



November 2021: The Month of the Holy Souls



The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2022 is ‘Catholic Schools: Living Life to the Full’. As we look forward to celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2022, we also take the opportunity to remember and pray for those who have gone before us in the hope of the resurrection. This resource aims to assist schools with activities and lesson ideas for the Month of the Holy Souls.

The Moment of November reminds us of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, that every tear will be wiped away as God’s love is so great that it overcomes even death itself.

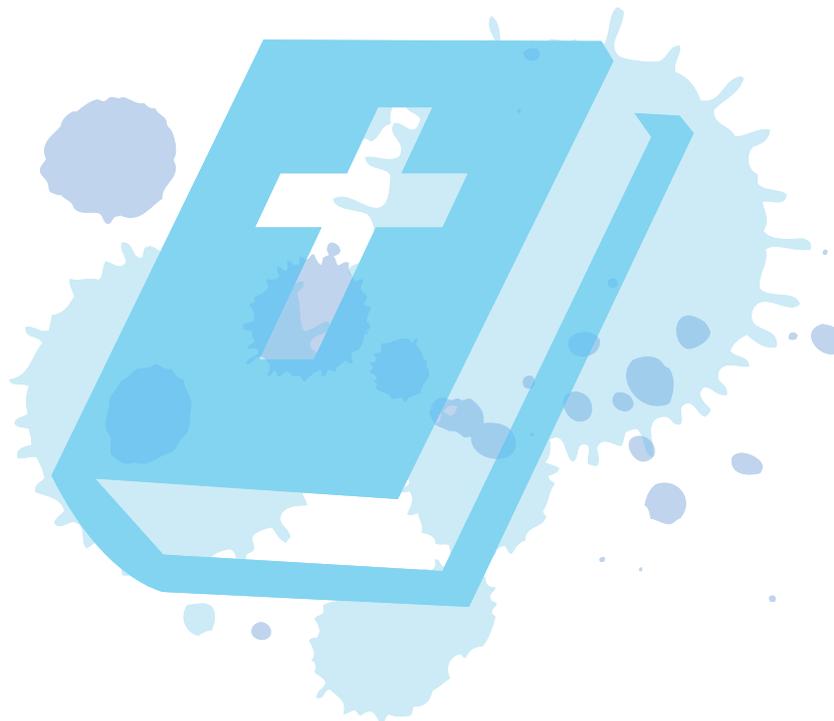
‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted’ (Mt 5:4).

For Parishes

This moment can be situated within the liturgical themes of November and the Masses/liturgies around the Feast of All Souls and remembering our loved ones who have died. The prayer service could be used in a parish setting with children or young adults.

Resources:

- Relevant content from the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland*
- Junior Lesson (Junior Infants–Second Class/P1–P4)
- Senior Lesson (Third Class–Sixth Class/P5–P7)
- Prayer Service of Remembrance





The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland



Level 1	Level 2
<p>Strand: Christian Faith</p> <p>Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants all people to be happy with him forever in heaven (1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 13:12; CCC, 1023) • When we die we go home to God (CCC, 1020) <p>Strand: Liturgy and Prayer</p> <p>Strand Unit: Additional Prayers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer for the dead/for those who are sick and dying 	<p>Strand: Christian Faith</p> <p>Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus promised new life here on earth and after we die • We believe that when we die, God calls us to heaven (CCC, 1011) • God’s plan is that when we die, we will live on with God, Jesus, Mary the angels and saints in heaven (CCC, 1024) <p>Strand: Liturgy and Prayer</p> <p>Strand Unit: Liturgical Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the Feast of All Souls the Church remembers those who have died and prays for them
Level 3	Level 4
<p>Strand: Christian Faith</p> <p>Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants all people to live happily with him in heaven forever, through the salvation brought by Jesus (GS, 18; CCC, 1026) • Jesus rose from the dead in his own body and entered heaven so we might join him one day and share in eternal life (CCC, 666–7) • The Lord Jesus said, ‘Whoever believes in me shall have eternal life and I shall raise him up on the Last Day.’ Christians believe and hope that they too will rise to new life with the risen Jesus. This is called eternal life. (1 Cor 15:23–4) • Just as Christ is risen and lives forever, so all of us will rise at the last day (CCC, 1016; 1 Cor 15:54–7) • Christians believe that when they die, they shall be with Christ and they shall see God (1 Cor 13:12) 	<p>Strand: Christian Faith</p> <p>Strand Unit: Eternal Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All that is good in our present world will survive in the Kingdom of Heaven • Every act of kindness, generosity and service contributes to the building of the Kingdom • The happiness of heaven consists of living with God and with all the blessed forever in a relationship of knowledge and love (CCC, 1024, cf. 1026–7) • The body will die but will rise again (in a renewed form) at the end of time (Resurrection of the Body; cf. LG, 48; CCC, 988–90, 1020) • By God’s grace and mercy, Christians have the secure hope that all those who loved God and others have found true life with God in heaven (GS, 18) • The Church prays for the salvation of everyone (CCC, 1058) • Catholics pray for the souls in purgatory on All Souls’ Day and all through the year • The Church commends the dead to God’s mercy and offers her prayers, especially the Eucharist





Junior Lesson



Junior Infants–Second Class (P1–P4)

Teacher's Notes

The Moment of November focuses on how we, as followers of Jesus, are a community of hope. We live in the hope that Jesus' promise will be fulfilled for us and all those we know and love.

Jesus promises that all who believe in him will return home to him in heaven when they die. Those we love who have died are now in heaven with Jesus and we can pray for them and to them. Throughout the month of November and on the Feast of All Saints (1 November) and Feast of All Souls (2 November), we remember family and friends who have returned home to heaven.

Saints are people just like us. They lived good lives, cared for others, prayed and tried to make the world a better place. We know about St Patrick and St Brigid. Who are the saints of today? Who are the people who show us what the Kingdom of God looks like? (E.g. Br Kevin Crowley, Sr Stan, Fr Peter McVerry, etc.)

Note: Teachers should use their own discretion when covering this material as the content may be difficult for some children, especially if they have been recently bereaved.

This YouTube video of Lego characters explains the origins of Halloween and All Hallows' Eve: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy66_pgeORA



Consider

Explore with the class some of the features of the season with a particular focus on the traditions of Halloween. Share the dates of the Feast of All Saints and Feast of All Souls with the class. Develop this discussion using some of the following questions:

1. What is a saint?
2. Do we know any saints?
3. Does anyone know why we celebrate Halloween on 31 October? (It is the day before All Saints' Day.) If the children are not sure, offer to write a hint on the board. Write 'All Hallows' Eve'.

Explore

November is a special month. The first of November is a special day called the Feast of All Saints. It is the day the Church celebrates with all the people who have died and are now with God in heaven. We go to Mass and remember that all these holy people are happy with God.

Saints are people just like us. They show us the way to live like Jesus taught us. Some of these people are members of our family, our friends, and our neighbours. We do not know the names of all the saints. Do you know the names of some of these saints?

Activity

In November, we remember the people we love who have gone before us. To help us remember those we love who have died, and illuminate our hope that they are now in heaven with God, we will write the name or draw a picture of someone we love who has died on the Junior Activity Page. This could be a family member, a friend, a neighbour or a pet. It can also be for those people who have no one to pray for them.

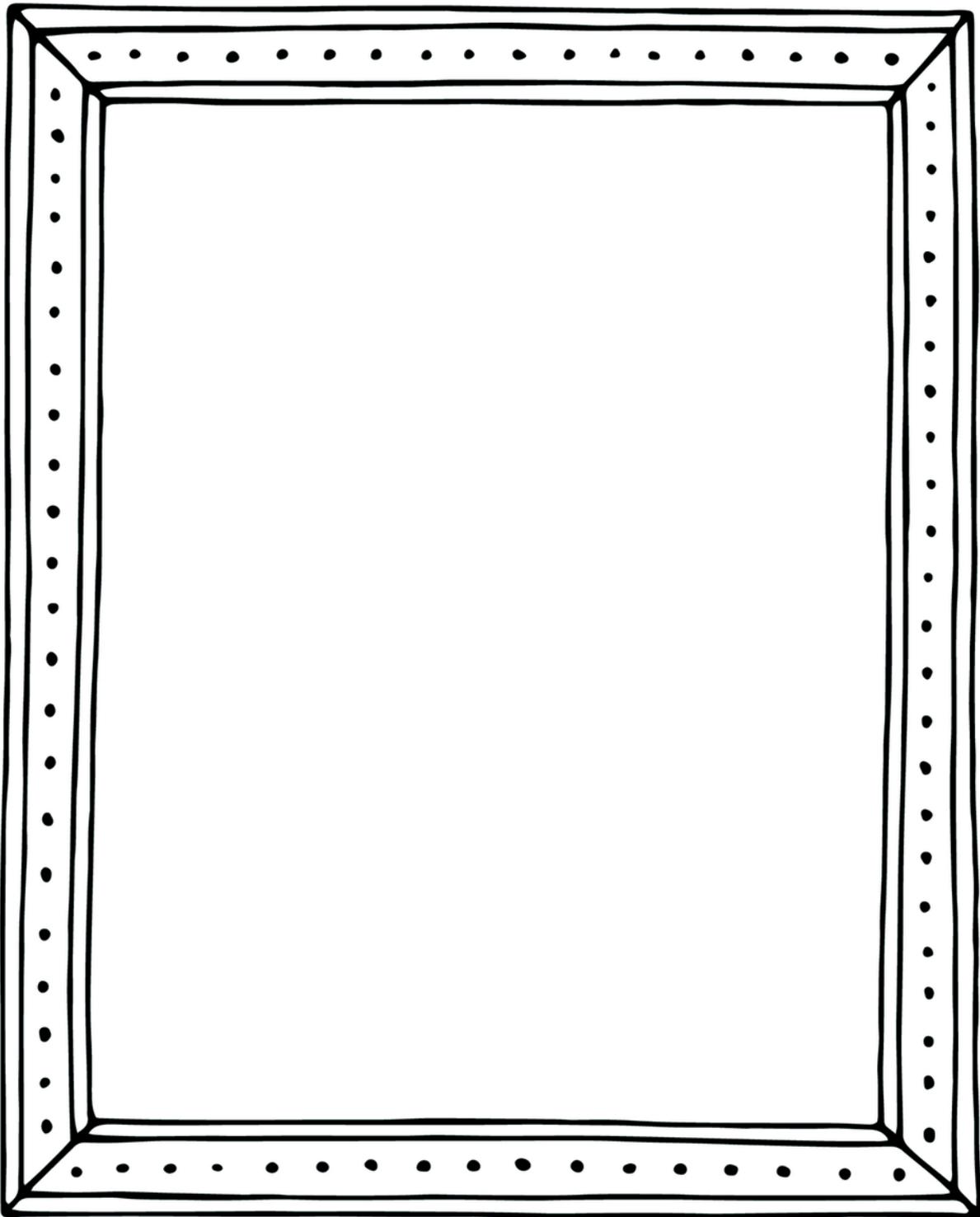
Display these sheets in the class prayer space.





The Moment of November

Junior Activity Page





Senior Lesson

(Third Class–Sixth Class) (P5–P7)



Teacher's Notes

The Moment of November focuses on how we as followers of Jesus are communities of hope. We live in the hope of the Resurrection, that those that have gone before us will be brought into the new and eternal life with God that Jesus promises.

Jesus tells us that all who believe in him will return home to him in heaven when they die. Those we love who have died are now in heaven with Jesus and we can pray for them and to them. Throughout the month of November and on the Feast of All Saints (1 November) and on the Feast of All Souls (2 November), we remember family and friends who have returned home to heaven. We also remember those who have no one to pray for them.

Sometimes it can be difficult to live with this hope, especially when someone we love passes away. As Christians, we can see the truth of the promise in the miracle of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead. As well as examining this miracle, this lesson will focus on how we can remember loved ones who have died, especially during the month of November.

In many ways, our lives are like the seasons of the beautiful world God created for us. We are young and growing, in the spring of our lives, blossoming in the summer and growing older and maturing in the autumn. The Bible tells us, 'For everything, there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven' (Eccl 3:1).

Note: Teachers should use their own discretion when covering this material as the content may be difficult for some children, especially if they have been recently bereaved.

Consider

Begin the class with a brief discussion around what we as Christians believe happens after we die or someone we love dies. Where do we go? What happens at a funeral?

Note: 'We believe that: when we die, God calls us to heaven' (CCC, 1011); 'God's plan is that when we die, we will live on with God, Jesus, Mary, the angels and saints in heaven' (CCC, 1024).

Whether it is a member of our family, a friend or even a pet, it can be very difficult when someone we love dies. It is completely normal to feel sad, angry, lonely or confused after we lose someone.

Jesus promises that all who believe in him will return home to him in heaven when they die. Those we love who have died are now in heaven with Jesus and we can pray for them and to them. Throughout the month of November and on the Feast of All Saints (1 November) and on the Feast of All Souls (2 November), we remember family and friends who have returned home to heaven.

Explore

We can learn a lot about Jesus' promise from the miracle of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead.

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. 'Your daughter is dead,' they said. 'Why bother the teacher anymore?'





Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha koum!' (which means 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!'). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

The following YouTube clip tells the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter (beginning at 3:00): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UQ8la6HG_o

Activity

Write an account of the miracle as if you were present or report the miracle for the *Galilee Gazette* on the Senior Activity Page.

Additional Activity

Take some time to think/talk about people you love who have died. This could be a family member, a friend or even a pet. The children can draw a picture or write the name of someone they want to remember. Place the sheets in a box at the sacred space in the classroom. If there is an opportunity, bring the class to Mass during a school day in November. Ask the priest if the class can place the box of names at the foot of the altar during the Mass.





Prayer Service



This prayer service could be held in a classroom, school hall or a prayer room. Due to the evolving situation regarding Covid-19, it may not be possible to conduct a prayer service in significant numbers. Alternative options include streaming the prayer service from one classroom to the rest of the school, or each class hosting their own prayer service.

PRAYER SPACE ITEMS

- A Remembrance Tree/book/box
- Completed drawings (Junior Activity Page)
- A green table cloth
- A candle
- Holy Water
- Crucifix

Leader: Good morning, everyone. Today, we are gathered to pray for family, friends, relations and neighbours who have died. We also pray for those who have no one to pray for them. We remember them especially during the month of November as we remember Jesus' promise of eternal life in God's Kingdom. We know that God's love is greater than death, and pray that those who have died are now with God in heaven. We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Opening Song: I Watched the Sunrise

Leader: Today, we remember those who have passed away and place prayer leaves with their names or their pictures on our Remembrance Tree. (Alternatively, these could be in a remembrance box or written in a book of remembrance.) Jesus teaches us that God's love is greater than death. We now listen to God's Word.

Reading: A reading from the Book of the Apocalypse

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say to me, 'Write down: Happy are those who die in the Lord!' 'Happy indeed,' the Spirit says, 'now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them.' The Word of the Lord.

Leader: Together, we pray for those who have died. The response to each prayer is 'May the light of Christ shine on them'.

All: May the light of Christ shine on them.





Reader 1: For all family members who have died. *(Response)*

Reader 2: For all past teachers and staff of this school who have died. *(Response)*

Reader 3: For all those in our parish who have died during the past year. *(Response)*

Reader 4: For those who have died and have no one to remember them. *(Response)*

Reader 5: For all those whose names are included on our Remembrance Tree (or remembrance box/book of remembrance). *(Response)*



Leader: We know that Jesus prayed constantly to his father in heaven. He asked us to pray to God the Father too. And so, as Jesus asked us, we dare to say:

All: Our Father ... / *Ár nAthair...*

Leader: Loving God, we thank you for the lives of our loved ones who have died. We ask you to care for those who are missing them at this time. May we always remember your promise that one day we will all be together in heaven. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Reader 8: May the Lord support us all the day long; till the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over and our work is done. Then in his mercy, may he give us a safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at last.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Closing Song: There is a Place

