



## **5. School assemblies at times of bereavement**

### **Words and Prayers:**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto **Name**, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him/her. May s/he rest in peace, Amen

Heavenly Father we are stunned and shocked at the death of **Name** and as a community we have gathered together to share our sorrow, our bewilderment and our pain. We are all asking the question 'Why?' but there seems to be no easy answer. We pray especially today for **her/his** friends, **her/his** classmates, **her/his** teachers and all who knew **her/him**. We remember **Name** for ..... (**List some characteristics or traits of the deceased**) We just don't understand this Lord, but help us to let go of any anger or any desire for revenge. May our tears be replaced by smiles when we think of **Name**, giving thanks for **her/his** life and all that **she/he** was to us and our school. Help us now pick up the pieces once again and to carry on in life as we believe **Name** would wish us to.

Almighty God, you know that it will be very difficult for us at our school without **Name**. Bring us the strength and the hope we need to carry on as **Name** would have wished us to do. We thank you Lord for the special gifts **Name** brought to the school and shared with us. May the Church and the wider community give thanks for the contribution **Name** made to the life of (**village/town name**) and may we redouble our efforts to serve each other, in honour of **her/his** memory. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

We hold before God all those who are sad because someone they loved has died.  
We hold before God all those who are sad because someone they knew has died.  
We hold before God each one of us that we may support each other in the days to come.  
We hold before God **Name** who has died. May **s/he** rest in peace. Amen.



## **Prayers for those who mourn**

1 .Lord, we look up to you and receive from you,  
Your blessing  
Your strength  
Your most holy love.  
In the darkest moments of our lives,  
Let us remember that you are the light  
You are the hope  
You are the courage we need. Amen

2 .Lord God, help us find comfort in our sadness,  
Certainty in our doubt  
And the courage to live.  
Make our faith strong  
Through Christ our Lord, Amen

3. Circle us Lord  
Keep hope within;  
Keep fear without.

Circle us Lord,  
Keep peace within,  
Keep darkness out.

Circle us Lord,  
Keep calm within  
Keep turmoil out.

Circle us Lord,  
Keep love within  
Keep anger away.



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4. May you be held by the God of compassion  
as you remember your loved ones today.  
May God be with you in your sorrow,  
and comfort you in your loss.  
May your God, your family and your friends,  
give you strength and confidence.  
May your spirit be lifted, may your heart be filled with peace,  
and may the light of God's promise fill you with joy and hope.  
Amen.

5. God of compassion,  
when I feel helpless in my grief,  
hold me to your heart.

God of gentleness,  
in those moments when life is dark,  
keep me close to you.

God of comfort,  
when I am overcome with sadness,  
shelter me under your wings.

Ever-faithful God,  
help me to find reassurance and hope  
in these words of hope to all your people -  
"Because you are precious to me,  
because I love you,  
there is no need to be afraid,  
for I am with you." (Isaiah 43)

*Margaret Lillis/CAFOD*

6. Lord of our longing  
hear our prayer,  
protect our dreams,  
and listen to our silent hopes.

Deal gently with our pain,  
speak to our sadness  
and remove the barriers

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that imprison our spirit.

Shed your light  
where shadows are cast,  
that we may feel your warmth  
and know your presence.

Give us courage  
to hold fast to our vision  
that we may build our world  
and create our future. Amen

Anna Shilson-Thomas, CAFOD

7. Jesus Christ,  
You understand the pain of loss,  
the grief that seems to take  
the air from my lungs.  
You are the Resurrection  
and the Life.  
All our hope is in you.

Lord Jesus,  
May I find a way through  
the darkness  
to the light of your love.  
You are the Resurrection  
and the Life.  
All our hope is in you.

Christ Jesus,  
You wept at the death of your friend Lazarus.  
Now your compassion wipes the tears from our eyes.  
May we find comfort in reaching out to others  
Who feel lost and alone.  
You are the Resurrection and the Life.  
All our hopes are in you.

Linda Jones, CAFOD



## **Useful Scriptures**

1. **Job 5:11** The lowly he sets on high, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.
2. **Psalms 27:13-14** I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.
3. **Isaiah 41:10** Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.
4. **John 16:33** I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.
5. **Romans 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.
6. **Romans 8:37-38** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
7. **Romans 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
8. **2 Corinthians 1:3** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
9. **Philippians 4:6** Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.
10. **Hebrews 13:5** I will never leave you or forsake you.
11. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**  
To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:  
A time to be born, And a time to die;  
A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted;  
A time to kill, And a time to heal;  
A time to break down, And a time to build up;  
A time to weep, And a time to laugh;

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A time to mourn, And a time to dance;  
A time to cast away stones, And a time to gather stones;  
A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing;  
A time to gain, And a time to lose;  
A time to keep, And a time to throw away;  
A time to tear, And a time to sew;  
A time to keep silence, And a time to speak;  
A time to love, And a time to hate;  
A time of war, And a time of peace.

DRAFT



## **Poetry some people find helpful**

### **Death is nothing at all by Henry Scott-Holland**

Death is nothing at all.  
It does not count.  
I have only slipped away into the next room.  
Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.  
I am I, and you are you,  
and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.  
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.  
Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.  
Put no difference into your tone.  
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.  
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.  
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.  
Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.  
It is the same as it ever was.  
There is absolute and unbroken continuity.  
What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?  
I am but waiting for you, for an interval,  
somewhere very near,  
just round the corner.

All is well.  
Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.  
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.  
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!



## **The Rose beyond the Wall by A. L. Frink**

Near a shady wall a rose once grew,  
Budded and blossomed in God's free light,  
Watered and fed by the morning dew,  
Shedding it's sweetness day and night.

As it grew and blossomed fair and tall,  
Slowly rising to loftier height,  
It came to a crevice in the wall  
Through which there shone a beam of light.

Onward it crept with added strength  
With never a thought of fear or pride,  
It followed the light through the crevice's length  
And unfolded itself on the other side.

The light, the dew, the broadening view  
Were found the same as they were before,  
And it lost itself in beauties new,  
Breathing it's fragrance more and more.

Shall claim of death cause us to grieve  
And make our courage faint and fall?  
Nay! Let us faith and hope receive--  
The rose still grows beyond the wall,

Scattering fragrance far and wide  
Just as it did in days of yore,  
Just as it did on the other side,  
Just as it will forever-more.





## **The Rose beyond the Wall (a simpler version)**

A rose once grew where all could see,  
sheltered beside a garden wall,  
And as the days passed swiftly by,  
it spread its branches, straight and tall...

One day, a beam of light shone through  
a crevice that had opened wide.  
The rose bent gently toward its warmth  
then passed beyond to the other side.

Now, you who deeply feel its loss,  
be comforted - the rose blooms there-  
its beauty even greater now, nurtured by  
God's own loving care.



## Death of a pupil

**Entrance music** (tape or CD) Choose a suitable piece of music.

### Introduction

In our distress and sorrow the one word that is surely coming to us all is “why”? There is no answer that will take away our pain. But there are answers that will give us strength.

In our prayer today we remember..... with thanksgiving our friend and pupil of this school. And we ask God’s grace for ourselves.

### Focus or symbol

- Overhead with words: ***“The kingdom of heaven belongs to children,”*** or ***“Let the children come to me.”***
- Photograph of deceased pupil or symbol of childhood, e.g. exercise book, school bag etc.


### Sign of the Cross

..... was baptised into Christ with the sign of the Cross, and so we begin “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

### Hymn or song

CFE	O&N
211	God who made the earth
349	Lead me, guide me
	The love I have for you
	536

### Reading *Isaiah, 25:6-9 (paraphrased)*

The Lord will prepare feast for all the nations on earth – a great meal with the riches of food and drink. He will remove the cloud of sorrow hanging over us. He will wipe away all tears. Then we will say, “He is our God! We have put our trust in him and he has rescued us. the Lord. Now we are happy and joyful because he has saved us.” 

### Comment on reading

The way we think about life and death will determine the consolation we receive in a time of sorrow. If we do not have a Christian vision, then the consolation we receive may be less. The Christian vision of death is of going home, going to Jesus, who has already gone to prepare a place for us. Therefore a good way of acting in times of sorrow is to trust in God as the reading has just told us. It means to give thanks for the life of the person we mourn. We recall with thanksgiving their friendship, their lives. We ask Jesus to look after them. At the same time it is a reminder to us that we sooner or later will die. And the way in which we live is our real preparation for death.



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### Response to reading

Representatives of the class of ..... bring forward flowers, plants and light a candle.



### Prayers

We turn to our loving God and pray:

That ..... be safe in the presence of Jesus.

**Response: Remember us O Lord.**

That the parents and relatives of ..... may be strengthened at this time.

**Response: Remember us O Lord**

That all the friends of ..... may be consoled at this time.

**Response: Remember us O Lord**

That all who nurse and care for the sick may be blessed.

**Response: Remember us O Lord**

That we all would live well and be ready to meet the Lord when he comes.

**Response: Remember us O Lord**

[Other prayers]

**Response: Remember us O Lord**

**Our Father ...** (perhaps sung)

### Thought-Word-Phrase for the day

*Our true home is in heaven.*

### Blessing

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

### Concluding song or music

CFE		O&N
106	Christ be beside me	79
816	Yahweh, I know you are near	620
	Jesus, you are Lord	286

*Taken from Assemblies Vol. 1 for Liturgical Seasons and School Occasions  
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## **Reflection**

O Lord,

We know that the task you set before us of raising a child is the most important and most challenging we will ever face.

We understand that our children are ours, not to possess, but to cherish and guide for a time, leading them to union with you;

We know that parenting may bring joy beyond words, and also sacrifice and heartache;

Yet we accept this responsibility gladly, knowing that you will help us if only we remember to ask.

O Lord,

When we have no strength, give us your strength;

When we lose patience, give us your patience;

When we don't know what to do, inspire us;

When we become weary, lift our spirits.

Help us to enjoy our children and to laugh with them;

And O Lord, when don't feel loving, send us your love.





## **I'll lend you for a little while,**

A child of mine, God said,  
For you to love the while he lives,  
And mourn for when he's dead.  
It may be six or seven years  
Or forty-two or three,  
But will you, till I call him back,  
Take care of him for me?

He'll bring his charms to gladden you,  
And should his stay be brief,  
You'll have his lovely memories  
As a solace for your grief.  
I cannot promise he will stay,  
Since all from earth return,  
But there are lessons taught below  
I want this child to learn.

I've looked the whole world over,  
In search for teachers true,  
And from the things that crowd life's land  
I have chosen you.  
Now will you give him all your love,  
Nor think the labour vain?  
Nor hate me when I come to take  
This lent child back again?



I fancied that I heard them say:  
Dear Lord, thy will be done,  
For all the joys thy child will bring,  
The risk of grief we'll run.  
We'll shelter him with tenderness,  
We'll love him while we may  
And for the happiness we've known  
Forever grateful stay.

But should thy angels call for him  
Much sooner than we've planned,  
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes  
And try to understand.



## **PRAYERS**

Eternal rest give to them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace. Amen.

Remember those who have died and who have gone before us, marked with the sign of faith.

May these and all who sleep in Christ find in your presence light, happiness and peace.  
Amen.

**Jesus remember me when you come into your Kingdom *Taizé Chant*.**

**Compassionate Lord Jesus  
Grant them rest in peace.**

## **Act of Remembrance**

They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning we shall remember them.

## **THE DE PROFUNDIS**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,  
Lord, hear my voice!  
O let your ears be attentive  
To the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive? But with you is found forgiveness:  
For this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,  
I count on his word.  
My soul is longing for the Lord  
More than watchmen for daybreak  
And Israel on the Lord

Because with the Lord there is mercy  
And fullness of redemption.  
Israel indeed he will redeem  
From all its iniquity.



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V. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord.  
R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.  
V. May they rest in peace.  
R. Amen.

### Jesus Says:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you and after I have gone and prepared you a place I shall return to take you with me.

So that where I am you may be too."

*John 14: 1-3*



May God 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, and a holy rest, and peace at the last!

*Cardinal Newman*



## CELTIC BLESSING

May your health overflow like a mountain stream in  
Springtime.

May your days be as happy as  
Summers long ago.

May you reap the autumn gold from  
a life of love and giving.

May you stay forever young.  
And when you go ...

May a million stars light your way to PARADISE.







## **Death of a teacher / staff member / friend of school**



**Entrance Hymn** (*tape or CD*) Choose a suitable piece of music

### **Introduction**

There are many ways of commemorating death. A common one is remembrance and thanksgiving. In our Catholic tradition, we also pray that the dead person be at peace with God.

### **Focus or symbol**

- Overhead with person's name and the words, "*Eternal Rest.*"
- Photograph/or articles associated with dead person.

### **Sign of the Cross**

It is through our baptism that our greatest hope lies, and so we begin "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

### **Hymn or song**

<i>CFE</i>		<i>O&amp;N</i>
69	Be still and know that I am with you.	57
369	Like a shepherd	727
543	O Lord, you are the centre of my life.	

### **Reading** *Wisdom 4:7-15 (paraphrased)*

Even if they die before their time, good people will find rest. Life is not about how long we live, but how wisely we live. A good life is a long life. Good people try to please God, and God loves them. Coming to perfection in a short while is the same as having a long life. Good peoples' lives are pleasing to God. Foolish people never think that mercy and grace are what God has ready for good people. He will protect them.

### **Comment on reading**

Our thoughts are very limited. Compared with God's wisdom, our thoughts are even foolish. God has a plan for each one of us. When we have done what he willed for us, when we have come into full life and goodness, God takes us to himself. God also has a care for those who remain. The way in which we fit into God's scheme of things is to live wisely. And we admit that we do not understand everything, much less the mystery of death. We treasure life, and we give thanks for the life of .....(name) who has enriched our lives.

### **Response to reading**

- a signed Mass card is placed at the focus of worship.
- a candle is lit



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- a flower or plant is laid
- a copybook for signing condolences is placed for people to sign later.

### Prayers

We turn to our living God and pray.

That ..... may have eternal rest with the Lord.

**Response:** *Jesus you are the Resurrection and the Life.*

That..... may be rewarded for his/her contribution to this school.

**Response:** *Jesus you are the Resurrection and the Life.*

That the family, relatives and friends of ..... may be consoled at this time.

**Response:** *Jesus you are the Resurrection and the Life.*

That all past members of this school who have left this world may be at peace with the Lord.

**Response:** *Jesus you are the Resurrection and the Life.*

That we may remember that we too are on a journey to the Father.

**Response:** *Jesus you are the Resurrection and the Life.*

[other prayers]

**Response:** *Jesus you are the Resurrection and the Life.*

**Our Father ..** (perhaps sung)



**Thought-Word-Phrase for the day** – Jesus said, “I am with you always.”

### Blessing

To us who are alive may God give forgiveness;

To all who have died may God give light and peace, and may a million stars light their way to paradise.

### Concluding song or music

CFE		O&N
40	Amazing grace	36
106	Christ be beside me	79