St Nicholas of Myra School

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Term 4 Week 8
2015

SAVE THE DATE

Friday 27 November
Parish Mass
Kinder & Stg 3

Monday 30 November
Return Raffle Tickets

All donations due by **Thursday 3 December**

Friday 4 December
Christmas Concert
5pm
Concert 6pm

Tuesday 15 December
Swimming Carnival

Dear Families of St Nicholas of Myra,

The church's liturgical cycle begins at Advent each year. This Sunday marks the end of the Liturgical Year B! As we move into new Church's calendar of Year C with the beginning of Advent.

Here's a good insight into life: ***"Life is not about being better than someone else. It is about striving*** *to be better than you used to be."* Author Unknown. St Augustine had another good insight when he wrote: "When people choose to withdraw far from a fire, the fire continues to give warmth, but they grow cold. When people choose to withdraw far from the light, the light continues to be bright in itself but they are in darkness. This is also the case when people withdraw from God."

And withdraw from God we all do, not out of disbelief necessarily, but mostly out of forgetfulness, because we are just too busy with the rest of life. Take for example the Bethlehem Innkeeper who told Mary and Joseph that there was no room for them in his inn. This did not mean that he was a bad person; he was just very busy taking care of his customers, providing for their needs and keeping the peace. Unfortunately, when the most important birth in history took place in his backyard, he missed it entirely, not because he was a bad person, he was just too busy.

With Christmas just around the corner, we might be too busy to give attention to what we are actually commemorating. Those who live "by the cash register" will do everything they can to keep our attention on our wallets and purses. The Three Wise Men seem to have had the true understanding of the Christmas event. They spent many weeks in anticipation as they travelled from their homeland to Bethlehem. When they arrived, their purpose was to honour the newborn child and out of courtesy they brought one gift each.

We, too, have the opportunity for a period of anticipation in the Season of Advent. Of course, Advent is a constant season for, within our own lives, we are continuously waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfil. Hope, struggle, fear, expectations, are all part of our Advent experience. God does not come to us from the sky, he comes to us in the daily story of our lives in people, places and events.

Advent invites us to prepare for the commemoration of God's coming by taking time to have a closer look inside ourselves away from the busy outside. This looking inside is not about remorse or regret, nor about listing ways life over the past year could have been different; it's not about wishing we were better people. It's about forward movement, getting new bearings, relying more on God for directions. It's about a fresh start, getting closer to the "fire" and the "light" that are God's love and compassion. Advent is a time to "Rejoice, let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is nigh." St Paul Phil 4:4,5

As well, Advent is a time to:

"Accept surprises
that upset your plans
shatter your dreams,
give a completely
different turn
to your day
and-who knows-
To your life.
It is not chance,
Leave the Father……..
to Himself weave
the pattern of your days

Dom Helger Camara. A thousand Reasons for Living

Then: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." St Paul. Phil. 4:7.

Peace and Joy

Anita Knezevic

Christmas Raffle

Thank you to Lidia Vlores for putting together our raffle ticket booklets. All tickets sold or unsold need to be returned by this Monday 30 November.

There are some great prizes to be won thanks to Helena Steed who did a wonderful job chasing up donations. There is still time to donate! If you know of someone or your would like to donate please drop off to school office by Wednesday 2 December contact the school office. Thank you!

busways

The new Public Timetable for Busways Region 1 will come into effect on the 29 November 2015. There will be changes to your current School or Public Route services. Please visit **www.busways.com.au** or contact Busways on 9497 1870 or 9497 1887.

Year 6 Farwell

Could all RSVP's YES or NO be sent to the office by Monday 30 November so we are able to finalise numbers for seating and catering. Thank you

School Fees

We would appreciate if all outstanding school fees be finalised by 10 December 2015.

Catholic Culture

Parent/ Carers and Helpers Lunch
Thank you for all of you hard work, whether it be at home or at school for helping our students to practise their reading, Fun Food Days, the different stalls we have throughout the year, the Trivia Night and Bunnings BBQ etc. All of these great learning and community events are due to the hard work, time and generosity of our parents and helpers from the school and the parish. We are always so grateful for the time you invest into our future generation.

I would also like to thank all of the Parents and Carers who continually support the students to participate in these school events.

2015 Parent Group

I would like to formally acknowledge and thank the 2015 Parent Group;

Chairperson - Sarah Lestal
Pastoral Care - Jim Mueller
Canteen - Helena Steed
Treasury - Vanessa Wheeler

K - 6 Grade Representative
Kindergarten - Sarah Lestal and Megan Simmons
Year 1: Jessica Portelli
Year 2: Helena Steed
Year 3: Leigh Parkes and Lidia Vlores
Year 4: Vanessa Wheeler
Year 5: Denise Prior
Year 6: Rachelle Carter

Many of these Parents and Carers have worked tirelessly in the background to organise, prepare and run these events which benefit all of our children at St Nicholas of Myra. I would really like to encourage everyone to take part in the Parent Group at least once in your child's schooling years.

2016 Parent Group

I would like to formally welcome and acknowledge the **2016 Parent Group**;

Chairperson – Clare Fidler
Pastoral Care - Jim Mueller
Canteen - volunteers are welcome – position still be filled
Treasury - Katrina Wearne
Secretary – Assistant Principal

K - 6 Grade Representative
Kindergarten - Katrina Wearne and Lauren Baker

Stage 1: Year 1: Clare Fidler and
Year 2: volunteers are welcome – position still to be filled

Stage 2: Year 3: Helena Steed and
Year 4: Lidia Vlores

Stage 3: Year 5: volunteers are welcome – position still to be filled
Year 6: Sarah Lestal

As you can see we are still looking for volunteers for the Canteen Coorindator, Grades 2 and 5. This is a one year commitment and is often easier when there is someone to share this role. If you would like to be apart of next years parent group, please complete the note or write a brief note to put yourself forward as a parent representative.

Thank you to the parents who have already put themselves forward to assist with next years fundraising, school and community building events.

Learning

Yearly Reports

The quote from the front of the newsletter also pertains to when we read our children's reports, "*It is about striving to be better than you used to be.*"
Author Unknown.

When reading reports, particularly when we reach the two year cycles of learning (Stage 1, 2 and 3), it often can feel like there has been minimal growth or change as you receive an overall grade which often represents many different strands.

When we reach these stages there is often more complexity to the skill of comprehending, or writing a paragraph or sentence. In Maths, a student may show strength in counting but when applying this to a multi step problem, they revert to simple or longer strategies, which are not efficient. They may be reading with meaning, however they may need to develop their complexity of their writing either through paragraphs, varying sentence structures, or using a variety of vocabulary.

The teachers make informed decisions by analysing many samples of work through Terms 3 and 4. They also consider if the child is secure in their conceptual knowledge or skill, are they still consolidating or do they need to be more consistent. Teachers will use varying methods to gather information regarding assessing. Some of these are formal pencil and paper, others are through ongoing discussions or conversations, asking students to articulate their thinking – this can be recorded using an ipad, through teacher notes or observations and bookwork etc

As one example, in Maths we have working mathematically (5 substrands) and the strands of number and algebra (5 substrands), measurement and geometry (9 substrands), statistics and probability (2 substrands). So in one Key Learning Area we have 21 areas to give one grade.

Within a strand of measurement and geometry there are 9 sub strands. These are length, area and surface area, volume and capacity, mass, time, 3D space, 2D space, angles and position. Students have to consistently demonstrate conceptual knowledge and skills within all 9 sub strands of measurement and geometry determined by BOSTES to receive a C grade. Thus the complexity of grading occurs for the students and the teachers which is also the reason why children are given two years to develop their conceptual understandings and skills.

I would like you to consider these questions:

How do you measure success? - is it when you bought that watch, a house, was it when you graduated, made your first profit or major sale etc

How will you measure success of your children report/grades?
Is it about their persistence, attitude when hard thinking is challenging them, is it developing life long skills of being organised, self regulating choices to be focused, to be able to sustain focus for longer periods of time etc

What will success look like of your child when they are 18 years old?
It is that they are faith filled responsible adults who are considerate but informed decision makers?
Are able to think for themselves?
Do they have friends who accept them even if they make different choices?

Anita Knezevic
Principal

Understanding Your Child's Report

Reporting time has come around once again. End of year reports will be sent home on Friday 4 December. Before you look over your child's report, we would like to explain the grading scale that constitutes a part of our reporting. As you know, your child's achievement for each Key Learning Area is reported using a five point scale.

A – Excellent Achievement

B – High Achievement

C – Sound Achievement

D – Basic Achievement

E – Elementary Achievement

You may already have heard the phrase – **"C is for Celebrate"-** and that is certainly the case! Your child's progress is tracked by the teachers using various methods of assessment including informal observations, practical activities and specific assessment tasks. These are then matched to the expected outcomes for that particular grade. **Students who are achieving as expected for their grade are then awarded the overall grade of "C".** This is indeed something to celebrate!

The scale is designed to be broad so that it is able to reflect even the most capable student who is in actual fact working well beyond the expected grade level. To explain it further:

A – The student would be working and achieving **well beyond** the grade level. They may be part of an accelerated learning program or working on an individual "project – based" learning contract.

B – The student would be working and achieving at a level beyond that which would be expected at that time for that grade. They may be in an extension group or work occasionally on independent learning contracts.

C – The student is working and achieving at the level expected for their grade.

D – The student is working with some assistance to achieve at the level expected and may participate in small group focus lessons with a teacher or on individualised programs. Students who do not apply themselves and fail to complete tasks due to this lack of application may also find themselves here.

E – The student is not yet working at the grade level and requires support and intervention to achieve. Their learning tasks are modified and they receive small-group or individual learning support structured to meet their needs.

We hope that this clarifies the grading scale for you.

Thank you

Rebecca Lloyd

Assistant Principal

Beginning of year MAI assessments

The beginning of 2016 assessment interviews are taking place on Wednesday 27 January 8am to 11am and Thursday 28 January 8am to 4:30pm. These assessments are compulsory for all students to attend. We will be notifying you shortly when you are able to start booking a time for your child on:

schoolinterviews.com.au

2016 Staffing

As you are aware each year brings our teachers new opportunities to spread their gifts and talents to other schools. Whilst we are sad that some of our teachers will be moving on we also wish them all the best in their new schools.

Mrs Mann has been at St Nicholas of Myra for 5 years She has accepted a teaching position at St Thomas of Aquinas.
Miss Westbrook has been with us at St Nicholas of Myra in different capacities for 2 years and has accepted a teaching position at Our of Lady Queen of Peace at Greystanes.

As you are aware we have some staff on leave for different reasons at different times. As you would be aware Mrs Lennon is currently on maternity leave and this will continue into all of next year. Mrs Bannister has decided to take a years leave to spend further time with her family, we will miss her greatly, however we look forward to Mrs Banister returning to us in 2017.

Therefore we welcome the following staff to our school:
Mrs Nicole Bray. Nicole has been teaching at Holy Family Luddenham for the past 7 years and is also an EMU Specialist. I am sure you will join with me in making her welcome at our school.
Mrs Michelle White will be the new Learning Support Teacher whilst Mrs Bannister is on leave. We welcome her to our school and thank her for fulfiling this role for our students.

As you are aware, next year:
Stage One will have one Year 1 class and two Year 2 classes
Stage Two will have two Year 3 classes and one Year 4 class

Stages/ Classes and Teachers will be announced at a later stage. This is so the best decision can be made once all processes are followed, teacher interviews and movements are settled and considerations are taken into account for the overall students learning needs. This is the thinking around why I wait later and sometimes there are unforeseeable circumstances can not be avoided even with the best of intentions and decision making.

School Banking

We process school banking all electronically. We do not physically go to the bank and deposit your child's banking. To make our school banking process more manageable and efficient you need to be aware of the following:

- ☑ **We can only accept one deposit from each student each week 1 deposit = 1 token**
- ☑ **For e.g. if you fill out 3 separate deposit slips in 1 week you still only get 1 token**
- ☑ **If you miss a week you cannot make up for it the following week in tokens**
- ☑ **We do not know the balance of your child's bank account**

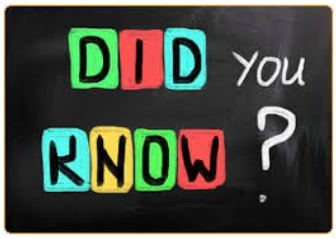
ENROLMENTS FOR 2016

We understand that family circumstances alter and that children sometimes need to change schools. If you know that you will not be attending St Nicholas of Myra in 2016 please advise Mrs Knezevic and complete a Notification of Leaving Form that is available from the school office. We have healthy enrolments for most classes in 2016, with some children on waiting lists, so in fairness to these families we ask you to let us know if you are changing schools. If you know of anyone considering a Catholic school education for their child at St Nicholas of Myra from 2016, in any grade, please encourage them to contact us as soon as possible to assist us with our planning.
Thank you.

Correspondence which has been sent home in the past fortnight or with this newsletter:

- ☺ Swimming Carnival
- ☺ Busways
- ☺ Christmas Concert

Did you know?
That the Church's new year begins with Advent! The church has a 3 year cycle around readings. They are Year A, B and C. This advent we are commencing Year C.



catholic out of school hours care

VACATION CARE

from 11 January 2016

Catholic out of school hours care is available at St Nicholas of Myra. For further information please contact Ben

0418 260 386
or visit

COSHCSStNicholas-Penrith@parra.catholic.edu.au

Truth Through Learning

Thank you to the following businesses who have donated to our Christmas Raffle so far

Sittano's	$30 Gift Voucher
Hogs Breath	$30 x 2 Vouchers
Museum of Fire	Family Pass x 4
Penrith White-water Rafting	Session Gift Certificate
King Henry's Court	$20 x 2 Vouchers
Taronga Zoo	Adult Pass x 2
Jenolan Caves	Family Pass x 2
Dymocks	Assorted Books
Studio 1000	3 x Vouchers
Kevin Chevills Inside Fitness	Single Membership x 2
	Family Membership x 2
Wish Gift Card	$20