Praying Lent This Year

Lent offers us all a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we’ve done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need.

A Year of Mercy, A Lent of Healing

God our hearts are heavy, With sins untold and cares unshared. Our lives are burdened, With doubts unvoiced and fears unmentioned. God who is greater than our hearts, Deeper than our minds, Always alive, always longing for our response, May we stretch out our hands and surrender, Walking with you through the wilderness, To find freedom in following Christ alone. May we willingly walk with Jesus, The One who carries our burdens to the cross Where fear is transformed into love, And loneliness into community with you Amen (c) Christine Sine http://gospaces.wordpress.com
Dear Parents and Friends of St Francis,

In this weeks newsletter I have included information regarding helping and encouraging your child to read. As parents we often worry about when should my child start reading and what can I do to help my child read?

Generally children start reading in their first grade or foundation year. During that school year, watch for these signs of reading difficulty: confusing letters, connecting the wrong sounds with letters, skipping words, not remembering words, or frequently guessing at unknown words, rather than sounding them out.

Most children will learn to read between kindergarten and grade 2, but their ability will be enhanced when someone; a teacher, parent, grandparent, or older friend teaches them how to do it.

The majority of children will pass through several important stages on their way to becoming good readers — that is, able to gain meaning and understanding from the printed page.

Please take the time to read the attached information and tips for reading. If you have any concerns for your child’s reading development please discuss these issues with your child’s teacher.

Peter McCallum Fundraising Event
Well done to everyone who participated in last Friday’s fundraising event at the Nathalia tennis courts. With over $14000 raised there is little doubt Nathalia is generous of heart and always helpful to those in need. This was a great event and we continue to support and pray for Ella and her family.

School Voucher Winners
Thank you to all families who bought tickets for our school voucher competition. Congratulations to...
1st Prize $500 ~ Lachlan Russell (Rachel Russell)
2nd Prize $200 ~ Bryce Young (Annecherie Young)
3rd Prize $100 ~ Darcy Young (Annecherie Young)

I’m sure this money will be greatly appreciated and used to alleviate some associated educational costs.

Easter Egg Raffle & Donations~
Donations of Easter Eggs for our Easter Egg raffle are still gratefully accepted. Thank you to everyone who has donated so far.

Thank you to Liz Ryan and Bernadette Kelly for volunteering to package up all the donated eggs. They will be doing this on Tuesday 22 March 2016. Easter Eggs can be donated up until that morning.

We need a volunteer to sell raffle tickets out the front of Brereton’s Bakery on Holy Thursday from 12 noon to 12.45 p.m.

We have enough volunteers for selling tickets on Good Friday.

Volunteers are needed on Easter Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. to sell tickets at the Easter Bash, which is being held on the creek front in Weir Street this year.
If you are able to help please contact the school or Kristy Brereton on 0438 088 860.

This is a major fundraiser and in the past has raised significant funds for our school.

Assembly change of time:
Assemblies will be at 2:15pm Monday afternoons.
Due to this weekend being a long weekend there will be no assembly next week. Our next assembly will be Monday, 21 March 2016.

School AGM and Board Meeting ~ Tuesday 15th March
Our school AGM and first official Board Meeting for the year will be held next Tuesday 15th March at 7pm. We look forward to formally gathering to outline our strategic directions for the coming year, share our successes and to formally farewell past board members, as well as nominate and welcome newly elected members to the board. All welcome. Supper and drinks will be provided.

St Patrick’s Day ~ 17th March
To be sure, to be sure! To help celebrate St Patrick’s Day all students are encouraged to wear green on March 17th. A gold coin donation will ensure we are continuing to be positive contributors to our commitment to Project Compassion for 2016.

EASTER EGG RAFFLE
TICKETS ON SALE
SCHOOL FRONT OFFICE

$1.00 A TICKET OR 3 FOR $2.00
St Francis Community Group – School Fundraising

All Catholic Schools have an obligation to raise additional funds. The amount we have to raise is directly related to how many students are enrolled at our school. In 2016 we are expected to raise $8,000.00

At school we aim to provide our students with the best educational opportunities we can. Some of these opportunities are valued added programs such as the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG) program which is funded by the school, not an added extra cost to families.

However, without the support through fundraising and people willing to take on coordinators roles for fundraising events, the sustainability of programs such as SAKG could easily be in jeopardy. If you are in a position to be part of a fundraising team or have great ideas for fundraising / social events please contact the school. We would love to hear your fundraising ideas!

Staff PD ~

In the past few weeks a number of staff members and parents have been involved in Professional Development opportunities - Mrs Mestrom, Miss Bonsema and Mrs Miller attended a Deanery P-2 Data evening at Sacred Heart Tatura. Analysing data and responding is an important part of our growth and development as learners. Shared practice helps to embed processes for future progress.

Have a great week.

Chris Summers

SOCIAL SKILLS BLITZ

This week, our Positive Behaviour Blitz is Honesty

Honesty is a trait desired in relationships with family and friends, with workmates and by employees. Honesty inspires trust and encourages openness. Honesty is something to be valued. It demonstrates the value we place on ourselves and our relationship with others.

In Week 6 our Social Skills Blitz was around Cooperation. The following students were nominated by their peers and teachers as displaying positive behaviour last week:

Lauren Cribb, Ella Dealy, Emily Woods, Tayla Connelly, Logan Daniel, Declan Begley, Ryley Barton and Ned Bramwell.

Winner of the care box was Nate Summerville

Congratulations Everyone!

Harmony Day – St Francis PS

We will be celebrating Harmony Day on Monday, 21 March 2016. Tam has been busy seeking speakers from different cultures to come and speak to us. We have representatives from Italy, Sri Lanka, Holland and Poland. We are hoping to have Conga, Ireland and Scotland also in our mix. Students and staff are encouraged to wear international dress on Monday, 21 March 2016. We ask that students bring a gold coin donation as funds will be donated to Caritas. More information to come in next week’s newsletter.
**Walker Learning Updates**

**What is a Focus Child?**

The Walker Learning Approach includes the opportunity for all children to be a focus child once a fortnight. The focus children speak to the class during the ‘tuning in’ phase, informing their teacher and peers of their intentions during investigation time. The teacher works individually with the focus children to scaffold their learning. Focus children then report back to the class during reflection time to share learning and observations.

A great You Tube clip to help explain the Walker Learning Approach: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtNPtfT6Fco](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtNPtfT6Fco)

**Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG)**

We are very grateful to Nathalia’s Bendigo Bank, who provided funding through their Community investment program so we could purchase a pizza oven, a purpose built outdoor kitchen bench as well as materials to make compost bays. These things will enhance our Kitchen Garden program greatly. How lucky we are to belong to such a supportive community.

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**None of us can think we are exempt from concerns for the poor and for social justice.**

*Pope Francis*
HELPING YOUR CHILD LEARN TO READ

How can I help my child learn to read?
Reading books aloud is one of the best ways you can help your child learn to read. This can be fun for you, too. The more excitement you show when you read a book, the more your child will enjoy it. The most important thing to remember is to let your child set her own pace and have fun at whatever she is doing. Do the following when reading to your child:

- Run your finger under the words as you read to show your child that the print carries the story.
- Use funny voices and animal noises. Do not be afraid to ham it up! This will help your child get excited about the story.
- Stop to look at the pictures; ask your child to name things she sees in the pictures. Talk about how the pictures relate to the story.
- Invite your child to join in whenever there is a repeated phrase in the text.
- Show your child how events in the book are similar to events in your child's life.
- If your child asks a question, stop and answer it. The book may help your child express her thoughts and solve her own problems.
- Keep reading to your child even after she learns to read. A child can listen and understand more difficult stories than she can read on her own.

Listening to your child read aloud
Once your child begins to read, have him read out loud. This can help build your child's confidence in his ability to read and help him enjoy learning new skills. Take turns reading with your child to model more advanced reading skills.

If your child asks for help with a word, give it right away so that he does not lose the meaning of the story. Do not force your child to sound out the word. On the other hand, if your child wants to sound out a word, do not stop him.

If your child substitutes one word for another while reading, see if it makes sense. If your child uses the word "dog" instead of "pup," for example, the meaning is the same. Do not stop the reading to correct him. If your child uses a word that makes no sense (such as "road" for "read"), ask him to read the sentence again because you are not sure you understand what has just been read. Recognize your child's energy limits. Stop each session at or before the earliest signs of fatigue or frustration.

Useful Reading Apps:


Most of all, make sure you give your child lots of praise! You are your child's first, and most important, teacher. The praise and support you give your child as he learns to read will help him enjoy reading and learning even more.

**Learning to read in school**

Most children learn to read by 6 or 7 years of age. Some children learn at 4 or 5 years of age. Even if a child has a head start, she may not stay ahead once school starts. The other students most likely will catch up during the second or third grade. Pushing your child to read before she is ready can get in the way of your child's interest in learning. Children who really enjoy learning are more likely to do well in school. This love of learning cannot be forced.

As your child begins primary school, she will begin her formal reading education. There are many ways to teach children to read. One way emphasizes word recognition and teaches children to understand a whole word's meaning by how it is used. Learning which sounds the letters represent—phonics—is another way children learn to read. Phonics is used to help "decode" or sound out words. Focusing on the connections between the spoken and written word is another technique. Most teachers use a combination of methods to teach children how to read.

Reading is an important skill for children to learn. Most children learn to read without any major problems. Pushing a child to learn before she is ready can make learning to read frustrating. But reading together and playing games with books make reading fun. Parents need to be involved in their child's learning. Encouraging a child's love of learning will go a long way to ensuring success in school.

**Reading tips**
The following are a few tips to keep in mind as your child learns to read:

- Set aside time every day to read together. Many children like to have stories read to them at bedtime. This is a great way to wind down after a busy day and get ready for sleep.
- Leave books in your child's room for her to enjoy on her own. Make sure her room is reading-friendly with a comfortable bed or chair, bookshelf, and reading lamp.
- Read books that your child enjoys. After a while, your child may learn the words to her favorite book. When this happens, let your child complete the sentences or take turns reciting the words.
- Do not drill your child on letters, numbers, colors, shapes, or words. Instead, make a game out of it and find ways to encourage your child's curiosity and interests.
COMMUNITY NEWS

MASS ART CLASS
SHEPPARTON FESTIVAL

Back for its second year and aiming to nudge the world record attempt.

Held in the Queens Gardens, this is a fun and easy painting class open to all ages and experience levels. All art materials are supplied at this FREE event, where participants can create their own masterpiece. All you need to bring is a smock for the kids!

Come along and join our attempt at holding Australia’s Biggest Art Class

**Dates:** Sunday 13 March
**Time:** 10am – 12 noon
**Cost:** FREE EVENT
**Venue:** Queens Gardens, 35 Nixon St Shepparton
Pre-register (to avoid queues) at [https://massartclass.eventbrite.com.au/](https://massartclass.eventbrite.com.au/)

Proudly supported by the Fund for Rural and Regional Renewal.
Have your say

Autism Spectrum Disorder Information Forum

The Parliament of Victoria’s Family and Community Development Committee is holding an Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We are encouraging people with Autism, their families, carers and service providers to make a submission to the Inquiry.

**WHEN:**
Wednesday March 16
5:30pm to 7pm

**WHERE:**
Senior Citizens Centre
90 Welsford Street
Shepparton

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**
Parents, family members, care staff, educators, clinicians — anyone wanting to understand more about Autism Spectrum Disorder and how to support children and adults with an ASD.

**Guest Speakers**

Dr Peter Eastaugh
Paediatrician

Braedan Hogan
Amaze

**Convenor:** Suzanna Sheed

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a lifelong developmental disability characterised by marked difficulties in social interaction, impaired communication, restricted and repetitive interests and behaviours, and sensory sensitivities. ASD includes autistic disorder (or "classic" autism); Asperger's disorder; and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), also known as atypical autism.

**RSVP:** Monday March 14
Leanne.Raditas@parliament.vic.gov.au
or 03 5831 6944
Invites your child to attend

A NETBALL CLINIC HOSTED BY
TRACEY BRERETON & JACINTA TODD
FRIDAY MARCH 18TH 2016

Nathalia Recreation Reserve
Netball Courts
Cost: $20.00 per Child (payment made on day)

Session One:
Age Group – 7 to 11 year Olds
4.00pm Registration
4.30pm – 5.45pm Clinic Time

Session Two:
Age Group – 12 to 17 years old
5.30pm Registration
6.00pm – 7.15pm Clinic Time

Netball Clinic will be conducted by:
Tracey Brereton-Shepparton Bears Netball Club A Grade Coach
Former Melbourne Phoenix and Melbourne Kestrels netballer, Victorian State team representative, involved as Coach with Victorian State teams, holds Advanced Coaching Certificate.

Jacinta Todd –Shepparton Bears Netball Club A Grade Player
Victorian State team Representative, Australia Mixed Netball Team Representative, Victorian Mixed Netball Team Representative, State Under Age Coach.

Get in quickly to reserve your spot

NETBALL CLINIC HOSTED BY TRACEY BRERETON & JACINTA TODD
By Sunday 12 March 2016
Contact: Hayley Summerville 0459900090 or Kristy Brereton 0438088860