Message from the Principal

Dear Parents,

At the moment staff are busy completing our end of year learning reports for your children. They are working hard to provide you with valuable feedback for yourself and your child. One of the most important jobs we have as teachers and parents is providing quality feedback to our children. To help them understand what they are doing well and in what areas they need to improve. Our overall goal is that we have guided them so well that they can self evaluate their own performance. I know as a parent I have been guilty of some pretty poor feedback: “Just please be good...because I said so!”

Michael Grose, a leading Australian parent educator comments that we can give much better feedback if we can avoid:

1. **Lecturing:** “When I was your age we didn’t have as many toys and we put them away...” No one likes to be lectured. We tune out, not in! The alternative is talk with kids, Ask ‘What’ questions, challenge their thinking, give reasons and facts.

2. **Put downs:** “You are such a silly boy you never hand in those notes at school.” At times we say this out of sheer frustration. (It’s not an easy job!) Alternative: Give feedback about behaviour without judging, tell them how to do something right next time.

3. **Sympathising:** “Oh you poor thing. They were really mean to you. There. There. You can’t help it if others pick on you.” Sympathy talks down to kids and disempowers them. Alternative: Empathise with them, which lets kids know you understand how they feel. “It’s awful when kids say mean things to you. I understand that you’d feel bad, but I’m sure you’ll cope.”

Communication and feedback is tricky. Do it well and your kids are more likely to take notice. Do it poorly (like we all have!) and we block communication with your kids and we feel awful. If you do make a mistake, DON’T beat yourself up. Just APOLOGISE! Not only are you modeling forgiveness, but you are letting kids know you are human, which can come as quite a relief for many kids!

Have a great week,

J Borg

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**STAGE 3 CANBERRA 2014 EXCURSION**

In 2014 Stage 3 will be travelling to Canberra for an excursion. This excursion is supported through PACER. Here is a short explanation about PACER.

The Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) is an initiative of the Australian Government which provides some financial assistance for students in Years 4-12 across Australia to travel to Canberra, the nation’s capital. Students who learn about civics and citizenship in the classroom see their knowledge brought to life when they experience Canberra first hand. Students visit Parliament House, the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House and/or the National Electoral Education Centre and the Australian War Memorial, and have the opportunity to visit a number of other sites of cultural and historical interest.
The Spirit of Christmas.

The students at Mother Teresa are doing an inquiry into the spirit of Christmas. As parents, I wonder what our inquiry would be in to this profound question. Is it the time to teach our children greed and discontent? Is the time to boost the nations economy by overspending on things we don’t need. Let’s go back to the source. When Mary found out she was pregnant she sang these words. “He has filled the poor with good things and the rich he has sent empty away”. This is the Christ who revealed himself to the poor shepherds and was only recognised by the wisest of men.

Christmas is about love and compassion. We can find the joy of Christmas and teach it to our children, by living compassionately. It is truly in giving that we receive.

**Friday, 29th Nov.** is our Thanksgiving Mass at 10am, to which you are warmly invited. This is a time when to be truly grateful for all the blessings and opportunities we have had this past year.

**Thursday, 28th Nov,** is our collection day for St Vincent de Paul Christmas goods for those in need this Christmas. The children can come to school in Christmas colours mutti to remind them of the joy of giving. Please give as generously as you can. Remember, God loves the poor and if we love God we need to love the poor as well, and to be one with them. Together, let’s find the true spirit of Christmas.

“I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love.” Mother Teresa

Maria Boyd REC

Here is our suggested donation list:

- Kindy: Christmas decorations, Bon Bons, tinsel, etc. tins of fruit, salsa
- Yr 1 – Tins of ham, assorted biscuits. Long life custard/cream/milk, coffee, tea, sugar
- Yr 2 – Chips, hot chocolate, milo, tins of vegetables, pasta, Christmas plates/napkins
- Yr 3 – Jellies, honey, vegemite, jam
- Yr 4 – Gravox, lollies, rice
- Yr 5 – soft drinks, fruit juice, cordial, Christmas cake, Christmas pudding.

**SCHOOL UNIFORMS 2014**

If you would like to start purchasing your school uniforms for 2014, you can either email your order, or come into the front office. [www.motherteresawestmead.catholic.edu.au](http://www.motherteresawestmead.catholic.edu.au) (download order form). The office will then fill your order and place in your child’s bag.

**LEAVING STUDENTS**

If your child will not be returning to school in 2014, you must notify the office as soon as possible and advise the last date of attendance at our school and the name of the new school your child will be attending.