

15 DECEMBER, 2021

St Francis Newsletter

'Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance'
- St Francis of Assisi

Dear Families,

The 2021 school year has again presented great challenges for our school community. Fortunately, St Francis is blessed with many resilient and determined individuals working together to ensure our students are well supported throughout the year and remain engaged in their learning. I feel very fortunate to have led this wonderful and vibrant school community and thank families for your support and making me feel welcome.

I truly believe we have a wonderful staff who collaborate closely to ensure a quality, engaging education for our students, as well as instilling a sense of purpose and community mindedness. Our staff who have had to adjust to continual lockdowns, remote learning and constant change this year. I thank the teachers, LSO's Admin staff, maintenance staff and Fr Michael Grace for the many and varied contributions they have made to St Francis. This year I have worked closely with a passionate leadership team who are committed to school improvement and continual student success.

It's important that I recognise and thank our wonderful families who have yet again had to manage life, family and work in a COVID climate. I appreciate the challenges this has presented many families. Even though we were once again in and out of lockdown, we were fortunate to go ahead with many student events throughout the year; 3/4 Camp, Swimming & Athletics Carnival, excursions, the 'Home Grown Exhibition' and Sacraments, were just a few opportunities we managed.

Finally, I acknowledge our amazing students. Much can be learnt from children as they adapt and change when the need arises. I am, as are the staff of St Francis, incredibly proud of the students' resilience, their sense of adventure and their ability to focus on the positives.

In conclusion, on behalf of the staff of St Francis, I wish all families a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year!

Building Works

We have the Builders onsite and currently undertaking the demolition works at the moment. Protective fencing is expected to be installed soon and all staff, students and families will enter via the black gates next to the Assisi Administration Building. The works are expected to be completed by the end of Term 2, 2022.

Calendar

TERM 4, 2021

Wed 15th Dec - Student's Last Day

TERM 1, 2022

Wed 26th Jan - Australia Day

Fri 28th Jan - Staff Return to school

Mon 31st Jan - Student's First Day

Mon 31st and Tue 1 Feb

• Foundation students 12pm finish

Wed 2nd Feb - Foundation assessment day

Thur 3rd Feb - Foundation first full day

ADVENT



St Francis, Nathalia is a child safe school. We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.



Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and travelled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly, "You're so blessed among women, and the babe in your womb, also blessed ..." (Luke 1: 39 – 42)

Scripture tells us little of Mary's journey to her cousin Elizabeth home. We are given only vague details telling us that it is somewhere in the hill country and that Mary hurries there because of Elizabeth's pregnancy. It probably was a gruelling trip for her to make. But Mary does it willingly to be where she is needed. And when her own pregnancy nears completion, she will take another difficult journey, this time to Bethlehem to fulfill the words of the prophets.

Mary, this "Christ-bearer," is bringing to Elizabeth the presence of the messiah for the first time. And it has a dramatic effect on her and on the baby John in her womb. Neither would ever be the same again.

With Christmas only days away, we are challenged to bring that very same presence to all whom we will touch this Christmas holiday season. Mary has become the embodiment of what we are called to be and do as Christians in our service to one another.

Merry Christmas to our St Francis Community

Parenting Ideas

We've all had those days. You know the ones... the days where your child has refused to get ready for school, thrown food at their brother and is in a right mood. Your teenager slams the door when you ask them to clean up their bedroom. You ask and ask again. And again. And the kids just won't listen. That, or if they listen, they won't do as they're told!

When days like this happen – and they do – you can get so angry that you lash out only to regret your actions later on. With smacking now widely regarded as less acceptable, the lashing out often takes the form of yelling. It's probably fair to say that yelling is the new smacking.

See Michael Grose's article, **'Turn your anger around without yelling'** for more.



We take the time to congratulate our School Captains for 2022, Noah, Sienna, Hamish and Jaxon! We are confident our captains will fulfil their roles through serving and leading in the St Francis community and beyond.



Also, Congratulations to our House Captains Lily, Dylan and Kurtis! We know you will all be inclusive and leading examples in our house groups throughout the year! Congratulations!



We celebrate our FMDM award winners, Jordyn and Javier, who were voted by teaching staff for their attributes and gifts in helping make our school a welcoming community through their positive interactions and their safe, responsible and caring behaviour.



We also congratulate our CWA award winner, Lachlan, for his leadership in Sustainability and Social Justice, always advocating for fairness and equity whilst leading by example.



What a diverse, dynamic and supportive group of students who have led the school through a challenging year of remote learning with grace and compassion! We are so proud of all our Grade 6 students and wish the greatest success to them as they head to secondary school!



FUN IN FOUNDATION

This term we happily shared our classroom with our new Foundation students for their transition visits.

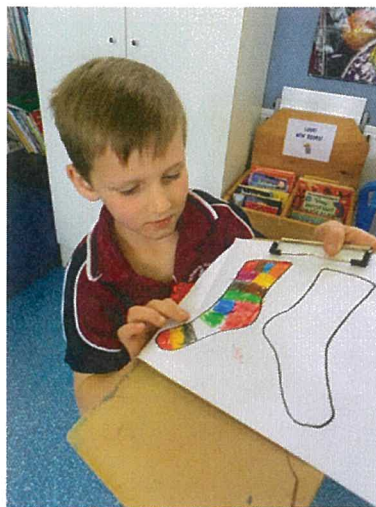
Each Wednesday, we ventured to the library for fun and the best kind of learning possible... HANDS ON LEARNING.

*The children used our Bee-Bots to learn first-hand about programming. They explored the concept of sequencing steps and directional language.

*We practiced our addition facts when we played one of our favourite maths games "Get out of my House" and we decorated socks so we could count by twos.

*We built "popcorn words" made our very own clock and a fraction Christmas tree!

**"Tell me
and I forget.
Teach me
and I remember.
Involve me
and I learn."**
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



Each day during Investigations we have a Reporter and Photographer. They always have a task that is linked to our learning goals. This week they had to show o'clock and half past times. Our Reporter was collecting Christmas data that we could turn into a graph.

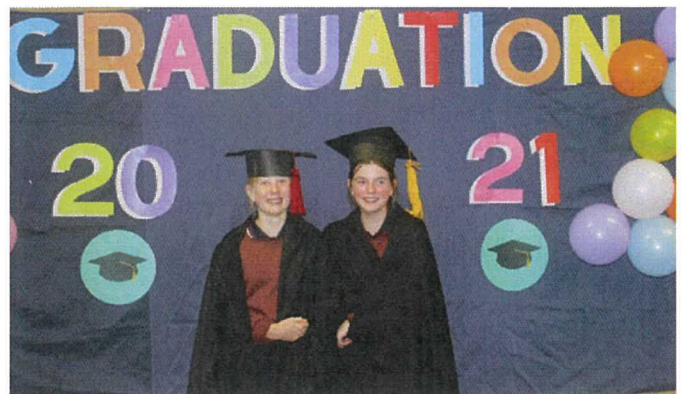
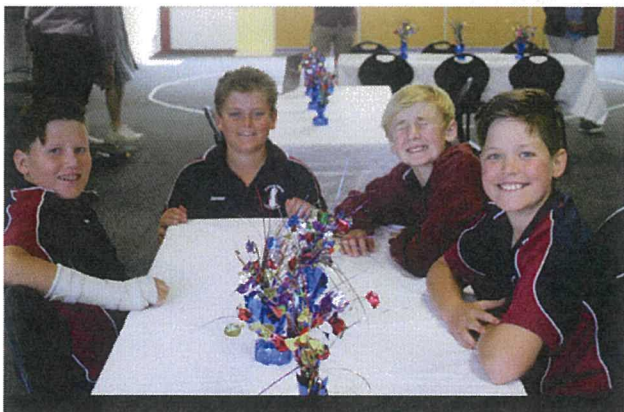
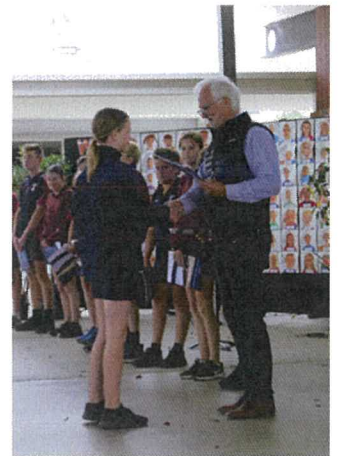


Lots of people ask about Investigations and how we build learning into the children's play.

This design made independently during investigations provided so many Maths concepts to explore. Shape and size, area and perimeter, addition and subtraction. Opportunities to count and order numerals according to quantities. Mapping, collecting data and I'm sure there's more.

Because the children have had total ownership of it, the learning is so meaningful and relevant to them. It also serves as inspiration for their peers. After we celebrate the learning concepts, ALL of the children begin to look for connections in their play. It becomes contagious. It's just wonderful to witness children that are excited about learning and showing that they can make literacy and numeracy connections through their play.

GRADE 6 GRADUATION



INSIGHTS

Turn your anger around without yelling



We've all had those days. You know the ones... the days where your child has refused to get ready for school, thrown food at their brother and is in a right mood. Your teenager slams the door when you ask them to clean up their bedroom. You ask and ask again. And again. And the kids just won't listen. That, or if they listen, they won't do as they're told!

When days like this happen – and they do – you can get so angry that you lash out only to regret your actions later on. With smacking now widely regarded as less acceptable, the lashing out often takes the form of yelling. It's probably fair to say that yelling is the new smacking.

Yelling is harmful

Researchers believe that yelling at kids can be just as bad as smacking. Yelling has also been linked to lower self-esteem in children and young people. Children who are raised in a home where yelling is common have a higher risk of developing psychological issues. When parents use yelling as a discipline measure, kids have an increased risk of developing behavioural problems, anxiety, stress and depression.

Understand, don't reprimand

When your kids are really getting under your skin, instead of getting furious, be curious. You need to connect before you correct. Children don't wake up in the morning and think, 'How can I make life horrible for my parents?' They might be having a hard time. Work out what needs aren't being met and help meet them.

Use humour

Humour is one of the best ways to take away anger and reduce stress. A good friend of mine was teaching his daughter to drive. The whole family was in the car while the daughter was driving when she missed a corner and ended up crashing into a petrol station sign. My friend looked at his daughter and at his family and said, "Well, while we're here, does anyone need to use the bathroom?" By using humour, my friend released the tension in the situation. Then they could calmly talk about what had happened and how to resolve it. What a wonderful way to turn away from anger!

Stay calm and kind

Self-talk is now recognised as a great way to regulate your emotions and change your behaviour. When you're starting to get upset there's a mantra that you can use: 'I'm going to be calm and kind.' When you repeat this phrase, it reminds you of what you want, and helps you to better regulate your own emotions. Calmness is something of a superpower that can have have such a positive impact on those around you.

parenting*ideas

Create psychological distance

All parents seem to have just a bit more patience with someone else's child or young person. Pretend that you're 'a favourite aunt who rarely ever gets cranky at the kids. She always finds a way to be kind, even with the challenging child or teenager. If that doesn't work for you, pretend your child is a neighbour's kid!

In closing

Yelling turns children and young people away. Speak softly. Speaking softly forces them to listen closely, and it make everyone feel better.

Most parents hate yelling (as do their kids). When you are calm and kind, and look to understand, not reprimand, you will be able to keep anger and yelling out of your home. That's better for your kids and for you.



Dr Justin Coulson

Dr Justin Coulson helps families be happier. His Goalcast and TEDx positive parenting videos have been viewed by more than 100 million people. He is the author of 6 books about creating flourishing families and raising resilient children. Justin and his wife, Kylie, are the parents of 6 daughters. Find the Dr Justin Coulson's Happy Families podcast on Apple Podcasts and Spotify. For further details visit www.happyfamilies.com.au