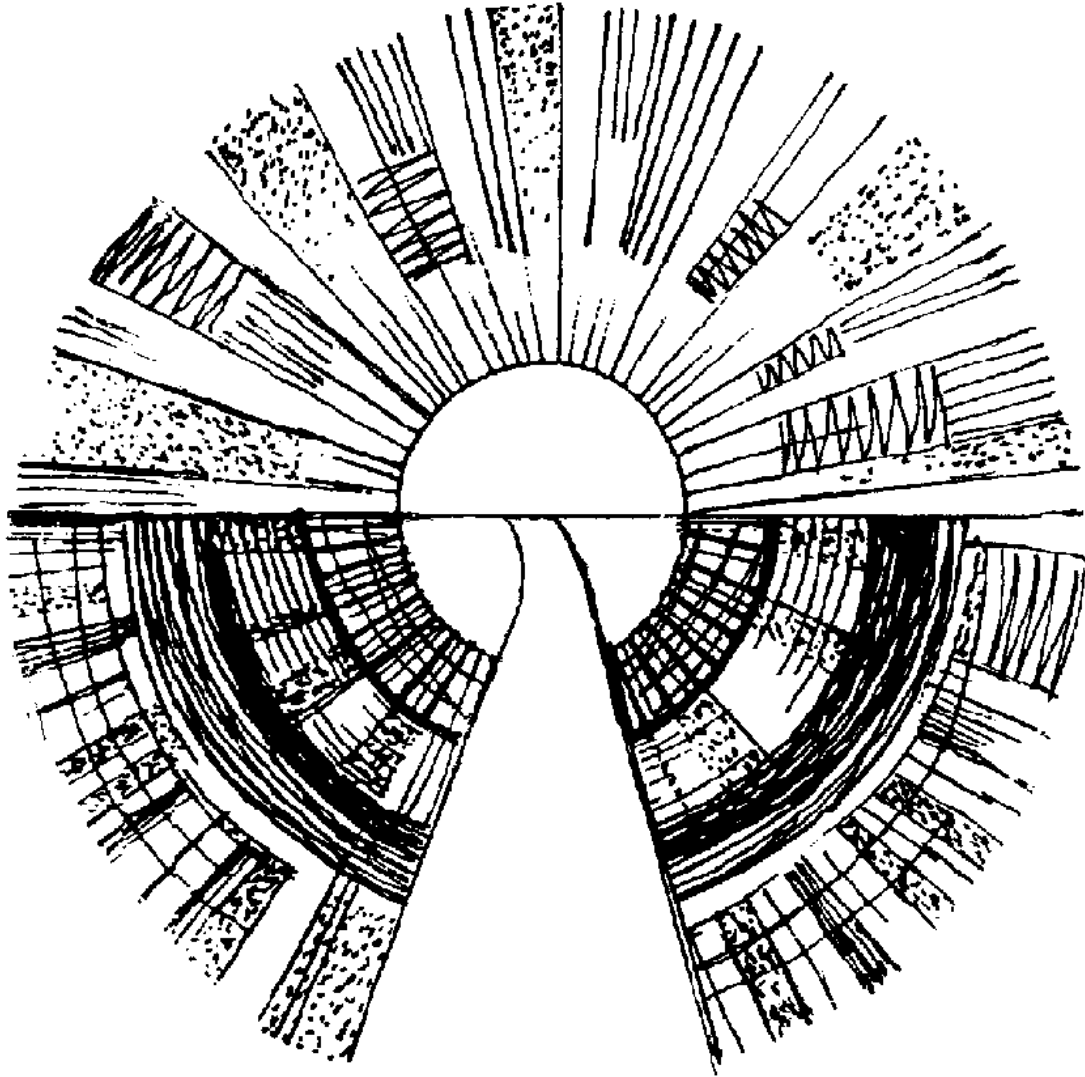




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Transition Year Pilgrimage Resource Pack



Often when we think of pilgrimages, we imagine the Camino, Croagh Patrick but pilgrimages take all shapes and forms. Life is a pilgrimage, recovery is another and we are all on some form of pilgrimage coping with Covid. In order to support school in this time we offer a suggested framework for schools who wish to undertake a 'mini-pilgrimage', where interactive gatherings within school are limited.

The idea is that it may be possible to take groups on a walk that might incorporate local shrines, landmarks and/or the parish church. The route will be dictated by the local environment and teachers will have to be imaginative as to the route. Some schools may have extensive grounds and may not even need to leave the school grounds. The timeframe is flexible but we anticipate anything from one hour to two. The ceremony below envisages a number of stops and the walk culminating in the local church. This may have to be adapted for some groups and schools. Holy Wells, local cemeteries, grottoes could also provide physical points of reflection. You may wish to reverse the route and begin at the church, it is very much up to you. The walking between stops is as important as the reflections. You may add more stops and prayers or curtail them. You may wish to bring students back to the school premises for collection or have them collected at the end of the activity. Specific arrangements are very much for each teacher to decide.

The programme below is designed for Transition Year. Once Transition Years have had this experience, they might take the First Years on the First Year Pilgrimage which is also available. Of course, the programme may be adapted for any year group.

Brendan McManus S.J. writes about the five pillars of pilgrimage: faith, gratitude, companionship, change of heart, celebration. At its most simple, however, a pilgrimage is a timeout to think. There are many forms but the most basic centres on three questions. Where am I coming from? Who am I? Where am I going? The focus of this 'mini-pilgrimage' is on these three questions. The reflections are aimed at Transition Year but you may extend the reflections, prayers and activities to suit your needs. Similarly, extra steps can be added depending on your route and time (a list of possible themes is contained in Appendix 6)

It may be possible to have some groundwork done in collaboration with other subjects. Students could look at the poem 'The Road not Taken' by Robert Frost and 'The World is Charged with the Grandeur of God' by Gerard Manley Hopkins (Appendix 1). Suggested songs are 'The Climb' by Miley Cyrus (Appendix 2); 'It All Works Out', Rip Tide Movement (Appendix 3). Other suggestions are contained in Appendix 4. www.Christian.Art provides reflections around the daily gospel which might link in with Art class.

The basic format would be to begin with an introduction which would establish the ground rules and an opening prayer. Suggestions are offered but feel free to adapt them to suit your needs.

Ground Rules

- ⇒ Walk in groups of three and change partners for each section. (Again, this is only a suggestion. Groups of three might make it easier for both those who are naturally quiet and also those who might be with someone they might struggle with. Three can diffuse any of the natural awkwardness that might come and yet we know there could be great growth in the awkwardness.)
- ⇒ At the beginning of each section, you are asked to be silent and think about what was said to you. This will be for two to three minutes and then feel free to chat to the person beside you
- ⇒ This will be a worthwhile experience if you think about the questions being asked



Some Practical Issues: Checklist

- ⇒ Check the weather well in advance
- ⇒ Decide on where the pilgrimage will end and how students will be collected
- ⇒ Connect with local clergy
- ⇒ Liaise with school management
- ⇒ Decide whether students will bring notebooks for journaling

Liturgy Themes:

1. New Beginnings
2. Difficulties
3. God and Nature
4. Health of Loved Ones
5. Step 5: Me
6. Church/Final Liturgy

I can forward the contact details for the local churches and liaise with them if necessary. Let us know how you got on!

Step 1: New Beginnings

Reflection: Now, we begin our journey. In a sense Transition Year is a new beginning, the beginning of senior cycle but, before we begin senior cycle, we take a year out to do many things ... things like thinking about the future and where you are going. Just as you have begun a journey which will bring you through senior cycle, we are now going on a little trip, a small pilgrimage if you like. Pilgrimages are a time to think. You have begun a new chapter in your life by starting senior cycle. Life is like having clay in your hands. We can make it whatever we please. The possibilities are endless. If we make a mistake we can start again.

(Optional Addition: We might consider the **Six Important Guidelines in Life**

1. When you are Alone ... Mind your Thoughts.
2. When you are with Friends ... Mind your Tongue.
3. When you are Angry ... Mind your Temper.
4. When you are with a Group ... Mind your Behaviour.
5. When you are in Trouble ... Mind your Emotions.
6. When God starts blessing you ... Mind your Ego)



Prayer: And so we pray ... Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up ... I am making a way in the wilderness. (Isaiah 43:18-19). Lord, we are excited to be on a new journey ... glad to meet new friends ... and glad to be with older friends ... ready to learn new things. As we go through this year, please help us to be kind to one another and to welcome the new people into our circle. Bless our teachers and families. Open our hearts so that we can understand new things about ourselves and about you, Lord.

Activity: For the next three minutes we ask that you walk in silence and I would like you to think about this question ... imagine in twenty years time, when you are thirty six, your friends are having a meal and you are not present. They begin discussing the type of person you are, the job you have, the things you value, they discuss you as a friend ... what would you like them to say ... how do you want to be described ... what kind of a person do you want your friends to know?

You might come up with three words to share when we stop next time. (If students have journals with them, you may give them an opportunity to write these words in their journal when you stop next.)



Step 2: Difficulties

Reflection: Invite students to share their words describing themselves in twenty years' time ... from Step 1.

In our journey through secondary school we will encounter difficulties, difficulties are a part of life but they can also be a time for growth, for learning. No one is perfect, everyone makes mistakes. What are you worried about? What are you worried about in school? Who can you talk to about these? Listen to this story ...

There was a tribe of Indians who lived a long time ago in the state of Mississippi. They lived next to a very swift and dangerous river. The current was so strong that if somebody happened to fall in or stumbled into it, they could be swept away downstream. One day the tribe was attacked by a hostile group of settlers. They found themselves with their backs against the river. They were greatly outnumbered and their only chance for escape was to cross the rushing river, something that they would never normally dream of risking. They huddled together and those who were strong picked up the weak and put them on their shoulders; the little children, the sick, the old and the infirm, those who were ill or wounded were carried on the backs of those who were strongest. With great anxiousness, they waded out into the river and, much to their surprise, they discovered that the weight on their shoulders helped them to keep their footing and to make it safely across the river. This story reminds us of the old saying "If you want to go fast go alone if you want to go far go together". The river of life can be turbulent and the only sure way of getting through it safely is to make the journey with others. The one sure way of failing is to try and go it alone.

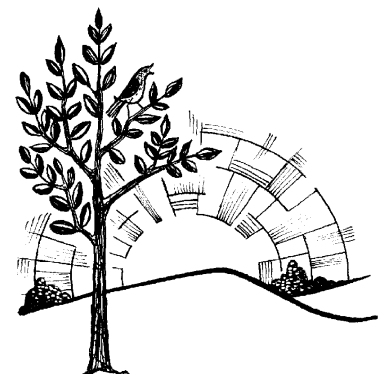
Prayer: And so we pray ... Lord, you had many hard times in your life, you got through them so help me to get through them. Teach me to accept the things I cannot change, give me the courage to change things that I can change and help me to cope with that which I cannot change. When things get tough and difficult, remind me to look for help. There are adults to help me, friends to comfort me but guide me to ask for help. I know I will encounter difficulties in my life but I ask that I will be able to feel your presence in those times.

Activity: For the next three minutes we ask that you walk in silence and I would like you to think about this question ... when you are afraid, when you make a mistake whom can you go to at home or in school, whom can you talk to at home or in school? (Again, if students have journals with them, you may give them an opportunity to write these names in their journal when you stop next.)

Step 3: God and Nature

Reflection: Invite students to share the names of the people they can turn to in times of difficulty ... from Step 2.

On our small pilgrimage we are outside, in nature, (in our beautiful school grounds). We are in the fresh air, away from the classroom, we are together and away from the books and the copies. Look around you ... what of God's creation can you see ... what are the sights and smells and noises ... take a few minutes to notice what is around you ... Listen to this story ...





Pripyat in Ukraine, where once 50,000 people lived, was built as a Soviet idea of paradise ... it is now a wasteland. This was the place abandoned after the nuclear explosion in nearby Chernobyl. The town was abandoned at such speed people had to leave many of their possessions and pets behind them ... but there is hope. The town had been growing ... not by humans but by nature. It is covered by thick vegetation and there are populations of foxes, deer, elk and wild boar.

Prayer: And so we pray ... Lord, the world is charged with the grandeur of God, everything in this world has your mark on it, your presence shines through each little significant thing. We pray that we may contribute in some way to protecting this planet that you have given us, to learn to respect the things of nature that you have given us and to look after them.

Activity: For the next three minutes we ask that you walk in silence and I would like you to think about this question ... How can I make a difference in looking after the planet that God had given us? (If students have journals with them, you may give them an opportunity to write these words in their journal when you stop next.)

Step 4: Health of Loved Ones

Reflection: Invite students to share their ideas on how they can make a difference in looking after God's planet ... from Step 3.

On this stage in our journey, we pause to remember all those who are sick in body and in spirit. Some may be suffering from physical illness or finding things very difficult to cope. We pause to think about those people in our lives ... simply thinking about them is a prayer in itself. We may be thinking of ourselves and our own illness ... those of our family and friends ... and we may be thinking of our all our neighbours. Listen to this story ...

In the light of the tragedy of September 11th there were thousands of articles written. However, the most striking article was written by Peggy Noonan, entitled "I Just Called to say I love you". Her words focused, not on the images of destruction from that terrible day, but on the words of love. She highlighted that all the phone calls and messages that came from the twin towers that day were messages of love. She includes message after message of parents, children, lovers saying 'I just called to say I love you.' Something terrible had happened, and time was short, life was reduced to its essentials, and in the end all that mattered was love. Noonan highlights that there is no record of anyone calling to say, "I never liked you," or "You hurt my feelings." No when push comes to shove, we know that at the end of the day only one thing matters and that is love.

Prayer: And so we pray ... God comes to us in our sorrows as well as in good times. Difficult times pass. It is said that trees need the winter winds to make them stronger so that, whatever we have to face, we will be stronger. My neighbour is everyone so, Lord, make me sensitive to the feelings of everyone I meet whether I know them or not: the sick, the healthy, the tired, the angry, the happy, the different.

Activity: For the next three minutes we ask that you walk in silence and I would like you to think about this question ... - what steps can I take to keep my loved ones safe – could that be what ways can I show love for my loved ones at this time and lift their spirits and keep them safe? (If students have journals with them, you may give them an opportunity to write these words in their journal when you stop next.)



Step 5: Me

Reflection: Invite students to share their ideas on what steps can I take to keep my loved ones safe ... from Step 4.

On this stage in our journey, we pause to think about you. Just think about yourself for a moment ... Jesus says to love your neighbour as yourself ... we often focus on the 'love your neighbour bit' but forget the 'as yourself' bit ... people often say 'mind yourself' so how are you going to mind yourself? What things are really good for us ...? What things are not so good for us...? Listen to this story ...

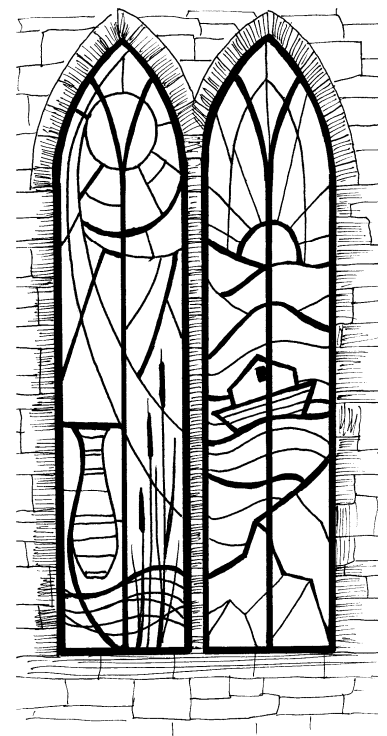
'There was once a Native American grandfather talking with his grandson. The boy was talking about an injustice that had happened that day that left him enraged. The grandfather admitted that he, too, had felt such rage. "I sometimes feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart," he told the child. "One wolf is vengeful, angry, violent. The other wolf is loving and compassionate." The grandfather said, "I too, at times, have felt a great hate for those who have taken so much with no sorrow for what they do. But hate wears you down and does not hurt your enemy. It is like taking poison and wishing your enemy would die." When he finished talking, the grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" The one I feed," replied his grandfather.' What are we feeding in our lives and what are we starving?

Prayer: And so we pray ... Dear Lord, you have given us talents and skills to use as best we can but the sad thing is that we are dissatisfied with them. We want to be more successful, more wealthy, more popular than we are. We are sad at the fact that we are not as clever, not as good-looking, not as good at sport as other people. We don't realise the good points about ourselves. Help us, Lord to make the best use of our talents and let us stop wanting to be like other people. Teach us to allow us to be satisfied with ourselves.

(Optional Addition: We might consider the following:

'Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world,
All things break – all things can be mended,
Not with time, as they say, but with intention, So go!
Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally.
The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.)

Activity: For the next three minutes we ask that you walk in silence and I would like you to think about this question ... what steps can I take to keep myself safe and to 'mind myself'? – could this be 'what are the things I can do to help myself grow in happiness and health? What am I feeding in my life and what am I starving?





Church Liturgy (You could use the opportunity of a visit to the church to give an input into the iconography of the church – stations of the cross, altar, chancel lamp, tabernacle, statues, pictures etc.)

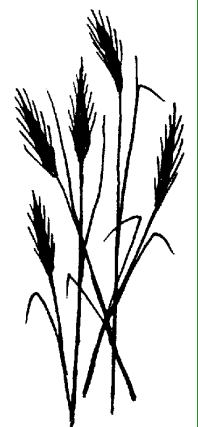
Summary of the steps taken: Today on our mini pilgrimage we travelled from ... to ... but that was only our physical journey. We also made a journey in our head ... we explored New Beginnings, Difficulties, Nature, Health of Loved Ones and, finally, we thought a little about ourselves. On our first stop, I asked you to think about what kind of an adult do you want to be when you leave in two years' time? On our second stop your reflection was on when you are afraid, when you make a mistake who can you go to at home or in school, who can you talk to at home or in school? Our third stop focused on nature and how can you make a difference in looking after the planet that God had given us? Then we looked at the health of those around us and we asked what steps can I take to keep my loved ones safe – could that be what ways can I show love for my loved ones at this time and lift their spirits and keep them safe? Finally, we thought about ourselves and the final reflection was on what steps can I take to keep myself safe and to 'mind myself'? What do I need to starve or get rid of in my life? ... What do I need to grow in my life? ... That's a lot of 'journey', a lot pilgrimage ... and on that journey we carried coats, journals etc. but what did you carry in your head ... in your heart... ?

We will now have a reflection We will read it slowly

Reflection: 'I Am Me' (You might divide up the reflection and allow different students to say different parts – See Appendix 5. It may be possible to have sanitised and/or laminated copies available.)

We will read each section slowly to allow you to think about the words (each section could be repeated)

In all the world, there is no one else exactly like me
Everything that comes out of me is authentically mine, because I alone choose it
I own everything about me; My body, my feelings, my mouth, my voice, all my actions,
Whether they be to others or to myself.
I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears
I own all my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes.
Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me,
By so doing I can love me and be friendly with me in all my parts
I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle me,
And other aspects that I do not know,
But as long as I am friendly and loving to myself,
I can courageously and hopefully look for solutions to the puzzles
And for ways to find out more about me -
However I look and sound, whatever I say and do,
And whatever I think and feel at a given moment in time is authentically me
If later some parts of how I looked, sounded, thought and felt turned out to be unfitting,
I can discard that which I feel is unfitting, keep the rest,
And invent something new for that which I discarded
I can see, hear, feel, think, say, and do.
I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive,
and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me -
I own me, and therefore I can engineer me -

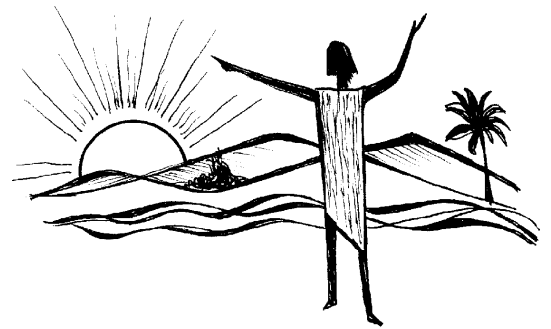




3. Closing Prayer and Song

We conclude with a closing prayer ...

Lord. Here I stand on the threshold of life – a new life.
It's like standing at the end of a narrow, untraveled road, on a hot summer's day.
There are road signs, Lord, lots of them;
There're all offering me different things.
I don't know which road to take.
Must I choose the easiest one, the smart path,
Or the muddy path, the dusty road or ...?
I know nothing of who I'm going to meet and see,
And the difficulties to be overcome.
But, Lord, help me to live fully no matter what.
And to be completely human, to be completely myself.
Guide me on which road to take.
Hold me by the hand and walk with me, Lord.



Concluding Song

Song Rudimental - Walk Alone feat. Tom Walker (Acoustic Version) Appendix 10

For more information please contact

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Appendices



Appendix 1: The Road not Taken - Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

'God's Grandeur' by Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the
soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright
wings.

Appendix 2: The Climb - Miley Cyrus

I can almost see it,
That dream I'm dreaming but
There's a voice inside my head saying,
You'll never reach it,
Every step I'm taking,
Every move I make feels
Lost with no direction,
My faith is shaking but I
Gotta keep trying,
Gotta keep my head held high

There's always gonna be another mountain
I'm always gonna wanna make it move
Always gonna be an uphill battle
Sometimes I'm gonna have to lose
Ain't about how fast I get there
Ain't about what's waiting on the other side
It's the climb

The struggles I'm facing,
The chances I'm taking
Sometimes might knock me down but,
No I'm not breaking
I may not know it,
But these are the moments that
I'm going to remember most yeah,
Just got to keep going,
And I, I gotta be strong
Just keep pushing on, 'cause

There's always gonna be another mountain
I'm always gonna wanna make it move
Always gonna be an uphill battle
Sometimes I'm gonna have to lose
Ain't about how fast I get there
Ain't about what's waiting on the other side
It's the climb (yeah)

(Repeat Chorus)

Keep on moving, Keep climbing,
Keep the faith baby
It's all about, It's all about, The climb
Keep the faith, Keep your faith, Whoa oh oh



Appendices



Appendix 3: It All Works Out - Riptide Movement

I can't bear to see you this way
You're heart is heavy
You're eyes plain to see

I know you feel lost
I know you feel scared
I know you feel down
I'm with you every step of the way
tomorrow's a new day

It all works out
It all works out
It all works out
It all works out

You're smile was fading, fading from you
You're mind is troubled
I know you, I see it in you

I know we'll get through this
I know we'll get by
I know we can do it

I'm with you every step of the way
tomorrow's a new day

It all works out
It all works out
It all works out
It all works out

ohhh, ooohhhh, ohhhh, ohhhh!!!

I am with you, I have your back
You have my heart too

I would never leave you this way
I will carry you every step of the way
tomorrow's a new day

It all works out
It all works out
It all works out
It all works out

Believe in me

Appendix 4: Song Suggestions

Dermot Kennedy – 'Outnumbered'
The Greatest Showman – 'A Million Dreams –
Never Enough – This is Me'
Andy Grammar – 'Don't give up on Me'
Cyndi Lauper – 'True Colours'
Kodaline – 'I wouldn't be who I am', 'I shed a
tear for you'

Appendix 5: "I Am Me" Pupil Parts

In all the world, there is no one else exactly like me
- everything that comes out of me is authentically
mine, because I alone choose it – I own everything
about me – my body, my feelings, my mouth, my
voice, all my actions, whether they be to others or
to myself –

I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears
- I own all my triumphs and successes, all my fail-
ures and mistakes. Because I own all of me, I can
become intimately acquainted with me – by so do-
ing I can love me and be friendly with me in all my
parts –

I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle
me, and other aspects that I do not know -
but as long as I am friendly and loving to myself, I
can courageously and hopefully look for solutions
to the puzzles and for ways to find out more about
me –

However I look and sound, whatever I say and do,
and whatever I think and feel at a given moment in
time is authentically me – If later some parts of
how I looked, sounded, thought and felt turned out
to be unfitting, I can discard that which I feel is un-
fitting, keep the rest, and invent something new for
that which I discarded -

I can see, hear, feel, think, say, and do. I have the
tools to survive, to be close to others, to be pro-
ductive, and to make sense and order out of the
world of people and things outside of me - I own
me, and therefore I can engineer me - I am me & I
am ok.



Appendix 6: Possible themes for extra steps

- ⇒ For single gender schools – on the threshold of womanhood, manhood (based on John O’Donoghue’s ‘On the Threshold of Womanhood’, ‘On the Threshold of Manhood’ (Benedictus: A Book of Blessings’ p. 79, 80 respectively))
- ⇒ Grief, Remembrance (possible text ‘We will remember them ...’ Appendix 7)
- ⇒ Patience (possible text ‘For everything there is a season ...’ Appendix 8)
- ⇒ Conflict – love in time of conflict (based on John O’Donoghue’s ‘Love in Time of Conflict’ (Benedictus: A Book of Blessings’ p. 50) Appendix 9)

Appendix 7: ‘We will remember them ...’

At the rising of the sun and at its going down	We remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter	We remember them.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring	We remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer	We remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn	We remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends	We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as	We remember them.
When we are weary and in need of strength	We remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart	We remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share	We remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make	We remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs	We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as	We remember them.

Appendix 8: **To Everything There is a Season**

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

- a time to be born, and a time to die;
- a time to plant, and a time to pluck up 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;
- a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
- a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- a time to seek, and a time to lose;
- a time to keep, and a time to cast 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 for war, and a time for peace.



Appendix 9: For Love in a Time of Conflict - John O'Donohue

When the gentleness between you hardens
 And you fall out of your belonging with each other,
 May the depths you have reached hold you still.
 When no true word can be said, or heard,
 And you mirror each other in the script of hurt,
 When even the silence has become raw and torn,
 May you hear again an echo of your first music.
 When the weave of affection starts to unravel
 And anger begins to sear the ground between you,
 Before this weather of grief invites
 The black seed of bitterness to find root,
 May your souls come to kiss.
 Now is the time for one of you to be gracious,
 To allow a kindness beyond thought and hurt,
 Reach out with sure hands
 To take the chalice of your love,
 And carry it carefully through this echoless waste
 Until this winter pilgrimage leads you
 Towards the gateway to spring.



Appendix 10:

Walk Alone - Rudimental Ft. Tom Walker

Showed up at the right time
 In a broke down limousine
 All you had was red lights
 I went and turned them all to green
 I found you in the landslide
 And pulled you out again
 The hardest conversations
 Are the ones you never had
 Well you don't have to say it
 'Cause you know I understand
 Never been the bravest
 But if you need a hand
 I got two, baby
 If you're in trouble I got you, baby
 Nothing that I wouldn't do, baby
 And you'll know, you'll know

That I am a rock, I am a stone
 I'll be your strength, I'll be your home
 And you may walk a lonely road
 But you will never walk, walk, walk alone
 You will never walk, walk, walk alone
 You will never walk, walk, walk alone, oh, woah

I don't have the answers
 But I can listen for a while
 Might not understand it
 But I can try to make you smile
 When you're in a black place
 And need a shoulder you can cry on
 I got two, baby
 If you're in trouble I got you, baby
 Nothing that I wouldn't do, baby
 And you'll know, you'll know

That I am a rock, I am a stone (Oh, I am a stone)
 I'll be your strength, I'll be your home
 (Oh, I'll be your home)
 And you may walk a lonely road
 But you will never walk, walk, walk alone
 You will never walk, walk, walk alone
 You will never walk, walk, walk alone, oh, woah
 You know, you know
 I am a rock, I am a stone
 I'll be your strength, I'll be your home
 And you may walk a lonely road
 But you will never walk, walk, walk alone
 You will never walk, walk, walk alone
 You will never walk, walk, walk alone, oh, woah