

# GIFT TEAM PACK

## BUILDING GIFT TEAMS



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# BUILDING GIFT TEAMS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For many years we have had chaplains (mostly lay) in the majority of our diocesan secondary schools and colleges, with named chaplains in only a very few of our primary schools. This is not to say that there is no 'chaplaincy' orientated activity in the primaries – far from it – we know there is already a huge range of different activities being organised and run by staff and students together.

We felt it was time to explore the development of primary chaplaincy, in line with many other dioceses in the country, and to discover what is already happening in our schools and how we can build on and strengthen these activities.

Based on the model developed in the Salford diocese, we are offering the idea of 'GIFT TEAMS' in primary schools, with the pupils working alongside and assisting RE Coordinators, teachers, and LSA's already involved in organising chaplaincy activities in school. We have chosen to change the terminology from 'chaplaincy teams' to GIFT Teams – GIFT standing for '**Growing Together in Faith**', which sums up perfectly the aim and ambition of these teams.

The situation in secondary schools is rather different. The importance of the role of the chaplain in our schools and colleges cannot be overstated. In many of our secondary schools we already have teams of students working with the chaplains, and the ideas presented here are to enable the chaplains, together with their teams, to strengthen and develop the work already being carried out.

In both primary and secondary schools, the GIFT Team is a model of empowerment for both students and staff. It builds on and extends existing activities and, most importantly, gives young people the chance to grow in confidence and capability as they begin to take ownership of the development of spirituality in their own schools. The ideas that the young people come up with are astounding and the energy with which they carry forward these ideas to be admired.

This 'GIFT Team Pack' gives a flavour of the models that can be developed. It is divided into sections, and includes a GIFT Team Development Plan which can help schools firm up ideas and take them forward in a structured way.



## 2. OVERVIEW OF CATHOLIC ETHOS IN SCHOOLS

The word 'ethos' comes from the Greek meaning 'custom' or 'habit' .... And ethos is a way of living, behaving and doing things by (a group of) people, who, though diverse, follow common values and are united by a shared vision of life.

*(from 'Christ at the Centre: why the Church provides Catholic schools' - Marcus Stock 2013)*

### WHAT MAKES A SCHOOL CATHOLIC?

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise ...His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps man to direct his thought, action and will according to the gospel.

The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school 'Catholic'; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal.

*(from 'The Catholic School, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education' - 1977 Vatican)*

### WHAT IS CATHOLIC ETHOS OR CATHOLIC LIFE?

What makes a Catholic school Catholic is the story it tells. .... the story is a very explicit one. It is the story of Jesus.

When we struggle to put into words what 'catholic ethos' is about, and never seem to be able to put our finger on exactly what it is, we are actually trying to articulate our experience of the presence of the risen Christ at the heart of our school community, a presence which may provoke us into faith, but does not compel faith.

It is a tangible presence and can be evinced by the signs and symbols present in the school, and especially by the quality of the lives, and the prayer, of the school leadership, staff and students.

All these things are vehicles by which we can come to recognise the presence of Christ. They are at the heart of any Christian community and at the heart of a school that wants to be Catholic.

However, they remain ambivalent vehicles, because all the members of the school community, even if they are explicitly charged with nurturing the Catholic ethos of the school, are on their own journey of faith, and are all one with Thomas to whom Christ addresses the invitation: "Doubt no longer but believe."

*(from 'What has the Catholic ethos of a school to do with the Resurrection' - John Deehan, The Pastoral Review September 2007)*

## SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is always concerned with self-transcendence; it requires us to go beyond egocentricity and to take account of our relatedness to other people, the environment and, for religious believers, God.

Evidence shows that children who are given the opportunity to develop their spirituality are likely to be successful learners who are creative, resourceful and able to identify and solve problems. They have enquiring minds and think for themselves, process information, reason, question and evaluate. They will know about big ideas and events that shape our world. They will be confident individuals who have a sense of self-worth and personal identity, who relate well to others and form good relationships, are self-aware and deal with their emotions and be open to excitement and inspiration offered by the natural world and human achievements.

Spiritual is not synonymous with religious – it is not the sole responsibility of the Religious Education Department, all areas of the curriculum contribute to our students spiritual development. '

*(from 'The Spirit of the Child' - Hay, Nye and Kingsley, 2006)*





### 3. HOW ARE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DISTINCTIVE?

#### Catholic Schools are distinctive when they:

- Manifest a Catholic ethos which is evident and open to experience by all who enter the school
- Promote Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church as an integral part of their mission
- Follow policies that reflect and embody the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church.
- Model leadership inspired by the image and life of Christ.
- Form an integral part of the communion of the local and universal Church.
- Provide a religious education which comprehensively and systematically studies the catechism of the Catholic church, the lives of the saints and the relationship between faith and life – all of which is integrated into EVERY ASPECT of the curriculum and life of the school, and adapted to the age and ability of the pupils
- Express the life of faith in acts of religion, through personal and liturgical prayer.
- Foster conduct and behaviour governed, ordered and guided by the seven cardinal virtues and rooted in Gospel values.
- Model Gospel values which unite society by promoting a citizenship rooted in a commitment to social justice and the common good.
- Attend to the spiritual needs of children and young people as a constant priority.
- Care for the pastoral and special needs of children and young people in accordance with Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Engender a culture of vocation.
- Uphold the dignity of the human person through the maintenance and care of school buildings and, through external and internal symbols and displays, manifest the centrality of Christ and the Catholic faith.

*(from 'Christ at the Centre' – Marcus Stock 2012)*



## 4. DEFINITION OF A SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

School chaplaincy has evolved from being a sacramentally defined ministry to one that is empowered by personal relationship....

It is, perhaps, the everyday presence of the contemporary school chaplain that best serves to define the role. I exemplify this as being a "presence in pilgrimage". In this sense, the "presence" of the chaplain has a triple aspect, which chaplains themselves defined as:

- the physical presence of "being there for staff and students to come and share with";
- the charismatic presence of being "a witness to the centrality of the spiritual in people's lives";
- the symbolic presence of being "a positive face of the Church" and in so being, encouraging staff and students to "deepen their relationship with God".....

And all the while, this nurturing presence is offered "on the move" as pupils journey through "the most formative part of their own unique way through life" (Felzmann 1984), as with the wider school community they make a pilgrimage towards a deeper relationship with Christ in the world beyond the school gates.....

In this way, the work of the school chaplain is a leaven for the future, realising the entitlement of young people to be cared for by their Church so that they, in turn, may become, as one chaplain termed it, the "prophets of the future".

*(from "A presence in pilgrimage": contemporary chaplaincy in Catholic secondary schools in England and Wales, Maureen Glakin 2011 – International studies in Catholic Education)*

***We strongly suggest that the children involved in the GIFT teams are NOT called "chaplain" because of the particular definition and expectation of the role of chaplain.***



## 5. GIFT TEAM TRAINING DAY - IDEAS

**This is just a selection of some of the ideas for school GIFT teams that Yr 5 and Yr 10 students came up with during one of the activities on a training Day – without any adult intervention.**

Assemblies, with posters round the school to excite interest – include a quiz, rap, etc  
Team to run all assemblies – set theme, and introduce, dismiss, give school messages etc  
St Martin of Tours drama (the story of the first chaplain)  
Article in school magazine  
Work with drama teacher  
Devise liturgies – special ones for KS 1 and 2  
Organise prayer time in forms  
Work on inter-faith  
Redesign chapel  
Design and make a prayer garden  
Holy water outside each class  
Send cards home for condolences, new babies etc  
Speak to Head, tutors, choir, drama group – in fact everyone to let them know about us  
Individuals from team allocated to each year group  
Share ideas with other schools  
Need a 'confidence building' input  
Have chaplaincy space and display near entrance – incl prayer intention box  
Team 'uniform' (sweatshirt / tie / badge etc) – have logo and motto  
'Gospel tea' with Head  
Make a 'thinking place'  
Need to have regular link with local Catholic secondary school  
Be part of Induction Team for new staff and students – participate in 'New Teachers' Day' – for all these events etc talk to Head about the school diary  
Media desk VITAL – daily updates, prayers needed, celebrate birthdays etc – school blog and Chaplaincy slot on main website – have 'media team'  
  
Yr 10s – assist with sacramental preparation, pre-reconciliation / First Holy Communion tips  
Yr 10s – going into Yr 7 lessons to speak on various topics, seasons etc  
Yr 10s – organise in-school retreat for Yr 8s  
Yr 10s – workshops in primary schools

Quote from a Primary Headteacher working with a GIFT team – 'the students plan and lead assemblies – and have no problems with either confidence or crowd control, capturing the attention of all their peers!'



## 6. AUDIT FOR GIFT TEAM

This looks at the different aspects of chaplaincy and invites schools to think of the creative ways that children can be involved in these areas.

WHAT MAY ALREADY EXIST / WISH LIST	HOW CAN THE CHILDREN BE INVOLVED?
Existing space resources – chapel, prayer garden - including quiet space for chaplaincy team meetings?	
Existing chaplaincy resources – computer, music player, books etc?	
Priests available for Masses etc – rota?	
Resourcing Form Tutor worship – opportunities for development and support?	
Assemblies – who plans and delivers?	
Prayer life of school outside daily act of worship?	
How is the Gospel proclaimed in school apart from prayers and assemblies – displays, support through illness, welcoming new students, multi-cultural awareness, bereavement support?	
Opportunities for staff prayer and staff retreats?	
Liaising with key staff for liturgy – departments who could enhance liturgy through music, drama etc?	



WHAT MAY ALREADY EXIST / WISH LIST	HOW CAN THE CHILDREN BE INVOLVED?
Identifying and dealing with pastoral issues?	
Any peer support groups / peer mentoring / “buddies” etc?	
Developing and sustaining closer school - parish links?	
Any existing student groups in school – CAFOD, YCW, SVP, Justice and Peace, Fair Trade, environmental issues?	
Are students engaged in charities, fund-raising, local campaigns – e.g. carols in local area, Poppy Day?	
Are students engaged in Diocesan / Deanery / SCYS events e.g Youth Service?	
How are students of other faiths accommodated?	
<b>STAFF ISSUES</b>	
Who would have particular responsibility on the Leadership Team and Governors for Chaplaincy?	
Who would line-manage the chaplaincy team leader?	
Where would training and pastoral support be found for chaplaincy team leader?	



## 7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMPLE

### SALFORD MODEL - ST WILLIAM OF YORK PRIMARY SCHOOL, BOLTON - EXAMPLE OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN Chaplaincy Team Development Plan March-July 2014

Action	Lead Person	Resources	Start Date	Finishing Date	Success Criteria
Set up a Chaplaincy room	Mrs Vayro to liaise with Mrs Babb. Mrs Lane to order the chosen goods. Mr Makin to paint the new Pond Room. Talk to Mrs Spencer about the stained glass window painting.	Pond room just for us - painted in pale lilac/purple. Fish tank. Suggestion box. Furniture- soft seats Window painted. (Mrs Spencer.) Frames with scrolls in. Laptop connected to server. Around £ 2000!!!	Week 3. 10.03.14 Order all the stuff Ask Mr Makin about the painting etc. Take pics of all the Chaplains to go in the frames etc	Completed before the Easter holidays	We have a beautiful calm room for Chaplaincy. Lots of people will want to come and visit the room to get something done - or just to sit and be quiet in there.
Decide on a uniform or way of standing out	Mrs Vayro to liaise with Mrs Babb. Mrs Lane to order the chosen pale purple sweatshirts and polo shirts. Meet every Monday with Mrs Vayro at 1.15pm. Discuss the agenda and decide who will do what and when.	Cost per top x 2 per child. Mrs Lane to confirm the prices.	Monday 10.03.14	To wear them before the Easter break.	We can be seen and clearly identified. Our important job stands out because of our smart uniform.
Organise our meetings and way of organisation	There may be cost attached as we go, so we need to talk to the Head teacher about an overall budget Cost for props. Mrs Vayro is going to have a look around school first		10.03.14 and ongoing each week	On-going	We are organised with a clear purpose. Everyone on the team knows what is going on and what we are trying to do. Everyone will have a clear idea of what Chaplaincy is and what we are trying to do ins school
Tell everyone about Chaplaincy	Do a play for the children. One for KS1 and one for KS2 and then into nursery.		Start deciding what and who will do what in week 4.	Show the children in Easter week.	
Decide on a list of actions. (What we want to do when we get set up)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our ideas so far .....</li> <li>Suggestion box- intended for prayer intentions and announcements.</li> <li>Share these with the school through our new media hub.</li> <li>Get a list of unvisited old people in our community (possibly SVP) Develop links with the old folks home in our local area.</li> <li>Create a welcome team for new people in school - new reception intake, new children, new staff, and visitors to school.</li> <li>Write an article on the newsletter about Chaplaincy. Have a page on the Website about Chaplaincy.</li> <li>Help the children on the Sacramental Programme with their preparations</li> </ul>		



## 8. BLANK DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DATE:

CHAPLAINCY TEAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN - SCHOOL:

ACTION	WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE?	LEAD PERSON (member of staff to help us)	RESOURCES NEEDED (including other pupils to as- sist)	START DATE (and finishing date if appropriate)	HOW CAN WE MEASURE OUR SUCCESSES?
EXAMPLE: Decide on the structure of our Chaplaincy Team, and how often we have meetings	We need to have regular meetings to discuss what needs to be done each week, & decide what each of us has to do	Mrs Smith – our Deputy Head – we will meet in her office	We need someone to keep notes – Mr Jones our LSA – and to make sure we are doing things correctly and on time	As soon as possi- ble, to continue regularly	We keep on top of everything that needs to be done



## 9. FORMING A NEW GIFT TEAM

*Remember – there is no 'right' way to form a GIFT team – and chaplaincy activities will be relevant to your own school. The idea is to build on the already excellent work that you are doing in your school*

***Which is the best year group to choose?***

Schools generally have found that years 3 and 5 are good, as the current teams can train up the new team for next year as they move up the school.

***How do you choose the right children?***

- (a) approach children you think would make good candidates
- (b) a more formal method is to advertise the post of 'GIFT Team Member' – ask for letters of application and references from parents – hold interviews

***Who would be the best candidates?***

The best team members are often the least expected – not the high-flyers, the 'holy Joes' or the 'good' children but the 'geezers', the loud mouths, the shy children

***How many do we need in a team?***

10 -12 is a good number – not too many so that all voices can be heard in discussions etc

***How do you deal with possible jealousy of the team?***

It makes good sense to choose 'unlikely' children rather than the high achievers – and to stress that, whilst it is an honour to be a team member, it actually means a lot of hard work, giving up break at times etc

It is also a good idea to encourage the team to enrol '**helpers**' from their peers when needed – to do tasks like helping with I.T., advertising events around the classes (e.g. Rosary Club at lunchtime, weeding the prayer garden after school.....)

***Do you need a distinguishing 'mark' for the team members?***

Schools have gone for different ties, enamel badges, sweat shirts printed with school logo and 'GIFT Team' – some schools have a GIFT Team group photo in a prominent position. You could choose one of these ideas or you may prefer to simply let the team be known by its work around the school.

***Do we commission our teams?***

The role of team member is really important (the role of chaplain in secondary schools is an appointment made by the Archbishop and the governors) and you may want to commission the teams in a special liturgy, perhaps during an assembly, with the parents present, and inviting your local parish priest, or even the Bishop!

***Who is 'in charge' of the GIFT Team?***

An adult 'facilitator' is needed to organise and chair meetings, to guide the children through making their ideas become practicalities, to sort out resources etc.

Different schools use LSAs, support staff, RE coordinators – in fact anyone who is keen on working with the children to help develop spirituality within the school. (Some schools have added an increment to a salary for the extra work involved.)

***What do we call the team?***

GIFT Team is a great name – other names used include 'Faith Mentors', 'Year of Mercy Ambassadors', 'Mini Vinnies' – be creative!



## 10. HOW DO WE BEGIN?

Having set up the team(s) the first thing for the adults to do is to look at the **Gift Team Audit/ Wish List** in the 'GIFT Teams Pack', to see what areas would be best for the children to be involved with (e.g. welcoming clergy, organising charity collections, writing prayers..)

The first session with the team (s) is to encourage the children to come up with **their ideas** for what the school chaplaincy might look like –

- why do we need a team?
- what will the team aim for and achieve?
- what ideas have you got?

Start with what you already have in school and encourage ideas to make this bigger, better, brighter, more exciting.

Use the ideas in the GIFT Teams Pack – 'Salford GIFT Team Training Day Ideas' as a starting point. No idea is too large or too small.

### ***Good starters for practical team work?***

#### ***Chapel area***

If you have a chapel, the team can look after it, changing displays etc to suit the liturgical calendar.

No chapel? Ask the team for ideas for where there may be space for at least a quiet room / prayer area – even outside!

#### ***Prayers***

Would the team like to write the weekly prayers for the beginning or end of day?

Would they like to find imaginative ways of praying using music, video clips, candles etc?

Would they like to help the class teacher or the children to lead the prayers?

#### ***Assemblies***

Could the team add things to the assemblies to make them more relevant for the children / parents?

Would the team like to produce an invitation to assemblies for parents?

#### ***Raising the profile***

Ask the team for ideas on how to make the chaplaincy work more prominent in the school -

Would they be able to provide a paragraph on the activities each month for the school newsletter?

Could they run a 'chaplaincy blog'?

Where would be the best place to display chaplaincy posters, prayers for the season etc?

***Use the GIFT Team Development Plan in the GIFT Teams Pack to help make a plan of action.***

*Remember*

***"Think big – then think bigger!"***

*Sr Judith Rossi*



## NOTES

