**Suggestions of Ways to Commemorate or Mark Loss**

Why not speak to your school chaplain or a priest from your associated parish about arranging a Month’s Mind for the person who has died? This could be celebrated in school or in the parish, whichever venue you feel is most suitable.

**What is a Month’s Mind Mass?**

Catholics know death is a beginning more than an end, and this Mass is a reminder of that. The tradition of the [Month’s Mind Mass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Month%27s_Mind) remembered those who had died about 30 days after their passing. Families and friends would attend the Mass, then make the day of it having dinner together and once again, toasting the departed loved one.

It is a time to honour the dead with prayers, a time to hope that their lives and deaths will have a lasting meaning.

The readings at this Mass can be the Readings of the Day or they can be chosen from the readings used for Funeral Masses. Please see the **Funeral Liturgy** document for these readings.

***Types of Masses to Commemorate the Dead***

* **Anniversary Mass**

If your school community wishes to have a Month’s Mind Mass or an Anniversary Mass celebrated, either in school or the local parish, you should contact your school chaplain or the local Parish Priest.

* **Mass for the Bereaved**

November is the Month of the Holy Souls where we pray for all those who have died. Some school communities celebrate a Mass in November in school or the local parish to remember all those who have died in their school community. Individual invitations are issued to those who have been bereaved in the previous year and a general invitation is extended to anyone who wishes to take part.

* **Mass for families of deceased children**

You may wish to arrange a Mass after Easter for the parents and families of children who died at the dawn of life.

This provides an opportunity for the School Community to prayerfully support parents whose children have died.

**Some other ways to remember the dead of our school communities:**

* **November Remembrance List**

During October, all staff and students receive a card to ask if they wish to put the name of a deceased family member, loved one or friend on to a Remembrance List. A list is then created for each year group which can be used during November services/assemblies etc.

* **Prayer Box**

A prayer box can be made for different students/teachers/parents to contribute to (please edit contents for anything too disturbing or inappropriate if passing the box on to the family of the one that died).

* **Prayer Book**

A prayer book to write messages or sign names may be displayed next to a picture of the person who has died. This could be placed in the entrance to school, in the Oratory or sacred space etc.

* **Memorial Table**

A memorial table can be set up near the office for the first few weeks Including: a framed photograph, a bible, and a candle, a flower or plant (this idea is appropriate for a student or teacher who was part of the school community).

* **Classroom Activities**

Opportunities should be provided for the students to express their thoughts and feelings. This can be done with verbal and nonverbal expressions such as through art, journaling, poetry, or letter writing, writing a prayer, making something for the family, going to the funeral home, a funeral or memorial celebration, visiting the burial place, talking about the person, and praying for the person and their family.

* **Memory Activities**

Through memory activities like a Remembering Quilt or a Memory Book, students can continue expressing the relationship they have with the person who died. The responses of the students can be encouraged with prompts like:

* You were special to me/us because…
* I remember this story about…
* I can draw my memory of… This can later be given to the family who is grieving, if appropriate.

*Later on*, a more permanent memorial could be established. For instance – a framed, inscribed picture for the wall, a tree planting, or rose bush in memory of the deceased.