



Catholic Schools Week 2012
Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2011

Resources for the Primary School
Community: Home, School & Parish

Theme: Christ's Living Body Active in Our World

29 January–4 February 2012

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This book provides resources to help celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2012.

There are materials for use with the following groups:

- Students in the classroom
- Staff members
- Parents
- Members of Board of Management/Governors
- The wider parish community.

Two copies of this book have been sent to schools and one copy to all priests ministering in parishes

Resources

It is our hope that you find the material included in this year's resource pack helpful as you celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2012. Copies of this resource are available to download *as Gaeilge* on www.catholicbishops.ie/catholicschoolsweek. 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 and Maeve Mahon in consultation with the Steering Committee for Catholic Schools Week 2012.



Welcome

'Christ's Living Body Active in Our World' brings to mind two differing but related meanings of the phrase – 'the Body of Christ'. If we were to stop ordinary Catholics coming out of Mass and ask them, 'What is the Body of Christ?', they would reply that it is what they receive in Holy Communion. Similarly, if we asked them where they could find the Body of Christ, they would probably point us to the tabernacle in the church. In both cases they would be right. But there is another meaning of 'Body of Christ' which is also important. The Church, the community of Christ's followers in the world, is the Body of Christ. St Augustine said that when we say 'Amen' as we receive Holy Communion we are saying 'yes' to what we already are – the Body of Christ!

When we think of the Body of Christ and Catholic primary schools in Ireland, our thoughts naturally turn to the preparation of children for their First Holy Communion. But the Catholic school is more than a place where we prepare children for their First Communion. It is also a Christian community that is a real part of Christ's Body active in our world.

During Catholic Schools Week 2012, we want to raise our awareness that as we say 'Amen' to Christ in Holy Communion, so too we should say 'yes' to being Christ's Body in our schools, in our homes, in our parishes and in the world around us. Christ's Body is not just to be found in church buildings – rather it must be encountered in all aspects of our lives.

In June 2012, the International Eucharistic Congress will take place in Dublin. This will be a notable event in the history of the Church in our country. Catholic Schools Week is part of our preparation. For many months the congress bell has been taken around the country. The bell is an important part of Christian tradition. We ring a bell every Sunday before Mass and the Angelus bell is heard every day. This is a reminder that while we *go* to certain places in our daily lives, we are *called* to a deeper response. We *go* to the supermarket, we *go* to the cinema, we *go* to the sports club, we *go* down town, but we are *called* to church, we are *called* to build community, we are *called* to serve those most in need, we are *called* to prayer. The church bell matters because it reminds us that there is more to life than just going here and there. We are part of God's story, God's plan for our world. Our faith teaches us that God is calling us.

'Catholic Schools: Christ's Living Body Active in our World' is the theme for our week in 2012. I invite you – in your school, your parish, your home – to be part of this week. You will find many helpful materials in this book. Most schools and parishes have celebrated this week for several years now. If your school or your parish has not participated in this week in previous years then I invite you to do so this year.

At Mass we say 'Amen' as we receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion, but we must also say 'yes' so that we may become the Body of Christ in the world. During this week we celebrate our Catholic schools as part of the Christian community's effort to truly be Christ's Body active in our world.

Michael Drumm
Chairperson
Catholic Schools Partnership

Catholic Schools Week 2012 Planning Meeting

The purpose of holding a planning meeting is to decide which elements of the resources your particular school community and parish will highlight during the week. By inviting representatives from the staff, Board of Management/Governors, Parent Association/Council, parish team, parish pastoral council and school chaplain to this meeting you will be able to ensure the best possible celebration of Catholic Schools Week in your school and parish community. The agenda for this meeting might look like this:

1. The Theme of Catholic Schools Week 2012

Catholic Schools: Christ's Living Body Active in Our World.

An explanation can be found on page 9.

2. The Parish

Consider marking the beginning of Catholic Schools Week within one of the parish Masses on Sunday, 29 January.

Liturgical resources and suggestions for such a celebration of the Eucharist can be found on page 7.

The parish might also get involved by:

- helping to host Grandparents' Day on February 1st
- helping to create a display celebrating the way in which Catholic schools in the parish make Christ's living body active in their community and in the world
- hosting a discussion on the importance of Catholic education during Catholic Schools Week.

3. The School

Each day of Catholic Schools Week 2012 has its own theme and resources for classroom activity. This meeting might consider the events that will involve the whole school and perhaps the wider parish community.





4. Grandparents' Day, 1 February

A significant part of Catholic education is its commitment to building on the tradition of Catholic education in the area and in the particular school. **The rich inheritance of the school** is its stepping stone into the future. Grandparents are a vital link in helping children give thanks for the work of the school and to look forward with joyful hope to the future.

This event has now become an integral part of Catholic Schools Week for many schools. If your school has not yet participated in this celebration we encourage you to consider doing so this year.

On pages 4 and 5 of this book you will find some suggestions for the preparation needed for Grandparents' Day and the Prayer Assembly on that day. **Remember to send out invitations to grandparents as early as possible.**

5. The School Environment

How will visitors to your school know that Catholic Schools Week is taking place? Take this 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. Parent Councils/Associations might be invited to help in this endeavour. See suggestions on page 6.

6. Parents

- A resource to help parents become involved in Catholic Schools Week can be found on pages 12–13. This will need to be photocopied back to back. Consider how best to distribute this to parents.

7. Staff and Board of Management/Governors

- A resource to help staff and Board of Management/Governors to reflect on their work in Catholic education can be found on page 11. There is also a series of statements about the Catholic School on page 10. Consider how best they describe your school at staff, Board of Management/Governors and Parent Association/Council meetings in the coming months. Encourage members of the Board of Management/Governors and Parent Association/Council to be present at all events planned for Catholic Schools Week 2012.



Preparation for Grandparents' Day

Let's Celebrate Our Grandparents!

These activities could be done in preparation for Grandparents' Day, Wednesday 1 February. Some of the finished activities might be used for display purposes or as a gift for grandparents during their visit to your classroom or school.

1. Writing/Project/IT Activities

- An essay about grandparents
- Scrapbook of memories about time spent with grandparents
- School in my grandparents' time ...
- Our favourite things to do together ...
- My grandparents' favourite prayers/poems/stories/recipes

2. Art Activities

Puzzle Card

Paste a photo onto cardboard and cut it into five or six big pieces. Make a card, decorate the outside and write the words 'Guess who loves you?' inside. Place the cut-out pieces inside the card.

Family Tree

Put some play dough or modelling clay into the bottom of a paper cup. Put a twig with plenty of branches into the clay and make sure it stands up straight. Cut big leaves out of green card. Invite the children to write the names of their siblings, parents, grandparents and others on the leaves. Alternatively, children could draw or stick pictures of family members on the leaves. Punch a hole in each leaf and tie them on to the branches using pipe cleaners or string. Start by placing the children and their siblings at the top, then their parents, aunts, uncles and finally grandparents on the bottom.

You Are My Sunshine Picture

On an A4 page draw a flower and put a photograph of child in the middle. Now draw a sun and put the grandparent's photo in the centre of it. Write the words 'You Are My Sunshine' on the page.

I Love You Because ...

Make a class collage with the title 'We Love Our Grandparents Because ...'

3. Annual Catholic Grandparents' Pilgrimage to Knock

Invite the children to write prayers or poems about their grandparents which will be brought to the altar during the Mass to celebrate this pilgrimage, which takes place in September each year. All prayers are kept in Knock and grandparents visiting the shrine can ask to see what their grandchild has written about them. Prayers and poems can be posted to The Catholic Grandparents' Association, The Mall, Westport, Co. Mayo. For further information see www.nationalgrandparentspilgrimage.com/home.



Reflection on Grandparents

Invite some of the children to read one of the following reflections on grandparents during the Assembly to Honour and Celebrate Grandparents on Wednesday. Alternatively, the children may like to read some of their own reflections.

'Grandparents can inspire us, validate us and instruct us in what it feels like to be loved. They can teach us about being different and unique. They give us the opportunity and permission to sample life's joys. They connect us with our parents, siblings, cousins and our own children. They connect us with the past and position us for the future. And even when they pass on, they stay with us for our whole lives in memories so rich that we can almost hear, smell, see, taste or touch them and their surroundings.'
(Dr Luci Bearon)

What is a Grandparent?

(The following were written by eight-year-old children)

Grandparents are a lady and a man who have no little children of their own. They like other people's.

A grandfather is a man, and a grandmother is a lady!

Grandparents don't have to do anything except be there when we come to see them. They are so old they shouldn't play hard or run. It is good if they drive us to the shops and give us money.

When they take us for walks, they slow down past things like pretty leaves and caterpillars.

They show us and talk to us about the colours of the flowers and also why we shouldn't step on 'cracks'.

They don't say, 'Hurry up.'

Grandparents don't have to be smart.

They have to answer questions like 'Why isn't God married?' and 'How come dogs chase cats?'

When they read to us, they don't skip. They don't mind if we ask for the same story over again.

Everybody should try to have a grandmother, especially if you don't have television because they are the only grownups who like to spend time with us.

They know we should have snack time before bed time, and they say prayers with us and kiss us even when we've acted bad.

My grandmother lives at the airport and when we want her, we just go get her. Then when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport.

Grandpa is the smartest man on earth! He teaches me good things, but I don't get to see him enough to get as smart as him!



Preparing a Sacred Space

Creating a Sacred Space or a Prayer Space in the entrance area is a very simple and effective way to reflect your school's Catholic ethos. Visitors to the school are struck by the sense that they are entering a space in which the sacred is acknowledged and celebrated. The school community has a space which they help to create and maintain; a space that celebrates the rich and symbolic life of the Catholic school, reflecting the movement through the Church year, the celebration of Saints and Holy Days, important events in the life of the school and most of all a visible expression of the faith we all share. Catholic Schools Week offers an opportunity to create a Sacred Space if you do not already have one, and provides a new focus for existing spaces.

The following are the key elements of any Sacred Space:

- A coloured cloth which reflects the current season of the Liturgical Year. As Catholic Schools Week falls during Ordinary Time the cloth will be green.
- A candle (this year consider placing an International Eucharistic Congress Candle in your Sacred Space. These candles can be obtained from www.iec2012.ie and there is a large range of sizes and prices.) You can also use the logo on page 31 of this book to create an IEC 2012 candle.
- A copy of the Bible on a stand, open to the text of this Sunday's Gospel or daily reading
- Holy Water
- If your school has particular affinity to a Saint then a statue of that saint might be put in the Sacred Space.

During Catholic Schools Week you might add some of the following:

- Pictures of activities that the school engages in, showing the pupils and staff as 'Christ's Living Body Active in our World'
- Names of organisations and groups that the school helps
- The theme of Catholic Schools Week 2012: '(School name) – Christ's Living Body Active in Our World'. This could be done as a collage, banner or poster by the children
- School motto/crest/picture or statue of Patron Saint
- A St Brigid's Cross
- Photos of Grandparents' Day and other Catholic School Week activities from last year.

Display Areas

Encourage staff to have displays in their classrooms and corridors which reflect the theme 'Christ's Living Body Active in our World' during this week.





Celebrating Catholic Schools Week in Your Parish

Catholic Schools Week 2012 begins on Sunday, 29 January, the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Over the past three years parishes throughout the country have responded with great generosity and creativity to the invitation to take time during this week to celebrate the contribution made by Catholic Schools to their communities. This can be done in a variety of ways: during the Sunday Liturgy, by joining in the activities in the parish schools and by creating opportunities for the parish community to connect with the school community. There are many different ways in which parishes might choose to celebrate Catholic Schools Week and the following are just some suggestions that might help.

Celebration of the Eucharist for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

If you have a **Liturgy Group** make sure that they are made aware of Catholic Schools Week as early as possible so that they can be involved in preparing the liturgy for this Mass. Encourage them to ensure that Catholic Schools Weeks becomes part of the annual life of the parish. It will always begin on the last Sunday in January.

- Consider how best the schools in your community might become involved in this Sunday's celebration of the Eucharist. Arrange a meeting with the principals and teachers in the weeks prior to Catholic Schools Week and discuss the various ways that the work of Catholic Schools can be highlighted and celebrated during the liturgy on that day (see page 2). Invite a member of the Liturgy Group to this planning meeting.
- The readings, prayers of the Faithful etc. for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time can be found in the December/January edition of *Intercom*. There are also homily notes for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time in the January edition of *The Furrow*. Consider who best might proclaim the Word at the Mass – a staff member, member of Board of Management/ Board of Governors? 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.
- The theme for this year's Catholic Schools Week, '**Catholic Schools: Christ's Living Body Active in our World**', is taken from 'Though We Are Many', the hymn specially written for the 50th International Eucharistic Congress, which takes place in Dublin from 10 – 17 June, 2012. The hymn could be learned by the children and sung at Mass on this Sunday. The music for this hymn can be listened to and downloaded from www.iec2012.ie. A child from the school could be invited to light the International Eucharistic Congress candle before Mass begins.



Parish Newsletter

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

Sunday, 29 January marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2012. The purpose of the week is to highlight and celebrate the wonderful contribution that Catholic schools make to our local communities and society in general. This year's theme is **Catholic Schools: Christ's Living Body Active in our World**. Our parish is joining in the celebrations by ...

Pupils from the school might distribute the newsletter on this Sunday.

Display Area

Consider working with the school to create a display showing the ways in which the parish school/s is/are 'Christ's Living Body Active in Our World'. This display could depict their work with local and national charities, their contributions to the local community and any other relevant activities.

Boards of Management

Boards of Management in the Republic of Ireland will be very recently formed, and this might be an ideal opportunity to thank those who have served on the previous Board and acknowledge and congratulate the new members.

The Pastoral Council

- Bring Catholic Schools Week to the attention of the **Pastoral Council** and ask them how the parish might best celebrate it this year. Consider the possibility of hosting an evening on the importance of Catholic Education in Ireland today.

The School

- The chaplain might take the opportunity this week to **visit as many classrooms as possible**. This book will help you to find a focus for your visit as it offers a theme for each day's work. You might bless the throats of the children on the Feast of St Blaise in some of the classrooms.
- Encourage schools to participate in Grandparents' Day on 1 February.
- Visit the staffroom this week. You might even bring a cake or a box of biscuits!
- Use the reflection for staff and Board of Management/Governors on page 11 to help all concerned reflect on their work in Catholic Education.

There is also a series of statements about the Catholic School on page 10. Consider how best they describe your school at staff, Board of Management/Governors and Parent Association/Council meetings in the coming months.



Theme for Catholic Schools Week 2012

Catholic Schools: Christ's Living Body Active in Our World

There may never be a more opportune time to celebrate Catholic schools and their unique contribution to Irish society than in the present climate. The place of Catholic education, and the right of parents to choose this particular type of education, is being debated and questioned in the most rigorous of ways throughout the country. There is little doubt that such a debate is necessary and that diversity in school provision is needed in our country. It is also true that this debate requires those who believe in Catholic education and those who participate in it to find their voice and to articulate publicly the rationale for their choice. Catholic schools need to create the spaces in the public sphere to express and define their unique contribution to the education system. Catholic Schools Week 2012 offers one such opportunity and the theme chosen reflects the wide variety of ways in which the characteristic spirit of the Catholic school enables and encourages pupils and staff to be agents for change, to live the Gospel, to be the body of Christ in our world.

This year's theme is taken from the anthem of the 50th International Eucharistic Congress and reflects the overall theme of the Eucharistic Congress – 'The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another'.

Verse 3 – 'Though we are many':

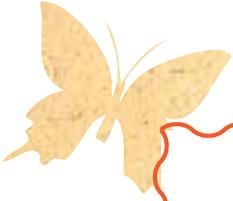
'And through this shared Eucharist
we are the living Church.
We witness to Christ's love
His living body active in our world.'

Catholic Schools Week 2012 offers us the opportunity to reflect on the fact that our school communities are places, where, in the words of St Catherine of Siena, **every child is encouraged to be who God meant them to be** so that they can set the world on fire and truly be Christ's living body active in our world.

Our Catholic School Communities are also places where Christ is continuously made present in new and unexpected ways.

Catholic Schools: Christ's Living Body Active in Our World

Central to the life of the Catholic school is its liturgical celebrations and the prayer time, which punctuate the rhythm of each day. It is during these times in a particular way that pupils and staff are invited, encouraged and challenged to be the body of Christ in the many different worlds which they inhabit. When the Catholic school community gathers to celebrate Mass, they do so knowing that having listened to the Word of God, given thanks for his great love for us and been nourished at the table of the Lord, they will be sent forth to be Christ to each other. Each time we celebrate Eucharist together as a community we are gathered, nourished and sent and it is no small coincidence that these actions are mirrored by the work of the Catholic School community as it gathers, nourishes and sends forth young people to be Christ to the world.



The Catholic School ...

- Has at its heart the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ
- Builds an environment of care and concern for others that is rooted in Catholic social teaching
- Creates a safe and happy learning environment where every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to their full and unique potential as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God
- Seeks educational excellence while remaining faithful to their distinctive vision and approach
- Is an inclusive and respectful community, welcoming children of all denominations and of none
- Acknowledges the role of parents as the first teachers in the ways of faith and provides opportunities for their participation in the life of the school
- Works in partnership with parents and the parish community to keep the light of faith burning brightly
- Provides religious education programmes that confirm and deepen the child's understanding of the Catholic faith so that every child will be as articulate in their faith as in all other areas of the curriculum
- Nurtures the child's appreciation and understanding of the sacramental life of the Church
- Displays the symbols of our rich Catholic faith tradition
- Spends time as a school community in reflection, prayer and ritual, celebrating the Eucharist and other sacraments to develop the spiritual life of each person in the school community.

Based on *Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland* (A Pastoral Letter of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference)



Catholic Schools Week 2012
Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2012

Reflection for Staff and Board of Management/Governors

The following is intended to form the basis for a short reflection with staff and members of Boards of Management/Governors on the identity of the Catholic School.

2012 is an important year for Catholic schools in Ireland:

- The International Eucharistic Congress will take place in Dublin from Sunday 10 June to Sunday 17 June 2012
- The Government of the Republic of Ireland will issue a report on the outcomes of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector.
- In Northern Ireland, new structures for education (ESA) are being put in place which will have an impact on Catholic schools.

In times of change identity is crucial. The landscape of Catholic schools is already influenced by new thinking and policy and will change significantly over the coming years in both the North and South of Ireland. Our Catholic schools have nothing to fear if they are firm in their identity. Inspired by a Catholic ethos they will continue to offer education and formation to pupils in response to the wishes of Catholic parents.

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2012 is '**Catholic Schools: Christ's Living Body Active in Our World**'. Clearly this theme is a statement of the identity of the Catholic school.

The Mass matters because Christ is present in a tangible way when the community gathers – the word is proclaimed, the bread broken, and the Body of Christ shared. The Eucharist thus invites us urgently to live the love of God in the day-to-day circumstances of life and in our relationships with one another.

We define the Church as the body of Christ. The school community is made up of people who form part of each other as the limbs do the body. The Catholic school community, caring for its students at a crucial time in their lives, is for them the local Church making Christ present in fresh and surprising ways. The mission of all in the school community is to be witnesses and ambassadors of the love of Christ in the world. And so, the Catholic School can truly be described as 'Christ's living Body, active in our world.'

During Catholic Schools Week 2012, Catholic Schools are encouraged to enable students gather, celebrate and reflect on the Eucharist and thereby recognise Christ present in the school – bringing about a lifestyle of communion and sharing.

Some questions to help reflection on the theme of Catholic Schools Week 2012:

- Do Catholic schools have a strong identity?
- How important is the Eucharist in forging the identity of the Catholic school?
- What impact will the changes signalled by the Forum on Patronage in the Republic and the Education changes in Northern Ireland have on Catholic schools?

Catholic Schools Week 2012 – Bishop Brendan Kelly

At Home Catholic Schools Week 2012



Dear Parent(s),

There may never be a more opportune time to celebrate Catholic schools and their unique contribution to Irish society than in the present climate. The place of Catholic education and the right of parents to choose this particular type of education is being debated and questioned in the most rigorous of ways throughout the country. There is little doubt that such a debate is necessary and that diversity in school provision is needed in our country. It is also true that this debate requires those who believe in Catholic education and those who participate in it to find their voice and to articulate publicly the rationale for their choice. Catholic schools need to create the spaces in the public sphere to express and define their unique contribution to the education system. Catholic Schools Week 2012 offers one such opportunity and the theme chosen – ‘*Catholic Schools: Christ’s Living Body Active in our World*’ – reflects the wide variety of ways in which the characteristic spirit of Catholic schools enables and encourages pupils and staff to be agents for change, to live the Gospel, to be the body of Christ in our world.

Reflect on the words of this prayer, written by St Teresa of Ávila.

*Christ has no body now on earth, but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks out
Christ’s compassion to the world.
Yours are the feet with which he is to
go about doing good,
and yours are the hands with which he is
to bless us now.*



Jesus has no body on earth.

He relies on me, as his follower, and as a member of his family, to act on his behalf.

During Catholic Schools Week, I am making a special effort to act as Christ's living Body in my home.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
This is what I did this week ...			
My name:			

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

HOME RESOURCES



My parent(s): _____

My teacher: _____

Monday: Assembly to Begin Catholic Schools Week

You will need:

- Someone to lead the Assembly
- Five children to read the prayers outlined below
- A Sacred Space containing a candle, a Bible, a cross and some holy water. You may also need

a palm branch to sprinkle the holy water on all who are gathered*

- A CD or suitable music accompaniment for one of the following songs:

- ▶ 'Connected' (Alive-O 4)
- ▶ 'Go Tell Everyone' (Alive-O 7)

Leader: Good morning everyone, and welcome to our assembly, which marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week. We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today, schools all across Ireland are celebrating the fact that they are Catholic. We join with them in prayer this morning.

The theme of Catholic Schools Week this year is **Christ's Living Body Active in Our World**. Every day this week, our school community is going to make a special effort to show how we can act like Jesus, and bring his love to the world. In this way, we will show that we are his followers, and that our school is truly a Catholic school.

Let us pray for those who help us to make Christ's living body active in our world. The response is, *'Lord, graciously hear us'*.

Reader 1: We pray for our parents and guardians, who were the first to show us how to live as Jesus wants us to. *Lord hear us.*

Reader 2: We pray for our teachers, that they will teach as Jesus did, and work together to make our Catholic school the best it can be. *Lord hear us.*

Reader 3: We pray for our priests, parish sisters and parish workers, that they will always be models of Jesus' love for us. *Lord hear us.*

Reader 4: We pray for everyone who works in our school that together we will build up Christ's living body. *Lord hear us.*

Reader 5: We pray for all the children in our school, that we will play our part in bringing God's love to the world, this week and always. *Lord hear us.*

Let us finish by praying as Jesus asked us to.

Our Father ...

Leader: Loving God,
Help us to live as you asked us to.
Help us to work together as your Body, active in the world.
Help us to bring your love to all we meet, and especially those who need it most.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Leader: As we go, we bless ourselves with holy water as a sign that we are willing to play our part as Christ's living Body, active in our world.

Sing: Choose a song as listed above, or a suitable alternative.

**Note: If you have a smaller number of children, you may like to place bowls of holy water at the doors of the Assembly area, and allow the children to bless themselves. If you have a larger group of children, you may like to use a palm branch to sprinkle the children with holy water.*



Christ's Living Body Active in Our Home

Think about the words of this prayer, written by St Teresa of Ávila:

*Christ has no body now on earth, but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks out
Christ's compassion to the world.
Yours are the feet with which he is to
go about doing good,
and yours are the hands with which he is
to bless us now.*

These words can help us to understand what it means when we say we are the Body of Christ. Jesus no longer lives on earth. He cannot share with those who do not have enough, or say a kind word to people who are upset. He cannot include people who are left out, or offer food to people who are hungry. Instead, Jesus relies on us, as members of his family, his followers. That is why we say that we are the Body of Christ.

During this week, we are going to make a special effort to show that Christ is active in our world through us. Today, we will begin by thinking about all the ways that we can be Christ's living Body active in our homes.

The activity on page 16 will help you to think of the many ways in which we can be Christ's living Body active in our home.

In the hands below, write or draw some ways that you can act as Christ's Body in your home. Share your ideas with others in your class.



After brainstorming with your friends, choose seven ideas to do in your home this week. As you complete each activity, write or draw it on the page you will bring home this week. Ask someone that you live with to sign your page to show that you have made Christ's living Body active in your home. Next week, bring your sheet back to your teacher to show him/her what you have done.



Tuesday: Christ's Living Body Active in Our School

Today we celebrate the Feast of St John Bosco.

St John Bosco was born in a town called Piedmont, near Turin, in 1815. He was the youngest of three children, all of them boys. When he was just two years of age his father died, so his mother, Margaret, looked after John and his two brothers on her own. When he was twenty years of age, John decided to become a priest. His work was mainly in providing schools to educate boys who might otherwise have been left on the streets. These boys found it very difficult to concentrate at school. John very quickly learned to juggle and do magic tricks so they would enjoy school more and this would help them to learn. John later became involved in writing books for teachers, trying to promote the Good News of Jesus. St John Bosco is patron saint of our youth and of Catholic publishers like Veritas, who have published the *Alive-O* programme.



DON BOSCO WRITING, TURIN, 1865/68
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Many other people cared for children and helped them by setting up schools so that they could be educated. These people became Christ's living Body active in the schools that they established. They helped the boys and girls who came to their schools to be the hands and eyes of Christ to all the people around them.

Get into groups of 2 or 3. Choose one of the people named below and find out about him/her. Compile a short presentation or fact file and share it with your class.

Catherine McAuley
Ignatius of Loyola
Mary Ward
Nano Nagle

Blessed Ignatius Rice
St Louise de Marillac
St Jean Baptiste De la Salle



We Give Thanks For Those Who Make Christ's Living Body Active in Our School

We have many people who help us, who care for us and who share their time and talents with us. They help to make Christ's living Body active in our school.

Draw or write the names of the people who help to do this in your school in the scroll below:



TUESDAY

Pray Together:

God the Father Almighty,
We praise you, we thank you, we give you glory for the gifted and talented teachers, classroom assistants and staff who share our life and stories here in our school.

We are grateful that they are signs to us of Christ's living Body active in our school. Continue to bless them in their work, and keep them faithful to your teaching, now and always. Amen.



Wednesday: Assembly to Honour and Celebrate our Grandparents

This prayer could be celebrated in individual classrooms or as a whole school assembly.

You will need:

- Someone to lead the prayer time
- A guest book in which grandparents can sign their names as they arrive
- A grandparent and child to light the candle at the beginning of the prayer time
- A reader for the reflection on grandparents and for the Scripture reading
- Four readers for the Prayer of the Faithful.

A Sacred Space containing:

Candle; Bible; St Brigid's Cross and enough space to put photographs or pictures of those who cannot attend.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lighting of the Candle

Invite a grandparent and grandchild to come forward and light the candle. The child could hold the candle as the grandparent lights it.

The lighting of the candle is a reminder of God's presence, round and about us, through us, with us and in us. We give thanks for the light that Jesus brings to the world in which we live, and for the light that we are for one another.

Hymn:

- ▶ 'Christ is my Light' (*Alive-O3*, p.52; *Alive-O5*, p.23)
- ▶ 'Christ be our Light' (*Alive-O6*, p.110; *Alive-O7*, p.283; *Alive-O8*, p.273)

Leader: Today is a very special day. It is Grandparents' Day and we are blessed that so many grandparents could be with us for this celebration. We want to honour and celebrate you all for the important part that you play in the life of the community, but most significantly in the lives of the children who are sitting here beside you. You are very important to them, as we know they are to you. Let us listen for a moment to the names of those grandparents who are able to be with us today.

Calling of the names

Leader: Some grandparents cannot be with us today. We have asked children to bring photos of their grandparents with them and now we invite them to come forward and place their pictures in our Sacred Space.

As this is happening:

Leader: Some grandparents live far away and could not travel, others are sick at home or in hospital, and some are with God in heaven. We ask God to bless and take care of all the grandparents who cannot be with us. May they know that we love them very much.

Leader: Today is also the Feast of St Brigid, one of the patron Saints of Ireland. We honour her memory today as we sing:

Sing: We sing a song to Brigid.

(*Alive-O* p.138, *Alive-O2*, p.155 *Alive-O5* p.377, *Alive-O6*, p.371)

Leader: Loving God, you called Saint Brigid to teach those around her to love, through the way she lived her life: caring for those in need, feeding the hungry and giving shelter to those who had none. Grant each one of us the same generous spirit, so that we too, may show your love to all. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Now let us listen to God's word to us on this day.

Reader: A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians:

This is what I pray kneeling before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The Word of the Lord.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: We know that God always listens to us when we pray and so we bring our prayers before him ...

Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader 1: We pray for all who care for us; the staff of our school, our parents, grandparents and our families. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

Reader 2: We pray for our teachers; that they may continue to help us be the best that we can be. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

Reader 3: We pray for children everywhere; that their homes and schools are places where they know that they are loved and cared for always. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

Reader 4: We pray for all who have died; we remember especially grandparents and all those we loved, may they be at peace with God in his heavenly home. *Let us pray to the Lord.*

Leader: We take these prayers and the prayers of our hearts and we offer them to God as we stand and pray together: **Our Father ...**

Final Blessing

As we go from this place we listen to the words of Blessed John Paul II:

'I leave you now with this prayer:

that the Lord Jesus will reveal himself to each one of you, that he will give you the strength to go out and profess that you are Christian, that he will show you that he alone can fill your hearts.

Accept his freedom and embrace his truth, and be messengers of the certainty that you have been truly liberated through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

This will be the new experience, the powerful experience, that will generate, through you, a more just society and a better world.

God bless you, and may the joy of Jesus be always with you.

Amen.'



Christ's Living Body Active in our Parish

Feast of St Brigid

There are many different stories about St Brigid and it is hard to separate fact from fiction. We are told that Brigid was born around 450AD in a place called Faughart, a few miles north of Dundalk in Co. Louth. This place has such strong connections with Brigid that it became known as *Fochard Bride*. Her father was a pagan chieftain who was called Dubhtach. Her mother, Brocca, was a Christian slave who was baptised by St Patrick.

Brigid was a very generous and kind person. When she was old enough, she helped to look after her father's house and she often gave away much of their food and clothes to people who needed them. Brigid was known for her generosity to the poor, and one story tells how, as a child, she once gave away her mother's whole store of butter. Knowing that this would get her into trouble she prayed that the store of butter would be replenished and her prayers were answered.

After some time she decided to dedicate her life to God, and with seven other young women she founded a convent in Kildare. She needed land for her community and so she went to the King of Leinster and told him that she would only need the land that her cloak would cover. The cloak grew and grew and spread over the whole of the Curragh. The name Kildare means 'church of the oak', and it is likely that there was already a place there where pagans worshipped. It is said that there was a sacred fire in Kildare which was kept burning by the pagans. Brigid kept this custom and the light of the fire came to be understood as the light of Christ. The flame of Brigid or *Solas Bhríde* still burns in Kildare today. By the time of Brigid's death around 525, Kildare had become an important centre of learning.

Brigid travelled by chariot all over Ireland. She is given credit for many miracles of healing, such as curing lepers and giving speech to those who could not talk. There are stories of her changing water into ale or stone into salt, and there are lots of other stories about how much she loved animals. She also managed to get people who had been taken captive released. Perhaps the best known story is of her visit to a dying pagan chieftain. While she prayed, she took rushes from the floor and wove them into a cross. While she was weaving she told the chieftain all about Jesus and how he had died on the cross. The chieftain was baptised and became a Christian before he died. Brigid's crosses are made each St Brigid's Day.

Brigid was Christ's living Body in her world

Choose the words that best describe how Brigid was Christ's living Body active in her world. Put each word into a sentence that gives us more information about St Brigid and her mission to be like Christ in the parish.

Giving	Selfish	Caring	Irresponsible
Feeding	Unjust	Loving	Changing
Disrespectful	Helpful	Freeing	Prayerful



Think about!

How could the story of St Brigid help us to be Christ's living Body in our parish? make a list.

Are there things we do already to be Christ's living Body in the parish.

Find the following words in the word search. Then see how many of these activities you or your class do in your parish.

CAKE SALE

HELPING

TIDY TOWNS

CHURCH CHOIR

PRAYING

VOLUNTEER

GREEN FLAG

SERVER

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

Thursday: Christ's Living Body Active in our Country

Patron Saints

What is a Patron Saint?

Yesterday was the feast of St Brigid and she is one of the three Patron Saints of Ireland. The other two are Saint Patrick and Saint Columba. A patron saint is chosen as a special protector or guardian for something that is important to us. There are patron saints of churches, parishes, schools, countries, illnesses and of all kinds of jobs. In fact, there can be a patron saint of anything that is important to someone. The custom of having patron saints started almost 1,700 years ago.

How are Patron Saints made?

A pope can make or name a patron saint, but sometimes they are chosen by a person or a group. Usually the person or group looking for a patron explore the lives of saints to see if they can find some connection between the saint and their particular interest or need. For example, Francis of Assisi loved nature and so he is patron of ecologists. Francis de Sales was a writer and so he is patron of journalists and writers. St Andrew, who was one of the twelve apostles, is the patron saint of Scotland, because legend tells us that he was buried there.

Find out:

- Who is the patron saint of your school or your parish?
- Why do you think they were chosen for this particular job?
- Are there any other saints associated with your parish?
- Who is the patron saint for your diocese?
- Choose a patron saint for your class.
- If you or your parents were born outside of Ireland, find out about the patron saint of that country.
- Make a fact file for some of the saints that you have learned about.

Match the Patron Saint to their country or their job

ST ANDREW

ST GEORGE

ST DAVID

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ST BLAISE

ST CLARE

ECOLOGISTS

TELEVISION

ENGLAND

SORE THROATS

WALES

SCOTLAND

Christ's Living Body Active in Our Country



On 10–17 June, 2012, Dublin is celebrating the 50th International Eucharistic Congress. This congress will be a gathering of Catholics from all over the world and from our twenty-six dioceses here in Ireland. The theme of the congress is ‘The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with One Another’.

The word ‘Eucharist’ means ‘thanksgiving’. It is another word for Holy Communion. Can you think back to the day when you made your First Holy Communion? What do you remember about that day? Write about it in the box below.

The last Eucharistic Congress that was held in Ireland was in 1932. Many things have changed in our country since then. Many things have changed in how we celebrate our First Holy Communion too. Interview a parent, grandparent or older person in your community about their First Holy Communion. Write an account of it in the box below. Then compare it to your own experience.

Look up www.iec.2012.ie for more information on the International Eucharistic Congress. Perhaps you and your family might like to come to the closing Mass called the Statio Orbis which will be held in Croke Park on 17 June, 2012.



Images courtesy of: Trócaire and jackie@missionsocieties.ie

Friday: Christ's Living Body Active in Our World

Feast of St Blaise

So far this week, we have looked at how we can work as active members of Christ's Body in our home, our school, our parish and our country. Today, we will look at how we can work together to make Jesus' presence felt in our world.

Today is the feast of St Blaise. Use the key below to discover how St Blaise played his part as the Body of Christ active in the world.



Blaise

priest

Jesus

world

 became a  because he wanted
 to bring God's love to the .
 He wanted people to know that we
 all have a part to play as
's Body, active in our . As
 well as being a ,  was
 also a doctor. He knew that .
 was a healer and that he had
 cured many people who were sick. .
 wanted to help people too. He knew
 that  needed him to be his
 hands and feet in the .

There are many other organisations that work as Christ's Body in the world today. Below are web links for some of them. Look at these websites with your class or your family and answer the questions below:

TROCAIRE

Working for a Just World

<http://www.trocaire.org/>

Click into the 'What We Do' section.

Fill in the blanks to read the five issues that Trócaire focuses on:

1. E _____ p _____ a _____ h _____
2. F _____ f _____ j _____
3. S _____ w _____
4. O _____ D _____
5. T _____ H _____



<http://www.wmi.ie/go/chc>

Click into the 'Pray Together' section.

Fill in the blanks to pray the Mission Prayer:

- M__y a__ c_____
- I__ t__ w_____
- S _____ l _____
- S _____ f _____
- a__ l_____
- I__ t__ p_____
- O__ G _____ l _____
- N _____ a__ f _____ . A _____ .



Over To You!

Trócaire and Children Helping Children are playing their part as Christ's living Body active in our world. What can you do in your own life? Choose one of the activities below or add your own.

I can make Christ's living Body active in the world by ...

- Making a collection of clothes for people in need
- Learning more about charities like Trócaire and Children Helping Children
- Praying for children and families who live in poverty
- Raising money for charity in a fun and interesting way
- Telling others about issues that affect people in developing countries
- Praying for people who work for justice in the world
- _____

We focus today on Christ's living Body active in our world. Irish people are recognised all across the world as friendly, caring and generous people. In the last few years, we have welcomed many new friends to Ireland from other countries. We give thanks to God for their friendship, and all the gifts that they bring to us. Together, we play our part as Christ's living Body active in our world.

We can say, 'Thank you God!' in many different languages. Saying the same thing in different ways shows how we are all part of Christ's living Body, and that we all have our own part to play.

Match the languages in the right-hand column with the phrases on the left.

Together, we thank God for the gift of each other.

- ¡Gracias a Dios!
- Buíochas le Dia!
- Salamat sa Diyos!
- Merci Dieu!
- Danke Gott!
- Ringrazio Dio
- Paldies Dievam
- Dzi kuj Bogu
- Obrigado Deus
- Hvala Bogu

- Gaeilge
- French
- Filipino
- German
- Italian
- Latican
- Polish
- Portugese
- Slovenian
- Spanish

Assembly to Close Catholic Schools Week

You will need:

- Someone to lead the assembly
- One child to read the prayer of St Teresa outlined below
- A number of children willing to share how they made Christ's living Body active in their homes this week (see page 13)
- A sacred space containing a candle, a Bible, a cross and some holy water
- A CD or suitable music accompaniment for one of the following songs:
 - ▶ 'One Won't Do!' (Alive-O2)
 - ▶ 'Body of Christ' (Alive-O6)

Leader: Good morning everyone, and welcome to our assembly, which marks the end of Catholic Schools Week. We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Let us listen to a prayer written by St Teresa of Ávila:

Reader: Christ has no body now on earth, but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks out
Christ's compassion to the world.
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good,
and yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now.

Leader: These words can help us to understand what it means when we say we are the Body of Christ. Jesus relies on us, as his followers, to bring his love to the world. During this week, we have made a special effort to show that Christ is active in our world through us. Let us listen to some of the things we have done:

[Some children might like to summarise their activities at this point. You could also scan their words or pictures from page 16 and use a digital projector to show them to those who have gathered.]

Leader: We thank God for our Catholic school, and for all who work and learn in it. We pray that we will always respond to Jesus' call to us to play our part as his living Body, active in our world. Let us make this prayer to our Father in heaven. **Our Father ...**

Leader: We know that our Body is Christ's Body. We need our bodies to bring Christ's love to world. So, we are going to bless each other's hands, and ask God to help us all to use our hands to do his work and to bring his love to the world.

[Invite children to turn to the person next to them, and to make the sign of the cross on the palms of each other's hands. Ask them to say the words 'Use your hands as Christ would' or similar as they do so.]

Sing: Choose a song as listed above, or a suitable alternative.



IEC 2  12

**Christ's Living Body
Active In Our World**

30 January–5 February 2012



Cut along the dotted line and
wrap around your prayer candle.
Be sure to remove wrapper before
candle burns to level of paper.

Christ's Living Body Active in Our World

Resources for the Primary School Community: Home, School & Parish

29 January–4 February 2012