

Catholic Religious Education Programme

# Friends in Faith

3rd to 5th Class

**SAMPLE  
MATERIAL**



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## SAMPLE MATERIAL

# Introduction to Teachers, Parents and Guardians



*Friends in Faith* is a new Religious Education Programme for 3rd to 6th class based on the Catholic Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (2015). *Friends in Faith* provides a clear, simple, sensitive presentation of the **four curriculum strands**:

**1. Christian Faith   2. Liturgy and Prayer   3. Word of God   4. Christian Morality**

*Friends in Faith* has been designed to:

- respect and support pupils on their faith journey
- create stronger links between the school programme and the parish liturgies
- develop a whole-school approach to religion in 3rd to 6th classes.

## **What classes will use *Friends in Faith Church Year C*?**

*Friends in Faith* is linked to the three-year cycle of the Catholic Church. Each year focuses on a different Gospel: Matthew (Year A), Mark (Year B) and Luke (Year C).

The *Friends in Faith Church Year C* programme will be used by **3rd, 4th and 5th classes** to coincide with **Church Year C (Liturgical Cycle C)**. This ensures a structured, sequential approach to the key Sunday Gospels. It also supports a common, whole-school, focus on faith development.

The faith partnership of school, home and parish is supported in a meaningful way by ensuring that the school programme is linked to the correct liturgical cycle.

*Friends in Faith Church Year C* will be used at the same time by 3rd, 4th, and 5th classes.

*Friends in Faith Confirmation Book* will be used by 6th class/Confirmation pupils.

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# Our Christian Beliefs



## Following in the Footsteps of Jesus...

Believing in a Christian way of life means believing in what Jesus taught about loving one another just as God loves us. It is about following in the footsteps of Jesus and making the world a better place.

Welcome to a book about believing and belonging, gathering and praying, listening and leading – and about being a good Christian, and a friend in faith.

Life is a journey... full of choices, decisions and surprises. Family and friends support you on that journey. Mams and dads made choices for you when you were small but – by now – you are beginning to take responsibility and make choices for yourself.

Being a Christian was a choice made for you on the day you were baptised. Since then, Jesus has been there for you every step of the way. Just as you choose how much you are in touch with your friends, you can also choose how much you are in touch with Jesus.

Do you want to be a Christian? Do you want to listen to, and learn from, Jesus about goodness, kindness, gentleness, care and forgiveness?

## We Are All Unique in God's Eyes

Can you tell which birds or animals made these footprints? One thing is sure – they are not made by humans!

Jesus invites you to walk with him, to live a good Christian life, and to leave your own unique footprint on the world. Do you want to follow in the footsteps of Jesus?



### Let's Chat

1. Are you pleased that you are a Christian? Why?
2. What does being a Christian mean to you?
3. What kind of footprint (or impression) did Jesus leave on people he met?
4. What kind of footprint would you like to make, as a Christian?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

Can you name:

1. three Christian symbols
2. three good Christian people
3. three things Christians do
4. three reasons to be a Christian?

### BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Toeprints – not just fingerprints – are unique to each person... so you really can leave your footprint on the world!



# Our Catholic Faith

THEME 1: We Believe

## Catholic – Believe and Celebrate!

Catholics are Christians who have particular beliefs and who practise their faith according to the rules and traditions of the Catholic Church. You are Christian and Catholic – believe and celebrate!



Thirty years ago, almost everyone in Ireland was Catholic. Nowadays, about 15 out of every 20 people in Ireland say that they belong to the Christian and Catholic faith. Almost every town and village in Ireland has a Catholic church and most schools are Catholic schools.

You are helped at home and at school to grow in faith. But just as you are learning to do more things for yourself every day and to make more of your own decisions, you also must take more responsibility for your faith. It is time to step up and step out with Jesus. He is there to welcome you and to walk with you!



The day of your Baptism was probably your first time in a Catholic church. It was also a day when people gathered to welcome you into the Catholic community. It was a day of joy and celebration.

You were probably so small on the day of your Baptism that you could take no footsteps. Are you ready now to walk the Catholic way?

### Let's Chat

1. Are you pleased that you are a Catholic? Why?
2. What does being a Catholic mean to you?
3. What do you think these people would say is important for them about being a Catholic?  
(a) an older person (like a grandparent)  
(b) a priest  
(c) a 6th class child

### A LITTLE BIT MORE



Look at the picture of the Catholic church. It is a church in Ireland.

1. How old do you think the church is?
2. How does this church differ from your local church?

# Understanding the Bible



## The Bible - Old and New

The Bible has two parts – the **Old Testament** and the **New Testament**. The Old Testament is about life before Jesus' birth. The New Testament is about life after the birth of Jesus.



The Bible is the most popular book of all time. It is a reference book for Christians. Thousands of years ago there were no computers, no easy way to record information and no quick way to check facts or find information. It is good that people took time to write about what happened before and after the birth of Jesus.

It is believed that about 40 people were involved in writing various parts of the Bible over a long period of time. They belonged to different traditions and backgrounds and included doctors, farmers, lawyers and fishermen. They had different writing styles and produced several types of books.

The Old and New Testaments are both important but quite different.

The Old Testament is a bit like a family tree, telling about people, places and events leading up to the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus. The 46 books of the Old Testament are in five categories: Law, History, Wisdom, Poetry and Prophets.

The New Testament is quite different. Many of the disciples continued Jesus' excellent work after he died. They travelled a lot and wrote their stories. The four Gospels tell about Jesus teaching and preaching. The Gospels teach us that Jesus was kind, gentle and forgiving. He was especially caring to those who were poor, weak and hungry.

### Let's Chat

1. The Old Testament includes books from the prophets. Prophecy is about predicting what will happen. Name three things that you think the prophets in the Old Testament might have predicted.
2. Can you name five stories from the New Testament? Which story gives the best understanding of Jesus?

### BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Even though many people wrote the Bible in many styles over many years, it all focused on one message and one person – Jesus Christ.



## Jesus Meets Many Who Believe

Jesus spent his life teaching and preaching. People listened and believed. They wanted to be with him and to follow him. Sometimes Jesus needed a break – a little ‘time-out’ to rest and pray.



**Mark 6:30-34**



Jesus had sent the disciples out to preach and teach. After some time, they returned. They wanted to see Jesus and to tell him about what they had done and taught. The disciples gathered around Jesus, but crowds were coming and going, all trying to meet him. Jesus and his followers did not even have time to eat. Jesus said to the disciples, ‘Come with me. We will go to a quiet place to be alone. There we will get some rest.’

So, they went in a boat to a place where there was nobody, but many saw them leave and recognised them. People from the towns ran to the place where Jesus was going. They got there before Jesus. When he arrived, he saw a great crowd waiting. Jesus felt sorry for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He started to preach again. He taught them many things.

### Let's Chat

1. Do you think it was right for Jesus to try to leave the crowd? Why?
2. Do you think it was ok that the people followed him?
3. Would you have followed him, if he was tired? Why?
4. What does it mean that people were like sheep without a shepherd?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

Can you find another Gospel story about:

- (a) a boat
- (b) a sheep or a shepherd
- (c) the disciples
- (d) Jesus and a crowd?

### BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

There are at least 30 references in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to crowds following Jesus. He was very popular!

# Our Friends in Faith



## Believe It or Not!

People often begin a sentence or story with the words 'believe it or not'. It really means that you have a choice to accept and to believe, without proof. Faith is a bit like that – it is an invitation to 'believe it or not'!



Are you a curious person? Do you wonder about things such as 'How did the world begin?' or 'Why are some people sick or hungry or poor?' or 'Why are there different faiths?' or 'Why does my friend pray in an unusual way or not pray at all?' It is difficult to answer some of these questions. Sometimes there are different answers – depending on what we know, understand and believe.

Faith is just like that – it is a bit of a puzzle! There are many world faiths and each faith has its own beliefs and practices. Children usually receive their faith at home where they pray and celebrate faith events and traditions. People of faith also gather and pray in a place of worship such as a church, mosque or synagogue.

It is important to respect other people's faith. Respecting other faiths means learning about different faiths, understanding faith practices and knowing when friends of other faiths are celebrating faith events.

About 75 per cent of Irish people are Christian (mainly Catholic). Ten per cent say they do not have any faith. About 15 per cent belong to one of the other world faiths. Being in the majority does not mean being better than others – not at all!



Almost all faiths are about being a good person, helping others and making the world a better place.



### A LITTLE BIT MORE

Try sketching the symbols for these faiths:

1. Christianity
2. Islam
3. Judaism
4. Buddhism
5. Hinduism

So, celebrate and be a friend in faith!

### Let's Chat

1. Imagine 20 people are standing in a supermarket or bus queue. How many of those people would you think are (a) Christian, (b) non-believers, (c) Muslim?
2. What faith (not your own) would you like to learn more about?
3. What is the question you most want to ask about another faith?

### IMAGINE

Supposing you had to talk to someone of another faith about being a Catholic. What would you be most proud to tell them?

# Pause for Prayer



## Counting on Jesus

It is good to pause and pray each day. Prayer helps you to be closer to God. When you pray you remember that you are not on your own. Here are two simple, special prayers. Say them. Pray them. Believe and know that we can count on Jesus.

It is good to know that you have family and friends you can count on. As Christians, you can also count on Jesus to be there for you.

The Act of Faith or Prayer of Faith is a lovely short prayer that helps you to check in with God.

Do you like the Prayer of Faith? Try to learn it. Take a quiet moment to say the Prayer of Faith each day.

### Prayer of Faith

O my God, I believe in you  
and in all that your  
holy church teaches  
because you have said it,  
and your word is true.

You are the Christ,  
Son of the living God.  
You are my Lord and my God.  
Lord, I believe, increase my faith.

The Prayer for School is a lovely prayer. It is for pupils who work and play together in school where the Christian faith is an important part of school life.



Pray with your friends.  
Celebrate your  
friendship with each  
other and with Jesus.

### Prayer for School

Heavenly Father, your son Jesus Christ came to share our life.

We give you thanks for making our school  
[say the name of your school]  
a place of sharing, learning and friendship.  
With the guidance of the Holy Spirit  
we will encourage and practise  
truth, fairness and respect  
so that our school may be a place  
where children and adults  
joyfully celebrate God's presence with us.  
May almighty God bless us all.  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

### Let's Chat

1. Which do you prefer: the Prayer of Faith or the Prayer for School? Why?
2. Choose one line in each prayer that is important for you. Explain why you picked those lines.
3. Check your *Friends in Faith* Prayer Book. What three prayers are your favourite prayers?

### JUST A THOUGHT

What three people do you feel you can count on most to be there for you? Create a short prayer for one of them.



# Our Christian Beliefs



## Gathering as Christians

In Ireland, long ago, going to Mass or church on Sunday was the most important event of the week. It was time for prayer, reflection and thanksgiving. It was also good to gather as a community of believers and friends.



High Resolution Image  
to follow

Gladys MacCabe was born into a Protestant family in County Antrim. She loved fashion and art. Gladys painted scenes of people at fairs, markets and churches. This painting by Gladys is called *Going to Mass*. It is typical of life in Ireland about 50 years ago.

1. Do you think the people in the painting know each other? Why?
2. Do they belong to a community or parish?
3. What faith symbols can you spot?
4. How do you know they are Christians?
5. What do you notice about their clothes?
6. What colours do you think are inside the church?
7. What might the adults be talking about?
8. What might the children be talking about?
9. Do you think all these people are happy?
10. Would you like to be in the group?
11. Which person would you like to be? Why?
12. Do you like the picture? Why?

### Let's Chat

1. Give the painting a new title. Make sure that it is connected with faith.
2. Describe a church gathering that you attended.
3. Do you like belonging to a Christian community? Why?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

Sketch a modern-day version of a Christians gathering for a religious ceremony in Ireland.

### BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Gladys MacCabe died in 2018 when she was almost 100!





## Gathering to Belong

The beginning of belonging to the Catholic faith is when family and friends gather for a Baptism. Baptism is a sacrament. It is a sacrament of belonging as a Christian and a Catholic.

Baptism is the first sacrament. The very first moment of belonging is when the priest says, 'I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

### 1 Gathering, welcome and promises

Sign of the cross  
Gospel message



Parents, godparents and friends gather. They promise to support the baby who is receiving the sacrament of Baptism.

### 2 Pouring of water



Water is poured on the baby's head. Water symbolises life and growth. With the help of family and friends, the baby will grow in faith as a Christian and a Catholic.

### 3 Anointing with oil



Oil is rubbed in the shape of a cross on the baby's breast. Oil is a symbol of the strength that faith will bring to the baby.

### 4 Lighting the Baptismal candle



The lit candle symbolises the light of Christ. It is also a sign of the warmth and encouragement that the baby will have from belonging to the Christian family.

### 5 Wearing a white garment



The white shawl, or robe, is a symbol of purity and cleanliness. The baby is now baptised and is wrapped in the purity and cleanliness of a life with Jesus Christ.

## Let's Chat

1. Why do you think Baptism is called a sacrament of belonging?
2. Which symbols do you find (a) easy and (b) difficult to understand?
3. Can you name any of the other six sacraments?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

Share three interesting pieces of information about your Baptism.



### JUST ONE WORD

The word '**baptism**' comes from a very old Greek word that means 'to be dipped or washed'.

# Understanding the Bible



## The New Testament

The **New Testament** is the second half of the Bible. It tells about life after the birth of Jesus. It was originally written in Greek.



There are 27 books in the New Testament. Some are history books. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are probably the best-known books of the New Testament. We often listen to readings from the Gospels at Mass, telling us about Jesus' life and how he asks us to live as Christians.



Jesus spent 33 years on earth – from his birth in Bethlehem to his crucifixion and death. The disciples were Jesus' main followers. They saw how he cared for the poor and healed the sick. They witnessed miracles. They listened to parables. They listened and responded when he asked them to go and tell the good news.

Many of Jesus' disciples and followers continued his excellent work. Four of them wrote the Gospels. St Luke wrote another book called the *Acts of the Apostles*. This tells how the apostles created the church after Jesus' death.

St Paul was very busy too! He travelled a lot to spread the good news about Jesus. He wrote many letters while he was away, and these letters were as long as books! St Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament.

### Let's Chat

1. Which three books from the New Testament would you like to know more about? Why?
2. Do you think it is strange that St Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books (they were very long letters really) in the New Testament?
3. Why do you think the Bible has sold over 5 million copies around the world?
4. What kind of people buy the Bible, in your opinion?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

Can you name:

1. four Gospel stories
2. four disciples
3. four places mentioned in the New Testament?

### FASCINATING FACT

The shortest sentence in the New Testament is in St John's Gospel. It is just two words: Jesus wept. (John 11: 35)

# Gospel Message

## Jesus Heals a Blind Man

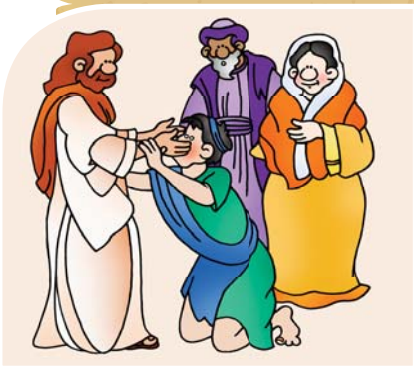
A large crowd gathered to see Jesus. They were embarrassed when a blind beggar asked Jesus for help. Jesus loved everyone, especially the poor, the hungry and the sick. He welcomed and healed the blind man.



Matthew 10:46-52

Then they came to the town of Jericho. When Jesus was leaving with his followers and a large crowd, a blind beggar called Bartimaeus was sitting by the roadside. Bartimaeus heard the commotion and he knew that Jesus was walking by. The blind man cried, 'Jesus, Son of David, please help me!'

Many people were horrified that the beggar was shouting out to Jesus. They scolded him and told him to be quiet. But Bartimaeus shouted more and more, 'Jesus, Son of David, please help me!' Jesus stopped and said, 'Tell that man to come over to me.'



So, they called to the blind man and said, 'Cheer up! Get to your feet. Jesus is calling you.' Bartimaeus stood up quickly. He took off his coat, left it on the ground and went to see Jesus. Jesus said, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man answered, 'Teacher, I want to see again.'

Jesus said, 'Go. You are healed because you believe.' At once, Bartimaeus was able to see again, and he followed Jesus on the road.

### Let's Chat

1. Describe Bartimaeus, as he probably looked. What would make the crowd feel embarrassed?
2. How do you think Bartimaeus felt when he was told to be quiet? How would you have felt?
3. What do you think the crowd learned about Jesus?
4. Do you think what they saw would have changed them?
5. What does this Gospel story teach us about faith?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

1. Imagine you were a reporter witnessing the healing of Bartimaeus. What headline would you give your newspaper article?
2. Write, or act out, a conversation between two people in the crowd after witnessing the healing of Bartimaeus.



### JUST ONE WORD

**Jericho** is the town where Bartimaeus was healed. Name five other places that are mentioned in the Gospels.



# Our Friends in Faith



## The Prophet Muhammad

Muhammad was born in the Middle East over 1500 years ago. He wanted people to change and to live good lives. He established the religion of Islam.

Muhammad was born in Arabia. His parents died when he was young, so he grew up with his uncle. Muhammad became a trader, buying and selling in the city of Mecca. He was a good man who was upset by other people's behaviour. He saw people stealing, cheating and being violent.

Muhammad often went to a cave in the mountains to pray alone. One day, an angel appeared and told him about the one true God, Allah. Muhammad rushed home and told his wife. She believed her husband was a holy man, a prophet.

Muhammad wanted people to be honest, peaceful and good. He began teaching about Allah. Many traders were angry because Muhammad's message was bad for business. They wanted to kill him.

Muhammad and his family escaped across the desert to Medina, almost 350 km away. The people there welcomed him and wanted to listen to him. He soon became the ruler of Medina.

Muhammad later returned to Mecca with an army and made the city a shrine to Allah. Mecca is now the holiest city of Islam.

## The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the sacred text of Islam. It is as important for Muslims as the Bible is for Christians. The Word of Allah is in the Qur'an just as the Word of God is in the Bible.

The Qur'an is written in Arabic. Muslim children learn Arabic so that they can read the Qur'an.



### Let's Chat

1. Describe some of the similarities between the Christian faith and the Muslim faith.
2. Would you have believed Muhammad if he told you an angel had appeared to him in a cave in the mountain? Why?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

1. What two questions would you like to ask a Muslim friend about their faith?
2. What two things would you tell them about your faith?

### FASCINATING FACT

One of the most important collections of Qur'ans outside the Middle East is in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. There are over 260 Qur'ans, or Qur'an fragments, there including one that is over 1000 years old!





# Pause for Prayer



## Praying in Quiet Places

The Bible often talks about Jesus praying. He prayed with others, but he also liked to pray quietly and alone. The Gospels mention times when Jesus 'went alone up into the hills to pray' or when 'Jesus was praying alone'.



Skellig Mhíchíl

Jesus was not the only one who liked to pray alone. There are beautiful, isolated places all over Ireland where saints built monasteries and places of prayer. One such place is the world-famous Skellig Mhíchíl in County Kerry.

Skellig Mhíchíl is a place of exceptional beauty – an isolated, craggy island in south-west Kerry. It takes a long time to reach Skellig Mhíchil by car. It was discovered as a peaceful place of prayer by St Finian who travelled around Ireland on foot!

St Finian and the monks who travelled with him built beehive huts (stone homes) on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. They stayed and prayed on Skellig Mhíchíl, 10 km out from the coast. It was a challenge to get to the island but – like Jesus – they wanted special places where they could go to pray alone.

St Finian was born in Carlow about 1500 years ago. He spent about 30 years in Wales, learning and praying. He returned to Ireland to travel and teach and to establish churches and places of prayer.

St Finian built a small clay church in Clonard, County Meath. Many people travelled to see him there and to learn from him. He taught other famous Irish saints. He is patron saint of County Meath and his feast day is on the 12th December.



## Let's Chat

1. Why do you think Jesus and others liked to pray in quiet places? Do you like quiet time to pray? Where is your quiet space?
2. Can you name four Irish saints? Where were their monasteries or places of prayer?
3. Create a short prayer that St Finian might have said when he was on Skellig Mhíchíl.

## A LITTLE BIT MORE

Find two interesting facts about each of these places of prayer:

1. Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly
2. Croagh Patrick, Co. Mayo
3. Ardmore, Co. Waterford
4. Lough Derg, Co. Donegal

## BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Some of the 2015 film *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was shot on the peaceful, prayerful island of Skellig Mhíchil. I wonder what St Finian would say about that!

## Themes – Strands and Strand Units

STRAND UNITS → STRANDS ↓	Our Christian Beliefs	Our Catholic Faith	Understanding the Bible	The Gospel Message	Our Friends in Faith	Pause for Prayer
1. We believe	Following in the footsteps of Jesus	Catholic – believe and celebrate!	The Bible – Old and New	Jesus meets many who believe <i>Mark 6: 30–34</i>	Believe it or not!	Counting on Jesus
2. We gather	Gathering as Christians	Gathering to belong	The New Testament	Jesus heals a blind man <i>Mark 10: 46–52</i>	The prophet Muhammad	Praying in quiet places
3. We pray	Faith flying high	Places to pray	The Parable of the Pencil	Jesus asks us to love <i>Mark 12: 28–34</i>	The Jewish Sabbath	Called to pray
4. We wait and prepare	The Christmas crib	Don't forget the shepherds!	St Luke's Gospel	Jesus is to be born to Mary <i>Luke 1: 26–56</i>	Lucia – celebrating light	A special prayer to Mary
5. We belong	Holy Communion on the moon	The sacrament of Holy Communion	Homes in Bible times	Jesus finds people to help him <i>Mark 5: 1–12</i>	Hinduism	A letter from God
6. We try	Irena Sendler	Prayer and positivity	Jesus has many names	Jesus talks about a useless tree <i>Luke 13: 6–9</i>	Father's Day	Try a prayer day
7. We repent and rejoice	Walls and bridges	Diary of Holy Week	Jesus enters Jerusalem as King <i>Luke 19:28–40</i>	Jesus talks about two brothers <i>Luke 15: 11–32</i>	Judaism	Prayers of joy
8. We respect	The Good Shepherd	Liturgy of the Eucharist	Lambs and sheep	Jesus is amazed <i>Luke 7: 1–10</i>	Respect and tolerance	Holy Communion prayers
9. We listen	Listen, ask and have faith	Listen and follow	Bible talk	Jesus and a good Samaritan <i>Luke 12: 25–37</i>	Buddhism	Listen and pray
10. We lead	Leading by example	Leading by feeding	The Holy Land	Jesus tells us not to worry <i>Luke 12: 22–30</i>	The Buddha bowl	Prayers for hunger and hope

## Key Messages

STRAND ↓	STRAND UNIT 1 ↓	STRAND UNIT 2 ↓	STRAND UNIT 3 ↓	STRAND UNIT 4 ↓	STRAND UNIT 5 ↓	STRAND UNIT 6 ↓
THEME →	Our Christian Beliefs	Our Catholic Faith	Understanding the Bible	The Gospel Message	Our Friends in Faith	Pause for Prayer
1. We believe	<p><b>Following in the footsteps of Jesus</b></p> <p>Believing in a Christian way of life means believing in what Jesus taught. It is about following in the footsteps of Jesus and making the world a better place.</p>	<p><b>Catholic – believe and celebrate!</b></p> <p>Catholics are Christians who have particular beliefs and who follow the rules and traditions of the Catholic church. You are Christian and Catholic – believe and celebrate!</p>	<p><b>The Bible – old and new</b></p> <p>The Bible has two parts – the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is about life before Jesus’ birth. The New Testament is about life after the birth of Jesus.</p>	<p><b>Jesus meets many who believe</b></p> <p><i>Mark 6: 30–34</i></p> <p>Jesus spent his life teaching and preaching. People wanted to be with him but sometimes Jesus needed a break – a little ‘time-out’ to rest and pray.</p>	<p><b>Believe it or not!</b></p> <p>People often begin a sentence or story with the words ‘believe it or not’. It means you have a choice to accept and to believe. Faith is a bit like that – it is an invitation to believe it or not!</p>	<p><b>Counting on Jesus</b></p> <p>It is good to pause and pray each day. Prayer helps you to be closer to God. When you pray you remember that you are not on your own.</p>
2. We gather	<p><b>Gathering as Christians</b></p> <p>In Ireland long ago, going to Mass or Church on Sunday was a time for prayer, reflection and thanksgiving. It was also good to gather as a community of believers and friends.</p>	<p><b>Gathering to belong</b></p> <p>The beginning of belonging to the Catholic faith is when family and friends gather for a Baptism. Baptism is a sacrament. It is a sacrament of belonging as a Christian and a Catholic.</p>	<p><b>The New Testament</b></p> <p>The New Testament is the second half of the Bible. It tells about life after the birth of Jesus. It was originally written in Greek.</p>	<p><b>Jesus heals a blind man</b></p> <p><i>Mark 10: 46–52</i></p> <p>A large crowd gathered to see Jesus. They were embarrassed when a blind beggar asked Jesus for help. Jesus welcomed and healed the blind man.</p>	<p><b>The prophet Muhammad</b></p> <p>Muhammad was born in the Middle East over 1500 years ago. He wanted people to change and to live good lives. He established the religion of Islam.</p>	<p><b>We gather to pray</b></p> <p>Jesus prayed with others, but he also prayed quietly and alone. The Gospels mention that Jesus ‘went alone up into the hills to pray’ or that he was ‘praying alone’.</p>
3. We pray	<p><b>Faith flying high</b></p> <p>Long ago Ireland was ‘the Island of Saints and Scholars’ because of the number of holy people who became saints. Many also wrote religious books and prayers.</p>	<p><b>Places to pray</b></p> <p>Prayer is a conversation with God. It doesn’t matter where that happens. It is good to pray together as a faith community. Sunday is the day Catholics gather together at Mass.</p>	<p><b>The Parable of the Pencil</b></p> <p>A parable is a story with a message. The message is usually about being a better person. Jesus used parables to make it easier to understand his message.</p>	<p><b>Jesus asks us to love</b></p> <p><i>Mark 12: 28–34</i></p> <p>Jesus was asked many questions. Sometimes it is difficult to find just the right answer but in this Gospel story Jesus’ answer is very simple: ‘Love God and love others.’</p>	<p><b>The Jewish Sabbath</b></p> <p>Jews celebrate the Sabbath, once a week. It is a day of rest and prayer. When the Sabbath begins, people wish each other ‘Shabbat Shalom’ meaning ‘have a peaceful Sabbath’.</p>	<p><b>Called to pray</b></p> <p>Prayer keeps us connected. People of faith pray in various ways and at various times. Many faiths have special times during the day when people are called to pray.</p>
4. We wait and prepare	<p><b>The Christmas crib</b></p> <p>Christmas is a season of two halves. The first half is advent when we wait and prepare. The second half is Christmas – the 12 days from the 25th of December to the 6th of January (the arrival of the kings).</p>	<p><b>Don’t forget the shepherds</b></p> <p>Only St Luke’s Gospel reports that shepherds come to visit Jesus. Did they really come? Were they forgotten because they were poor, simply dressed and brought no precious gifts?</p>	<p><b>St Luke’s Gospel</b></p> <p>St Luke is one of the four evangelists, or Gospel writers. He was born in the city of Antioch in Syria. A clever and talented man, Luke was a doctor and a painter.</p>	<p><b>Jesus is to be born to Mary</b></p> <p><i>Luke 1: 26–56</i></p> <p>Mary was an ordinary person who was asked to do an extraordinary thing – to be the mother of Jesus. Her cousin, Elizabeth was also expecting a baby, John the Baptist.</p>	<p><b>Lucia – celebrating light</b></p> <p>Each year, on the 13th of December, Swedish people of all faiths celebrate the feast day of Saint Lucy (Santa Lucia) – the patron saint of light and sight.</p>	<p><b>A special prayer to Mary</b></p> <p>When the Angel Gabriel came to visit her, Mary heard that she was chosen by God and that an incredible change was going to happen to her.</p>

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5. We belong	<b>Holy Communion on the moon</b> There are times – such as Christmas – when Christians make a special effort to belong, to celebrate and to share in faith. Prayer and Holy Communion are two of the greatest signs of belonging for Christians.	<b>The sacrament of Holy Communion</b> A sacrament is a moment of grace when we are close in a special way to Jesus. Holy Communion is one of the seven sacraments. It is a sacrament of belonging. We belong by receiving the body of Christ.	<b>Homes in Bible times</b> People had homes in Bible times but they spent most of their time working, playing, and eating outside. The roofs were the coolest and quietest places, so people often slept on the roof.	<b>Jesus finds people to help him</b> <i>Luke 5: 1–12</i> Jesus was preaching near Lake Galilee. More and more people wanted to hear him. It was tough for Jesus to be working alone. He realised he needed people who would help him. He needed disciples, or followers.	<b>Hinduism</b> Hinduism has a holy text – the Vedas; a place of prayer – the temple; religious festivals – Holi and Diwali; and a place of pilgrimage – the River Ganges.	<b>A letter from God</b> Prayer is an important part of faith. God reminds us in this letter that he is always there for us, but he would like us to keep in touch with him. He invites us to belong through prayer.
6. We try	<b>Irena Sendler</b> Irena Sendler was a Polish Catholic – and a true Christian. She believed people should always try to do the right thing. She had once been helped by the Jewish community. Later in life Irena saved the lives of 2500 Jewish children.	<b>Prayer and positivity</b> Life is sometimes not so easy but staying close to Jesus and staying positive can help. Keep praying, keep smiling, keep trying and know that God is there even when life is stormy.	<b>Jesus has many names</b> Jesus, Lord, Saviour, Prince of Peace, Lamb of God. Jesus has so many titles, it can be hard to know when a Gospel story, or a reading from the Bible, or a song or a prayer is referring to him.	<b>Jesus talks about a useless tree</b> <i>Luke 13:6–9</i> This is a parable. The real message is to always try to do our best, to try to lead a good and fruitful life. Is there also a message about faith in the story?	<b>Father's Day</b> Father's Day began as a Catholic celebration. The feast of St Joseph on the 19th of March, was chosen to honour fathers. St Joseph was a good man, kind and caring to Mary and Jesus. Dads are good too – so it is important to give them a special day.	<b>Try a prayer day</b> It is hard to belong anywhere if you don't keep in touch. Prayer is the best way to keep in touch with God. It doesn't matter where or when or how we pray but the more we pray the more we feel we belong.
7. We repent and rejoice	<b>Walls and bridges</b> The world has some famous walls – the Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall in Germany, Hadrian's Wall in England. All were built as enemy walls – to keep people apart, to create distance and to give a message – 'Not welcome!'	<b>Diary of Holy Week</b> Holy Week occurs from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. For Christians, it is a week of great sorrow and great joy. It begins joyfully with Jesus arriving in Jerusalem. It ends joyfully with the resurrection of Jesus Christ... but a lot happened in between!	<b>Jesus enters Jerusalem as king</b> <i>Luke 19:28–40</i> This is the story of Palm Sunday. Jesus entered Jerusalem as king. His followers were rejoicing but the Pharisees wanted people to obey them, not a new king called Jesus!	<b>Jesus talks about two brothers</b> <i>Luke 15:11–32</i> This is a parable about life not always being fair. Some people try hard but don't get noticed. Others are selfish, but they get away with it. Jesus has a message – he forgives.	<b>Judaism</b> Judaism's history and religious celebrations are rooted in the Old Testament. The Jewish year celebrates times of sorrow and joy. In Judaism Pesach is celebrated around the same time that Easter is celebrated by Christians.	<b>Prayers of joy</b> Easter is a time for prayers of joy. We often pray when we need something but we don't always remember to say a 'thank you' prayer. Easter is time to give thanks and praise because Jesus is risen!



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8. We respect	<p><b>The Good Shepherd</b> Jesus is often called the 'good shepherd' because he cares for each lamb (that is you and me!). Good shepherds are caring and kind. They try to ensure that no one is lost, forgotten or left behind.</p>	<p><b>Liturgy of the Eucharist</b> Holy Communion (or Eucharist) is a sacrament of belonging. Holy Communion is bread and wine changed to the body and blood of Christ. Our faith is nourished by receiving Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.</p>	<p><b>Lambs and sheep</b> Lambs and sheep are mentioned more than 500 times in the Bible. They were used for food, clothes and sacrifice. Jesus used them as a symbol in stories. He also became a symbol himself – the lamb of God.</p>	<p><b>Jesus is amazed</b> <i>Luke 1:1–10</i> This is a story about one of Jesus' miracles. People were usually surprised by Jesus' ability to perform miracles, but in this story Jesus is the one who is most surprised.</p>	<p><b>Respect and tolerance</b> All around the world, there are people of different faiths, race and colour. The world would not be very interesting if we were all the same! It is important to respect and celebrate difference.</p>	<p><b>Holy Communion prayers</b> Receiving Holy Communion is a special moment of grace. You are receiving the bread of life, the body of Jesus Christ. It is important to be prepared, respectful and prayerful.</p>
9. We listen	<p><b>Listen, ask and have faith</b> It is good to listen and to ask questions. As we grow, we ask many questions because we are learning about family, friends, faith and facts about the world. Sometimes we can't get all the answers – we just have to believe. That's faith!</p>	<p><b>Listen and follow</b> A pilgrimage is a long, difficult journey to a sacred place. It involves prayer and penance. Ireland has many places of pilgrimage including Croagh Patrick. People go to follow in the footsteps of St Patrick (and Jesus!).</p>	<p><b>Bible talk</b> As Christians, we listen to the word of God in the Bible, but many Bible words are uncommon today. It is easier to understand the message when words are explained.</p>	<p><b>Jesus and a good Samaritan</b> <i>Luke 12:25–37</i> Jesus worked hard. He wanted people to listen. He taught a lot about respect. This is a story about how we treat others, and how Jesus expects Christians to show respect to all people.</p>	<p><b>Buddhism</b> Buddhism is about 2500 years old. There are over 350 million Buddhists in the world, mostly in Asia. Buddhism was originally a breakaway branch of Hinduism. Buddhists do not believe in a god. They listen and follow the teachings of Buddha.</p>	<p><b>The Three Trees</b> We pray to ask God for help, to thank him, or just to chat. God listens but he wants us to listen too. Sometimes our plans are not the same as God's plans. Listen to this story – it is about God answering in his own way.</p>
10. We lead	<p><b>Leading by example</b> Sometimes we learn about leading in unexpected ways, at unexpected times and from unexpected people. Leading by example is showing others that you will do the right thing, even if that is difficult. It is about making the world a better place for everyone.</p>	<p><b>Leading by feeding</b> Brother Kevin is an Irish Capuchin monk. He lives the true spirit of the Capuchins, working quietly and humbly to support the poor, the hungry and those lost or left behind. Brother Kevin is like the good shepherd in the Gospel.</p>	<p><b>The Holy Land</b> Jesus spent his life in Palestine, known to Christians today as the Holy Land. It helps to follow the Gospels if we see Judea, Samaria and Galilee on a map. It also explains why Jesus spent time with fishermen and shepherds, on mountains and in the desert.</p>	<p><b>Jesus tells us not to worry</b> <i>Luke 12:22–30</i> Jesus understands that we all need food, clothes and warmth. They are essential. But Jesus also reminds us that we need the nourishment of our faith. He asks us to seek the kingdom of God.</p>	<p><b>The Buddha bowl</b> The 'Buddha bowl' is a healthy, colourful meal of fruit or vegetables enjoyed by people of all faiths. Some say that having a Buddha bowl is 'nirvana'. The Buddha bowl is based on the Buddhist practice of eating colourful fruit and vegetables.</p>	<p><b>Prayers for hunger and hope</b> Prayer is not always about getting on our knees talking to God. Sometimes it is about getting off our knees to act for God! If everyone leads a little to combat hunger, the world could become a much better place.</p>

