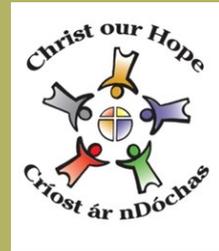




Kerry Association of Religion Teachers
Quarterly Newsletter

February 2015
Volume 1, Issue 3
Spring Edition



KART News

Dear R.E. Coordinator/Teacher/Chaplain,

Welcome to the third edition of KART news, the newsletter for the Kerry Association of Religion Teachers.

As we begin this liturgical season of Lent we become more attentive to the Word of God, to fasting and prayer. Not unlike Advent, Lent has a double character, namely, to prepare both catechumens (candidates preparing for baptism at the Easter Vigil, see page 8) and the faithful to celebrate the Paschal Mystery. It is also important to bring to mind the season of spring. Lent originally meant 'springtime' so we can view this liturgical season as a spring-time for the spirit.

Inside this edition I have included worksheets, prayer services, reflections and much more. Please forward any articles, pictures or resource material for future editions to tomaskenny@dioceseofkerry.ie.

Kind Regards,

Tomás Kenny
Post-Primary Diocesan Advisor

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EXPLORATION OF IDEAS

Changes Lenten practices in Ireland over the last century.

- Previously fasts were very strict. Only one meal a day was taken - meat, fish and even eggs and dairy products were not allowed.
- From the ninth century onwards, restrictions were gradually relaxed. A light meal, or collation, was allowed in the evenings. At a later stage fish was allowed.



- Today fasting and abstinence is observed only on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
- Previously sackcloth and ashes were a symbol of repentance in the Old Testament. At first the Church used them for public penance. From the 10th century it became a custom for all Christians to get ashes on their foreheads for the first day of Lent.
- Today penance and repentance is a matter for each individual's conscience. The emphasis is not so much on denial as on doing better, praying more, giving to others and trying to live better lives as disciples of Jesus. We have to take responsibility individually for deciding on our own forms of penance.
- In the early Church baptism was usually received by adults. The season of Lent was used as a preparation time for baptism. Some of the prayers in the Lenten masses have references to this. At the Vigil ceremony on Holy Saturday night we are all invited to renew our baptismal promises.
- The Irish Bishops invite us to take part in a communal form of almsgiving. They send out *Trócaire* boxes to all homes and places of work. We are encouraged to put the money spared by our penance into the boxes. The word *Trócaire* means 'mercy' or caring. *Trócaire* is an Irish aid organisation. It is one of the many organisations who send aid to the developing world.

To Do:

Interview an older person you know and ask them about their experience of Lent in their youth. List the changes you notice between the Lenten season today and some years ago.



FOR THE CLASSROOM: WORKSHEET 1**Lent**

The season of Lent has the following four activities as the core of the season: Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving and Charity. Give examples of each one for the season of Lent.

Prayer:

Fasting:

Almsgiving:

Charity:

FOR THE CLASSROOM: WORKSHEET 2

Don't say a word

When you're angry - don't let rip, even if you are justified, before you give yourself a chance to cool down. If you do, you may live to regret some harsh, thoughtless words.

When someone is telling you something detrimental about someone else, even if what is being said is true, don't allow yourself to become a member of the judgement team. Try to say something positive about the person or else change the subject.

When you're tempted to say "I told you so". They probably know that already, reminders don't help.

When someone needs your silence more than your words, even if they are words of advice. Often people who are distressed, confused or unhappy really need a good listener rather than a good adviser.

When you have something private or personal to say to someone and other people are within earshot. Respect confidentiality at all times.

My list of positive words/phrases:

1).....

2).....

3).....

4).....

5).....

FOR THE CLASSROOM: WORKSHEET 3

ON THE ROAD TO EASTER WORD SEARCH

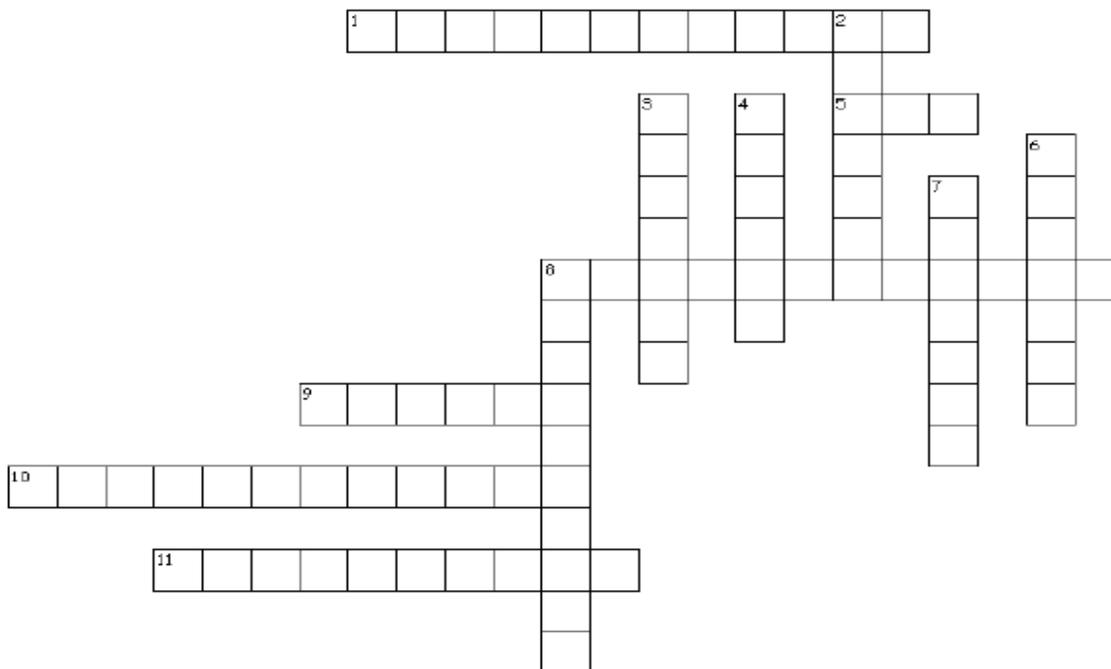


| | | |
|------------|---------------|--------------|
| Ash | Holy Week | Palm Branch |
| Wednesday | Holy Thursday | Forty Days |
| Sacrifice | Good Friday | Jesus |
| Almsgiving | Holy Saturday | Passover |
| Prayer | Easter | Foot Washing |
| Fasting | Palm Sunday | Resurrection |
| Lent | Purple | Love |



FOR THE CLASSROOM : WORKSHEET 4

Lenten Crossword



Across

1. Lent continues until _____.
5. The Church gives us _____ weeks of Lent to prepare for Easter.
8. The day Lent begins.
9. The liturgical color for Lent is _____.
10. Lent is the time that we prepare for Jesus' _____.
11. Giving to the poor.

Down

2. To go without.
3. Easter celebrates the _____ Mystery, the mystery of our dying to sin and rising with Christ to the new life of grace.
4. We open our hearts to God's love by the Lenten practices of _____.
6. Lent is a time of _____.
7. Going without food.
8. Not eating meat.

FOR THE CLASSROOM: WORKSHEET 5—THE CATECHUMENATE

Definition of a Catechumen:

- 1) A convert to Christianity receiving training in doctrine and discipline before baptism.
- 2) One receiving instruction in the basic doctrines of Christianity before admission to membership in a church.

A Brief History of the Catechumenate

During the first three centuries, most Christians prepared for Easter by fasting for only two or three days. But by the fourth century this pre-Easter fast developed into our now-established Lent of 40 days. Nevertheless, it was still viewed as a preparation for Easter and the baptism of new Christians.

Beginning in the fifth and sixth centuries, as the number of adult baptisms sharply declined in relation to the baptism of infants, the need to prepare adults for Baptism at the Easter Vigil receded.

Lent was gradually transformed into a time of prayer and penance, modelled on a 40-day, post-Epiphany fast popular among monks, in imitation of the fasting and penance practiced by Jesus during his 40 days in the desert.

Then with the liturgical renewal advanced by Pope Pius XII's restoration of the rites of Holy Week in 1956 and by the Second Vatican Council's retrieval of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), Lent, on the one hand, and Baptism and Easter, on the other, were happily re-connected.

Once again, Lent came to be seen and experienced as a season in preparation for Easter—preparation not just for individuals, but for the whole community of faith.

With the restored RCIA, Lent served anew as the "home stretch," as it were, of the long process of the initiation of new converts into full membership in the church.

On the First Sunday of Lent there is the formal enrolment of the names of the catechumens, known also as the rite of election. This rite ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and provides an opportunity for them to express their desire to receive these sacraments.

There follows a period of purification and enlightenment, embracing the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, in which catechumens are encouraged to purify their minds and hearts from temptation and sin, and to deepen their union with Christ.

WORKSHEET 5—THE CATECHUMENATE CTD.

The climax of this process is reached at the Easter Vigil, but it does not end there. A "suitable period" of post-baptismal catechesis, known as mystagogy (which is derived from a Greek word, meaning "to teach a doctrine," or "to instruct into the mysteries"), continues the new convert's instruction of the Christian moral life, the sacraments, the Trinity, and prayer.



Although it has been over 40 years since the restoration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and over 50 years since the reform of the Holy Week liturgies, there are still many Catholics who continue to regard Lent in less liturgically appropriate ways.

For these Catholics, Lent remains a season devoted to prayer and penance (surely good and holy things in themselves), but without explicit reference to Baptism, to the Easter Vigil, or to their own responsibility for nurturing the faith-development of new Christians, including their active participation in the church's sacramental and ministerial life.

For many, Lent is still primarily, if not exclusively, a time for personal and private devotions: giving up things like sweets, movies, and hand-held games, or attending daily Mass, as if the Mass itself were a private devotion, like Stations of the Cross.

The Eucharist is a communal celebration, not a penance. It is the centre of the Church's entire life, including the season that is about to begin. Just as Lent is directed toward Baptism and Easter, so Baptism and Easter are directed always toward the Eucharist, the heart of everything the church does.

Questions:

- 1) What is a catechumenate?
- 2) What was Vatican II?
- 3) When and where did Vatican II take place?
- 4) What does RCIA stand for?
- 5) In reference to the catechumenate, what happened on the First Sunday of Lent?
- 6) When did the climax of the catechumenate take place?
- 7) What was the name given to the process after the climax?
- 8) What is the Easter Vigil? When does it take place?

PRAYER SERVICE FOR LENT

by Ms Máiréad Hickey, Chaplain, Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine, Kenmare

Introduction: Chaplain/Religion Teacher

During this season of Lent, we gather to remember how much God loves us and all he has done for us. In this service we commit ourselves ever more completely to the path of reconciliation. We pray this morning that the prayers we say and the sacrifices we make in this Lenten season will open our hearts to receive God's forgiveness and turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, places where love, honesty and justice can live. As we journey through this time of Lent, we trust that God is at work in our lives. We are aware that there have been times when we have thwarted God's goodness. So this morning we come to name what is wrong in our living and ask God's forgiveness and mercy so that we can live as loving people. The theme of our service emphasises water and renewal. Jesus says in the Gospel that what he wants to give us is the living water, a fountain or well-spring of life within us, which is his love.



To begin our service we will pour out a bowl of water. Look at it and remember that water is something we connect with life and with growth; we are surrounded by the protection of water in the womb and we need it to grow. It is something that we connect with in cleansing and in baptism; we are forgiven in the waters which cleanse us and called to follow Jesus in the water of Baptism. We begin our service with a blessing on this bowl of water.

Blessing of the Water

Celebrant: Let us ask the Lord our God to bless this water he has created, which we shall use to recall our baptism. May he renew us and keep us faithful to the Spirit we have all received. May this water remind us of our baptism and may we share the joy of all the baptised.

PRAYER SERVICE CTD.

Lord send your spirit upon this water and bless it. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

After the blessing of the water each person can make the sign of the cross on each others foreheads. (Instrumental music will be played here)

Penitential Rite

Celebrant: Lord Jesus, you were sent to lead us to new life. Lord have mercy.

All: Lord Have Mercy

Celebrant: You come with healing grace . Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

Celebrant: You look with compassion and mercy upon us. Lord have mercy.

All: Lord Have Mercy

Opening Prayer: Let us pray to receive the light of God's forgiveness. Lord our God, our hearts seek out the warmth of your love, our minds seek out the light of your word and our souls long for your forgiveness. Give all of us the ability to grow in love so that your light may shine within us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. *All:* Amen

Liturgy of the Word

Reader: First Reading Colossians 3:12-5

You are God's chosen race, his saints: he loves you. You should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel break begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all, to complete them together and complete them, put on love and may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

LENTEN PRAYER CTD.

Psalm: Have Mercy O Lord, Have mercy on us (Fintan O'Carroll)

Gospel: The Parable of the Prodigal son (*Narrated by different voices*)

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, '*Father, give me my share of the estate.*' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, '*How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death. I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.*' So he got up and went to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, '*Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.*'

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Meditation (*Reflective music played in the background*)



Ritual: Following the mediation I will go to the sacred space and pick up several stones. As I hold them I will talk about how some things in our lives are like this stone, they block the flow of God's life in us. Like the prodigal son we can live ungodly lives. We can push God out so that we can forget his word and his ways.

LENTEN PRAYER CTD.

Like the prodigal son we can be filled with negativity such as fear, selfishness and anger, wanting our own way all the time etc. Today in this season of Lent the times has come to let go of our negativity and hold on to God's way. We can do this in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Confessing is like dropping the stones in the water and letting them be washed away in the river of God's great love. At this point I will drop the handful of stones gently into the holy water. I will then ask the students to try and name in their hearts anything they would like to let go of this Lent... After a brief pause, the celebrant will invite them to come forward one by one to receive the Sacrament Of Reconciliation. As they do so, I will ask them to take a stone and place it in the Holy Water, as a sign of what they want to let go of, and then I will ask them to bless themselves with the holy water and come to receive God's forgiveness.

Instrumental music

Now each of you will have the opportunity to make an Individual Confession.....
I invite you to come forward; **(Time for Confession)**

Lighting of individual candles followed by Baptismal Promises

Recessional : Stay with Me (Taizé)

p Stay with me, re-main here with me, watch and pray,— watch— and pray.— *p*

Concluding Prayer

Celebrant: Lord, as you sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts
to make us your children, we thank you for your forgiveness and love.
Help us always to live the example of forgiveness in all we do and say.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **All:** Amen.

SACRED SPACE FOR LENT

The Lenten Garden

The idea of the Lenten Garden is that it would be prepared as a sacred space at the beginning of Lent and once a week over the intercom at morning prayer at different aspect of the garden can be reflected on and a challenge set to the students of one thing they could do in that week to better themselves or their lives.

This lent we have prepared a Lenten garden.

As we walk along the journey of Lent and we prepare for Easter we will use our Lenten Garden to help us reflect and make positive changes.



Week 1. **Rubbish.** In our garden this week we look at the rubbish. Before we begin any garden we first need to tidy it up. Maybe during this week we could reflect on what we could tidy up in our own lives? Have we let our lives or homes get messy? Do we need to get organised at home or in our study? Is there one thing we could do this week that would tidy up our lives for Lent?

Week 2. **Weeds:** In our garden this week we look at the weeds. Are there some things in our lives which are out of place, things that we wish weren't there. Are there thoughts or habits that we need to get rid of. Maybe Gossip, putting ourselves down or resenting others? This lent perhaps we could decide on at least one thing we need to stop one thing we could get rid of out of our lives?

Week 3. **Poor Soil:** In our garden this week we look at the stony, poor soil. Plants need good soil in which to grow. Are we taking care of our physical and mental health? Could we give up sugar, take up exercise, catch up with friends? Is there one thing we could do this week that might improve our lives in some small way?

SACRED SPACE FOR LENT

Week 4. **Seeds:** In our garden this week we look at the seeds. Now that we have prepared the soil perhaps we could plant a seed by adding gratitude to our lives. As we are thankful for the good in our lives we become less self-obsessed and we allow more good to follow. Write 5 things every day this week you are truly grateful for.

Week 5. **First signs of Life:** In our garden this week we look at the budding plants. Once we start to improve our lives we need to encourage ourselves and show ourselves compassion. As we begin our journey towards God's Love we need to show kindness to ourselves and others. Could we decide on Acts of Kindness we could do for ourselves or others this week?

This week takes place in holy week so maybe it could form part of a reflection before they leave to encourage them to participate in the Easter Ceremonies?

Week 6. **Water and sunlight:** In our garden this week we look at the plants that still need to be nourished by water and sunlight. As we follow the path of Lent we are reminded of the Life, Death and Resurrection of our Lord. We ask that the word of the Lord be "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." Could we spend five minutes every day this week reading the Bible and decide to go to some of the liturgies over Easter which are so rich in meaning and join in the Church's chorus, "He is Risen, Alleluia. He is Risen indeed?"



The Sacred Space (see left) was designed by Ms. Lizzie Harrison, Youth Ministry Coordinator at Esker Retreat Centre, Co. Galway. It was presented at a meeting of the National Association of Post-Primary Diocesan Advisors in early February. Lizzie also composed the above prayer service.

NEWS FROM DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

Millstreet Students visit Mosque in Cork **by John Magee, Chaplain, Millstreet Community School**

Transition Year students from Millstreet Community School recently took part in a trip to Cork to visit the places of worship for Jews and Muslims. This is eighth year that such visits have taken place and yet again they have provided the young people with a great opportunity to broaden their minds about over religions and cultures.



The day began with Mr Fred Rosehill who is Chairman of Trustees Cork Hebrew Congregation, welcoming the students to the synagogue in Cork. He was born and spent all his life in Cork. He spoke to the students about how his grandparents arrived in Cobh, or Queenstown as it was then, and settled in Cork and were made to feel welcome. His own children and grandchildren were born and educated in Cork too. He then spoke about the synagogue itself and of Jewish festivals like Passover and Hannukah. He explained how the community celebrate these important times in the Jewish calendar. When Mr Rosehill was asked about the visit of the Millstreet students, he replied, *“Cork’s tiny Jewish community is delighted to welcome young people from all traditions and help to them understand the meaning and practice of Judaism, we welcome their interest and commend their teachers for this hugely important initiative.”*

The students were then welcomed by Imam Ahmed Halawa at the Cork Mosque. He began by answering the questions that the students had already prepared. Topics ranged from how young Muslims in Cork find practicing their religion in schools, whether Muslim women wearing the scarf (Hijab) or being fully covered (Burqa) are doing so for religious or cultural reasons, to the response of the Muslim community to recent violent actions carried out by extremists. He then went on to talk about the plans for the Muslim community have for the mosque which was opened over a year ago. These include the construction of classrooms for young Muslims to learn Arabic at weekends. He also explained about important aspects of their faith, such as praying five times a day and the pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. He mentioned that there could be as many as 300 or 400 hundred people in the mosque for significant events. At the end of the visit, the Imam thanked the Transition Years from Millstreet for visiting the Mosque.

NEWS FROM DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

He added, *“It is wonderful to see Irish students coming here and trying to find out about different religions and cultures.”* In the light of recent media coverage, the Imam was keen to state that, *“Islam teaches us to reject any terrorism and to live peacefully with other cultures and religions. From my point of view these visits are very important for us to get to know each other and to help others gain a correct understanding of Islam.”*

The day left the students with a lot to think about. When asked about the value of the visit, Tomas Ozaist commented, *“Trips like these are important because people should find out about the religions first hand rather through the media. This is especially the case with Islam which is often seen as a violent and vengeful religion whereas in reality it teaches love and respect. Extremists use the name of Islam for their own violent ends. It’s important for people to get a correct understanding before they make judgements on the matter.”*

Jennifer Corcoran added, *“I think our trip is very important because of stereotypes people have of Jews and Muslims. The unrest in different places can make other people afraid of them. The trips like this are important as they open our eyes and help us try and understand that we might belong to different religions but we share a common humanity.”*

When asked for his opinion as to why these trips continue to be of value, Mr John Magee (Chaplain, Millstreet Community School) said, *“I believe that the annual trip to the mosque and synagogue in Cork are an essential part of our students’ broader religious education. People from different religious traditions treating each other with respect and understanding doesn’t make the headlines unfortunately, so it’s essential that the students get a first-hand experience of both faiths and have the chance to meet Jews and Muslims who live ordinary, everyday lives in Cork. Our Transition Years can bring the positive message home to their families and communities that the extremists are a tiny minority and they end up causing no end of difficulties for ordinary Jews and Muslims who want to practice their religion in peace.”*



FOR TEACHERS

Called to Serve: The mission of the Catholic School in today's world—PART 1 **by Katherina Broderick, Principal, St. Joseph's Presentation, Castleisland**

*Catholic Schools Week took place from 25 January to 31 January 2015.
The theme was: Called to Serve.*

It is important to reflect on the contribution that Catholic schools have to offer our students, parents and society in today's world. There is no doubt that our society has undergone significant socio-economic, cultural and religious changes. In the Religious Education (RE) classroom today, we are presented with a diversity of cultural and belief systems which present challenges for RE teachers.



Picture: Ms Katherina Broderick

‘In this new cultural context, every school needs to redefine its identity so that it is not just reacting to the latest trend or fashion but that it can truly articulate its self-understanding. This is a challenge that Catholic schools take seriously’. The Catholic School, inspired by the Gospel, has something of value to offer to all of our students, parents and society. Cultural awareness is both an attitude and a skill. As such we must cultivate it and perfect it on a continuous basis. ‘Catholic schools seek to reflect a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education’.

The Christian view of the human person

“I have come that you will have life and have it in all its fullness”. (John10:10)

Catholic education aims to lead each student to develop to his or her potential. The whole human person is the focus of the Catholic school's mission. By seeking to develop the young people in our care, we not only develop their knowledge and skills in subjects they study, but also deepen their confidence, self-esteem and their appreciation of humanity. Our schools achieve this on a weekly basis through a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities both within the school and in the local community which deepen the personal development of our students. These programmes and activities also lay the foundations for life-long growth and hope along with offering them a rich source of direction and wisdom but also lead to a deepened sense of the meaning of life in what is often a time of confusion and rapid social change.

Dialogue between faith and culture

Religious Education teachers appreciate that our society, communities and schools are culturally diverse and work very hard to ensure that we have inclusive classrooms. In this way, RE teachers are making significant progress in furthering the dialogue that is needed to ensure that schools are inclusive and that a rich learning environment is available for all students. In teaching the current Religious Education Syllabus, teachers foster a relationship of dialogue with the many different viewpoints, from Humanists to Buddhists, Jews to Christians and those of other or no faith tradition.

Very often in discussions on the future of Religious Education, we focus on the language we use to describe the subject. There is good reason for this as people often understand Religious Education to be what they have themselves experienced in school. This of course is a pity as this subject has undergone significant change with the introduction of the Junior Certificate RE syllabus for examination in 2000.

Religious Education as a subject in our schools at Junior Cert today is not one of indoctrination. 'Religious Education deals with ultimate questions. Religious belief makes a fundamental claim on the conscience of believers. Since religion deals with matters of fundamental, ultimate concern it follows that the religious response has a priority in all one's subsequent reasoning and deliberation'.

The term Religious Instruction implies that students are learning information only thus excluding the affective domain. Whatever terminology we use to describe the subject, the Religious Education class in our schools today is one which teaches students to think about faith and to respect difference.

Religious Education achieves unity within difference through the study of elements of unity and elements of difference. Religious Education achieves a combination of faith and reason. Catholic education has always placed a high value on reason, both intellectual and practical. However, it maintains that faith and reason must be seen as partners in the quest for understanding and ultimate fulfilment.

RE teachers are conscious of the importance of developing the affective domain of students' learning by moving from the cognitive understanding of the concepts to exercises that encourage students to apply their understanding to their own experience. The current RE syllabus invites students to reflect on their own experiences, thereby contributing to the spiritual and moral development of the student. The RE syllabus provides a framework for encountering and engaging with a variety of religious traditions and the non-religious interpretation of life.

FOR TEACHERS CTD.

It aims to identify how understandings of God and Religious Traditions have contributed to the culture in which we live. The RE syllabus promotes the critical and cultural development of the person in his/her social and personal life. It aims to foster awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples, of all ages and at all times.

In the Education Act 15(2) (b) the characteristic spirit of the school is understood as being 'determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school'.

Part 2 of this article will be published in the summer edition.

LENTEN WORDSEARCH

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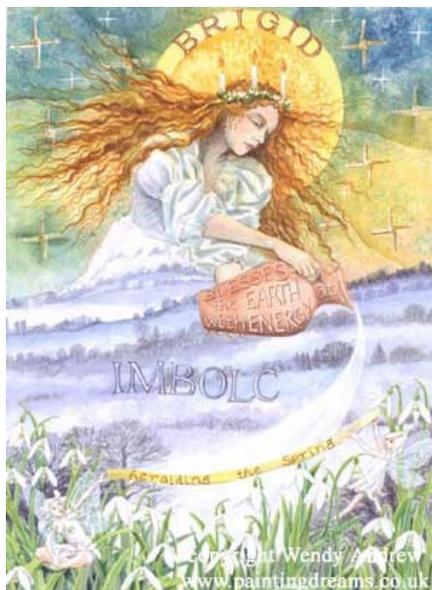
WILDERNESS
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THE CELTIC SEASON OF IMBOLC

Imbolc most commonly is celebrated on February 2nd, since this is the cross-quarter day on the solar calendar, halfway between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox in the northern hemisphere. Among agrarian peoples, Imbolc has been traditionally associated with the onset of lactation of ewes, soon to give birth to the spring lambs. The Christian Church of course sought to introduce an alternative festival and so the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple celebrates an early episode in the life of Jesus, and falls on or around February 2nd.

THE CELTIC SEASON OF IMBOLC



In the modern Irish Calendar, Imbolc is variously known as the Feast of Saint Brigid (Secondary Patron of Ireland), Lá Fhéile Bríde, and Lá Feabhra — the first day of Spring. Christians may call the day "Candlemas" or "the feast of the Purification of the Virgin."

One folk tradition that continues in certain places on St. Brigid's Day (or Imbolc) is that of the Brigid's Bed. The girls and young, unmarried women of the household or village create a corn dolly to represent Brigid, called the Brideog ("little Brigid" or "young Brigid"), adorning it with ribbons and baubles like shells or stones. They make a bed for the Brideog to lie in. On St. Brigid's Eve (January 31), the girls and young women gather together in one house to stay up all night with the Brideog, and are later visited by all the young men of the community who must ask permission to enter the home, and then treat them and the corn dolly with respect.

SPRING-TIME WORDSEARCH

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

FRIENDS
SUN
BLUESKY
FREEDOM
WILDLIFE
PEACE
STREAM
FLOWERS
INSECTS
HAPPINESS
LOVE
VACATION
PLAY
JOY
ADVENTURES

PRAYER FOR THE CELTIC YEAR—IMBOLC

Let's just spend a moment or two in quietness. Consider the winter that is drawing to a close, the bareness of trees awaiting spring's warmth, the first snowdrops to emerge and flower, fallen leaves from winter that now are taken up once again by the soil as a source of nutrients (nature's endless cycle of life and death), signs of life within our own gardens as plants that seemed dead just a month ago are now beginning to show green.

Springtime!

A. the promise of new life

Springtime!

A. the potential for growth

Springtime!

A. the hope of harvests to come

(Silence)

'Let us live in awe of the Lord our God,
for he gives us rain each spring and fall,
assuring us of a harvest when the time is right.'

(Jer 5:24)

'Where man sees but withered leaves,
God sees sweet flowers growing.'
(*Albert Lighton*)

'The day the Lord created hope was probably the same day he created Spring.'
(*Bern Williams*)

In the lengthening of days,
Snowdrops emerging
from winter's frozen ground
All. We see the creator's hand

In the sight of a tiny lamb,
joyfully bounding
across hillside farm
All. We see the creator's hand



Scripture Corner

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'"

Matthew 4:1-11

PRAYER FOR THE CELTIC YEAR—IMBOLC

Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude,
 the spiritual blindness that prevents us
 from appreciating the wonder that is this world,
 the endless cycle of nature,
 of life and death and rebirth.
 Forgive us for taking without giving,
 reaping without sowing.
 Open our eyes to see,
 our lips to praise,
 our hands to share,
 and may our feet tread lightly on the road ahead.



(Here a song, chant or hymn might be sung)

Psalm 8

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which
 you have set in place,

What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and
 honour.

You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:

All flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field,

The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

PRAYER FOR THE CELTIC YEAR—IMBOLC

A sleeping world emerges to new possibilities,
weakening winter's icy grip,
and birdsong and bleating lamb
announce to all the promise
that in due season
creation bursts into life.
And whilst leaves that fell in winter
lie upon the ground,
soon to feed the earth
in nature's wondrous cycle
of death and rebirth,
within the tree is a stirring of new growth



For the cycle of life
Which brings death and rebirth
A. We rejoice in the promise of Spring

For lengthening days
And sunlight's warmth upon the soil
A. We rejoice in the promise of Spring

For a snowdrop's beauty
Reflecting its Creator's artistry
A. We rejoice in the promise of Spring

For new born lambs
Their joy and exuberance
A. We rejoice in the promise of Spring

For all of creation
And the majesty of its Creator
A. We rejoice in the promise of Spring



Scripture Corner

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.

Matthew 4:1-11

PRAYER FOR THE CELTIC YEAR—IMBOLC

'Spring makes its own statement, so loud and clear that the gardener seems to be only one of the instruments, not the composer.'

(Geoffrey B. Charlesworth)

The seasons are what a symphony ought to be: four perfect movements in harmony with each other.

(Arthur Rubenstein)

This is your garden, Creator God
 a thing of beauty beyond understanding,
 a poem that is being written
 not in words,
 but in colours,
 wind's whisper,
 soaring bird,
 snowdrop's petal,
 gentle rain,
 sunlight's warmth.
 This is your garden, Creator God,
 a thing of beauty
 beyond understanding

Scripture Corner

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Matthew 4:1-11

(A time of intercession might be appropriate at this point, either silent or aloud, praying for areas of the world where humankind is not in harmony with creation, places of war, famine or exploitation of the world's resources)

Together we say:

**We bless you,
 God of Seed and Harvest
 And we bless each other
 That the beauty of this world
 And the love that created it
 Might be expressed though
 our lives
 And be a blessing to others
 Now and always**



Amen

SHAPING OUR DIOCESE

Diocese of Kerry Pastoral Plan 2015 - 2020

The Diocese of Kerry is presently preparing a new pastoral plan for 2015-2020. Conscious of the changing reality of society and church today, the diocese is carrying out a comprehensive listening process in order to hear people's hopes, challenges and expectations at this time. The pastoral plan will provide the diocese with a road-map/direction over the next 5 years.



Launching the listening process, Bishop Ray Browne said “It is important to consult and listen to what people are saying. At times we think we know what people need, but that is not always accurate, so it is important to ask. We believe that listening to people speak about their concerns is an essential starting point.”

To hear people's concerns and hopes, there will be gatherings held throughout the diocese. All comments will be noted and will form the basis for drawing up the pastoral plan. A number of schools throughout the diocese will partake in a questionnaire in order to collate the views of our young people.

WHAT WILL YOU DO THIS LENT?—SEE PAGE 28 FOR SUGGESTIONS

| FAST | PRAY | GIVE ALMS |
|------|------|-----------|
| 1. | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

WHAT WILL YOU DO THIS LENT?

Group work – Get Started

When you have completed your grid decide with your partner which action (s) you will take and decide the following:



1. What?

(Aims)

2. How?
(Proposed Actions)

3. Where?
(Sources of Information)

4. Who?
(Who is doing what?)

5. When?
(Time Frame)

SUGGESTIONS FOR LENT

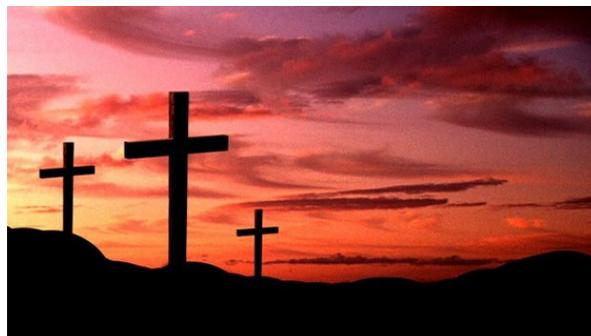
- ◆ Participate in Trócaire's 24hr fast – Give up either food, or your phone, or music or your computer – to raise essential funds for life changing projects in some of the world's countries.
- ◆ Reflect on the question – What is God asking of me?
- ◆ Speak at weekend masses about the Lenten Campaign.
- ◆ Organise a fundraiser event in your school.
- ◆ Reduce your carbon footprint to combat climate change, which can be a cause of hunger.
- ◆ Write an article for your school magazine or local paper highlighting the extent and effects of hunger.
- ◆ Fast from busyness with friends, hobbies, technology and use the time to support the Lenten campaign.
- ◆ Invite in a guest speaker who is involved in Trócaire's work and can help guide you in your action to combat hunger.
- ◆ Use a notice board in the school to remind others of the Lenten campaign – you could use a *thought for the week* or photos.
- ◆ Write to you local TD to highlight the need to take action on hunger.
- ◆ Stand in solidarity with those who are hungry by doing without 'luxury' food for Lent.
- ◆ Use the intercom system at a particular time in the weeks of Lent to provide food for thought or to pray as a whole school community on the Lenten theme.
- ◆ Organise a prayer service or Mass remembering those who are in need.
- ◆ Make prayer posters to hang in your school /church.
- ◆ Use your own particular talents to highlight the Lenten hunger campaign.
- ◆ Have your say –draw or write a message to world leaders on the front of a 'right to food plate' and post it back to Trócaire.



LITURGICAL NOTES FOR SCHOOL

Present the students with a variety of spiritual practices throughout Lent

- ◆ Liturgy of the Hours—Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer
- ◆ Reading Scripture in Class
- ◆ Stations of the Cross
- ◆ Pilgrimage
- ◆ Quiet Time
- ◆ Reflection and Prayer for those preparing for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation
- ◆ Lenten Meditation



Introduce the Possibility of Variety during your Lenten Observance

- ◆ Lent is not a season of willpower, nor is it a test to see how strong you are. Lent is a season where the Holy Spirit searches our hearts and uncovers our wounds and weaknesses, bringing healing and strength.

Each week, new ideas based on the readings of the Sunday could be suggested.

A Lenten practice can be for Forty Days, for a week or even a single day.

Prepare Students for Easter

In recent years schools close the week before Holy Week. This leaves little or no time for preparing students for Easter and the Easter Ceremonies.

- ◆ It might be a good idea to prepare the students for Easter during Lent. Lent is after all, a time of preparation for Easter.
- ◆ Easter is the most important time of the Liturgical year. It is, in fact, the highpoint of the Church's year.
- ◆ The season of Lent could be a time to introduce students to the varying liturgical rites experienced throughout the period of the Triduum.
- ◆ Introduce the students to the concept of the Triduum
- ◆ Contact the Parish Priest and investigate ways to involve the students in the Easter celebrations.

ASHES

The ashes we received on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday are an annual reminder of the passage of time and our constant need of repentance, our need to change. The ashes were made from the burning of the palms which had been blessed last Palm Sunday. We had waved palms in praise of Christ at the beginning of Holy Week and now we have failed him many times since that day. Even in their origin therefore, the ashes show the passing of this world and all created things.

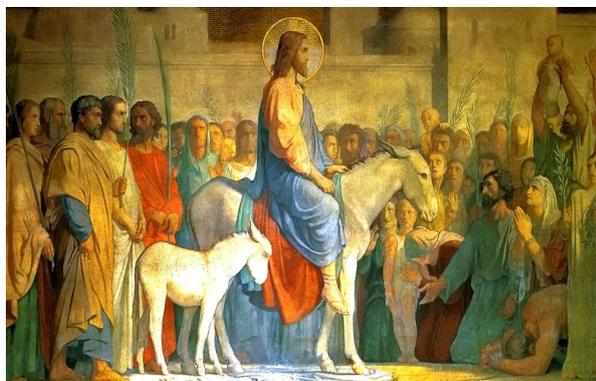


Centuries ago it was custom, at the beginning of Lent, to sprinkle ashes on public sinners as they came into the church in repentance. Now, we acknowledge publicly that we are all sinners and in need of repentance. Carrying the ashes on our forehead indicates our willingness to do repentance for our sins. The traditional words used as the ashes are placed provide a timely reflection: “Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return.” The alternative verse used in many churches focuses our attention on the deep meaning of our Lenten observance: “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.”

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR LENT

- 1) The Text this Week is a helpful resource: <http://www.textweek.com/lent.htm>
- 2) Catholic Online: <http://www.catholic.org/clife/lent/>
- 3) Busted Halo have again delivered useful materials: <http://bustedhalo.com/>
- 4) Creighton University Lenten Resources: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/>
- 5) See the Lenten Campaign against Human Trafficking: <http://www.aptireland.org/lenten-campaign-trafficking/>
- 6) TES have provided helpful links for Lent: <https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources/search/?q=lent>
- 7) The Religion Teachers Association of Ireland: http://www.rtai.ie/?page_id=354
- 8) RE Resource Site: <http://resource-ni.com/>

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR EASTER



THE EASTER TRIDUUM

The days of the Sacred Triduum are Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. Holy Thursday evening is

when the Triduum begins. There are many different ways to involve the students in the celebration of the Triduum:

- 1) Procession of Gifts on Holy Thursday
- 2) Prayers of Intercession on Good Friday
- 3) Music Ministry
- 4) Help with the bonfire on Holy Saturday
- 5) Ministers of the Word
- 6) Help prepare and make an Easter Garden
- 7) Liturgical Arts for Easter—making banners for the Church.

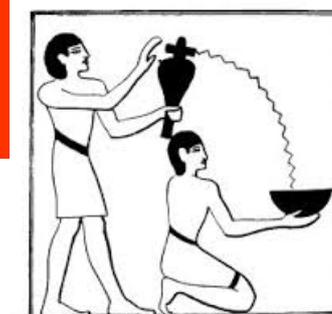


PALM SUNDAY

The beginning of Lent is a good time to start thinking about Holy Week and how its liturgy could be improved.

Palm Sunday is the last Sunday of Lent. The blessing of palms and procession are often rather minimalistic in our Irish churches. It would be good, for example, to use real branches for at least some of the participants.

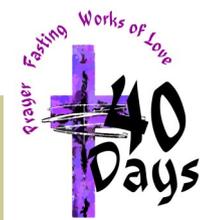
Your school could re-enact this ritual with first or second year classes. It could be built into a pilgrimage procession around the school and end at a sacred space in or near the school grounds. Use some of the readings from Palm Sunday or excerpts from the long Gospel use this day.



USE WATER DURING THE EASTER SEASON

A message which is coming through with increasing clarity from parishes around Ireland is that our liturgies are weighed down with words, and at the same time symbolically impoverished. Actions can speak louder than words. Use symbols with water—maybe design a water symbol at your school and design prayer services around it for the Easter Season. We must also remember to celebrate Easter for the fifty days until Pentecost. Easter does not end when the holidays end..!

Source for above: Columba McCann, *101 Liturgical Suggestions*, (Dublin: Veritas, 2014).



Liturgical Calendar for February/March

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Wed. Feb. 18th: | Ash Wednesday |
| Sat. Feb. 21st: | St. Peter, Damian, bishop and doctor of the Church |
| Sun. Feb. 22nd: | 1st Sun. of Lent |
| Mon. Feb. 23rd: | St Polycarp, bishop and martyr |
| Sun. Mar. 1st: | 2nd Sun. of Lent |
| Wed. Mar. 4th: | St Casimir |
| Thurs. Mar. 5th: | St Kieran, bishop |
| Sat. Mar. 7th: | Ss Perpetua and Felicity, martyrs |
| Sun. Mar. 8th: | 3rd Sun. of Lent |
| Mon. Mar. 9th: | St Frances of Rome, religious |
| Wed. Mar. 11th: | St Aengus, bishop and abbot |
| Sun. Mar. 14th: | 4th Sun. of Lent |
| Tues. Mar. 17th: | St Patrick, Bishop, Principal Patron of Ireland |
| Wed. Mar. 18th: | St Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor of the Church |
| Tues. Mar. 19th: | St Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary |
| Sun. Mar. 22nd: | 5th Sun. of Lent |
| Sun. Mar. 29th: | Palm Sunday |

NOTICES

♦ R.E. Diocesan In-service

The semester two in-service for R.E. teachers takes place this Thursday, February 26th in the John Paul II Pastoral Centre, Killarney. The day starts at 9:15am.

♦ World Youth Day

World Youth Day will be celebrated in Krakow, Poland in July 2016. See their official website at <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/>

♦ Shaping our Diocese

See the Kerry Diocesan Website to find out more about the Diocesan Plan for 2015–2020. A number of Diocesan Post-Primary schools will be involved in the listening process. Students will be invited to answer two questions relating to their everyday needs and their approach to faith and the Church.

♦ Ceiliúradh na nÓg 2015-2016

This schools/parish based project will commence again in September 2015. All Diocesan Post-Primary schools are invited to take part. If you have any suggestions as to how you might like to see this initiative develop please let me know.

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