

Lesson Notes to accompany the Video:
‘Coronavirus – A Global Pandemic’
and to facilitate reflection on and discussion of the
Covid-19 crisis and its impact on students’ lives

For Use in All Catholic Secondary/Grammar Schools



VERITAS

Learning Intentions

Over the course of the following three sessions the students will:

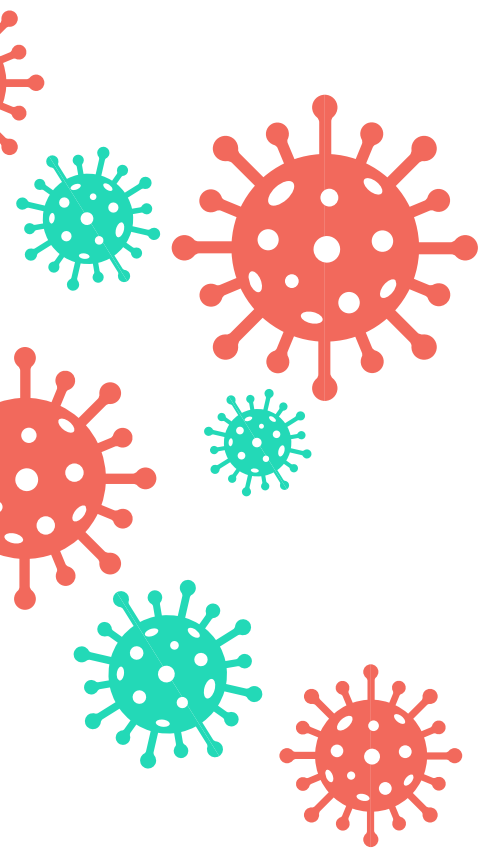
- reflect on how life has changed for us all since the start of Covid-19;
- express and share their feelings/reactions to this crisis;
- identify and share coping strategies and ways of helping others;
- in terms of our faith, analyse what life lessons we can take from the whole pandemic experience.

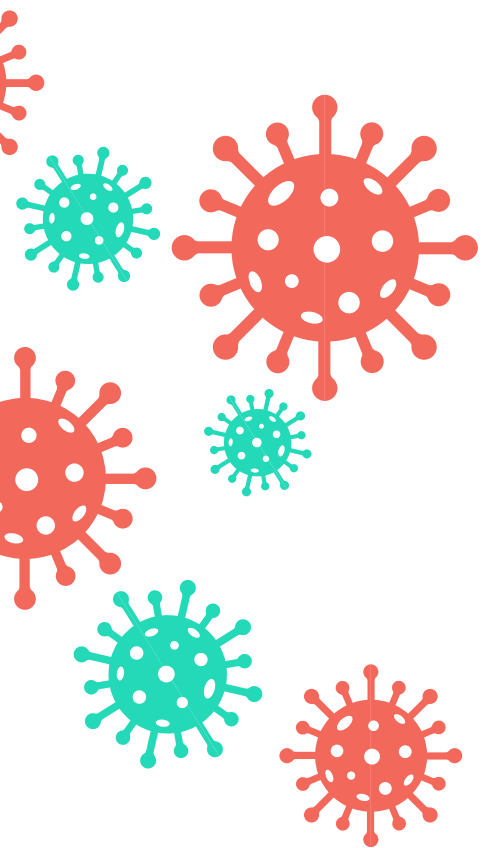


Session 1: How Our Lives Have Changed

Introduction before the video

- To begin the session and by way of introduction to the video featuring images of how our world has changed since the beginning of the Covid-19 virus, you might like to use these or similar words:
 - ▶ Since the springtime of this year, people all across the world have been dealing with the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus.
 - ▶ It has affected almost every country in the world and has brought with it a huge amount of sadness, disruption and anxiety.
 - ▶ For some families, it has led to heartbreak through the loss of one or more beloved family members. And this experience has been made even more painful by the fact of not being able to have normal funerals, or wakes, which provide the bereaved with the support and friendship they need to carry them through such difficult times.

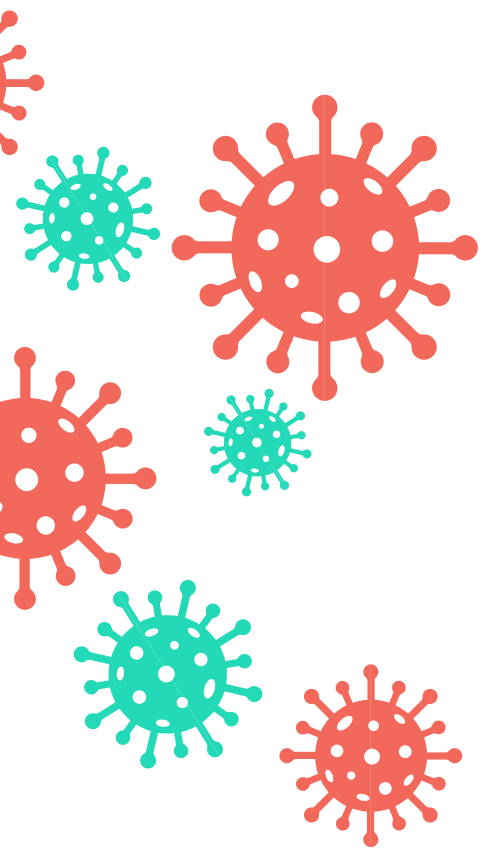


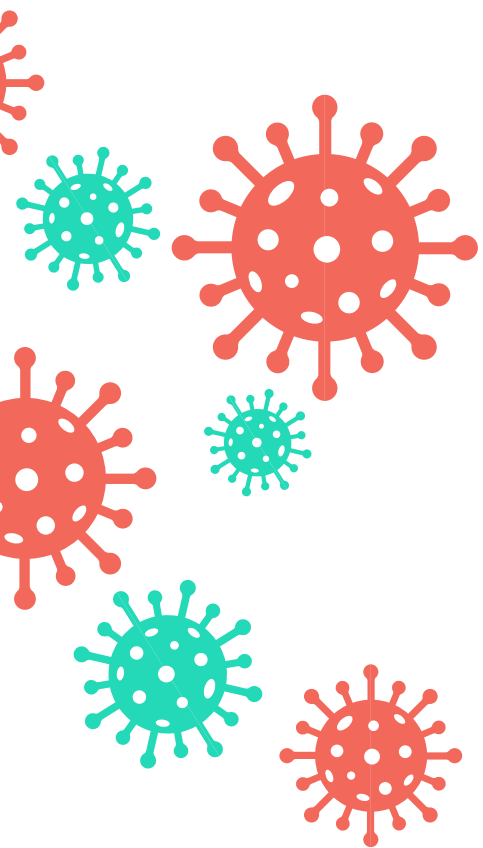


- ▶ In almost all countries, the virus has led to a period of lockdown, where normal everyday activities like school and work have been halted or transferred online.
- ▶ Even though strict lockdowns have ended in most places, there still remain restrictions to our everyday lives. We are living in a very different world.
- ▶ The following short video, called 'Coronavirus – A Global Pandemic', features some of the images that have become commonplace in Ireland since the outbreak of the virus.

Video and Group Discussion

- Play the video 'Coronavirus – A Global Pandemic' for the students.
- After they have watched the video, organise the class into smaller groups.
- Invite the students to discuss the following questions with the other members of their group.
- Afterwards, invite and discuss the feedback from the groups.





Discussion Questions

What are the ways in which life has changed since the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus?

Who or what have you missed most over the past months?

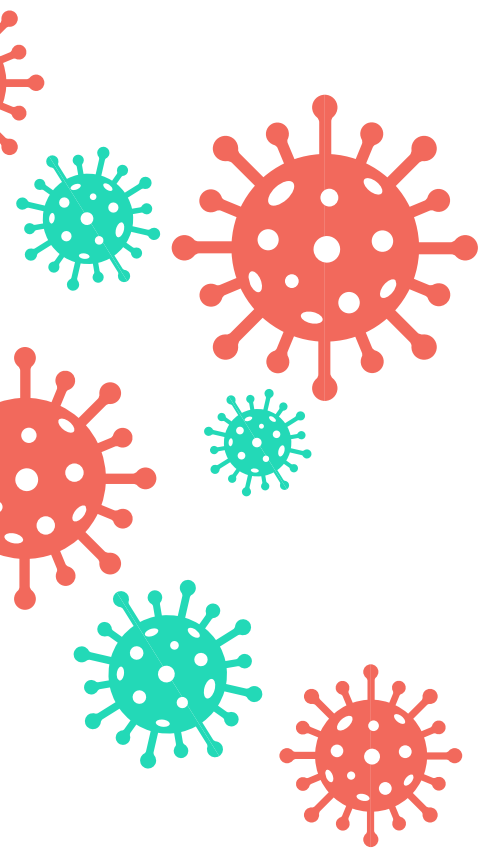
What are you most looking forward to doing again when the restrictions are finally lifted?

Has anything good come out of the pandemic in your opinion?

Exploring people's experiences of the pandemic

Teacher note: *In this part of the session the students will explore some other people's experiences of the pandemic. This will be done using 'character cards', each of which describes a typical experience arising from the pandemic. These cards may be copied and cut out from Template no. 1.*

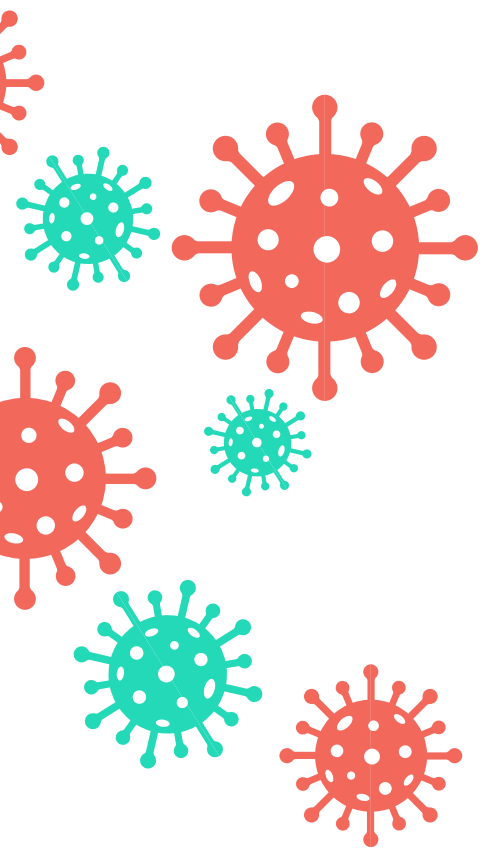
- Have the students work once again within the same small groups.
- Give each student a character card and ask them to read out, in turn, to the other members of their group, what their 'character' says.
- Then ask the students to discuss whether they identify with any of the characters and, if so, in what way. Also, if they know someone whose experience was similar to that of any of the characters, they could share those stories.



Exploring students' own feelings

Teacher note: You will now help the students to identify and explore their own feelings in regard to the pandemic. Please be mindful that some of the students may become upset or need support during this session or afterwards. In particular, consider students who have been bereaved or are otherwise vulnerable. Once again, there is a template provided of the 'Emotion cards' needed for this activity, which may be photocopied and cut out.

- Make several copies of **Template no. 2** and cut out the individual cards.
- Spread the cards out on a table and invite the students to pick a card that represents a feeling or emotion that they have had as a result of the pandemic.
- Invite volunteers to explain to the class why they picked a particular emotion and to describe how it has affected them.



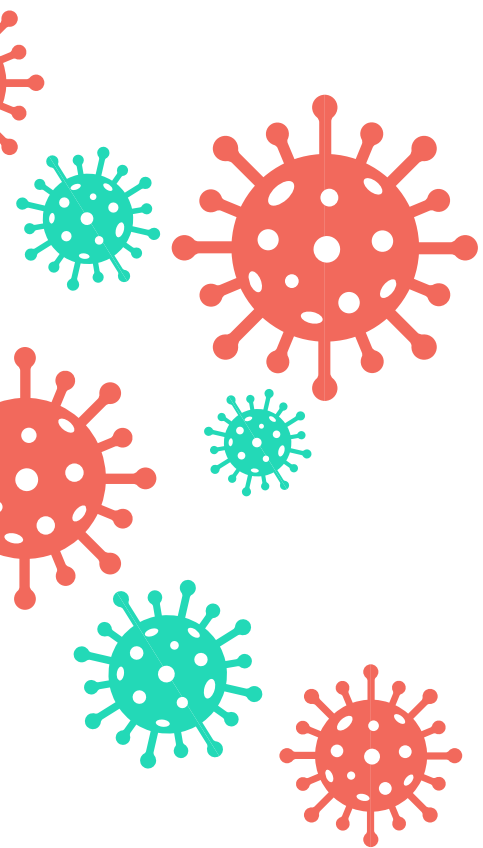
A Time to Pray ...

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

As a group, we have expressed a vast range of emotions that we have experienced over the past months since the start of the pandemic. It is good to recognise how we have been feeling and to understand that we are not alone in feeling this way. These have been difficult times for everyone and it's important to talk about our feelings and not bottle them up or dismiss them. We can support each other in moving forward with our lives. We will bring all of our feelings and struggles before God now and ask for God's help and comfort. You may close your eyes during this prayer.

Teacher note: *You may wish to read this prayer aloud, or nominate a student to do so, while the remaining students bow their heads in silence and reflect.*





Teacher/Leader

Dear God,

in this time of anxiety and fear, we turn to you.

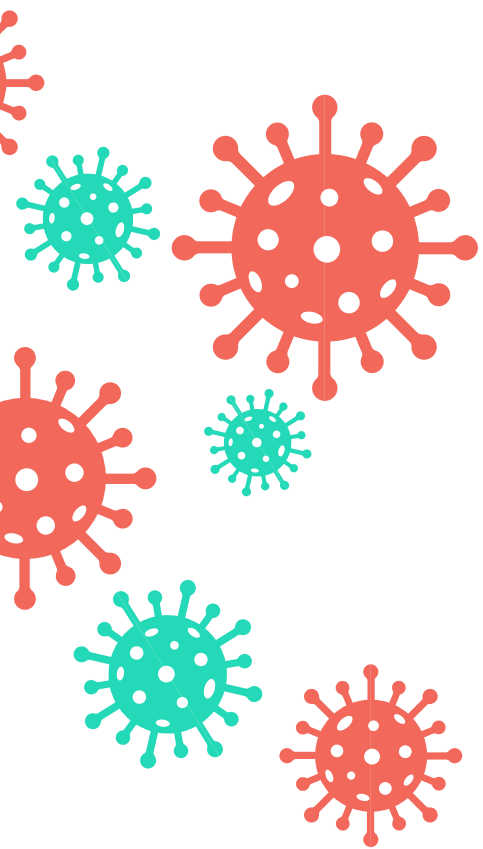
We lay all of our fears and troubles before you and ask for your support and strength.

We recall the words of Jesus to his disciples: 'Remember, I will be with you always, to the end of the age' and we rejoice in his constant presence.

We pray for all those who are sick and suffering and for all those who have lost loved ones during this global pandemic. Grant them comfort and peace.

We remember all the frontline workers who are caring for the sick or who are keeping essential services running. Reward them for their compassion and courage.

We remember the people in homes all over the country who are caring for others and keeping them safe. Reward them for their loving care.



We pray, too, for the people who have to make important decisions about the management of our country during this time of crisis, that you may grant them the wisdom to make the right choices in order to keep us safe and to bring the virus under control.

We ask for your guidance as we play our own part in keeping ourselves and others safe. May we bring light and joy to all. Lastly, we ask for your blessing and protection on each person here, and on the entire human family.

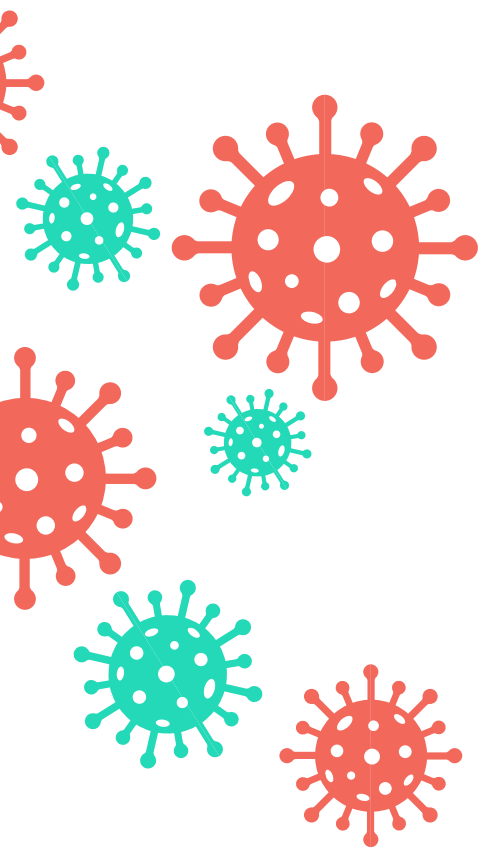
We ask all this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Session 2: Coping Strategies

Before reflecting on the Gospel story of Jesus calming a storm

- Recap on Session 1 and on the wide range of feelings/emotions felt by people/the students since the beginning of the current crisis.
- Reiterate the importance of recognising our feelings and that we are not alone, and recognising God's presence in this situation and asking for God's help.
- Tell the students that on Good Friday this year, Pope Francis gave his extraordinary blessing on the city of Rome and on the world from an empty St Peter's Square. He used the story of Jesus calming a storm and saving his disciples (Mark 4:35-41) to help people to reflect on the destructive storm that has affected all of our lives since the start of the pandemic.
- You might like to show the students the image of Pope Francis giving his blessing on Good Friday on this [link](#).



A reflection: Jesus Calms a Storm

Sign of the Cross

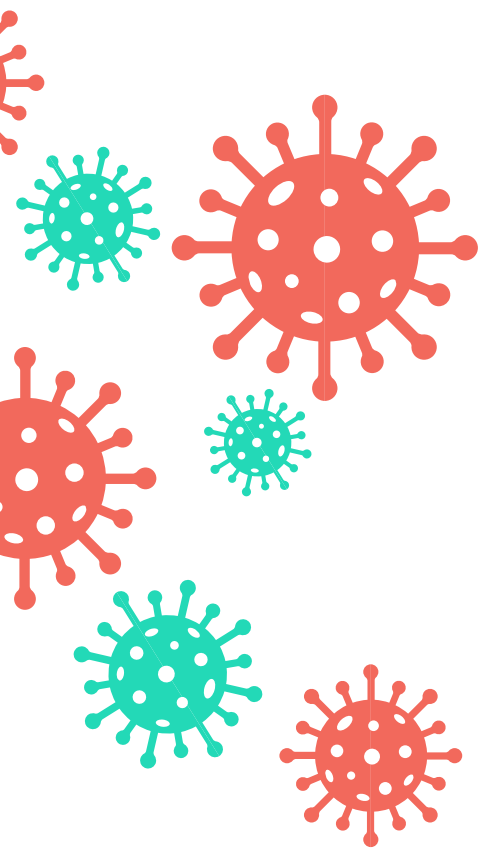
Teacher

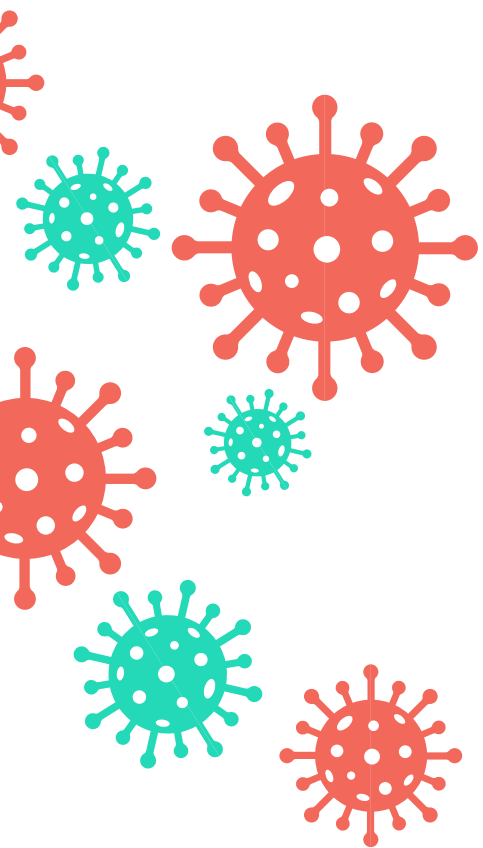
In his Good Friday address, Pope Francis used the story of Jesus calming a storm and saving his disciples to help people to reflect on the destructive storm that has affected all of our lives since the start of the pandemic. We will listen to that story now and then reflect on its message.

Reader

A reading from the Gospel of Mark (Mark 4:35-41).

On the evening of that same day Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So they left the crowd; the disciples got into the boat in which Jesus was already sitting, and they took him with them. Other boats were there too. Suddenly a strong wind blew up, and the waves began to spill over into the





boat, so that it was about to fill with water. Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples woke him up and said, ‘Teacher, don’t you care that we are about to die?’

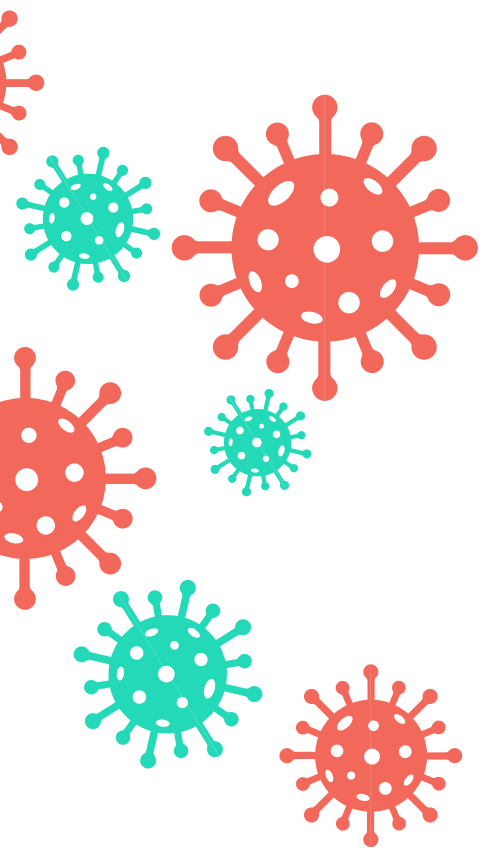
Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, ‘Be quiet!’ and he said to the waves, ‘Be still!’ The wind died down, and there was a great calm. Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?’

But they were terribly afraid and began to say to one another, ‘Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’

Teacher

Close your eyes and become quiet and still.

Imagine that you are with the disciples and Jesus on the boat. The water is calm and the evening is warm and bright. *(Pause)*



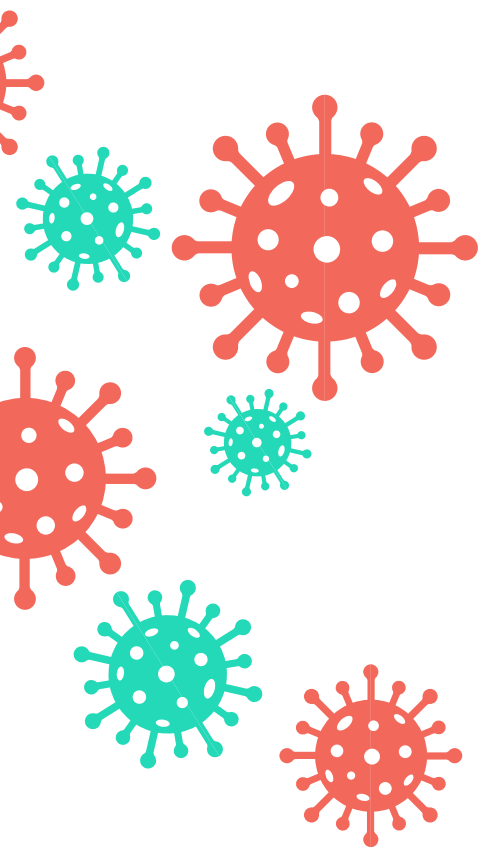
Then suddenly things change ... the sky darkens and the wind builds up ... and the boat begins to fill with water ... *(Pause)*

Jesus is asleep in the back of the boat, seemingly oblivious to the danger. How are you feeling at that moment? Are you scared, or do you trust that you are safe with Jesus? *(Pause)*

Some of the disciples begin to panic, and one of them wakes Jesus and asks him, 'Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die? *(Pause)*

What do you think when you hear Jesus commanding the wind and the waves to stop ... and then everything becomes calm again? *(Pause)*

What do you think about the question Jesus asks: 'Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?'



Allow your imagination to transport you to the stormy times that we have all been experiencing over the past months ... when we may have felt overwhelmed by fear and anxiety about the pandemic. *(Pause)*

Imagine Jesus asking you now, 'Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?'

Feel the fear and panic leave you as you rest in the knowledge that Jesus is always there for you ... that there is no need to be afraid. *(Pause)*

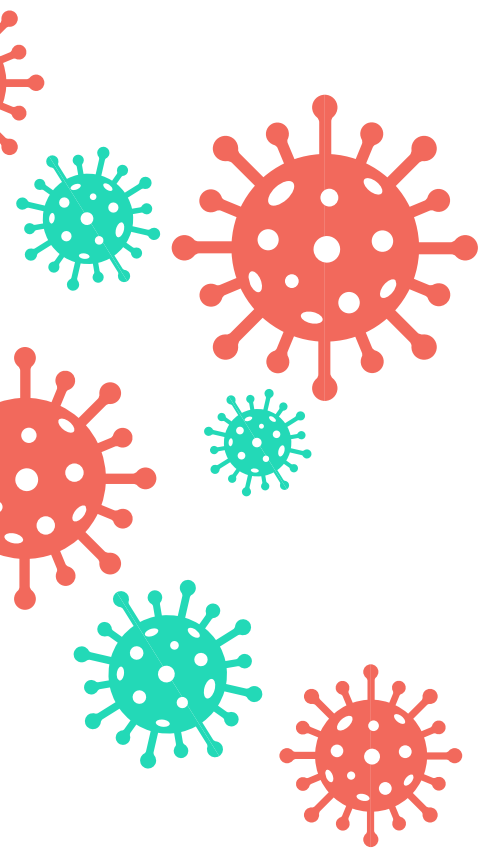
When you are ready, open your eyes.

Sign of the Cross

Group Work: Coping Strategies

Teacher Note: *The students will now discuss in groups the impact of the global pandemic on their own lives and the strategies they have been using to cope. You will need one copy of Template no. 3 for each group.*

- Invite the students to form into small groups.
- Ask them to discuss the two questions on the next page with the members of their group.
- To help with the second question, give each group a copy of **Template no. 3**, which lists some coping strategies the young people may have used. Ask them to tick off any of the items that apply to the members of their group, and to share some details of these coping strategies with the other members of their group. This is not an exhaustive list, and they may have additional items of their own that they can add onto it.





Discussion questions

What have you found most difficult during the pandemic?

What has helped you to cope?

- Invite and discuss the feedback from the groups.
- Finally, remind the students that if they are feeling overwhelmed, it is important to ask for help. Apart from their families and friends, there are many organisations that offer help to children and young people, such as the following, all of whose contact details are available online:
 - ▶ Childline
 - ▶ NSPCC
 - ▶ Samaritans
 - ▶ Barnardo's
 - ▶ Aware NI (Mental health services)
 - ▶ Cruse Bereavement Care
 - ▶ Counselling services: AA, GA, Drug addiction helplines

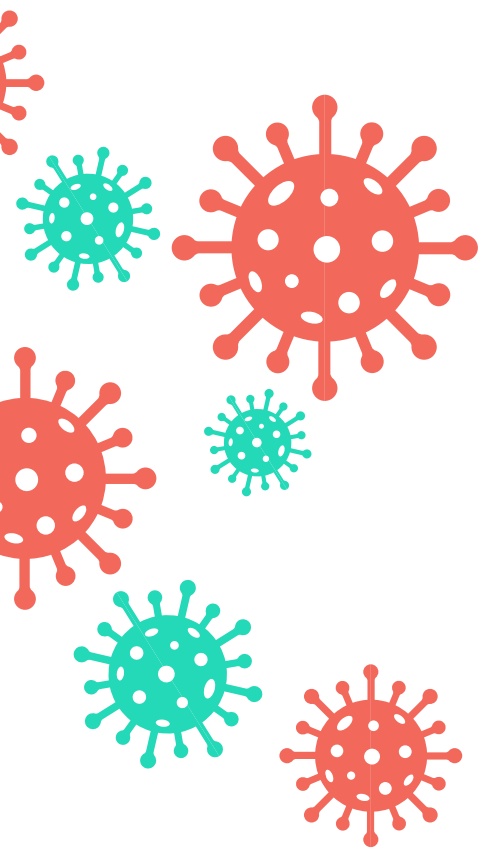
Session 3: What Life Lessons Can We Take from the Global Pandemic?

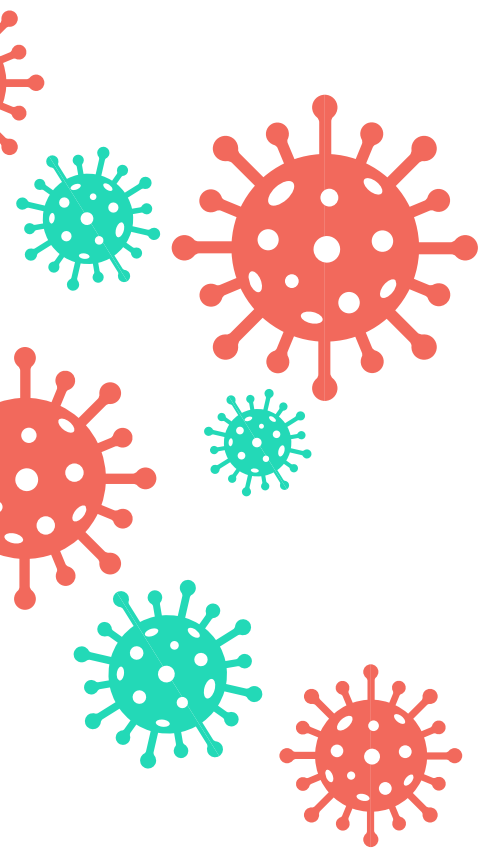
Group Work: Life Lessons from Covid-19

- Before distributing Template no. 4, introduce the topic of this session using these or similar words:

In this final session we will consider and talk about lessons we might learn for our lives from the whole experience of coping with the pandemic. We have all had different experiences over the past months – some good experiences and some very difficult ones. In this session we will share some of the things we have learned from these experiences in order to help one another as we move forward in our changed world.

- Then invite the students to form into small groups.

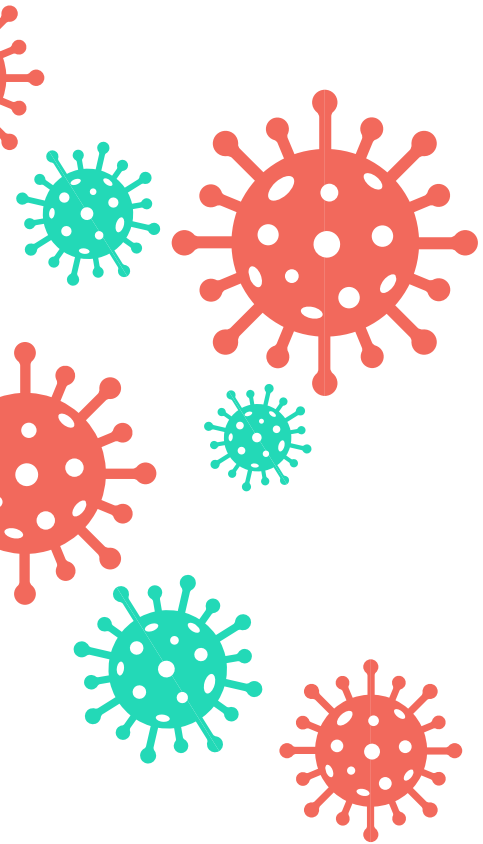




- Give each group a copy of **Template no. 4**, on which there are five statements from people about lessons they have learned or things they have observed arising from the pandemic.
- Invite the students to read and chat about the statements with the other members of their group. For example, which statements do they agree or disagree with most, and why? Have they personal experiences or examples that they could share about any of the topics covered in these statements?
- Invite volunteers to share their responses and examples with the class.
- Finally, write the heading ‘Life Lessons from the Pandemic’ on the board and conduct a brainstorm around ‘things we have learned from the pandemic about what is really important in life’. Jot down the students’ responses.

Writing Task

- Invite the students to write about what the experience of the pandemic has taught them about the things in life that are important, and the things that are not important.



A Time to Pray

Sign of the Cross

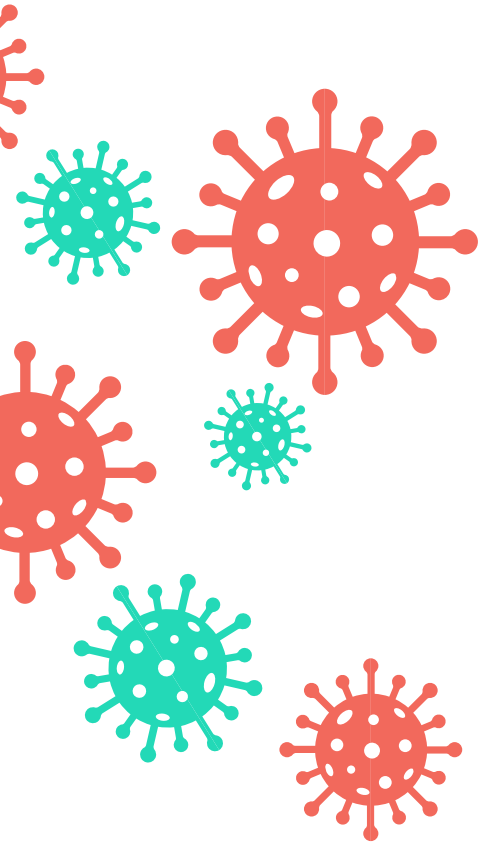
Teacher

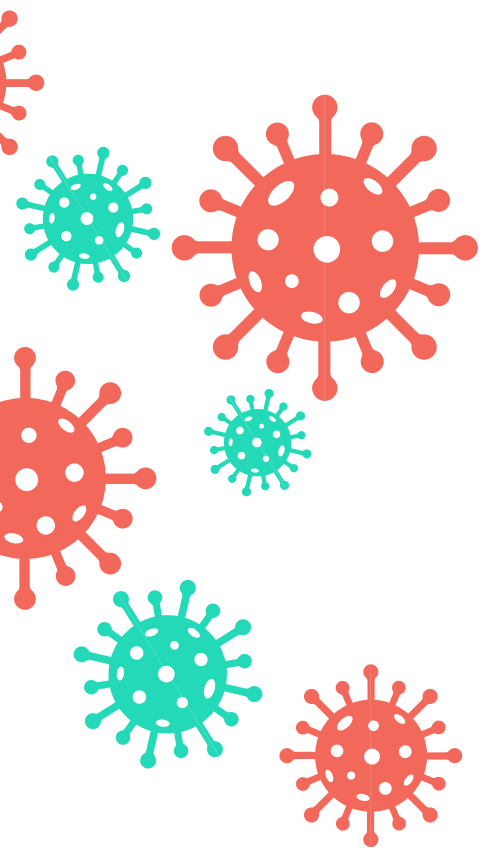
We will conclude our reflections on our Covid-19 experiences by listening to some excerpts from a prayer that Pope Francis prayed recently to the Virgin Mary, asking for her support, comfort and protection in these difficult times. You may close your eyes as I read this prayer.

Pope Francis' prayer:

In the present tragic situation,
when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety,
we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother,
and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us
amid this coronavirus pandemic.





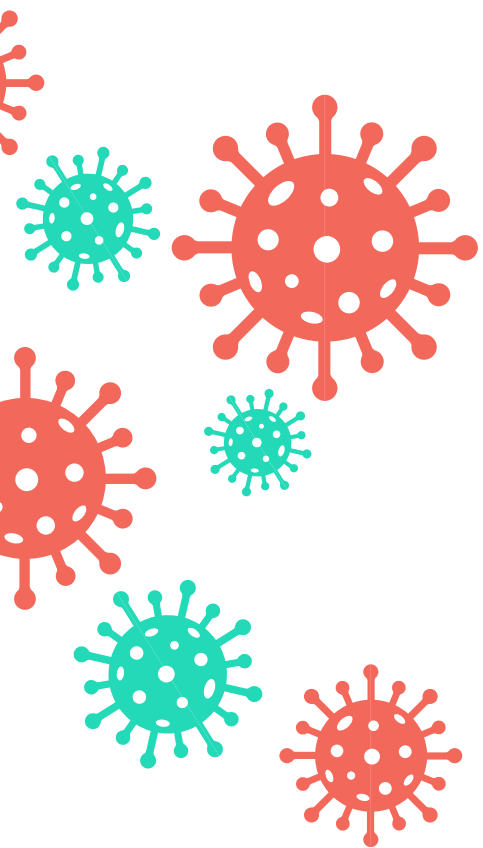
Comfort those who are distraught and who mourn their loved ones who have died, ...

Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them.

Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies,
that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew.

Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.



Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others.

Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Beloved Mother, help us realise that we are all members of one great family and to recognise the bond that unites us ...
Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.
Amen.

Sign of the Cross