



St Anthony's School RE Newsletter 'We Grow and Learn with Jesus'

Our School Chapel

Last term we took the decision to relocate our school chapel to the room that was previously our library. The new chapel was opened in time for the beginning of Lent. The larger room allows the children and staff the space to sit quietly in prayer and reflection at different times of their week.

There is a special prayer corner where children can safely "light" an electronic devotion candle. They can, if they wish, write a prayer and place it into a prayer box. Gregorian chant music is played quietly throughout the day to help remind people that they are in a place of sanctuary and prayer.

We have also hung our special quilt that was made by parents, children and staff of St. Anthony's in 1999/2000 to celebrate the new millennium.

On a weekly basis we hold prayer groups where children are able to pray together and reflect on passages from scripture or say traditional prayers like the Rosary. Classes are also timetabled to visit the chapel at least once a week for their Acts of Worship.

We know how much people need to have the time and space for reflection and prayer in their day and we are so pleased that the children are making use of the chapel in such a respectful way.

Located beside our prayer garden, we think our new chapel will be an intrinsic part of the children's prayer life and wellbeing.

Parents and families will soon be offered a chance to visit our new chapel.

Spring 2023

Have you ever noticed how we like to characterise different months and seasons? For example, January is painted as the longest, bluest month of the year – so much so that 'Blue Monday' is a term coined to refer to the third Monday in January. Other months and seasons similarly characterised include February – romance and playfulness due to Valentine's Day and being the shortest, quirkiest month; and October – pumpkin-spice and all things nice! But these characterisations don't leave much room for nuance. Even the bluest Januarys will have some light, and the most playful of Februarys will have harder moments. And for most people, October doesn't consist of endless pumpkin-spice lattes!

This year, the month of March is taken up wholly with the Liturgical Season of Lent. In the Church, Lent is represented by the colour purple, worn by priests and seen on the altar. Purple, like the season of Lent, symbolises a time of prayer, penance and preparation for Jesus' death on the cross and Resurrection at Easter. It offers a chance for us to reflect on our relationship with God and make a fresh start as the Church focuses on the three pillars of Lent, almsgiving, fasting and prayer – or as children in school will know them, GIVE, ACT, PRAY:

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/prayers-for-home/parent-newsletter/>

But even in this somewhat austere season, there is room for nuance! On the fourth Sunday of Lent, called Laetare Sunday, Catholics are invited to celebrate! 'Laetare' is the Latin word for 'rejoice' and on this day only, the purple of Lent is swapped for rose pink, symbolising hope and a reminder of what is to come on Easter Sunday. This Sunday is also Mothering Sunday, where historically believers would return to the mother church where they received the Sacrament of Baptism.

This newsletter shares some of the content children will experience in school throughout March and suggests ways for you to engage with them about it. We hope and pray that your Lent will be a time of prayer, penance and preparation, but with lots of opportunities for rejoicing too!

Our Lenten Assemblies

We have at least one assembly every week in which we ensure a Lenten theme is at the core.

Over the weeks, we have spoken about the Stations of the Cross and the Transfiguration. The children are then "missioned" to go out and find ways they can follow the central messages from the assembly.

For example, we invite children to think about the times they "fall" as Jesus did three times as he was carrying his cross. How do they respond when something goes wrong? What do they do when they have an argument or a dispute with a friend? What do they do when they have got some answers wrong in class?

Our younger children have listened to the story of the Three Trees. *The Three Trees* is the title of the Lower Key Stage 2 play and we wanted our younger children to have an introduction to this very special story.

Everything we say and do is centred upon Jesus' teachings and actions from the Gospels.

Easter Trail

In KS1 we have installed an outdoor Easter Trail for the younger children to follow. The trail follows Dotty, the donkey that carried Mary to Bethlehem, through the key events of Holy Week. The first four stations of the trail sequence the early events of Jesus' life, helping the children put the Easter Story into context. The trail then follows the key events of Holy Week, finishing with the celebration of Easter Day.

Mini Vinnies

Our commissioned Mini Vinnies will be visiting Holy Rood Church for Mass with parishioners on Wednesday 22nd March. Afterwards they will be having lunch with the local parish group and speaking about the work they are doing in St. Anthony's. One part of their role is to take on chaplaincy work around the school. Throughout Lent, groups of children from Key Stage 2 have visited classes in Early Years and

Key Stage1 to lead them in prayer and collective worship. This gives our older children the opportunities for leadership and responsibility in the Catholic life of our school.

Prayer

*Jesus said to the man, "Do you believe...?"
...The man said, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him.
John 9:37-38*

Inspired by the man's confident statement of belief in the Gospel, the daily classroom prayers for the week commencing 20th March help children to explore some 'I believe' statements from the Apostles' Creed.

Here are some ideas from the prayers to help inspire your home prayer times:

'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us and everything you created in your loving care.
Thank you for our beautiful earth, which we need to take care of.
Help us to care for our planet in small ways each day.
Amen*

'I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us in your loving care.
You gave us Jesus, your Son, to be the Light of the World and to set an example for us to follow.
Help us to be like Jesus and bring joy and peace to others.
Amen*

'I believe in the Holy Spirit.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us in your loving care.
Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to guide us.
Holy Spirit, we ask that you fill us with hope and joy so that we can live life to the full.
Amen*

'I believe in the holy Catholic Church.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us in your loving care.*

*We ask for your blessing on the Catholic communities we belong to.
Help us to share our belief with others by talking about Jesus and shining with
the light of your love.
Amen*

'I believe in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.'

*Dear God,
We believe that you hold us in your loving care.
Thank you for sending your Son Jesus, who died and rose again to give us
life everlasting.
Holy Spirit, help us to live as Jesus lived, showing love and care for everyone
we meet.
Amen*

Another prayer that you might like to use in family prayer times during Lent is below.
It includes the Lenten practices **GIVE, ACT, and PRAY** and encourages us to
remember to place Jesus at the centre of all we say and do:

**Jesus,
Be the centre.
As I continue my journey through Lent,
I welcome you into my heart.
Be my guide as I GIVE to others.
Be my strength as I ACT by making good choices.
Be my friend as I PRAY and get to know you more.
Amen**

Our Lunchtime Prayers

Throughout the school year, children have said special prayers before they go to lunch. A bell is rung to signal the end of lessons the beginning of quiet reflection. Here are the prayers the children have been saying during the Lenten period. Each day we select one or two to say together in our classrooms.

Lord God,
you who breathed the spirit of life within me.
Bring out of me the light and life you created.
Help me to find my way back to you.
Help me to use my life to reflect your glory
and to serve others
as your son Jesus did.

Amen

Loving God,
you call us back to you with all of our hearts.
I feel your call for me deep in my heart
and I know you want me back
as much as I want to return.
Please, Lord,
give me the wisdom to know how to return.
Make my journey back to you this Lent
one of grace, forgiveness and gentle love.

Amen

Dear God
You care for us as a loving parent.
Through my smallest Lenten sacrifices,
help me to become less selfish
and more aware of your ways.
Help me to be closer to you
Guide me to seek your love.

Amen

Dear Lord,
I know you receive what is in my heart.
Let us follow your words
and the actions of your son, Jesus.
Guide me to make sacrifices this Lent
By being kinder to those around me.

Amen.

Lord,
I'm not always able to do your will.
I'd often much rather do my own will.
Please be with me on this Lenten journey
and help me to remember
that your own spirit can guide me
in the right direction.
I know that with your help,
anything can be done.

Amen

Loving God,
Sometimes my heart
turns in every direction
except towards you.
Please help me
to turn my heart toward you,
to gaze upon you in trust
and to seek your kingdom with all of my heart.
Help me to help others
So that I may do good things in your name.

Amen