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“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11
Dear Parents

Meet and Greet

Last night we held our annual ‘Meet and Greet’ night which afforded parents and teachers the opportunity to make contact in a setting that was informal and informative. The night was well attended and I spoke at the beginning of the night about some of the priorities of the school year, including the continuation of our Teacher Mentor Program, our Inquiry English approach to the teaching of English and our Social and Emotional Program for our children. New initiatives include renewing our approach to teaching Maths and the introduction of a Teacher Growth and Development Program. All parents received an information pack for the term from the child’s class teacher. If you were unable to attend, the pack will be sent home today. My thanks to Pat Caggiano, Ryan Caggiano, Maddison Caggiano, Victoria Caggiano, Lee Black, Gerard Gough and Geoff Crane for their help on the BBQ. It was greatly appreciated.

Car Park

Progression the car park is continuing at a good pace and it is nearing completion. I am told the end of next week should be the completion date. The actual new space for parking is already available to use, as many parents are already aware. All that remains to be done is the concreting around the traffic flow slip-road, curbs and the like. The school will send home directions on its use, complete with maps, in order to ensure a smooth transition to its full use. Extra staff will also be rostered on for the first few days to assist in the transition process.

Year 6 Leaders' Badges

One of the highlights of being in Year 6 is the opportunity to participate in leadership opportunities throughout the school. To that end, all Year 6 students in the school participate in a Leadership Group. The students have the opportunity to experience different leadership groups each term. At this Thursday’s Mass, the Leadership Badges will be blessed and the students commissioned. Parents are most welcome to attend.
Swimming Carnival

A reminder that this Friday we are having our Swimming Carnival at Cisac in Belconnen. The swimming races are for students in Grades 3 – 6, and for those who have turned 8 in Year 2, however all K-2 students will be joining the rest of the school at the pool for the remainder of the day after the completion of the races. Novelty and fun events have been scheduled and it should be a very enjoyable day, all the more so as Friday is predicted to be particularly hot. All parents are most welcome to attend and if you are able to assist in any way, please contact Mrs Kristy-Lee Kayden via the front office or through her email: kristy-lee.walker@cg.catholic.edu.au My thanks to Kristy-Lee for her excellent work in organising the carnival.

Have a wonderful week with your families.

Best wishes

Cameron Johns

Marymead’s 50th Year Anniversary

Family Fun Day

Sunday 26 February 2017

Marymead, 255 Goodyer Street Narrakundah
11.00am – 3.00pm

Have you walked in the Marymead Walkathon or attended a Marymead event? Have you worked or volunteered for Marymead? Have you utilised one or more of Marymead’s services?

As part of Marymead’s 50th Anniversary celebrations we will be holding a Family Fun Day at Marymead’s Narrakundah site on Sunday 25th February from 11am to 3pm. There will be a jumping castle and lots of free activities for the kids, a sausage sizzle and soft drinks for gold coins donations, entertainment and more, so please come along and enjoy a day with the Marymead Community!

Lucky Door Prizes • Raffle • Drinks • Sausage Sizzle • Popcorn • Face Painting • Picnic Games • Jumping Castle and much more!

Lifeline Canberra Bookfair

Lose yourself at the biggest ever Lifeline Canberra Bookfair featuring more books than ever before plus DVDs, comics, games, kids activities and more!

Friday 10 to Sunday 12 February
at Exhibition Park in Canberra

Entry by gold coin donation
Find out more at www.act.lifeline.org.au
Year 6 Kaden are developing their leadership skills by helping the Year 1's with their Maths.
Dear Parents and carers,

I am very excited to have been given the opportunity to offer individual guitar lessons at St Thomas Aquinas this year! I am a parent at the school and also very much enjoy helping in the classroom with STA’s music teacher, Mrs Cathy-Ann Berry. In all, I have about 5 years experience teaching mainly rock, pop and blues guitar to primary school aged children.

Lessons will start around week 5 or 6 and will be held during the school day on Thursdays or Fridays. Cost will be $30 per half hour lesson. Places are limited so for more information or to register your interest, please don’t hesitate to call on 0431155599 or email jbarac@y7mail.com.

Regards,
Josie
Moving beyond asking, “What did you do at school?”

By Michael Grose

Ever found yourself asking your child the same bland question about school?

“So, how was your day? What did you do at school today? What did you learn?”

If these are your default questions the chances are that you’ll get a one or two word reply along the lines, “Fine!” “Good!” “Okay” “Nothing much.”

These answers don’t really tell you a lot. On the other hand, these types of questions don’t ask a great deal.

So how can you move beyond the mundane when you talk with kids about their school days?

Set the atmosphere

It helps to create the right atmosphere for conversations. A quick “How was your day?” as you pick a child up from after-school is a rapport-builder or mood checker, but little more.

If you drive you may learn a bit on the trip home, particularly if you keep the radio off and are able to keep some distance between kids and mobile devices. Alternatively, walking home together may loosen up your child’s tongue and put them in the mood for talking.

Give kids a chance

Most kids need some time and space to unwind before expecting them to talk about their day, particularly if you are going to launch and ask them questions. This makes sense as most adults would feel annoyed if they were assaulted as soon as they walked in the door about their day, “How was your day? What did you do? Who did you see?” Ahh! Stop!

Create conversations rather than ask questions

The dinner table makes a great place to talk, if all televisions are off, mobile devices are left behind and you take the time to make it more than a pit stop. One way to kick off a conversation is to ask kids if they’d like to hear about your day. From my experience kids are often interested in the most mundane things that go on in an adult’s day so don’t think you have to make it sound grander than what it is. This gives kids permission to talk about their own days; your story can stimulate conversations which provides openings for kids to ask questions and share a little or in some cases a lot about their own day at school.

Interesting questions lead to interesting conversations

The questions you ask to prompt a conversation will often say a great deal about you and what you value. If you focus only on academic or learning questions then it indicates that’s what you value.
Moving beyond asking, “What did you do at school?”

It helps to take conversations and your questions in different directions to get a multi-faceted window into your child’s school life but also an indication of your child’s interests, social skills and welfare. Here are some examples of question starters that may prompt different responses from kids about their time at school:

1. Tell me what made you laugh today?
2. Who did you play with at recess today?
3. Did you do anything that was brave?
4. If I spoke to your teacher, what would she tell me about you?
5. What did your teacher talk about today?
6. Is there anyone in your class who needs to be in time out?
7. Where’s the best place to hang out/play at school?
8. Tell me one good thing that happened to you today?
9. Who were you nice/kind/friendly to today?
10. Did anyone push your buttons today?
11. What did you do that you were proud of/happy with today?
12. What’s something you learned with a friend today?
13. What’s your teacher’s most important rule?
14. If today was a musical instrument what would it be? Why?
15. If you were a teacher tomorrow, what would you teach the class?

Next time you ask a clichéd and dull question about your child’s day stop yourself before you utter the words. Instead think outside the square and ask questions that may stimulate a response beyond “Fine” or “Nothing.” And remember they may not feel like talking, which is fine too. Like adults, kids need to be in the right mood and the right environment if they are going to share a meaningful conversation about their day.

Visit our website for more ideas and information to help you raise confident and resilient young people.

Special note: I’m thrilled to announce that my latest book Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children is out. It’s available at parentingideas.com.au
Altar Servers for Weekend Masses
11th & 12th February 2017

Saturday 6pm: Kane & Caitlyn Smith & Luke Wyche
Sunday 9 am: Claire & Genna Hackett & Paige Howell

Children’s Liturgy (4-13 years)
Meg Millband & Ros Berry

Assembly in the Hall at 1:00
Friday
Week 4 - Years 5/6
Week 6 - Year 4
Week 8 - Year 3
Week 9 - Kinder
Week 10 - Awards

Mass Times at St Thomas Aquinas
Monday to Friday 9.30 am
Saturday 6.00 pm
Sunday 9.00 am
Confession Saturday 4.30 pm

Alexi Mastoris, Georgia Smith, Eloise White, Jaana Crnjac, Madisyn Eals, Nicholas Bucat, Jasmin Polglase & Julian Prado