Programme Outline

The structure of *You Shall Be My Witnesses* is based on the sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church:*

- What we believe!
- What we celebrate!
- What we live!
- What we pray!

There are Five Sessions

Session 1	Belonging
	How do I belong?
Session 2	Believing
	What do I believe?
Session 3	Being a Christian
	How can I be a Christian?
Session 4	Becoming a Witness
	How do I share the Good News?
Session 5	Beginning Again
	What happens next?

Note:

This programme is usually delivered in a parish setting with volunteers who facilitate the programme. Parents are encouraged to join in at the end of each session for prayer. Children are asked to complete some tasks and worksheets at home and these activities provide a conversation for both the parents and children around the topics discussed in each session. In the light of the current situation I would like to encourage all members of the family to provide the support and encouragement needed to prepare your child/ children for the sacrament of confirmation.

Acknowledgement:

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to Maeve Mahon, who developed the *You Shall Be My Witnesses* programme for parishes and for giving us permission to use this wonderful resource in a new way to help our Confirmation candidates prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Providing a Sacred Space

In order to deliver each session, I invite you to create a sacred space in your home. This sacred space will also serve as a focus of prayer at the end of each session.

You will need:

A candle (battery is safe)

A white or red cloth

A cross or Bible (or both)

(insert image of a sacred space)

Session 4

Becoming: How Can I Become a Witness?

Start the session by lighting the candle and saying the opening prayer together.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us, especially upon _____ (child's/children's name (s)) as he/ she/they prepare for the sacrament of confirmation. Amen

In this session we are going to look at what it means to be a 'witness'.

We might think of someone who is a witness to a crime or a road accident and is called to give evidence in court, to say what they saw. That is one way of being a witness.

Another way is to witness by the way we live our lives, the way we treat ourselves, other people and the world around us. We can try to witness to our faith by the way we live in the world; how we behave says a lot about what we believe. Remember last week when we talked about the Apostles being too scared to go out into the streets of Jerusalem in case they were recognised as Jesus' friends? Well they weren't exactly being great witnesses to their faith. But when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they were no longer afraid to go out and be witnesses. Later on, in the Acts of the Apostles we can read about how they witnessed to their faith and belief in God. Let's read that now.

Acts 2:44-47 International Children's Bible (ICB)
All the believers stayed together. They shared everything. They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those people who needed it. The believers met together in the Temple every day. They all had the same purpose. They broke bread in their homes, happy to share their food with joyful hearts. They praised God, and all the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding those people to the group of believers.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

When the Apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit, they were no longer afraid, but they changed in other ways too. We can see this from the piece we have just read. They were happy, they shared with each other and they gave away money to those who needed it. The Holy Spirit made a difference in their lives. The gifts they received were like seeds that began to grow and bear fruit.

When you use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life to may begin to notice the fruits of those gifts.

These are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Can you find them in the word search?

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Z	X	U	H	S	D	K	V	C	A	W	G	J	V	Z
S	Q	J	T	R	K	S	S	F	U	K	F	I	A	U
E	S	F	C	Q	P	L	I	A	L	X	K	D	E	M
S	F	E	D	F	P	N	S	I	I	G	S	X	R	J
S	T	S	N	G	Q	B	U	T	I	E	S	D	R	Q
S	J	R	Y	D	O	N	E	H	L	Q	C	A	P	N
E	L	L	E	J	N	C	G	F	J	V	M	E	Z	Z
N	C	C	A	P	N	I	C	U	K	A	X	K	W	E
D	L	D	Z	E	Q	O	K	L	O	X	R	L	T	D
O	B	O	I	L	N	P	J	L	J	R	P	J	L	L
O	K	T	V	T	S	S	E	N	E	L	T	N	E	G
G	A	R	R	E	T	F	I	E	P	E	A	C	E	J
P	M	O	T	K	N	U	K	S	X	Z	W	C	K	O
D	L	T	P	H	L	I	P	S	N	M	H	Z	B	Y
A	N	X	G	N	A	W	R	W	J	U	C	H	G	W

FAITHFULLNESS
GENTLENESS
GOODNESS
JOY
KINDNESS
LOVE
PATIENCE
PEACE
SELFCONTROL

Acts of Random Kindness

After you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit it will bear fruit in you too. We hope that we will see those fruits by the kind of witness you become. It might not be easy to be a witness to

your faith in our world today. Sometimes we are all tempted to hide our gifts away, not to use them. If we do this then we do not bear fruit. Can we do what the Apostles did or, do we have to find new ways to become witnesses?

Have a discussion with your family on this for a few minutes.

So, how might we use our gifts so that they bear fruit and help us to witness to our faith?

St. Paul tells us that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. You can read about this in his letter to the Galatians and to his letters to the people of Corinth.

Galatians 5:22-23 International Children's Bible (ICB)
But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong.

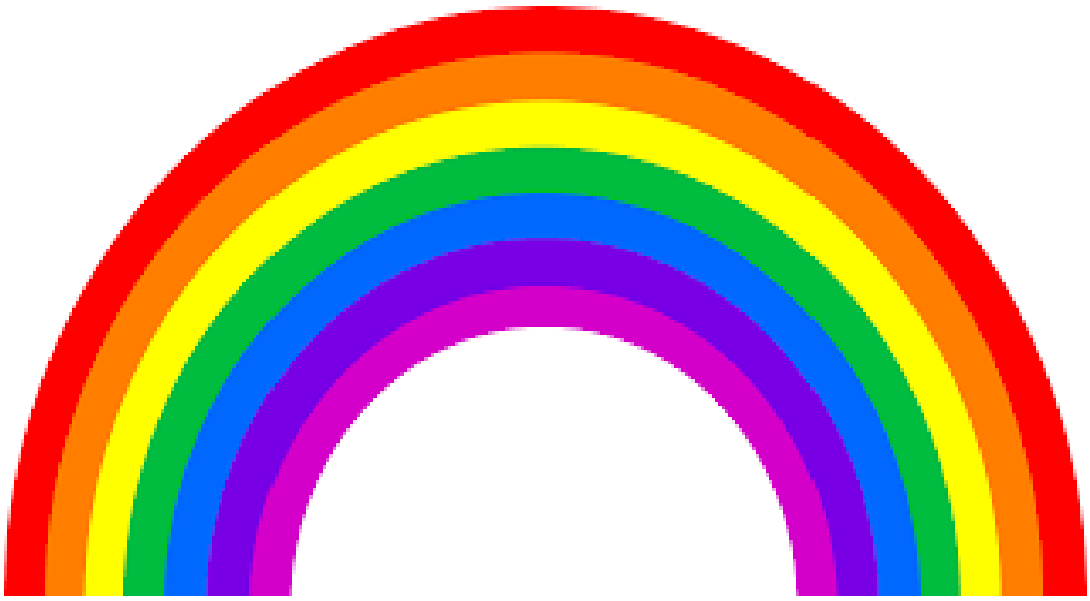
1 Corinthians 13:4 International Children's Bible (ICB)
Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud.

So how might we use our gifts so that they bear fruit and help us to witness to our faith? One way we might do this is through performing Acts of Random Kindness. Another name for this might be 'love your neighbour', and we all know who told us to do this.

Evan Almighty

If you have watched the movie *Evan Almighty* at home, school or in the parish you will know that the first letters of the words Acts of Random Kindness spell ARK. If you have not seen the film *Evan Almighty*, I recommend that you watch it with your family.

> You know the story of Noah's Ark. It is a long story and you can read it in chapters 6-9 of Genesis. This story tells us that when we listen to God and do our best to love him with all our hearts, we can do great things. Imagine what it was like to be Noah in this story. Remember Evan in the movie. People laughed at him, they thought he was crazy to listen to God, to do what God wanted him to do. At the end of the story God promises Noah that there will never be another flood like the one that lasted for forty days and forty nights. He told Noah that the rainbow would be a sign that this promise would always be kept. The rainbow is a sign of God's love for all of us.
> When we see a rainbow, we should think of how much we are loved by God.
> The rainbow might also help us to begin our Acts of Random Kindness right here and right now.



Choose seven Acts of Random Kindness to do, keep them simple and achievable and record each of your acts in the rainbow.

A group of people in Ireland began a year-long campaign to encourage us to commit Acts of Random Kindnessonce a month. One of the people who had this idea, Séan Mullan, said:

'If 40,000 people did one act of kindness this month and half did the same next month and added another act, and if one quarter of the recipients did the same, it would amount to more than one million acts of kindness by the end of the year.'

ACTS OF RANDOM KINDNESS

What I/ We could do:

For God

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For Others

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For My Family

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For My Community

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As a Member of the Church

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Closing Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for calling us to be members of your holy people.

May we always walk in your ways and be faithful to your word.

May we carry the light of Christ in our hearts, in our minds and in our deeds as we go from this place to continue our walk with God and with each other. Amen