



Catholic Schools Week 2018

Catholic Schools: Called to Be a Family of Families



DUBLIN, IRELAND
**WORLD
MEETING of
FAMILIES**

21-26 AUGUST 2018

Catholic Schools: Called to be a Family of Families

Assembly Resources

Assemblies are important times in the life of our school as they allow the school to gather together, to share information, to celebrate and to pray.

As we prepare for the World Meeting of Families, we reflect that we are called to be a family of families. These assemblies encourage us to think of the school family – the teachers, pupils and parents, the support staff, the grandparents and childminders, school governors and the wider family of parishioners, nursery schools, therapists and counsellors who come into our schools and help our children.

Those tasked with preparing assemblies should consider the following in their preparations;

- Take time to prepare the assemblies in advance, creating sacred spaces made up of the children's own artwork and prayers.
- Consider hosting the assembly in the parish church allowing the children to experience a liturgy in the church.
- Invite people to participate in the celebration with you – canteen staff, school governors, bus drivers, parish pastoral council members, childminders. This allows children to see and appreciate the wider family of the school.





Moment One: Families of Hope

Open your heart to faith and God will do the rest

Checklist

For the Sacred Space

- Prayer Wall (Post-its)
- Paschal (large) Candle
- Bible
- Hope, Faith, Love and Joy Candles
- Lighter for candle
- Tapers to light four candles

People

- Prayer Leader
- Five pupils to carry the Bible and the Hope, Faith, Love and Joy Candles
- Four people to say prayer, and light candles
- Minister of the Word
- Five children to read Prayers of Intercession
- Accompanist for music/choir leader

Prayer Space – Prayer Wall

Invite each member of the school community to write a prayer of hope for their family on a Post-it. Create a prayer wall based on the theme of World Meeting of Families, 'The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World'.

Use the World Meeting of Families promotional banners alongside the prayer wall to highlight the meeting and the Papal Visit.



Leader: Invite the pupils to stand for the opening song. During the song, ask the pupils to bring the candles and Bible to the prayer space.

Opening Song:

Christ be our light.

Welcome Address:

We begin by lighting our paschal candle to remind us that God is with us.

A few moments of silence.

Today we come together as a school family to celebrate family life and to pray for all those we love. The family is where we experience love and care, where we belong, where we learn to share and treat others with respect. Our families come in all shapes and sizes. The most important part of being family is the love and care we give to one another. God our Father loves us through the people we call family.

Today we share our hopes and dreams for our own families and the future of families throughout the world.

Pope Francis, writing in the letter the Joy of Love (*Amoris Laetitia*, 88) tells us to have hope. Hope that things can change for the better. 'It does involve realizing that, though things may not always turn out as we wish, God may well make crooked lines straight and draw some good from the evil we endure in this world.'

Opening Prayer:

World Meeting of Families Official Prayer

Gathering Ritual:

On the prayer space there are four unlit candles. Place the paschal candle/large candle in a prominent place as the four candles will be lit from this one.

Pupil: We welcome all who have come to share in this special prayer assembly with us. We gather to say thanks to God.

We offer you the light of hope. Carry this light of hope in your heart and share God's love in everything you say and do.

A student, using a taper, lights the first candle from the paschal candle.

Parent: We offer you the light of love. Carry this light of love with you wherever you go

and remember that there will always be a light burning for you at home.

A parent lights the second candle from the paschal candle.

Member of staff: We offer you the light of joy. Carry this light of joy out into the world; through our relationships with family and friends, in our work and play and in our service to others.

A member of staff lights the third candle from the Paschal Candle.

Parish member: We offer you the light of faith. Carry this light of faith out into the world and remember to be part of the Christian community and be a light for all the world.

A parish member lights the fourth candle from the Paschal Candle.

Penitential Reflection:

Leader: Jesus said, 'If you are about to come before God to pray, and then remember that you have quarrelled with someone, first go away, settle your argument and make your peace with them.' (Mt 5:23-6)

If we have hurt anyone by our words or action.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

If we have ignored someone and made him or her feel unloved. Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

If we have been unforgiving and filled with anger. Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Scripture Reading:

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah (31:3-4; 29:11-13)

The Lord has this to say to you today. I have loved you with an everlasting love and I am constant in my affection for you. I will build you up and I will protect you in good times and in bad. I have plans in my heart for you: plans for peace not disaster; plans to give you a future and a reason to hope. And remember, when you call upon me and come to pray to me I will hear you. You will seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you. The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



Real life story

Tattoos on the Heart by Gregory Boyle SJ

For over twenty years, Fr Gregory Boyle, a Jesuit priest, has run Homeboy Industries, a gang-intervention programme in the Boyle Heights neighbourhood of Los Angeles, the gang capital of the world. In his book, *Tattoos on the Heart*, he recalls his experiences of working in the ghetto and shares some heart-rending, hilarious and heart-warming stories of the lives of the people living here. In this extract from *Tattoos on the Heart* we hear Bandit's story, a story of love and hope.



Bandit's Story

Fifteen years ago, Bandit came to see me. He had been well named by his homies, being at home in all things illegal. He was 'down for his varrio' and put in time running up to cars and selling crack in Aliso Village. He spent a lot of time locked up and had always seemed impervious to help. But then that day, fifteen years ago, his resistance broke. He sat in my office and said he was 'tired of being tired'. I escorted him to one of our four job developers and, as luck would have it,

they located an entry-level job in a warehouse. Unskilled, low-paying, a first job.

Cut to fifteen years later, Bandit calls me near closing time on Friday. He now runs the warehouse, owns his own home, is married with three kids. I hadn't heard from him in some time. No news is usually good news with homies. He speaks in something like a breathless panic.

'Father G, ya gotta bless my daughter.'

'Is she okay?' I ask. 'I mean, is she sick – or in the hospital?'

'No, no,' he says, 'on Sunday, she's goin' to college. But she's my little girl and I'm scared for her. So do ya think you could give her a little send-off blessing?'

I schedule them to come the next day to Dolores Mission, where I have baptisms at one o'clock. Bandit, his wife and three kids, including the college-bound Carolina, arrive at 12.30. I situate them all in front of the altar, Carolina planted in the middle. We encircle her, and I guide them to place their hands on her head or shoulder, to touch her as we close our eyes and bow our heads. Then, as homies would say, I do a 'long-ass prayer,' and before you know it, we all become cry-babies sniffing our way through this thing.

I'm not entirely sure why we're all crying, except, I suppose, for the fact that Bandit and his wife don't know anybody who's gone to college – except, I guess, me. Certainly no one in either one of their families. So we end the prayer, and we laugh at how mushy we all just got. Wiping our tears, I turn to Carolina and ask, 'So, what are ya gonna study at Humboldt college?'

She says without missing a beat, 'Forensic psychology.'

'Daamn, forensic psychology?'

Bandit chimes in, 'Yeah, she wants to study the criminal mind.'





Silence.

Carolina turns slowly to Bandit, holds up one hand, and points to her dad, her pointing finger blocked by her other hand, so he won't notice. We all notice and howl and Bandit says, 'Yeah, I'm gonna be her first subject!'

We laugh and walk to the car. Everyone piles in, but Bandit hangs back. 'Can I tell you something, dog?' I ask, standing in the parking lot. 'I give you credit for the man you've chosen to become. I'm proud of you.'

'*Sabes qué?*' he says, eyes watering, 'I'm proud of myself. All my life, people called me a lowlife, a *bueno para nada* (good for nothing). I guess I showed 'em.'

I guess he did.

And the soul feels its worth.

(Gregory Boyle, SJ, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, New York: Free Press, 2010, p. 197)

Prayers of Intercession:

Leader: With love in our hearts, let us unite as one family to ask God for all our needs.

1. We pray for the Church and the World Meeting of Families, that it will be a time of celebration and a beacon of hope for families around the world. Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
2. Loving God, the mistakes we make, both in and outside the home, can cause hurt to others. We ask that we become more aware of those mistakes, more open to learning from them so that we can avoid repeating them. Help us to see when we need to ask you and others for forgiveness. Let us trust that you are always offering us a chance to start again. Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
3. Loving God, it is so easy to get caught up in the busyness of life and to miss that those around us need support. Help us to be sensitive to the help they need, and to offer it in the way that it is needed and without fuss. Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
4. Loving God, help us to recognise and to share the gift of your love in small and large acts of kindness and care. May we be particularly sensitive to the needs of families and to those who are estranged from their families. Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
5. Lord we pray for people who are driven from their homes, their families and their lands. May they find peace in their hearts and hope for the future. Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
6. Lord, we pray for all the people who are special to us who have died. May we take comfort and hope in knowing that everyone who dies in Christ will rise to new life and be with him forever. Bless them and bless us until we are all together again. Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.



Leader: Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

A few moments of silence.

Lord God, we ask you to receive our prayers and answer them according to your holy will. We make these prayers through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection:

Our Deepest Fear

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our Light, not our Darkness that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,
talented and fabulous?
Actually, who are we not to be?

You are a child of God.
Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people
won't feel insecure around you.
We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It is not just in some of us – it is in everyone.
And when we let our own Light shine,
we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.

(Marianne Williamson, A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of 'A Course in Miracles')

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank you for our families.
Help us always to treasure and appreciate what we have so generously been given.
Help us always to hope in you.
As we grow together in your love.
Amen.

Together let us pray in the words our saviour taught us,
Our Father ...

Song:

'In Christ Alone'