

ISSUE 1, TERM 1, 2014

Lent: a time to 'break free!'



I can't believe it is Week 4 and we have had so many opportunities to come together as a community. Something I value about working in a Catholic school is the rich sense of tradition and ritual we practise with the children in our care. The practice of prayer in both formal and personal settings is dynamic for children and their peers act as powerful mentors. Gospel values are integrated into our curriculum and the general operation of our school. We focus on the greatest message Jesus left for us that was "to love one another as I have loved you." As a part of the human family we can think of this message as a cue to our responsibility for those who have little. During Lent our students are asked to think about those children who don't enjoy the same privileges they do. Caritas is the International Charity we support and their Project Compassion mission is their focus during Lent. The theme of Project Compassion in 2014 is 'Have Life and Have it to the Full'. This theme is inspired by the Gospel of John 10:10 "I have come so they may live life to the full." It is consistent with the Millennium Development Goals, eight life-changing goals that look to halve world poverty by 2015. It is important that children can see that they are capable of making change, in their own lives and the lives of others by initiating small acts of kindness and mercy.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and the liturgical colour for Lent is purple, it reminds us to contemplate and prepare for Easter. We are encouraged to abstain or act with restraint, to pray deeply and more often and to give alms. During Lent 'giving' or donating is an active way faith can be present in our lives. Project Compassion boxes are present in classrooms and each family has a small box to take home. Enjoy the season of Lent as an opportunity to break free from 'old habits' and think about the ways we can be better people, the people God wants us to be.

Our students in the sacramental program begin to prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation (Registration for this Sacrament is March 15/16). We ask you to pray for them during this time of prayer and preparation.

Your active participation in prayer is a great model for your children, you are first and foremost the teachers of faith to your children. I hope that you can join us in prayer during the term and seize the opportunity to discuss faith and prayer with your children.

Peace

Kerry Power, REC



Religious Education
Newsletter

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Each year the Catholic Education Office requires each school to develop goals that are relevant to it's unique community. The two goals focus on the academic development of the community and the Religious Formation of the community. Our goal for Religious Formation in 2014 is;

'To provide opportunities for staff and students to develop their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of

God and Christian Living'

This Newsletter outlines the Sharing Our Story Units that will be taught in Term 1, the Liturgies and Masses, Sacramental details and other important information relating to Religious Education.

Peace

Kerry Power Religious Education Coordinator

Sharing Our Story

Sharing Our Story is the document used in The Diocese of Parramatta to guide the teaching of Religion in our Catholic schools. The units explore Bible scripture, Jesus' mission, sacraments and Church teaching. Each Stage works with material that is relevant to the needs of its learners, using resources that engage and support understanding and connect students with the core learning of Catholic faith.

Early Stage One first unit *God loves me* recognises the new experiences Kindergarten have in the initial weeks of school. As individuals they are part of a bigger families, their school family and the community of believers who love and are loved by God. Lent is an important season in the Catholic calendar and children experience the sensory rituals present at this time. *From Ashes to Easter* provides activities for children to understand the stories and liturgy practiced at this time. The powerful stories that retell the story of Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection along with whole school liturgies will help enrich their understanding of this important season.

Stage One began the term with *Jesus Our Friend*. This unit invites children to think about the ways they should care and respect others as Jesus teaches in the Gospel. It acknowledges difference and embraces the values of love, trust, honesty and forgiveness. Lent is a time to reflect on our feelings and actions and how we can grow and change for the better. The story of Zacchaeus recounts how the tax collector accepted change through his personal encounter with Jesus. *The Easter Triduum* focuses on the powerful story of The Last Supper. A whole school liturgy in Week 11 will help enrich student understanding of Holy Week and Easter preparation.

Stage Two first looks at *Jesus Sharing His Gifts*. This unit focuses on Jesus as a healer, not just of physical hurts but also pain of the heart. Students highlight their own talents and how they might heal others. The Lenten unit for Year A- *An Invitation to Believe* focuses on Lent being a time to turn back to God in our acceptance of our wrongdoings, asking forgiveness, seeking absolution and receiving penance. *Journeying With Jesus* examines the key events of Holy Week and allows time to meditate on Jesus' suffering and death, turning toward the hope brought about by the Resurrection, celebrated in Term 2.

Stage Three: Stage 3 began the year with *The Parables of Jesus*, a unit that explores who God is and what the Kingdom of God is like. We are called to follow Jesus, just as the disciples did and this unit fits nicely with our introduction to the various roles and responsibilities Stage 3 are called to assume as leaders of our school. The Lenten unit for Year A focuses on *An Invitation to Believe*. Lent is a time to turn back to God in our acceptance of our wrongdoings, asking forgiveness, seeking absolution and receiving penance. Holy Week is the high point of our liturgical year and the *Easter Triduum-The Way of the Cross* gives time for reflection and meditation on the powerful person of Jesus and the decisions He and others around Him made during this time. A liturgy in the last week of term will allow for meditation on Holy Week and the Easter Season will continue into Term 2 with a celebration of The Resurrection.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

Here is a list of the Liturgies and Masses for Term 1, 2014. There is always an open invitation for you to join us in prayer. We hope that you might take the opportunity to attend Mass with your child's class during the Term.

Week 4	Year 6 Reconciliation (Thursday 20/2) St. Monica's Church 11:15am
Week 5	Year 4/5 Reconciliation (Thursday 27/2) St. Monica's Church 11:15am
Week 6	Ash Wednesday Liturgy (Wednesday 5/3) St. Monica's Church 11:30am Diocesan Education Mass (Thursday 6/3) The Staff of the Diocese of Parramatta celebrate mass together. St. Patrick's Church, Blacktown, 4:30pm
Week 7	Catholic Education Week (Monday 10/3) Morning Assembly Prayer Grandparents Day (Tuesday 11/3) Beginning with Morning Assembly through to Recess
Week 8	St. Patrick's Day Liturgy (Monday, 17/3) Learning Space 1:30pm (Awards only) Stage 2 will lead us in a liturgy celebrating the life of this much-loved saint.
Week 9	Solemnity of the Feast of the Annunciation Liturgy Monday 25/3 11:45am Learning Space
Week 10	
4th Sunday of Lent	
Week 11	Liturgy to prepare for Holy Week
5th Sunday of Lent	

Classes also attend Parish Mass at 9:15 twice a term. Class teachers can advise you of their selected dates and you are welcome to attend.

