



**Fifth Class/  
Sixth Class**  

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**Primary 7**



A special lesson for teachers  
to facilitate reflection on and  
discussion of the Covid-19 crisis

# Let's Look ...

## CHATTING

### ABOUT BEING AT HOME SINCE THE START OF COVID-19

- Begin by sharing with the children how you found the experience of being at home since the start of Covid-19. Everyone will be only too aware of how shops, playgrounds, swimming pools, etc. were closed for a long time, and it will be important to allow the children to recall their own experiences of those times, whether their stories be positive or negative, but perhaps try to focus a little first on some positive experiences of your own during that time, so as not to begin on a negative note. So you might mention, for example, how you took up cycling or some other form of exercise, how you got to discover things about your neighbourhood that you had never noticed before, how you got to know some elderly neighbours through offering to do shopping or small jobs for them when they were cocooning or shielding, books you read, movies you watched, etc. You may also have some sad stories to share, and doing so will help those children who have had difficult experiences over the past months to share those stories if they wish.
- Then chat together using these or similar questions:
  - » What did you miss most about not being able to come to school for all those months? Or did you miss school at all?
  - » Was there anything good about staying home and not being able to go out? Tell us about it.
  - » Did you learn to do any new things during the lockdown, or start any new hobbies?
  - » Can you think of anything you would like to have done that was cancelled because of Covid-19? How did you feel about that?
  - » Did anyone have a birthday or a special occasion during the lockdown? How did you celebrate? In what way was the celebration different to what you might normally do on such occasions?



# Let's Learn ...

## LET'S EXPLORE

### THE EMERGENCE AND SPREAD OF COVID-19

**Note:** You will need a copy of the template on p. 7 for each child.

- Give each child a copy of the template, which is an account of the emergence and spread of Covid-19, to help the children to recall how and where the virus started and how it spread.
- You could first invite the children to read this account in silence for themselves, and then have different children read individual paragraphs aloud for the class.

#### Covid-19 in Ireland

In December 2019 a contagious virus called Covid-19 began in Wuhan in China. Within four months, it had spread right around the world, and by June 2020 over eight million people had been infected and nearly half a million people had died. Covid-19 had become a pandemic.

As events unfolded in China and then in Italy and Spain, people in Ireland had no idea of how the virus would affect the lives of everyone on the island. By March 2020, the first cases in Ireland had been confirmed, and normal life quickly began to change. St Patrick's Day parades were cancelled all over the country and people were asked to stay at home to stay safe. Soon afterwards, shops and businesses were closed, as were bars and restaurants. Eventually all sports and large gatherings were cancelled too. Teachers and students moved to online learning and many adults began working from home. People were asked not to visit other households, even the homes of family members and friends, and particularly the homes of people over seventy. People over seventy were asked not to leave their homes at all.

Hospitals closed for all normal procedures, as frontline emergency staff, such as doctors, nurses, paramedics, hospital porters and care attendants began to prepare for a 'wave'

of Covid-19 patients. Sadly, many people died from the disease, though most people who contracted the virus recovered. Some of the people who died were the frontline workers who had put their own lives in danger in order to help others.

As the numbers contracting the virus became less, most shops and businesses were gradually allowed to reopen and people were allowed to see more of their friends and family again. But life has changed. Adults are now required to wear face masks in crowded indoor spaces. Queues outside shops are a normal sight, as people observe a new regulation known as 'social distancing'. Careful and regular handwashing has become more important than ever. Every shop, church and public building has installed hand sanitisers to keep visitors safe. Some leisure activities have still not returned and some businesses have not yet reopened. Some don't know if they will ever reopen. Many restrictions on foreign travel have been introduced and sometimes people are required to self-isolate when they return from different countries.

This situation is ongoing and could continue for some time yet. The hope is that a vaccine will be available before long, which should bring the virus under control.

## CHATTING

### ABOUT THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Chat with the children about the impact that Covid-19 and the curtailment of normal activities and freedoms have had on people – on the children themselves and on their families, on their relatives, friends or neighbours, on people they read or heard about on TV or other media. Ask these or similar questions:
  - » What did you find most difficult about staying at home and keeping apart from your extended family and friends?
  - » Would anyone like to tell the class about a time that was particularly difficult for you and your family? Or about the feelings or negative emotions that you felt, and why?
  - » Can you think of any other people for whom the past months have been especially



difficult? (healthcare workers, people who live alone, people with loved ones who became ill or died from the virus ...) Perhaps you have stories that you can share about some of these people and what their lives were like during the past months.

- » Some of you may have found the whole experience frightening. Who or what helped you to get through it?
- » Did you find any comfort in prayer and in knowing that God/Jesus was there for you all the time, and that you could turn to God/Jesus to help you to get through it? Tell us about that.

## DIGITAL SLIDESHOW

- Play the slideshow depicting different images from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Invite the children's responses to the slideshow by asking these or similar questions:
  - » What images remain in your mind from the slideshow?
  - » Which images in the slideshow show that something unusual is happening at the present time?
  - » Are there any other images of Covid-19 that you would add to a slideshow if you were putting one together?

## GROUP WORK

### HOW LIFE HAS CHANGED

**Note:** Each pod or group will need a piece of recycled paper on which to record their answers.

- Draw the children's attention to the 'pod' system in operation in your class as another example of the ways in which life has changed since the outbreak of Covid-19.
- Then assign each 'pod' or small group one of the topics listed below. Ask them to work together for five minutes to brainstorm five ways in which life has changed regarding this topic. Give each group a piece of recycled paper on which to record their answers.

Topics:

- » School
  - » Hobbies
  - » Public transport
  - » Shopping
  - » Holidays
  - » Restaurants
  - » Keeping in touch with family and friends
- After five minutes, invite each group to share their answers with the class.

### Teacher Tip:

In relation to the Literacy Activity, some children may prefer to create a picture story rather than write about their given topic.

## LITERACY ACTIVITY

### THE CHANGES I SEE!

**Note:** You will need a copy of the template on p. 8 for each child.

- Give each child a copy of the template.
- Ask them to choose one of the topics that has been discussed and to write about it under the headings provided on the template, which are:

*Since the Covid-19 virus started, I see changes in the way we ...*

*The main changes in this aspect of our lives are ...*

*The good things I see coming out of these changes are ...*

*Some bad effects of these changes are ...*

- After a little while, invite the children to Think-Pair-Share their responses with the person sitting beside them.
- Conclude the activity by inviting a few volunteers to share their responses with the class.

# Let's Live ...

## CHATTING

### ABOUT ADAPTING

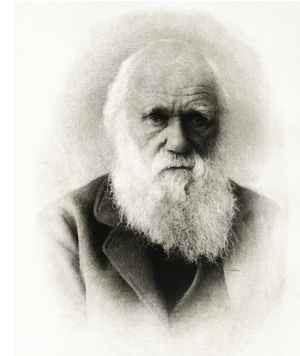
- Show the children the first slide, which features a picture of Charles Darwin. Explain that Darwin is famous for his theory of evolution by natural selection. According to this theory, all living things must struggle in some ways in order to survive. The living things that are most suited to their environment tend to survive, while those that are less well equipped don't, and sometimes a whole species may disappear. This is called the 'survival of the fittest'.
- Show the children the second slide, which features this quote:

'According to Darwin's Origin of Species, it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself.'

— Leon C. Megginson (1963)

- Explain that over the last few months, people all over the world have adapted and adjusted to the changing environment of living with

Covid-19. And that's why the majority of people have managed to survive. And while Covid-19 has not gone away, we have been able to reopen schools and businesses and to see our friends and families again.



- Then chat with the children using these or similar questions:
  - » Do you think most people like to change and adapt? Why or why not?
  - » What has been the biggest change in your own life or in the life of your family since the Covid-19 outbreak?
  - » If you were in charge of managing the Covid-19 situation in this country, are there any other changes you might make in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19?

## PRAYER

### *Sign of the Cross*

**Teacher** (*lighting candle*): Our candle reminds us that God is with us.

Today we have been talking about what it has been like for us and for others since the Covid-19 crisis began. There were many things that we could not do for the past number of months; many things we missed out on; many disappointments. But we adapted and we changed. And because we changed, we stayed safe, and so we are slowly starting to reopen our country. Let's pray together now, asking for the strength and courage to continue to do what we need to do to keep one another safe.

We pray together, 'Strengthen us, O Lord.'

**All:** Strengthen us, O Lord.

**Teacher:** Loving God, give us the gift of **knowledge**. Help us to know how to keep

ourselves and one another safe by washing our hands and keeping a safe distance from others. Give us the **wisdom** to do the right thing, no matter what others think. Strengthen us, O Lord.

**All:** Strengthen us, O Lord.

**Teacher:** Loving God, give us the gift of **understanding**. Help us to realise that many people are still very anxious about Covid-19. May we be patient with them and with ourselves, as we adapt to living with the virus. Strengthen us, O Lord.

**All:** Strengthen us, O Lord.

**Teacher:** Loving God, give us the gift of **reverence**. Help us to show respect to you and to one another. Inspire us to make good decisions and to show **right judgement** in our words and in our actions. Strengthen us, O Lord.

**All:** Strengthen us, O Lord.



**Teacher:** Loving God, give us the gift of **wonder and awe in your presence** and in the presence of the world you have created. Help us to see that all living things are held in a delicate balance in this web of life. Inspire us to be responsible citizens of the planet. Strengthen us, O Lord.

**All:** Strengthen us, O Lord.

**Teacher:** Loving God, bless the people who cared for, and continue to care for, those suffering from Covid-19 – doctors, nurses, paramedics, care attendants, hospital porters, those who keep the hospitals clean, those who make and serve the food for the patients, and all those who work in the health service. May we be inspired by their selflessness. Inspire in us the same courage as we deal with the virus in our own lives. Strengthen us, O Lord.

**All:** Strengthen us, O Lord.

**Teacher:** Is there anything else anyone would like to ask for God's strength to do? (*Give the children*

*the opportunity to offer their own prayers in silence or aloud. Invite the children to respond by saying 'Strengthen us, O Lord'.)*

**Teacher:** Loving God,  
you are with us all the time,  
when we are excited and when we are nervous,  
when we are happy and when we are sad.  
Help us to settle back into school,  
to have fun with our friends and to learn well together.  
Help us to adjust to the changes that are required of us.  
Strengthen us to be responsible and to make good decisions here in school, at home and in our parish community.  
May we continue to look out for one another and to keep one another safe.  
**All:** Amen.

*Sign of the Cross*

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