



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL



In our collective worship this week the children explored the meaning of the word 'revelation' through examples of dramatic reveals in fairy tales, history and everyday life, before hearing the most important revelation of all: at Jesus' baptism, God revealed Jesus as His Beloved Son.

Perhaps you'd like to read the full Gospel text of this amazing event with your child/ren:

Matthew 3: 13 - 17 Full Text (from the Jerusalem Bible)

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade Him. "It is I who need baptism from you," he said, "and yet you come to me!" But Jesus replied, "Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands."

At this, John gave in to Him. As soon as Jesus was baptised He came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on Him. And a voice spoke from heaven, "This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on Him."

In this Gospel, the Holy Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – is clearly revealed. God the Father's voice is heard from heaven, God the Son is Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit came down like a dove.

God calls Jesus His beloved child, and He welcomes each of us to be part of His family and be called His beloved child too – we just need to say 'yes', like Mary said 'yes' to God!

Children were challenged to repeat the revelation "I am God's beloved child!" to themselves throughout the week, e.g. when they wake up, go to bed, and at times when they might feel angry/sad/alone and need a reminder of how loved they are.

You might like to do this as a family and invite your child/ren to notice how it makes them feel to be reminded of this truth, and how it changes their interactions with others, for example, do they find that they have more patience, are kinder, more generous or loving?

Why not...

- Challenge your child/ren to write/draw their own news report about this incredible Gospel story.
- Write "I am God's beloved child!" on a sticky note and place them on each mirror in your house, so that the whole family are reminded of this truth whenever they catch a glimpse of themselves!

WEDNESDAY WORD

Here is the link to this week's Wednesday Word.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFESSION 2023 (Holy Spirit Parish parish)

Father Bill will deal individually with all candidates and their families who apply to be registered for this coming year 2023 'First Sacraments'. Father Bill hopes to begin preparation for First Forgiveness (confession) in early February and registration forms will be available for parishioners of Holy Spirit parish from church on the last weekend of January. Father Bill reminds us that the start of 2023 is a great opportunity for parents and families to make a fresh commitment to attend Sunday Mass, especially for those families who have a potential candidate for 'First Sacraments'.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP INVITATION

The dates for this term's class led collective worship were sent to you before the holidays. The dates until half term are listed in the key diary section at the end of this newsletter. We hope that you will be able to join the school family for these events. The first will be led by Year 5 at 2:30pm on Monday with the theme of 'do this in memory of me' and memories. This worship session will also be linked to Year 5's child-elected class charity, Dementia UK and the children will watch a short child-friendly video explaining what dementia is. The video is called "Memories with Grandma" and you might want to watch the video yourselves, particularly if dementia has or is currently impacting your family. The link to the video is [here](#).



THANK YOU

It was lovely to hear so many positive responses to the cards we sent to the neighbours before the festive break and we have also received a beautiful letter from Smithy Court thanking us for the letters sent by Year 6. It really made their Christmas! Thank you also for the very kind comments, cards and generous gifts to staff. We really appreciate how closely we work together as a school family and your generosity and support is greatly appreciated.

YEAR 6 PGL AND SATs PARENTS MEETING



There will be a meeting for parents of children in Year 6 on **Wednesday 8th February** from **5:30-6:30pm** regarding the forthcoming residential visit to PGL in Shropshire in March. The meeting will also double as a SATs information session allowing parents to understand more about the tests children will take in May of Year 6 and how you can support your child in preparing for them.

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF

We welcome to the St Mary's family Miss Burke and Mr Leighton. Miss Burke is an experienced class teacher and will be working three days per week at St Mary's. Miss Burke will teach in Reception each Wednesday to allow Mrs Finney to fulfil her leadership responsibilities and will teach in Year 6 each Thursday and Friday. Mr Leighton is a Learning Support Assistant who will be supporting in Year 3 until July. We are delighted to welcome them to our school and know their gifts and talents will further enhance our provision for the children. I am sure you will join with the staff team in wishing them every happiness and success in their new roles.

PARISH AMBASSADORS

We are looking to appoint two parish ambassadors at St Mary's, Marple Bridge and two parish ambassadors at Holy Spirit, Marple. The selected pupils will represent the school for our parish communities. The role will involve attending Mass and making announcements to the parishioners regarding school events and achievements, as well as attending parish events such as carol concerts, First Holy Communion celebrations etc. The appointment will run until July 2024. Pupils of any age are welcome to apply for the role. Pupils should apply by writing no more than 200 words explaining why they would like to take on the role of parish ambassador, stating which parish they would like to represent. Applications should be sent into the school office by Friday 3rd February.

EDUCATION SUPPORT FUND POLICY

This is an initiative by the St Ralph Sherwin Trust and is designed to provide financial assistance for pupils who might otherwise miss out on important aspects of their education/school experiences and is intended to support those most in need. If you would like further details and to find out about the application process, then please contact the school office. Applications will be treated in the upmost confidence.

NEW SCHOOL MEAL PROVIDER

This week Derbyshire Catering Service (DCS) were appointed as the catering provider for St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy and began delivering meals.

At DCS they understand the importance of children's health and wellbeing and how inextricably it is linked to education and attainment. They believe every child should be able to enjoy the benefits of a hot school meal. They use quality organic produce, from local suppliers, which therefore offers a more sustainable route, whilst also providing a convenient service for parents that promises great value for their money. Please see the attached menu for meal choices.

The feedback from the children this week has been extremely positive and the majority are certainly enjoying the new meal choices and menus!



SCHOOL ADMISSIONS 2023

A final reminder that the deadline to apply for a Reception place is 15th January 2023. Applications need to be made at the Stockport Local Authority website – [Nursery and school admissions - Stockport Council](#). Please note that a place in our nursery does not secure an automatic place in Reception. A new application must be made using the link above.

THE MONTH AHEAD...KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Event
	<i>Please note the dates and times detailed below are provisional and may be changed if necessary.</i>
15 January	Deadline for applications for Reception 2023 entry. Nursery and school admissions - Stockport Council
16 January	Y5 Collective Worship (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
21 January	Cross country at Woodbank Park (10:30am)
23 January	Y3 Collective Worship (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
30 January	Y4 Collective Worship (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
3 February	NSPCC Number Day. £1 donation to NSPCC for children dressed as a number or wearing clothing with a number on it.
3 February	Closing date for Parish Ambassador roles.
6 February	Y6 Collective Worship (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
6-9 February	Mental Health Week (please see attached leaflet for events).
7 February	Online Safety Day.
8 February	Y6 PGL and SATs meeting for parents (5:30pm – 6:30pm)
8 February	PTA AGM (6:45pm – 8:00pm) in the hall. All welcome!
13 February	Y2 Collective Worship (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
14 February	Music concert (2:15pm in the hall). All welcome!
16 February	School closes to children for the half term break.
17 February	INSET Day for staff – school closed for children.

A PAUSE FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER



With the arrival of the New Year, we start to put away signs of our Christmas celebrations: we finish off festive food, box up decorations, maybe recycling Christmas cards (and Christmas trees!) and perhaps generally breathe a sigh of relief about the return to normality. As we busy ourselves discarding all things of the festive season and look ahead to what 2023 might have in store, it's good to pause and remember that we are still in the season of Christmastide, which officially ends at Candlemas on 2nd February. We can leave many things behind, but hopefully the image of Jesus, God's gift of joy, hope and peace for the world remains.

Dear Jesus, You light up our lives! Help us this year to follow you, and follow in the footsteps of the saints, especially St Mary, who have gone before us. Amen.

**Wishing you all a wonderful weekend.
Mr John Nish and Miss Alice Poole.**