Dear Parents and Friends,

Carols
The children presented a range of carols to tell the story of Christmas. Thank you to all those involved in organising such a great occasion. Every one performed well but it was obvious to all that the staff item was the best, of course!

Nicole leaving
It is with thanks and sadness that this week we bid farewell to Mrs Nicole Drago who has worked at St Joseph’s for the four years since graduating. Nicole has shown herself to be a dedicated and popular teacher who will be missed by parents, students and colleagues. It will be beneficial to broaden her professional experiences at St James’ Vermont with the advantage of being close to home. We wish Nicole well.

Graduating students
One of the joys each year is to reflect upon the development of those who are completing their time at St Joseph’s Primary School. Even in the short time I have known these young people, they have stepped up to the challenges of school leadership to complete a most successful year. Other staff members have been recalling some of the great changes that have occurred since their first days of school in 2006. We are proud of these young people we are sending onto the next step of their life journeys. We call on our God to bless them and their endeavours to make this a better world for all.

…………..cont’d
The graduating students are: Amy Bourke, Natalie Boxell, Thomas Durant, Samantha Edwards, Daniel Enever, Rhys Foley, Bleinda Hamment, Jasmine Hendriks, Jamie Hirschfeld, Pierce Jenkin, James Linder, Sally McIntosh, Joshua Mazurak, Holly Munro, Mitchell Newell, Hunter Nugara, Lilian Pagels, Jacob Peels, Riley Purton, Michael Read, Kailee Robinson, Danielle Virgona,

**Parents and Friends Association**

The Christmas raffle tickets need to be back tomorrow at the latest to be included in the draw on Wednesday morning. The hampers are terrific! Well done to all for the donations!

**This week:**
- Tuesday 2:30 pm - Assembly
- Tuesday 6:00 pm - Graduation Mass, all welcome
- Wednesday 9 am- End of School Year Mass, all welcome, Christmas Raffle
- Wednesday 11:30 Buddy planting
- Wednesday 3pm Students finish

**2013**
- January 29 Staff officially begin
- January 30, Preps at school 9 – 12:30, Yr 1-6 individual testing times
- January 31, Preps at school 9 – 12:30, Yr 1-6 individual testing times
- February 1 Preps at school 9 – 12:30, Yr 1-6 all day

To the fantastic staff at St Joseph’s who endeavour to provide quality educational programs to meet the needs of your children; to the parents who strive to support their children and build the community here; but mostly to the wonderful children here with whom we are privileged to work, may the celebration of the incarnation of our God bring you peace, joy, and hope to face the challenges of the new year.

*God bless us all,*
*John*

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*Prepare the way of the Lord;*
*Make a path for our God in the desert.*
*The glory of the Lord will be revealed;*
*And all people will see it together.*
*This is the promise of the Lord;*
*And God’s promise will be fulfilled.*
Third Week of Advent

In the gospel reading for the third Sunday of Advent, the crowds were gathering to be baptised by John the Baptist. John was an extraordinary man with a strong personality, gifted as a leader with power to convince people. He was called by the Spirit of God to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. He did this in the form of baptism. Crowds came to him for this baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Several people asked John “What should we do?” He answered them according to their occupation. He told the soldiers not to use violence and be satisfied with their wages. The tax collectors were told not to take any more from the people than they should. Others were told to share their coats if they had two.

The same question applies to us today. In general terms the answer is “Think of others”. We are to share with the less fortunate. Giving gifts to family and friends and receiving them is fine but it is not totally the real spirit of Christmas. We can easily be persuaded by the department stores into buying expensive gifts for people who don’t need them. In return we often receive gifts that we don’t need. It is the poor here and overseas who should be receiving our gifts. This would bring joy into their hearts. By thinking of others, we prepare our hearts joyously for the feast of the birthday of Jesus.

Wishing you all a happy Christmas and New Year,

Karen McQuade
Christian Life Leader
Choir for Christmas Mass
The children in the School Choir are invited to join with the Parish Choir to lead the singing at Mass on Christmas Eve. Those who are available are asked to be at the church by 5.45pm.

Farewell to the following families whose children are moving on to Secondary school:

Boxell
Edwards
Jenkin
Hamment
McIntosh
Mazurek
Munro
Nugara
Pagels
Purton
Robinson
and the Nagel and Rainbow families who are moving to new schools.
Thank goodness for Christmas

The real strength of Christmas lies in its use of rituals. Most families develop a strong sense of ritual at Christmas.

Kids today need Christmas more than ever. Not for the gifts and presents - most children get their fair share throughout the year. They need Christmas for the escape, and for the mystery and magic that is associated with childhood.

There are few secrets left for kids these days. In this information-age they are bombarded with news and views of all sorts. Childhood was once a type of secret garden that was full of mysteries. The wider world was there to be discovered by children, rather than something that was thrust upon them. Kids are now more knowing, more street-wise and in many ways, more cynical than in the past.

Christmas for all its commercialism still has its mystery and magic. I liked the way my children would, dispensing with logic, keep the secrets of Christmas alive for as long as possible.

I remember how, my eldest as a young teen and his eleven year old sister, knew that the idea of Santa sliding down a chimney in a red suit was a tad nonconical. Yet they didn’t let on for the sake of their younger sister. Perhaps, once a year they still wanted to believe in the magic. Teenagers, like adults, are always on the lookout for activities that anchor them back to their childhoods.

The real strength of Christmas lies in its use of rituals. Most families develop a strong sense of ritual at Christmas. My own family’s rituals that evolved over two decades, are now entrenched in my children’s psyches as they move into adulthood. One, in particular, is so insistent that we keep certain Christmas traditions in place that she has become the family Christmas organiser. She’s not leaving anything to chance!

Christmas for kids is all about anticipation. From a commercial sense, Christmas starts in November and slowly builds up toward the Big Day. Much of the anticipation is built around the receiving of presents.

As a parent you can build a sense of anticipation and broaden kids’ focus away from the notion of receiving presents and gifts. Christmas gives you a chance to build a sense of generosity in your kids and also to develop their appreciation for family traditions and rituals. You don’t have to wait until Christmas Eve for the rituals to kick in. You can start earlier by involving kids in the whole build-up to Christmas.

Here are five simple ideas you can use right now to switch your kids on to Christmas:

1. Put up your own advent calendar at the start of December. Even better get kids to make their own.
2. Get kids to clear out their cupboards of toys, clothing and items they don’t need. They can pass them on to someone who can use them.
3. Go with your children to choose a gift to donate to the local ‘giving tree’.
4. Ask your kids to help you send your Christmas cards to your family and friends.
5. Adopt a Christmas tradition from another country. Do some research online or ask around for different traditions.

You can get more ideas to get your kids into the real Christmas spirit by going to www.twitter.com/michaelgrose. Become a ‘follower’ and every day I’ll send you a tweet with a great Christmas idea for you and your kids.

Have a great one!

Published by Michael Grose
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Thank you to the helpers who put the Christmas raffle prizes together. There are LOTS of prizes to win!!

2. Graduation Dinner

Also, the SPA needs to be set up for the Inaugural Graduation Dinner for our Year 6 families. If anyone can help Tuesday morning 18th December at 9:00am to put out tables and chairs, that would be fantastic. Just meet at the SPA.

3. Future Fundraiser

We have been offered the opportunity to run the BBQ at the ‘Crank Up’ event held at the Upper Yarra Museum in Yarra Junction, weekend of 6th and 7th of April, 2013. This would be a great fund raiser for the school if we could get enough helpers. It is in the middle of the school holidays after Easter. We would be looking at setting up a roster with 2 hour shifts (4 people per shift) from 9am to 8pm both days. Maybe your family would have the numbers or you could team up with another family and make it a bit of fun. Please leave details at the office or contact Cathy 0409 187 166.
The Parents & Friends committee are happy to welcome more members, so if you would like to get involved, even as a general member, leave your details at the office or contact our chairperson Cathy Linder on 0409 187 166.
We generally meet 2 – 3 times per term but you don’t have to attend meetings if you can’t or prefer not to. We have lots of events and activities being proposed for next year; for example, The Autumn Fair, Bushdance, Shopping Tour, Trivia Night and we are always open for suggestions.
We wish our leaving families all the very best for the future and wish everyone a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year.

Thanks from the
P & F Team

YOUR CHILD - YOUR SCHOOL - YOUR P & F