



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 11th December 2023
Term 4 Week 11

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 4

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Wednesday 13th December
6pm Yr 6 Graduation in Gym

Friday 15th December
Last 2023 student day
3.20pm finish

Wednesday 31st January
First 2024 student day

Tuesday 20th February
9.30am Open Day/School
Alive Tour

Tuesday 27th February
9.30am Open Day/School
Alive Tour

Wednesday 6th March
9.30am Open Day/School
Alive Tour

Wednesday 27th March
9.30am & 6pm Open
Day/School Alive Tour

Dear families,

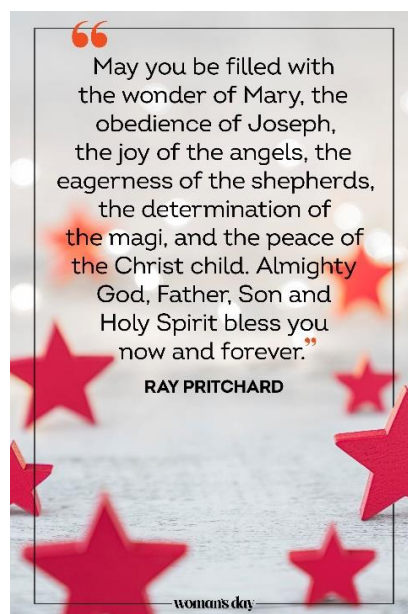
We made it to the end of the year! On behalf of the staff at Saint Francis Xavier Primary School, I would like to thank you for your support throughout this year. Your assistance with classroom projects, homework, dress-up days, hot chocolates, hot lunches, Zooper-Doopers, excursions, camps and so much more has been greatly appreciated by our staff and students. We have worked together to be a community through our words and actions.

On a personal note, I would like to thank so many families, staff and of course, all students for making me feel so welcome in my first year at our school. The staff, parents, students and friends of St. Francis Xavier have extended the hand of friendship in so many ways and I am very grateful.

As we enter into the long summer holidays, I wish everybody a very happy and safe break. May your time together be surrounded by good friends and family. May you find opportunities to rest and re-charge and may your Christmas time be blessed. On behalf of everyone at St. Francis Xavier school, Happy Christmas!

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



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.

Carols on the Oval

What a terrific evening we had last Thursday as we gathered for Christmas carols on the oval. The children certainly enjoyed a very special evening! Thank you to the many parents, friends and staff who worked so hard to make the evening such a success. A great effort! We would like to make special mention of Stephanie Nunn and Dan West who brought the evening together for us. Thankyou!



First Day 2024

Classes resume on Wednesday 31 January for the new school year. Supervision will be provided from 8.15am and the school day will conclude at 3.15pm. Our Foundation students will have their rest days on 2, 7, 14, 21, 28 February, See you in 2024!

Departing Families

It's always a little sad at the end of the school year when we say farewell to many families as children move on to secondary schools and beyond. Seven years of education passes quickly even though at the start it might seem like a long time ahead! We wish all families who are moving on from our community a very happy future. Thank you for supporting our school. We would like to make special mention of Matthew Corrigan (Year 6) whose graduation this year will end 36 years of continued association with our school. How amazing!

School Hours in 2024

Please note that the following changes will occur to our daily timetable in 2024. The gates will open each morning from 8.15am. The day will conclude at 3.15pm. As well as meeting requirements for the new Industrial agreement for teachers, we hope that these slight changes to our day will also assist families who need to drop off children prior to 8.30am as well as providing 5 minutes extra at the end of the day for those who are travelling across town for secondary school collections.

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday December 10, 2023 Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began as the prophet Isaiah had written:

"God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to clear the way for you.'

Someone is shouting in the desert 'Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!'"

So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. "Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins." Many people from the province of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the River Jordan.

John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. He announced to the people, "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)

Gospel reflection: Today we hear about John the Baptist and how he was a messenger for God, preparing people for the coming of Jesus.

When John the Baptist began to prepare the way for Jesus, it wasn't just for his friends and family. His message was for everyone who would listen.

Prayer is a way that we can prepare for Jesus too. We can also try to be kind and generous to other people and say sorry for all the things that we've done wrong. We can say sorry in prayer to God, and also we can say sorry to the people we have hurt by our actions.

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We can also make sure that we don't hurt others by taking care of the world so that it's a nice place for everyone to live. We can make sure that we only buy what we need so that there is enough for others. We can make sure we pay a fair price so that those who grow our food, or make our clothes, or our toys, can earn enough money for themselves and their families. *(Adapted from CAFOD website)*

Our Challenge: Can you think of other ways we can prepare for the coming of Jesus?



FR JORGE It was fitting that we farewelled Fr Jorge today after four years as our Parish Priest by celebrating our end of year school Mass with him. We began with the Foundation children walking in their Year Six buddies to the song "Standing on the Shoulders" and ended with the handing over the school candle and Mercy cross to the new school leaders. All the Year Sixes were given a special blessing, as is the tradition as we begin Foundation and leave after Year Six.

In Fr Jorge's homily he spoke about endings and new beginnings are a part of life and how we are never alone if we have God in our lives. He encouraged us all to be "the body of Christ" and treat others and our world with kindness and respect.

We wish Fr Jorge all the very best and safe travels as he moves to a Western Australia.

Many thanks also to all the family, friends and community members who joined us for our Eucharist- everyone is always welcome here at St Francis Xavier!



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

Curriculum News

End of Year Reports to Parents – via Parent Access Module (PAM)

Your child's School Report will be available for download from the PAM site from 4pm Wednesday afternoon (13th December). These reports have been well-prepared and represent your child's Semester Two achievements. Each report has been prepared by your child's class teacher, then read and commented on by a buddy teacher from within the school and finally read again by the Leadership Team. I commend the teachers for their efforts, professionalism and personalised comments. Please make some time to read the report and initiate discussion with your child/ren about what their teacher has written. And most importantly, enjoy and celebrate your child's report and their 2023 school year!

Structured Literacy

2024 is going to be a very exciting, rewarding and heaps of learning year as we begin our Structured Literacy processes. I know that we have the best person as our Leader for Structured Literacy. Emma Hancock is passionate, knowledgeable, driven and professional in her work. I look forward to working closely with Emma as we take our children, teachers, staff and community along with these exciting, latest evidence-based practices.

See you in 2024,



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

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Wellbeing News

Christmas is generally a time of indulgence for most families. Many parents are concerned by the excess consumerism of Christmas and the fear that their children will end up ungrateful, entitled little brats! At school this Advent Season we introduced Reverse Advent Calendars and we witnessed so much generosity and excitement when children felt they were able to make a meaningful and authentic contribution. This Christmas, “unspoil” your child by reducing the emphasis on crass commercialism with sincere, compassionate giving. Attached are ten top tips to make your Christmas truly memorable!

Wishing you all a wonderful, safe holiday break and looking forward to a fantastic 2024!

Kind regards,

Christine Meneely, **Wellbeing Leader**

Sport/Physical Education News

Thank you

As we conclude the 2023 year, on behalf of Nev and myself we thank all of the students, staff, families and friends that have played a significant part in allowing SFX to have another successful year in the Sporting field. 2023 was a very busy year for Sport and there were numerous highlights, none more so than the many wonderful opportunities we were able to provide for our students to participate and enjoy playing sport. Congratulations to all of the students that so proudly and with outstanding attitude, effort and sportspersonship represented St Francis Xavier Primary School. We wish all students and families a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

2024

Term 1:

- Week 3 - Thursday Feb 15th* - District Tennis @ BRTC
- Week 4 - Friday Feb 23rd - SFX Athletics Day @ Llanberris
- Week 5 - Friday Mar 1st - District Swimming @ Eureka Outdoor Pool

Term 2:

- Week 3 - Mon Apr 29th - Division Cross Country @ Fed Uni
- Week 5 - Friday May 17th - Division AFL @ Sebastopol
- Week 6 - Friday May 24th - Division Soccer @ Wendouree Rec Reserve
- Week 7 - Monday May 27th - Regional Cross Country @ Warrnambool
- Week 8 - Friday Jun 7th - Division Netball @ Selkirk Stadium

Term 3:

- Week 4 - Monday Aug 5th - Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics @ Llanberris
- Week 6 - Friday Aug 23rd - Division Basketball @ Selkirk Stadium
- Week 9 - Tuesday Sep 10th - Division Athletics @ Llanberris

Term 4:

- Week 1 - Friday Oct 11th - Regional Athletics @ Llanberris

Have a great week.

Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**



INSIGHTS

Unspoiling Your Kids This Christmas



Even in homes where getting by is a bit of a struggle, Christmas is generally a time of indulgence for most families. We might be fighting inflation, increased rent and mortgage payments, and rising fuel and food costs, but it's Christmas! We want to make it memorable, and spending seems to be the default to make that happen.

Yet, at the same time that we spoil ourselves and our loved ones, we often bemoan the ingratitude of our children. We feel that they're spoiled. We wish they'd look beyond themselves and stop making Christmas all about "me, me, me." And apart from that, it's expensive!

With this in mind, here are 10 tips for "unspoiling" your children this Christmas.

First, focus on others!

1. Focus on Service

This year, one family I know is baking cookies and visiting the local police station, ambulance station, and fire station to drop off some Christmas cheer. They take the time to thank the people who work to keep us safe. Others I know visit the local RSPCA with supplies or donations, drop food, books, and toys at a women's shelter, or donate food (or money for a well) to one of the many overseas charities that help those who are impoverished and in need.

2. Focus on Your Neighbourhood

Who are the people in your neighbourhood? Perhaps an elderly widow could do with a hand in her yard. 'Tis the season for fast-growing grass and gardens. Perhaps someone has just gone through a tough separation and could do with a Christmas basket to ease the pain (financial and emotional) that Christmas might bring.

One of our favourite things to do is to host a neighbourhood Christmas party. We invite all of our neighbours for a barbecue and to sing carols. Every year, we are asked for the date in advance, so people can be available!

3. Try a Secret Santa Drop

Our children's favourite Christmas activity is playing "knock and run." We select a handful of people we want to give something to each year. It might be a teacher, a friend, a coach, or a church leader. We wrap their parcels (often home-made treats), write thank you cards, and drive to their home. After parking out of sight, we sneak to their door, place their gift on the doorstep, and bang on the door before sprinting for a hiding place. Then we watch with delight as someone gets an unexpected, anonymous Christmas surprise. (It can be hard to do this well with six children, and we've often been caught—but it's always fun.)

Next—focus on the children.

4. Give Something Exciting

The reality is that our children DO want to get something exciting at Christmas. So, pick something great for them (within your budget) and help them enjoy it. A decision to not get anything can leave them feeling resentful, particularly when they see everyone else "getting."

5. Reduce the Number of Gifts They Receive

Some children receive gifts from everyone. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, parents, and even siblings are all expected to buy for everyone. This not only costs a fortune, but it can overwhelm children and leave them expecting more and more. Invite your extended family to contribute to one meaningful gift, rather than lots of bits and pieces.

6. When Opening Gifts, Take Time to Savour Them

Savouring is the magnifying, or amplifying, of a positive experience. When the children open a gift, give them time to savour it. Encourage them to play with it. Let them breathe in the excitement of the moment, rather than ripping into the next package and flinging their gifts aside.

7. Experiences Are Better Than Things

One of the most remarkable findings from positive psychology research is that spending money on experiences brings more happiness than spending money on "stuff." Perhaps a family trip will be more memorable than more toys?

In a similar vein, gifts that encourage relationships are better than gifts that promote isolation. A new game console might be fun, but it may lead to withdrawal (and fights). It might be better to purchase some games that bring the family together.

8. Rather Than Gifts, Give Letters

One year for Christmas, I contacted my siblings and asked them to give me 10 memories of special times with Dad. With six children, we had a total of 60 memories, each written on separate pieces of coloured paper and rolled up into mini-scrolls and placed into a jar. Dad opened the jar and looked at us, perplexed. He reached in and pulled out the first note. He read it and chuckled. Then it dawned on him that there were 60 notes from his children. He dipped his hand in again and read. Then he began to weep. The rest of that Christmas morning, he read, cried, laughed, and reminisced. It was a meaningful, wonderful gift that cost nothing but meant the world.

9. Encourage the Children to Write "Thank You" Notes

Christmas break is a great time to take stock of gifts and say thank you. Invite your children to write thank you notes to those who gave to them, saying specifically why they're grateful. Sincere thanks takes time—but it is a wonderful way to help the children show appreciation.

Finally, give the most valuable gift you can: time.

10. Give the Gift of Time

There may be no gift more appreciated by our children than your time. It costs so little yet is so hard to give generously. But when we give of our time generously, all the material desires our children have will fade away.

This Christmas, "unspoil" your child by reducing the emphasis on materialism, crowding out the crass commercialism of "getting" with sincere, compassionate giving. It can make your Christmas truly memorable.

How are you planning to make this Christmas one to remember?



Dr Justin Coulson

Dr Justin Coulson is the co-host and parenting expert on Channel 9's Parental Guidance, the founder of happyfamilies.com.au, and one of Australia's most trusted parenting experts. Over the past decade he has helped innumerable families with his 7 books about raising children, speaking sessions, and countless media appearances.



Give life. Give blood.



When you give blood, you give the gift of life

And it's at the top of someone's wish list.

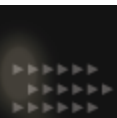
Give blood before the end of the year to get a limited-edition festive bandage designed by Madeleine Stamer. It's Lifeblood's little way of saying thank you.

Ballarat Blood Donor Centre: 601 – 603 La Trobe Street

Call 13 14 95 or visit www.lifeblood.com.au



 lifeblood teams



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY
BALLARAT EISTEDDFOD



FESTIVAL OF SCHOOLS MUSIC

BANDS & INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS



CHECK OUT OUR NEW SECTIONS
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SEPTEMBER 7 - 12

BOUGHT TO YOU BY FREEMASONS

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ORCHESTRAS, STAGE BANDS, CONCERT BANDS

Caro Convention
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ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY
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FESTIVAL OF SCHOOLS MUSIC

BANDS & INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS

Solo instrumental (includes percussion)

12 yrs and under / 16 yrs and unders / 19 yrs and under

Instrumental duo, trio or quartet

12 yrs and under / 16 yrs and unders / 19 yrs and under

Jazz/Rock combo (max 8 players)

16 yrs and unders / 19 yrs and under

THESE
SECTIONS ALSO
OFFER NON-
COMPETITIVE,
CRITIQUE ONLY
(INC VET/VCE)
FOR ALL AGES

NEW SECTIONS ADDED

THESE SECTIONS
ALSO OFFER
NON-
COMPETITIVE,
CRITIQUE ONLY
AND WORKSHOP
OPTIONS

String Ensemble or Orchestra

Junior / Intermediate / Senior

Concert Bands

Novice or beginner / Junior / Intermediate / Advanced

Stage Bands

Novice or beginner / Intermediate / Advanced