**March 2011**

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**Reflection**

...Man began to look around and saw that not only might he die but that mother nature was dying. A few people got together to do something constructive about it. And they found that when a few people with good intentions got together.....

IT WAS AMAZING WHAT THEY COULD DO!!

**Coming up . . .**

- 8th Apr - Last day of term
- 22nd Apr - Good Friday
- 24th Apr - Easter Sunday
- 25th Apr - ANZAC Day
- 27th Apr - Students return
- 1st-6th May - Catholic Schools Week
- 6th May - Mothers Day lunch
- 10th-12 May - NAPLAN
- 16th-20th May - Book Fair
- 2nd June - Athletics Carnival
World Maths Day was celebrated last week with all classes enjoying exciting and relevant Maths activities around the school. The focus was on ‘hands-on’ maths and the children calculated and measured and explained and questionned all things mathematical to each other and their teachers.

The Andrew Chinn concert was again a great success last Tuesday. Andrew conducted a workshop with 12 students from Year 3 – Year 6. These students learned all the words to Andrew’s new songs and the movements to go with them. When the rest of the school arrived one hour later we were absolutely stunned by the concert given to us by the workshop group. Mr Chinn has a wonderful ability to make everyone feel special and managed to get all teachers, students, parents and visitors singing and dancing. It was fabulous to see so many very talented entertainers from our student body. The boys group was more animated and happy singing than I have ever seen before. What a wonderful way to spread God’s message of love.

Clean Up Australia Day was a great success last Friday with our school community cleaning up Gummun Place, the Apex Park, the Sports Grounds and Blaxland St. The children enjoyed doing their bit for the community and are hoping that more and more people will take responsibility to keep our beautiful town and country clean. Thank you to the Upper Hunter Shire and to Phoebe and Justine in particular for their assistance on the day and for the lovely BBQ shared at the end.

On Monday, 13 of our equestrian students travelled to Murrurundi with their parents to compete in the Blandford School Horse Sports Day. The school has been taking part in this competition for many years now and is very proud of the fine standard we have achieved. We are also proud of the spirit in which our children participate and the willingness of our parents to get in and help with the running of the days. We are very fortunate to have such very talented horse people in our town and their willingness to share their talents is very heartening to witness. Thank you to Miss Thomas for volunteering to supervise the children on the day. Some might say that wild horses couldn’t have stopped her from going on the day! Miss Thomas’ expertise and generosity in this field is much appreciated.

Gymnastics has reached a new level this year as we have engaged the services of an outside instructor to teach our children this component of the PD/H/PE syllabus. Natalie arrived on Friday morning and set up all the necessary gym equipment including mats, mini tramp, parallel bars and rings and balance beam. The kinder children were so excited that they asked if the circus was at our school! The infants and primary classes had a course tailored to their needs and the children thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The gymnastics lessons will continue for the next four weeks.

The teachers at St Joseph’s are very committed to providing the best educational experiences to the children in their care. The professional development plan for Term 1 in 2011 has enabled teachers to attend the following professional development workshops:-
+ Data Analysis: to enable teachers to use the NAPLAN results to their best advantage
+ NSWIT Training for new scheme teachers
+ Research presentation to all staff from Prof John Hattie covering the major factors that contribute to improving student learning outcomes
+ Leadership and the Quality Teacher Framework
+ Count Me In Too – Maths training
+ Teaching children with Autism
+ Faith Education Accreditation
+ Smart board training
+ Balanced Literacy programme

Parish – School Dinner to celebrate St Patrick’s Day will be held at the RSL club on Thursday evening the 17th March. Remember the green theme. There will be trivia, food, fun and friendship for just $25 per head. The numbers must be in by Friday to enable the catering to be organised. Please ring Marie Scott on 6548 5130 or contact John Lannen or Sally Gilbey at the school (65482035) to book your tickets.

Ash Wednesday will be celebrated tomorrow with the giving out of Ashes at the 12.00 Mass. All welcome. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for forty days. Lent is traditionally a time of prayer and fasting in preparation for the celebration of Easter. However, with young children, our focus is more so on reflecting upon our lives and being more like Jesus - A time when we remember Jesus’ love and concern for others.

INVITATION

Our parent community is very active in their support of the school. The Association of Parents and Friends is a great group of people who work, socialise and meet to build relationships within our community. They do a great job.

I urge all parents to attend this Wednesday’s Annual General Meeting. It will be held in the Fletcher Room of the RSL at 6.30pm. There will be nibblies provided. The children can play in the adjoining games room.

There will be positions vacant on the committee for those who would like to take a more active role. This meeting will be a great opportunity to have a social night out with fellow parents and friends. You may even like to stay on after the meeting for a meal.

FREE TO A GOOD HOME

The P&F have replaced the canteen fridge. The old one still works but is not reliable. If you would like it as a spare drinks fridge or as a big esky you are welcome to take it. First in first served. We desperately need it taken out of the MacKillop Room.

Helen Whale
As we move into the Season of Lent, we would like to offer you some suggestions for celebrating Lent in your home.

Lent begins this Wednesday, on Ash Wednesday and lasts for forty days. Lent is traditionally a time of prayer and fasting in preparation for the celebration of Easter. However, with young children, our focus is more so on reflecting upon our lives and being more like Jesus - a time when we remember Jesus’ love and concern for others.

Eg. I play soccer........ I could be more like Jesus by being kind to my team mates and not getting angry with them.

I read books ........ I could be more like Jesus by reading a story to my younger brother and sister each night.

The family activities that are suggested for Lent are offered to your whole family. They are intended as beginning ideas that your family may like to select from and further develop to suit the needs of your family.

Lent is an important growing time for us all, please encourage your child to share with his/her teacher and class the activities that your family is doing to get ready for Jesus’ Resurrection. During the Season of Lent the children will be studying a Lenten/Easter unit from our Religious Education Programme.

Suggestions For Family Activities For the Season of Lent

- Prepare a special ‘peace and quiet’ space together. Place a bible, missal or special book of prayers there. Make or choose a candle to go there. Soften the space with cushions, pot plants, a drape of material for the bible. Keep in mind the purple colour of Lent. Come to agreement that whenever someone is in the ‘peace and quiet’ space they will not be disturbed.
- At the beginning of Lent spend a quiet time together when each member of the family thinks of how they would like to change during Lent. Each person could write or draw this on a piece of paper, which is then burnt. Place the ashes in the ‘peace and quiet’ space.
- Decide together the things your family will go without during Lent. Place a project compassion box in the quiet space. Each week put in the savings from things your family has gone without. – Each family would have received a project compassion box.
- Agree to share some quiet Lenten meals together.
- Share some of the psalms for the family prayer.
- Make forgiving each other and asking for forgiveness a focus during Lent.
- Collect favourite quotes, poetry, photos, newspapers pictures or stories. Each member of the family could add to the collection.
- Focus on the sign of the cross for prayer. Make it slow and thoughtful.
- During Holy Week decorate eggs together. Prepare the house for Easter.
- Share hot cross buns on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Talk about the meaning of the cross.

Anne Marie Peebles, REC

The first topic which we have just finished in Religion, is called ‘Living Jesus’ Law of Love’ In this topic we have covered the importance of Jesus’ words and actions of love and how he teaches people to love God and one another. We have also looked at how the Ten Commandments are a sign of God’s love and that the Beatitudes show all of us how to live like Jesus did. The Ten Commandments state what is required in the love of God and love of neighbour. The first three concern love of God and the other seven love of neighbour. The Beatitudes (Mt 22. 37-40) are regarded as the epitome of the ethical teachings of Jesus.

Our current topic is called ‘An Invitation to Believe’. The main focus of this topic is Lent. Lent is a time for prayer, self denial and how we can help others during this time in the lead up to Easter. Lent is a forty-day season of preparation for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. The season begins on Ash Wednesday, when priests mark the foreheads of Christians with ashes as a reminder that we are created from dust and to dust we shall return. Lent is a time of stripping down to essentials, as each Christian focuses on his or her individual relationship with God. It is a time when we remember our baptisms, when Jesus washed away our sins, giving us newness of life to celebrate in the triumph of Palm Sunday and the glory of Easter.

Our final topic this term which will continue in Term Two is: ‘Passover/Exodus’. We will begin with the story of the Exodus. This was about the Israelites being freed from slavery in Egypt. The children will also identify the events in the life of Jesus during the Easter Triduum. The Easter Triduum begins on Holy Thursday with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, is continued through Good Friday with the celebration of the Passion of the Lord. On Holy Saturday it reaches its high point in the Easter vigil, and concludes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday.

We are all looking forward to a good term ahead.

John Lannen
3/4
A message from MAC

Dear Parents,

The Merriwa Activity Centre (MAC) has been made aware of St Joseph’s upcoming pupil free day on 23rd March 2011. The committee and staff of MAC would like to inform parents that the Activity Centre will be open to cater for any St Joseph students that may require the service on that day.

On this particular day, the Centre will be open from 8.30am (8.15am by prior arrangement) until 6pm. We will organise lots of fun activities such as crafts and games to keep everyone entertained.

If you require our services on this day, please give us a call on 65482082 after 2pm weekdays or just leave a message and we will get back to you.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Jill and Julie

AWARDS

Congratulations to our award winners for Weeks 4 & 5:

Kinder
- Madeleine Thrift - for always joining in enthusiastically in class discussions.
- Jack Lean - for always taking great care with his work.
- Patrick McLaren - for always doing his best work
- Korey Halse - For great pattern work in Maths.

1/2
- Piper Cropper for trying her best when sounding out words
- Lauren Redgate for a fantastic effort in her spelling test
- Claudia Parker-Olive for her fantastic effort during class discussions.
- Sophie Inder for applying her mathematical knowledge during class discussions.

3/4
- Sam Nairne – for working well in group activities,
- Clancy Martin – for his willingness to assist his peers in the classroom
- MacKenzie Lean – for great work in English activities.
- Oliver Towell – for working well when constructing his tower in Science

5/6
- Adam Constable for making a fantastic effort to complete his homework
- Hamish Cameron for his consistent efforts in contributing to class discussions
- Callum Telfer for making an effort to work hard and listen in class.
- Austin Constable for making an effort to work hard in all areas.

Principal’s Awards
- Bailey McNaught: Showing great maturity with academic pursuits and leadership.
- Nicole Martin: for her creative flair and dramatic skills.

BUS ROSTER

12/13 Mar Cassar family
19/20 Mar Moore family.
26/27 Mar Nairne family
2/3 Apr Hagley family

THANK YOU . . .

to the Cameron & Martin families who have given up some of their valuable time to clean the Aberdeen Bus.