



School Newsletter

Panui

Week 2, Term 1

8 February, 2018.

Nau mai, Haere mai.

St Thomas More Catholic School

KA NGARO, KA NGARO, KA EA, KA EA, TE TOKA A TIRIKAWA
NO MATTER WHAT, STAY TRUE

Welcome back to St. Thomas More for the new school year.

It is so good to hear happy voices and to catch up with the adventures your children have shared with us from their holidays.

Several new families have joined the STM community including: Ava Heeney, Saraiah Surgenor, Kaila Manion, Amelia Chooi, Zachary De Graaf, Pedro & Emmett Farrell (Pukekohe), Thomas & William Magill (Lower Hutt), Conor & Josh Roxburgh (Ireland) Luke Ryder (Rotorua), Oliver Smyth, Ellie Hahnhaussen, Paddy McEvoy (Rotorua), Max Nielsen, Caitlin Guidera (Wellington), Rodeson Ferrer, Matt Oliva, Christian & Joshua Prietos (Philippines).

Here's a quick snap shot of a day in the life of STM....



Paua- Mrs Thomas' literacy group enjoying the indoor- outdoor flow in their learning space. A feeling of being outside and plenty of sunshine and fresh air.

The yellow walls really encourage creativity too.

I'm sure the blue lino feels cool on a hot day, Alex agrees.

Mr Webster's literacy group has a great view of the school gardens and the butterfly house. The monarchs are having a great time with the abundant swan plants and flowers so close to their home.

Mr Webster is commissioning another butterfly house, this time for the Red Admiral





Mr Mills' literacy group is lucky to have the helping hands of Linda Oxenham, one of three teacher aides at STM. I'll bet you are having trouble finding Mr Mills. He's got younger over the holidays. He's sitting at the table by the door- conferencing with a group there.



Meanwhile in Kina team...Ms Lees, Mrs Meredith and Mrs Pirini were out on the courts throwing out the challenge to work cooperatively to carry a ball across the finish line. Each team had a piece of cardboard, it had strings attached to it, and a ball. This was a true challenge of collaboration and thinking as a group.

Mrs Dustin, Mrs Morgan and Mrs Dragovich have settled into their new learning spaces and it is great to see the newest students in their little learning nest each morning.



Below is the wrap around view of the courtyard which is being incorporated into the front of the school. A great place for both Kina and Pipi teams to maximise the outdoors and the quiet of the shady trees. The shade sails are going to be reinstated in this area and also there will be built in seating so that parents can come in at the end of the day and wait for their children. You can see that this area also has two gates- one to the outside and one into the shady parish centre...giving us the option for children to visit the Mary grotto to have quiet prayer time there. It also means when the playgroup or when people come for parish gatherings there is a chance to share facilities- building that openness and connection between school and the community. The block wall is going to be plastered and painted blue. Then we are attaching the mosaics which our seniors completed in 2014. We have been waiting for a long time to be able to display these beautiful mosaics in pride of place.



Catholic Cookies - Preparing for Lent

For those of you who might be new to St Thomas More, this section of the newsletter is written by the proprietor's representatives on the Board of Trustees (we include parents of past and present students, and Fr Darren). Our role includes a particular focus on the Catholic Character of the school. Our semi-regular writings (yes - we are busy people who forget sometimes 😊) often focus on the particular times of the year in the Church calendar.



This week, we're preparing for the beginning of Lent. Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (next week) and ends at the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday right before Easter. On Ash Wednesday people "receive a mark on the forehead made with ashes as a reminder that we are dust and unto dust we shall return". The ashes symbolise our mortality and need for the mercy of God."

During Lent the Church asks us to pray, fast, and do good works.

Lent is 40 days, which commemorates the forty days Jesus spent in the desert, and the forty years the Israelites spent in the desert. For those of you who are mathematicians amongst us, you might have realised that 14th February to Easter is more than 40 days. Sundays are excluded from the calculation, so you can break your fast during those days.

Some families have lenten traditions. In my family growing up we "gave up" sweets for Lent.... although in practice, they went in a jar, and then we ate them all at Easter - which is probably not really what we are aiming for 😊. Giving our sweets to the foodbank, YES!

Here are some ideas for things to do with your family for Lent (taken from this website <http://www.catholicicing.com/simple-lenten-traditions-for-families-with-little-to-no-prep-work/>)... and yes, I am loving the "little or no prep work part!"

- Go to Mass as a family on Ash Wednesday. This is so great because even the smallest members of the family can have ashes. *Our Pipis are going to participate in a special little ceremony in their learning space. Kina and Paua will be sharing this day with the parishioners at church.*
- Attend stations of the cross at your church. Our Seniors will be dramatizing the passion play again this year- you'll get an invitation for the Wednesday before Easter.
- Lenten cleaning- rather than the idea of "Spring cleaning", clean 1 area of your home every day during Lent. Your house is beautiful and clean for Easter! (*Let's be honest, it probably won't happen in my house...*)
- Set up an almsgiving box– you simply set out a box, and take 1 thing from your own pantry every day of Lent. At the end of Lent, take the box to a food bank - *STM church has a food bank collection every Sunday - leave goods in the basket to the left of the entrance.*
- Decide 1 day of the week during Lent to go "screen free" as a family (*ouch - that might be a hard one!*)

Another Lenten option might be to attend BELIEVE (Reflections on the Creed)/ This is a six-part series exploring the treasures of our faith expressed in the Nicene Creed, and is running in our parish soon.

School Hui (Gospel Assembly has had a change of name)

Every Friday afternoon from 1:45-2:15 we will be gathering as a school to celebrate our School Hui. This will follow the following format:

- (1) **National Anthem:** Played through the sound system
- (2) **Prayer:** Teachers will organise a simple prayer based on the Gospel for the week to begin.
- (3) **Head Heart Hand Awards:** Teams will take turns to give out awards from their classes.
- (4) **Notices:** Teachers and House Captains will share any important notices with the school.

Every Monday morning from 8:30-9am, each team will hold their own Gospel Liturgy. They will be focussed on the Gospel Reading for the upcoming Sunday Mass.

• **Worship Songs**

- **Scripture:** Teacher/students share Sunday's Gospel. This can be presented as a story, dramatisation or video (get creative!)
- **Reflection:** Teacher/students present a short reflection on the Gospel.
- **Prayer:** Teacher/students lead a concluding prayer

Our welcome/powhiri for new families is at 10.00 next Monday, 12th February.

If you are able to come along to meet the new families and to join together in a welcome morning tea we would love to see you. Mums and Dads of new children we are sending you out a personal invitation – please check your child's bag tonight.



Friday morning 16th February: make friends and enjoy a cuppa with other parents of new entrant children

You may have seen pamphlets or even been invited to Alpha, which will be held in the evening in the Parish centre.

We are able to offer you a chance during the day to **come and meet others** who want to find out more about Jesus. The meetings will be held each Friday, in the Parish centre, with breaks for Easter and the school holidays, beginning at 9.30 a.m. after Mass on Friday, 16th February.

This is a chance to **have morning tea and meet other families in our school and parish community in a relaxing place**. Together you can discuss and come to a better understanding of your Christian faith, through a series of films, which are engaging and feature inspiring stories and interviews from around the world. It will also help you understand what the children are learning / discussing in their sessions at school.

PTFA –first meeting of the year at Imbibe on 19th February starting at 7 p.m.

If you are able to come it is a fun night. Nothing formal at all but a chance to talk and to plan how best to fundraise for our children. We're planning out the first school disco and bake sale, the cups of tea after Mass on the 25th February and what new resources we are going to gift to the school this year.

Our one and only Term 1 School Mass is going to be at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday 11th March.

Please can you put this date in your diary now....we need every one of our children there to celebrate as a whole school family.

Just a note to the Kinas and Pauas- we are going to be watching carefully that our school uniform is being worn correctly.

For \$130 each child has a uniform they wear every day – it needs to be kept tidy.

(usually from Day One until Year 4 when they grow out of it – we have kept records of when new uniform is purchased so we know how long it lasts)

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