



Catholic Schools Week 2021

Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2021 in your Parish



COMMUNITIES OF ...

FAITH

LEARNING

LOVE

RESILIENCE

HOPE



Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience

Catholic Schools Week 2021 begins on Sunday, 24 January, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time and its theme is 'Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience'. In light of the challenges and uncertainty we have collectively faced over the past year, this year we are presented with the opportunity to reflect on how our faith sustains us and how we as a community support and care for each other. In this context, we can consider ways that the parish community can honour and support the work of their Catholic school during this week-long celebration. While there are a variety of ways in which parishes can celebrate Catholic Schools Week, the following are some helpful suggestions to assist parishes with their celebrations.

Sunday, 24 January

Celebration of the Eucharist for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

The parish liturgy group will obviously be very useful in helping to prepare for this Mass. Encourage them to make Catholic Schools Week part of the annual life of the parish.

Planning Meeting

Arrange a meeting with the principals and teachers of primary and post-primary schools in the parish in the weeks prior to Catholic Schools Week to discuss how to highlight and celebrate the work of each individual Catholic school as a community of faith and resilience in the liturgy on 24 January. If your parish does not have a Catholic post-primary school, consider how you might best involve students from your parish who attend post-primary schools in neighbouring parishes. Include a member of your parish liturgy group in this meeting.

The Mass

Word of Welcome and Explanation

This might include a few words about the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2021 – 'Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience' (an explanation of the theme is available online at www.catholicschools.ie). Given the ongoing and evolving situation with COVID-19, online streaming of the Mass may be an option as guidelines on social distancing and group gatherings are subject to change. A prayer of thanksgiving for Catholic Schools Week would be appropriate at the Mass.

Loving God

As we gather today, we thank you for your presence with us.

Help us, our school community, to be places of hope, faith and resilience.

May we become more and more like your son Jesus who, by his words and actions, showed your unconditional love for all people.

May we learn to be like him, trusting in you and reaching out to those around us.

May your Holy Spirit be the source of inspiration and wisdom as we journey together in faith, hope and love.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.



Opening Procession

It may be appropriate to have an Opening Procession on this Sunday. This could include symbols that represent the distinctive identity of each Catholic school in the parish. If a display area has been set up in the church to mark Catholic Schools Week, this is the ideal place to put the symbols presented in the Opening Procession.

Music

Consider involving children/staff in the music during the liturgy. A group of children might sing the Psalm and intone the Gospel Acclamation.

Liturgy of the Word

The readings, Prayer of the Faithful, etc., for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time can be found in the December/January edition of *Intercom*. Tá siad le fáil as Gaeilge san áit céanna. There are also homily notes for this Sunday in the January edition of *The Furrow*.

As this is the parish celebration of the Sunday Eucharist it is appropriate that the usual Minister of the Word scheduled to read does so. This gives a visible sign of the Sunday Eucharist as a place where we are all nourished to go back to our communities of home and school and continue to announce the gospel. Include a Prayer of the Faithful for Catholic schools and their work. Some young people might be invited to compose and read these prayers.

Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts

Consider inviting representatives from the three communities of home, school and parish to prepare the altar table and to present the gifts of bread and wine. This will be a visible reminder of the need for all three groups to work together so that we might all witness to the gospel values that we profess as members of the Church.

Hospitality

This would be a good time to offer hospitality after Mass. Perhaps the Parents Association, Parish Council and other local groups would come together to coordinate this. Again, with COVID-19 guidelines, this may not be possible in large numbers.

Prayer for Grandparents on Wednesday

As it is likely that grandparents may watch Mass being streamed on the internet during Catholic Schools Week, it would be appropriate to offer a prayer for all grandparents, cherishing their contribution to the lives of their grandchildren. Pope Benedict XVI offered this prayer for grandparents:

Lord Jesus,
you were born of the Virgin Mary,
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.
Look with love on grandparents the world over.
Protect them! They are a source of enrichment
for families, for the Church and for all of society.
Support them! As they grow older,
may they continue to be for their families
strong pillars of gospel faith,
guardian of noble domestic ideals,
living treasuries of sound religious traditions.
Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,
that they may pass on to future generations the fruits
of their mature human and spiritual experience.
Amen.



Parish Newsletter

Ensure that Catholic Schools Week is brought to the attention of the wider community by placing a note in the parish newsletter. Include specific public activities planned in your parish. Sample text might read as follows:

Sunday, 24 January, marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2021. During this week we aim to celebrate the unique contribution that Catholic schools, both primary and post-primary, make to supporting each other and living out Jesus' message of the gospel. This year's theme is 'Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience'. Our parish is joining in the celebrations by ...

Pupils from the parish schools might distribute the newsletter at Mass.

Display Area

Consider working with the school to create a display showing the unique work and identity of each parish school.

The Pastoral Council

Bring Catholic Schools Week to the attention of the Pastoral Council and ask them how the parish might best celebrate it this year. Consider using the extract 'Catholic Schools: Building Community' from *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis* to enable a discussion about the role of Catholic schools and how they might be better supported by the faith community.

Where applicable, the chaplain might take the opportunity this week to visit as many classrooms as possible. The Catholic Schools Week resource will help you to find a focus for your visit as it offers a theme for each day's work.

