



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Wednesday 15th March 2023
Term 1 Week 8

P.O. Box 2027
Ballarat East VIC 3354
Phone: 5331 6311
Fax: 5331 8337

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 Week 8

Wednesday 15th March

NAPLAN testing commences

Thursday 16th March

6pm at St Alipius Year 4 SFX
Sacrament of Reconciliation

Friday 17th March

No Assembly today

Term 1 Week 9

Monday 20th March

NAPLAN testing concludes

Friday 24th March

12.40pm 5CC Assembly

7pm Mix + Mingle at Oscar's

Term 1 Week 10

Wednesday 29th March

9.30am School Alive Tour

6pm School Alive Tour

Thursday 30th March

Ballarat Catholic Primary
Schools Cross Country, Fed Uni

Thurs 30th-Fri 31st March

Year 5 Sovereign Hill School

Friday 31st March

Casual dress day (*Donations
to Caritas-Project Compassion*)

12.40pm 3VG Assembly

Term 1 Week 11

Monday 3rd April

9am in Gym

Holy Thursday Liturgy

*Please note change of date

Last Day of Term 1

Term 2 (9 weeks)

Mon 24th April - Fri 23rd June

Wednesday 26th April

ANZAC gathering

Friday 28th April

9.30am at St Alipius Church
Term 2 Mass

Mon 1st-Fri 5th May

Book Fair in Library

Friday 5th May

12.40pm 6MM Assembly

Friday 12th May

Mothers' Day celebration

Friday 19th May

12.40pm 1EM Assembly

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

Did you enjoy the long weekend? I know that I did! Sometimes it's important to stop and take a breath before we push on for the second half of term. This year we have had an extra-long, long weekend with the school closure day yesterday. Our staff spent time working on our literacy focus for this year; Structured Literacy. This called for new training as we move forward with this program.

Over recent years there has been much in the media around literacy standards across the Country. In my more cynical moments I often think that when there is no other news around, Education can always be brought to the fore! One thing that we know without any doubt is that in Australia, our students are fortunate to have access to excellent educators who have many skills at their disposal. In this instance, our school is no exception. Our staff are experts in education and our school has a history of leading the way in providing access to programs that are designed to improve learning outcomes for all students. Structured Literacy is a good example of this. We are focusing our teaching on strong core instruction which is evidence based and has evolved from the science of Reading and Learning.

We know that knowledge builds on itself. With the Structured Literacy approach we are using all the good elements of learning such as phonics, syllables, morphology, syntax and semantics to teach sound literacy skills every day. You can help us by ensuring that your children come to school each day ready to learn and rearing to go. Good fuel in the tank followed by a positive attitude to learning helps to build the conditions that allow our students to thrive. How exciting is that!

God bless,



Mark Hogbin.

Farewell Gab This week we say farewell to Ms. Gab McKinnis who has fulfilled the role of Business Manager at St. Francis Xavier for the past 7 years. Anyone who has had the opportunity to work with Gab will say with confidence that she always has the best interests of our school at heart. As a member of our school leadership team, I will certainly miss Gab, and her keen knowledge of financial matters in our school. We wish you all the best Gab for your new position at DOBCEL. How lucky they are to have you!

Mix & Mingle Have you purchased your tickets for the Mix & Mingle yet? We are looking forward to a great evening together at Oscars as we welcome new families into our community and reacquaint ourselves with friends from time past. Let's all put the date in the diary and make an effort to enjoy an hour or two among friends. See you there!



Friday 26th May
Years 3-6 SFX Athletics Day
at Llanberris

Friday 2nd June
12.40pm F TW Assembly

Friday 16th June
12.40pm 2EH Assembly

**6pm Sat 17th and 10.30am
Sun 18th June at St Alipius**
Year 4 First Eucharist

Term 3 (10 weeks)
Mon 10th July - Fri 15th Sept

Friday 14th July
9.30am in Gym Term 3 Mass
12.40pm 4BW Assembly

Friday 21st July
12.40pm 1MM Assembly

Fri 28th July school closure

Friday 4th August
12.40pm 5OH Assembly

Friday 11th August
12.40pm F LH Assembly

Friday 18th August
12.40pm 6ZA Assembly

Friday 25th August
Book Week celebrations

Friday 1st September
Fathers' Day celebration

Thursday 7th September
6pm at St Alipius
Year 3 Confirmation

Friday 8th September
12.40pm 1JS Assembly

Term 4 (12 weeks)
Mon 2nd Oct - Wed 20th Dec

Friday 6th October
9.30am at St Alipius Mass

Friday 13th October
12.40pm 5JF Assembly

Friday 20th October
Grandparents' Day
*Please note change of date

Friday 27th October
12.40pm 2CJ Assembly
*Please note change of date

Friday 3rd November
12.40pm F MM Assembly

Friday 10th November
12.40pm 4CP Assembly

Friday 17th November
12.40pm 3NM Assembly

Friday 24th November
12.40pm F GJ Assembly

Friday 1st December
12.40pm 2GH Assembly

Monday 18th December
9.30am in Gym Mass

NAPLAN Students in Year 3 and Year 5 will be taking part in the annual NAPLAN tests over the coming fortnight. NAPLAN tests are a nationwide testing regime which provides a snapshot in time for parents and teachers to better understand student progress. The students are well prepared and looking forward to completing the online tests. We encourage you to chat with your children at home about NAPLAN and what it means to them.

Thank-You! Thank you to our many families who supported the school closure day this week. We understand that it can be difficult for families to accommodate school closures and we appreciate your support.

Sibling Enrolments 2024 If you have a child to enroll in Foundation in 2024 at St. Francis Xavier please ensure that you lodge their information on the Catholic Education website as soon as possible. This information will secure a place for your child but without it we cannot guarantee that places will be available.

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>

Social Media A gentle reminder that while social media can be a great means of communication, it can also be discouraging when derogatory comments are posted about people in our community. Let's choose to utilise social media to spread the good news with each other as we celebrate learning together.

Please find at the end of this newsletter: School Alive Tours and 2024 Enrolment Information; Parish Bulletin; Assembly Awards; NAPLAN tips by Dr Justin Coulson.

Library Books: Your assistance would be greatly appreciated in helping us track down missing books. Overdue notices will be sent home soon. Please return any overdue books that are at home or let Sue Shuttleworth (sshuttle@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au) know if they have been lost or if you're sure they have been returned. Please remind children that borrowed books need to be scanned back in by the teacher before they can go back on the library shelves. Books need to go home and return to school in a Library bag to protect them please. Thank you very much.

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday March 12, 2023 Third Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Gospel: John 4:5-42 (*Below is the shortened version*)

A Samaritan woman came to draw some water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink of water." (His disciples had gone into town to buy food.) The woman answered, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan — so how can you ask me for a drink?" (Jews will not use the same cups and bowls that Samaritans use.)

Jesus answered, "If only you knew what God gives and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask him, and he would give you life-giving water. All those who drink this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring which will provide him with life-giving water and give him eternal life."

"Sir," the woman said, "give me that water! Then I will never be thirsty again, nor will I have to come here to draw water."

Many more believed because of his message, and they said to the woman, "We believe now, not because of what you said, but because we ourselves have heard him, and we know that he really is the Saviour of the world."

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below)*

Gospel reflection:

Jesus is thirsty and so he asks a Samaritan woman for a drink from the well.

The woman is surprised because normally Jews and Samaritans did not get along. It was also unusual at the time for a man to talk to a woman he did not know- but even though it is unusual, Jesus talks to the woman anyway. Why do you think he does this?

St. Francis Xavier Primary School is a Child Safe School called to action through Gospel values and Mercy tradition. Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.

Jesus is showing us that God loves everyone, no matter who they are, where they come from or the colour of their skin. Just like Jesus in this story we all need water to drink. We need food to eat. A safe place to live, somewhere to learn and someone to look after us when we are sick. Sometimes people forget that God loves us all and that we are part of one global family. They only see the differences between themselves and another group of people and this can lead to many problems.

So this week let's do what we can to help other people. Let's treat those who are different to us with kindness and respect. Let's share with others and try to live in peace.

Our Challenge: How can we work together to make the world a better place for everyone? *(Adapted from CAFOD website)*



Sacrament of Reconciliation

This week we pray for many of our Year 4 children who will be making their Sacrament of Reconciliation at St Alipius Church on Thursday evening.

Last week our Year 4 classes attended Parish Mass with Fr Jorge and he spoke to them about how reconciliation is about right relationship and forgiveness. As a part of their Religious Education, the children have been invited to think about how we treat others with our words and our actions. We know sometimes we don't get it right and we miss the mark of what we are aiming to be. (The word 'sin' is the word the Church uses- it comes from ancient Hebrew and means

'missing the mark'). Fr Jorge also hopes to visit the children this week at school.

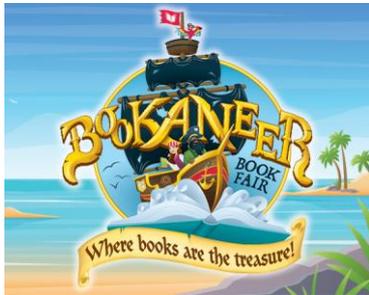
Baptism Preparation – Ballarat Parishes

The next preparation session for Baptism will be held on Thursday April 6th. **Please note** that given this is Holy Thursday, there will only be one session on this day as opposed to the usual two. The session will be held at 10 am at the Cathedral Hall. If you know of anyone wishing to attend a session on this day, please inform them that the **5.30 pm session will not happen on this day**.



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

Curriculum News



Book Fair: We are very excited to announce that the Book Fair is taking place this year! Our Book Fair will begin on Monday 1st May and conclude on Friday 5th May 2023.

The Book Fair provides children with the opportunity to explore literature and select books of interest. The Book Fair is a great way to celebrate reading within our community with hundreds of fun, engaging and affordable books for the children to discover. Prior to the Book Fair, classes will be given the opportunity to view the selected books and write a wish list.

Book Fair dates: Monday 1st May- Friday 5th May **Location:** Our school LIBRARY

Shopping hours: 8:30am- 8:50 am & 3:00pm- 4:00pm

Special activities: Maze activity, Word Find, Story writing, Colouring activity, Guessing Game)

NAPLAN: This week students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will take part in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). NAPLAN was first introduced in 2008 and has become a routine part of the school calendar in Australia. NAPLAN is how governments, education authorities and schools determine whether young Australians are reaching important educational goals.

From Wednesday 15th March through to Monday 20th March our Year 3 and 5 children will participate in these sessions.

**NAPLAN
2023**





Student - Led Conferences at SFX: Your child(ren) will be showcasing their schoolwork and discussing learning goals with you through Student-Led Conferences. During Student – Led Conferences, your children will lead the discussion with you about their school work, while teachers will help direct conversation and answer questions you may have.

These conferences are scheduled in week 10 of this term on the following dates: Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th March.

Bookings for these conferences will be open on PAM by Wednesday 15th March.

These meetings will last for 15 minutes, and we encourage all families to attend. Children must attend these meetings! We have several goals for holding conferences using this format:

- For parents/carers – we hope that you will get to see rather than simply being told about your child’s progress
- For students – we hope students will take more responsibility for their learning
- For teachers – we want teachers to have more meaningful and impactful conferences with you
- For all – we want to maximize our time together, create ways to partner with one another to support student success.

Questions to ask your child at Student - Led Conferences.

Here are some questions for you to ask your child during their Student – Led Conference.

These are suggestions, so please look them over and pick a few that you would like to ask!

1. What are you most proud of?
2. It makes me proud to see that
3. Can you tell me more about ...?
4. I can tell that you improved in
5. What did you find challenging this term?
6. Did you reach your goals? Why/Why not?
7. What can we do together at home to support your learning?

We have deliberately formed them as Student – Led and not 3 – Way Conferences. Highly Effective Catholic Primary Schools promote Student Voice. Student – Led Conferences are identified as a significant way of developing Student Voice and all the latest research and evidence around Assessment as Learning supports this.

If a parent/carer needs to have a conversation with the teacher not in the presence of the child in regards to other matters, this needs to take place at another time. Contact can be made with the class teacher requesting further time if needed.



Have a wonderful week.

Jane Clark, **Deputy Principal – Learning Enhancement**

Wellbeing News

Little worriers look to parents and teachers for reassurance when they feel anxious. This can be evident in many ways, such as asking a million questions, wanting parents or teachers to make decisions for them or continually seeking praise. Some adult responses such as ignoring their worries or constantly reassuring them are unhelpful. As adults we don't have to fix our children’s problems, but we do have to acknowledge when they are worried (even when it seems silly to us!) Similarly, allowing a child to avoid an activity that makes them anxious is counterproductive- avoidance may help kids feel safe in the short term, but it risks the establishment of a long-term pattern that can be impossible to shift.

A practical way to show that you are trying to understand them is to validate how they are feeling and help to normalise that feeling. It is positive to acknowledge their discomfort and help give them the language to express it, for example you could say, “ It’s normal to feel a little nervous and worried about swimming/ Naplan/ the party. When I feel worried I get a pain in the tummy/ sweaty hands/ wobbly legs too. I find it helps me to take some big breaths/ use my brave thinking/ tell myself I’ve coped with this feeling before. What might help you?”

This week we have Naplan testing in Years 3 and 5- attached is a great tip sheet for children and parents who may be feeling a little anxious or stressed about it.

Sport/Physical Education News

Regional Swimming Well done to Amelia (Yr 4) who swam at the Regional Swimming Carnival on Tuesday. We are sure that you swam your best and we are all very proud of you.

After School Sporting Schools program

This week our after school Sporting Schools program continues.

The remaining Monday (Volleyball) sessions are:

Monday Mar 20 (3:30pm - 4:30pm) (*Mar 13 is a Public Holiday*)

Monday Mar 27 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)

The remaining Thursday (Basketball) sessions are:

Thursday Mar 16 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)

Thursday Mar 23 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)

Thursday Mar 30 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)

2023 Sports Dates

Term 1:

- Week 8 - Tuesday Mar 14th - Regional Swimming @ Horsham
- Week 10 - Thursday Mar 30th - Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Cross Country @ Fed Uni

SFX Football Jumpers, Singlets & Netball dresses/bibs

If you have any SFX Football jumpers, singlets or netball dresses/bibs at home could you please return them to either Mr Down or Mr Carroll.

Have a wonderful week.



Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**

P&F News

Zooper Doopers for sale on Mondays. 50 cents each.

Please see below a link to sign up to help with Zooper Doopers on a Monday.

Your help is really appreciated!

<https://signup.com/go/LSiymVV>

Please be aware that you will need a current Working With Children Check to be a helper. Thank you.

The P and F committee are continually in need for volunteers to **help pack hot lunches**, please sign up via this link.

SignUp.com
signup.com



Mix
and
mingle

Friday the 24th March
Oscar's (Atrium Room)
18 Doveton St Sth, Ballarat
7pm start
\$30 a ticket

Includes 1st drink free, finger food, live music and door prize

On sale now through Flexischools

Foundation Enrolment 2024 – Enrolment Information

School Alive Tours

We are happiest when prospective families pay us a visit to see for themselves what makes us different.

New and Existing Families are invited to join us to learn about St. Francis Xavier Primary School.

An information session will take place at 9:30 am with a School Alive Tour to follow:

1. Tuesday 21st February 2023
2. Tuesday 28th February 2023
3. Tuesday 7th March 2023
4. Wednesday 29th March 2023

An information session will take place at 6pm with a School Alive Tour to follow:

5. Wednesday 29th March 2023

Event Registration

To register your attendance for a School Alive Tour please complete the Registration Form at:

<https://www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au/enrol/open-days/>

Online Enrolment Opens from Wednesday 8th February 2023

Foundation Enrolment 2024 – New Families

Attending a School Alive Tour is the first step in the enrolment process.

The online City of Ballarat Expression of Interest for Enrolment form is the second step in the enrolment process. If you wish to do so, please nominate St Francis Xavier Primary School as your first preference for your child's education.

Please note the link to the CEOB Expression of Interest form does not become live until Wednesday 8th February 2023

Please click on this link below or scan the QR code and fill in and submit the City of Ballarat Catholic School Expression of Interest Form:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>



Foundation Enrolment 2024 – Existing Families

Enrolments open for children of existing families who start Prep in 2024 on Wednesday 8th February 2023. Parents of existing families who have a child to start in 2024 - please complete the Expression of Interest form by clicking on the following link to submit a City of Ballarat Expression of Interest for Enrolment Form:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>



Please note this is an essential step for existing families in ensuring your child is enrolled in Prep 2024.



▶ **SS PETER & PAULS**
701 FISKEN ST
BUNINYONG 3357



▶ **ST ALIPIUS**
82 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350



▶ **PARISH OFFICE**
84 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350
PH 5332 6611
OPEN TUE – FRI
10.00 AM – 1.00 PM

8 March 2023

Third Sunday of Lent

Harden not your hearts

St Alipius parish

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballarata-east/

MASS TIMES

St Alipius

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri 9:30 AM
Stations of the cross after Friday mass
Saturday 12:00 PM anointing, 6.00 PM
Sunday 9.00 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th)
10.30 AM (2nd & 4th)

Ss Peter and Paul's

Sunday 9:00 AM (2nd & 4th)
10:30 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th)
Rosary – Thursday 11:00 AM

Mass and prayer resources

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

Counting team 7 this week – 9:30 AM

PARISH VISION STATEMENT

THE COMBINED
COMMUNITIES OF ST ALIPIUS
PARISH REACH OUT IN THE
SPIRIT OF FAITH, HOPE,
LOVE, AND ACCEPTANCE, AS
GOD CALLS US TO IN THE
GOSPELS.

WE PRAY FOR

Faithfully departed: Reynaldo
Suratos

Anniversaries: Roland
Dimaculangan, Noelene Fletcher

Unwell: Mary Hall, Peter
McLachlan, Sarah McLachlan

*Our parish is committed to the
safety, well-being, and dignity of
all children and vulnerable adults.*

*We acknowledge this land's
traditional owners and custodians
and pay our respects to Elders
past, present, and emerging.*



Parish Priest
Fr Jorge Jr De Chavez, OSJ

Sacramental and Parish
Coordinator
Cathy Prunty

Administrative Assistant
Natalie Shannon

Parish Pastoral Council
Chair
David Morrison

Finance Officer
Kerrie McTigue

Finance Chair
Paul O'Beirne

Child Safety Officer
Emily Clarke

Liturgy Coordinator
David Santamaria
www.sapliturgy.net.au

Funeral Ministry
Carmel Flynn
stalipiusfuneral@gmail.com



ANOINTING MASS

After the anointing mass next Saturday 18 March at 12 PM, there will be a cuppa in the hall. It would be much appreciated if people could please bring a plate to share. If anyone who would like to attend needs transportation, please call the parish office on 5332 6611.

UPCOMING EVENTS
Anointing Mass 12.00 PM, Saturday 18 March, St Alipius
2nd Rite of Reconciliation 6.00 PM, Monday 20 March, St Alipius
Liturgy Committee meeting 5.30 PM, Tuesday 21 March, Presbytery
Fr Jorge's Silver Jubilee celebrations Saturday 15 April

PLANNED GIVING RENEWAL

The Parish Finance Committee discussed the need for a renewal of the parish's planned-giving program at its recent meeting.

We are seeking volunteers to join a planned giving program committee. Our goal is to renew and revitalise our parish's planned giving efforts and ensure the long-term sustainability of our community.

If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact the parish office and leave your details. You will then be invited to an information session to discuss the role further before committing. We look forward to hearing from you!

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The Ss Peter and Paul's community hosted the World Day of Prayer last Sunday and were thrilled with the excellent turnout. Days like this don't just happen and we would like to thank all who helped prepare for it.

VINNIES BREAD RUN

Each Monday night between 7.30 and 8.00 PM, Vinnies volunteers can be found in the St Alipius Church Hall providing bread to those in need. If this would benefit you or someone you know please call into the hall during this time. Please bring a bag to put the bread in.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Stations of the Cross will be held at Ss Peter and Paul's in Buninyong at 7:00 PM every Tuesday night during Lent. Stations of the Cross will follow the 9.30 am Mass each Friday morning at St Alipius. Everyone is welcome to attend.

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our stewardship program. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Collection basket – **\$949**

Presbytery and priest support.

Envelopes, credit cards and direct debits – **\$458**

Parish – buildings, office, administration, grounds maintenance.

For any queries or concerns, or should you wish to join our stewardship program to support our parish, please phone our Finance Officer Kerrie on 5331 2933 or email ballaratoffice@ballarat.catholic.org.au

SACRAMENTAL NEWS

During the coming week, 110 children will receive the sacrament of reconciliation for the first time during the second rite. These liturgies will be on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights. Please keep these children and their families in your prayers. Special thanks to the schools who have supported the children and to the priests who have made themselves available for these liturgies.

FR JORGE'S ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTHOOD

Fr Jorge will celebrate the 25th anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood on Thursday 13 April. As a parish, we will come together on Saturday 15 April to congratulate Fr Jorge and give thanks for his work with us and those further afield. Mass will be followed by a gathering in the hall, with more information to be shared in the coming weeks. Please keep this date free. If people are looking to give Fr Jorge a gift in recognition of this occasion, Fr Jorge asks that you give money which he would use to continue his sponsorship of a seminarian in the Philippines.

BALLARAT EAST COMMUNITY DAY AT ST ALIPIUS PS

Stalls, music food and fun. Be a part of the festivities on Sunday 2 April between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM at St Alipius Primary School grounds, 106 – 108 Victoria Street, Ballarat East.

SECOND RITE RECONCILIATION

In preparation for Easter, you are invited to gather on Monday 20 March at 6:00 PM in St Alipius, for the second rite of reconciliation. The second form of the sacrament of penance is a communal liturgical celebration that includes listening to the Word of God, followed by a homily, and an examination of conscience. Before the concluding rites, individual confession and absolution take place with people approaching a priest one at a time and privately confessing their sins. Penitents can be seen but not heard by others who are present. The second rite respects the privacy of each penitent within the communal nature of the sacrament.

BAPTISMS

**Jonty David Leehane, Levi John Leehane
and Angus Jack Leehane**

Children of Johnathan Leehane and Sophie Berlund

*The church gives faith to your children through
Baptism, and you have the task to make it grow.*

Pope Francis

VOLUNTEER THANK YOU

Many people work quietly in our parish on a regular basis in the church, grounds, hall or even at home to make it a better place. To all who volunteer, we would like to say thank you. We appreciate your support.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Zimbabwe is experiencing an intense drought, exacerbated by climate change. With the support of Caritas Hwange, Priscilla learnt conservation farming skills to grow drought-resistant crops and started poultry farming to support her family during the current food crisis. Please donate to Project Compassion 2023. Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow For All Future Generations. You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes/envelopes available from the parish, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion or by calling 1800 024 413.



CHOIR FOR MASS OF THE OILS

Singers and musicians are invited to join the music group being formed for the Mass of the Oils on Monday 3 April at 6:30 PM. Practice times are at the Cathedral on Sundays at 6:15 PM after 5:00 PM mass on 19 and 26 March and 2 April. Register your interest with Julie Boyd at julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au or call 5337 7159.

SLAVERY FREE CHOCOLATE

Easter chocolate is already on supermarket shelves, so let us recommit to buying slavery-free chocolate this year. It is also the right time to tell our families, friends, and communities about the exploitation of children in chocolate production, to encourage them to start buying slavery-free chocolate now – and to keep going after Easter. You can find the Be Slavery Free Chocolate Scorecard at www.beslaveryfree.com/chocolate. The scorecard published in 2022 and updated before Easter, features most of your favourite brands and explains how they rate in several key areas including child labour, payment of a living income and the impact on climate.

VINNIE'S SCHOOL APPEAL

More than 1 million Victorian students headed back to or started school this year. For a rising number of their families, it is getting harder to find the funds to ensure that their children have everything they need to learn and grow. The Vinnies Education (Back-to-School) Appeal, which launched on 1 February, is needed more than ever. Visit <https://donate.vinnies.org.au/appeals-vic/back-to-school-appeal-vic-2023> to donate.

POPE FRANCIS ANNIVERSARY

Pope Francis will celebrate the 10th year of his pontificate on 13 March. The Digital Synod has launched an online map featuring virtual candles representing people's prayers for the Pope. To offer a prayer and light a virtual candle, visit www.decimus-annus.org/site/index.

WALK FOR JUSTICE

This year's Palm Sunday Walk for Justice will call for Justice for Refugees, including permanent visas for all, fair processes and income support for people who are seeking recognition as refugees. Walk with us this Palm Sunday, 2 April 2 at 1.00 PM for a group reflection, with the walk starting at about 1.30 PM. Meet at the right side of the State Library of Victoria, near the Joan of Arc statue and next to Little Lonsdale Street – you'll see a large 'CAPSA', 'Jesuit Social Services' or 'Xavier Social Justice Network' or 'CSSV' banner). If you have any questions, please get in touch with Maeve at CAPSA, email info@capsa.org.au.

Reflection on the Gospel

Veronica Lawson RSM

Third Sunday of Lent: John 4:5–42

Those privileged to act as catechists in the RCIA program over the Lenten period will be introducing candidates to some of our most treasured gospel stories. In 1963, Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy called for the restoration of certain early Church practices. The two main features of Lent, baptism, and penance, were to be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. More use was to be made of the baptismal elements proper to the Lenten liturgy. Some features that were part of an earlier tradition were to be restored. In response to this call, John's stories of the Samaritan woman, the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus were moved from the weekday to the Sunday liturgy. Thus, three weeks into Lent, the liturgy invites us to take a faith journey in the company of a courageous outsider, an unnamed woman from a despised religious group.

A woman of Samaria comes to draw water from the well of Jacob, Israel's great ancestor in faith. She belongs in a long line of women whose lot as women is to undertake the burdensome, often dangerous, daily toil of carrying water so that their families might

simply survive. Jesus asks the woman for a drink and elicits a bewildered response. She responds, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" This response provides the opportunity for Jesus to move into an extended and constantly deepening exchange in which the woman proves herself a knowledgeable and worthy dialogue partner. The pursuit of water, a key baptismal symbol in the gospel tradition, provides the catalyst for her journey to faith in Jesus as the Messiah/the Christos and her engagement in the mission of proclaiming the good news to her people.

The woman becomes both disciple and missionary prophet.

Commentators tend to focus on the woman's marital status, usually in negative terms. Because she is said to have had five husbands, many presume that she is a sinner: there is nothing in the text to support this position. Successive husbands may have died. Financial, religious or societal constraints may have functioned in her decision to remarry. The



"husbands" may refer to the strange gods that claimed the allegiance of the Samaritans. There is no consensus on this among scholars.

At the outset, the woman views Jesus simply as a Jew who breaks with established custom by asking her for water. She comes to accept him as the provider of living water. Jesus understands her life story and opens up the way for her to accept him as a prophet. She takes the risk of sharing her own convictions about the locus of worship and is gifted with new understanding and with Jesus' further self-disclosure. She leaves her water jar behind and brings others to faith in Jesus as Messiah and saviour of the world. She becomes both disciple and missionary prophet.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

EXODUS 17:3–7

ROMANS 5:1–2, 5–8

JOHN 4:5–15, 19–26, 39–42

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

1 SAMUEL 16:1, 6–7, 10–13

EPHESIANS 5:8–14

JOHN 9:1, 6–9, 13–17, 34–38

Naplan week is almost here

NAPLAN week is almost here, and many parents (and kids... and even teachers) are feeling a little extra stress and anxiety. NAPLAN has a lot of critics, plenty of supporters, and a whole lot of parents and students who simply go along with it because 'it's just what we do'.

This article is designed to offer some general – and gentle – advice on what's coming.

What NAPLAN is

NAPLAN stands for the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy; a nationwide standardised test that almost every student in Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 are about to sit. Its purpose is to provide information about how education programs are working, areas for improvement, and which schools need support in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. Some critics argue that it doesn't do this particularly well... but that's beyond the scope of this discussion.

What NAPLAN does well

When it works well, NAPLAN does three things:

- 1** NAPLAN results enable the identification of problems in the school system. And they point to places where education needs to improve.

For example, NAPLAN results have shown us education gaps for indigenous students, and for students in disadvantaged schools. We knew those gaps existed. But now we know the scope and range.
- 2** Literacy and numeracy results are made transparent at a national, state and territory, and school level. We now know that states and territories have different levels of achievement when they are compared on a like-for-like basis which NAPLAN allows.
- 3** NAPLAN shows us education trends over time.

What NAPLAN doesn't do well

NAPLAN doesn't give you a useful guide on how your child is doing academically. The test is done in March and we receive the results in the late part of the year. If you want to know how your child is doing, talk to their teacher. Great teachers can give you detailed information today about your child's progress.

NAPLAN doesn't give you any information about the quality of your child's character. It doesn't tell you anything about your child's ability to work in a team, to problem-solve, to show compassion, to be creative, engaged or resilient. It's not about your child's talents.

NAPLAN also gives us no information about the school your child attends in terms of approaches to discipline, school culture, school contribution to community, or the way it encourages students in areas not covered by NAPLAN.

And in some cases it has been reported that NAPLAN, while providing data, doesn't ultimately lead to governments providing schools (or parents) with the resources needed when issues arise.

What you should do

Based on everything I've outlined above, you'll note that much of NAPLAN's focus is oriented towards education at a school, regional, state, and national level. While there is some individual focus, it's not really an individual assessment tool. It's more about how the school, the state, and the country are doing. Therefore, I suggest parents keep the following in mind:

- Don't make NAPLAN a big deal. You barely even need to talk about it with your child
- Don't offer rewards to your child for doing well on NAPLAN. Research evidence shows this adds pressure, builds anxiety, and reduces children's creativity, motivation, and interest in real learning. (One mum I spoke to wondered if bribing her child with a puppy would be helpful. It's not.)
- Don't buy practice tests for NAPLAN. Your child doesn't need to rehearse for NAPLAN
- Don't worry about NAPLAN results. Leave that to the school

Instead, you might want to try the following:

- Do show an interest in your child's education, regardless of whether NAPLAN is on or not
- Do encourage your child to read every single day. Read to them. Read with them. Have them read alone. And do this regardless of whether NAPLAN is on or not
- Do have your child participate in sports, music, art, drama, and other enrichment activities to the degree that you have the time and money for them – regardless of whether NAPLAN is on or not
- Do give your child plenty of unstructured (screen-free) time to simply be kids – especially when NAPLAN is on

What your child should do

More than anything, your child will benefit from not being particularly interested in or bothered by NAPLAN. Life should be as close to normal as possible for your child.

It's true that some schools want to see NAPLAN results before they'll consider enrolling your child. It's true that some elements of NAPLAN feel like they matter a lot to us as parents because we want to see our children succeed. But please – PLEASE – remember:

Your child's NAPLAN score is not an indicator of your child's value, your child's potential, or your child's worthiness. It's just a number. And it's more meaningful to the school system than it is to you or your child.

When NAPLAN rolls around, treat it like a small, gentle wave at the beach. It rolls up the sand. It leaves a small, temporary mark. And then it disappears back into the ocean.



AUTHOR

Dr Justin Coulson

Dr Justin Coulson is a dad to 6 daughters. He is the parenting expert and co-host of Channel Nine's Parental Guidance, and he and his wife host Australia's #1 podcast for parents and family: The Happy Families Podcast. He has written 6 books about families and parenting. For further details visit happyfamilies.com.au.

AWARDS from 10th March Assembly, hosted by 4HC

Assembly Date: 10/3/23 Term 1, Week 7	Theme: COMPASSION Compassion means to feel the suffering of others and to help ease that suffering. We show compassion to others because Jesus teaches us how to care.
F LH	Noa Cavanagh and Harry Toohey
F TW	Frankie Richards & Oscar Johnson
F GJ	Carter George and Charlotte Carter
F MM	Elliot Fulcher & Piper Swayn
1 JS	Eliza Vallance and Finn Burbidge
1 MM	Sophie Crumpton & Hughey Roberts
1 EM	Sutton Answer & Harvey Slater
2 EH	Charlotte Porter and Jameson Campbell
2 CJ	Levi Dreher and Sofia Shorter
2 GH	Eddie Anderson and Charlie Quarrell
3 NM	Madeline Purtell & Gabriel Dunne
3 JV	Carter Keen and Betsy Nicholson
3 GW	Sam Norris and Lucy Bromley
4 BW	Michelle-May Lunn & Lucinda Leonard
4 HC	Isla Tongs and Archie Williams
4 CP	Edward Lloyd and Ava Vallance
5 JF	Stella Reus and Cooper Daly
5 OH	Henry Warr and Harper Lourey
5 CC	Mitchell Kane and Lottie Rush
6 PB	Frankie Hill and Charlotte Bell
6 MM	Felicity McGrath and Henry Robb
6 ZA	Pearl Nicholson & Isaac Hatt
Environmental Education	Ella Uljanic, 3GW for the compassion she showed towards a giant moth she discovered in the school yard at lunch time on Wednesday. Ella went out of her way to protect the moth, by showing others so they too could admire its brilliant camouflage and stand guard to make sure the moth was safe.
Performing Arts	Arlo Troon and Louie Evans for being aware of the needs of others.
Visual Arts	Alby Skrokov, Xavier Staley, Wentworth Campbell and Lucy Kierce For being compassionate helpers in the Art Room.