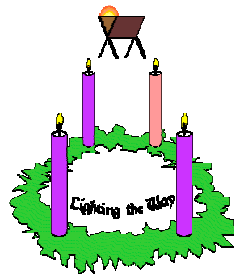


# Prepare Ye

In the coming weeks the Church's liturgical year comes to a close. This point marks the end of one period and the beginning of another. On Sunday, December 1 we enter the season of Advent. Advent begins on this day because it is the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. Advent is the special time when we are inspired to create or maintain traditions that prepare our hearts and homes for the birth of Jesus. It is difficult not to get caught up in the material nature of Christmas but Christmas isn't all about the gifts we will receive. The focus for us is how can we prepare our hearts for the greatest gift which is Jesus. So instead of thinking about the long list of presents you will buy -and wrap!- maybe think about the ways we can share and show our friends and family that we love them. During Advent our students will be discussing Advent and the traditions associated with this beautiful time of year. I hope that they will share some of them with you.



Wreaths are an ancient symbol of victory. Advent wreaths symbolise the victory of Christ's coming and the glory of his birth. The circular shape of the wreath depicts the immortality of our soul and the new, and everlasting life promised to us through Christ. There are four candles in the Advent wreath, representing the four weeks of Advent. The three purple candles represent our waiting, repentance and hoping and longing expectation for the arrival of Christ. The pink candle, representing the third week, reminds us that the time of Christ's arrival is approaching fast and we must prepare. A white candle can be placed within the centre of the wreath, representing Jesus, the light of the world. It is not lit until Christmas day to represent Jesus' birth. A wreath can be made from fresh foliage with real candles or even from paper with painted cardboard cylinder candles with cellophane flames.

Over the Advent season we will take many opportunities to pray together as a community, celebrating the year and all we have achieved.

On **Monday, December 16** we will have our final assembly for the year. We will present awards for Christian Living, Academic, Consistent Effort Most Improved and School Spirit. Parents of those students who are receiving awards will be notified prior to the assembly. Following this assembly the Staff will hold a *Thank You Morning Tea* for all the volunteers who have supported us during the year. Please put these dates in your diary.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the graduating class of 2013. These students will graduate on **Tuesday, December 17 (Week 11) as part of our End of Year Mass.** *I have known many of you since Kindergarten and it has been a real pleasure to see you grow into positive servant leaders.*

*I look forward to hearing about the great things you will achieve in the future. Good Luck and God Bless You.*

The End of Year Mass is our final opportunity to worship together and farewell those families leaving our community. Hope to see you there.

Blessed Advent Kerry Power REC

## Religious Education Newsletter ISSUE 2, TERM 4, 2013

Each year the Catholic Education Office requires each school to develop goals that are relevant to its 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 2013 is;

*'To provide opportunities for staff and students to reflect upon and develop their knowledge and understanding of Catholic traditions with a focus on liturgy and prayer.'*

This Newsletter outlines the Sharing Our Story Units that will be taught in Term 3, the Liturgies and Masses, Sacramental details and other important information relating to Religious Education.

Peace



Congratulations Year 6 2013

## Sharing Our Story

**Sharing Our Story** is the syllabus 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.

In the next few weeks the Sharing Our Story Units shift to exploration of the liturgical season of Advent. Advent is a beautiful time of the year when the scripture stories begin to focus on the preparation time required to receive the gift of our Lord Jesus. The Nativity narrative is a familiar story and the journey of the Holy Family and their challenging trek toward Jerusalem is frequently shared at this time of year. Our own community has the added joy of preparing for the final weeks of Mrs Newbury's pregnancy and the anticipation of a new member to our St. Monica's family.

Kindergarten begin by looking at the story of *The Annunciation* (Luke 1:26-38) and Mary's role as the Mother of Jesus. Students are familiar with this story from their discussions about The Angelus Prayer that we recite every day at 12noon. The other Scripture reference retells the story of the journey made by Mary and Joseph and introduces the important characters that play a part in Jesus' birth in the unit **Jesus is born** (Luke 2:1-20)

Stage 1 are **Waiting for Jesus** by looking at Jesus' birth as foretold in a prophecy by Isaiah (Isaiah 9:5-7). Stage 1 look at the story of the Wise Men in *Visitors from the East* (Matthew 2:1-12) and The Shepherds (Luke 2:8-20) and the important part they played in both protecting and proclaiming in the birth of Jesus. Students then reflect on *The Annunciation* through their meditation on The Angelus prayer.

Stage focus on the message of **Prepare** beginning with Isaiah's prophecy in the Old Testament about the coming of the Saviour or Messiah who will care and protect his people. It then shifts to the New Testament with John the Baptist as the prophet who prepared the way for Jesus (Matthew 3:1-6). John played a powerful role in Jesus' life and ministry and this unit explores how we can continue to proclaim Jesus and the message of the Good News in our lives.

Stage 3 are currently exploring the **Eucharist** and its part in **Nourishing Us for the Journey**. Students become conscious of and meditate on the structure of the Mass and how it relates to community. This unit fits nicely at a time when Year 6 are preparing for their Graduation Mass and the teachers and Father Fernando are spending time together contemplating the theme of Graduation and the associated readings. The Advent Unit **I Am Chosen** continues the theme of being called as disciples to spread the Good News throughout the world. Isaiah declares the Good News of deliverance (Isaiah 61:1-9).



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

Here is a list of the Liturgies and Masses for Weeks 6-11 in Term 4, 2013. 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 6** Remembrance Day Liturgy 10:30am by the flagpole  
**Sunday 10/11**
- Week 7** Classes to attend Parish Mass—ask your child's teacher or check your child's Homework sheet  
**Sunday 17/11**
- Week 8** Sacrament of First Reconciliation— Friday November 29 7pm  
**Sunday 24/11** St. Monica's Parish Church
- Week 9** Reconciliation—Year 6 Thursday December 5 11:30am  
**Sunday 1/12**
- Week 10** Feast of the Immaculate Conception- Monday December 9  
**Sunday 8/12** Morning Assembly  
 Advent & Christmas Celebration—Friday December 13  
 St. Monica's Parish Hall 7pm
- Week 11** End of Year Mass & Graduation—Tuesday December 13  
**Sunday 15/12** St. Monica's Church 6pm

### *First Reconciliation 2013*

Congratulations to those


St Monica's students who join with other students in our Parish to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time on

Friday, November 29th.

We pray for them and their families as they continue their sacramental journey.

*Dear God*

*I am very sorry that I have sinned against you because you are so good, and with your help I will not sin again.*



November is traditionally the month when we remember in a special way, those who have died. **All Saints Day** on November 1st is when we celebrate the life of saintly people. **All Souls Day** on November 2nd is a special day when we pray that the souls of our dearly departed will make their way to Heaven. **Remembrance Day** is another occasion when we remember the men and women who gave their lives for our country in war. The 2013 Ambassadors and SRC Leaders lead us in prayer on Monday, November 11.

*"May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace." Amen*

