



Archdiocese of Birmingham

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mrs L. J. Yorke M.Ed.



St. Mary's mission: To love God above all things by: learning together, loving ourselves, loving each other, loving all people, loving life itself and constantly striving for excellence worthy of our God-given gifts.

December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

Our theme for the Autumn term is: 'Families and Community'

Our virtues for this half term are: - 'Intentional and Prophetic'



Dear parents and carers,

6th December 2024

As we have journeyed this week through the first week of Advent, we have been preparing our hearts and minds for the nativity. At the heart of our preparations is prayer and the staff and children are leading us in prayer and liturgy daily, as we walk with the Holy Family, towards Jesus' birth.

This Sunday, we enter the second week of Advent and we light our 'Bethlehem' candle representing faith. Next week, the children will be reminded of Mary and Joseph's trip to Bethlehem as we explore deeper our own faith moving towards Christmas. On the second page of this newsletter, I include a prayer focus that you can do with your family at home, with a task that can be completed too. If your child does this task, please bring it in for our Advent displays in school.

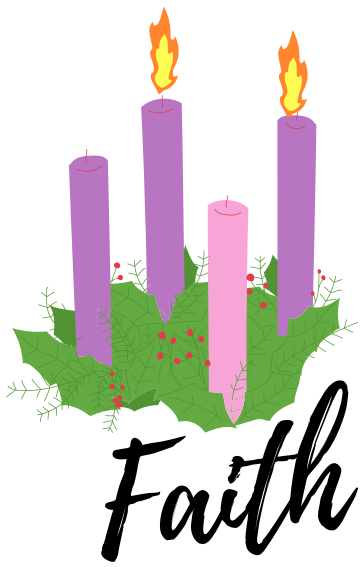
We have two weeks left in school with so much going on. I have included all important information within this newsletter. Thank you to our PTA for supporting our Christmas preparations at this time and helping with our fundraising. We had a really big turn out for the Christmas discos this week.

If you are attending the KS1 nativity or LKS2 nativity, please be aware that there is limited space in the hall. We are not 'ticketing' the events, but we only have space for 2 adults per child in the hall. There will also not be space for pushchairs and prams, so please try not to bring these, as they will have to be left outside of the hall.

A gentle reminder that if your child has a school meal, please remember to check School Gateway regularly and to keep outstanding balances down to a reasonable level. We now have quite a few parents owing more than £100. We appreciate that this may be a more difficult time of year to clear this, so we will send reminders out in the new year. If you have any questions regarding your child's school meals account, please contact the office.

We have an early finish when we break up on Friday 20th December and staff are keen to leave on time to begin their Christmas break. Please check the times for pick up in the dates section of this newsletter. Any children who are late being collected are put in to Kidz.comm after school provision, where there is a charge. Thank you for your support and I wish you a very happy weekend.

Mrs Yorke



Second advent candle

The second Sunday of Advent symbolises Faith with the "Bethlehem candle" helping us think about the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem.

We invite you to continue to join us in this time of reflection and celebration. Let the light of the Bethlehem candle guide us on our journey of faith, this Advent.

scripture

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." - Hebrews 11:1

reflection

Embracing Faithful Journeys

In this season of Advent, symbolising faith, let's consider the transformative power of belief. Like Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, how can we, too, navigate our paths with unwavering faith, trusting in the promises that lie ahead?

open question

In what ways can we infuse the spirit of faith into our daily lives and share it as a beacon of inspiration within our families and in our community?

Task

A Creative Expression -

Families, express your reflections through creativity! This could be a family story, a drawing, or any medium that captures the essence of faith. Share your creations with us, as together, we illuminate the path with the light of faith.





Catholic Life

This week's Gospel and Prayer



Luke 21: 25-28

"Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near".

Reflecting on this week's Gospel message we learn:

- we have hope because Jesus came to be with us at Christmas, which we prepare for during Advent
- Jesus gives us strength and courage to face difficulties when we are open to Him
- When we are open to Jesus, we can share His love with those we meet.

WEEK 1

Light one candle and sit for a moment in silence.

*Christ our Light,
Shine in our lives with hope and promise.
Give us right vision so that we remain attentive
to this holy season.
Remind us to look for you in small acts of
kindness and love.
We await your coming with wonder.*

Amen

Sadlier Religion

Whole School Mass -

6.12.24

-The Immaculate Conception



The whole school gathered together to celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, honouring Mary, free from original sin and her 'yes' to God's plan. May her faith inspire us to trust in God's purpose for our lives.



Our next Mass: - Whole school Mass Christmas Mass

Our next Mass in Church will be on **Friday 20th December 2024**, starting promptly at 9:45am.

This is a whole school Mass to celebrate Christmas together before we break up..

All parents are welcome to join us and we ask that you sit in the old part of the Church.



Christmaths Challenge at Bishop Challoner

Our Year 5 children really enjoyed the Christmaths challenge at Bishop Challoner School today and represented our school really well.

Thank you to Bishop Challoner Maths Department and Year 9 pupils for organising the day!



Advent prayer... at home



Advent preparation... in school



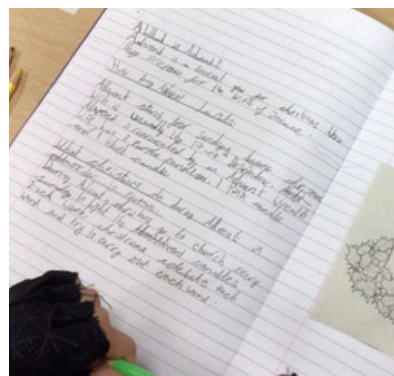
Our week began with our whole school Gospel Assembly led by Mrs Davis. We lit the prophet's candle, and we are filled with hope at the knowledge that Jesus is coming!



Hope



Year 3 started their unit on Advent off with a fact file all about what they already know about Advent. Ready to learn even more over the next few weeks.

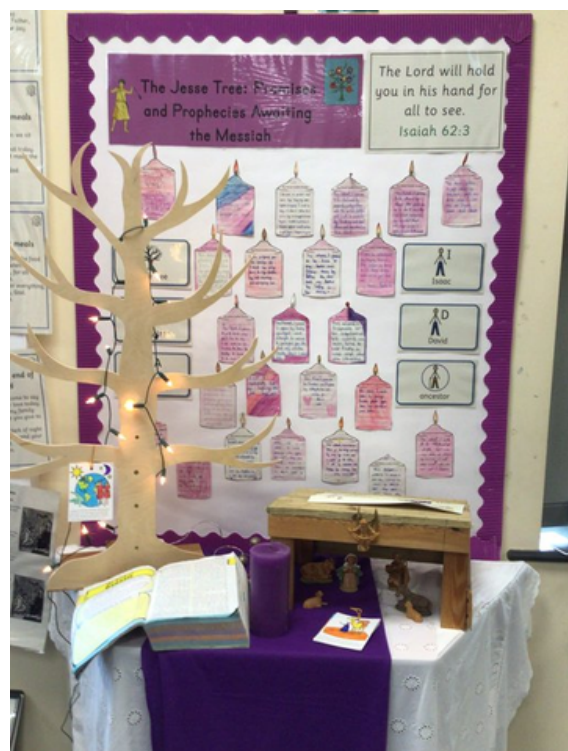


Reception have made an advent wreath for their RE display and made their own wreath focusing on the colours of the different candles

Year 1 have written their Advent promises for how to prepare their hearts this Advent.



The children in Year 2 have created their own Advent wreaths to help them prepare for the birth of Jesus



Year 6 have created their own Advent Calendar display containing Bible Quotes about Christ's first coming - they will share these every day throughout Advent. They have also been looking at parable i.e. the parable of the ten bridesmaids and what this teaches us about preparing for Jesus' second coming.

Year 4 have started Advent by reading a scripture about creation during their morning prayers and adding it onto the Jesse Tree.

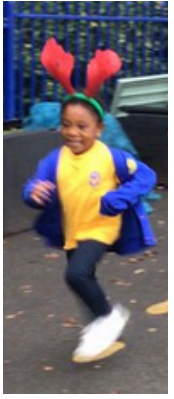


Year 5 children have prepared their prayer tables with ways that they can prepare their hearts for Advent.

SANTA DASH



We had fun participating in the School Games National 'Santa Dash.' Many of our children dressed festive for their dash around the playground.

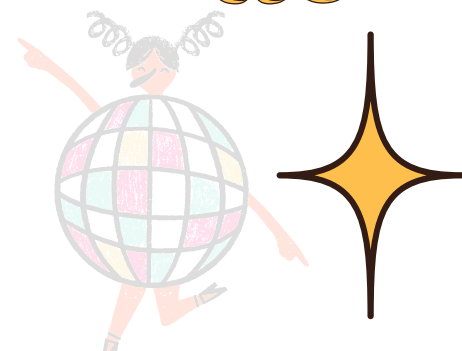


Christmas Disco



HO HO HO

The children really enjoyed their Christmas discos this week. Thank you PTA and all the staff for supporting them.



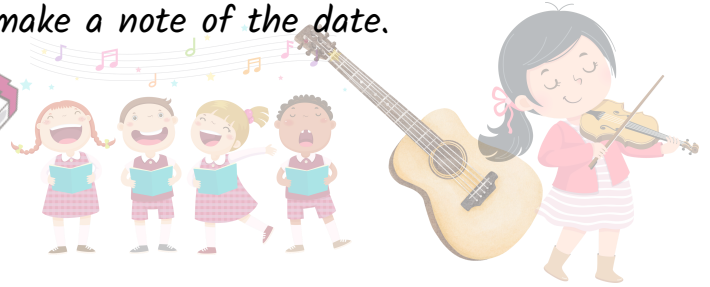
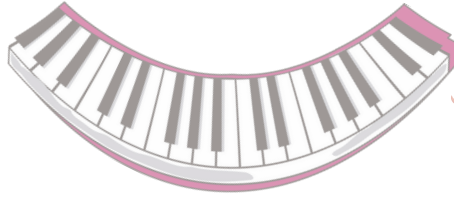


Music Concert

Monday 9th December 3:45-4:45 (Piano and Guitar)

Tuesday 10th December 3:45-4:45 (Violin and Piano)

We have some very talented musicians in school who are learning to play an instrument. We have our after-school concert lined up so please make a note of the date.



Year 3 Harborne Library Visit - 10.12.24

Year 3 will be visiting Harborne Library next Tuesday.

3L will leave at 9:00am

3T will leave at 10:45am

If you are a parent who would like to attend and support walking to and from the library, please let the Year 3 staff know.



Christmas Dinner will be served on Wednesday 11th December!

If your child normally brings in a packed lunch on a Wednesday and would like to opt in for Christmas Dinner, please confirm this with the school office. The children can wear festive headwear or tinsel on this day with their normal school uniform...

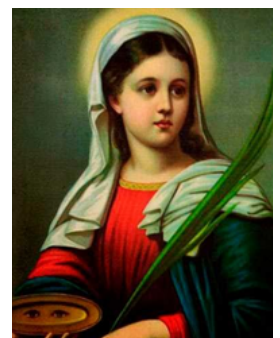
Christmas Jumper Day

Next Thursday 12th December children may come to school in festive clothing which may include a Christmas jumper/t-shirt or Christmas colours / head gear. Please ensure the children are dressed appropriately for the weather and wear shoes and a coat suitable for outdoor play. There is no charge.



3L non-school uniform day - 13.12.24

Class 3L will be celebrating the life of their class saint - St. Lucy - with a non-school uniform day and a special day in school on Friday 13th December 2024.





Prayer Service

Year 3 prayer service for parents - 13.12.24 9:00am

Year 3 are inviting parents, grandparents, family members to join them in a special prayer service in school, dedicated to St. Lucy.



Carols by candlelight - 13.12.24 6:30am

If your child is in the Choir and is performing at Candles by Candlelight, please make sure that you return to school for 6:30pm to practise before the performance.



On 13th December, a special event is being hosted in our Parish Hall. Carols by candlelight will showcase music by David Fisher and St. Mary's School choir.

Tickets from St. Mary's Parish Office in office hours.

Come and join us to raise funds for 'Shelter' winter appeal.

**Carols by Candlelight
Friday 13th December**

Coming Up

**KS2 Theatre Trip to Malvern Theatre to see
Sleeping Beauty**

Tuesday 17th December 2024 - 8:45am

We are opening early on Tuesday 17th December because all of KS2 need to be registered by 8:35am and loaded on to coaches by 8:45am. On this day, particularly if your child is in KS2 - they will need to be in school for 8:15am. We need to get to Malvern for 10:00am to see the performance.

We will not be waiting for children. Anybody not here by 8:30am risks being left behind. Please make note of the early start for this day.





Christmas Mass

Friday 20th December 2024 - 9:45am

On the final day of the term, all children and staff will go to Church for Christmas Mass before we break up.

What a wonderful end to the term!

Parents are welcome to attend - please sit in the old church.

Nativities - begin next week:-

Year Reception

12.12.24 at 9:30am
in the Church

RECEPTION CHRISTMAS STORY

Reception class are so excited for Jesus' birthday.

Years 1 and 2

17.12.24 at 2:15pm
in the School hall

BETHLEHEM'S BUZZIN'

The stallholders of a very busy Bethlehem are hoping to make lots of money out of the visitors who are arriving in the town. Will they make a profit or will a very special event that takes place finally teach them that there are more important things in life than making money?

Years 3 and 4

18.12.24 at 2:15pm
in the School hall

SUPERSTAR

Our nativity is the story of the celestial choir rehearsing for their school Christmas Nativity. Although Jesus is the 'superstar' of the nativity, it is Stella's time to shine!

This nativity explores the importance of the star guiding those who witnessed Jesus' birth to the humble stable in Bethlehem.

Years 5 and 6

19.12.24 at 2:00pm
in the Church

CAROL SERVICE

Come and join us for traditional and modern carols that recount the story of Jesus' birth.

The children are very excited to share their nativities with you. Due to space in the hall, we ask for you to limit how many adults attend them. We have space for 2-3 adults per child in the school hall. There is more room in the Church - the more the merrier in the Church for Reception (12.12.24) and Y5 and Y6 (19.12.24). We have limited room in school hall - toddlers are welcome but please limit prams and pushchairs coming in to school. Thank you.



TEACHER GIFT!



The cost of living is affecting us all. Rather than buying gifts for each other this year, the staff have chosen to support St Chad's Sanctuary Christmas Wish List - and will be collecting adult gloves, scarves and hats.

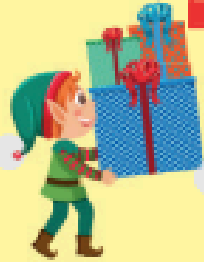
We have so many families who buy gifts for staff and we are so thankful for your generosity, but this year we would like to ease any pressure families may feel and ask for your prayers as our Christmas gift instead (and support for our charity work).

We have been asked to support the Birmingham Irish Association Initiative again this year, to provide toys for children who in Birmingham who may not receive a Christmas present this year. Our families and staff have always been so generous at supporting this initiative.

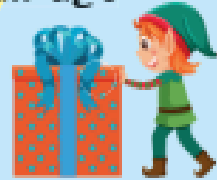
Details can be found below: -

Toy Appeal

Christmas 2024



Please give new toys (unwrapped) for our local children in Birmingham for all age groups ranging from 1-15 years



COLLECTION DATES:

Monday 4th November - Thursday 12th December

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL





St Catherine of Siena Primary School, in Great Colmore Street B15 2AY, support **Birmingham Christmas shelter** every year. This year, the school will open between 24th-28th December to serve those who need food and clothing. Last year, 400 guests received fresh clothes and toiletries in those four days.

St Catherine's have asked our schools to support by collecting items for the Birmingham Christmas Shelter - they need: - **toiletries, biscuits, crisps, cordial, clothing.** If you would like to support, please bring any donations to the school office over the next few weeks.





School Fund

Our School Fund is a vital source of income for our school.

It pays for the 'extras' such as Inspire workshops, curriculum resources, Christmas activities, theatre or performances as well as subsidising school trips.

These 'extras' are enjoyed by all year groups at St Mary's throughout the year.

Contribution to this fund is entirely voluntary and we are very grateful to those parents who regularly support the school in this way. However, in the last few years the amount of school fund received has dropped quite significantly. There are probably many reasons for this, but perhaps the most obvious is remembering to send in a donation every year, half term or term.

We understand that some families may find donating to us difficult, especially with the current cost of living crisis. With that in mind we have decided to alter the way our donations are done and hopefully make it easier to maintain.

Several parents make their contribution by standing order and we are very grateful to them all.

As we have been accepted as a charity for tax purposes, we can claim the tax on donations to school fund by parents who are taxpayers if those parents sign a Gift Aid Declaration.

This means that for every pound you give we get an extra 25p from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation to go further.

Consequently, by setting up a standing order for say, £2 per month per child or £5 per month per family for parents with multiple siblings who attend St Mary's, you will guarantee the school a monthly income on which we can reclaim tax.

Please consider this option seriously. If you feel unable to sign up to a monthly payment, why not pay a one-off payment of £20 per child per year or £50 per family per year, again with a Gift Aid declaration.

A Gift Aid declaration and standing order form has been emailed out to our families. If you wish to gift aid your donations then please complete and return these to school at your earliest convenience.

*For those families who **do** wish to gift aid, we have set up the account listed below for donations.*

Account Name: St Marys School Fund – Gift Aid Account

*Sort Code: **30 - 19 - 14***

*Account Number: **03595246***

As always, we are extremely grateful for the support that we receive from the parents at St Mary's and appreciate you helping us be able to put on these events and treats for the children, which hopefully make their time at St Mary's more fun and memorable. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the school. We ask you to be assured of the confidential manner in which the school will treat your details.

We are an operation encompass school. Therefore school is working alongside the police to ensure support for any child who has been involved in or witness to domestic abuse. Please find more information about this on our website or contact the school office.

Pastoral Team

If you require any support from school please speak to a member of our pastoral team

If you have a concern that a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or you receive a disclosure (intentionally or unintentionally) you must contact one of the following staff members as quickly as possible:



Amy Davis	Louise Yorke	Rachel Jones	Rachel Richards	Sharon Tame	Laura Noone	Jade Preedy
Deputy Headteacher	Headteacher	Senior Teacher	EYFS Lead	School Counsellor	AHT	AHT
Lead DSL	Deputy DSL	DSL	DSL	DSL	DSL	DSL

Alternatively, email DSL@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk

Do not book holidays during term time

This is a reminder that holidays during term time are unauthorised. If you intend to take your child out of school during term time, we ask that you complete a holiday request form at least 2 weeks prior to the leave date where possible. Parents may be fined by the Local Authority for taking unauthorised leave of absence. Children need to be in school every day so please ensure holidays are only booked during school holiday time.

Good attendance, continues to be a school and government priority. Good attendance is 96% and above Remember below 95% is a concern and below 90% is classed as persistent absence. If you have any problems with regards to getting your child to school or you are struggling to improve your child's attendance, please speak to Mrs. Yorke or Mrs. Davis.

We will announce the attendance for the previous week in this section of the newsletter each week.

Attendance and Punctuality: –

Our attendance for last week was –

Week 02/12/2024-06/12/2024

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	92	94.3	96.6	95.3	96	99	91.3	98.3	97.3	98	98.6	99.3	98.3	99
Lates	4	1	2	10	3	7	2	2	0	1	5	9	3	3
Whole School Attendance so far this year						96.4%			School Target				97%	

Well done 5F: - Our attendance champions!

Dates for this half-term

Autumn theme -

Autumn 11 Virtues

9th December 2024 - 1:30pm

10th December 2024 - am

11th December 2024 - lunch

12th December 2024 - 9:30am

12th December 2024 - all day

13th December 2024 - all day

13th December 2024 - 9:00am

13th December 2024 - 6:45pm

13th December 2024 - 7:00pm

17th December 2024 - 10:15am

17th December 2024 - 2:15pm

18th December 2024 - 2:15pm

19th December 2024 - 2pm

20th December 2024 - 9:45am

20th December -

Families and Communities

Intentional and Prophetic

Penitential Service for Years 4 - 6 (children and staff only)

Year 3 visit to Harborne library (9:15 3L and 11:00 3T)

Christmas dinner day in school

Reception Nativity in Church (for parents)

Christmas jumper day in school

Year 3L non-school uniform day for their class Saint - St. Lucy

Year 3 Prayer Service for all Year 3 parents

Choir sing for Carols by Candlelight - meet at school 6:30pm

Carols by Candlelight in St. Mary's Church (all welcome)

KS2 Theatre Visit at Malvern Theatre 'Sleeping Beauty'

Year 1 and Year 2 Nativity in School Hall (parents welcome)

Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Assembly in School Hall (parents welcome)

Year 5 and Year 6 Christmas Carol Service in Church (for parents)

Whole school Christmas Mass for all children, staff and parents

Break up for Summer holidays

1:40 finish time - Reception classes

1:45 finish time - KS1 classes

1:50 finish time - sibling group

2:00 finish time - KS2 classes

Star of the week

Congratulations to the following children who have shone in school over the last week:

Year RB	Phoebe	For being a positive member of RB!
Year RT	Nardos	For always sharing the smile and kindness of Jesus with everyone.
Year IF	Mahin	For her lovely sentences in English this week
Year IL	Sia	For her excellent manners and living out the school virtues
Year 2E	Amira	For being a fabulous actor in the Nativity practice.
Year 2G	Evan	For brilliant behaviour all week!
Year 3L	Max	For trying really hard in English this week! Well done Max!
Year 3T	Cillian	For trying incredibly hard in Maths this week! Well done!
Year 4J	Ravi	For always trying his hardest to be a super role model
Year 4M	Leonor	For an excellent first week at St Mary's and being a fantastic behaviour role model
Year 5F	Devaansh	For always giving 100% and having a great attitude to work
Year 5M	Scarlett	For always giving 100% and having a great attitude to work
Year 6O	Benjamin	For his increasingly more mature attitude and commitment to his work
Year 6R	Melissa	For giving 100% effort in all she does, and always doing it with a smile!

