visits premises of services in the parish and community.
- iv. Dance, drama and musical entertainment is provided by the school to contribute locally - nursing homes, local fundraisers, etc.
- v. School choir sings at parish Mass, liturgical celebrations and for sacramental events throughout the year.
- vi. Sacramental children and parents attend regular parish Mass.

B3. The contribution of parents to the life of the school is encouraged and welcomed in accordance with the vision of *Share the Good News - The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland*.

- i. An inventory of parents open to volunteering within the school could be taken and their skillset used in a practical way throughout the school community; for example, gardening, knitting, sports, clubs, meditation, Bible study, sacramental preparation, historical tours.
- ii. The work life of parents could make an interesting contribution in terms of awareness of voluntary and charity work in the community.
- iii. Parent social evenings take place, not just parent-teacher meetings.
- iv. Spiritual input from parents, sharing their faith stories, cultural differences.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- v. Career input from parents visiting classes or exhibiting careers would encourage pupils towards responsible stewardship and active Christian responsibility to the community.
- vi. A designated parent-friendly area/room with tea/coffee-making facilities (sponsored by the parent association) for use while they are helping in the school.

B4. Child safeguarding is a priority in the school as to ensure that there is a safe and caring environment for pupils and employees – supports are provided for individual members of the school community to foster their deeper development.

- i. The board of management ensures that a health and safety policy is implemented.
- ii. The principal is available to the employees as a support, both academically and professionally.
- iii. The school takes an active interest in its employees and safeguards the health of its members.
- iv. The BoM provides some funds towards fostering the development of its employees.
- v. Best practice in all areas of school life is constantly reviewed in order to protect the employees while ensuring excellence in education.
- vi. The school appoints a designated liaison person to help and support pupils and employees in relation to child safeguarding.
- vii. The name of the designated liaison person (DLP) and a copy of the child safeguarding statement are clearly visible in a public area in the school.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

B5. The members of staff of the school are confident in articulating its Catholic ethos.

- i. Members of staff are educated/supported in the articulation of the school's Catholic ethos.
- ii. New members are given a staff handbook containing useful information necessary in articulating the Catholic ethos of the school at the first staff meeting of the year and all staff are familiar with the contents.
- iii. BoM/trustees/diocesan advisor provide funding/training for members of staff in the founding vision of education, and what that means in contemporary society, and in the life of the school community.
- iv. Various forms of communication of the school ethos are available; for example, pamphlets, website, school policies, visual art.
- v. The principal confidently and respectfully articulates the Catholic ethos and takes his/her responsibility seriously as a role model for the staff.
- vi. Non-Catholic staff members are facilitated to engage with the Catholic ethos of the school where they are employed, and to have any queries or questions dealt with in a spirit of mutual respect and inclusivity.

B6. There is an active, living link between the school and the local Catholic parish community, which in turn supports the school.

- i. A committee set up with representatives from the school and parish oversees and coordinates programmes and activities which create a real link between the school and parish and vice versa.
- ii. If the parish has a pastoral council, the school committee could liaise with the council on supporting the school and vice versa.
- iii. The link between the school and the parish is not just sacramental; there is a real link with communities and the Church, as the people of God.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

B7. Issues relating to the Catholic identity of the school appear frequently on the agenda for board of management meetings.

- i. Board members receive in-service/training and literature on the Catholic identity of the school and what that means.
- ii. Challenging decisions and responsibilities are accepted in line with the Catholic identity of the school.
- iii. Spiritual reflections and prayers take place at the opening of board of management meetings.
- iv. BoM seeks advice from Catholic advisors when necessary.

B8. Meetings within the school (board of management, staff, parents' association, etc.) usually begin and/or end with prayerful reflection.

- i. Prayerful reflections acknowledge the liturgical year and Gospel values.
- ii. Reflections should be challenging both educationally and spiritually and relevant to the target audience.
- iii. The trustees of the school could source material for use at meetings and assemblies.
- iv. IT, video/audio clips, symbol, ritual is used creatively.

C. THE SCHOOL IS AN AGENT OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

C1. All school planning and policy development is clearly linked to and inspired by the school's mission statement.

- i. One of the in-school management posts of responsibility involves being expert on the school's mission statement and school planning and policy.
- ii. The language and terminology of the school's mission and Catholic vision infuses school planning and policy documents and literature.
- iii. Alongside the DES school self-evaluation requirements, the school has

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

additional self-evaluation on the vision and mission of the Catholic components and characteristics of the school.

- iv. Planning and policy is reviewed regularly and if it falls short of the school's mission statement, a process of honest and fair evaluation takes place and new planning and policy is engaged.

C2. Visitors to our school experience an atmosphere that reflects the values of justice, forgiveness, integrity and respect for the needs and rights of pupils, parents and members of staff.

- i. A visitor book in the foyer of the school (designed by the children) reflects comments from visitors on their experience of the school. This is regularly reviewed and contributes to the ongoing reflection and self-evaluation of the school in light of its professed values.
- ii. Staff are given the opportunity to give honest feedback (anonymous if requested) through ballots and surveys on the atmosphere and inherent values of the school as they experience them.
- iii. The BoM visits the school annually during the school's working day and engages with the school community to provide support and positive feedback.
- iv. All staff are aware of the school's values and actively promote them in all their duties.

C3. Our pupils, in a spirit of mutual respect and trust, can approach staff and share concerns.

- i. Comment/worry box somewhere visible in the school which is followed up appropriately in confidence.
- ii. Photographs around the school of pupils sharing, talking and being listened to.
- iii. Statements clearly displayed around the school; for example, 'A problem shared is a problem halved' 'Jesus listened to the children and helped them ... we listen and help ...'
- iv. Staff attend training and in-service in the pastoral care of young children.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- v. Staff meetings/input provide regular opportunities for staff to upskill in areas such as basic counselling skills, anti-bullying skills, self-harm awareness, eating disorder awareness, suicide awareness, mental health awareness.
- vi. The principal and staff are aware of times when it is necessary to talk to parents and to refer children to their GP, CAMHS or HSE duty social worker.
- vii. Parents and pupils are made aware, in a spirit of mutual respect and trust, of the school's support structures and legal responsibility with regards to the health and surveillance of the children in their care.
- viii. A student council is supported and encouraged.
- ix. Programmes are run in the school; for example, Rainbows.

C4. The school participates in and supports justice and peace initiatives such as Trócaire's Lenten campaign.

- i. A yearly calendar is drawn up that clearly outlines initiatives which the school will support that year and members of staff take responsibility to coordinate each initiative within the resources of the school.
- ii. Initiatives in the wider community that have the same values of the school are highlighted through the school website, communication, posters in the school and school visits and supported through fundraising, etc.
- iii. The school highlights initiatives at their school assemblies and parent evenings.
- iv. Justice and peace issues are used as impetus for prayerful reflection and meditation and as a means towards greater compassion and empathy for all and help foster a closer relationship with God.

C5. Pupils receive an age-appropriate introduction to media studies as they learn to critique what they see on their TV and computer screens (e.g. how cartoons and advertisements work; the models of 'success' and 'happiness' being promoted) and are invited to reflect on the uses, influences and dangers of modern means of communication: Internet, Facebook, Twitter, mobile phones.

- i. Critical reflection is a major part of being a Christian in the school and it is taught in light of the Gospel values through parable stories both from the Bible and new contemporary parables.
- ii. Pupils are challenged to think on their own two feet through drama and role play.
- iii. Educational research is combined with Christian and spiritual insight to give pupils the best skill-based programmes on decision-making, how the brain thinks, and what brings true happiness, which encourage independent, critical reflection based on the example of the life of Jesus Christ and other great spiritual leaders.
- iv. The school website has an Internet safety information blog.
- v. The school advertises any local initiatives/courses that parents would find useful in this area.
- vi. Invite parents to an information night, sharing information from experts on internet safety and cyberbullying and the local Garda Síochána.
- vii. IT etiquette classes are organised for all pupils that are age-appropriate.
- viii. Visits to the school (all classes) from local community personnel dealing with this issue.
- ix. Competitions in the school to promote awareness.

C6. The school teaches pupils to care for creation by encouraging authentic changes in lifestyle such as 'avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices.'

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- i. All teachers, parents, pupils and staff, try to use less non-biodegradable materials (tinfoil, film, etc.) when bringing their lunch to school.
- ii. Teachers use modern technology (digital platforms/formats) whenever possible to reduce the amount of waste produced by photocopying and printing.
- iii. Pupils plant a tree, flower or shrub and learn to care for it throughout the year.
- iv. Pupils learn how to make their own compost and use it on the grounds of the school.

C7. As a Catholic school we challenge all members of the school community to live a simpler life, based on sharing the earth as our common home with all people.

- i. At school assemblies the community reflects on the importance of our responsibility to dutifully care for creation.
- ii. The school encourages members of the school community to walk or cycle to school where possible.
- iii. The school encourages teachers and staff to carpool or use public transport when possible to get to and from work.
- iv. The school provides transport, such as buses, to bring pupils to school community events that are held away from the school campus.

C8. Pope Francis teaches that a passionate concern for our world cannot be supported without 'a spirituality capable of inspiring us' . In stimulating pupils towards exercising a greater concern for our world, the school community is animated by the Church's rich spiritual heritage.

- i. Each class participates in Christian meditation such as the Maranatha.
- ii. The principal, members of BoM, teachers, students and staff reflect on the relationship between the Gospel and the founding story of the school.
- iii. Prayer is central to the daily life of the school.
- iv. Liturgical celebrations are prominent features on the school calendar.

D. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

D1. There is a policy statement in the school on religious education which includes faith formation, prayer, sacramental experiences and awareness of the stewardship of God's creation. This is stated as a developmental, year-by-year policy and integrated with relevant policy documents across other aspects of school life.

- i. The RE representative liaises with the principal, BoM, chaplain, pupils and parents to ensure the policy on RE is developed and integrated into school life.
- ii. Pupils are encouraged to keep an environmental garden and RE lessons and prayer can take place in this space.
- iii. The RE policy statement is available on the school website and in the school.
- iv. A small committee of representatives from the BoM, pupils, parents, teachers and parish could coordinate and oversee the policy in practice in the school.

D2. The religious education programme receives its allotted time for each year and the school follows the curriculum and textbooks approved by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

- i. RE is timetabled daily.
- ii. The diocesan advisor provides suitable support and training.
- iii. Teachers use the appropriate texts and pupils have a textbook as approved by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.
- iv. Teachers have an input into the programme and supplement it appropriately in response to the needs of the pupils.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

D3. The principal or the RE representative works with class groupings in planning the work for the year and this is clearly stated and communicated to parents, staff and the local parish as a basis for mutual understanding and a partnership approach.

- i. The school website is used to communicate to parents the RE content for any given year. Particular attention is given to years that include sacramental preparation.
- ii. There is an understanding among staff which is updated and shared at staff meetings of how the RE programme builds upon and incorporates the material of each successive year.
- iii. The chaplain liaises with the teachers regularly as to the content of the RE programme. This happens, for example, during the chaplain's visit to the class.
- iv. At appropriate times, parents are invited into the school for inputs by the teacher about the content of the RE programme and especially pieces of journal work that they might have an input in.

D4. The school participates in Catholic Schools Week each year and continues to utilise the resources developed for Catholic Schools Week throughout the school year.

- i. All resources for Catholic Schools Week are available via www.catholicschools.ie within the 'useful resources' section.

D5. At the beginning and end of each school day and at other specified times during the day, there is time devoted to prayer and/or reflection.

- i. Each class begins the school day with a prayer and the school day ends with a prayer.
- ii. Students are invited to write or research the class prayers at the beginning of the day or the class periods.
- iii. School assemblies begin with a prayer.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- iv. Prayers are especially tailored to the Church calendar; for example, prayers in honour of Mary during the month of May. The Angelus can also be said during the day.
- v. Prayers relevant to the needs of the school or the class are written and said.

D6. There is a developmental programme in the school on environmental and ecological education, which is inclusive of religious education, as the school promotes 'a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature' in accord with Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*.

- i. Teachers highlight links between the different parts of the curriculum in regard to ecological matters.
- ii. Class-based material on ecological issues are linked to the sacred space or area of the school used for growing and sowing.
- iii. Particular attention is given to the Gospels and parables of growth and sowing.
- iv. Emphasis is given to the concept of stewardship as evident in the story of creation in the book of Genesis.

D7. Adult members of the school community participate in opportunities for spiritual support and growth provided in partnership with the diocese and other bodies.

- i. Yearly input/in-service at the start of the year for all staff.
- ii. Optional retreat for staff members.
- iii. Library of challenging and inspirational books/DVDs/websites in the staffroom - Christian education, story of the founding order, novels and personal development, worldwide projects
- iv. Information is made available to staff on the challenges encountered by teachers working in Christian communities throughout the world.
- v. Support and spiritual guidance is available from a school chaplain.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

D8. The school makes explicit mention - in its literature, statements and oral communications at key events - that the spiritual development of pupils is a central educational aim.

- i. All staff are as proficient in speaking about the area of spiritual development as about the area of academic development, through regular in-service and information inputs by the school principal and other trained personnel.
- ii. School personnel are trained in up-to-date, relevant spiritual terminology, to make explicit the real practical advantages of spiritual development to the child, in a way that all parents will understand.
- iii. The central educational aim of the founding intention will be made explicit in all communication - this may entail a few brief sentences which situates the school in its founding origin.

E. WE ARE CALLED TO BE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

E1. The school has a mission statement clearly rooted in the mission of Christ.

- i. It is clearly displayed on the school's website, school staff handbook, homework journals and on classroom walls.
- ii. School could have a poster competition among the students to symbolise the mission statement.
- iii. Sets of age/class-appropriate RE lessons could be prepared with clear teaching on the founder of the school and the mission statement and with interesting reflective exercises for students.
- iv. The school mission statement could be read out at the parent council meeting and discussion and reflection could take place as to how the parent body could support and contribute to the mission.
- v. In-service could be provided for all staff on the meaning and significance of the mission statement.

E2. All members of the school community are cherished and valued as Christ would welcome them.

- i. There is an open atmosphere of welcome and acceptance pervading the school, which can be felt tangibly by visitors and the school community alike.
- ii. There are no factors built into school policy which would positively or negatively discriminate another individual.
- iii. All school programmes are inclusive in all aspects.
- iv. There is a proactive approach to valuing inclusivity in the school and the necessary resources are made available.
- v. The school community is strongly challenged by the values of Christ, and responds to this challenge in all its endeavours, which leads it to be an open and welcome Christian environment for all.

E3. At regular school assemblies there is ongoing reflection on the Christian way of life.

- i. Age-appropriate guided meditations could be prepared for use throughout the school year.
- ii. Christian charities could be invited to special assemblies to speak about being a Christian in action.
- iii. Past pupils who have volunteered overseas could share their experiences, or if they have work which is inspired by their faith life.
- iv. Brief IT/video clips on inspirational worldwide work of the founding order or other schools worldwide could be shown.
- v. Classes could prepare short role plays situating everyday scenarios (bullying, stealing, age-ism, etc.), and highlighting the Christian response in each case.

E4. Members of staff are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of Jesus Christ.

- i. Yearly input/in-service at the start of the year for all staff.
- ii. Optional retreat for staff members.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- iii. Library of challenging and inspirational books/DVDs/websites in the staffroom - Christian education, story of the founder, novels and personal development, worldwide projects.
- iv. Input at staff meetings on other staff working worldwide, teachers reflecting on being Christian in more difficult challenging countries.
- v. Support and spiritual guidance is available from a school chaplain.

E5. Children are introduced to and experience a variety of ways of praying, including guided reflections, periods of silence and participation in liturgy.

- i. Designated prayer room/area in the school.
- ii. Class prayer services/Masses.
- iii. Weekly reflection on Fridays - age-appropriate Examination of Conscience. ('This week how was I around my fellow class mates?') could be done over the intercom for the whole school.
- iv. Weekly or daily two minutes of silence throughout the school. (Bell rings on the intercom, silence is announced and all children and staff stop and meditate.) Students and teachers could be taught basic mindfulness skills for use during this time.
- v. Use of audio/visual clips to stimulate reflection.
- vi. Sharing of reflective ideas with other schools.

E6. The seasons of the Christian year are highlighted by appropriate and relevant spiritual celebrations to which all in the school community are invited.

- i. Visual displays throughout the public areas of the school highlighting the Christian year.
- ii. School drama productions, musical celebrations and reflective interludes.
- iii. Projects on display of the practical work being done by Christian organisations throughout the year; for example, St Vincent de Paul, Concern, Trócaire.

SECTION ONE

SCHOOL RESOURCES

- iv. Confession, Communion and Confirmation preparation and celebration – parents and students supported and challenged by a team of teachers and parents trained in sacramental preparation.

E7. There are Christian symbols (such as the crucifix, art works) in each classroom and place of gathering in the school.

- i. It would be helpful if the Christian symbols were surrounded by reflective photography of the students and parents of the school community and relevant art work; for example, statue of the Divine Mother, photographs of local women contributing to the life of the community, Crucifix, photographs of projects in the community which work to overcome hardship, local VdeP group, bereavement groups.
- ii. Opportunities to teach on the mission statement of the school, through symbol, should be availed of throughout the year.
- iii. The values particular to each founder of each school could be displayed in a powerful present-day reflective manner.

E8. Copies of the Bible are available for use in senior classes and the Bible is always treated with respect in the school community.

- i. Colouring books of the parables and Gospel stories are available for use.
- ii. A large Bible could be displayed at reception and opened daily/weekly on a different passage, highlighted for reflection. Each passage could be reworded in a simpler format for younger students and displayed alongside the original Bible passage, while art work could elucidate the point.
- iii. All children would be taught basic Bible 'etiquette' and respect for the scriptural/holy books of world religions in general.

SECTION TWO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES





BOARD OF MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Primary School: A Process Centred on Conversations

1. Respond to invitation from patron to participate in the process
2. Attend information evening to discuss the process
3. Complete 'Ethos Reflection' resource characteristics A–E
4. Choose a facilitation model for the school
5. Approve chosen characteristic submitted by the facilitation team
6. Approve chosen target submitted by the facilitation team
7. Review end of year report submitted by the facilitation team and with the facilitation team to discuss the report
8. Sign-off on end of year report, file and send a copy of end of year report to the diocesan liaison team



FACILITATION TEAM CHECKLIST

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Understanding and Living the
Ethos in a Catholic Primary School:
A Process Centred on Conversations

1. BoM agrees on a facilitation model
2. Complete 'Ethos Reflection' resource characteristics A–E
3. Review both the input of the BoM and the facilitators in the 'Ethos Reflection' resource
4. Identify one of five characteristics for the school to work on for the coming year
5. Submit the chosen characteristic to the BoM for approval

Having received BoM approval:

6. Engage with staff using the 'Ethos Reflection' resource on your chosen characteristic
7. Engage with parents using the 'Ethos Reflection' resource on your chosen characteristic
8. Engage with fifth/sixth class students using the 'Lesson Plan' on your chosen characteristic

Having engaged with school community:

9. Review the feedback from each of group on your chosen characteristic
10. Identify one target [i.e. A1, B3, etc.] from your chosen characteristic that the school will work on over the coming year
11. Submit chosen target to the BoM for approval
12. Read the concrete suggestions provided in the booklet to assist your work on your chosen target
13. Write an end of year report on your work since the start of the year
14. Submit end of year report to the BoM for review and meet with BoM



END OF YEAR ONE BoM PROCESS REPORT FORM

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Primary School: A Process Centred on Conversations

Name of school:	
Facilitation team members:	
Date of meeting with BoM:	
In the box below please indicate which targets your school intends to work on:	
TARGET	YEAR
1	
2	
3	
4	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
Chairperson BoM:	Date:

END OF YEAR TWO (AND ONWARDS) BoM
PROCESS REPORT FORM**THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP**Understanding and Living the
Ethos in a Catholic Primary School:
A Process Centred on Conversations

Name of school:	
Facilitation team members:	
Date of meeting with BoM:	
In the box below please indicate which targets your school intends to work on:	
TARGET	YEAR
1	
2	
3	
4	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
Chairperson BoM:	Date:

SECTION TWO

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

GLOSSARY

- **Church:** The worldwide body of Christians known as the community of disciples, the Body of Christ, the People of God, the Temple of the Holy Spirit.
- **Christian Spirituality:** Life in the Holy Spirit who incorporates the Christian into the Body of Jesus Christ, through whom the Christian has access to God the Father in a life of faith, hope, love, and service.
- **Creation:** The original and ongoing act of God by which reality is produced and sustained from nothingness.
- **Ecumenism:** The movement which seeks to achieve unity of Christians within the Church and ultimately of humankind throughout the 'whole wide world' (the literal meaning of the word).
- **Faith:** The gift of God by which we freely accept God's self-communication in Christ.
- **Gospel:** The 'good news' proclaimed by Jesus Christ and thereafter by the Apostles and the Church. The Gospel is interpreted and recorded in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- **Kingdom of God:** The reign, or rule, of God. It is the transforming presence of God in the heart, in groups, in the world at large, renewing and reconciling all things. It is both a process and the reality toward which the process is moving. Thus, it is 'already' and 'not yet'.
- **Intercultural:** Intercultural describes communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. Intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships. In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together.
- **Inter-religious Dialogue:** Inter-religious dialogue is best defined as intentional encounter and interaction among members of different religions as members of different religions. There is quite a variety of types of interreligious dialogue, with no overall agreement about what these types are: official or institutional dialogue between or among elites chosen by their religions as official representatives, parliamentary-style dialogue, verbal dialogue, inter-visitation, spiritual dialogue, practical dialogue, and internal dialogue.
- **Multicultural:** Multicultural refers to a society that contains several cultural or ethnic groups. People live alongside one another, but each cultural group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with each other. For example, in a multicultural neighbourhood people may frequent ethnic grocery stores and restaurants without really interacting with their neighbours from other countries.
- **Philosophy:** The intellectual discipline concerned with the ultimate meaning of reality, but without assuming responsibility (as theology does) for articulating that meaning in terms of particular religious traditions.
- **Religion:** The external, social, institutionalised expression of our faith in God.
- **Sacrament:** In general, any visible sign of God's invisible presence. Specifically, a sign through which the Church manifests and celebrates its faith and communicates the saving grace of God. In Catholic doctrine there are seven: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Marriage, Holy Order, and the Anointing of the Sick.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Sacramental:** A grace-bearing sign – for example, holy water, a crucifix – which does not so fully express the nature of the Church as a sacrament does and which, according to Catholic doctrine, does not carry the guarantee of grace associated with the seven sacraments.
- **Sacramentality (Principle of):** The fundamentally Catholic notion that all reality is potentially and in fact the bearer of God's presence and the instrument of divine action on our behalf.
- **Secularism:** A system of thought that denies the reality of the spiritual and/or supernatural order. Its belief is limited to this 'world' (*saeculum*).
- **Symbol:** A sign of some other reality. In religious usage, it is close to the meaning of sacrament (see above); i.e. a visible expression of an invisible reality. The word may also mean a creed or a basic belief, as in 'symbol of faith'.
- **Theology:** Theology may be defined as the study which, through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express the content of this faith in the clearest and most coherent language available. It is the ordered effort to understand, interpret, and systematize our experience of God and of Christian faith. It is 'faith seeking understanding' (*fides et intellectum*) – St Anselm of Canterbury.
- **Tradition:** Both the process of 'handing on' the faith and that which has been handed on. Tradition (uppercase) includes Scripture, the essential doctrines of the Church, the Eucharist and the other sacraments, and so forth. Tradition (lowercase) includes changeable customs, institutions, teachings, and practices.

SECTION TWO

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

The Catholic Schools Partnership

- Catholic Primary Schools in a Changing Ireland: Sharing Good Practice on Inclusion of All Pupils (Dublin: Veritas, 2015)
- Catholic Primary Schools Looking to the Future (Dublin: Veritas, 2012)
- Ten Frequently Asked Questions about Catholic Primary Schools (Dublin: Veritas, 2010)
- Catholic Schools in the Republic of Ireland: A Position Paper (Dublin: Veritas, 2010)

The Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools

- A Guide to Patronage and Trusteeship of Catholic Schools in Ireland (2011)

Catholic Schools Week

- All Catholic Schools Week resources from 2012 to present are available via the following link:
catholicschools.ie/resources-for-use-in-catholic-schools/

Irish Episcopal Conference

- Religious Education at the Heart of our Primary Schools: Response to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Consultation on Time and Structure in a Primary Curriculum (Dublin: Veritas, 2017)
- The Value of Religious Education in our Primary Schools: Response to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Consultation on a Curriculum in Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics (Dublin: Veritas, 2016)
- Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (Dublin: Veritas, 2015)
- Share the Good News – National Directory for Catechetics in Ireland (Dublin: Veritas, 2010)
- Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland (Dublin: Veritas, 2008)
- Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future (Dublin: Veritas, 2006)

Magesterial Documents

- Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (2014)
- Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (2013)
- Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (2007)
- The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997)
- The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal (1988)



Where can these materials be accessed?

All of the above publications are free of charge and accessible via the following link:
www.catholicschools.ie/useful-publications/

