



# Connecting Parish and School



A guide for Primary School visitations by priests  
and other parish personnel



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**A guide for Primary School visitations  
by priests and other parish personnel**

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## **What you should know about your role before you begin:**

- You will be made welcome in the school and teachers will be glad of your support. The CPSMA *Handbook* states that 'the local priest should visit the school regularly. By arrangement with the principal teacher and the other teachers he should be given access to all classes. This should normally take place during the religious instruction period but may be facilitated outside of that time, if necessary'.<sup>4</sup>
- You will be viewed as a representative of the parish and as a person to encourage the teaching of Religious Education and, consequently, frequent visits will be expected, especially at peak religious events during the school year. The Catholic primary school 'identifies itself with its parish, working closely with the local priest (or a priest) who visits the school frequently'.<sup>5</sup>
- You are an important visitor to the primary school; you are not a teacher and should never take it upon yourself to be alone in the class with the pupils. Insist, if necessary, that the teacher remain in the room during your visit to the class as 'it is essential that [the] supervision [of pupils] is undertaken by a person trained to supervise in large numbers. This will in most cases mean a teacher'.<sup>6</sup>
- Interestingly, between the years 2002 and 2012, there was a 10% increase in the number of primary school teachers who hold the view that 'the Church should support the school and family in the religious formation of the child'.<sup>7</sup> Your visit is necessary and required.
- All activities involving children should be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Diocesan Child Safeguarding and Protection Policies and Procedures.

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4 Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association, Board of Management – Handbook 2012, p. 93.

5 Catholic Primary Schools' Management Association, Board of Management – Handbook 2012, p. 47.

6 <https://allianz.ie/schools-insurance/safety-security/pupil-supervision/>

7 INTO, Religion in Primary Schools: Analysis of Data Report, p. 24.

**Section 1:**  
**Visiting Infant Classes**  
**(Primary 1 and Primary 2)**

## **What you should know about children in Infant Classes (P1 and P2) before you begin:**

- These children range in age from four to six years.
- The class may be all boys, all girls or a mixture of boys and girls.
- These children do not engage with homilies – no matter how good you are at delivering them. They prefer to talk rather than to listen.
- Their reading and writing skills are minimal.
- Their attention span is short.
- They learn through their senses and prefer 'doing' to 'listening'.
- They 'love' their teacher, whom they regard as 'all knowing'.
- They can be very egocentric, talking about themselves, their pets, their holidays, their relations and friends, etc.
- They like playing and they learn a lot through play.
- They like to be praised. 'Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí.'
- They can vary greatly in their capacity to express themselves orally.
- They move a lot – sometimes where they are sitting, around the classroom or in and out to the bathroom. Their 'body language' might indicate that they are tired of listening.
- They may address you as 'Teacher'.
- Depending on the school, the children you meet may be from different cultural, linguistic, Christian or other faith backgrounds. If you are visiting the class outside of the timetabled RE period, check first with the class teacher as to whether or not some children need to be excused from participating in your ministry.



### **What you should know about the *Grow in Love* programme when visiting Infant Classes (P1 and P2):**

- The RE programme is called *Grow in Love*.
- *Grow in Love* is written in the light of the new RE Curriculum for Ireland.<sup>8</sup>
- The *Grow in Love* programme is designed to be used both in school and at home.
- *Grow in Love* also provides links with the local parish community.
- The Teacher Kit<sup>9</sup> contains a Teacher's Manual with resources, a music CD, a Pupil's Book, a set of posters **and** an access code for free online resources. Buy a parish copy of the Teacher Kit for easy access to all of the resources.
- This publication draws heavily from material provided in the relevant Teacher's Manual.
- Free online resources are available at [www.growinlove.ie](http://www.growinlove.ie), which you can download and photocopy as an aid to your school visit.
- Each *Grow in Love* programme is divided into a number of themes, which allows you to take a thematic, cross-curricular approach to your pastoral visit. If you are unsure about what this means, ask the teacher.
- The programme has been vetted and approved by a committee of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

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8 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (Dublin: Veritas, 2015).

9 See [www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love-teacher-kit-junior-infants.html](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love-teacher-kit-junior-infants.html)

### **The basic preparations and skills required when visiting Infant Classes (P1 and P2):**

- Arrive on time. If you need to meet the principal/secretary, then give yourself extra time. Enter the classroom as RE is about to start.
- Dress appropriately so that your role is evident and respected.
- Have your visit well structured and prepared. Never 'wing it'! Detailed help with preparation is available further on in this publication.
- Introduce yourself to the children. Stay at the top of the room and do not venture in among the children/tables.
- When questioning the class, only use open questions. Open questions are likely to receive long answers and they usually start with 'W', e.g. Who, What, Where, When, Why. Closed questions can be answered by 'Yes' or 'No'. If you notice the class responding *en masse* with 'Yes Teacher/Father' or 'No Teacher/Father', then change your question style.
- Do not write on any classroom surface – blackboard, whiteboard, flip chart, etc. Writing on these surfaces is a skill that you probably don't possess, and infant children have minimal reading skills.
- Do not read from any textbook. If you wish to acquaint the children with a piece of Scripture, tell them a story etc., then narrate the Scripture verse or passage from memory. A textbook will only create a barrier between you and the class.
- If you are using pictures/illustrations, then make sure that they are suitable and large enough for children at the back of the room to see.
- If you are using any type of electronic equipment, then ensure that you know how to plug it in and how to operate it before you visit the classroom. Do not 'learn on the job' or you will be dealing with chaos.
- Always have some activity that allows the children to participate in your visit.
- Always pray with the children – more on this anon.

## **Format of RE Visit Plans for all school visits**

Planning your classroom visit is essential. Below is a suggested format for your school visit which you will fill out in advance. The example below is filled out for you as an aid. A blank template is available on the next page for your continued use.

**School Name:** St. Patrick's, Donaghmore

**Date:** 30-09-2021

**Class/Teacher:** Junior Infants (P1)/ Miss Brenda Maguire

**Topic:** We are all one family. (From Pupil's Book, page 9)

**Objective of Visit:** That the children will learn how important it is to show love to others.

**Resources:** Three bags of 'money'; whiteboard picture of St Nicholas if possible (ask teacher); candle; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:** I will begin my session with the children by dramatically narrating to them the story of St Nicholas and how he helped three poor sisters. I will use my three money bags as props. See <https://www.biography.com/religious-figure/saint-nicholas>. After the story I will ask the children some open questions to deepen the message I hope to convey.

**Development:** My session will continue by asking the children to draw a picture of St Nicholas in their RE copy.

**Closure:** My visit to the class will be brought to a close by lighting my candle (flame reminding us that God is alive and with us) and by asking the children to repeat the *Morning Prayer* after me, phrase by phrase (see page 9 of the Pupil's Book).

**Evaluation:** (To be carried out after the visit.) I was pleased but in future I would...

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) VISIT PLAN TEMPLATE**

**SCHOOL NAME:**

**DATE:**

**CLASS/TEACHER:**

**TOPIC:**

**OBJECTIVE OF VISIT:**

**RESOURCES:**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

**CLOSURE:**

**EVALUATION:**

## **Explanatory Notes on the 'Visit Plan'**

- There are many advantages to keeping a 'visit plan'. If you visit this class again during the year, or in subsequent years, you will have a record of what you did and of what you learned (your evaluation).
- You will have a record of the frequency of your visits to various classes. Don't confine your school visits to classes that are preparing for the reception of sacraments.
- The core of the 'Visit Plan' contains three elements: the introduction, the development and the closure.
- The 'Introduction' might make use of a piece of Scripture, a secular story, a personal experience/recollection, a piece of music from the class CD, a poem, an image, a piece of video, one of the RE posters from the Teacher Kit, religious trinkets that you purchased, a game, etc.
- The 'Development' might involve the children in an art/craft activity, working on an activity from their textbook, working on an activity that you downloaded from the *Grow in Love* free online resources, practising a skill (genuflecting, receiving Communion, signing on forehead-lips-heart, etc.), repeating a prayer formula, chatting, etc.
- The 'Closure' should always consist of a prayer experience. The *Grow in Love* programme uses different expressions of prayer, e.g. vocal prayer (many different forms), meditative prayer (guided imagination), contemplative prayer (silent repetition), liturgical prayer, prayer through movement/mime, etc. The programme also uses different forms of prayer, e.g. prayer of petition, thanksgiving, praise, sorrow, repentance, intercession, etc.
- As prayer is a central element of the programme and one that you will engage with regularly, it will now be treated separately.

## Prayer in the Primary School

- Prayer is at the heart of Religious Education. 'The ultimate goal is to teach children how to develop their relationship with God through prayer, so that they are drawn into the very life of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity).'<sup>10</sup>
- The mystery of the faith 'requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer'.<sup>11</sup>
- You have easy access to a lot of practical aids that will help you engage primary school children in prayer. These include: a lighted candle, a Bible (on a stand), the Lectionary, good quality pictures and statues, figures from the church crib, icons, liturgical vessels, cross/crucifix, vestments, holy water, holy oils, anointing, blessings, incense, a prayer cloth/shawl, music, songs, hymns, chants, silence, the class prayer space, etc.
- The following *Prayer Gestures* are listed in the curriculum to be taught to infant classes: Sign of the Cross, genuflecting, sitting, kneeling, standing, and prayer with movement. You might use some of these gestures when praying with the children.
- The following *Formal Prayers* are listed in the curriculum to be taught to infant classes: Sign of the Cross, prayer to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Glory be to the Father, Hail Mary, Our Father, Morning Prayer, Night Prayer, Grace before and after meals, Guardian Angel prayer and some responses at Mass (Amen, Peace be with you, Thanks be to God, Greeting the Gospel). Again, you might use some of these.
- The following *Additional Prayers* are also listed for infant classes: some psalms, prayers for the dead, sick and dying, prayers for parents and families, and prayer to Jesus, Mary and the Holy Family.<sup>12</sup>

10 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 19.

11 John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2558.

12 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 59.

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## **JUNIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 1**

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (Junior Infants/Primary 1)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (Junior Infants/Primary 1). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

### **Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>13</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>14</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In Junior Infants/Primary 1 the nine themes for the year are: My Family; Our World; Advent and Christmas; The Holy Family; Jesus; Holy Week and Easter; The Church; Water; We Give Thanks. The following seven seasonal themes are also dealt with: Autumn; In November, We Remember; St. Patrick; Lent; Mary; Summer; Grow in Love. When visiting Junior Infants/Primary 1, feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

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13 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

14 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.



# JUNIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 1

## LATE OCTOBER VISIT

---

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Junior Infants (P1)/(Name)

**Topic:** As the children have already engaged with the themes on 'My Family' and 'Our World', your topic for this visit is: 'My family and my world'.

**Objective of Visit:** To welcome the children to the school and to introduce yourself and your role to them.

**Resources:** A few personal items (possibly); an alb; clerical collar; a breviary. If you are a lay person, explain on whose authority you visit the class and your training, etc. A candle; matches/lighter.

### **Introduction:**

- Welcome the children to the school and ask them to share what they like best about school so far.
- Tell them your name and describe your role/ministry.
- Ask them to share with you what they have learned about 'My Family' and 'Our World'. Remember to use open questions (Who? What? Why?)

### **Development:**

- Reveal a few personal details about yourself – details you don't mind the entire parish knowing! Do this in the context of the two themes that the children have already engaged with.

- Put on an alb (display a white shawl) and explain the connection with Baptism. Tell the children why and when you wear it (why it is used). You might also give an explanation about your clerical collar/role/position.
- 'Show and Tell' about your breviary (prayer book) and mention the importance of prayer in your life.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P1 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Loving God, you created me and (*name of teacher*), all the children in this class and everything in the world. Let us praise and thank God by saying together 'Glory Be'.

**All:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**Priest/Visitor:** For all those who care for us at home, let's say 'Glory Be'.

**All:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**Priest/Visitor:** For all the beautiful plants and animals in our world, let's say 'Glory Be'.

**All:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**Priest/Visitor:** For the beautiful colours of autumn, let's say 'Glory Be'.

**All:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**Priest/Visitor:** *(Invite the children to suggest other things we should glorify God for.)* Loving God, thank you for our beautiful world and all the people in it. Help us to take care of them all.

Let us finish our prayer using God's name.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:**

To be carried out privately after the visit.

## JUNIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 1

### PRE-CHRISTMAS VISIT

---

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Junior Infants (P1)/(Name)

**Topic:** As the children have already engaged with the themes on 'In November, We Remember' and 'Advent and Christmas', your topic for this visit is: 'Angels help us prepare to receive a great gift'.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children might focus on the wonder and mystery surrounding the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

**Resources:** An angel figure from the parish crib; incense sticks; matches; the figure of Mary from the crib; the figure of Joseph from the crib; the figure of a shepherd from the crib.

#### **Introduction:**

- Place the angel figure on the teacher's table, covered with a cloth, and ask the children to guess what it is.
- After a few children have guessed, slowly remove the cloth to reveal the angel. If the children do not recognise the figure, tell them it is an angel.
- Now light the incense sticks around the angel, telling the children that you are doing so because angels are special helpers sent by God.

#### **Development:**

- Tell the children that you are going to tell them four things about angels. Have everyone in the class put up one finger in the air to indicate the first item. Now tell the children that God sent an angel

from heaven to tell Mary that she was going to be the mother of the baby Jesus. Show the figure of Mary from the crib.

- Have everyone in the class put up two fingers in the air to indicate the second item. Now tell the children that God sent an angel from heaven to tell Joseph that he was to mind Mary. Show the figure of Joseph from the crib.
- Have everyone in the class put up three fingers in the air to indicate the third item. Now tell the children that God sent an angel from heaven to tell the shepherds where the baby Jesus would be born. Show the figure of a shepherd from the crib.
- Now have everyone in the class point to themselves and tell them that God has sent an angel to everyone in the room to help and protect them.

#### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Remind the children that the crib figures in the room are signs that God always loves us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P1 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** God has given everyone in this room an angel to watch over and protect them. Angels also had special jobs at the very first Christmas. Let us all say together the prayer to our guardian angel.

**All:** Angel sent by God to guide me,  
Be my light and walk beside me;  
Be my guardian and protect me;  
On the path of life direct me.  
Amen.

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## JUNIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 1

### END-OF-FEBRUARY VISIT

---

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Junior Infants (P1)/(Name)

**Topic:** Jesus is the embodiment of love and forgiveness

**Object of Visit:** That the children will come to know Jesus as a loving and forgiving person.

**Resources:** A CD player; Track 10 (Jesus Loves Children) of the Junior Infants religion CD; the Junior Infants/Primary 1 Teacher's Manual; a representation of Jesus; large candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Play the song 'Jesus Loves Children' for the class and, while they are listening, ask the children to pick out the most important words that they hear. The words of the song are: *Jesus sat down in the shade of a tree, and said to the children 'come sit by me.' They sat at his feet and he touched them and smiled, and told them how much he loved each little child. He told them of God the Father above who cares for us with such kindness and love. So come little children let's all sing a song, because Jesus loves you all day long.* (See page 148 of the Teacher's Manual.)
- Ask the children to share their 'most important' words with you. Hopefully some children will supply 'loved', 'cares', 'kindness', 'love' or 'loves'.
- Now play the song for a second time. If the children have already learned it, ask them to sing along, but this time they are to count the number of times that 'love', 'loves' etc. is mentioned.

**Development:**

- Now tell the children that the word 'love' is used in the song because Jesus and God his Father are loving and forgiving.
- Ask the children to finish the following sentences for you:
  1. The love of Jesus is as big as ...
  2. The love of Jesus is as strong as ...
  3. The love of Jesus is as near as ...

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Display the representation of Jesus and light the candle, telling the children that it is a reminder of the love of Jesus.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P1 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Jesus, your love for us is as big as ... [*Use one of the words supplied.*]

Jesus, your love for us is as strong as ... [*ditto*].

Jesus, your love for us is as near as ... [*ditto*].

Together let us say: 'Thank you Jesus for your love.'

**All:** Thank you Jesus for your love.

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

# JUNIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 1

## PRE-EASTER VISIT

---

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Junior Infants (P1)/(Name)

**Topic:** The death and Resurrection of Jesus

**Objective of Visit:** To help the children become aware that Jesus died on the Cross but rose from the dead and is still with us.

**Resources:** Large cross (used at Easter Vigil); white cloth/sheet; candle; matches/lighter.

### **Introduction:**

- Display the large cross (used at the Easter Vigil) and ask the children the following questions:
  1. Who can tell me what this is?
  2. Where have you seen one of these? (*Hanging in classroom/school crest?*)
  3. When do we make the Sign of the Cross on ourselves (*demonstrate*)?
  4. Why do we remember the cross of Jesus?

### **Development:**

- In your own words, proclaim to the children the story of Jesus' death and Resurrection and tell them that Jesus is still with us.
- The material on pages 38-41 of the Pupil's Book may assist you in proclaiming this Good News.
- Drape the white cloth/sheet over the cross, telling the children that, when Jesus rose from the dead, the white burial cloth was all that remained in the tomb.



**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Display the cross, with the white cloth draped over it, and light the candle, telling the children that it is a reminder that Jesus is alive and with us still.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P1 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** The candle reminds us that God is with us. It reminds us too that Jesus is not dead. He is alive. We want to tell God that we are happy.

**All:** Alleluia! Alleluia! (*If the children have learned the song Alleluia, track 14, they might sing it as a response.*)

**Priest/Visitor:** Thank you, God, for being with us always.

**All:** Alleluia! Alleluia! [Or sing *Alleluia*.]

**Priest/Visitor:** Thank you, God, for raising Jesus to new life.

**All:** Alleluia! Alleluia! [Or sing *Alleluia*.]

**Priest/Visitor:** Thank you, God, for Easter.

**All:** Alleluia! Alleluia! [Or sing *Alleluia*.]

**Priest/Visitor:** 'Thank you, God, for Jesus' is the prayer we say. 'Thank you, God, for Jesus' we pray on Easter day.

**All:** Alleluia! Alleluia! [Or sing *Alleluia*.]

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Junior Infants (P1)/(Name)

**Topic:** End-of-year revision and reflection

**Objective of Visit:** To give the children the opportunity to reflect on what was learned during the year and to give thanks.

**Resources:** The CD with religious hymns/songs; a CD player; the Pupil's Book; the set of religion posters; pupils' art work in the classroom; candle; matches/lighter.

### **Introduction:**

- **Song:** Ask the children to pick their favourite hymn/song from their *Grow in Love* classes. Then ask them to sing this song/hymn, accompanying the track on the CD. (The teacher might operate the CD for you.)
- **Story:** Ask the children to identify their favourite story from their *Grow in Love* classes and to narrate it to you. (The set of class posters may help you here.)
- **Art:** Ask the children to open their textbooks at their favourite page and invite some volunteers to share their page and comments with you. (There is probably some art work on the walls of the classroom that you might comment favourably on.)

### **Development:**

- Drawing on what was mentioned in the 'Introduction' above, call out a list of what the children learned during the year. Ask the children to include now anything important that they forgot to mention.

- Remind the children that they learned a lot of prayers during the year and that now you would like to pray with them.

### **Closure:**

- Display the class religion CD, a Pupil's Book and the set of class posters open at a favourite picture. Then light your candle. The lit candle is a reminder that Jesus is with us now and always.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P1 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin by singing our favourite *Grow in Love* song. (*Teacher operates the CD player and the class sing along with their favourite track.*)

(*Children sing their favourite track together.*)

**Priest/Visitor:** Today we thank God for all the beautiful stories we heard during the year. We thank God especially for our favourite story (*mention it here*). Who would like to mention another story? (*Allow the children to mention their stories and you reply with: 'Thank you God for...'*)

**Priest/Visitor:** Today we also thank God for all the beautiful pictures we saw during the year. We thank God especially for our favourite picture (*mention it here*). Who would like to mention another picture? (*Allow the children to mention their pictures and you reply with: 'Thank you God for ...'*)

**Priest/Visitor:** Now to finish, we thank God for Jesus, Mary and Joseph; for all those at home who care for us, and for our teacher (*Name*), who is so good to us. May God bless us all now as I make the Sign of the Cross over the class.

**Children:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

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## **SENIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 2**

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (Senior Infants/Primary 2)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (Senior Infants/Primary 2). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

**Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>15</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>16</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In Senior Infants/Primary 2 the ten themes for the year are: Our World; We Belong; Advent and Christmas; The Holy Family; St Brigid and the Spring; Jesus; Holy Week and Easter; The Church; Baptism; Grow in Love. The following three seasonal themes are also dealt with: We Remember; Lent/Ash Wednesday; Mary. When visiting Senior Infants/Primary 2, feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

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15 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

16 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.

## SENIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 2

### LATE OCTOBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Senior Infants (P2)/(Name)

**Topic:** Caring for people and caring for creation

**Objective of Visit:** To introduce yourself and to explore creation and family in the context of 'trees'.

**Resources:** Three trees drawn on the blackboard/whiteboard (copy the tree on page 82 of the Teacher's Manual). If you are not good at drawing, then ask the teacher to draw the three trees. Candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Welcome the children back to school and ask them to share with you what is different/the same/easier/harder from last year.
- Tell them your name and describe your role/ministry.
- Tell them that you are aware that they have been learning about God's creation and about family and other people since they returned to school.

#### **Development:**

- Draw/have previously drawn three trees on the blackboard/whiteboard.
- Tell the children that the first tree is a 'tree of nature' and ask them to suggest various things that grow on trees. As various items are suggested, you or the teacher draws them on the first tree.

- Now tell the children that the second tree is a 'family tree' and ask them to suggest various people who should be on the 'family tree'. As various people are suggested, you or the teacher draws them on the second tree.
- Now tell the children that the third tree is a 'school tree' and ask them to suggest various people who should be on the 'school tree'. As various people are suggested, you or the teacher draws them on this third tree.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that, before you leave, you would like to pray with them about what is on the three trees. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P2 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us thank God for all the beautiful things that grow on trees. For branches, leaves, oranges, apples, blackberries, pears, peaches, cherries, coconuts, plums and chestnuts. Let's say together 'Thank you, God'.

**All:** Thank you, God.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us thank God for all the people on our family trees. For mummies, daddies, guardians, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, grandmas and grandads. Let's say together 'Thank you, God'.

**All:** Thank you, God.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us thank God for all those on our 'school tree'. For our teacher (*Name*) and all the other teachers, for our priest (*Name*), our cleaners, our caretaker, our secretary, our SNAs, our minders and our lollipop lady. Let's say together 'Thank you, God'.

**All:** Thank you, God.

**Priest/Visitor:** Now let us remember all those who are not on any of our trees. For people who feel that no one loves them, or who feel that they don't 'belong' to any family. Let's say together 'Help them, God'.

**All:** Help them, God.

**Priest/Visitor:** Amen.

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.



## SENIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 2

### PRE-CHRISTMAS VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Senior Infants (P2)/(Name)

**Topic:** How Mary prepared for the first Christmas

**Objective of Visit:** To help the children to honour Mary as a special person who was 'blessed among women'.

**Resources:** Class Advent wreath (it's part of the class preparation for Christmas); matches/lighter; statue of Mary from the church crib; figure of the infant Jesus from the church crib.

#### **Introduction:**

- Light the appropriate number of candles on the class Advent wreath. Question the children as to why we light candles and as to why we are lighting X amount this week.
- Display the figure of Mary from the church crib and ask the children a few questions: Who is this? Whose mother is she? Where would you usually see this figure? Why is she kneeling? Why are her hands joined/open?
- Place the figure of the infant Jesus beside the figure of Mary and ask the children to imagine and tell you what Mary is saying to herself as she looks at the baby Jesus.

#### **Development:**

- With the help of the children, recall the events of the Annunciation.
- With the help of the children, recall the events of the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

- With the help of the children, recall the events of the birth of Jesus in the stable in Bethlehem.

**Closure:** Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P2 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** As we look at the Advent wreath and at the two figures, we remember the night that Jesus was born. We think of Mary, the mother of Jesus. She looked after Jesus when he was a baby. Together let us say 'Thank you, God, for Mary'.

**All:** Thank you, God, for Mary.

**Priest/Visitor:** Mary fed Jesus and loved him and cared for him. She taught him his first words. Together let us say 'Thank you, God, for Mary'.

**All:** Thank you, God, for Mary.

**Priest/Visitor:** Mary helped Jesus to take his first steps. She told him stories and taught him how to say his prayers. Together let us say 'Thank you, God, for Mary'.

**All:** Thank you, God, for Mary.

**Priest/Visitor:** I think that since the beginning of Advent you have been learning how to pray the *Hail Mary* using actions. Teacher will now lead us to pray the *Hail Mary* using the actions you have learned. (*If the actions have not been taught, then finish the prayer session by reciting the Hail Mary.*)

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SENIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 2

FEBRUARY VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Senior Infants (P2)/(Name)

**Topic:** The Bible is a holy and precious book and it teaches us how to love God and others.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would respect the Bible as the Word of God and develop a sense of wonder in relation to Bible stories.

**Resources:** An ornamental copy of the Scriptures/Lectionary (pages from the Book of Kells); a beautiful cloth; book stand; a diary; photograph album; candle; matches/lighter.

### **Introduction:**

- The children have been engaged with story recently so begin by telling them what school was like when you were a pupil and share a school memory with the class.
- Now show them your 'diary' and briefly discuss with the children why people keep diaries.
- Next show the children your photograph album and briefly discuss with the children why people keep such albums.

### **Development:**

- Using the beautiful cloth, the book stand and the ornamental copy of the Scriptures/Lectionary, reverently display the Word of God. Tell the children what the book is and why you treat it with such respect.
- Recently the children have been working with various stories from the New Testament. Ask them to share their favourite 'Jesus story' with you and to say why they like it.

- Tell the class that Jesus did not keep a diary and that there were no photographs in Jesus' time. The Bible tells us what Jesus was like.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. One of the many gifts that Jesus left us was the prayer the class has been learning recently - the *Our Father*. This is a good opportunity to pray with the children the lines of this prayer that they have learned so far. Light the candle, reminding the class that it is a sign that God is alive and here with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P2 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** We know that God is always with us and that we can learn what God is like from the Bible. Jesus also showed us what God is like – by what he did and what he said. Jesus taught us a special prayer that we can all say together. Let's say this special prayer together now. You can repeat each line after me. (The children only know the first half of the prayer; make sure they repeat it 'line by line' after you.)

Our Father, who art in heaven, (*Children repeat*)  
 hallowed be thy name; (*Children repeat*)  
 thy kingdom come, (*Children repeat*)  
 thy will be done (*Children repeat*)  
 on earth as it is in heaven. (*Children repeat*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Senior Infants (P2)/(Name)

**Topic:** Holy Week and Easter

**Objective of Visit:** To help the children to become aware of and enter into the events of Holy Week and Easter.

**Resources:** Photocopy of page 43 of the Pupil's Book – draw Jesus and his friends at the Last Supper; photocopy of page 44 of the Pupil's Book – draw a picture of Jesus on the cross; an A4 piece of paper/card with the word 'Surprise!' written on it; a box/container with the following objects already in it: a piece of palm, some ashes, a packet of sweets, pitta bread and some grapes, a toy lamb, a crucifix, an Easter egg; candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Tell the children that you are going to play two guessing games with them today. The first guessing game is called 'Show and Tell' – you will show them a picture and they will tell you what they know about it. Show, in turn, the photocopy of page 43 containing the bread and grapes, then the photocopy of page 44 containing the drawing of the cross and, finally, your A4 paper/card with the word 'Surprise!' written on it (you will have to read and say this word for the children). Hopefully, your game will deal with the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus.

#### **Development:**

- Now tell the children that the second game is called 'What's in the Box?' Show the box containing the objects listed above and tell the

children that there are a number of items in the box that relate to Lent and Easter. Then ask them to guess 'What's in the Box?'.

- As the children guess an item, remove it from the box and ask the children to talk about it.
- If there are items that are not guessed by the children, remove them yourself, give the class a clue as to why they were in the box, and then ask them to talk about those items. (Sweets=giving up something for Lent; toy lamb=Jesus, the Lamb of God; Easter egg=new life/Resurrection.)

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light the candle, reminding the class that it is a sign that God is alive and here with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P2 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** During the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert, he showed us how to pray. Let us say together, 'Help us to live like Jesus.'

**All:** Help us to live like Jesus.

**Priest/Visitor:** At the Last Supper, Jesus showed us how to share. Let us say together, 'Help us to live like Jesus'.

**All:** Help us to live like Jesus.

**Priest/Visitor:** When Jesus died for us, he showed us how to love. Let us say together, 'Help us to live like Jesus'.

**All:** Help us to live like Jesus.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us finish by making the sign of Jesus' love for us.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SENIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 2

### SUMMER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Senior Infants (P2)/(Name)

**Topic:** End-of-year revision and reflection

**Objective of Visit:** To give the children the opportunity to reflect on what was learned during the year and to give thanks.

**Resources:** The CD with religious hymns/songs; a CD player; the Pupil's Book; the set of religion posters; pupils' art work in the classroom; candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Song: Ask the children to pick their favourite hymn/song from their *Grow in Love* classes. Then ask them to sing this song/hymn, accompanying the track on the CD. (The teacher might operate the CD for you.)
- Story: Ask the children to narrate their favourite story from their *Grow in Love* classes. (The class posters may help you here.)
- Art: Ask the children to open their textbooks at their favourite page and request some to share their page and comments with you. (There is probably some artwork on the walls of the classroom that you might comment favourably on.)

#### **Development:**

- Drawing on what was mentioned in the 'Introduction' above, call out a list of what the children learned during the year. Ask the children to include anything important that they forgot to mention.
- Remind the children that they learned a lot of prayers during the year and that now you would like to pray with them.

## SENIOR INFANTS/PRIMARY 2

### SUMMER VISIT

---

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Senior Infants (P2)/(Name)

**Topic:** End-of-year revision and reflection

**Objective of Visit:** To give the children the opportunity to reflect on what was learned during the year and to give thanks.

**Resources:** The CD with religious hymns/songs; a CD player; the Pupil's Book; the set of religion posters; pupils' art work in the classroom; candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Song: Ask the children to pick their favourite hymn/song from their *Grow in Love* classes. Then ask them to sing this song/hymn, accompanying the track on the CD. (The teacher might operate the CD for you.)
- Story: Ask the children to narrate their favourite story from their *Grow in Love* classes. (The class posters may help you here.)
- Art: Ask the children to open their textbooks at their favourite page and request some to share their page and comments with you. (There is probably some artwork on the walls of the classroom that you might comment favourably on.)

#### **Development:**

- Drawing on what was mentioned in the 'Introduction' above, call out a list of what the children learned during the year. Ask the children to include anything important that they forgot to mention.
- Remind the children that they learned a lot of prayers during the year and that now you would like to pray with them.



**Closure:**

- Display the class religion CD, a Pupil's Book and the set of class posters open at a favourite picture. Then light your candle. The lit candle is a reminder that Jesus is with us now and always.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer using God's name. (*Infants/P2 are used to this.*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us now sing our favourite *Grow in Love* song. (*Teacher operates the CD player and the class sing along with their favourite track.*)

(*Children sing their favourite track together.*)

**Priest/Visitor:** Today we thank God for all the beautiful stories we heard during the year. We thank God especially for our favourite story (*mention it here*). Who would like to mention another story?

**Children:** (*Allow the children to mention their stories and you reply with: 'Thank you God for...'*)

**Priest/Visitor:** Today we also thank God for all the beautiful pictures we saw during the year. We thank God especially for our favourite picture (*mention it here*). Who would like to mention another picture?

**Children:** (*Allow the children to mention their pictures and you reply with: 'Thank you God for ...'*)

**Priest/Visitor:** Now to finish we thank God for Jesus, Mary and Joseph; for all those at home who care for us, and for our teacher (*Name*) who is so good to us. May God bless us all now as I make the Sign of the Cross over the class.

**Children:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## **Section 2:**

### **Visiting First and Second Classes (Primary 3 and Primary 4)**

### **What you should know about children in First and Second Classes (P3 and P4) before you begin:**

- These children range in age from six to eight years.
- The class may be all boys, all girls or a mixture of boys and girls.
- These children do not engage with homilies – no matter how good you are at delivering them. They prefer to talk and do rather than to listen.
- They are moving from being egocentric to becoming aware of the needs and perspectives of others.
- They are fascinated by the world of nature.
- Groups are important to them, as they have a strong desire to belong.
- They can easily be motivated to self-directed learning.
- They have a capacity for wonder and awe and have a sense of mystery.
- They learn best by doing.
- They enjoy making friends and being a friend.
- They enjoy playing and role-play.
- They want to please parents, teachers and other significant adults.
- They can ask lots of questions.
- Their reading and writing skills are improving.
- They may address you as 'Teacher'.
- Depending on the school, the children you meet may be from different cultural, linguistic, Christian or other faith backgrounds. If you are visiting the class outside the timetabled RE period, check first with the class teacher as to whether or not some children need to be excused from participating in your ministry.

**What you should know about the *Grow in Love* programme when visiting First and Second Classes (P3 and P4):**

- The RE programme is called *Grow in Love*.
- *Grow in Love* is written in the light of the new RE Curriculum for Ireland.<sup>17</sup>
- The *Grow in Love* programme is designed to be used both in school and at home.
- *Grow in Love* also provides links with the local parish community.
- The Teacher Kit<sup>18</sup> contains a Teacher's Manual with resources, a music CD, a Pupil's Book, a set of posters **and** an access code for free online resources. Buy a parish copy of the Teacher Kit for easy access to all the resources.
- This publication draws heavily from material provided in the relevant Teacher's Manual.
- Some children (particularly in Northern Ireland) will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in First Class/P3. Most children will receive the sacrament in Second Class/P4.
- Most children celebrate their First Holy Communion in Second Class/P4.
- Free online resources are available at [www.growinlove.ie](http://www.growinlove.ie), which you can download and photocopy as an aid to your school visit.
- Each *Grow in Love* programme is divided into a number of themes, which allows you to take a thematic, cross-curricular approach to your pastoral visit. If you are unsure about what this means, ask the teacher.
- The programme has been vetted and approved by a committee of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

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17 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (Dublin: Veritas, 2015).

18 See [www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love--3-teacher-kit-1st-class-p94696-21188/](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love--3-teacher-kit-1st-class-p94696-21188/)

### **The basic preparations and skills required when visiting First and Second Classes (P3 and P4):**

- Arrive on time. If you need to meet the principal/secretary, then give yourself extra time. Enter the classroom as RE is about to start.
- Dress appropriately so that your role is evident and respected.
- Have your visit well-structured and prepared. Never 'wing it'! Detailed help with preparation is available further on in this publication.
- Introduce yourself to the children. Stay at the top of the room and do not venture in among the children/tables.
- When questioning the class, only use open questions. Open questions are likely to receive long answers and they usually start with 'W', e.g. Who, What, Where, When or Why. Closed questions can be answered by 'Yes' or 'No'. If you notice the class responding *en masse* with 'Yes Teacher/Father' or 'No Teacher/Father', then change your question style.
- Do not write on any classroom surface – blackboard, whiteboard, flip chart, etc. Writing on these surfaces is a skill that you probably don't possess.
- Do not read from any textbook. If you wish to acquaint the children with a piece of Scripture, tell them a story etc., then narrate the Scripture verse or passage from memory. A textbook will only create a barrier between you and the class.
- If you are using pictures/illustrations, then make sure that they are suitable and large enough for children at the back of the room to see.
- If you are using any type of electronic equipment, then ensure that you know how to plug it in and how to operate it before you visit the classroom. Do not 'learn on the job' or you will be dealing with chaos.
- Always have some activity that allows the children to participate in your visit.
- Always pray with the children – more on this anon.

## **Format of RE Visit Plans for all school visits**

Planning your classroom visit is essential. Below is a suggested format for your school visit which you will fill out in advance. The example below is filled out for you as an aid. A blank template is available on the next page for your continued use.

**School Name:** St. Patrick's, Glenties

**Date:** 30-09-2021

**Class/Teacher:** First Class (P3)/ Ms Monica Bonner

**Topic:** We celebrate God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (From Pupil's Book, page 33)

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would appreciate God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Resources:** Bible; track 11 of the class CD; candle; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:** I will begin my session with the children by asking them to tell me about the tallest, deepest, widest, biggest thing they have seen or heard about. Then I will tell them about the forgiveness of Jesus as shown in Luke 23:32-43/Matthew 27:33-37. After the story I will ask the children to tell me what the connection is between the biggest things and the story.

**Development:** My session will continue by asking the children to draw a picture/symbol showing the size of God's mercy in their RE copy.

**Closure:** My visit to the class will be brought to a close by lighting my candle (flame reminding us that God is alive and with us) and by asking the children to sing along with or listen to track 11 of the class CD ('The Lord, He Is My Shepherd').

**Evaluation:** (To be carried out after the visit). I was pleased but in future I would...

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) VISIT PLAN TEMPLATE**

**SCHOOL NAME:**

**DATE:**

**CLASS/TEACHER:**

**TOPIC:**

**OBJECTIVE OF VISIT:**

**RESOURCES:**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

**CLOSURE:**

**EVALUATION:**

## Explanatory Notes on the 'Visit Plan'

- There are many advantages to keeping a 'visit plan'. If you visit this class again during the year, or in subsequent years, you will have a record of what you did and of what you learned (your evaluation).
- You will have a record of the frequency of your visits to various classes. Don't confine your school visits to classes that are preparing for the reception of sacraments.
- The core of the 'Visit Plan' contains three elements: the introduction, the development and the closure.
- The 'Introduction' might make use of a piece of Scripture, a secular story, a personal experience/recollection, a piece of music from the class CD, a poem, an image, a piece of video, one of the RE posters from the Teacher Kit, religious trinkets that you purchased, a game, etc.
- The 'Development' might involve the children in an art/craft activity, working on an activity from their textbook, working on an activity that you downloaded from the *Grow in Love* free online resources, practising a skill (genuflecting, receiving Communion, signing on forehead-lips-heart, etc.), repeating a prayer formula, chatting, etc.
- The 'Closure' should always consist of a prayer experience. The *Grow in Love* programme uses different expressions of prayer, e.g. vocal prayer (many different forms), meditative prayer (guided imagination), contemplative prayer (silent repetition), liturgical prayer, prayer through movement/mime, etc. The programme also uses different forms of prayer, e.g. prayer of petition, thanksgiving, praise, sorrow, repentance, intercession, etc.
- As prayer is a central element of the programme and one that you will engage with regularly, it will now be treated separately.



## Prayer in the Primary School

- Prayer is at the heart of Religious Education. 'The ultimate goal is to teach children how to develop their relationship with God through prayer, so that they are drawn into the very life of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity).'<sup>19</sup>
- The mystery of the faith 'requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.'<sup>20</sup>
- You have easy access to a lot of practical aids that will help you engage primary school children in prayer. These include: a lighted candle, a Bible (on a stand), the Lectionary, good quality pictures and statues, figures from the church crib, icons, liturgical vessels, cross/crucifix, vestments, holy water, holy oils, anointing, blessings, incense, a prayer cloth/shawl, music, songs, hymns, chants, silence, the class prayer space, etc.
- The following *Prayer Gestures* should have been taught to the infant classes (P1 and P2): Sign of the Cross, genuflecting, sitting, kneeling, standing, and prayer with movement. You might use some of these gestures when praying with the children.
- The following *Formal Prayers* are listed in the curriculum to be taught to first and second classes (P3 and P4): Act of Contrition/Sorrow, Prayer for Forgiveness, Prayer after Forgiveness, Journey Prayer, Prayer before Communion, Prayer after Communion, Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, all Mass responses. Again, you might use some of these.
- Among the *Additional Prayers* listed for first and second classes (P3 and P4) are: some psalms, some blessings, some stations of the cross, prayer to saints and simple examination of conscience.<sup>21</sup>

19 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 19.

20 John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2558.

21 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 74.

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## **FIRST CLASS/PRIMARY 3**

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (First Class/Primary 3)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (First Class/Primary 3). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

**Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>22</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>23</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In First Class/Primary 3 the ten themes for the year are: Belonging; Jesus; Advent and Christmas; We Hear the Gospel at Mass; Reconciliation; Celebrating Mass; Holy Week and Easter; Jesus Is Still With Us; Creation; Grow in Love. The following five seasonal themes are also dealt with: The Rosary; Celebrating the Saints; Lent; St Patrick; an Inter-Religious Education lesson. When visiting First Class/Primary 3; feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

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22 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

23 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.

## FIRST CLASS/PRIMARY 3

### LATE OCTOBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** First Class (P3)/(Name)

**Topic:** As the children have already been introduced to Jesus, the topic for this visit is: 'Jesus taught his friends how to live'.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children might understand that following Jesus includes being just and fair in our treatment of others.

**Resources:** 'Caleb's Story' from pages 70-71 of the Teacher's Manual; a small ball/ball of wool; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Introduce yourself and describe your role/ministry.
- Tell (do NOT read) 'Caleb's Story' to the class. Embellish the story if you wish.

#### **Development:**

- Give the ball/ball of wool to a pupil and ask them to relate the beginning of Caleb's story, and after a few sentences ask that pupil to throw the ball/ball of wool to another pupil who will continue with the story, and so on until the story is finished.
- After the second telling of the story, ask a few questions: Why did Caleb...? Why did Kim ...? How did (Caleb, Kim, other family) feel when ...? What example of Jesus did Caleb follow? Is this important? Why?
- Ask the children to open their religion books at page 15 and to write, in the space provided, about a time when they shared with someone who was in need.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Today, let us pray for all those people who don't have as much as we have. I will say 'Lord, hear us' and you can answer 'Lord, graciously hear us'.

**Priest/Visitor:** Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** For all those people who have suffered from storms, flooding and fire. *(Pause)* Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** For all those people and families who are homeless. *(Pause)* Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** For all those who don't have enough food to eat. *(Pause)* Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** *(Invite the children to suggest others for whom you might pray.) (Pause)* Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FIRST CLASS/PRIMARY 3

### PRE-CHRISTMAS VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** First Class (P3)/(Name)

**Topic:** The waiting for Christmas is almost over.

**Objective of Visit:** A desire to keep the birth of Jesus at the centre of the Christmas celebrations.

**Resources:** A birthday card; a football; a lottery ticket; a doll; some crib figures; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Tell the children that you have various objects in your bag that are connected to/remind you of various celebrations.
- In turn, ask them to guess what you might have that would bring the following to mind: a birthday (birthday card); a sports victory (a football); winning money (a lottery ticket); a new baby (a doll); Christmas (some crib figures).

#### **Development:**

- Ask the children to name everything that relates to Christmas. The class teacher might write a list of these items on the board.
- Tell the children that they have only one vote and to think carefully before they vote for the most important item on the list. Take the vote and record the result on the board.
- Discuss the result with the class using open questions – Why? Who? What event? Where? etc.

- Connect various items on the class list (presents, lights, meals, decorations, etc.) with the real meaning of Christmas.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Today, let us pray that we may discover the real meaning of Christmas. I will say 'Lord, hear us' and you can answer 'Lord, graciously hear us'.

**Priest/Visitor:** Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** May the presents that we receive at Christmas remind us of the gift that God gave us in the baby Jesus. (*Pause*) Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** May all our Christmas lights remind us that the baby Jesus is the light of the world. (*Pause*) Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** May our Christmas decorations remind us of what decorated the stable in Bethlehem – angels, shepherds, animals. (*Pause*) Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** May visitors to our house at Christmas remind us of the three wise men who came to visit the baby Jesus. (*Pause*) Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Invite the children to suggest other items. *(Pause)* Lord, hear us.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.



**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** First Class (P3)/(Name)

**Topic:** The lost sheep

**Objective of Visit:** Explore how God will always search for us and desire to bring us back to him.

**Resources:** A small toy sheep; page 31 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:**

- Tell the children that you are going to play a game called 'Find the lost sheep' with them. Show them your toy sheep, which will be lost.
- Look for three volunteers and ask them to wait outside the room.
- Give the toy sheep to a pupil and ask them to hide it in their school bag. Ask one of the three pupils to return to the class and, by asking three questions, see if they can find the lost sheep.
- Continue the game with the other two pupils who were outside the room.

**Development:**

- Ask the children to complete the 'lost sheep' maze on page 31 of their textbook.
- Ask the children: In the story of the 'lost sheep' that Jesus told, who does the shepherd represent? Who are the sheep? Who is the lost sheep? Why does God search for the lost sheep? How can we get lost from God? What makes us part of God's flock of sheep again?

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that before you leave you would like to pray with them. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** When we do not love God or other people, we can feel lost and sad. God does not want it to be this way. God wants us to be close to him. When we return to God, we feel happy and God celebrates. Let us pray together: 'Will you search for and find us, O God?'

**Children:** Will you search for and find us, O God?

**Priest/Visitor:** When we refuse to share with our friends, and we realise we have lost their friendship, we can feel lost and lonely. At these times, will you search for and find us, O God?

**Children:** Will you search for and find us, O God?

**Priest/Visitor:** When we have done something that upsets someone in our family, we can feel lost and lonely. At these times, will you search for and find us, O God?

**Children:** Will you search for and find us, O God?

**Priest/Visitor:** When we are mean to people and we know we have hurt them, we can feel lost and lonely. At these times, will you search for and find us, O God?

**Children:** Will you search for and find us, O God?

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** First Class (P3)/(Name)

**Topic:** Jesus is risen!

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would develop their faith in the risen Jesus.

**Resources:** A butterfly (or picture/drawing of one); a caterpillar (or picture/drawing of one); the online fresco of Jesus and Mary Magdalene by Fra Angelico (ask help from the teacher); track 3 of the reflective music from the class CD; CD player; the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Using your pictures/drawings (or the real things), tell the class about the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.
- Ask the pupils to tell you the differences between a caterpillar and a butterfly (food, shape, habitat, looks, flight, etc.).

#### **Development:**

- Recall the story of Mary Magdalene meeting the risen Jesus. It is on page 43 of the Pupil's Book.
- Have the teacher display the online Fra Angelico painting to the class and question the pupils about it – Who? When? What else? etc.
- Tell the children that we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus at Easter and we use the word 'Alleluia' to express our joy.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** We know that God is with us always. God was with Jesus as he was placed in the tomb, and God is with us now. Let us take some time to remember what happened when Jesus rose from the dead. We can begin by making our bodies quiet and still.

*(Play track 3, 'Reflective Music', and leave this playing in the background.)*

Now that our bodies are quiet and still, let's close our eyes. *(Pause)*

Picture yourself back in the time of Jesus. Imagine you were there when he rose from the dead. *(Pause)*

Watch as the stone at the entrance to the tomb is rolled back. *(Pause)*

Look as Jesus walks out of the tomb alive! *(Pause)*

Watch as Jesus speaks to Mary Magdalene. *(Pause)*

Jesus is with you today and every day. Is there anything that you would like to say to Jesus today? If there is, use your inside voice. *(Pause)*

The risen Jesus is always there to help us. We can always talk to him. *(Pause)*

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Loving Jesus, may the joy of the Resurrection be with us always.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

*(Finish playing the 'Reflective Music')*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** First Class (P3)/(Name)

**Topic:** 'Go and share the Good News'

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would be able to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to love as Jesus asks.

**Resources:** Page 49 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter. The teacher will need to be present to record items for you on the board.

**Introduction:**

- Divide the class into groups of three or four and give each group a few minutes to decide what was the best piece of news that they ever heard.
- Take a report from each group and ask the teacher to record these on one half of the board.
- Now ask the groups to discuss and decide what was the best news that Jesus gave to his followers.
- Take a report from each group and ask the teacher to record these on the other half of the board.

**Development:**

- Chat to the children about the two lists using open questions like Why? How? When? What if?
- Have the children return to their discussion groups and ask them what they would do to spread the love of Jesus.

- Take a report from each group and tell them that they will record some of these suggestions in their Religion textbook.
- Ask the children to record some of the suggestions above in the spaces provided on page 49 of their textbook.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Using some words and actions, we will remember what happened after Jesus died and rose from the dead.

Children, with your palms open, facing upwards, and arms outstretched, slowly raise them while repeating after me: *Jesus ascended into heaven.*

**All:** *(with actions)* Jesus ascended into heaven.

**Priest/Visitor:** Now children, turn your palms over and move your hands slowly down, still outstretched, while saying after me: At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus' friends.

**All:** *(with actions)* At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus' friends.

**Priest/Visitor:** Lord Jesus, you gave your friends a mission to go out and tell everybody about your love. They were the first ones to go out and spread the Good News and they did this with the help of the Holy Spirit. We thank you that we have heard the Good News and we ask the Holy Spirit to help us in the same way so that we too can go and share the Good News. Together, let us pray to the Holy Spirit:

**All:** Holy Spirit, I want to do what is right. Help me.  
Holy Spirit, I want to live like Jesus. Guide me.  
Holy Spirit, I want to pray like Jesus. Teach me.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

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## **SECOND CLASS/PRIMARY 4**

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (Second Class/Primary 4)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (Second Class/Primary 4). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

**Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>24</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>25</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In Second Class/Primary 4 the ten themes for the year are: Called and Chosen; Jesus; Advent and Christmas; We Hear the Word of God at Mass; Reconciliation; At Mass, We Give Thanks and We Receive Holy Communion; Holy Week and Easter; We Can Live as Jesus Asked; Creation; Grow in Love. The following five seasonal themes are also dealt with: The Rosary; Celebrating the Saints; Lent; St Brigid; an Inter-Religious Education lesson. When visiting Second Class/Primary 4, feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

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24 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

25 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.

## SECOND CLASS/PRIMARY 4

### LATE OCTOBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Second Class (P4)/(Name)

**Topic:** At Mass, Jesus' followers gather together.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would have a desire to keep the Lord's Day holy by going to Mass.

**Resources:** The 'Gathering Song' (Track 7) of the CD; CD player; page 16 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Introduce yourself to the class and describe your role/ministry.
- Ask the children to share with you what is going to be special about this year (First Confession/Communion).
- Tell them that you have come to help them prepare for their First Holy Communion.

#### **Development:**

- Introduce and play the 'Gathering Song' (Track 7, p. 88) to the children and chat about the words. (This song was taught to the children in First Class/P3.)
- Verse two of the song mentions 'the Lord's special day'. Make sure that the children realise that Sunday is 'the Lord's special day' and that the followers of Jesus gather together on that day.
- Ask the children to open page 16 of their textbook and to number the pictures in the correct order. If the children have already done this, revise and discuss the correct order with them.

- Question the children to see if they know why the followers of Jesus gather together on Sunday. [Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday.]

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Together, let us sing the 'Gathering Song' (Track 7, p. 88) with the CD.

*(All sing the 'Gathering Song')*

**Priest/Visitor:** The response is: 'On Sunday, let us gather before him.'

**All:** On Sunday, let us gather before him.

**Priest/Visitor:** On Sunday, Jesus rose from the dead.

**All:** On Sunday, let us gather before him.

**Priest/Visitor:** At the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

**All:** On Sunday, let us gather before him.

**Priest/Visitor:** Jesus is Our Lord and Master.

**All:** On Sunday, let us gather before him.

**Priest/Visitor:** At Mass we give thanks and we pray to God.

**All:** On Sunday, let us gather before him.

**Priest/Visitor:** At Mass we celebrate the love of God.

**All:** On Sunday, let us gather before him.

*(If time allows, you might sing the 'Gathering Song' again.)*

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SECOND CLASS/PRIMARY 4

### PRE-CHRISTMAS VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Second Class (P4)/(Name)

**Topic:** The birth of Jesus

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would experience Christmas as a celebration of the birth of Jesus.

**Resources:** 'The Christmas Story' video (talk to the teacher); a crib with some crib figures; an Advent wreath; page 23 of the Pupils' Book; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Show the Advent wreath to the children and discuss how many candles should be lit. (Light the appropriate candles.)
- Show the empty crib to the children and introduce the crib figures (*Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds, angels*), one by one, and encourage the children to tell the Christmas story, piece by piece.
- Encourage the children to have a crib at home, or visit the parish crib, and to tell the Christmas story to their family.

#### **Development:**

- With the help of the teacher, show 'The Christmas Story' video to the class. This online video features images of the Christmas story from the Annunciation through to the visit of the shepherds.
- Chat to the children about their favourite part of the video.
- Ask the children if they think the story of Jesus' birth is an important part of celebrating Christmas. Why or why not?

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Leave the Advent wreath lighting during the prayer.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by saying together the prayer on page 23 of our Religion books.

**All:** 'Lord God, open our ears to hear the Christmas story' ...

**Priest/Visitor:** Let's remember all the people in the Christmas story. The response to our prayer is 'Lord, graciously hear us'.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Mary is the mother of Jesus. We pray for all mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers, godmothers and foster mothers. Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Joseph helped Mary to take care of Jesus. We pray for all fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers, godfathers and foster fathers. Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** The shepherds came to celebrate the birth of Jesus. May we never forget that Christmas celebrates Jesus' birthday. Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Christmas is a special time for families. We think of the Holy Family: Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We remember our own families and those who are sad this Christmas because they are not with family. Lord, hear us.

**Children:** Lord, graciously hear us.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SECOND CLASS/PRIMARY 4

### FEBRUARY VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Second Class (P4)/(Name)

**Topic:** We can be forgiven.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children might develop an understanding of how they sin and of their need for God's forgiveness.

**Resources:** The online video 'Sacrament of Reconciliation' – Part 1; pages 32 and 33 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:**

- Remind the children that they have already seen how to get ready for the Sacrament of Reconciliation – by thinking about their lives and remembering those times when they didn't act in the way God wants them to.
- Ask them to open page 33 of their textbook. Discuss the seven questions in the circles with them.

**Development:**

- With help from the teacher, play the children the video 'Sacrament of Reconciliation' – Part 1, which explains the first three steps in celebrating this sacrament.
- Chat with the children using these or similar questions: Who have you seen going to confession? When do people usually go? Where do they go? What kind of sins do you think they might confess?
- Ask the children to open page 32 of their textbook and to identify the first three steps in celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us close our eyes and listen carefully to these questions. Think about each one of them, and then answer using your inside voice that only God can hear.

We show love to God by praying to him and by thanking him. Were there any days when you didn't pray to God? *(Pause)*

We show love to God when we listen to the grownups that we live with and do what they say. Was there ever a time when you disobeyed or lied to the people that you live with? *(Pause)*

We show love to God and to other people when we are kind, when we play together and when we share. Was there ever a time when you were angry or in a bad mood and didn't want to play with or share with others? *(Pause)*

We show love to God and to other people when we tell the truth about other people. Was there ever a time when you said something that wasn't true about someone? *(Pause)*

Is there anything else that you want to say sorry for? *(Pause)*

God will always forgive our sins. God wants us to be happy and to try not to sin again. God loves us even when we sin. *(Pause)*

When you are ready, you can open your eyes and we'll say the *Act of Sorrow* together from page 33 of our books.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SECOND CLASS/PRIMARY 4

### PRE-EASTER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Second Class (P4)/(Name)

**Topic:** At Mass we receive Holy Communion.

**Objective of Visit:** Revere the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

**Resources:** Page 38 of the Pupil's Book; the online video called 'Receiving Holy Communion'; Poster no. 6 (how to receive Holy Communion); a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- With the help of the class teacher, show the children the online video called 'Receiving Holy Communion'.
- Having watched the video, talk to the children using these or similar questions: Have you ever received Holy Communion? Why/why not? What do you notice about the way in which the people walk to the priest to receive Holy Communion? Why are the people being quiet? Are there adults who sometimes help the priest to distribute Holy Communion? etc.

#### **Development:**

- Show the children Poster no. 6 and focus on the way the people receive Holy Communion, and on what they say.
- Practise the method and the words of reception of Holy Communion with the children.
- Explain to the children that there are certain ways we can prepare to receive Jesus in Holy Communion (fasting, clean hands, *Prayer before Communion*, holding our hands in a special way, *Prayer after Communion*).



- Complete the tasks on page 38 of the Pupil's Book.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), while saying at the same time *Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** When we gather together to celebrate the Eucharist, we share a meal, we share food, we share the Bread of Life. We remember what Jesus did for us. We give thanks. Let us remember and give thanks today for Jesus, the Bread of Life. Let us stand. As we gather together, let us remember:

**All:** *(repeating after priest/visitor, as they genuflect)* Jesus is the Bread of Life.

**Priest/Visitor:** As we share a special meal with others, let us remember:

**All:** *(as they genuflect)* Jesus is the Bread of Life.

**Priest/Visitor:** As we share our lives together, let us remember:

**All:** *(as they genuflect)* Jesus is the Bread of Life.

**Priest/Visitor:** As we share the Bread of Life, let us remember.

**All:** *(as they genuflect)* Jesus is the Bread of Life.

**Priest/Visitor:** As we grow in God's love and friendship, let us remember.

**All:** *(as they genuflect)* Jesus is the Bread of Life.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us pray together the prayer on page 39 of our books.

**All:** Lord Jesus, I love and adore you ...

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SECOND CLASS/PRIMARY 4

### SUMMER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Second Class (P4)/(Name)

**Topic:** As I have loved you.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would begin to realise that following Christ isn't always easy because God's love is a radical kind of love.

**Resources:** Pages 259 and 261 of the Teacher's Manual, containing the story 'The Twin Sisters' – Parts 1 and 2; Poster no. 10; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Read parts 1 and 2 of the story 'The Twin Sisters' before your class visit, with a view to telling (NOT reading) the story to the children. Embellish and dramatise the story as you see fit!
- After telling the story, ask these or similar questions: Why do you think the people threw a party for Katrinka? What effect does Katrinka have on the people around her? Who do you know who is happy like Katrinka? Why was Matilda so unhappy? What do you think the neighbours said to one another when they saw what Katrinka did? What did Katrinka teach her sister?

#### **Development:**

- Ask a group of children to volunteer to role-play the following situation: A new child starts in our school in the middle of the year. You notice that nobody plays with them in the yard. What do you do?
- Discuss the positive/negative aspects of the role-play with the class.

- Show the children Poster no. 10, which depicts some people following Jesus' example. Discuss some scenes from the poster.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** We learned so much this year. Together we say, 'Thank you God for all that we've learned'.

**Children:** Thank you God for all that we've learned.

**Priest/Visitor:** We learned about friendship and how lucky we are to be surrounded by a circle of friends.

**Children:** Thank you God for all that we've learned.

**Priest/Visitor:** We learned more about Jesus. We learned how he loved those around him and helped and healed those who needed his touch. We know he loves us too.

**Children:** Thank you God for all that we've learned.

**Priest/Visitor:** We learned that God is always ready to forgive us no matter what we have done wrong.

**Children:** Thank you God for all that we've learned.

**Priest/Visitor:** We learned the Law of Love and that your love is for everyone.

**Children:** Thank you God for all that we've learned.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us now give glory to God for everything we have learned.

**All:** Glory be to the Father ...

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

# **Section 3:**

## **Visiting Third and Fourth Classes (Primary 5 and Primary 6)**

### **What you should know about children in Third and Fourth Classes (P5 and P6) before you begin:**

- These children range in age from nine to ten years.
- The class may be all boys, all girls or a mixture of boys and girls.
- These children do not engage with homilies – no matter how good you are at delivering them. They are limited in their understanding of abstract religious concepts.
- They are becoming more aware of the inter-connectedness between themselves and the created universe.
- They can understand the extent to which their actions can have an impact on the planet.
- The peer group is very important, and they do not want to be left out.
- From digital media, they are conscious of people from different cultures and different backgrounds. They are open and ready to accept others.
- They learn best by doing.
- They enjoy making friends and being a friend.
- They enjoy playing and role-play.
- They are beginning to internalise the rules and regulations which, until now, were imposed from outside.
- Their reading and writing skills are improving further.
- They may address you as 'Teacher'.
- Depending on the school, the children you meet may be from different cultural, linguistic, Christian or other faith backgrounds. If you are visiting the class outside the timetabled RE period, check first with the class teacher as to whether or not some children need to be excused from participating in your ministry.

**What you should know about the *Grow in Love* programme when visiting Third and Fourth Classes (P5 and P6):**

- The RE programme is called *Grow in Love*.
- *Grow in Love* is written in the light of the new RE Curriculum for Ireland.<sup>26</sup>
- The *Grow in Love* programme is designed to be used both in school and at home.
- *Grow in Love* also provides links with the local parish community.
- The Teacher Kit<sup>27</sup> contains a Teacher's Manual with resources, a music CD, a Pupil's Book, a set of posters **and** an access code for free online resources. Buy a parish copy of the Teacher Kit for easy access to all the resources. This publication draws heavily from material provided in the relevant Teacher's Manual.
- The Third Class/P5 programme places particular emphasis on praying the Psalms.
- By the end of Fourth Class/P6 the children will know most of the Mass responses.
- Free online resources are available at [www.growinlove.ie](http://www.growinlove.ie), which you can download and photocopy as an aid to your school visit.
- Each *Grow in Love* programme is divided into a number of themes, which allows you to take a thematic, cross-curricular approach to your pastoral visit. If you are unsure about what this means, ask the teacher.
- The programme has been vetted and approved by a committee of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

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26 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (Dublin: Veritas, 2015).

27 See [www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love-5-teacher-kit-3rd-class-p96682-21494/](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love-5-teacher-kit-3rd-class-p96682-21494/)

### **The basic preparations and skills required when visiting Third and Fourth Classes (P5 and P6):**

- Arrive on time. If you need to meet the principal/secretary, then give yourself extra time. Enter the classroom as RE is about to start.
- Dress appropriately so that your role is evident and respected.
- Have your visit well-structured and prepared. Never 'wing it'! Detailed help with preparation is available further on in this publication.
- Introduce yourself to the children. Stay at the top of the room and do not venture in among the children/tables.
- When questioning the class, only use open questions. Open questions are likely to receive long answers and they usually start with 'W', e.g. Who, What, Where, When or Why. Closed questions can be answered by 'Yes' or 'No'. If you notice the class responding *en masse* with 'Yes Teacher/Father' or 'No Teacher/Father', then change your question style.
- Do not write on any classroom surface – blackboard, whiteboard, flip chart, etc. Writing on these surfaces is a skill that you probably don't possess.
- Do not read from any textbook. If you wish to acquaint the children with a piece of Scripture, tell them a story etc., then narrate the Scripture verse or passage from memory. A textbook will only create a barrier between you and the class.
- If you are using pictures/illustrations, then make sure that they are suitable and large enough for children at the back of the room to see.
- If you are using any type of electronic equipment, then ensure that you know how to plug it in and how to operate it before you visit the classroom. Do not 'learn on the job' or you will be dealing with chaos.
- Always have some activity that allows the children to participate in your visit.
- Always pray with the children – more on this anon.



### **Format of RE Visit Plans for all school visits**

Planning your classroom visit is essential. Below is a suggested format for your school visit which you will fill out in advance. The example below is filled out for you as an aid. A blank template is available on the next page for your continued use.

**School Name:** St. Declan's, Ashbourne

**Date:** 30-09-2025

**Class/Teacher:** Third Class (P5)/ Mr Paul Dalton

**Topic:** Introducing the Bible

**Objective of Visit:** That the children might have an overview of the structure of the Bible.

**Resources:** Bible; the online video of 'A Visit to the Library'; pages 13 and 14 of the Pupil's Book; 'Bible Rap' (CD 1, track 4); text of a psalm; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:** With the aid of the class teacher, I will show the children the online video 'A Visit to the Library'. I will then chat to the children about what they have seen.

**Development:** My session will continue by asking the children to open page 13 of their textbook and to find the names of the four sections of the Old Testament; the four sections of the New Testament and the number of books in each section. I will tell the children that the Bible is a library of books and that it is the Word of God.

**Closure:** My visit to the class will be brought to a close by lighting my candle (flame reminding us that God is alive and with us) and by asking the children to sing along with or listen to track 1 of the class CD (The 'Bible Rap'). I will conclude by praying a psalm with the class.

**Evaluation:** (To be carried out after the visit.) I was pleased but in future I would...

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) VISIT PLAN TEMPLATE**

**SCHOOL NAME:**

**DATE:**

**CLASS/TEACHER:**

**TOPIC:**

**OBJECTIVE OF VISIT:**

**RESOURCES:**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

**CLOSURE:**

**EVALUATION:**

## **Explanatory Notes on the 'Visit Plan'**

- There are many advantages to keeping a 'visit plan'. If you visit this class again during the year, or in subsequent years, you will have a record of what you did and of what you learned (your evaluation).
- You will have a record of the frequency of your visits to various classes. Don't confine your school visits to classes that are preparing for the reception of sacraments.
- The core of the 'Visit Plan' contains three elements: the introduction, the development and the closure.
- The 'Introduction' might make use of a piece of Scripture, a secular story, a personal experience/recollection, a piece of music from the class CD, a poem, an image, a piece of video, one of the RE posters from the Teacher Kit, religious trinkets that you purchased, a game, etc.
- The 'Development' might involve the children in an art/craft activity, working on an activity from their textbook, working on an activity that you downloaded from the *Grow in Love* free online resources, practising a skill (genuflecting, receiving Communion, signing on forehead-lips-heart, etc.), repeating a prayer formula, chatting, etc.
- The 'Closure' should always consist of a prayer experience. The *Grow in Love* programme uses different expressions of prayer, e.g. vocal prayer (many different forms), meditative prayer (guided imagination), contemplative prayer (silent repetition), liturgical prayer, prayer through movement/mime, etc. The programme also uses different forms of prayer, e.g. prayer of petition, thanksgiving, praise, sorrow, repentance, intercession, etc.
- As prayer is a central element of the programme and one that you will engage with regularly, it will now be treated separately.

## Prayer in the Primary School

- Prayer is at the heart of Religious Education. 'The ultimate goal is to teach children how to develop their relationship with God through prayer, so that they are drawn into the very life of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity).'<sup>28</sup>
- The mystery of the faith 'requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer'.<sup>29</sup>
- You have easy access to a lot of practical aids that will help you engage primary school children in prayer. These include: a lighted candle, a Bible (on a stand), the Lectionary, good quality pictures and statues, figures from the church crib, icons, liturgical vessels, cross/crucifix, vestments, holy water, holy oils, anointing, blessings, incense, a prayer cloth/shawl, music, songs, hymns, chants, silence, the class prayer space, etc.
- The children are already familiar with a variety of *Prayer Gestures* – Sign of the Cross, genuflecting, sitting, kneeling, standing, etc.
- The following *Formal Prayers* are listed in the curriculum to be taught to third and fourth classes (P5 and P6): Comhartha na Croise, Glóir don Athair, Prayer to the Trinity, Gloria, St Patrick's Breastplate, Apostles' Creed, Stations of the Cross, Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, Memorial Acclamations 2 and 3, The Angelus, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, all Mass Responses. You might use some of these.
- Among the *Additional Prayers* listed for third and fourth classes (P5 and P6) are: more psalms, prayer to saints, prayer for vocations and prayer for Christian unity.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 19.

29 John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2558.

30 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 94.

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## **THIRD CLASS/PRIMARY 5**

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## THIRD CLASS/PRIMARY 5

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (Third Class/Primary 5)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (Third Class/Primary 5). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

### **Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>31</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>32</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In Third Class/Primary 5 the ten themes for the year are: God; The Bible; Jesus; Advent and Christmas; God's Covenant and Our Response; The Great Commandment; Holy Week and Easter; The Church Is a Community of Believers; Celtic Christianity; The Mass. The following five seasonal themes are also dealt with: Death and Eternal Life; Lent; Remembering St Patrick; an Inter-Religious Education lesson; How We Have Grown in Love! When visiting Third Class/Primary 5, feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

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31 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

32 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.

## THIRD CLASS/PRIMARY 5

### LATE OCTOBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Third Class (P5)/(Name)

**Topic:** Jesus the Healer

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would pray to Jesus for healing for themselves or for others whom they know.

**Resources:** Pages 106-107 of the Teacher's Manual; page 27 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Introduce yourself and your role to the children.
- Ask the children to name their five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch). Be sensitive to the possibility that some children may have a sensory impairment.
- Choose one of the senses and discuss with the children how it helps them to enjoy life and connect with others.

#### **Development:**

- Tell (do not read) the children the story of Helen Keller, which is on pages 106-107 of the Teacher's Manual. You will have read and remembered this story before your class visit.
- Question the children about the story using open-ended questions: Who? Why? How? When? In what ways ...? Do you think ...? etc.
- Explain to the children that all of you are going to use gestures to pray the *Our Father* and that you are not going to say the words out

loud, but pray it using your inside voices. You may need to practise this once or twice, and page 27 of the pupils' textbook will aid you.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together quietly.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross (quietly)*

**Priest/Visitor:** We will now use gestures to pray the *Our Father* and we will pray it quietly by using our inside voice.

**Our Father, who art in heaven** (*hands crossed over chest*)

**Hallowed be thy name** (*two arms raised upwards, palms facing upwards*)

**Thy kingdom come** (*bring two arms downward, palms facing towards the floor*)

**Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven** (*join hands in prayer gesture and bow head indicating yes*)

**Give us this day our daily bread** (*two arms outstretched, palms facing upwards asking for daily bread*)

**And forgive us our trespasses** (*right hand over heart*)

**As we forgive those who trespass against us** (*right hand moving outwards from right to left and making eye contact with those around*)

**And lead us not into temptation** (*two arms extended with hands facing outwards in the gesture of keeping away*)

**But deliver us from evil. Amen.** (*join hands in prayer gesture*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross (quietly)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.



## THIRD CLASS/PRIMARY 5

### PRE-CHRISTMAS VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Third Class (P5)/(Name)

**Topic:** The gift of time

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would grow in their appreciation of why we celebrate liturgical events.

**Resources:** Advent wreath; Poster no. 4 – liturgical calendar; rosary beads; page 32 of the Pupil's Book; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Ask the children to mention all the ways in which we measure time (seasons, years, months, days, hours, minutes, seconds, etc.).
- Now ask them what is used to measure the passage of time (watches, phones, calendars, diaries, etc.).
- Now show the Advent wreath and discuss what it measures. After the discussion, light the appropriate number of candles.

#### **Development:**

- Invite the children to name the key events in the life of Jesus. See if they can identify the order in which the events happened. The teacher might record the answers of the children on a chart or on the board.
- Display the poster of the liturgical calendar (it can also be shown on the whiteboard). Remind the children that the Liturgical Year follows the life, death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus.
- Ask the children to open page 32 of their textbook and ask some pupil/s to read the account of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38).

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. The candle/s on the Advent wreath is/are lighting, reminding the children that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

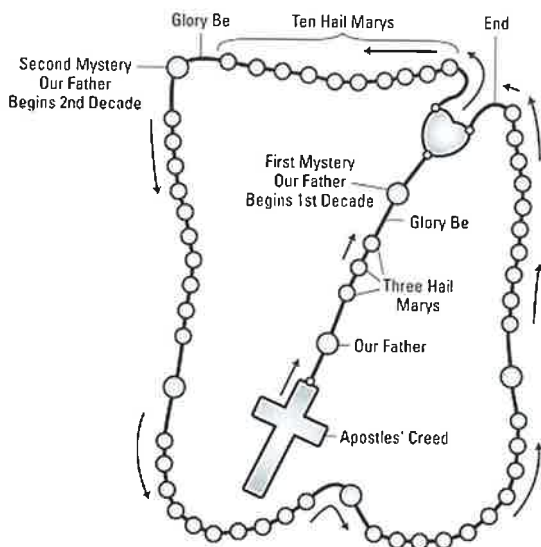
**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Today we will pray the First Joyful Mystery of the *Rosary*. This Joyful Mystery is called 'The Annunciation', when we remember the story of Mary accepting God's invitation to be the mother of Jesus.

*(The children use their rosary beads or their fingers to count the ten Hail Marys. The priest/visitor can pray the first half of the prayers and the children respond with the second half.)*

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.



## THIRD CLASS/PRIMARY 5

### END-OF-FEBRUARY VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Third Class (P5)/(Name)

**Topic:** Living the Great Commandment

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would see the link between using their gifts and talents and living the Great Commandment.

**Resources:** A copy of page 230 (I Am Talented) from the Teacher's Manual for each child; page 57 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:**

- Chat to the children about their gifts and talents using these or similar questions: Who gave you your gifts and talents? Why do you think that God has given you these gifts and talents? How does it make you feel to know that God has given you these gifts and talents?
- Ask the children if they can name some talents that people use individually or in groups with others.

**Development:**

- Distribute a copy of page 230 (I Am Talented) from the Teacher's Manual to each child. Ask them to complete the page while listening to the following questions:

Are you body smart – enjoy sports, athletics, etc? *(Pause)*

Are you word smart – enjoy reading, writing and talking? *(Pause)*

Are you number smart – enjoy problems, maths, etc? *(Pause)*

Are you people smart – enjoy groups, clubs, etc? *(Pause)*

Are you music smart – enjoy singing and listening to music? *(Pause)*

Are you picture smart – enjoy art, TV, computers, etc? *(Pause)*  
Are you nature smart – enjoy the world of plants and animals? *(Pause)*

- When they have completed page 230, invite the children to share their responses with the child beside them.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** God our Father, we thank you for giving each one of us our unique talents. We give glory to you now in the words of the *Gloria* (page 57 of Pupil's Book).

**All:** Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## THIRD CLASS/PRIMARY 5

### POST-EASTER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Third Class (P5)/(Name)

**Topic:** Life in a parish

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would desire to take part in the life and worship of their local parish and have a sense of belonging to their parish and diocese.

**Resources:** The video from the parish in Ashbourne accompanying this lesson (see page 274 of the Teacher's Manual); the Apostles' Creed (on page 101 of the Pupil's Book); a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Chat to the children about either the parish in which the school is situated or the parish where they live, using these or similar questions: What is the name of the parish? Is it big or small? How many schools/churches are in the parish? How many priests? What are some of the things a priest does?
- The people in a parish who are not priests are called lay people. Some lay people take on a special role in the parish. What jobs do you see lay people doing in this/your parish?

#### **Development:**

- With help from the class teacher, show the video from Ashbourne parish, which is part of this lesson.
- Ask the children to name the different roles covered in the video (Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, Ministers of the Word, Altar servers, Altar server coordinators, Baptism preparation team, Music ministry, Church altar/floral society, Hospitality team, Collectors).

- Discuss the roles and ask if any of these roles attracts them.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us pray the *Apostles' Creed* together from page 101 of your textbook. In the *Apostles' Creed* we profess our faith.

**All:**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty,  
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting. Amen.

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## THIRD CLASS/PRIMARY 5

### SUMMER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Third Class (P5)/(Name)

**Topic:** At Mass we remember and give thanks.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would recognise Jesus' presence in their lives.

**Resources:** The slideshow 'Jesus is Present at Mass' (see pages 332-333 of the Teacher's Manual); Poster no. 8; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Assess what the children already know about Jesus and the events of his life, using these or similar questions:

Where was Jesus born?

How do we remember Jesus' birthday every year?

What gifts did the three wise men bring to Jesus when he was born?

When did Jesus die? When do we remember this event?

What happened at the Resurrection? When do we remember this?

What happened on Ascension Day/at Pentecost?

#### **Development:**

- Now chat with the children about how people might recognise the presence of Jesus in the world today, using these or similar questions:

Can you name places where Jesus might be present? People? Books?

When are we invited to meet Jesus in a special way? (Sacraments)

Is Jesus present when people are hungry/suffering/playing, etc? Why/why not?



- With the help of the teacher, show the slideshow 'Jesus is Present at Mass' to the children. This deals with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and notes/questions are available on pages 332-333 of the Teacher's Manual.
- Refer the children to Poster no. 8, which shows some of the things people do at Mass.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Today we will pray *St Patrick's Breastplate*, which reminds us of the presence of Jesus in our lives. You can repeat each line after me.

Christ be with me, *(children repeat)*  
 Christ be beside me, *(children repeat)*  
 Christ be before me, *(children repeat)*  
 Christ be behind me, *(children repeat)*  
 Christ be at my right hand, *(children repeat)*  
 Christ be at my left hand, *(children repeat)*  
 Christ be with me wherever I go, *(children repeat)*  
 Christ be my friend, for ever and ever. *(children repeat)*  
 Amen. *(children repeat)*

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

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## **FOURTH CLASS/PRIMARY 6**

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## FOURTH CLASS/PRIMARY 6

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (Fourth Class/Primary 6)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (Fourth Class/Primary 6). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

### **Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>33</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>34</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In Fourth Class/Primary 6 the eleven themes for the year are: God; The Bible; Jesus; Advent and Christmas; Trusting God; Building God's Kingdom; Holy Week and Easter; The Church; The Pilgrim Church; Reconciliation; The Mass. The following four seasonal themes are also dealt with: Eternal Life; Remembering Brigid; an Inter-Religious Education lesson; How We Have Grown in Love! When visiting Fourth Class/Primary 6, feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

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33 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

34 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.

## FOURTH CLASS/PRIMARY 6

### LATE OCTOBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fourth Class (P6)/(Name)

**Topic:** The Bible, our Sacred Scripture

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would seek to live by God's Word.

**Resources:** A copy of the Bible (or the class Bible); page 13 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter. Choose your favourite story from the Bible and be ready to relate it to the children.

#### **Introduction:**

- If you are a lay person, tell on whose authority you visit the class and your role, etc.
- Invite the children to recall what they have already learned about the Bible using these or similar questions:

What is the Bible? (*A library of books*)

What is another name for the Bible? (*Sacred Scripture*)

How many parts are there in the Bible? (*Two. Old and New Testaments*)

How many books are in the Old Testament? (*46*)

How many books are in the New Testament? (*27*) ( $46+27=73$ )

Can you remember the names of the four sections of the Old Testament?  
(*Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Books, Books of the Prophets*)

#### **Development:**

- Ask some children to relate their favourite story from the Old Testament.
- Ask some children to relate their favourite story from the New Testament.

- Relate your favourite Scripture story to the children.
- Ask how and why reverence is shown to the Sacred Scriptures.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us open our religion books on page 13 and say the *Prayer on Opening the Bible* together. (*All pray the prayer together.*) Let us listen now to the reading from the holy Gospel according to St Matthew about how important it is to live by God's Word.

(*Read the first half of the account of the Last Judgement from Mt. 25:31-40.*)

**Priest/Visitor:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us pray together now the *Prayer on Closing the Bible* from page 13 of our Religion books.

(*Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.*)

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FOURTH CLASS/PRIMARY 6

### PRE-CHRISTMAS VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fourth Class (P6)/(Name)

**Topic:** The Epiphany

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would know the story of how the three wise men found the baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

**Resources:** Page 35 of the Pupil's Book; the online video of the Three Wise Men; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Chat with the children about all the Christmas stories they remember from the Bible. Ask the class teacher to record the names of the stories on the board. Some or all of the following stories are likely to be mentioned:

The Annunciation (The angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary)

The Visitation (Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth)

The Shepherds and the Angels

The Nativity (The birth of Jesus)

The Epiphany (The visit of the Wise Men)

The Presentation in the Temple (Anna and Simeon)

#### **Development:**

- Ask the children to open page 35 of their textbooks and to read 'Visitors from the East' in a 'round robin' style – one child begins the reading and other children continue in sequence.
- After the reading of the Scripture passage, check the children's understanding by asking: Why did ...? Who told ...? What instruction ...? Why are they called ...? What gifts ...? etc.

- With help from the teacher, watch the online video of the children acting out the story of the Three Wise Men.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us listen again to the story of the Epiphany – the coming of the three wise men. The Lord be with you.

**Class:** And with your spirit.

**Priest/Visitor:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**Class:** Glory to you, O Lord.

**Priest/Visitor:** [Read Matthew 2:1-12 from page 35 of the *Pupil's Book*.]  
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Class:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Priest/Visitor:** With the wise men, we will now quietly pray. Let us be quiet and still ... (*Pause*). We close our eyes ... (*Pause*). We notice our breathing ... (*Pause*). As we breathe in, we pray: 'Welcome Jesus ...' (*Pause*). As we breathe out, we pray: '... Bring us your peace.'

(*All repeat this prayer for a few minutes.*)

When you are ready, open your eyes.

(*Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.*)

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FOURTH CLASS/PRIMARY 6

### END-OF-JANUARY VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fourth Class (P6)/(Name)

**Topic:** Live by the Ten Commandments

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would strive to live according to the Ten Commandments.

**Resources:** Pages 41 and 42 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Revise what the children learned about Moses in the previous lesson (Moses meeting God on the mountain; the covenant; the Chosen People).
- Ask the children to open page 41 of their textbook and have various pupils read the first paragraph about God's covenant.
- You then read 'The Ten Commandments' from Ex. 20:1-17 (on page 41 of the Pupil's Book).
- Check the pupils' understanding of the Scripture passage by asking some questions: What did God ...? How do you ...? etc.

#### **Development:**

- Ask the children to turn to page 42 of their textbook and to read the Fourth Commandment. Invite the children to give examples of how they might show that they are living this commandment.
- Invite the children to read the Fifth Commandment and to give examples of how they might show that they are living this commandment.



- Invite the children to read the Seventh Commandment and to give examples of how they might show that they are living this commandment.
- Invite the children to read the Eighth Commandment and to give examples of how they might show that they are living this commandment.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** God chose Moses and the people. God chooses us too. So let us be God's people and praise God, as we say: *You are our God and we are your people.*

**All:** You are our God and we are your people.

**Priest/Visitor:** Since the days of Abraham ...

**All:** You are our God and we are your people.

**Priest/Visitor:** Since the days of Moses and Aaron ...

**All:** You are our God and we are your people.

**Priest/Visitor:** Since the beginning of time ...

**All:** You are our God and we are your people.

**Priest/Visitor:** Children, repeat the following after me: God of Abraham (*Repeat*), God of Moses (*Repeat*), You are our God (*Repeat*), We are your people (*Repeat*), Praise and honour to you (*Repeat*), Amen (*Repeat*).

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FOURTH CLASS/PRIMARY 6

### PRE-EASTER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fourth Class (P6)/(Name)

**Topic:** Good Friday: Jesus dies on the Cross.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would remember that Jesus died on the Cross to show us how much he loves God his Father and how much he loves us.

**Resources:** A good size crucifix.

#### **Introduction:**

- Invite the children to share what they remember about the events of Holy Week and the people who were present.
- The following questions should help you. As the children respond, ask the class teacher to record their responses on the board.

When does Holy Week begin?

Name some of the people who were there in the first Holy Week.

What happened during Holy Week?

When do we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey?

When do we remember the Last Supper?

What happened on Good Friday?

#### **Development:**

- Remind the children that the events of Good Friday are recalled in every church in the fourteen Stations of the Cross.
- Ask the children if they can name any of the 'Stations' and encourage them to look at the 'Stations' in their own church.
- Share and explain your favourite 'Station' to the children.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave.
- Display the crucifix in a prominent place in the prayer space.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Holy Week is a special time in our lives because we remember that Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, suffered and died for us during that week. I invite you to stand for this prayer time. The response to the prayers will be: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.* Each time we say this prayer, we will join our hands and bow our heads and remember that Jesus has saved us and redeemed us. Let us pray that prayer together now.

**All** *(with hands joined and heads bowed):* We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Priest/Visitor:** On Palm Sunday we recall how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to gather his disciples together so that they could share his Last Supper with them. *(Response)*

We recall how Judas got thirty pieces of silver for betraying Jesus on Holy Thursday. *(Response)*

On Holy Thursday we recall how Jesus took bread and wine, blessed and shared them, and asked his apostles to do the same. *(Response)*

We recall how Jesus met his mother Mary as he carried his cross to Calvary. *(Response)*

We remember that Jesus died on the cross to show us how much he loves God his Father and how much he loves us. *(Response)*

*(Finish the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross together.)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FOURTH CLASS/PRIMARY 6

### SUMMER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fourth Class (P6)/(Name)

**Topic:** God calls us to forgive others.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would be thankful for God's gift of forgiveness and be able to extend this gift to others.

**Resources:** The song 'Our Father' (CD 1, track 21); page 376 of the Teacher's Manual; page 85 of the Pupil's Book; the online video of the *Our Father*; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Ask the children to open page 85 of their textbook and to read the definition of the word 'trespass'. Discuss the definition with them, making sure that they understand its use in the *Our Father*.
- As well as asking for forgiveness, the words of the *Our Father* challenge us to do something. What do they challenge us to do?
- Is it fair to expect others to forgive us if we are not prepared to forgive others? Why or why not?

#### **Development:**

- With the help of the class teacher, introduce the song, 'Our Father' (CD 1, track 21, p.376) to the children. Sing it twice.
- With the help of the class teacher, show the online video of the *Our Father* using the gestures.
- Practise the recitation of the *Our Father*, with gestures, twice.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** We will now use the gestures that we learned to pray the *Our Father*.

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven** (*hands crossed over chest*)

**Hallowed be thy name** (*two arms raised upwards, palms facing upwards*)

**Thy kingdom come** (*bring two arms downward, palms facing towards the floor*)

**Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven** (*join hands in prayer gesture and bow head indicating yes*)

**Give us this day our daily bread** (*two arms outstretched, palms facing upwards asking for daily bread*)

**And forgive us our trespasses** (*right hand over heart*)

**As we forgive those who trespass against us** (*right hand moving outwards from right to left and making eye contact with those around*)

**And lead us not into temptation** (*two arms extended with hands facing outwards in the gesture of keeping away*)

**But deliver us from evil. Amen.** (*join hands in prayer gesture*)

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

**Section 4:**  
**Visiting Fifth Class**  
**(Primary 7) and Sixth Class**

**What you should know about children in Fifth Class (P7) and Sixth Class before you begin:**

- These children range in age from eleven to twelve years.
- The class may be all boys, all girls or a mixture of boys and girls.
- They are becoming more aware of the inter-connectedness between themselves and the created universe.
- They can understand the extent to which their actions can have an impact on the planet.
- The teacher/priest/parish visitor serves as a model and an example.
- From digital media, they are conscious of people from different cultures and different backgrounds. They are continuing to emerge from their egocentric world where everything is judged in terms of themselves and their own needs. They are open and ready to accept others.
- They need the security of order and discipline in the classroom.
- Peer groups form a major influence in their personal and moral development.
- They are moved to do what is right in order to gain approval from those around them.
- Their reading and writing skills are improving further.
- Some may be at the stage of pre-adolescent development.
- Depending on the school, the children you meet may be from different cultural, linguistic, Christian or other faith backgrounds. If you are visiting the class outside the timetabled RE period, check first with the class teacher as to whether or not some children need to be excused from participating in your ministry.

## **What you should know about the *Grow in Love* programme when visiting Fifth Class (P7) and Sixth Class:**

- The programme is called *Grow in Love*.
- *Grow in Love* is written in the light of the new RE Curriculum for Ireland.<sup>35</sup>
- The *Grow in Love* programme is designed to be used both in school and at home.
- *Grow in Love* also provides links with the local parish community.
- The Teacher Kit<sup>36</sup> contains a Teacher's Manual with resources, a music CD, a Pupil's Book, a set of posters **and** an access code for free online resources. Buy a parish copy of the Teacher Kit for easy access to all the resources. This publication draws heavily from material provided in the relevant Teacher's Manual.
- In the Fifth Class/P7 programme, Lesson 4 of Theme 8 is only suited to those who have already celebrated Confirmation.
- Confirmation lessons should be taught at the most suitable time leading up to the celebration of the sacrament.
- Free online resources are available at [www.growinlove.ie](http://www.growinlove.ie), which you can download and photocopy as an aid to your school visit.
- Each *Grow in Love* programme is divided into a number of themes, which allows you to take a thematic, cross-curricular approach to your pastoral visit. If you are unsure about what this means, ask the teacher.
- The programme has been vetted and approved by a committee of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

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35 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (Dublin: Veritas, 2015).

36 See [www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love-7-teacher-kit-5th-class-p97824-36661/](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/grow-in-love-7-teacher-kit-5th-class-p97824-36661/)



### **The basic preparations and skills required when visiting Fifth Class (P7) and Sixth Class:**

- Arrive on time. If you need to meet the principal/secretary, then give yourself extra time. Enter the classroom as RE is about to start.
- Dress appropriately so that your role is evident and respected.
- Have your visit well-structured and prepared. Never 'wing it'! Detailed help with preparation is available further on in this publication.
- Introduce yourself to the children. Stay at the top of the room and do not venture in among the children/tables.
- When questioning the class, only use open questions. Open questions are likely to receive long answers and they usually start with 'W', e.g. Who, What, Where, When or Why. Closed questions can be answered by 'Yes' or 'No'. If you notice the class responding *en masse* with 'Yes Teacher/Father' or 'No Teacher/Father', then change your question style.
- Do not write on any classroom surface – blackboard, whiteboard, flip chart, etc. Writing on these surfaces is a skill that you probably don't possess.
- Do not read from any textbook. If you wish to acquaint the children with a piece of Scripture, tell them a story etc., then narrate the Scripture verse or passage from memory. A textbook will only create a barrier between you and the class.
- If you are using pictures/illustrations, then make sure that they are suitable and large enough for children at the back of the room to see.
- If you are using any type of electronic equipment, then ensure that you know how to plug it in and how to operate it before you visit the classroom. Do not 'learn on the job' or you will be dealing with chaos.
- Always have some activity that allows the children to participate in your visit.
- Always pray with the children – more on this anon.

## **Format of RE Visit Plans for all school visits**

Planning your classroom visit is essential. Below is a suggested format for your school visit which you will fill out in advance. The example below is filled out for you as an aid. A blank template is available on the next page for your continued use.

**School Name:** St. Mary's, Belfast

**Date:** 30-09-2025

**Class/Teacher:** Fifth Class (P7)/ Ms Jennifer O'Brien

**Topic:** The Prophets speak the Word of God.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children might be inspired by the prophets to witness to the truth in their own lives.

**Resources:** Pages 51 and 52 of the Teacher's Manual; page 14 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:** Having read and memorised the story 'The Treasure Hunt' on pages 51 and 52 of the Teacher's Manual, I will narrate it to the class.

**Development:** My session will continue by asking the children to open page 14 of their textbook and to give me the answers to the various questions, based on the story. I will then use some of the deeper questions, on page 52 of the Teacher's Manual, to deepen their understanding.

**Closure:** My visit to the class will be brought to a close by lighting my candle (flame reminding us that God is alive and with us) and by inviting the children to take part in the meditation that is supplied at the bottom of page 52 of the Teacher's Manual.

**Evaluation:** (To be carried out after the visit.) I was pleased but in future I would...

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) VISIT PLAN TEMPLATE**

**SCHOOL NAME:**

**DATE:**

**CLASS/TEACHER:**

**TOPIC:**

**OBJECTIVE OF VISIT:**

**RESOURCES:**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

**CLOSURE:**

**EVALUATION:**

## Explanatory Notes on the 'Visit Plan'

- There are many advantages to keeping a 'visit plan'. If you visit this class again during the year, or in subsequent years, you will have a record of what you did and of what you learned (your evaluation).
- You will have a record of the frequency of your visits to various classes. Don't confine your school visits to classes that are preparing for the reception of sacraments.
- The core of the 'Visit Plan' contains three elements: the introduction, the development and the closure.
- The 'Introduction' might make use of a piece of Scripture, a secular story, a personal experience/recollection, a piece of music from the class CD, a poem, an image, a piece of video, one of the RE posters from the Teacher Kit, religious trinkets that you purchased, a game, etc.
- The 'Development' might involve the children in an art/craft activity, working on an activity from their textbook, working on an activity that you downloaded from the *Grow in Love* free online resources, practising a skill (genuflecting, receiving Communion, signing on forehead-lips-heart, etc.), repeating a prayer formula, chatting, etc.
- The 'Closure' should always consist of a prayer experience. The *Grow in Love* programme uses different expressions of prayer, e.g. vocal prayer (many different forms), meditative prayer (guided imagination), contemplative prayer (silent repetition), liturgical prayer, prayer through movement/mime, etc. The programme also uses different forms of prayer, e.g. prayer of petition, thanksgiving, praise, sorrow, repentance, intercession, etc.
- As prayer is a central element of the programme and one that you will engage with regularly, it will now be treated separately.

## Prayer in the Primary School

- Prayer is at the heart of Religious Education. 'The ultimate goal is to teach children how to develop their relationship with God through prayer, so that they are drawn into the very life of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity).'<sup>37</sup>
- The mystery of the faith 'requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer'.<sup>38</sup>
- You have easy access to a lot of practical aids that will help you engage primary school children in prayer. These include: a lighted candle, a Bible (on a stand), the Lectionary, good quality pictures and statues, figures from the church crib, icons, liturgical vessels, cross/crucifix, vestments, holy water, holy oils, anointing, blessings, incense, a prayer cloth/shawl, music, songs, hymns, chants, silence, the class prayer space, etc.
- The children are already familiar with a variety of *Prayer Gestures* – Sign of the Cross, genuflecting, sitting, kneeling, standing, etc.
- The following *Formal Prayers* are listed in the curriculum to be taught to fifth class (P7) and sixth class: An Phaidir, Sé do Bheatha, a Mhuire, Hail Holy Queen, Benediction, Nicene Creed, Acts of Faith, Hope and Love, prayers to the Holy Spirit, The Rosary, Memorare, Prayers for the Confirmation ceremony. You might use some of these.
- Among the *Additional Prayers* listed for these classes are: more psalms, journal keeping as prayer, prayer of centring, Stations of the Cross, Benedictus, The Magnificat, The Serenity Prayer and prayers for those who have died.<sup>39</sup>

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37 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 19.

38 John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2558.

39 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*, p. 120.

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## **FIFTH CLASS/PRIMARY 7**

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (Fifth Class/Primary 7)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (Fifth Class/Primary 7). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

### **Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>40</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>41</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In Fifth Class/Primary 7 the ten themes for the year are: God Is Always with Us; Jesus; Our Christian Vocation; Advent and Christmas; Conscience; Social Justice; Holy Week and Easter; The Holy Spirit; We are Called to Love and Serve the Church; The Mass. The following six seasonal themes are also dealt with: Death and Eternal Life; Lent; Remembering St Patrick; Mary, Mother of Jesus; Judaism (1) and Judaism (2). When visiting Fifth Class/Primary 7, feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

<sup>40</sup> Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

<sup>41</sup> Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.

## FIFTH CLASS/PRIMARY 7

### LATE OCTOBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fifth Class (P7)/(Name)

**Topic:** God calls each one of us.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would be open to listening to the voice of God in their own heart, calling them to lead a life of love.

**Resources:** Pages 30 and 31 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Chat to the children about their different passions and interests.
- Explain to the children that God calls and draws each one of us to a certain way of living. This is known as a *Christian vocation*. Ask them to open page 30 of their textbook and invite a child to read 'Our Christian Vocation' out loud.
- See if the children can remember the names of any of the people whom God called in Old Testament times. (Abraham, David, Moses)

#### **Development:**

- Ask the children to open page 31 of their textbook and invite a child to read out loud the story from the Old Testament about how God called a young boy named Samuel.
- After the story is read, check the children's understanding by asking some recall/lower-order questions, which are on page 31 of their text.
- Dig deep by asking how Samuel/Eli felt at various stages. Ask how the children would have felt if they were in Samuel's place.



**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** God calls each one of us by name to live a life of love. Listen to what God says to us in this reading from the prophet Isaiah (43:1-2):

*Israel, the Lord who created you says, 'Do not be afraid – I will save you. I have called you by your name – you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you.'*

The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Priest/Visitor:** The response to our prayer today will be: *I have called you by your name – you are mine.*

**All:** I have called you by your name – you are mine.

**Priest/Visitor:** In the moments when we feel lost, help us to hear these words:

**All:** I have called you by your name – you are mine.

**Priest/Visitor:** In the moments when we are hurting, help us to hear these words:

**All:** I have called you by your name – you are mine.

**Priest/Visitor:** In the times when we are lonely or sad, help us to hear these words:

**All:** I have called you by your name – you are mine.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FIFTH CLASS/PRIMARY 7

### PRE-CHRISTMAS VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fifth Class (P7)/(Name)

**Topic:** Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would seek to keep religious traditions around Christmas alive in their homes.

**Resources:** Pages 46, 47 and 48 of the Pupil's Book; the video 'Christmas in My Home' connected to this lesson; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Share one of your own family's Christmas traditions with the class.
- Now ask the pupils to share one of their family's Christmas traditions with the class. If there are children from other countries in the class, make sure to include them in the sharing.
- Ask the children to recall anything new that they have heard. Then ask them what they would include if they were asked to design their own 'perfect' Christmas.

#### **Development:**

- With help from the class teacher, show the video 'Christmas in My Home', which features a group of people describing how their families celebrate Christmas.
- Seek the children's reaction to the video.
- Divide the class into three groups and give one page (46, 47, 48) of the textbook to each group to read. Afterwards, ask children from each group to share what they have read.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** I invite you to close your eyes now and relax in God's loving presence. *(Pause)*

Become aware of your breathing. Notice it, but don't change it. Just relax and breathe. *(Pause)*

Today, we were talking about celebrating Christmas. But, for now, picture yourself at one of your family's most recent Christmas celebrations. Look around: What can you see? Who can you see? What excites you the most? *(Pause)*

What can you hear? *(Pause)*

What can you touch? *(Pause)*

What can you smell? *(Pause)*

As you remember, realise that you are not alone. Jesus is with you. Tell Jesus with your inside voice why you remember this Christmas. *(Pause)*

When you are ready, you may open your eyes. *(Pause)*

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FIFTH CLASS/PRIMARY 7

### FEBRUARY VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fifth Class (P7)/(Name)

**Topic:** Jesus teaches us the Beatitudes.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would desire to develop the attitudes that Jesus identified in the Beatitudes.

**Resources:** Pages 63 and 65 of the Pupil's Book (the Beatitudes); the slideshow on the Beatitudes (ask the teacher); the notes on the slideshow (see pages 225 and 226 of the Teacher's Manual); a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Display the picture of Jesus delivering the Sermon on the Mount (*online*) and chat with the children using these or similar questions: What is happening in the picture? What are the people doing? Do you remember some of the other places where Jesus preached? (*Temple, synagogues, by the sea, on mountains*) What did Jesus preach about?
- Chat with the children about what makes them happy, using these or similar questions: What things/people/activities make you happy? What does social media/the world tell you about how to be happy?

#### **Development:**

- With the help of the teacher, show each of the slides on the Beatitudes to the children.
- Use the notes on pages 225 and 226 of the Teacher's Manual to help the children to reflect and respond.
- When the slideshow is finished, ask the children to read The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) from page 63 of their textbook.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Jesus has told us how we ought to 'be'. But we know that even when we are *not* 'being' this way, we are still loved by God. Let us think for a few moments now about those times when we find it difficult to 'be' the way Jesus wants us to be...

**All** (say the *Prayer for Forgiveness*): O my God, help me to remember the times when I didn't live as Jesus asked me to. Help me to be sorry and to try again. Amen.

**Priest/Visitor:** After each of the prayers, the response will be: *This is how we want to be.*

**All:** This is how we want to be.

**Priest/Visitor:** Be dependent on God and be blessed! (*Response*)

Be close to the earth and be blessed! (*Response*)

Be just and fair and be blessed! (*Response*)

Be compassionate and be blessed! (*Response*)

Be genuine and true and be blessed! (*Response*)

Be a peacemaker and be blessed! (*Response*)

Be prepared to stand up for what is right and be blessed! (*Response*)

Be mindful of those who have died and be blessed! (*Response*)

Let us pray together the prayer on page 65 of our textbook.

**All:** Jesus, our friend and teacher ...

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FIFTH CLASS/PRIMARY 7

### POST-EASTER VISIT

---

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fifth Class (P7)/(Name)

**Topic:** The Holy Spirit

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would recall and share what they know about the Holy Spirit.

**Resources:** You will need five small sheets of paper or card. You will also need two copies of the 'What We Know about the Holy Spirit' template on page 327 of the Teacher's Manual. Keep one of these templates intact for your own reference but cut out the individual statements (not including the headings) on the other one.

Before introducing the children to the activity, write one of these descriptions on each of the five sheets of paper or card: Symbols of the Holy Spirit; The Holy Spirit is one of the Persons of the Trinity; The Holy Spirit is our Helper and Guide; The Holy Spirit in the story of Pentecost; The Holy Spirit and the Sacraments. You will also need: a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Invite the children to form into five groups. Give each group one of the cards. Explain that you will be calling out statements about the Holy Spirit and that they will be required to match each statement to the most appropriate card.

#### **Development:**

- Read out each statement individually from the slips of paper you cut from the template.
- After discussing with the pupils, give each statement to the group to which it is best suited.

- Invite the children's personal responses to the activity and ask about their own personal experiences of the Holy Spirit.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** Jesus told his followers that he would ask God the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon them to help them to live as he had asked them to. The Holy Spirit is with us and with all the followers of Jesus today. The response to the prayer today is *Come Holy Spirit*.

**All:** Come Holy Spirit.

**Priest/Visitor:** Help us to carry out the work of Jesus at home. (*Response*)  
 Help us to carry out the work of Jesus in school. (*Response*)  
 Help us to carry out the work of Jesus in our neighbourhoods. (*Response*)  
 Help us to carry out the work of Jesus with our friends. (*Response*)  
 Help us to carry out the work of Jesus with those in need. (*Response*)  
 Help us to carry out the work of Jesus by caring for the planet. (*Response*)  
*Invite the children to add their own suggestions as to where we can carry out the work of Jesus.*

Let us finish by saying the *Prayer to the Holy Spirit* together.

**All:** Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful ...

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## FIFTH CLASS/PRIMARY 7

### SUMMER VISIT

---

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Fifth Class (P7)/(Name)

**Topic:** On the road to Emmaus

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would, in the context of talking about special meals, realise the significance of the Last Supper.

**Resources:** The online vox pop; page 106 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Chat with the children about who they would invite to a special meal (family, friends, someone famous).
- Ask them to share experiences of special meals they have taken part in.
- With the help of the teacher, play the online vox pop which features children talking about special celebratory meals that they have experienced.

#### **Development:**

- After the children have watched the video clip, chat with them using these or similar questions: Which of the meals did you like the best? Why? Which was the most unusual meal? Why? Where were most of the meals held? What else besides the food was important? etc.
- Explain the significance of the Passover Meal to the Jews. Tell the children that the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his apostles on the night before he died was a Passover Meal.



- Explain to the children that Jesus transformed the meaning of that Passover Meal by taking bread and wine, blessing them and changing them into his Body and Blood. Invite the children to read the section titled 'The Last Supper' on page 106 of their textbook.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** As we gather now in your name, Jesus, you are with us. The response to each prayer is: *You are with us*.

**All:** You are with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** When we gather together for our meals ... (*Response*).

When we have special celebrations ... (*Response*).

When we gather together at Mass ... (*Response*).

When we remember what you did and said ... (*Response*).

When the priest does what you did at the Last Supper ... (*Response*).

When we share the Bread of Life ... (*Response*).

When we share our love as you did ... (*Response*).

Let us finish our prayer time by praying together the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**All:** Our Father ...

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

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## **SIXTH CLASS**

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**Pupil's Book:** *Grow in Love* (Sixth Class)

**Teacher's Manual:** *Grow in Love* (Sixth Class). This manual is part of the *Grow in Love* 'Teacher Kit'.

**Before you begin:**

As was mentioned earlier, *Grow in Love* is a programme designed to be used both in school and at home, and it also aims to provide links with the local parish community. *Share the Good News*, the National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland, states that 'co-operation between home, parish and school is essential in encouraging young children in coming to know who they are and to whom they belong'.<sup>42</sup> The *Directory* also states that 'the school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round'.<sup>43</sup>

Be aware then that the parish, and you as its representative, are important elements in the formation of the Christian community and that, even for those who are 'non-practising', the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people.

In Sixth Class the ten themes for the year are: God; Creation; Jesus; Advent and Christmas; Social Justice; Church; Holy Week and Easter; Eucharist; Morality; Confirmation (The Holy Spirit). The following six seasonal themes are also dealt with: Preparing for Eternal Life; St Brigid and Other Women of Faith; Lent: A Time of Repentance and Reconciliation; Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother; Islam (1) and Islam (2). When visiting Sixth Class, feel free to engage with any of these themes, planning your visit by using the 'Visit Plan' mentioned above. However, there now follows suggestions for five visits to the classroom during this year. You can adapt these suggestions in any way you see fit. 'The Lord be with you.'

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42 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 142.

43 Irish Episcopal Conference, *Share the Good News*, p. 146.

## SIXTH CLASS

### NOVEMBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Sixth Class/(Name)

**Topic:** Jesus shows us the way.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would be reassured that God knows each one of them and that they are always in God's care.

**Resources:** Pages 38 and 39 of the Pupil's Book; the 'Introduction to the Big Question' video; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- With help from the teacher, play the 'Introduction to the Big Question' video on the interactive whiteboard. The 'Big Question' is: *If you don't know where you are, does that mean you are lost?*
- Invite the children who wish to do so to share their response to the 'Big Question' with the class. These or similar questions may help: Can you give an example of someone being lost? Can people be lost without knowing it? What would help you if you were lost? Can you feel lost when you know where you are? In what way?

#### **Development:**

- Have various children read the story 'Ella's Forest Walk' out loud from page 38 of their textbook.
- Now ask the children to close their textbooks and you ask them the lower-order questions from the top of page 39 of their text.
- Then dig deeper by asking questions such as: Do you think Ella trusted her grandad? What makes you think that? What does it

mean when you say you trust someone? Do you think Ella's grandad loved her? Why/Why not? If you trust someone, does it lessen your fear? etc.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:**

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of our enquiring minds.

We bring our thoughts and feelings about being lost before you.

We remember how you went to look for the lost sheep and didn't give up until you found it.

There are many ways to be lost or to feel lost.

We need courage when we feel lost.

We need each other.

We need your guidance.

Thank you, God, for sending your Son to be our companion and brother.

We trust that Jesus will show us the way when we feel lost.

Thank you for the gift of our guardian angel.

Let us pray together now to our guardian angel.

**All:**

Angel sent by God to guide me,

Be my light and walk beside me;

Be my guardian and protect me;

On the paths of life direct me. Amen.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SIXTH CLASS

### END-OF-JANUARY VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Sixth Class/(Name)

**Topic:** The Church is a family.

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would reflect on what it means to be part of a family.

**Resources:** The story 'What is a Family?' from pages 235-236 of the Teacher's Manual; page 58 of the Pupil's Book; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Chat with the children about families, using these or similar questions:  
What does the word 'family' mean to you?  
Is every family the same? What can be different about families?  
Is there anything that is common to most families?  
What would you say is the best thing about living in a family?  
What kind of things do we learn/experience as members of a family?
- Be familiar with the story 'What is a Family?' from pages 235-236 of the Teacher's Manual. With the help of the text from the Teacher's Manual, narrate the story to the class.

#### **Development:**

- After you have told the story, check the children's understanding by asking the recall/lower-order questions on page 58 of their textbook.
- Then dig deeper by asking questions such as:

What do you think might have been the main message in the winning stories – ‘Families Are Different’ and ‘Every Family Matters’? What do you think the poem ‘Family Feelings’ was about? What are the important elements that make a group of people a family?

- Encourage the children to spend a little time engaging with the first ‘Think About It ...’ activity on page 58 of their textbook.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** We bring all our families before God, our loving Father. We thank God for all those who love us, and we ask God to help us to be more loving towards the people in our families. Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Pope Francis’ advice for how we should treat the members of our families is to always remember to say ‘please’, ‘thank you’ and ‘I’m sorry’. We ask God to help us to remember how much these simple words mean. Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** We pray for members of our families who are sick or sad or lonely. We ask God to comfort them too. Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Our school community is like a family. Loving God, bless all the people in our school. Help us to look out for one another and to respect one another. Lord, hear us.

**All:** Lord, graciously hear us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Together, let us pray the Christian family prayer, the *Our Father*.

**All:** Our Father, who art in heaven ...

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.



### POST-CONFIRMATION VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Sixth Class/(Name)

**Topic:** Making a difference after Confirmation

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would be able to reflect on the lives of people of faith and recognise that the Holy Spirit is at work in these people.

**Resources:** Pages 114-115 of the Pupil's Book; The 'Christian Heroes' slideshow; a candle; matches/lighter.

**Introduction:**

- Begin by inviting a child to read 'The Work of the Holy Spirit' on page 114 of their textbook.
- Then tell the children that they will now watch a slideshow featuring some people from the past who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to be Christian heroes.
- With help from the class teacher, show the slideshow and invite the children to read the descriptions of these people on pages 114-115 of their textbook. The text for the sixth slide is at the bottom of page 115.

**Development:**

- Invite the children to recall the way in which the Holy Spirit worked through each of the people featured on the slideshow.
- Explain that the Church has a special mission to the poor, the sick and the marginalised, and those people on the slideshow played their part in that mission.

- Now invite the children to read 'We, Too, Can Be Christian Heroes!' on page 115 of their textbook and ask them to respond to the final sentence on that page: 'So the question is: what will *you* do?'

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** The response to each of the prayers today is: *May we use that gift in the service of others.*

**All:** May we use that gift in the service of others.

**Priest/Visitor:** God has given us the gift of wisdom. *(Response)*

God has given us the gift of understanding. *(Response)*

God has given us the gift of right judgement. *(Response)*

God has given us the gift of courage. *(Response)*

God has given us the gift of knowledge. *(Response)*

God has given us the gift of reverence. *(Response)*

God has given us the gift of wonder and awe in his presence. *(Response)*

Holy Spirit, help us to use your gifts, now sealed within us, to bring about a world of justice and joy. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Priest/Visitor:** We will now quench our candle, but as we watch the light go out, may we prepare ourselves to bring the light of Christ to others. May the Holy Spirit guide us to be people of light and people of love.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Sixth Class/(Name)

**Topic:** Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would be inspired to follow the example of Mary.

**Resources:** The story 'A Mother's Love' from pages 505-506 of the Teacher's Manual; page 130 of the Pupil's Book; the online icon of *Our Mother of Perpetual Help*; a candle; matches/lighter.

### Introduction:

- With minimum help from the Teacher's Manual, tell the story 'A Mother's Love' (pages 505-506) to the class.
- After you have told the story, check the children's understanding by asking the recall/lower-order questions which are on page 130 of their textbook.
- Then dig deeper by asking questions such as:  
Do you think the mother forgot the answer to the sports question?  
Why do you think Caoimhe suspected her mother decided to be quiet?  
Would you find it hard to follow the mother's example?  
What might teach a mother about love, joy and sacrifice?

### Development:

- With help from the class teacher, display the icon of *Our Lady of Perpetual Help* on the whiteboard or invite the children to look at the image on page 130 of their textbook.

- Examine the icon/picture with the help of the text on page 130 of the Pupil's Book.
- Ask the children to share what strikes them most about the icon/picture.

**Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** You may quietly relax and look at the icon/picture of *Our Lady of Perpetual Help* while I read out the words of this famous hymn:

Mary, from this sacred image,  
With your eyes so sadly sweet,  
Mother of Perpetual Help  
See us waiting at your feet.  
In your arms your child you are holding,  
Source of all your joy and woe.  
Oh what bliss, and oh what sorrow  
Your heart alone can know.

On your face He is not gazing,  
Nor on us is turned His glance,  
For His anxious eyes He fixes  
On the Cross and reed and lance.  
To your hands His hands are clinging  
As a child would cling in fear,  
Of that vision of the torments  
Of His passion drawing near.

And for Him your eyes are pleading  
While to us you look and cry:  
*'Sinners spare my child, your Saviour,*

*seek not Him to crucify.'*

Yes, we hear your words sweet Mother,

But poor sinners we are weak.

At your feet we helpless children,

Your Perpetual Help we seek. *(Pause)*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

## SIXTH CLASS

### JUNE/NOVEMBER VISIT

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**School Name:**

**Date:**

**Class/Teacher:** Sixth Class/(Name)

**Topic:** Preparing for eternal life

**Objective of Visit:** That the children would be aware of the 'circle of life' and that death and eternal life are parts of that circle.

**Resources:** Page 118 of the Pupil's Book; the children's Religious Education journals; a candle; matches/lighter.

#### **Introduction:**

- Chat with the children about the term 'circle of life' and what it means, using these or similar questions:  
What happens to plants and animals in spring/summer/autumn/winter?  
What is this pattern called? etc.
- Now talk about how it is the same with people. People mature and age and eventually die.
- Tell the children that Jesus told us that death is not the end. Jesus assured us that he would prepare a place for us in heaven.
- Invite the children to read 'The Circle of Life' on page 118 of their textbook.

#### **Development:**

- Invite the children to draw a large circle on a page in their RE journals and to put the title 'Circle of Life' on the page.

- Ask them to write the names of the different stages of human life around the edge of the circle. (*birth, childhood, teenage years ... death*)
- In the centre of the circle, invite them to draw one or more pictures or symbols to signify what eternal life means to them.

### **Closure:**

- Tell the children that you would like to pray with them before you leave. Light your candle (or the class candle), reminding the children that it is a sign that God is alive and with us.

**Priest/Visitor:** Let us begin our prayer by making the *Sign of the Cross* together.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Priest/Visitor:** In our prayer today we remember those who have died, in our families and in our neighbourhoods. We trust that we will meet them again in heaven. We remember that Jesus said, 'There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you.' The response to our prayer today is: *May they live forever with the saints.*

**All:** May they live forever with the saints.

**Priest/Visitor:** God loves all the grandads and grannies who have died.  
(*Response*)

God loves all the dads and mums who have died. (*Response*)

God loves all the friends and neighbours who have died. (*Response*)

God loves N. who has died. (*Response*)

Gentle God, you love all of us. Wipe away the tears of those who are sad and help all of us to remember Jesus who died and rose from the dead. May we live for ever with Jesus and be happy for ever. We make this prayer through Christ, Our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**All:** *Sign of the Cross*

**Evaluation:** To be carried out privately after the visit.

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### ONLINE

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## NOTES



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