



St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

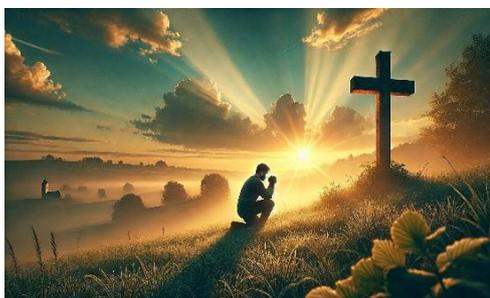
<http://www.st-marys-marplebridge.stockport.sch.uk/>

St Mary's Parish: <http://stmarysmarplebridge.org.uk/>

Holy Spirit Parish: <https://www.holyspiritmarple.com/>

Bulletin Number 21: 27 February 2026

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

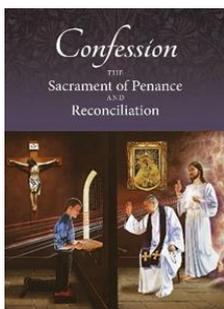


This week in our celebrations of the word, we reflected on the **season of Lent** and the importance of **prayer** through the Gospel reading of Matthew 4:1-11 from the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus Christ goes into the desert and turns to God in prayer during a time of challenge and temptation. We reminded the children that prayer is a conversation with God: an opportunity to open our hearts, share our thoughts and feelings, and listen for his guidance. Prayer can take many forms: spoken words, music, reflection, or

quiet silence. During Lent, we are especially called to deepen our relationship with God through prayer, trusting in him to give us strength and direction. As part of our mission this week, we invite everyone to take a moment each day to pray, thinking about what you want to say to God and being open to what he may be saying to you.

WEDNESDAY WORD The latest version of the Wednesday Word can be accessed [here](#). Please enjoy spending some time sharing the Word of God with your children.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION



Congratulations to the children enrolled in this year's Sacramental Programme who reverently celebrated their First Sacrament of Reconciliation on Thursday afternoon. The occasion began with a prayerful Liturgy of the Word, shared alongside pupils from Years 4 to 6, centred on the theme of God's mercy and forgiveness. This sacred time of reflection enabled the children to prepare spiritually before approaching their individual First Confession with Father Greg, Father Benjamin or Father Stephen. It was a deeply moving and grace-filled moment, and we are immensely proud of the children as they continue to grow in faith and understanding.

EASTER GARDENS

Following the email shared at the beginning of the week, we would like to remind families about our Easter Garden project. Pupils are invited to create a small garden depicting the Easter Story (no larger than 30cm x 30cm), ready to be brought into school on Monday 16th or Tuesday 17th March for display in St Mary's Church during Lent. Further details and examples can be found on the attachment.



YEAR 5 & 6 STOCKPORT SHAPES DODGEBALL FINALS



We are delighted with the team of Year 5 and 6 pupils who proudly represented our school at the Stockport SHAPES Dodgeball Final, held at Bramhall High School on Thursday afternoon. Competing against teams from across the borough, they demonstrated excellent teamwork, resilience, and superb sportsmanship in every match. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for the children to challenge themselves, develop their confidence, and represent St Mary's with great pride and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, we didn't make it through to the Greater Manchester finals but an amazing achievement to make the Stockport finals.



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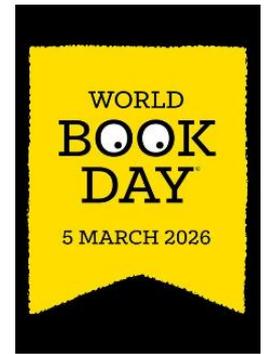


St Ralph Sherwin

Catholic Multi Academy Trust

WORLD BOOK DAY 2026

We will be celebrating World Book Day next **Thursday, 5th March** with a range of fun, reading-focused activities throughout the day and across the rest of the week. Children have already received their World Book Day book token before the holidays. Next Thursday, children are invited to come to school in pyjamas or bedtime-themed clothing and bring along their favourite bedtime story to share. We are also running a Sock Character Competition, with entries to be brought into school on Tuesday 3rd or Wednesday 4th March. Please find more details of the competition on the attached poster. The celebrations will continue with a World Book Day Disco after school on Friday 6th March, hosted by the PTA. We are looking forward to a wonderful celebration of reading and stories.

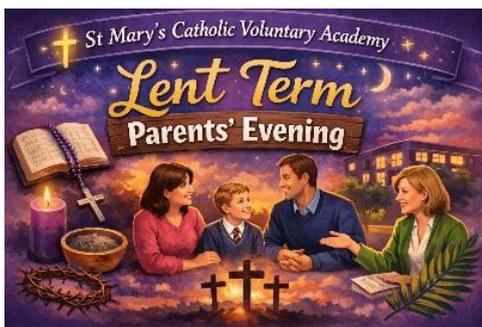


ST MARY'S BOOK CLUB

We are excited to launch our Lent 2 Book Club recommendations and to continue sharing a range of high-quality texts across the school. The children have responded so positively to our previous selections, and we look forward to introducing even more fantastic reads this half term. We are also very much looking forward to celebrating World Book Day together next week — further details about our plans were shared in the newsletter before half term.



LENT TERM PARENTS EVENINGS



Parents Evenings will be held on **Monday, 23 March, and Wednesday, 25 March**, from **3:40pm to 6:30pm**. Appointments are for 10-minute slots, giving you the opportunity to discuss your child's progress and achievements with their teacher(s). Mrs Major will send the booking link on Tuesday evening at 6:00pm. We look forward to welcoming you and sharing your child's learning journey. For parents of children on the SEND register, your child's class teacher will contact you to arrange an appointment over the course of this half term.

PUPIL PREMIUM – ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR OUR SCHOOL



Did you know that just registering your child for Free School Meals means that the school gets extra money? This funding is called 'Pupil Premium'. For every child registered, St. Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy will receive approximately £1,515 additional funding each year per child registered. Even though children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 receive a free school meal, school do not receive the additional funding without parents registering so please do read on!

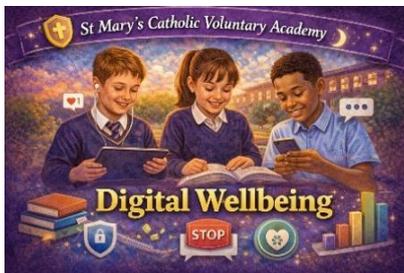
If you receive any of the following, then you may be entitled: • Income Support • Universal Credit (provided your household income is less than £7,400 a year after tax and not including any benefits you get) • income related Employment and Support Allowance • income based Job Seekers Allowance • support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 • Child Tax Credit only with an income of less than £16,190 • the guaranteed element of Pension Credit To Apply for free school meals please follow the link below. It is a very worthwhile process and the additional funds will then come directly to school: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/start/free-school-meals-application-form>. Just registering your child for Free School Meals means that school receives the extra money even if you don't take up the free meal. No one will know you have registered and it will not affect any other benefits you are claiming. From the start of the 2026/27 school year, the government will introduce new eligibility criteria, meaning that all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive a free meal. The government have told us they will issue further guidance ahead of September 2026.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS IN SCHOOL HOURS

We recognise that of course we don't always have a choice when scheduling medical appointments for children. We have however seen a rise in children being taken out of school for these during the school day. Any absences at all do cause disruption to pupils' learning so where possible we would ask for any appointments to be made outside of the school day.



DIGITAL WELLBEING



The online world presents a wide range of risks, many of which are significant and must be taken seriously. *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the statutory safeguarding guidance for schools in England, groups these risks into four key areas known as the '4 Cs':

Content – This refers to anything shared online, including text, images, or videos. Children and young people may encounter material that is illegal, inappropriate, or harmful.

Contact – This relates to the potential risks associated with communicating with others online. This may include peer pressure, unwanted contact, or exposure to unsuitable advertising.

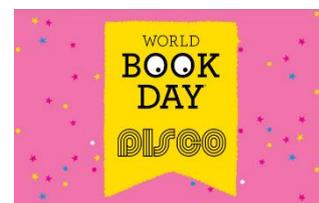
Conduct – This concerns how individuals behave online. Certain behaviours, such as cyberbullying or sharing harmful content, can increase the risk of harm or negatively affect others.

Commerce – This involves risks linked to financial activity online, including gambling, misleading advertising, phishing, or scams designed to obtain personal or financial information.

Safeguarding children from these risks is a shared responsibility between school and home. By working together, we can help children develop the knowledge and skills needed to stay safe online. For further guidance on supporting your child's digital wellbeing at home, please visit the [E-Safety page on the school website](#).

PTA FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Next **Friday, 6 March** the PTA are holding the World Book Day Disco, 5pm - 6.15pm. Children are invited to dress up as their favourite book character for a chance to win a prize. [Tickets are on sale via the PTA website](#). Save the date - on **Friday 17 April** the PTA are holding our first Family Ceilidh at Marple Sports Club. Tickets will be on sale soon, but keep the day free in your diary, we'd love to see you all there!



THE MONTH (OR SO) AHEAD...KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Key Event
<i>Please note the dates and times detailed below are provisional and may be changed if necessary. New dates in bold.</i>	
2 March	Lent Mission Day – Walk with Me.
4 March	Author Visit (Louise Austin) for Years 3-6 to celebrate World Book Day.
6 March	PTA World Book Day Disco 5:00-6:15pm. Tickets now available from St Mary's PTA.
9 March	Year 6 celebration of the word at 2:30pm. All welcome.
13 March	Mother's Day Assembly led by Reception 9:30-10:00am. All welcome.
13 March	Nursery Mother's Day Stay and Play 9:00-11:30am.
13 March	Year 1 Mother's Day Afternoon Tea 2:00-3:00pm.
17 March	Choir to sing at Stockport Town Hall – Via the Viaduct Concert 6:15-8:00pm.
23-27 March	Year 5 to lead Stations of the Cross 9:00am each day in the hall.
23 & 25 March	Parents Evenings 3:40-6:30pm.
27 March	Celebration Assembly 2:15pm. All welcome.
27 March	School closes for the Easter holidays.
13 April	School reopens following the Easter holidays.
17 April	PTA Ceilidh at Marple Sports Club.
22 April	Coffee and Cake Social. 1:30-3:00pm in the hall. All welcome!

Wishing you all a happy weekend. Mr John Nish.