St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Harrogate

Parents' Religious Education Newsletter 2

Dear Parents,

The dark nights have certainly found their way back to us and we return from half term to the month of November – a time to remember those who have gone before us into the loving embrace of God. We also journey towards the season of Advent when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, at Christmas.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. ***Amen***

In this issue of the newsletter, you will find what your child is learning about in each year group up to the end of this half term. We hope you find this newsletter informative and of interest.

The following table provides dates from the Catholic Church's calendar that mark or celebrate significant days or saints days during this half term.

2nd November	All Souls	30th November	St Andrew
8th November	Remembrance Sunday	3rd December	St Francis Xavier
10th November	St Leo the Great	6th December	Second Sunday of Advent
11th November	St Martin of Tours (Remembrance Day)	7th December	St Ambrose
17th November	St Hilda of Whitby	8th December	Immaculate Conception of Mary
21st November	The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	13th December	Third Sunday of Advent
22nd November	Christ the King (Youth Sunday)	20th December	Fourth Sunday of Advent
23rd November	St Clement	24th December	Christmas Eve
29th November	First Sunday of Advent	25th December	The Nativity of the Lord

Throughout Ordinary Time in November the Church asks Catholics to pray for the following intentions: *All Victims of War* especially on Remembrance Sunday (2nd Sunday in November) and *Young People* especially on Youth Day (Christ the King). During Advent and at Christmas the Church asks Catholics to pray for *Openness to the Word of God* especially on Bible Sunday (2nd Sunday of Advent), *Migrants and Refugees* especially on Migrant's Day (3 December) and *Expectant Mothers* especially on 4th Sunday of Advent.

All pupils are taught religious education through the Catholic RE programme called '*Lighting the Path*' published by Oxford University Press and approved by the Diocese of Leeds. *Lighting the Path* follows a spiral curriculum which means that each year group follows the same broad theme, but the content differs depending on the age of pupils.

'Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path'
Psalm 119:105

Nursery & Reception – Prophecy and Promise

The children will learn about the birth of Jesus and how Christians prepare for Jesus' birth during the season of Advent.

They will learn that God has an immeasurable love for everyone and this gives each one of us a unique dignity that comes from God. God shows his love by sending the gift of Jesus to us. They will learn the story of Jesus' birth from the gospel of Luke: the greeting of the angel to Mary at the Annunciation and the visit of the shepherds to Jesus in Bethlehem.



At home
You could help your children by:
- reminding them that Christmas is about the gift of Jesus to us and not just about receiving presents.
- take them to see the baby Jesus at church during the Christmas season.

Key Stage One
Year One – Prophecy and Promise

The children will learn that God sent the Angel Gabriel with a message to Mary and learn why this is important. They will learn that God asked Mary to be the mother of his son and will have an opportunity to reflect on her 'Yes' to God and on the presence of angels in the story.

They will begin to make links between key words and phrases in the bible stories and the 'Hail Mary' prayer. They will reflect on how art can express religious beliefs and how Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus during Advent.

At home
You could help your children by:
• reinforcing why Mary is important for Christians
• discussing the importance of mothers
• if you send Christmas cards, opt to send some that depict the birth of Jesus in art and talk about what they show

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Year Two – Prophecy and Promise

Children will study the infancy narratives in the gospel of Luke, beginning with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation to Mary, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the birth of Jesus and the visit of the shepherds. They will focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the stories and on the contrast between light and darkness using artwork as a stimulus.

At home
You could help your children by:
• reading the Christmas story and encourage them to ask questions

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Key Stage Two
Year Three – Prophecy and Promise

Pupils will recall the importance given to a day of rest in the account of Creation in the Book of Genesis and relate this to the Christian day of rest when Catholics go to Mass on Sundays. Pupils will focus on the part of the Mass called the 'Liturgy of the Word' which is centred on readings from the Bible and learn why, for Catholics, listening to God's word is important. The pupils will then explore the beginning of Matthew's gospel and look at the family tree of Jesus that is plotted through Joseph, the husband of Mary. They will learn that Jesus is descended from Abraham showing he is the fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham, and descended from David, to show that he is the promised one who will be born in the city of David: Bethlehem. They will study the annunciations to Joseph and Mary to show that whilst the stories are different, they have the same message.

At home
You could help your children by:
• reading the Christmas story and encouraging them to think about the important role that Joseph played in the story.

Year Four – Prophecy and Promise

Pupils will study the life and message of John the Baptist and make links between him and the prophet Elijah who, it was believed, would return just before the promised Messiah appears. John tells the people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah by taking stock of one's life, performing good deeds and seeking forgiveness. John the Baptist is a pivotal figure because he unites the promise made to the Jewish people in Old Testament times to the fulfilment of that promise in Jesus that is celebrated by Christians during Advent and at Christmas. Pupils will then study some of the important ancestors of Jesus through the tradition of the 'Jesse Tree' a means of showing how God's plan for humanity was worked out through key figures in history of the Jewish people culminating in Jesus.

At home:
• if you keep the tradition of the Christmas tree, place some symbols of the Jesse Tree on to your tree

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Year Five – Prophecy and Promise

Pupils will focus on David, a king of the ancient Israelites, and use their knowledge of David to explore what good leadership looks like. They will learn the story of David the youngest son of Jesse, who began as a shepherd boy, is anointed by the prophet Samuel and who confronts and kills Goliath the Philistine. Though David had his flaws, learning about David helps pupils understand faith filled leadership, the significance of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and of Joseph and how David is seen as a model of prayer given that many of the psalms in the Old Testament are attributed to him.

At home:
• pupils could use their research skills to find out what shepherds did and were like in the ancient middle east.

Year Six – Prophecy and Promise

Pupils will focus on women in the Old Testament who were essential to ensuring that God's plan for humanity was fulfilled. Pupils will then explore the importance of Mary to Christians and how her role was prefigured in the role of women like Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah and Esther from the Old Testament. They will then consider inspirational women today and how some women respond to God's call in a life of service.

At home:
• pupils could use their own research skills to learn about a key woman from the Old Testament like Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah or Esther.