



Our Lady's Catholic High School



A National Teaching School

Friday, 8 January 2021

The theme for next week is Baptism of the Lord (MARK 1: 7 – 11)

'Someone is following me...and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

Our baptism is not the only time when we are filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit. There are times when God gives us strength in special ways for different tasks. Do not be afraid to ask for the Spirit to help you in times of difficulty and in times of change. The Holy Spirit is with you always.

Dear Lord

**We pray for guidance in every challenge and in every new beginning.
Grant that we may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit,
through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.**

Amen.

ONLINE LEARNING

Firstly, may I thank the families who have provided such lovely and appreciative feedback to us about our online provision for pupils. We have spent much time in the autumn term training our teachers in the use of Teams and that work is now paying dividends. Be assured that they value greatly your feedback. You are of course realistic as parents and carers and you know that, even at our very best, online lessons will never be as effective as having pupils learning in school with their teachers and classmates.

I hope you understand that many of our teachers, while being key workers, are also parents of young children and they must respond to the needs of their child's primary school. Before and after school clubs have typically stopped and these were very important in allowing teachers to fulfil their school commitments. To try to maintain as strong and effective provision as possible, we must work as flexibly as possible and so many of our lessons will be delivered from the class teacher's home. This also allows us to reduce the number of staff in school where possible and hence reduce the rate of transmission of the virus.

The majority of lessons will be delivered live. This means that the teacher will be present and available to the pupils to explain; direct activities; pose questions; respond to questions. However not all lessons require this and sometimes the teacher will leave a video or PowerPoint recording of instructions and pupils will be expected to work to complete a piece of extended writing, a piece of art or extended question etc. There will also be some occasions where work must be set for the class, as would be the case if the teacher were not present at school, and the tasks would be work sheet based. Should you have enquiries about our provision please contact in the first instance the Learning Manager for your child and we will try to help.

LESSON REQUIREMENT

Each child should follow their daily timetable online, logging into Teams and waiting for the teacher to admit the class. A microphone being available to your child is very helpful but if you do not have one, they can interact with their teacher through the 'chat' function. Your child needs a supply of lined paper, blank paper, and graph paper and all the typical school pencil case equipment. It is very important that they can work free from distractions such as their mobile phone and computer gaming equipment. Such things are not available to them while at school and we must do our best to replicate this environment while undertaking schoolwork at home. Pupils should be dressed appropriately for all lessons – this means wearing the sort of clothing that would be acceptable on a school trip where uniform is not needed.

BEHAVIOUR

We ask all parents and carers to have a discussion with your children to make very clear what is and is not acceptable behaviour on online forums. Please note that we will be using Behaviour 4 Learning and we will not tolerate any

inappropriate messages, images, actions or comments. Stage warnings will be issued for minor issues and pupils will be 'removed from the lesson' immediately should they receive a Stage 4 warning, just as you would expect were they in school. Serious offences will be dealt with severely and without exception. Should this be necessary, you as parents/carers will be contacted and a plan put in place prior to resuming online lessons. We are also looking at how we can operate our system of rewards for pupils.

It is through working together and remaining strong as a community that we will come through this period and be in the best position to pick up where we left off. I hope you feel that the first week has gone well and I extend my very best wishes to you all.

'BE A WINTER FRIEND'

Please see below details of a fantastic initiative called 'Be A Winter Friend' which has been promoted by individuals such as comedian Steve Royle, Lancashire Rugby League star, Josh Charnley (Warrington Wolves) and Leader of the House of Commons, Sir Lindsay Hoyle which could potentially really benefit pupils. The aim is firstly for individuals to look after themselves and then to support someone or others throughout winter (and this lockdown) who may be feeling lonely and struggling.

Study Buddy: interacting with friends and learning through online resources for example FaceTime, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or other ways of contact.

- This can be applied to all young people -school, college and university.
- Also spending leisure time with friends over FaceTime, Discord or online party gaming such as Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch etc. Also playing multiplayer games on phones or tablet devices; multiplayer Monopoly, Among us, Minecraft, Psych. This will allow you to connect with others and to feel less lonely.

Social Check in: Setting a time with friends or family and updating each other on your emotions, experiences and tasks or activities you have done throughout the day or week. This can be done through social contact or verbal one to one communication. Another example is a young person could keep a motivational journal/diary entry of their days in lockdown.

Social Check out: take time away from social media to:

- Exercise inside or outside as this helps to raise self-esteem, reduces stress levels and can cause chemical changes in the brain to positively change your mood.
- Get fresh air: walk to clear your mind with a family member or friend.
- Do something you enjoy this could be different hobbies or learning a new skills as this boosts self-confidence and self-esteem, helps build a sense of purpose, read a book, bake, gardening or paint.

Be in the moment: Work on staying mindful in the present, instead of worrying about the past or future.

- Try meditation to focus on breathing and reduce stress or anxiety levels
- Take time to self-reflect on how you've been feeling emotionally, mentally and physically.
- Build and working on your self-esteem by challenging negative beliefs.
- Make a list about what you are grateful for and appreciate.

It would be great for them to support this initiative or even yourselves to, we really need to support each other through this. If they want to promote any of what they are doing to support themselves or each other on social media or to learn more, type in #beawinterfriend.

Dates to remember

Wednesday, 20 January – Year 9 Careers/Options Day
Friday, 12 February 2021 – School closes for half-term
Monday, 22 February INSET day School closed for all pupils
Tuesday, 23 February – School opens
Wednesday, 24 February Year 7 Careers Day
Friday, 26 March - School closes for Easter at 12.45 pm
Monday, 12 April - School opens for the Summer term