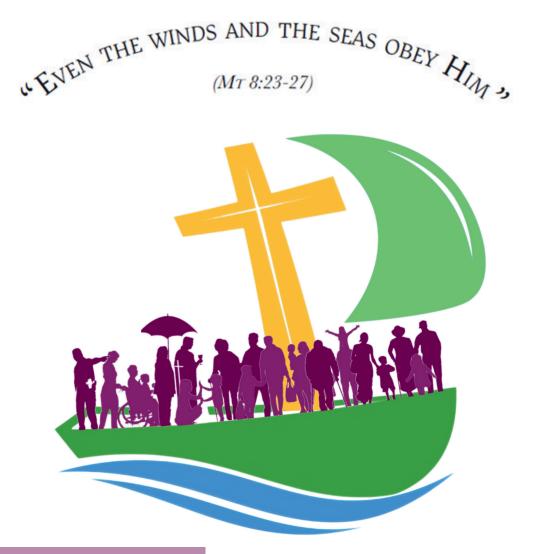
## DIOCESE OF CORK AND ROSS **PARISH AVARENESS WEEK** MY PARISH – A FAMILY OF FAITH RESOURCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS



YEAR OF PRAYER, LISTENING AND DISERCERNMENT

In conjunction with Catholic Schools Week 2025

## Welcome

This Year of Prayer, Listening, and Discernment in our Diocese offers us a unique opportunity to reflect deeply on how we can listen to the Holy Spirit and discern the path forward for our faith communities.

At the heart of this year lies the call to engage young people. I am happy to introduce a Parish Awareness Resource designed for Primary school pupils. This resource invites pupils to reflect on belonging, connecting and participating in their parish.



The resource includes:

- Objectives
- Key questions
- Suggested whole school and class activities

I hope this resource will inspire pupils to see themselves as active participants in their faith communities, and contribute to the mission of the Church. It aligns with our Diocesan focus on discernment and listening to the Spirit through the eyes and voices of our young people. I warmly encourage you to use these resources as part of your Religious Education classes.

This resource is a small yet significant step in fostering a deeper connection between young people, their personal faith, and their parish communities. Together, let us empower them to recognise their unique role in shaping the future of the Church.

May the Holy Spirit bless and guide us all as we journey together in faith.

Yours sincerely in Christ

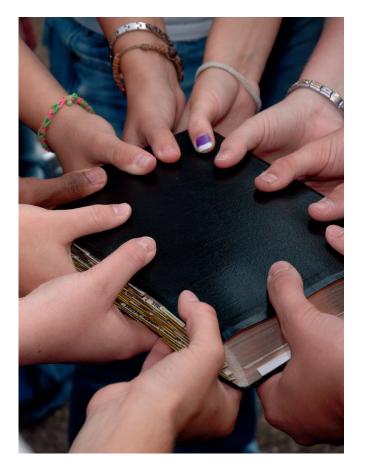
✤ Fintan Gavin Bishop of Cork and Ross



### Introduction

Welcome to this resource which has been designed to engage pupils in developing an understanding of belonging, connecting and participating in their parish.

The resource outlines the objectives, key questions, and suggested class and whole school activities.



Education is "accompanying and encouraging students on the path of human and spiritual growth, showing them how friendship with the Risen Jesus expands the heart." (Pope Francis)

## Purpose of the Resource

At the heart of this resource is the belief that every pupil is on a unique journey of faith. This resource aims to:

- Encourage Personal Connection: Help students recognise Jesus' presence in their daily lives.
- **Promote Active Faith:** Inspire pupils to live out their faith through acts of kindness, service, and leadership in their parish and community.
- **Foster Belonging:** Guide pupils to see themselves as valuable members of their **parish family**, with unique gifts and roles to play.
- Stimulate Creativity and Imagination: Enable pupils to reimagine their parish community and church for the future, making it welcoming and engaging for all.



## **Objectives and Key Questions**

That children will have an understanding of the following:

#### 1. Belonging to my parish

- What does belonging mean?
- Where do you belong? (Family, neighbourhood, clubs etc)
- What does belonging to my parish mean? (Belonging to the family of God)

#### 2. Connecting with my parish

- Explore the idea of community.
- Explore the word connecting.
- When do you connect with your parish? (Baptism, Sunday Mass, First Holy Communion, marriages, funeral etc.)

#### 3. Participating in my parish

- Explore the idea of what it means to participate.
- How do we participate in our parish?
- Who leads and guides us in our parish? (Priest, Deacon, Parish Council, Sacristan, Ministers etc).
- What other ministries are in our parish? (Choir, Vincent de Paul, Minister of the Eucharist, Minister of the Word, Altar Servers etc.)



### How to Use This Resource

This resource is designed to be teacher-friendly, adaptable, and engaging. Here's how you can make the most of it:

#### **Flexibility:**

- The activities are designed for mix-and-match use. Teachers can select activities that best suit their pupils' needs, available time, and specific objectives.
- Feel free to supplement these lessons with your own ideas, scripture readings, multimedia resources, or examples from your parish context.

#### **Pupil-Centered Approach:**

• This resource emphasises active participation, creativity, and reflection.

#### **Incorporate Parish Life:**

- Highlight real examples of people, ministries, and opportunities within your parish to make activities relatable and practical.
- Consider inviting guest speakers from the parish to inspire pupils with their stories and experiences.

#### **Encourage Creativity:**

Activities like designing a church for the future and designing a parish jersey promote creativity and consolidate learning.

#### **Involve the Community:**

• Engage with the parish by showcasing pupils' work.



### A Resource for Growth

This resource may foster **spiritual growth and discovery** – for both pupils and teachers. As you guide your pupils through these activities, you may find yourself inspired by their insights, creativity, and enthusiasm.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt this resource, draw from their own experiences, and incorporate relevant resources like **multimedia tools**, **current parish initiatives**, and scripture reflections. Your personal touch can bring these lessons to life in ways that resonate deeply with your pupils.

### Final Encouragement

Thank you for your dedication to the faith formation of your pupils. Together, let's help them discover how they can live as active, engaged members of their faith and community.



### Glossary

Parish, Co-Parish Priest, Deacon, Ministers (those who serve), Minister of the Word, Minister of the Eucharist, Parish Council (parish leadership team comprised of priest and volunteers), Baptism team, Funeral team, Family of Parishes, Diocese, Bishop, Cathedral.

## Suggested Class Activities

- Identify the buildings associated with your parish (church, hall, schools).
- Discuss the origin of the name of your local church.
- Visit and draw your local church.
- Design your own church building inside and out as you would like to see it in the future.
- Identify and interview people connected with your parish (e.g. Co-Parish Priest, Sacristan, people who help in the church etc.)
- Design a parish jersey that is representative of your parish community. What might this include?
- How can we promote connection within our parish? Discuss with your group and report to your peers.
- Plan, research and work on a project with your group about your parish: its history, the present and how it might look in the future.
- Wordsearch on parish and church vocabulary.

## Suggested Whole School Activities

- That each school would appoint a liaison person to link with the Co-Parish Priest to arrange a school visit during Catholic Schools Week (where possible) to engage in a shared conversation about our parish.
- That representative grandparents would be invited to visit the school to share their own experience of parish with pupils. This might be done in conjunction with Grandparents Day.

## Feedback from Pupils

Invite pupils as a class group to write to Bishop Fintan to share with him what they now understand of their parish as a faith community. Encourage them to include how they would see their parish in the future.

> Bishop Fintan Gavin Diocese of Cork and Ross Redemption Road Cork T23PXD0



Our Prayer from the Boat (Mt 8:23-27)

During this Year of Prayer, Listening and Discernment you are invited to pray with your pupils:

#### OUR PRAYER FROM THE BOAT (MT 8:23–27)

Loving God, help me to pray and to listen.

Open my eyes, ears, heart, and mind to see and hear how you want us to love each other.

Bless us, the children of Cork and Ross, as we imagine a future for our Parish of

(Insert Parish Name)

Amen.

#### ÁR NGUÍ ÓN MBÁD (MT 8:23–27)

A Dhia ghrámhar, Cabhraigh liom guí agus éisteacht.

Oscail mo shúile, mo chluasa, mo chroí agus m'intinn go bhfeicfinn is go gcloisfinn conas is mian leat dúinn grá a thabhairt dá chéile.

Beannaigh sinn, clann deóise Chorcaí agus Rois, mar a shamhlaímid todhchaí dár bParóiste.

(Ainm an pharóiste)

Amen.



#### The Logo for the Year of Prayer, Listening and Discernment



The logo contains the people of Cork and Ross from our Diocesan Logo.

The **boat** is a symbol for the Church. When Jesus invited the first men to become disciples he said, "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people" (Matthew 4:19).

The **boat is in motion**. This symbolises a Church that is on the move.

The boat is in **full sail**. This is a symbol of the wind of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us. We pray that we may be able to listen to where the Holy Spirit is guiding us.

**Green** symbolises hope, life and growth. We are people of hope and "we must fan the flame of hope that has been given us" (Pope Francis).

The **mast** of the boat is the cross, representing Jesus and his love for us.

**Gold** is a symbol for joy. We rejoice because Jesus is Emmanuel, God-withus, and he promised to be with us always (cf. Matthew 28:20).

