The sermon on the Mount introduces us to the Beatitudes. Jesus began his address to the gathering crowd with what is now known as the Beatitudes. We can use this to prepare ourselves for Easter.

Jesus starts off with **blessed are those who are poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**...

Being poor in spirit means that you shouldn’t be attached to all the ‘stuff’ you have. That you understand that God has given you all the great things or blessings and we should be very thankful and even willing to give them up or share them with others... Think about these following points for a minute...

- Do I focus too much on ‘things’ rather than people?
- Do I share my gifts...talents...time...and belongings with others as often as I should?

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted**...

Mourning is when we’re really sad. We have all cried when we’ve been hurt or someone we knew has died. But we can also mourn when we see injustices and wrong doing in our lives. God promises to comfort us when we need it...think about these following points for a minute...

- Do I take the time to ask God for help when I need it?
- Do I help those who I know are suffering?
From the Principal . . .

Last Wednesday we celebrated Ash Wednesday with Mass in St Anne’s Church. Ash Wednesday marks the start of the Lenten season leading up to Easter. Lent is a perfect time to think of others and put their needs before our own. This ties in nicely with the section in this newsletter entitled: “How Can I Help My Child Be Successful In School?” Perhaps we could really focus on what we can do to help our children succeed at school so that they may fully experience the freedom that comes with the gift of education.

Monday evening was the St Joseph’s School Opening Mass for 2016. It was lovely to see so many children and families there. It is really important that we ask God to bless the journey we embark on together this year and to strengthen the bonds between school and home so that together we can help our students become lifelong learners and responsible global citizens. The Parents and Friends Association again provided a wonderful dinner following the Mass. The sense of community was wonderful.

In the classrooms on Monday evening the teachers demonstrated the routines and practices particular to their space of learning. It was obvious how the atmosphere of the classrooms has changed over the year as the collaborative classrooms and shared learning spaces have become the norm. I hope you were able to sense the enormous pride the students have in their learning spaces and how engaged they are in their educational processes.

The parents in all classes were introduced to the more formal goal setting practices taking place in 2016. The teachers are working currently with the students to help articulate student learning goals. At the Term 1 Parent Interviews, parents, students and teachers will state the individual current goals and design a collaborative plan for the students to achieve these goals. Each child will be concentrating on their own individual goals and parents and teachers will be assisting them to succeed in achieving them.

Goal Setting needs to be SMART:

- SPECIFIC
- MEASURABLE
- ATTAINABLE
- RELEVANT
- TIME-BOUND

Congratulations to our swimming squad that represented St Joseph’s at the Regional Carnival last week. Again I was very impressed with the reports of the sportsmanship of every student. Congratulations to Tia Magner, Amy Redgate, Patrick Magner and Axul Hourn who were selected to represent the Upper Hunter Region at Diocesan level in March.

Video conferencing facilities have recently been installed in the Library. Already teachers have been able to use these to hold collaboration meetings and
professional development sessions with educational personnel in Sydney. We are looking forward to using it to bring increased educational opportunities for our students also…stay tuned!

The Parents and Friends Association at St Joseph’s now has a new secretary. Thank you to Peta Luke who accepted this position at our last Monday’s meeting.

St Joseph’s School is a very vibrant, happy place of lifelong learning. Our team of fabulous teachers and support staff work tirelessly to help every student to reach their potential and every occasion to be an opportunity to learn. I am so proud of our school community and I hope you are too.

Teachers will be learning new ways to motivate and inspire students to become quality writers this week as they attend professional development in Muswellbrook. Miss Farrow and Mrs Whale will be travelling to Newcastle on Thursday to investigate a framework to guide our student wellbeing programs. More information on both of these days to follow.

_Helen Whale_

We need your help for:

Harmony Day, 21 March, celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity. It’s about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

It is a day for all Australians to embrace cultural diversity and to share what we have in common.

The central message for Harmony Day is that ‘everyone belongs’, reinforcing the importance of inclusiveness to all Australians.

This year’s theme is ‘our diversity is our strength’!

The focus is all about celebrating the cultural diversity that is a big part of our Australian way of life. Not only is it one of our greatest strengths, but many of us would agree our diversity make us stronger too.

On Monday 21st March we will be doing some activities for Harmony day and the Liturgy will have a Harmony Day focus. We would also like to provide a little taste of food from different cultures for the children to try. Would you be interested in cooking some cuisine from another culture? If so please ring the school and leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible!

Many thanks

Tanya Ninness
AWARDS

Congratulations to our award winners of Weeks 2 and 3:

Kindergarten
Jye Bates - for great work in computers and helping others
Ivaana Gaur – for great work during maths
Annabelle Hunt - showing good skills during literacy groups
Chad Booth - for sharing interesting information with the class

1/2
Levi Hourn – for great participation in solving whole number problems
William Collins – for being a great class leader
Jeremy Hopkins - for showing great knowledge of number facts
Ellie Holland - for a fantastic effort during literacy groups

3/4
Alister Fairfull - for settling beautifully into the 3/4 classroom
Emily Wright - for her excellent knowledge of collective nouns
Braeden Halse - for excellent strategies in spelling unknown words
Paddy Wong - for excellent communication skills

5/6
Axul Hourn - for his interesting contributions to class discussions
Jorji Taaffe - for her wonderful work ethic!
Olivia Collins - for her great background knowledge about Australia’s colonisation
Tia Magner - for always giving of her best

Playground Champion:
Patrick McLaren - for showing consideration towards others in the playground
Jye Bates - for beautiful manners on the playground
Alister Fairfull - for being a great friend on the playground

Principal’s Awards:
Fiona Tomy – for her outstanding reading skills.

Healthy Harold is on his way!

Next week, 23rd & 24th February, Hunter Life Education will be visiting our school and running sessions for each of our classes.

The program helps children to:
- build their awareness and understanding of the link between the choices they make and their short and longer term consequences
- value their safety and health and that of others
- develop attitudes that can prepare them to make safer and healthier choices and
- identify strategies and build confidence and skills that can help them to deal with peer and community pressure

We are grateful to Mt Arthur Coal for subsidising the cost of this program. This school will cover the remaining cost.

You will find on the last page of this newsletter an order form for Healthy Harold Merchandise and the option of making a donation to this worthy organisation.

If you would like to order, it would be helpful if you would place the order form and payment in an envelope and return to school by next Monday.

Best wishes to all the members of our school community who will be celebrating their birthday in the coming weeks .....

Mrs Whale

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
On Tuesday evening 9th February the Staff of St Joseph’s travelled to Newcastle to be part of the annual “Called to Serve Mass” at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Hamilton. This is a very special Mass where all the staff members in our schools are asked to come together to pray and receive a special commissioning to continue to do the work of God in our schools.

It is also at this Mass where staff members are awarded the Monsignor Coolahan Awards for Excellence in particular areas: Teaching, Leadership, Support Staff, First Five Years, Innovation and Community.

We were very honoured to be part of this evening as Mrs Helen Whale received the Excellence in Leadership Award. I have included part of the citation from the evening regarding Helen’s award.

‘St Joseph’s Merriwa is a warm and friendly school, due in large part to Helen Whale’s strong commitment to the Catholic ethos. This is evident in her spiritual leadership, her involvement in the parish and the way in which she communicates and models the teachings of the Gospel to staff, students and parents. Helen Whale leads the school community of St Joseph’s Merriwa in a manner consistent with Catholic values and provides opportunities for staff and students to participate in liturgy, pastoral care and social justice initiatives. She encourages and supports a positive climate within the school community, building strong relationships with all levels of the school, the parish and the local community.

On a recent visit to St Joseph’s colleagues were greeted by an atmosphere of welcome, where students, staff, families and the surrounding community clearly felt valued and supported. ‘Let the children come’ examples the inclusive nature of enrolment at St Joseph’s under Helen’s guidance. Helen obviously places an important emphasis on the Catholic school as an ‘option for the poor’ and ensures equity for all families. She is clearly committed to authentic learning and challenges her staff to provide quality teaching and learning which will enable students to become self-aware, intellectually curious, critical and creative thinkers, respectful of others, engaged citizens and committed to both spiritual growth and lifelong learning. Helen acts with truth and integrity in all her interactions. She relates to students, teachers and parents in ways that are engaging and open, inviting reflection and evaluation of school policies, processes and procedures.

Helen lives and attends Mass within the community, takes an active role in the district and participates in the life of the parish. She clearly values the link between school and home, school and parish and home and parish, and works to strengthen and grow these relationships in a positive manner.

Helen speaks about ‘our school’, and ‘our plans for improvement’. She clearly articulates the school achievement goals and is prepared to acknowledge the barriers to learning which are specific to her community. As a teacher and leader, Helen works for and with the staff to impact student achievement, enabling all stakeholders to actively participate in the improvement and achievement of school goals.

Helen is growing St Joseph’s Merriwa as a school which is Catholic, authentic, effective and a place of excellence. She is a highly effective and quality principal who is able to interpret the narrative of St Joseph’s to remind everyone why they are there, and why their contributions are so important.’

As a staff we were very privileged to join with Helen and her family for such a special night and we would like to congratulate her on such a wonderful award and all that she does for our school.

Anne Marie Peebles
RE Coordinator
1. **Read EVERYDAY!** You can read to your child or have your child read to you - either way READ!

2. Create a **consistent** after-school routine. Help your child study and complete their homework.

3. Be **POSITIVE!** Always speak positively about school, learning, and your child’s teacher.

4. Encourage! Give your child the **opportunity** to excel in all areas of their academics.

5. Be sure that your child is getting **plenty of rest** each night and is ready for school each day.

6. Teach your child to be **responsible** for their actions and to take pride in all they do!

7. **Stay INVOLVED!** Make it a point to ask your child about their day.

8. **Communicate** - Please know you can contact the school with any questions or concerns.

LENTEN GROUP

Lent began on Ash Wednesday and as is normally the tradition, we will be running a weekly Lenten discussion group helping us to prepare spiritually for Easter. Sessions will go for approximately one hour each week, the first being today at 3.30pm. Session days vary over the following weeks and are shown on the front page calendar. Please feel free to join us!

St. Joseph's P&F Association

**Next P&F meeting:**
**Monday 14th March 2016**
**4.30pm in the MacKillop Room**

*All families and friends most welcome and encouraged to attend!*

**THANK YOU . . .**

to the Wong family who gave up some valuable time to clean the Aberdeen Bus recently.

**CANTEEN ROSTER**

- 24 Feb
- 2 Mar
- 9 Mar

**BUS ROSTER**

- 20/21 Feb
- 27/28 Feb
- 5/6 Mar

**Uniform Shop**

The P&F Uniform Shop will be open each Tuesday morning between 8.30 and 9.00am for your uniform needs.

If you have any queries regarding school uniform, please contact De Patterson on 0416 194 501.
St. Joseph's Primary School P&F Meeting
Monday 8 February 2016, St Joseph's School


Confirmation of previous Minutes. Moved by Helen Whale, seconded by Bronwyn Redgate.

General Business


- **P&F to cater for school mass and parent information night – Monday 15 Feb 2016.** Mass at 6pm. Peta Luke to send out invitation with RSVP. Catering numbers need to be with Mel Bates on Friday. Mel Bates to organise food; sausages, cakes, ice-cream, etc. Meal to be served to children directly after Mass.

- **Recent working bee was very productive and well attended with 42 people.** Advanced ‘Flowering Ash’ trees have been planted. These trees are fast growing with deep roots. Provided to the school by the P&F at $65 each. A wonderful donation of hay for garden mulch provided by Richard, Jodie, John, Patrick and Tia Magner.

- **St Joseph's garden and grounds discussed with mention that new position needed for annual tree planting ceremony for new families to St Joseph’s.** Bronwyn Redgate put forward the idea of a formal garden, with hedges and urns, within the grounds. Noted that the dry creek bed is still in planning stage. Noted that ‘Manchurian Pears’ are attractive in the playground and a good tree to plant more of.

- **Blanford Horseports Day is 4 March 2016.** This is on the calendar for St. Joseph’s to attend this year. A teacher is required for a 7.30 am start. Pauline Lawler to liaise with Helen Whale.

- **P&F meeting day and time survey confirmed that 4.30 pm on the second Monday of each month during school terms is the best time for majority of families that responded to survey.**

- **Gymnastics to continue this year for sport.** Helen Whale researching providers.

- **Magician Joel Howlett to visit St Joseph’s again this year.** Magic show plus workshop for older students. P&F to fund. Moved by Helen Whale, seconded by Bronwyn Redgate. All in favour. Motion carried.

Principal’s Report –

- Total enrolments, 65 students; 7 new kinders; 1 new student in Year 4.
- Opening Mass night will include parent information session in each classroom.
- Special development days for teachers this year will be directed at two separate subjects: writing and maths for students. A personal development day is scheduled for teachers on 17 February 2016 (pupil free day). The focus on this day will be writing and the course title is ‘Seven Steps To Writing’. Noted that feedback on this course is good.
- National Future Schools Expo and Conference in March will be attended by Helen Whale and Sam Kerr.
- ‘Best Start’ for kindergarten students - feedback was all positive.
- Parents in partnership sessions to continue at P&F meetings.
- Plans to extend student learning collaboration further to parents. In the first instance this will be a goal setting meeting with teacher, student and parents with particular focus on student needs.

Treasurer’s Report – report from Bronwyn Redgate with information on balances and term deposits.


Meeting closed 5.30 pm.

Next meeting: 14 March 2016
Special Needs Information Day

Come along and hear Catholic Schools Office representatives speak about support available for children enrolled in our Catholic schools.

CatholicCare Social Services will also come along to offer information about their services.

Morning tea provided.

2016 Info days

March 15
St James’ Primary School
Kotara South
11am - 1pm &
7pm - 8.30pm

March 16
St James’ Primary School
Muswellbrook
11am - 1pm

March 22
St Joseph’s Primary School
Taree
11am - 1pm

The Special Needs Information Day is provided free of charge!

R.S.V.P. (For catering)
Cath Garrett-Jones
Parent Liaison and Resource Officer
P 4979 1303
E cath.garrett-jones@mn.catholic.edu.au

The provision of the opportunity to gather information from Service Providers present does not constitute an endorsement of their service from the Catholic Schools Office or Federation of P & F Associations – Diocese of Maitland–Newcastle. It is a matter for each individual to determine the appropriateness of any service provider for their own needs.
HAROLD MERCHANDISE

Dear Parents,

Life Education NSW is a not for profit community-based organisation that relies heavily on fundraising within the community to assist in meeting the shortfall left after receiving minimal assistance from Government funding.

The sale of Harold merchandise to the children whilst the program is visiting each school supports the fundraising activities of local committees and all proceeds support Life Education within each local area. These products help to remind children about the messages delivered to them during their Life Education session and have either a picture of Harold or the Life Education logo on them.

The educator will provide the opportunity for children to purchase these products during the school visit. Please provide the correct money in an envelope with the item written on the face of the envelope along with your child's name and class. This allows the educator to process orders efficiently and accurately. Orders will be returned by the conclusion of the visit.

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<tr>
<th>Product Description</th>
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<td>Harold Hand Ball</td>
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<td>Harold Sticky Note Pad</td>
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<td>Harold Stationery Set</td>
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Name: ___________________________ Child's Class: ___________________________

NB Harold Products are subject to availability
Life Education NSW thanks you for your support.

☐ I would like to donate __________ to Life Education NSW.
Gifts of $2.00 or over are tax deductible.

Name: ___________________________ Phone (optional): ___________________________
Address: ___________________________ Postcode: ___________________________
Suburb: ___________________________ Child's Class: ___________________________
Email (optional): ___________________________ Child's Class: ___________________________

Visit Life Education at www.lifeeducation.org.au or www.healthyharold.org.au