

# PIWG News

## Lent 2018

The Parent Involvement Working Group promote the active involvement of parents in their children's education in Catholic schools. They meet 4 times per school year and focus on developing support for parents, engaging with their views on important issues and encouraging them to support the work of Catholic schools and parishes.



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**We're on the Web!**  
[www.sces.org.uk](http://www.sces.org.uk)



*"By devoting more time to prayer, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception, and then to find the consolation God offers.*

*Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbour as a brother or sister.*

*Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth... Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbour. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger."*

**Pope Francis Message for Lent 2018**



## Welcome

February 14th 2018  
Ash Wednesday

*Hello!*

*Welcome to the first Parent Involvement Working Group Bulletin for 2018. This is a very special year for all involved in Catholic Education, marking 100 years since the 1918 Education Act brought Catholic schools into the state system. Throughout the year the Catholic community in Scotland is celebrating the positive contributions Catholic schools make to our country.*

### Catholic Schools – Good for Scotland

*In this issue you can read some suggestions for celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in your local area; The Catholic Education Commission's Open Forums - the next of which is in Oban on 4<sup>th</sup> March - and how your family make the best of Lent this year and serve the common good in Scotland and beyond through prayer, small acts of sacrifice and of love.*

*Have a happy Lent!*

*God bless,*

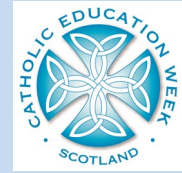
*Jo Soares*

*Chair, Parent Involvement Working Group*

WELCOME PARENTS!

**CALLING ALL PARENTS:** The PIWG are from across the country and are passionate about ensuring that the voice of Catholic parents is heard. If your school, parish or cluster would like support in involving parents then please get in touch. And we will do what we can to help.

## Catholic Education Week



The Catholic Church in Scotland encourages schools, parishes and other agencies to work closely together in order to celebrate the successes of Catholic education. The purpose of Catholic Education Week is to highlight the significance of education, not only for young people but for society as a whole. Students, parents, teachers and others are asked to reflect on their own roles in the education process – at home, in school, in the local parish and in other educational settings.

SCES provides support materials linked to each year's chosen theme to assist schools and parishes in their own plans to draw attention to the added value which Catholic schools bring across Scotland. This added value is being particularly celebrated this year in the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2018 Education Act which brought Catholic schools into the state system.

We are all asked to reflect on *Catholic schools: Serving the Common Good*.

### Developing in Faith - Questions for Parent Councils

**Our school shows a commitment to communicate Catholic social teaching and thereby to promote social justice and opportunity for all.**

Our schools said:-

"Our curriculum is designed to enable every pupil to discern their vocation and to be well-equipped to follow it as active citizens in service to the world."

"Our school curriculum is enriched through links with Missio Scotland, SCIAF and other charities such as 500 Miles, Marie Curie, Yorkhill Hospital and the Beatson Trust. These charities have raised the profile of what children can do to help others, and have instilled in our children a desire to take action."

"Our pupils demonstrate a community of service and their Christian vocation to *love your neighbour*."

"Our children have contributed to the life of the wider community by respecting the environment and by visiting care homes and working in allotments within the local community."

Reflect as an individual and as the parent council for your school :-

Do I / we provide support for school groups e.g. Pro-life, Justice and Peace, St Vincent de Paul, Aid to the Church in Need, Fair Trade, Eco and help them make in impact in the parish and local community?

Do I / we support pupils involved in the Caritas or Pope Francis Award and help them to understand the Gospel-based inspiration for their activities?

Is there an active link with a community or communities within the developing world and does the link refer directly to our Christian vocation to "love your neighbour"?

At the PIWG we find our families are facing many challenges. Lent is the perfect time and the home is the perfect place to receive the grace we need. Our homes are where we are busy and where we rest, where we hope and where we worry and where we love and we forgive. 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2018 is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. The word “Lent” is from the Old English lencten which simply means spring, signifying new life and renewal. The Church encourages us to renew our relationship with God and with others with prayer, fasting (or giving up unnecessary luxuries) and giving to others. You may think of Lent as season of self-sacrifice but it’s also a chance to do good.

### Things You Can Do for Lent as a Family

If you don’t want to give something up for the Lenten season, why not do something as a family instead? It doesn’t have to be big or grand. In fact, it’s often the small things that make a difference.

**Daily Family Devotions** | Whether it’s at breakfast or after dinner, you can read a devotional with your family. It need not be long or dramatic, and they have many appropriate for small children.

**Daily Prayer Time** | It’s important that kids grow up feeling that prayer is a natural thing. Each evening spend time in prayer on a certain topic of your choosing. (ex. the health of loved ones, members of your church, people groups close to your heart, upcoming elections, etc.)

**Find Something to Give Away** | As a family, go through your possessions and find gently used (or well loved but still good quality) items, then pray about how you can bless others with those things. You can give toys, clothes or baby gear to pregnancy support centers, foster care agencies, or families in need.

**Encourage One Another Daily** | At a mealtime together, go around the table and take turns saying something nice or encouraging for each person present. Not just compliments like “has cool shoes” but work to build each person up.

**Be hospitable** | Each week of Lent, why not invite over another individual or family with whom you aren’t well acquainted? Someone new in town, an older single person who might enjoy fellowship or an elderly couple whose grandchildren are far away. Bless them with your words and time together.

**Reach out to someone else** | Whether by text, email, or handwritten card, choose a person today and send them a line or two of encouragement. An “I’m thinking of you” or “we’re praying for you” can mean more than you think.



# 40 Lenten Activities for Families

|   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Give up television, video games or social media for one day.          | Genuinely compliment someone.  | Donate a bag of food to the local foodbank.                 | Attend a weekday mass in your parish or school                           | Pray for someone who has been unkind to you.                | Visit a friend or relative who doesn't get many visitors.               | Go outside and look around you. Thank God for his beautiful creation. | Put a small donation daily into your SCIAF wee box.                 |
| Plan a simple meal and talk as a family about how to help the hungry. | Pray for friends and family who are preparing to receive sacraments. | Make a card for someone you know who is having a hard time. | Pray for those who do not know Jesus that they may learn about his love. | Ask for forgiveness from someone you have hurt.             | Have a mealless day.  | Pray for our world leaders.   | At dinner tonight ask everyone to share what they are grateful for. |
| Tell your teachers, "Thank you."                                      | Clean up the mess that someone else made without complaining.        | Memorise a prayer that you don't already know by heart.     | Donate a bag of clothes that are still nice but that you no longer wear. | Do something healthy to take care of the body God gave you. | Pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. | Pray the Rosary (or even just a decade) as a family.                  | Light a candle at church and pray for someone you love.             |
| Read the Gospel for the day.  | Listen to religious music whilst you do a task you have been putting | Give up sweets and snacks for a day.                        | Surprise your family by doing something helpful you wouldn't usually     | Choose a saint and learn more about their life.             | Attend (or read at home) the Stations of the Cross.                     | Pray for the homeless.  | Go for a walk with your family.                                     |
| Sort your recycling carefully and minimise your waste.                | Pray for the Pope.   | Take time to share a smile with someone today.              | Tell your parents you appreciate them.                                   | Thank someone who has helped you.                           | Pray for your parish priest.  | Clear your mind of other things and sit quietly with God.             | Decorate eggs to roll on Easter Day.                                |



# Catholic Education Commission

## CEC OPEN FORUM, PAISLEY

November 18<sup>th</sup> saw the latest of our CEC Open Forum meetings, which was held in St Mirin's Hall at St Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley. The forum meetings are designed to provide an opportunity for all interested parties to learn about developments affecting Catholic Education in Scotland.

The meeting began with Mass in the Cathedral, followed by a presentation from the Scottish Catholic Education Service. As 2018 marks the centenary of the 1918 Education Act, which saw Catholic schools brought into the state system, the presentation looked at the impact that this legislation had on Catholic schools, as well as the impact that Catholic schools have had on Scotland. Under the title "Catholic Schools: Good for Scotland", the presentation chartered the growth of the Scottish Catholic population through immigration; the Catholic community's determination to have schools which reflected their belief, practice and values; the impact of the Act itself, and the impact that Catholic schools have had on Scottish education and Scottish society.

In addition, participants also had the opportunity to get involved in workshop activities and discussions, sharing their own ideas on Catholic Education now and into the future.

The day finished with an exploration of the newly-commissioned icon "Jesus Our Teacher", written by Bernadette Reilly especially to mark the centenary. The icon will be touring the country throughout 2018, and each diocese will have a programme of events to mark this important anniversary. Details of these events, and of who you can get involved, will be available on the Scottish Catholic Education Service's website, [www.sces.org.uk](http://www.sces.org.uk).

### SUNDAY

4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018

### Catholic Education Commission OPEN FORUM

#### Catholic Schools – Good for Scotland

The Scottish Catholic Education Service invites members of the Catholic education community – parents, teachers, students, clergy – to participate in an open forum session of the Catholic Education Commission. Designed to provide an opportunity to learn about developments affecting Catholic education in Scotland. This session will explore how Catholic education contributes to local communities through the commitment to Serve the Common Good.



The forum will begin with the celebration of Mass with Bishop Brian in St. Columba's Cathedral at 10.30am

There will be a separate programme of Arts and Crafts for primary aged children during the forum

### Catholic Education Commission Open Forum

**THEME:**  
**Serving the  
Common Good**

**100 years of  
Catholic  
Education**

Book your place at  
[www.sces.org.uk](http://www.sces.org.uk)  
[mail@sces.org.uk](mailto:mail@sces.org.uk)  
0141 556 4727



**ST. COLUMBA'S**  
Cathedral Halls  
Corran Esplanade  
Oban  
PA34 5 AB

4<sup>th</sup> March 2018  
10.30am – 1.30pm

# Parent Gathering 2018



## Parents in Catholic Schools Working together

In most parts of Scotland, schools are organised in associated school groups or “clusters”. The Parent Councils of these clusters have much in common due to their geographical area and their link to a local secondary school. It can therefore be helpful for the parents within these clusters to have opportunities to meet together, discuss local matters and plan joint events.


## Joint Parent Council Meetings

More and more areas are arranging joint parent council meetings for their cluster and are finding benefits in sharing ideas among the family of local schools. SCES representatives have been delighted to attend meetings during the winter term in Cumbernauld and Falkirk and are looking forward to others in the coming months. The 2018 anniversary of Catholic Schools being brought into the state system is a perfect opportunity for parents and parent councils to get together with their nearest neighbours and celebrate! So why not contact the other schools in your cluster and arrange to meet in 2018? You could hold a social event; a liturgical event or a workshop for parents to share in their children’s learning. For further information on hosting an event contact [parents@sces.uk.com](mailto:parents@sces.uk.com)


And it doesn’t have to stop there. Your diocese may have a **Diocesan Parent Forum** where parents from all of the school in the diocese have the opportunity to come together and the **National Gathering of Parents** is organised through SCES to bring the parents of children attending Catholic schools across the country together. This is a great networking day and offers the chance to hear about local good practice and share ideas and suggestions.

For more information on any of the work of the PIWG and to get involved, please contact the chair Jo Soares

[parents@sces.uk.com](mailto:parents@sces.uk.com)




## Gathering of Catholic Parents



### Catholic Schools Good For Scotland

**18<sup>th</sup> August 2018**  
**9.30am – 2.30pm**  
Diocese of Paisley – Venue to be confirmed

Places at this event are free, but booking is essential.  
 To book a place please contact: [mail@sces.uk.com](mailto:mail@sces.uk.com)



# Have Your Say about Scottish Education

In the last newsletter we shared some details of the “Empowering Schools” consultation. While this is now closed the PIWG would encourage all Parent Councils to keep discussing this matter at upcoming meetings. If you have questions about anything relating to the new Education Act it is important to raise these with your Head Teachers, Local Authorities and MSPs.

The proposed bill has 5 areas

- Head Teachers Charter
- Parental and Community Engagement
- Pupil Involvement
- Regional Improvement Collaboratives
- Education Workforce Council of Scotland



One of our PIWG members gives her thoughts on what these areas are about: “The **HT Charter** is looking at what is needed to help head teachers have more control within their school. This includes Curriculum of Excellence – school improvement plans– staffing and funding. If all of these changes happen it will mean a big difference to the role of the head teacher. As parents we need to think about what impact these will have on pupil learning and what we would do to support the HT.

For Parents and Parent Councils the next area, **Parental and Community Engagement**, will raise questions of how best to work collaboratively on school policies, school improvement plans and curriculum design. As parents we will need to be actively involved in forming our school communities, so that community engagement reflects the family and the parish.

The section on **Pupil involvement** asks how there can be greater pupil involvement in decisions that impact on their school. As parents, could we assist by using our skills from industry and work to find ways for the pupil voice to be heard?

**Regional Improvement Collaboratives** have already been established and the lead directors have been appointed. The first improvement plans were to be completed by the end of January. As parents we should find out how these new structures will impact on the ability of Catholic schools to work together collaboratively in cluster and diocesan groups and how we can support the work of teachers at all level.

The last proposal is for an **Education Workforce Council of Scotland** to responsible for teachers and non-teaching professionals, driving up standards, professional learning and development, maintaining a practitioners register, review and set standards, accredit and validate professional learning and development, education advice to Scottish government and promote family/carer/community engagement within the education system. If this goes ahead it will be a large organisation and it will be important to ensure that the voice of parents with children in Catholic schools is heard through their work.”

## Your views count

The Scottish Government is currently reviewing the Gender Recognition Act 2004. The act covers applications for legal gender recognition including the minimum age at which applications can be made. Proposals include reducing the current minimum age of 18 years to 16 and allowing arrangements for children between 12 and 15 years of age to make applications in certain circumstances. The consultation paper can be accessed via the Scottish Government’s Consultation Hub at

<https://consult.gov.scot>