



## *Nickie's Reception Gold Newsletter*

Working to Acknowledge God's Beautiful Children who are "Belonging, Being and Becoming"  
Creating a Learning Environment that Supports Children to Understand and Act Justly

### **Term 1 - The Beauty of Friendship - Me**

"The Spirit is upon us and anointing us to be thriving people, capable learners and leaders of a world God desires. The Spirit is enabling us to build this world God desires. Today and everyday this scripture is fulfilled in our hearing, in our action, faith and lives - in being Christ for our world."

(CESA Live Learn Lead Together inspired by the Gospel reading Luke 4:16-21)

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Thank you all very much for your support and kindness during our first term for the year. The children are to be commended for the beautiful way they have worked together to establish new friendships routines and embrace new challenges. We have all worked very hard as a 'Community of Inquiry' striving to learn what it means to be a school student aiming to explore and understand our world.

#### **Meet & Greet**

Our meetings were very successful and help to build a positive link between children's home and school life. I thank you all very much for taking the time to meet with me and for your honesty and kind feedback. The beauty of being a part of the SJMS Community is that we all work together diligently for all our children aiming to support them to reach their full potential. This cannot be done alone and requires love, understanding and support from all its members both at school and home.



I take the promise poem and teacher's prayer I gave each child at the beginning of the year very seriously, working attentively to be fair and to challenge all children to be and do their very best. We know as adults that we all have different challenges in our quest to improve and it is in accepting these challenges that we can help our children to be comfortable with theirs. Our partnership at SJMS is unique, a true blessing allowing for flexibility where we strive to welcome and accommodate the strengths and needs of all our members. It is imperative that we work in unison for the greater good in order to achieve success.



### **Our Class Community**

We have been blessed with an active and generous class community. Thank you very much to Vikki Schiavone and Ella Pena for volunteering to be Reception Gold's class Representatives. I also wish to thank the dedicated parents who help with Reading Activities every Friday morning. I sincerely appreciate their kindness. The parents support a small group of children to remain focused and on task with their reading and writing while I listen to individual children read. This support makes a wonderful difference to the children's learning. Thank you to Scott Blenkiron and Arron Cox for volunteering their time to cut wood into manageable pieces for us. We thank Jude's parents Jan Rzeznik and Rajinder Maan for donating potting mix which has helped to further nourish our garden. Many thanks to all the parents who facilitate our morning Exploration sessions by listening to children read, play shops, gardening and supervise woodwork.



If you are available to help and have a Catholic Police Clearance, it would be very much appreciated. I sincerely understand that it is not possible for everyone to volunteer and help in the classroom. The best support you can give your children and school community is the loving attention, help with their learning and care at home. You are their first and most important teachers.



We have been very blessed to have Venetia a grandmother in our Community volunteer each week. Venetia works with each child individually helping them to learn the correct letter formation, pencil grip and fine motor skills. The children really look forward to having their special turn with her.

### **Exploration Time, Academic Rigour & Weaving Pedagogies**

Exploration time is an important part of children's learning. It is purposeful, aiming to ignite children's interest and offers academic rigour. Therefore, we ask that you use this time to support your children's learning by engaging in the experiences with them.



According to Professor Peter Freebody the syllabus guidelines indicate that students should experience a strongly related mix of the academic, the applied, the knowledge and the inquiry based learning approaches. Professor Allan Luke also supports this through his studies related to successful teaching and learning. He refers to the Mastery of Teaching, a Pluralistic Pedagogical approach where the teacher can adapt the method according to the children and what needs to be taught. He warns

of the mistake of walking into a room, noticing a particular approach at a given time and thinking this is not the valued style assuming that good teaching is not in practice. Different styles and approaches suit different situations.

I want our children to be successful, able to participate and choose. My work which is my genuine passion and vocation in life is backed by research striving to link theory with practice while working alongside your children. Each year the way in which I go about my efforts to support your children's knowledge building and understanding differs according to the cohort I have been blessed with. Therefore, acknowledging the gifts each member brings to the Community and respecting what people wish to contribute to and participate in whilst striving to manage and address the mandated curriculum.

This approach is an intricate process which takes time and deep consideration for all the many components involved. I continue to welcome your critical and constructive feedback which helps to build our positive Community of Inquiry where we learn and share together. You are very welcome to email me any thoughts and ideas you may like me to consider at [nickie@sjms.catholic.edu.au](mailto:nickie@sjms.catholic.edu.au).



### **Teacher Learning - CESA's Live, Learn, Lead Together & Wayne's Brabbin's Ignatian Spirituality**

These initiatives have helped us to celebrate our Catholic identity especially during these challenging times, to renew our understanding of our purpose as Educators and remembering the good that the Church has done and continues to do. At the same time, it is imperative that we know and learn from the past, acknowledge the human condition, recognise the truth and strive to improve and not make the same mistakes again.

One of the most significant points that stood out for me after writing my paper was Doctor Kent Hoffman's take on how very difficult it is for human kind to be in good relationship especially with the pressures to do so much, to be more efficient and to acquire more knowledge. He articulates that this is not really nearly as important as being in relationship with others, slowing down and being present with one another and connecting heart to heart. Hoffman shares that suffering comes from not being able to slow down and be in relationship with those around us. Vicar General Father Philip Marshall spoke of our infinite worth. Doctor Kent Hoffman expressed this infinite worth within each of us as

the gate of Heaven, that is being everywhere, within each one of us. This reminded me of Sister Miriam Frances song, 'God is Dwelling in my Heart' inspired by 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?"



### Religious Education - Our Lenten Journey

We are aiming to reflect God's love and brighten up each other's day by the kind choices we make. The building of our class candle, filled with the children's flames, describing their special acts of kindness has been very supportive. Their Lenten promises have also helped them on their journey to choose to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

We are looking forward to working with Miss Hoare's Year 2/3 class to 'Walk for Water' to raise money for Caritas. It will be an opportunity for children to understand that there are children in the world who have to work very hard for the bare essentials and how we must work together for justice and equity. We are also very excited about working with our Reception and Year 1 Buddies to participate in a 'Book Swap' to also help raise money for Caritas. These experiences will help to develop children's understanding of Lent and will be extended to our literacy and numeracy programs through reading, writing, sorting, counting and measuring, the number of coins collected.



## Literacy

The children have responded well to our Oral Language, Jolly Phonics, Reading and Writing programs. They are recognising letters, learning how to form them and using correct pencil grip. Children are developing their abilities to hear sounds in words making connections with listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is supported through our daily encounters with meetings, shared learning, story time and recording our thoughts and ideas.



## Numeracy

The children have been exploring a variety of experiences to establish an understanding of number, order, sequence, pattern and position in relation to familiar experiences. They have been working together as a whole class to help one another devise a number of ways to solve problems related to our shared experiences.



## Our Buddy Classes

The children were delighted to meet their Year 2/3 buddies in Miss Hoare's class. They have spent time talking to them, getting to know more about them, their interests and their families. We were very grateful for our buddies' support during Carnevale and Saint Joseph's day celebrations.

Singing with Cathy's Reception Blue Class is a weekly highlight where we practise articulation, rhyme and songs of praise.

## Our Garden Project

The children have been busy making mud pies, weeding, watering, feeding and maintaining our garden. They also enjoy sitting, praying and reflecting in 'Our Garden of Gethsemane'. We are in the process of renewing our garden bed behind our classroom. If you would like to support this initiative, we would appreciate some potting mix please.



## Plants, Animals and Our Science Curriculum - Biological Sciences: Living Things

The children have been enchanted by our visiting hopping mice. They particular enjoyed the caterpillars along with our tadpoles that underwent metamorphosis transforming into butterflies and frogs. We are very grateful to our friends at the Nature Education Centre many of whom volunteer. One of the volunteers is an elderly lady who takes time to collect the milkweed and caterpillars for the centre.



The children enjoy doing observational drawings, paintings and sculptures of plants and animals. We work together to write science reports about the nature we encounter and are in the process of collecting data to choose names for our animals. Our Zebra Danio & White Cloud fish are healthy and calming to gaze and wonder about. Our Love Birds Light and Bella are intriguing to watch as they build their nest and care for their young. The Stick and Leaf Insects enjoy feeding upon lush gum leaves.

We observe and notice the connections between plants, animals and what is needed to survive. We eagerly care for living things taking pride in the privilege to be able to share and experience nature first hand.



### Children's Names & Meanings

As part of our work related to 'Me' I am asking you to email me the reasons **why** you chose your child's name at your earliest possible convenience and also request that you please provide me with the **meaning** of the name. This will be collated to create a class book about ourselves and will be included in the children's Art folders.

Thank you again for a very kind and supportive start to the school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [nickie@sjms.catholic.edu.au](mailto:nickie@sjms.catholic.edu.au). I look forward to the next term with great excitement and wish you all a very happy holiday and Easter with your treasured children. God Bless.

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If your family would like to borrow the love birds or any of the class pets over the school holidays, please email me at your earliest possible convenience.

Sincerely

Nickie Palumbo ☺

Exploring Our World, Beauty, Creativity & Aesthetics through the Lens of the Child  
Play & Investigations

