



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,

13th December 2024

As we enter the third week of Advent, we light our 'Shepherds' candle' reminding us of the joy that we experience in the coming birth of Jesus. The pink candle is lit on Gaudete Sunday and we are rejoicing that we are half-way through our preparations. We have had a wonderful week of preparations in school with music concerts, enjoying our Christmas lunch, a range of activities to support our Charity work, watching the Reception Nativity and we have even had a visit from Santa. Next week, we will continue with our Nativities and we conclude our week with Christmas Mass at 9:45am.

If you are attending the KS1 nativity or LKS2 nativity, please be aware that there is limited space in the hall. We only really have room for 2 adults per child. There will not be space for pushchairs and prams, so they will have to be left outside of the hall. Please bring any spare change with you to the nativities as the children will be standing with buckets for any donations that you would like to give to school. This money will be used for school fund projects in the future.

We also have so much taking place for local charities as we move through Advent. On Friday evening, it was wonderful to hear our choir sing at 'Carols by Candlelight', raising funds for Shelter. Our toys have also been collected and will be distributed to families. If you would still like to support Shelter, we are collecting food and clothes to go to St. Catherine of Sienna this week.

Please can I remind all parents that **school opens at 8:15am on Tuesday**. All children can arrive from this time, but we especially need all KS2 children in the building by 8:30am as all the juniors are off to the theatre and we have a long way to go in order to be sat down by 10am. We must leave school by 8:50 on this day, so any children who are late may be left behind, which we really don't want to happen, so please set those alarms to be earlier on this day.

We look forward to finishing slightly earlier on Friday 20th December ready to begin our Christmas break. All staff will be off site by 2:30pm on this day, so please book in to one of our after-school clubs, if you need further child care on this day.

Thank you for your continued support this term, Mrs Yorke.



Third advent candle

As we approach the third week of Advent, let's unite in joy and celebration. The "Shepherd's Candle" lights our path, reminding us of the joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.

As we bask in the glow of the 'Shepherd's Candle', may joy illuminate our hearts and unite us in the spirit of celebration.

scripture

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." - Psalm 100:1-2

reflection

Cultivating Joyful Hearts

In this season of Advent, symbolising joy, let's reflect on the infectious and transformative nature of joy. When we give generously, we bring joy to ourselves and others. What brings you joy? What are the things that are priceless to you? How can we infuse joy into our lives, celebrating the blessings that surround us, much like the world celebrated the birth of Jesus?

open question

How can we foster and spread joy within our school community, bringing light to each other's lives?

Task

A Creative Outpouring -

Families, channel your reflections into a creative expression of joy! It could be a poem, a dance, or any form of artistic expression that radiates joy. Share your creations with us, and let the joy within our community shine even brighter.





Catholic Life

This week's Gospel and Prayer



Luke 3:3

"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 are called to prepare ourselves for Jesus by opening our hearts to Him
- Our actions have an impact on others
- No matter what we have done, God will always forgive our mistakes if we say sorry

WEEK 2

Light two candles and sit for a moment in silence.

*Christ our Hope,
Illuminate our hearts with your grace.
Enlarge our vision so that we recognize our kinship with all the people of the world.
Help us to give to others in ways that meet their deepest needs.
We await your coming with gratitude.*

Amen.

Sadlier Religion

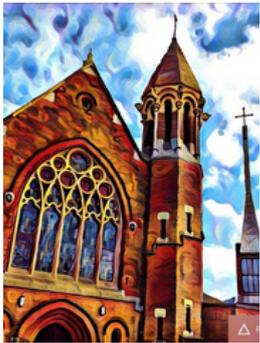
Our next Mass: -

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.



*Reception were wonderful in their nativity on Thursday!
Well done children for learning all your lines and songs so beautifully.*

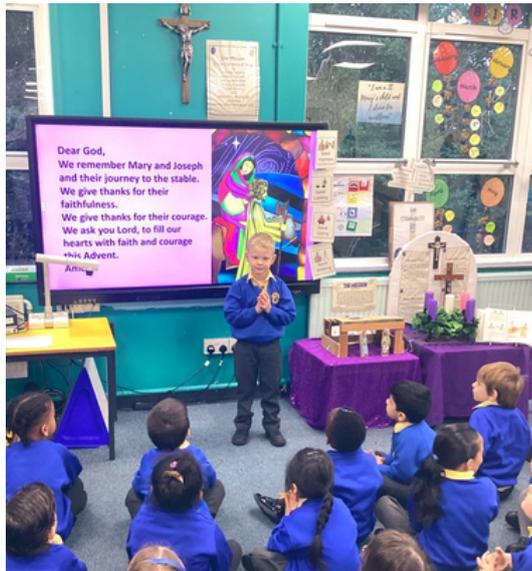


Advent prayer... at home



Advent preparation... in school

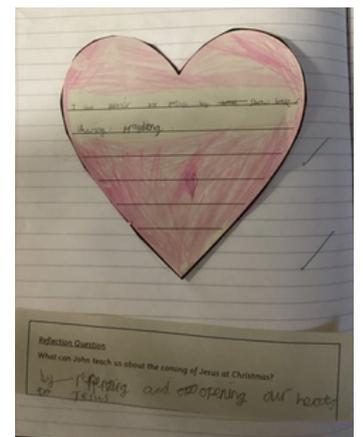
Reception Class have been learning about The Faith candle in Collective Worship this morning and remembering Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.



Year 1 continue their learning about Advent by labelling the wreath and discussing what it represents.



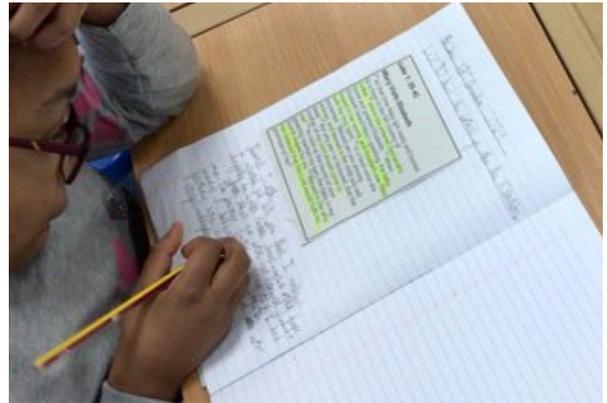
Year 2 joined Year 1 to support them in making their wreaths and within their lessons have been identifying how they can prepare their hearts for Jesus.



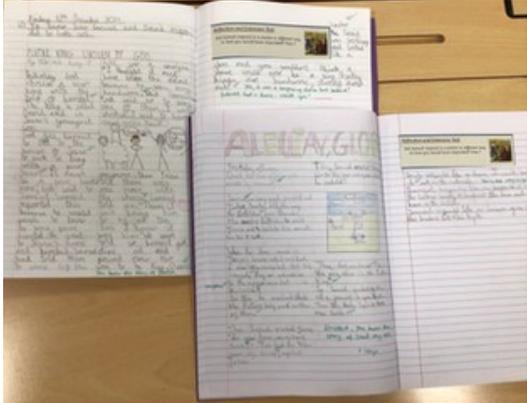
Our Advent displays in school are wonderful. Here is an example of how Year 3T have been updating their board with work that they are doing at home and in school.



Year 3 have been retelling the story of the Visitation, using scripture from Luke to support their learning.



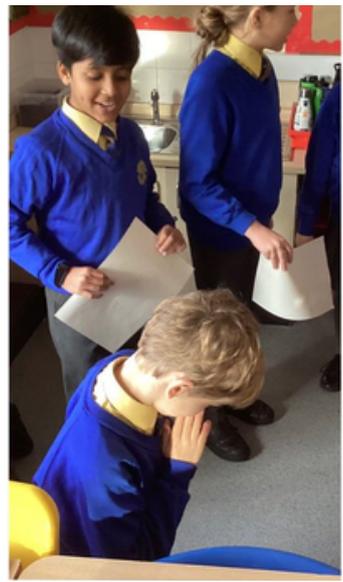
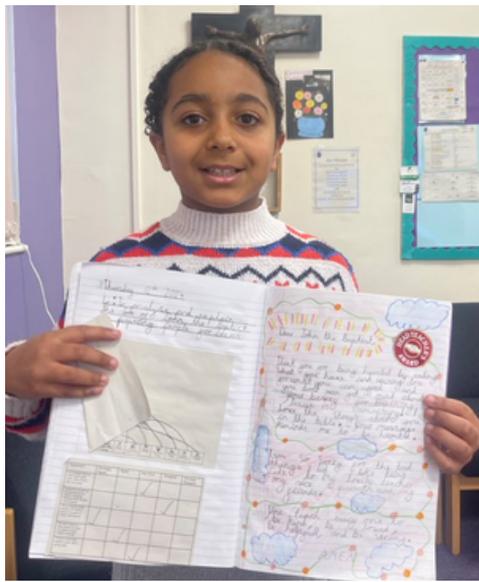
Year 4 have been learning about the ancestors of Jesus in their Advent lessons



Year 3 also led a beautiful prayer service for their parents about St. Lucy and her service to God.



Year 5 have been reflecting on what they can learn about faith and trust in God.



Children in Year 6 have led Advent prayer and reflection on penitence after receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Monday.



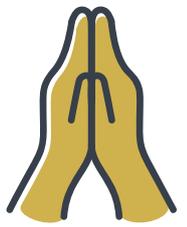
Christmas Dinner Day 11/12/2024

Our kitchen staff, Led by Mrs Brown, outdid themselves with a beautiful Christmas dinner which was enjoyed by all.





Building God's Kingdom



Our Advent Charity Work



Instead of buying presents for each other this Christmas, St. Mary's staff have bought: hats, scarves and gloves for St. Chad's Sanctuary - we hope our donations will support our Community this Christmas.



Christmas Charity



Thank you for all your support for our Christmas toy appeal. We received so many toys and Santa and the prefects did a wonderful job in sending them on their way to Bishop Challoner.



St. Mary's choir sang beautifully for their families and local community at Carols by Candlelight, raising money for 'Shelter' winter appeal for the homeless.

More musical talent

with our piano, violin and guitar music concerts

A wonderful two evenings where our talented musicians showcased all they have learnt to their parents. Incredible performances!



Christmas Jumper Day

And presents from Santa!

Thank you to our very active PTA who create these opportunities for the children and are the 'elves' who provide all the presents for us.



Drama Club performance - 16.12.24 3:45pm

If your child is in the drama club, they would like to show you how they have developed their dramaturgical skills in a performance for parents. We look forward to showing you what the children have been doing.



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.



Nativities

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

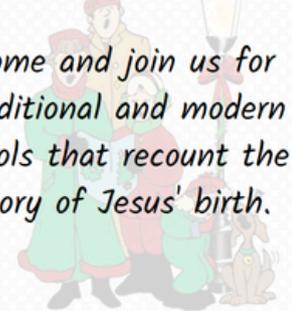
Our nativity is the story of the celestial choir rehearsing for their school Christmas Nativity. Although Jesus is the 'superstar' of the nativity, it is Stella's time to shine! This nativity explores the importance of the star guiding those who witnessed Jesus' birth to the humble stable in Bethlehem.

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.



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 09/12/24-13/12/24

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	92	96.6	95.6	93.3	94	93.3	85.6	92	94.3	98.6	98	100	97.6	98
Lates	3	3	6	8	5	4	0	5	0	2	4	3	2	2
Whole School Attendance so far this year						96.4%			School Target				97%	

Well done 5f: - Our attendance champions!

Dates

16th December 2024 - 3:45pm

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 -

Drama club performance to parents

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



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

Year RB	Aoife	For being kind and helpful to her friends in class!
Year RT	Andreass	For being a kind friend who always helps others
Year IF	Chikanyima	For her wonderful singing and enthusiasm during the nativity.
Year IL	Natneal	For always showing kindness and consideration for others and using beautiful manners
Year 2E	Erina	For learning and acting her line so beautifully for the Nativity
Year 2G	Freya	For amazing acting skills
Year 3L	Meredith	For showing resilience and determination in Maths and her growing confidence with number knowledge
Year 3T	Sarah	For growing in confidence in class as well as during the nativity and drama club.
Year 4J	Chidalu	For always being ready to share her thoughts and ideas during class discussion
Year 4M	Marta	For being a role model showing acts of service and care for others both in class and on the playground.
Year 5F	Cara	Beautiful, thoughtful work in RE!
Year 5M	Matthias	For using lots of scripture to evidence his ideas in RE
Year 6O	Noah	For his excellent effort in Writing this week
Year 6R	Aiden	For his hard work in all subject areas

