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Resources

It is our hope that you find the material included in this year's resource pack helpful as you celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2013. Copies of this resource are available to download *as Gaeilge* on www.catholicbishops.ie. Some elements of the resources have also been translated into Polish and are available on the website.

This resource pack has been prepared by Mícheál Kilcrann, Elaine Mahon, Maeve Mahon, Hazel O'Connor and Fr John Paul Sheridan in consultation with the Steering Committee for Catholic Schools Week 2013.



Welcome

The theme of Catholic Schools Week this year brings two important realities together. The first is the community of faith and the second is sharing the good news.

Share the Good News is the title of Ireland's national directory for catechesis. It is a guide for the journey of faith from early childhood to mature adulthood. It is full of images, stories and plans for how all of us can share the good news in the various communities of faith of which we are a part. You should dip into it sometime, not least into the sections that deal with schools during this week.

There are many communities of faith. The family home is the most important community of all, where the seed of faith is first sown. In the school community, this seed is nurtured and grows but in teenage years it is also challenged and can be subjected to caricature and ridicule. During adult years people often feel inadequate in expressing their faith in a society that leaves little space for God. So it is that we all need a community of faith that is bigger than home or school. For most of us this will be the parish.

When a parish is working well it is truly a remarkable witness to faith. The parish is defined by geography but it lives by faith: from the celebration of Mass to all of the other sacraments; from the welcome given at baptism to the support of the bereaved; from the unseen, voluntary labour to the care of those in need; from praying every day to working for justice; from a sense of local life to being part of a universal church.

The Catholic Church worldwide is celebrating a Year of Faith. During Catholic Schools Week 2013 we are asking parishes and schools to reach out to each other in a spirit of faith. Over the past few years many parishes and schools have celebrated this week together. But some have not. In particular, I ask parishes that haven't participated in Catholic Schools Week in previous years to do so this year.

The good news is that the seed of faith has been sown in our lives. Jesus revealed much about the reign of God through the parables that he told. Amongst the most important are those that speak of a sower sowing seed. Some seeds fell in thorns and were choked. Some fell in a drain and were drowned. Some fell in shallow earth and perished. And some fell in rich soil and yielded thirty, sixty, even a hundred fold. People often read these parables in a moralistic way – making judgments about the quality of people. But the true meaning of these parables is that the Word of God will not be frustrated by anything human: while many seeds may not bear fruit, the true seed of the Word of God will yield a rich harvest in unexpected ways in our personal lives, in our families, in our parishes, and, yes, in our schools. The task of Christian faith is not to bemoan all that is wrong with us and our lives, but to have the eyes to see that even in the midst of a sad and difficult world the seed of God's Word is bearing fruit in ways that we could never have imagined.

Let's celebrate the good news of our Christian faith during this week in the communities that are our homes, our schools and our parishes. You will find many useful suggestions in this booklet to help you.

Michael Drumm
Chairperson
Catholic Schools Partnership

Catholic Schools Week 2013 Planning Meeting

A staff meeting in early January will help to ensure that Catholic Schools Week is celebrated well in the school. The following might form the agenda for such a meeting.

1. The Theme

Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News

A brief explanation of the theme can be found on page 11.

2. The Parish

Suggestions for parish involvement can be found on pages 8–10.

3. The Classroom

There are classroom activities for each day of Catholic Schools Week 2013. These can be found on pages 12–30.

4. Grandparents' Day, 30 January

This year's theme acknowledges the community of faith in which the Catholic school is rooted. It draws our attention to the interconnectedness between these faith communities and reminds us that the school is in essence an extension of both the domestic and local church. Grandparents are an integral part of all of these communities and play an ever more important role in handing on both knowledge and experience of faith to children, who are the key stakeholders in our Catholic schools. The invitation to grandparents to visit the school during Catholic Schools Week affirms and values their place not only in the life of their grandchildren but in society itself. This event has quickly become the highlight of Catholic Schools Week for a significant number of schools. The resources for Grandparents' Day are on page 20.



Invitation: Having looked at the Prayer Service on page 21 you might consider asking some grandparents to be prepared to make a contribution about their own faith story when they come to school on Grandparents' Day.



5. The School Environment

How will those who visit your school during Catholic Schools Week know that something special is happening? This is an opportunity to identify areas of the school where sacred spaces, religious images and display boards might be updated, enhanced or added in preparation for the celebrations.

Sacred Space

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated during Ordinary Time, so use a green cloth as the basis for your sacred space. (Green is the liturgical colour for Ordinary Time.) You can also place the following objects in the sacred space:

- A candle
- A Bible. Use a stand to highlight the importance of the Sacred Scripture
- Cross or crucifix
- Holy water
- A framed copy of your school's Ethos Statement or the Catholic School Schedule
- Your school motto or crest
- A picture of your school's patron saint or founder
- A Brigid's cross and flowers. These can be added to the sacred space on Friday, signifying the traditional beginning of springtime on St Brigid's Day.

Poster

Included in this resource book is an A2-sized poster. The poster can be placed in the school sacred space. Activity sheets from the daily resource page in this book or other examples of children's work from Catholic Schools Week can be placed around the poster to create a colourful display.

6. Parents

Parents are the first of teachers in the ways of faith and they depend on the school community to continue to nourish their child's faith. It is important to involve parents in the activities of Catholic Schools Week where at all possible. There is a resource to be photocopied and sent home on page 6. Consider how best to distribute this to parents.

7. Staff and Board Meetings

Resources for staff and board meetings can be found on page 5. These resources are for consideration and reflection at staff and Board of Management/Governor meetings during the coming year. Encourage members of the Board of Management/Governors and Parent Association/Council to be present at all events planned for Catholic Schools Week 2013.



Key Characteristics of the Catholic School

We are Called to be Followers of Christ

The vision that underpins all aspects of school life is that the human person is made in the image of God and is called to share in God's own life forever. All 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.

We have a Catholic Understanding of Education

The school values a broad curriculum and co-curricular activities in order to foster a deeper sense of the whole person. Staff and pupils seek excellence, including academic achievement, in the context of a broad Christian philosophy of education. The school seeks to nourish the mind, body and soul 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 instill an attitude of respect for the good of the other.

The School is a Christian 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.

The School is an Agent of Personal Growth and 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.

Religious Education is an Integral Part of the Life of this School

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.

Taken from: 'A Process for Understanding and Taking Ownership of the Characteristic Spirit in a Catholic School' (Catholic Schools Partnership, 2012)

A Resource for Staff and Board Meetings

Begin by praying this prayer, which was said before every session of the Second Vatican Council:

We stand before you, Holy Spirit,
conscious of our sinfulness,
but aware that we gather in your name.

Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts.

Give us light and strength to know your will,
to make it our own,
and to live it in our lives.

Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your power,
for you are God, sharing the glory of Father and Son.

You desire justice for all:
enable us to uphold the rights of others;
do not allow us to be misled by ignorance
or corrupted by fear or favour.

Unite us to yourself in the bond of love
and keep us faithful to all that is true.

As we gather in your name
may we temper justice with love,
so that all our decisions may be pleasing to you,
and earn the reward promised to
good and faithful servants.

You live and reign with the Father and the Son,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen

Read:

Key Characteristics of the Catholic School, on page 4.

Discuss:

How well each of the characteristics is reflected in your school

Consider:

Beginning the process of understanding, supporting and taking ownership of the characteristic spirit of the Catholic School as outlined by the Catholic Schools Partnership. More information about this process on www.catholicschools.ie or on pages 33–41 of the CPSMA Member's Handbook

Over the coming months

Review:

How your school community lives up to its Catholic ethos under some of the following headings:

- Ethos Statement
- Mission Statement
- Connection with local parish
- RE Policy
- Pastoral Care
- SPHE and RSE Policy
- Provision for liturgy and reflective space
- In-service in these areas
- Parents Council

(Taken from *Share the Good News*, p. 145)



Catholic Schools Week 2013 at Home

Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News

Dear Parent(s),

This is the fifth year of celebrating the wonderful contribution that Catholic schools make, not only to their local communities, but to Irish society as a whole. This year's theme acknowledges the faith community in which the Catholic school is rooted. It draws our attention to the interconnectedness between these faith communities and reminds us that the school is really an extension of both the church at home and the local parish church. This year has been declared a Year of Faith by Pope Benedict XVI. The year began on October 11 2012, and will end on November 24 2013. During this year we are all being asked to pray, deepen our understanding of our own faith, give witness by the way we live, and serve those who are in need. Catholic Schools Week 2013 offers us an opportunity to think about how we can do these things within our family, which is the most important place where children learn about and experience their faith.

Share the Good News

One of the most important things that parents can teach their children is that God loves them always. Read these words from the prophet Isaiah with your child to remind us all how much we are loved by God:



> Think About

How we know that God loves us.
What we can be thankful to God for.



How can we Share the Good News at Home?

We can do this in so many ways every day. We share the good news when we live like Jesus asks us to; when we are kind, loving and patient; when we pray together; when we go to Mass; when we give our time or our money to help those who are not as lucky as we are; when we use our talents well; when we do our work to the best of our ability ... The list is endless! Think of something that you could do each day this week to share the good news. You can draw a picture or write a sentence .

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Preparing to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week in the Parish

Catholic Schools Week 2013 begins on Sunday, January 27, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. The theme for this year, **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**, reminds us that we are celebrating a Year of Faith and invites us to engage more fully, in our parish communities, with the resource that is the National Directory for Catechetics, Share the Good News. Perhaps even more significantly, it also seeks to situate and root the school firmly in the wider community of faith, in an effort to encourage and challenge us to be more aware of our responsibility towards our Catholic Schools as just one place within that community where the faith of children is nurtured, deepened and challenged.

Tús Maith Leath na Hoibre

This is the fifth celebration of Catholic Schools Week on the island of Ireland. Each year we have endeavoured to broaden and deepen the celebration of the immense contribution that our schools make to parish communities and to society in general. Diocesan, parish and school communities across the country have entered into the spirit of the week with great enthusiasm and creativity. This year it is even more important that parishes take a leadership role in ensuring that Catholic Schools Week gets off to great start and that they make it abundantly clear that our schools are firmly and indelibly rooted in the parish community in which they are situated. *This will probably be best done by situating the formal beginning of Catholic Schools Week in one of the Sunday Masses on 27 January.* In order to help you and your parish liturgy group prepare for this celebration it is suggested that a planning meeting take place with school principals, teachers and other key people. The following may offer some structure and support for that meeting:

Planning Meeting

Opening Prayer: Consider using the prayer on page 5 which was used at every session of the Second Vatican Council.

Theme:

Take some time to discuss the theme for Catholic Schools Week 2013. Some of the following questions might help:

- How are our parish schools rooted in the faith community?
- How has and does the parish community support the schools?
- How do the schools contribute to and support the parish community?
- How could we in this parish best represent the relationship between the parish community and the schools and vice versa? Display in the church, parish hall, local library? Reflection at Mass? Gathering in parish hall or school during Catholic Schools Week?
- Is there something that could be presented to the schools in our parish as a gift at the Opening of Catholic Schools Week Mass? For example, a candle or similar object for the sacred space in the School entrance area; Bibles for one of the classrooms; an image of a patron saint of the parish or school; a copy of *Share the Good News* for the staffroom?



Mass on the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

Resources for the celebration of Mass on the Third Sunday Ordinary Time can be found in the December/January edition of Intercom. Tá siad le fáil san áit céanna as gaeilge. There are also homily notes for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time in the January edition of The Furrow.

Opening Procession

It may be appropriate to have an Opening Procession on this Sunday that includes some symbols that represent the reciprocal relationship between the parish and school.

One of the community nominees on the Board of Management or Governors might represent the connection between the parish community and the school. 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 brought in the Opening Procession. If the parish has a special candle for the Year of Faith this might be carried in procession and lit by a member of the school and parish community together on this Sunday.

Opening Remarks

Using the resource on page 11, a member of the community might say some words of welcome and briefly explain Catholic Schools Week 2013

Music

Consider involving children/staff in the music.

Liturgy of the Word

As this is the parish celebration of the Sunday Eucharist it is appropriate that the 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 share the good news.

Some of the children might sing the psalm and Alleluia.

Encourage the children preparing for Confirmation to write and read a Prayer of the Faithful for inclusion on this Sunday.

Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts

A family group can be invited to prepare the altar table and to present the gifts of bread and wine.

Communion Reflection

A suitable reflection can be read at this time; or if the parish is going to make a presentation to the school, this would be a good time to do so. Alternatively a group of children might lead a reflection.

Hospitality

This would be a good time to offer hospitality after Mass. Perhaps the Parents Association and other local groups would come together to coordinate this.



Other Opportunities for Highlighting and Celebrating Catholic Schools Week in the Parish

Catholic Schools Week Flyer

A flyer to further explain Catholic Schools Week 2013 is available for download at www.catholicbishops.ie. This could be downloaded and distributed by parishes at the Mass to celebrate the beginning of Catholic Schools Week. Pupils from the parish schools might distribute the flyer before and after Mass.

Parish Newsletter

Ensure that Catholic Schools Week is brought to the attention of the wider community by placing a note in the parish newsletter in the weeks before Catholic Schools Week 2013. Include specific public activities planned in your parish. Sample text might read as follows:

*Catholic Schools Week 2013 begins on Sunday, 27 January. This is the fifth year of celebrating the immense contribution that Catholic schools make to our local parish communities and to Irish society in general. This year's theme is **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**. Our parish is joining in the celebrations by ...*

The Pastoral Council

Consider giving space to input, discussion and reflection on some of the issues raised on pages 130–48 of *Share the Good News* at your Pastoral Council Meeting around this time.

The Chaplain

- Take the opportunity to visit as many classrooms as possible and participate in any of the activities that the school has planned for this week. The resources contained in this book will help you to find a focus for your visit as there is a theme offered for each day's work.
- Encourage schools to participate in **Grandparents' Day** on 30 January. This will be particularly important this year given the theme.
- Visit the staffroom this week. You might even bring a cake or a box of biscuits!





Theme for Catholic Schools Weeks 2013

The theme, **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**, reminds us that this year we are celebrating a Year of Faith and invites us to engage more fully, within all our faith communities, with the resource that is **Share the Good News**: The National Directory for Catechetics. Perhaps even more significantly, it also seeks to situate and root the school firmly in the wider community of faith in an effort to encourage and challenge us to be more aware of our responsibility towards our Catholic Schools as just one place within that community where the faith of children is nurtured, deepened and challenged.

The Year of Faith, declared by Pope Benedict XVI, is an opportunity for Catholic schools to recommit themselves to strengthening and celebrating their Catholic identity. The Year of Faith began on 11 October 2012, a date of much significance in the Catholic Church. It marks the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Year of Faith will end on 24 November 2013, the Feast of Christ the King. This time will provide Catholics locally and throughout the world an opportunity to celebrate, deepen and share the richness of their Catholic faith. During this year we are all called and challenged to pray, deepen our understanding of our own faith, bear witness to our faith in the way we live our lives, and serve those who are in need in our communities and in the world.



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013

Share the Good News: The National Directory for Catechetics offers much material for reflection for all who seek to strengthen and nourish their understanding of faith. It affirms and acknowledges the local Catholic school as 'a constitutive part of the parish' which, 'contributes generously to the children's faith development' (*Share the Good News*, #91, p. 131).

During this week Catholic schools are invited to celebrate and experience the joy and happiness of being an important part of a developing, loving and caring community. **Share the Good News** characterises the ultimate aim of Catholic education as 'the full growth of the individual, a fully alive person for self and for others in communion with Christ' (*Share the Good News*, #28, p. 44).

In Catholic schools pupils are encouraged to grow in communion with Christ and with each other. The theme of Catholic Schools Week 2013 acknowledges that it cannot and indeed must not seek to do this alone, but with the help of the faith communities in which it is firmly rooted: the local parish community of faith and the domestic faith community that is the home. In essence, the Catholic school is an extension of these two communities.

This week, school communities are encouraged to take the opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for the work that they already do to fulfill the challenge of the Year of Faith; to pray, deepen our understanding of our own faith, bear witness to our faith in the way we live our lives and serve those who are in need in our communities and in the world. They are also invited to consider how they can extend and deepen their work in these areas. The communities of faith on which our schools depend for support and nourishment are encouraged to reflect on how best they can continue to strengthen, affirm and acknowledge the wonderful gift that Catholic Schools are to the local and domestic church.

Monday: We Share the Good News in our Parish Community

Assembly to begin Catholic Schools Week

You will need:

A Sacred Space containing:

- Bible; Candle; Rosary Beads; Trócaire Box, Children Helping Children Globe or some other object that represents giving for your school; Alive-O Book, Bread and Grapes

- 6 children each from 3rd and 5th class to present and comment on the objects
- 6 Children to read the Prayer of Intercessions

Think about:

- Inviting your priest to be present
- Adding music to the prayer time

Leader: Good morning everyone, and welcome to our assembly, which marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week in our school, our parish and our homes. We begin our prayer together by marking ourselves with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Did you know that there are more than 2,800 Catholic schools in Ireland? This week we are taking the time to celebrate the work that schools just like ours do to help us all to be the kind of people that Jesus calls us to be. The theme of Catholic Schools Week this year is **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**. We all know what a community is. This school is a community and we all live in a community. I wonder what makes a community of faith different? I think we can see things in our Sacred Space this morning that help us understand what makes a community of faith different. Let's ask some of the people from third and fifth class to help us.

Note: *The children should remain standing so that all six symbols can be seen together at the end.*

Child 1:

Takes a Bible from the Sacred Space and holds it up so everyone can see.

Child 2:

A community of faith listens to the Word of God.

Child 3:

Takes a candle from the Sacred Space and holds it up so everyone can see.

Child 4: A community of faith keeps the light of faith burning.

Child 5:

Takes a pair of rosary beads from the Sacred Space and holds them up so everyone can see.

Child 6:

A community of faith prays together

Child 7:

Takes a Trócaire Box, Children Helping Children Globe or some other object that represents giving for your school from the Sacred Space and holds it up so everyone can see.

Child 8:

A community of faith gives to those in need.

Child 9:

Takes an Alive-O book from the Sacred Space and holds it up so everyone can see.

Child 10:

A community of faith is always learning more about how God wants us to live and be in the world

Child 11:

Takes bread and grapes from the Sacred Space and holds them up so everyone can see.

Child 12:

A community of faith believes that when we gather together to celebrate Mass that the bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Jesus Christ.



Leader: Let us take a moment to look carefully at each of the things that the children are holding. Each one of these helps us to understand what makes a community of faith different. They also help us to share the good news. We are a community of faith in this school. We do all the things that the children spoke about. We share the good news every day in our school. But we are also part of another community of faith, one that is bigger than the school. We live in this community; we go to Mass in this community. Can anyone guess what it is called? It is the parish. Our parish is a community of faith and we want to give thanks for our parish today.

If your priest is present you might acknowledge him at this point with the following or similar words:

We especially want to give thanks for our priest who leads and serves our parish. Together we are going to pray for one another, for our parish and for the world.

Children can place objects back in the Sacred Space and return to their seats.

Prayers of Intercession:

The response is, 'Lord, graciously hear us'.

Reader 1:

We pray for our parents who helped us to become members of the community of faith when they brought us to be baptised. Lord hear us.

Reader 2:

We pray for our teachers and all who work in our school that they will continue to help us to understand what a community of faith is by their actions and their words. Lord hear us.

Reader 3:

We pray for our priests, parish sisters and parish workers and all who make up the parish faith community that we will all work together to share the good news and build up our church. Lord hear us.

Reader 4:

We pray for those who are worried, sick or who have not enough to eat that the community of faith will always do their best to support and help them in their time of need. Lord hear us.

Reader 5:

We pray for all the children in our school, and in schools all over Ireland, that we will share the good news with all we meet this week and always. Lord hear us.

Reader 6:

We pray for Pope Benedict, for our bishop [insert name] for all priests and for all who work to share the good news in our world. May they always have the courage to be the people that Jesus calls them to be. Lord hear us.

Let us now pray the prayer that Jesus taught us

Our Father ...

Leader:

Loving God,
we know that you are always with us.
Give us the strength and the courage
to bring your good news to our schools,
homes and parish
this week and always.
Help us as we try to be the kind of people
you call us to be.
May we keep the light of faith
burning brightly in our communities
today and from now on.
Amen

If the priest is present you might ask him to give a blessing at this time. Otherwise conclude:

We end our prayer time as we began by marking ourselves with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

For the Teacher:

There are activities for Junior and Senior classes today. You might like to invite your priest or pastoral worker in to talk about the parish, particularly to the senior classes. There is some basic information needed by the senior classes to complete the activity on this page but the activity could also be extended to include pictures, statistics and a more detailed project on the parish. Answering the question: 'How do we share the good news in our parish?' will also require some discussion around Mass, parish groups, Eucharistic Adoration, charity events or organisations etc.

For Junior classes there is a picture to colour on the next page. This is also an opportunity to perhaps visit the church, find out the names of the priests, people who work in the parish and the saint associated with the parish.



About Our Parish

Name: _____

Saint: _____

Priest/s: _____

Church/es: _____

Schools: _____

What I know
about my parish: _____

What I like best
about my parish: _____

How we share
the good news
in our parish: _____

WE SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WHEN WE GO TO MASS



MONDAY

Our priest is called _____

Tuesday: We Share the Good News in Our Diocesan Community

For the teacher: Today we broaden the idea of 'church' beyond the parish to the diocese to which the children belong. Junior classes can do the activity on page 17, while senior classes will be able for the more advanced activities on pages 18 and 19. www.catholicbishops.ie/dioceses has a diocesan map of Ireland which will help with the activity on page 18.

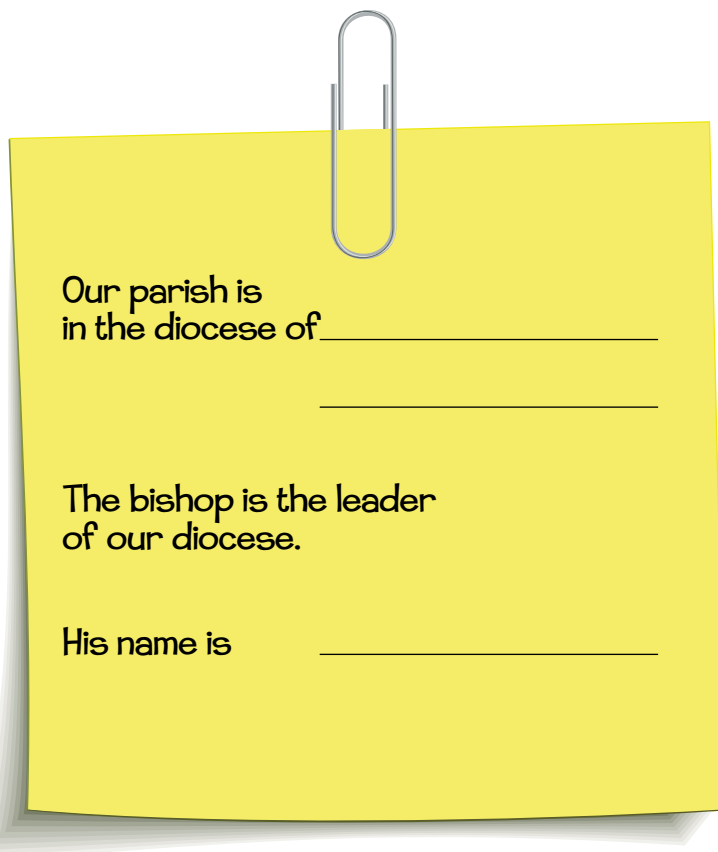
The head of a diocese is a **bishop** or **archbishop**, who is appointed by the Pope. The bishops are the successors to the Twelve Apostles. The bishop has a particular church in the diocese called a **cathedral**. The word comes from the Latin word *cathedra*, which means 'chair'. The chair symbolises that fact that a bishop is the principal teacher of the good news in the diocese.

The bishop wears a **mitre**, which is a very old type of headdress, and when he is celebrating Mass he usually carries a **crozier**, which looks very like a shepherd's crook. This symbolises that the bishop is the 'shepherd' of the diocese. After the resurrection, Jesus commanded St Peter to 'Feed my lambs' and 'Look after my sheep' (John 21: 15-18). The bishop still follows this command of Jesus. Two particular ways that he does this is in the celebration of the **Chrism Mass** during Holy Week every year and the celebration of the **Sacrament of Confirmation**. During the Chrism Mass the bishop blesses and consecrates the oils used in the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, the anointing of the sick and ordination.

Ireland is divided into **four ecclesiastical provinces** – Armagh, Dublin, Cashel and Tuam. They are loosely related to Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connaught. In each of the ecclesiastical provinces there is an **archdiocese** and a number of dioceses. There are 26 dioceses in Ireland, which are divided as follows:



Province of Armagh Archdiocese of Armagh Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise Diocese of Clogher Diocese of Derry Diocese of Kilmore Diocese of Meath Diocese of Raphoe Diocese of Down and Connor Diocese of Dromore	Province of Dublin Archdiocese of Dublin Diocese of Ferns Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin Diocese of Ossory
Province of Cashel Archdiocese of Cashel and Emlý Diocese of Cloyne Diocese of Cork and Ross Diocese of Kerry Diocese of Killaloe Diocese of Limerick Diocese of Waterford and Lismore	Province of Tuam Archdiocese of Tuam Diocese of Achonry Diocese of Clonfert Diocese of Elphin Diocese of Galway and Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora Diocese of Killala

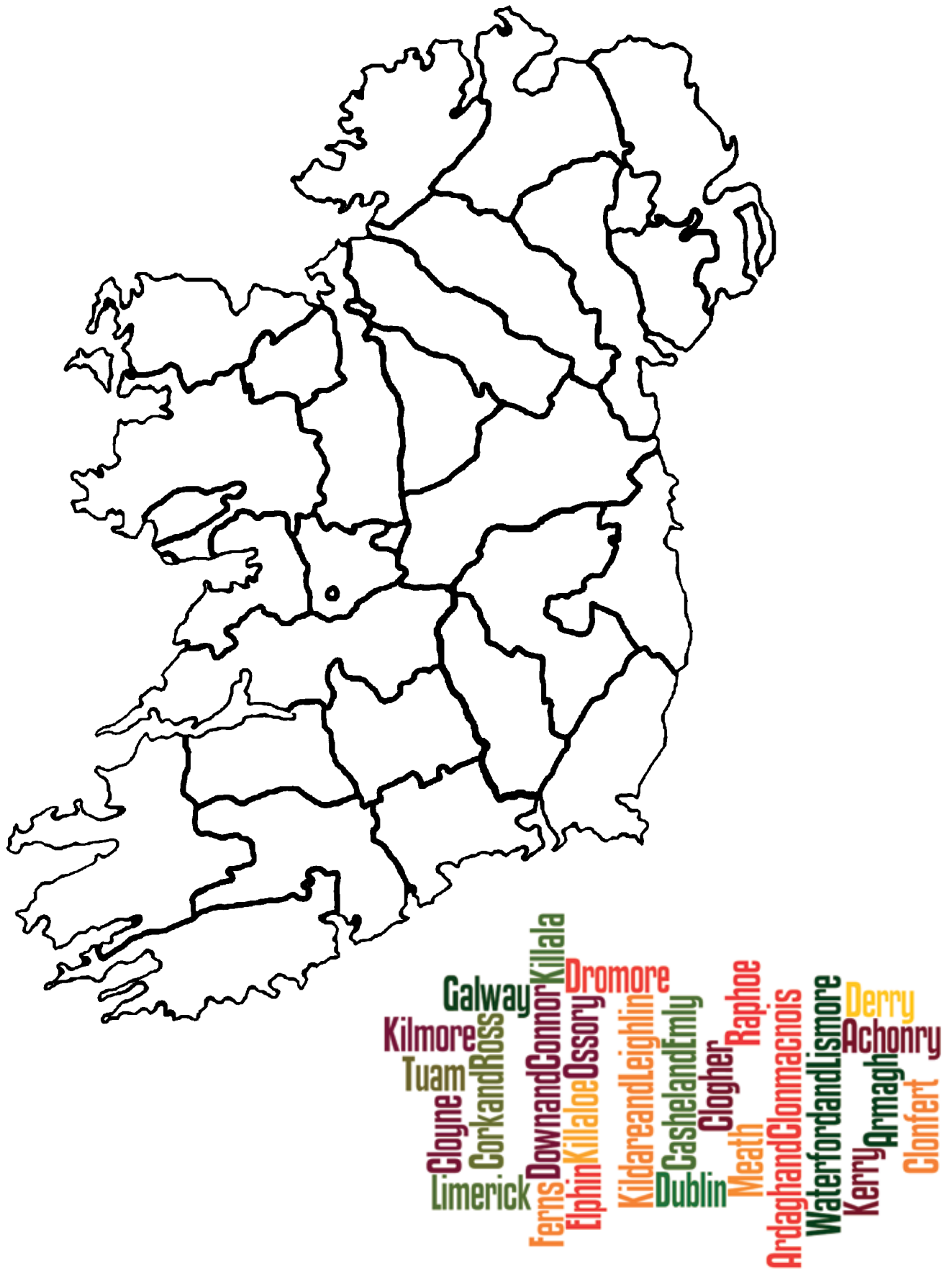


Our parish is
in the diocese of _____

The bishop is the leader
of our diocese.

His name is _____

Write the name of each diocese in the correct place on the map





Our Diocese

Name: _____

The Patron
Saint(s): _____

Our bishop: _____

Our cathedral
is called: _____

It is in: _____

Our parish: _____

Some of the agencies and organisations in our diocese that help share
the good news are:

A Prayer for Our Diocese

God our loving Father

We are your people, the sheep of your flock.

Keep our diocese of _____ always in your care.

May we all contribute in our own way

to building up your kingdom as we share the Good News

and live as Jesus asked us.

May we be guided by wise leaders and generous ministers

and may we live in harmony and peace with one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Wednesday: Grandparents' Day – We Share the Good News at Home

For the teacher: For the last few years we have designated the Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week as the day for the school community to celebrate and pay tribute to grandparents and the role they play in handing on the faith to their grandchildren and in supporting the community of faith at home and in the parish. You can use some of the ideas below and/or the prayer service on pages 21 to 23 to celebrate Grandparents' Day in your school.

Write a Poem, Prayer or Story

National Grandparents' Day in Ireland is celebrated in September every year. More details can be found at www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.com. The people who organise this event would very much like to receive prayers/poems about grandparents to include in their celebration. You might like to spend some time today inviting the children to write a story, poem or prayer about their grandparents. These will be brought to the altar during Mass at Knock Shrine during the Grandparents' Day celebration next September.

*Stories, Prayers and poems can be posted to Catholic Grandparents Association, The Mall, Castlebar Street, Westport, Co. Mayo.
(Tel: 098- 24877)*

A Special Kind of Love

There's a special kind of love that grandchildren have for their grandparents. It's filled with respect for their wisdom and accomplishments. With gratitude for the and the values they've given us, with delight in the stories of our family that they remember and share. It's a special kind of love that's built on a lifetime of caring and giving. It's the kind of love that's felt for you my dear grandparent today and always.

*Courtesy of the Grandparents Association,
Westport, Co. Mayo*

Good News Card

Make cards containing the words:

'Thank you for being and sharing the Good News for our family'

These can be taken home to grandparents or posted if they are living elsewhere.



Prayer Service to Celebrate Grandparents' Day

This short prayer service can be adapted to suit the needs of your class/school community. It can also be adapted to be prayed even if you are not inviting the grandparents in on the day. You may like to involve as many of the grandparents as you can by inviting them to read various parts.

Leader:

We begin our time of prayer together by marking ourselves with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As we light our candle this morning we remind ourselves that our friend Jesus is always with us in everything we do.

This morning we give thanks for the great gift of our grandparents and we begin by welcoming them in song

🎵 *Céad Mile Fáilte Romhat, Alive-O 3, p. 297*

Leader:

This morning we want to give a very warm welcome to all the grandparents who have joined us here. For some of you, it's your very first visit to our school and for others you are very much a part of our school community as we see you each time you come to collect your grandchild/grandchildren. We also take a moment to remember the grandparents who cannot be with us; those who could not travel; those who live far away; those who are sick; either at home or in hospital; and those who are with God in heaven. They are all in our thoughts wherever they are this morning.

Now, let us listen to the Word of God:

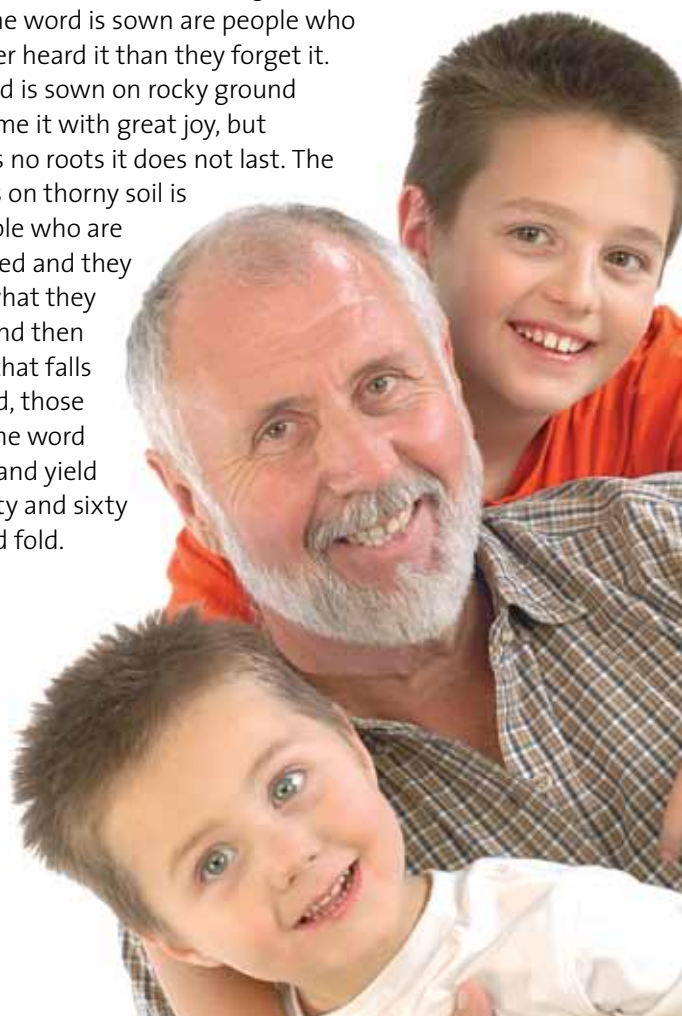
Adapted from Mark 4:1-20

Reader 1: One day Jesus told this story:

'Listen!, Imagine a sower going out to sow. Some of the seed fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground. There was a little soil so it grew straight away. But as soon as the sun came out it withered because it had no roots. Some seed fell into thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it produced no crop. And some seeds fell into rich soil. They grew tall and strong and produced a great crop. And he said, 'Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!'

Reader 2: Later, his friends asked Jesus what the story meant.

He said to them, 'The seed that the sower is sowing is the word. Those on the edge of the path where the word is sown are people who have no sooner heard it than they forget it. When the seed is sown on rocky ground people welcome it with great joy, but because it has no roots it does not last. The seed that falls on thorny soil is heard by people who are easily distracted and they soon forget what they have heard. And then there is seed that falls on rich ground, those people hear the word and accept it and yield a harvest thirty and sixty and a hundred fold.



Leader:

The story we have just heard is one of the many parables that Jesus told. I think it is a great story for us today. The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2013 is **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**. Today's parable is about sharing the good news too and with us today we have a lot of people who helped plant the kind of seeds that Jesus wanted us to sow. Who do you think they are? Yes, they are your grandparents. Your grandparents planted the seeds of faith in your parents when they were baptised and they helped those seeds to grow. They made sure that the seeds fell into the good ground. They did this by praying with them, bringing them to Mass, teaching them about Jesus and showing them how Jesus wanted them to live. Then your parents continued the work of planting seeds when they brought you to be baptised.

They remembered what their parents, your grandparents, did for them and they did it for you. But they have help, because your grandparents help them to water the seeds that were sown in you. They teach you prayers, show you how to be, the kind of person Jesus wants you to be, and do all kinds of things to help you grow in faith. They are really sharing the good news and we are all very lucky to have them in our lives. I think we should give them a big clap to show how glad we are that they choose to share the good news with you.

At this point you might like to ask one or two of the grandparents present to share their memories of their faith – how it was nurtured, what their faith means to them or how they think they share the good news with their grandchildren.

Leader:

We thank our very special guests for **sharing the good news and for being the good news in our school community**.

Now, let us bring our prayers before Jesus our friend: Lord graciously hear us.

1. We pray for all those here present, our teachers, the school staff and members of our family. We give thanks to Jesus for the good news that they share with us. **Lord hear us.**
2. We pray for our parents and grandparents who love us, care for us, and share the good news with us. We ask you to care for and protect them for us. **Lord hear us.**
3. We give thanks for the teachers in our school. Give them the gifts they need to teach us each day. Bless them with the gifts of your love, your patience, and your understanding in their work so that they may share the good news always. **Lord hear us.**





4. Bless all children everywhere, those here in our school, in our families and across the world. We also remember children today less fortunate than us who have no school at all to attend. May all children learn to share the love of Jesus, and his Good News with one another.

Lord hear us.

5. We remember those of our grandparents who are sadly no longer with us. We ask Jesus to bless them, as they live forever with the saints in your heavenly kingdom. **Lord hear us.**

Leader:

We place all our prayers spoken aloud or in the silence of our hearts before our Loving God as we pray:

Our Father/Ár n-Athair

Leader:

As we come to the end of our celebration this morning we will pray our final blessing together.

Invite those present to repeat each line as it is spoken by the Leader.

Bless us this morning, dear Jesus, bless young and old.

Bless all those who are no longer with us, or in faraway places.

Bless our friends, who have come to join us here in Ireland.

Bless their families who are far away this morning.

Bless our grandparents with love and good health.

Bless us with your love to share with our families, our friends, and with all in our school.

Bless us always to share the good news of our friend Jesus. Amen.

Suggested closing hymn:

- ♪ 'Circle of Friends', *Alive-O* 4, page 27
- 'Together Again', *Alive-O* 3, page 10
- 'Gather Round', *Alive-O* 6, page 12



Thursday: We Share the Good News in Our School Community

School is a place where the Good News of Jesus can be heard. Many people in our school help us to hear and understand the Good News of Jesus. These people help us to understand the Good News of Jesus by the things they do for us and the care they give us.

Senior Classes: Write your good news story below and share it with your class or display it for your school community to see.

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

My Good News Story

[illegible]




Junior Classes: Take it in turns to share a piece of good news you have with your class. Draw a picture of your good news story.

Draw the people in your school who help you to hear the good news of Jesus:

We Hear the Good News So We Share the Good News!

Make a list of 5 ways we can share the good news of Jesus in our school community by what we say and do. Use these key words to help you:



Help; Care; Love; Share;
Give; Kind; Good; Pray.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Pray Together:

Dear Lord,
We thank you for our teachers and all those in our school community who share with us the good news of Jesus. Help us to listen to the good news and bring it alive in our school in all we do and say. Help our school to be a place where the message of Jesus will always be heard and lived out.
Amen.



Friday: St Brigid Teaches Us to Share the Good News

For the teacher: All this week, we have been considering how to spread the Good News in our communities of faith. Today, on the Feast of St Brigid, we look to her as a model who spread the faith long ago, and we seek to imitate her in our own place and time. Today's resources also include a prayer service to conclude Catholic Schools Week.

According to tradition, St Brigid was born in the middle of the fifth century in County Louth. From the time she was a little girl, Brigid was very generous and kind to people who were poor, because she understood that God has a special love for them. In this story, we hear about how Brigid gave away the only thing she had to a woman who needed it.

Saint Brigid and the Butter

Like all saints, Brigid was a very good and kind person. She was especially kind and good to poor people because she understood that God has a special love for them too.

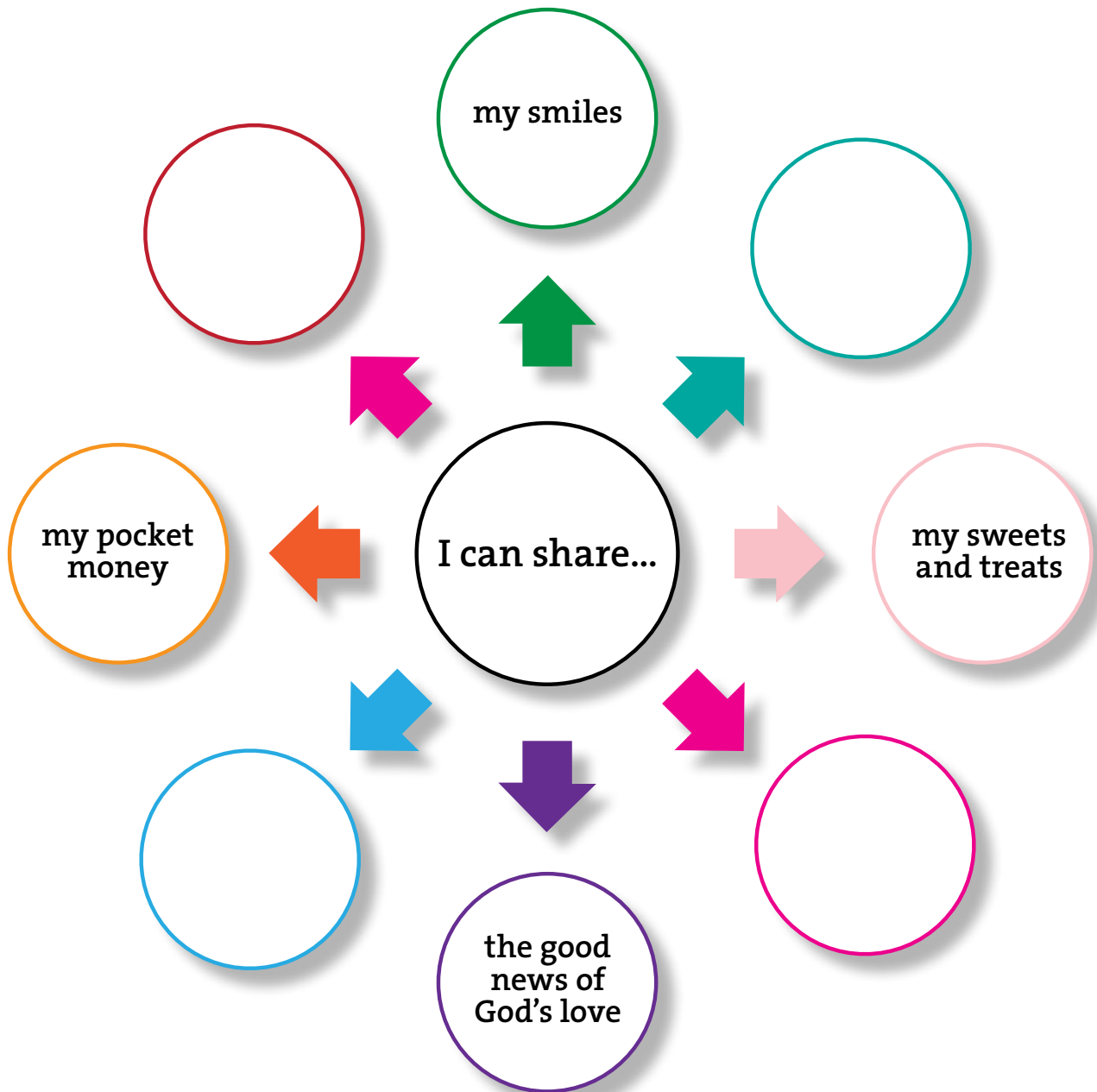
One day an old woman heard about Brigid. She went to Brigid's house. Brigid was making butter in her churn. But she did not have very much milk – only enough to make one small pat of butter. As Brigid was working away, the old woman knocked on the door. She was very poor and very hungry. 'Oh dear, oh dear. What am I to do!' she whined. 'I have not eaten these three days. I cannot go one step further unless I get something to eat.'

Brigid was very sorry for the old woman. She looked all around to see what she could give her, but all she had was one small pat of butter. 'We haven't even enough butter here for ourselves,' she said looking at the little pat, 'but this old woman is much more hungry than we are. She must have our butter.' And Brigid gave it to her. When the old woman saw what Brigid did, she realised that Brigid must be a very special person indeed and that God must be very close to her.

Brigid often gave away food to those who were poor and hungry. The people loved Brigid for her kindness.



St Brigid shared what she had with someone who needed it. What can you share with others? Try some of the ideas below and add your own.





Prayer Service in Honour of St Brigid

You will need:

- Ten children to read
- To set up the sacred space in the area where the prayer service is to take place

Opening Song: 'The Community Song' (*Alive-O 6*)

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us begin with the prayer to our guardian angel:

All: O angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here.
Ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Leader: We gather together today on the feast of St Brigid to celebrate the conclusion of Catholic Schools Week. She was born in County Louth around the time of St Patrick. She was a kind woman, who spent her life helping other people. Here in our school, we also know how important it is to help others. Let us listen to a story about St Brigid and see what we can learn from it.

Reader 1: Like all saints, Brigid was a very good and kind person. She was especially kind and good to poor people because she understood that God has a special love for them too.

Reader 2: One day, an old woman heard about Brigid. She went to Brigid's house. Brigid was making butter in her churn. But she did not have very much milk – only enough to make one small pat of butter. As Brigid was working away, the old woman knocked on the door. She was very poor and very hungry.

Reader 3: 'Oh dear, oh dear. What am I to do! I have not eaten these three days. I cannot go one step further unless I get something to eat.'

Reader 2: Brigid was very sorry for the old woman. She looked all around to see what she could give her, but all she had was one small pat of butter.

Reader 4: 'We haven't even enough butter here for ourselves, but this old woman is much more hungry than we are. She must have our butter'.

Reader 2: And Brigid gave it to her. When the old woman saw what Brigid did, she realised that Brigid must be a very special person indeed and that God must be very close to her.

Reader 1: Brigid often gave away food to those who were poor and hungry. The people loved Brigid for her kindness.

Leader: St Brigid knew that it is important to share what we have with others. We also know that we need to be generous with the things that we have. One of the greatest gifts that we have here in our school is our faith and belief in God. We need to share that with others just as St Brigid did. So, let us pray to God, asking for help to spread the good news in our communities of faith. The response to these prayers is, 'Lord, graciously hear us.'

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Reader 5: We pray for our priests, parish sisters, pastoral workers and all those who help us to share the good news with our parish community. Lord, hear us. (Response)

Reader 6: We pray for our Bishop, Diocesan Adviser(s) and all who share the good news with us in the diocese of _____. Lord, hear us. (Response)

Reader 7: We pray for our parents, grandparents, godparents and all who share the good news with us at home. Lord, hear us. (Response)

Reader 8: We pray for our teachers, SNAs and all who help us to share the good news with our school. Lord, hear us. (Response)

Reader 9: We pray for all Catholic schools, that they may share the good news within their communities of faith. Lord, hear us. (Response)

Reader 10: We pray that we may always be generous with the things we have, and share willingly with others. Lord, hear us. (Response)

Leader: Together, let us give glory to God, just as St Brigid did:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

Leader: Loving God,
Thank you for the life of Brigid, a great Irish saint.
Help us to spread the good news of your love, just as she
did.
Bless our Catholic school, and help us
to grow as a community of
faith.
We ask this through Christ,
our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the
Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Closing Song: 🎵 'We Sing a Song to Brigid' (*Alive-O* 1 and 2)

