



## Area of Study

**Moral, social and personal.**

## Overview

This Transition Unit offers Transition Year students time to reflect on their role within the local community by enabling them to explore their understanding of the concept of community. It also links TY students with children in local primary school who are preparing for First Communion. This Transition Unit can be undertaken by students of all Christian denominations and by students of other faiths or those who do not profess any faith. A lot of the concepts and beliefs can be discussed with due respect to all, with students participating in the activities in whatever way best reflects their own beliefs.

## Related learning

This TU links with junior and senior cycle Religious Education as it deals with the concept community.

It also links with IT as the students are invited to use a PowerPoint presentation to explain their individual faith journey.

## Outline of the unit

### Part 1 Exploring the concept of community

- The students are asked to discuss their understanding of the term community in groups
- They then are invited to use either poetry, newspapers, songs, plasticine, or drama to present their group's ideas. A class definition is arrived at based on all the groups' displays.
- The description of the early Christian communities is explored (Acts 2: 44-47) and compared and contrasted with their own.
- Students examine and discuss the lives of people who have lived their faith such as Rosa Parks, Oscar Romero, Jean Donovan.
- Each student will design and present to their peers a Powerpoint presentation to explain their unique faith journey to date. This can include those students who profess to having no faith as they might do a lifeline of the significant experiences they have had so far in their lives. Teachers will appreciate the need to approach this exercise with sensitivity and ensure that students do not feel compelled to reveal experiences that are private to them.

## Part 2 – Understanding children and learning how to share faith with them

- The students interview a younger person of seven/eight years (see appendix 1)
- The transition year students give a report on this interview outlining their difficulties and observations as they tried to ask their questions. From their findings the group build up a picture of how the younger person thinks and how they learn and where the younger children are in their faith journey.

## Part 3 - Preparing the reflection day for the primary school children

(It is best that students work in groups of 6-8 with each primary school class. If your TY group is large it might be necessary to link up with more than one primary school.)

- The students design worksheets based on the theme of friendship with others and friendship with Jesus (samples in appendixes)
- Students will decorate their own worksheets and present them to their class in preparation for the day of reflection.
- The story of Jesus and the Children (Mark 10: 13-16) is read to the Transition Year students. Using what they learned about the thought process of the seven/eight year old they write and act out a drama suitable for second class students based on the scripture passage.
- Students will prepare their own certificate which is given to primary school students at the end of the reflection day (see appendix).

## Breakdown of the unit

Religious Education class timetabled for 2 class periods for ½ the year - 22 hours of class contact

ICT training - 3 hours

Independent learning, research, interviews, preparation of powerpoint, preparation of props and costumes for play, etc – 10 hours

Reflection day with primary school children – 5 hours

Evaluation – 1 hour

## Aims

*This transition unit aims to:*

- facilitate TY students in an experience of sharing “faith” with younger children
- provide students with an opportunity to explore and discuss their thoughts on their faith journey to date particularly with reference to the Christian understanding of community.

## Learning Outcomes

*On completion of this unit students should be able to:*

- explain their understanding of the concept of community and be able to compare and contrast this to a description of an early Christian community
- develop and extend their IT skills
- prepare and present a PowerPoint talk based on their journey of faith
- show an appreciation of how a seven year old thinks and learns
- show confidence and skills needed for working with this age group
- design and create age appropriate worksheets for the reflection day
- script and dramatise the piece of scripture about Jesus and the Children
- evaluate constructively their own and others drama ideas
- show team work in the way they prepare for the day and how they work together on the day.

## Key skills

## How evidenced

information processing

Analysing and evaluating information taken from a wide range of sources such as interviewing a seven year old

Integrating information to prepare and present a PowerPoint talk

Recording their learning in a journal

critical and creative thinking

Discussing their journey of faith within the community with a view to enabling them to learn where they are on this journey.

Designing and planning a reflection day for primary school students using worksheets and drama

Creating an imaginative PowerPoint presentation

communicating

Preparing and presenting an age appropriate scripture based drama.

Expressing their opinions on their journey of faith.

Develop listening skills and learning to respect the personal views of people their own age and much younger

Teaching younger students about friendship using worksheets

Presenting a PowerPoint to their peers

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|----------------------------|---|
| communicating              | Learning how to work with others in the pursuit of a common goal<br>Being able to teach others who are much younger<br>Encouraging each others ideas<br>Assessing the work of others in a respectful way<br>Taking instructions from group leaders<br>Taking responsibility for the teaching of the primary school students |
| being personally effective | Evaluating their own work and being able to receive and respond to feedback<br>Developing the confidence to teach a group of seven year olds<br>Developing the confidence to present their own work to their peers<br>Taking a responsible role in the creation of a reflection day   |

## Learning approaches

Group work, pair work, discussion, drama, art work, visit to primary school, didactic approach as appropriate, use of IT, individual work and research.

## Assessment approaches

Peer assessment of their drama

Peer and self assessment of their PowerPoint presentation

Self assessment of their performance during the reflection day. They will be encouraged to record their own assessment of how they feel they worked during the reflection day with the primary school children. This will be recorded in their journal which they will keep throughout the unit.

## Evaluation methods

As the work progresses there will be evaluation by both the teacher and the students involved.

A final evaluation of the unit will also be held involving all the TY students and teachers who participated in the Transitionn Unit.

## Resources

Imagination, paper and pen!

Dorothy Parker said profoundly that the art of writing is the art of “applying ass to seat” which I think may provide the hardest challenge at times but given that we can overcome initial resistance I am providing below a summary of stuff I found that works.

I have found Pat Boran’s book “A Portable Writing Workshop” excellent for word games and spring board ideas.

Nicky Jackowska’s “Write for life” is also full of writing exercises which I found helpful. Models for the different forms can be found in most anthologies but I have used the “Signals” short story anthology and in particular the stories “Trio” by Jennifer Johnston “WildWood” by John Banville and “A Talk in the Dark” by Derek Mahon with good results.

For the poetry section I again use Pat Boran’s book, and John Fahy’s “Time For Poetry”. The last section ‘Get Writing’ is useful. The Leaving Certificate text book “Endeavour 2” by Edel O Donovan and Fiona Kirwan has some good modeling exercises in its creative writing section. I have found the Poetry anthologies “Being alive” and “Staying Alive” full of challenging poems as are the “Rattlebag” and “Schoolbag” collections compiled by Ted Hughes and edited by Seamus Heaney (Faber and Faber).

A great book on a general approach to writing poetry is Ted Hughes book “Poetry in the Making”, (Faber and Faber); a collection of radio talks he gave for educational programmes on helping children to write poems which is very accessible.

For the drama script section “Class Acts” has some good material as does “Another 100 ideas for Drama” by Anna Scher and Charles Verrall with some good ideas for spring boards and situational drama.

In general, with regard to resources, I have to say that I have found that the best resource is the students themselves and their own life experiences and that their best writing always seems to come from this.

## APPENDIX 1

### Interview questions for a seven year old

1. Who is their favourite person?
2. What is their most prized possession?
3. What is their biggest fear? (Be careful about this one)
4. Who are their friends?
5. How do they know that these people are their friends?
6. What are they most looking forward to when they make their Holy Communion?

The transition years are asked to notice how the younger person answers the questions, which questions are seen as easier and to observe if there are any questions which the child cannot answer. How did they handle this? They are encouraged to notice both the child's words and body language. We ask them not to make any comment which can be seen as judgemental.

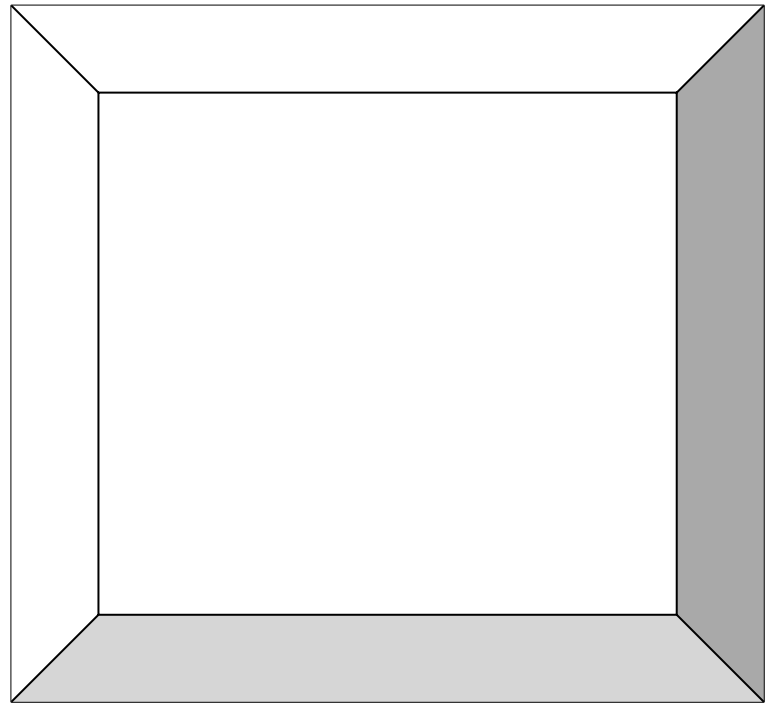
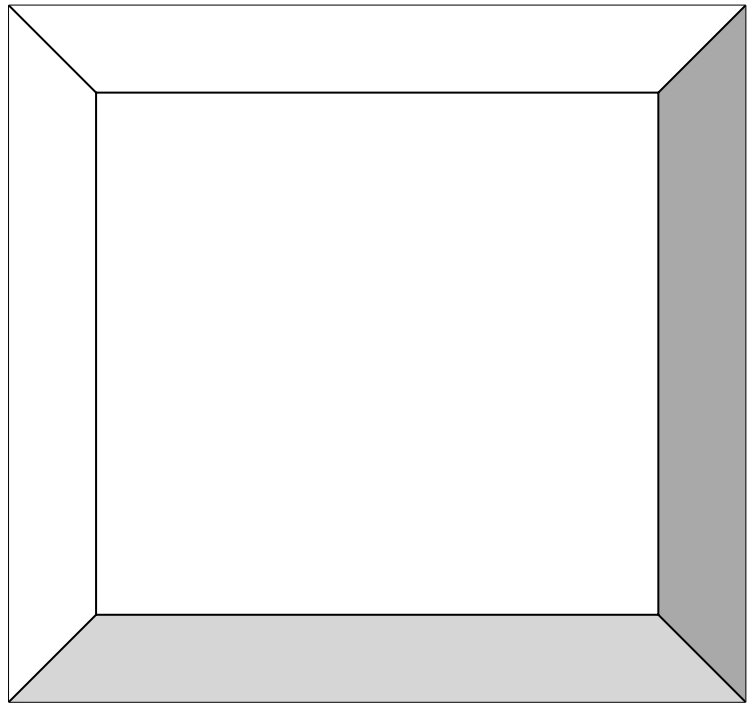
From their observations we explain the following

- Lower order and higher order questioning
- Varying the stimulus
- The centrality of the family in the child's life
- The difference in a teenagers thinking and that of a seven year old. Maybe explain Fowler's theory of Stages of Faith. I found this helpful
- The need to use worksheets to keep them focused.
- The need to have a lot of activity planned so that there is no room for boredom or indiscipline.

APPENDIX 2

**WORKSHEET 1**

God give us many friends. Who are your friends? Draw pictures to tell a story about your friends.

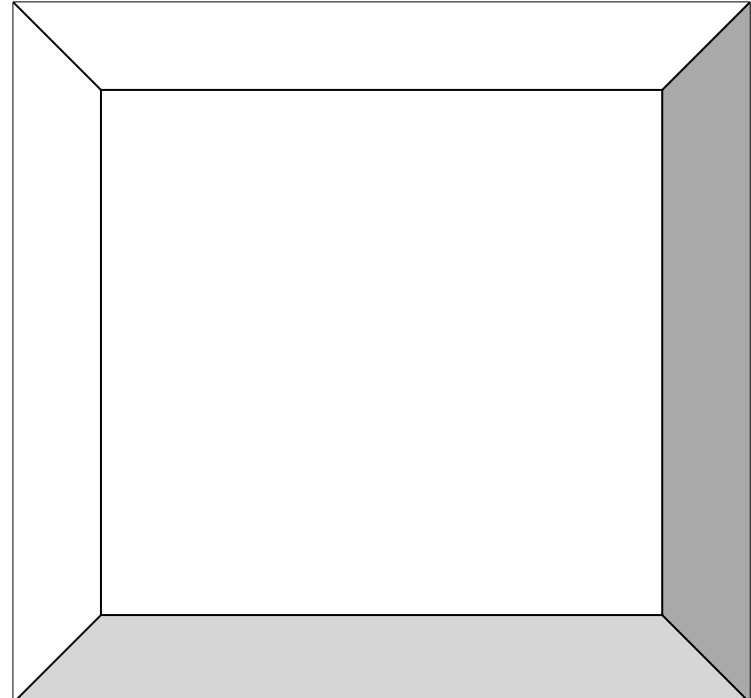
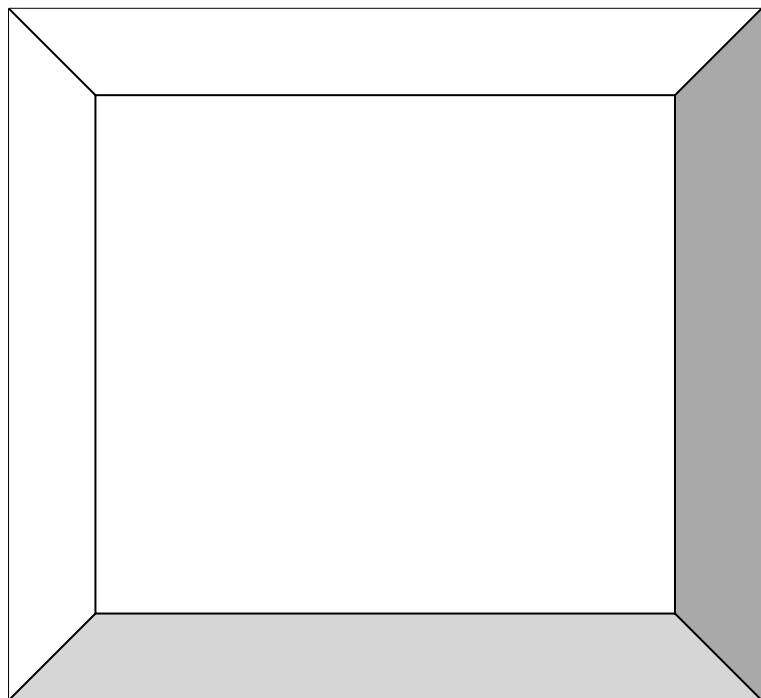


My friend at home is

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My friends in school are

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In the evenings I play with

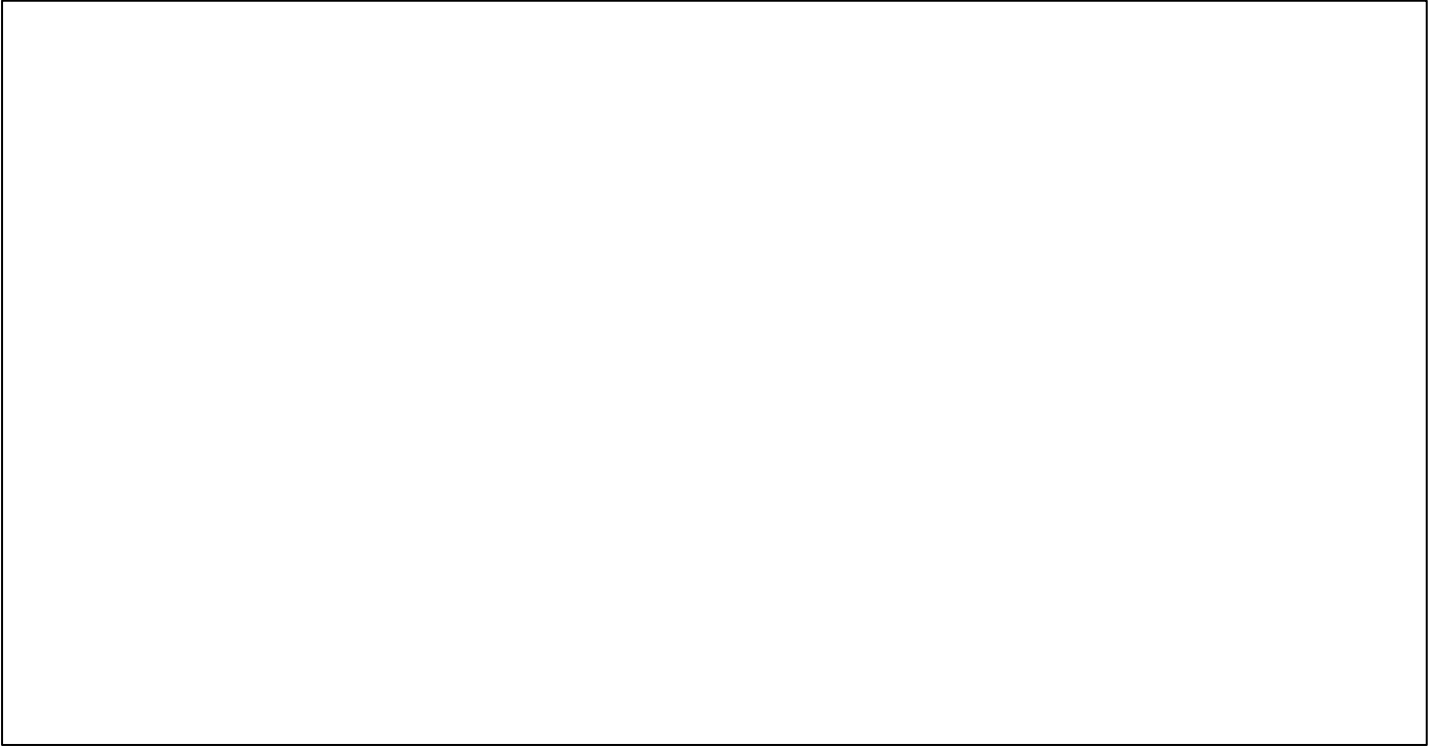
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My best friend is

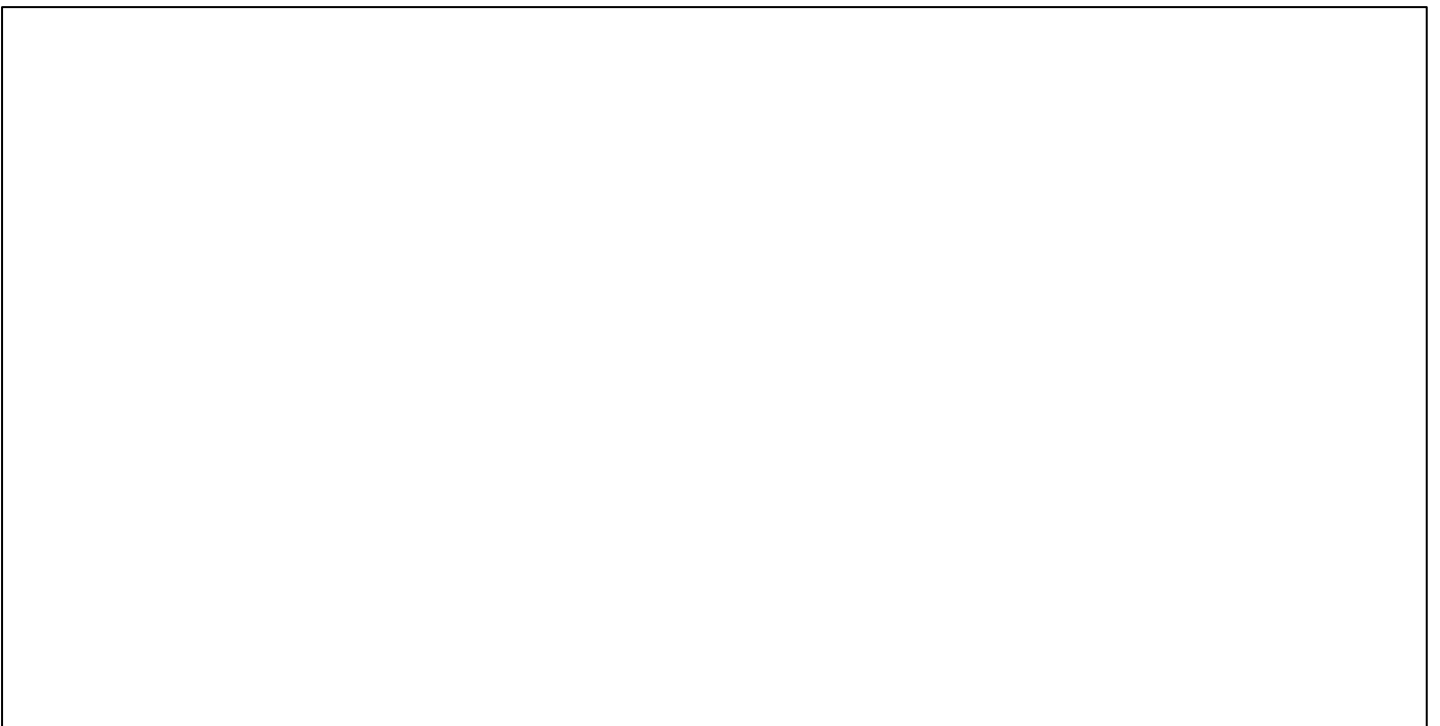
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## WORKSHEET 2

Draw a picture of a time when you were a good friend



Draw a picture of a time when someone did something nice for you and showed you that they were a good friend





### APPENDIX 3 Sample agenda for TY students reflection day with primary school children

The Transition Years will act as group leaders and will work with small groups of the First Communion class. The following is a proposed timetable for their day with the primary school children.

#### **Part 1**

Objective: that the Transition years and the primary school children share their experiences of friendship and explore their faith and friendship with Jesus.

- The students introduce themselves with name tags. These will include some reference to a hobby to help the younger children identify with the Transition years. The children then design their own name tags.
- The group leaders use Worksheet 1 as a basis to tell the children about themselves
- The children are given time to fill out Worksheet 1
- The children then report the story behind their drawings.
- The group leaders use Worksheet 2 to further explain what friendship is about.
- The second class students colour in their sheets and then explain to the group the story about a time when they were kind to someone and when someone was kind to them.

Drama based on the passage about Jesus and the children

The transition year students dramatise Jesus welcoming the children. The younger students are asked questions about the play for example,

Who was in the play?

What were their names?

Where were the children and their parents going?

What was the journey like?

Why did the men stop the children coming to Jesus?

What did Jesus say?

What do we learn about Jesus?

What does the play teach us about friendship?

It can be a good idea to ask the second class to act out the play with the help of the transition year students who will whisper their lines.

The children then fill in the voice bubbles on Worksheet 3 imagining what they would say to Jesus if they met him.

## **Part 2**

Objective: that the second class students can identify the gifts that God has given us because we are loved.

The Transition Years brainstorm the children on the gifts that they have received from God. A collage is then prepared based on one of the gifts, for example trees, rainbows, an animal, etc. The outline must be open enough to allow the children put torn pieces of magazines into the spaces. When they are finished the collage it is a good idea to get them to explain the collage to the rest of the class. These are displayed in the classroom.

The children are encouraged to think about something nice they could do for others in this their First Holy Communion year. The group leaders help them fill in this on the certificate which they can keep as a memory of the "Friends in Faith day".

### **Requirements for the day:**

Name tags for both groups

Worksheets for each child

Names of the Holy Communion class for the name tags and the certificates. We normally get the names before the day to fill these in on name tags and certificates

Magazines for the collage and markers to highlight outline when completed.

Pencils, crayons, glue, dishes for glue and sponges for collage. Bluetak.

Costumes for the play, for example T-shirts, baseball caps scarves.



This is to certify that

\_\_\_\_\_

took part in a Faith Friends Day.

I Promise to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

for my friend Jesus



Faith \_\_\_\_\_

Friends \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet 3

Picture is taken from <http://children.calvarychapel.com>

What is Jesus saying to the children and what are they saying to Jesus their friend?

