

Primary Newsletter January 2019

Happy New Year. I hope you all had a happy and peaceful break. In his reflection on the Christmas season, Bishop Declan writes:

“The question put by Jesus ‘why are you looking for me’ is a question for all of us to ponder. Why do we look for Jesus? Why do we listen to his word and seek his presence? Why do we fail to do so? Why do we turn away from him when we have celebrated his birth this Christmas season?”

At the beginning of Advent, we entered into the Diocesan Year of Prayer. During the past year we have been reflecting on what it means to be missionary disciples. We are sent into the world to be the sign of Christ’s presence today. We can only be that presence if we know Christ. We are called to let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home within us. Sometimes we understand that message and other times like Mary and Joseph and like the later disciples of Jesus, we fail to understand immediately. We need to live with the question ‘why’ in order that we can understand and more fully enter in to the mystery of God, the Kingdom of God and our vocation within it.

Through prayer we come to know Jesus as the Christ. Through prayer we are enabled to answer the question ‘why are you looking for me’. We grow in our answers. We are a people of Hope, trusting in God, open to the Holy Spirit, believing that God is present with us and leading us along paths that may be new and challenging but are also life giving.”

As the Bishop says we can only be the presence of Christ in the world if we come to know Christ through prayer. School can be such a demanding, stressful and busy place that making time for personal prayer can seem like a waste of time but only through prayer can we grow in understanding. Perhaps making more time for prayer is not a bad New Year’s resolution.

A Future Full of Hope: Year of Prayer

The Bishop shared his pastoral guidelines for the Diocese at the beginning of Advent. Details of school involvement in this are in the chaplaincy newsletter but please note the following:

October 2019 has been declared a month of mission by Pope Francis. In order to enter into the spirit of this month and to celebrate it we will be working with Missio/Mission Together. **The Education Mass has therefore moved from June to 22nd October.** The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Declan in Clifton Cathedral and the Director of Missio plus other guests will be joining us. Please put this new date in your calendar now. Further details will be issued closer to the event.



New Outcomes in RE

For the God Matters syllabus work for the Revelation and Sacraments modules is available on the website. For those using Come and See suggested outcomes are available for Unit 4 Local Church and the next unit will follow shortly. Can I also remind you that work from the Advent module for years 2 and 6 is due in and I will be moderating this on 15th January. You are welcome to join me at Alexander House, but you must let me know in advance. I will begin at about 10.30am.

CCRS

The next session is on January 19th and January 21st and is on Sacraments.

In this session we will be considering what we mean by a sacramental church, how we understand things like 'Grace' how we teach sacraments to pupils.

You can join in at any point and are welcome just to attend the course even if you don't want to do the written work for the qualification. In that case we will provide a certificate of attendance. This is a good opportunity to both increase your knowledge and discuss your work with other teachers. The aim is to make this relevant to teaching. Full details are in the course booklet.

Teaching Other Faiths: A Day for Primary Coordinators 13th March (St Dunstan's Parish Centre, Keynsham)

Last year the focus was on Judaism. This day will focus on the teaching of Islam Cost £40 The day will be led by a member of the Muslim faith who is also a primary teacher. In the afternoon we will be looking at the new outcomes in RE and assessment.

The Modular Course

A programme designed to develop and support teachers in their theological and practical RE knowledge. The course takes the four major documents of Vatican II as outlined in the 'Revised Curriculum Directory' and considers their implication both for teaching and the life of the school. It aims to be practical as well as provide knowledge. **The first session is on the 6th February.** If you are an RE Coordinator and have not already done this, you should attend. It is also suitable for those who simply wish to increase their knowledge. Full details are in the course booklet.

Retreat for Senior Leaders Thursday 12th March at the Ammerdown Centre

Cost £75

Time 10am-3pm

This will be led by Cafod and will focus on Catholic Social Teaching. This is a key aspect of our work and Cafod have promised to introduce practical ideas as well as developing a greater understanding of the topic. Please try to support this. Cafod will also be introducing some exciting new projects for schools to take part in including work with the British Council which also carries some funding!

Primary Leavers Masses 12th and 13th June

All schools are expected to attend this event and please try to make this a priority over other events that may occur on the same date. Jenny will be notifying schools about which date they attend.

Our theme this year will be: Prayer.

For **the offertory** schools should write a one sentence explanation of how they have developed the prayer life of their school and **make a symbol** of this work that pupils can bring up at the offertory. In thinking about this theme, you could for example bring up a school prayer book, a model of your prayer garden if you have one, pictures of your day with our pilgrimage cross, etc.

Monitoring of RE and Catholic life

This should be taking place on a regular basis. Please remember to include pupil voice as well as looking at lessons/displays/work/prayer areas etc. If you need any help with this, please get in touch. Opportunities for spiritual and moral development should exist across the curriculum.

Liturgical Dates 2019

'Candlemas Day' 2nd February 2019 also celebrates 'The feast of the Presentation of the Lord' This year it falls on a Saturday but perhaps you could celebrate it on the Friday. An explanation of this feast and a possible assembly are available on the chaplaincy newsletter.

Ash Wednesday is 6th March and Holy Week begins on Sunday 14th April.

Resources

- <http://www.missiontogether.org.uk/> This is the website of Mission Together which is part of Missio. Mission together is about children helping children. Their website contains lots of materials. Bishop Declan is the Chair of Missio and it would be wonderful if we could support them during Lent.
- **Peace Sunday 20th January.** The theme this Year is 'Good politics serves Peace' This theme is a little complicated for young children however asking the basic question 'what can we do to be peacemakers' reaches all ages. If you go to the Pax Christi website and look under Peace Education they have a lovely assembly for primary on making New Year's resolutions to be peace makers. If you do this and the subsequent display I would love to see the pictures and some of the resolutions. <http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/primary-schools/new-year/>
- For Lent try <https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/lent/activities-and-resources/lenten-activities-for-children> which has a raft of resources
- **The week of prayer for Christian unity** runs from the 18th to the 25th January. The theme this year is 'Only Justice'. The initial work on the theme for this year's Week of Prayer was prepared by a group of representatives from different parts of Indonesia, please go to <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-resources> for materials.

Many thanks for all you do
Ann Fowler