The P&F Forum and P&F Meeting for the month of March were both held on Tuesday and it was most heartening to see so many parents and friends of the school involved. The upcoming St Joseph’s Camping Weekend was particularly highlighted as an event that’s not to be missed for those families available (related information in a latter section of this newsletter).

Punctuality is a life habit that provides multiple benefits. In the school environment, students who are at school on time each day, gain the benefit of settling well for the day ahead through prayer and instruction. Please prioritise punctuality each school morning.

Wonderful health, physical education and sporting opportunities are provided for our students and the upcoming Gala Sports Day Program (commencing tomorrow for Year 6 and 7), and the Catholic Zone 2 Swimming Carnival (next Thursday for select students) are but two examples. We wish all competitors well for these events and we know that they will be terrific ambassadors for our school.

Further congratulations to Jakob Rawlings (Year 7) on his recent selection in the U/12 Beenleigh District Baseball Team and the U/12 Gold Coast Representative Baseball Team.

Exciting curriculum enhancing activities are scheduled tomorrow for Year 2, with their Kids Go Fresh and Healthy Incursion, and next Thursday for Year 3, with their excursion to Berrinba Wetlands. We trust that these events are most engaging and informative for students.

I have been delighted to learn that staff organise an Information Technology (IT) Breakfast each term, and the first for the year will be held next Monday. At the breakfast, guest presenters from Brisbane Catholic Education will focus on the optimisation of iPad use at St Joseph’s.

The Semester 1 Parent/Teacher interviews will commence from Monday 24 March. A related item of correspondence from the school will arrive in homes by week’s end. Prompt replies regarding preferred interview times is requested.

As well as being engaged in the afore mentioned interviews over the final two weeks of this term, teaching staff will also be meeting with colleagues to focus on Term 2 curriculum planning. This detailed planning will assist in enabling rich learning and teaching to occur from day one of Term 2.
Prep enrolment interviews for the 2015 school year commence next week. Current St Joseph’s families who have submitted 2015 Prep enrolment applications are asked to note that your interviews will be scheduled soon after the Easter break.

With reference to the Easter break, the SPAC or St Patrick’s Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Easter Vacation Care Package is now available on the school app, parent portal and website. I commend this service to you if work or other personal commitments will leave your child/children without a parent or carer for some period of the upcoming holidays.

Important acknowledgements will soon occur in honour of Sister Jenny’s 40 years as a Religious Sister of St Joseph. Sister Jenny reached this milestone on 6 January this year. Sister Jenny’s dedication and service to the Josephites and for the Josephites will be acknowledged at next Monday’s school assembly (17 March) and at next Wednesday’s whole school Mass (19 March) in celebration of the feast day of our school’s patron saint, Joseph. All members of our school community are invited to attend these special occasions.

As we continue our Lenten journey and strive to be more like Jesus through our words, actions and prayer life, let us turn to the patron saints of our parish and school, Patrick and Joseph, whose feast days we celebrate next Monday and Wednesday, respectively. We pray for the intercession of our patron saints in the life of St Patrick’s Parish and St Joseph’s Tobruk Memorial School:

*St Patrick, you brought the Christian faith to the people of Ireland. Guide all those who teach and enliven the faith in our parish and school.*

*St Joseph, you cared for Mary and Jesus and loved them unconditionally. Protect the families in our parish and school as you protected your own.*

With Courage, Faith and Love

Stephen Johnson

**The Great Homework Debate**

At a recent meeting of parents at the Parents and Friends Forum the topic of homework ignited an enthusiastic discussion just like the ones I have experienced at each of the schools I have taught in over the last 25 years. Each time varied responses and many differing viewpoints are expressed. Some parents like it, others hate it, some are ambivalent towards it. Some want more, some want less. Some want harder and some want easier. It is very difficult to gauge the needs of a class; let alone a school.

The homework debate has been raging for many decades, with no end in sight. On one hand there are the supporters of homework who swear by its benefits, and on the other hand we have the detractors who would like schools to end the practice of giving homework to students. Among the proponents there is also the burning question of just how much homework should be given to students. Parents, educators, students and indeed the general public have all been deeply divided over the homework issue for a long time. It seems as though the numbers of detractors are slowly growing. Some schools have a no homework policy.

The experts also disagree over the advantages and disadvantages of homework. Some conclude that there is a positive correlation between the amount of homework students do and their achievement levels. Other researchers state that there is little or no benefit to giving homework and that it does not really lead to improved academic performance. Let us consider the pros and cons of homework and maybe your own thoughts regarding it can be clarified.

**PROS**

- Homework helps to consolidate and clarify what was learned during the school day.
- It gives practice with content, concepts and skills.
- Homework improves performance in standardized tests.
- It is an extension of classwork that allows students to achieve mastery of the content or skills to be learned.
- Students do not have enough time during the day to fully understand all the information they are given.
Homework facilitates rote learning.
- It lets parents see what their children are doing at school.
- Homework teaches self-discipline, time management and research skills.
- It reduces time for TV and video games and promotes good study habits.
- It increases interest in schoolwork when it is corrected quickly.

CONS
- Homework must be corrected quickly or students get frustrated and lose interest.
- It can be too burdensome and stressful at times.
- Homework disturbs family life and prevents students from doing household chores.
- Parents or relatives may do the homework for the student.
- Students need time to relax, play and pursue sports and hobbies.
- Homework can make students too tired after a long day at school.
- It keeps them up too late at night.
- Homework is often meaningless busywork which does not promote real learning.
- Students from middle- and upper-class homes have better resources to help them with homework.

Below are some links to websites to give you food for thought. If you cannot open these links type in the titles to search for the articles.

The Homework Grid  The Great Homework Debate  The 5 Hallmarks of Good Homework

Peace and blessings.

The Seasons for Growth Program is an Australian based program for children who are experiencing grief and loss in their lives. These losses can include the loss of a parent or significant other (e.g. grandparents, siblings, etc.) through death, separation or divorce. This program aims to educate children who are experiencing grief to assist them to understand that the reactions associated with their losses are normal. It also helps children to develop skills for coping, problem solving and decision-making and for building peer support networks thus aiding the restoration of self-confidence and self-esteem. The Seasons for Growth Program is a whole school Program catering for children who are experiencing grief in Years 2 to 7.

As Sr. Jenny will be on leave during Term 2, this program will not be starting until Term 3. Which year levels it will be offered to will be determined by parent response to the form at the bottom of this program outline.

I will contact parents/caregivers to let them know which year level/s will be involved. Please place the signed permission form in an envelope marked for Sr. Jenny’s attention and return to the school office by the end of Term 1. I can be contacted every day at St Joseph’s if you wish to know more about this program.

Thank you

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PLEASE RETURN TO THE OFFICE:  Attention: Sr. Jenny

PERMISSION FORM FOR THE SEASONS FOR GROWTH PROGRAM

Childs Name……………………………………………………………………… Year Level……………………
Grief Situation (e.g. Divorce, death)
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

I give permission for my child to attend this program
Parent Signature ………………………………………………………………

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MORNING TRAINING CLUB

Morning Training Club has started again for 2014. The sessions will be running on a Monday and Wednesday morning from 7:45-8:15. These sessions will be general fitness and will include some cross country training. If your child would like to be involved and hasn’t received a form, then please inform their classroom teacher.
Dearest Parents

Dear Parents………………..about your Leonardo

MARY MCBRIDE

Some classes have been working on a seascape over the past few weeks, creating a background of sea and sky in oil crayons and then collaging all manner of sea vessels etc over the top. Before we started this unit we looked at paintings of seascapes and discussed colour and movement. We talked about how the time of day would affect the colours and how the weather also would affect directional lines and the angle of the boats on the water. There was a lot of discussion. The backgrounds were enthusiastically worked into the paper. We used a heavier grade paper for this work as the surface was going to take a bit of a pounding over the next few weeks. When the backgrounds were finished the children had to use scissors to ‘draw’ their boats and lighthouses etc and glue the objects onto the surface. Overall the results were very effective. It was obvious with some of the students that they didn’t use scissors very often and initially were very clumsy with their cutting. Learning to cut is a process and you can help your child to develop and strengthen their fine motor skills by planning scissor activities of varying complexities. I think that every child should own their own scissors at home and should have the right scissors for the right age. Adult supervision is always required when using scissors until the child is deemed efficient and sensible enough to go on their own.

There are artists who work entirely with scissors and paper and cut with amazing accuracy to produce the most sophisticated of sculptures. When Matisse was too old and sick to paint at his easel he set about creating cut paper collages often on an enormous scale. He called it ‘painting with scissors’.

Left: Paper cut Artwork by Japanese artist Hina Aoyama
Far Left: Matisse with his scissors and cut outs

The crosses are progressing and we complete our series of modelling workshops this week. We will then move onto the under glaze.

Mrs Jan is still not fully recovered. She came in again last Thursday for a few hours to help with the crosses and will do the same this week. The children are always delighted to see her. Thank you to all the angel parents who have knocked on the art room door and asked if any help was needed. It is so appreciated.

A MUSICAL NOTE - MRS HARAN

Thank you to a very talented group of musicians who come at 7.30am on a Wednesday morning for band rehearsals. They are enjoying their musical arrangements.

CHOIR

The school choir rehearse every Wednesday afternoon. The leadership provided by the year 7 & 6’s has united and organised the whole choir and the children sing with enthusiasm. It is wonderful to have so many year 2 and 3’s involved in singing.

BOOKCLUB - LESLEY SOLAR

Book club due back Fri 21st March. Term 1’s order will be distributed AFTER we come back from holidays, as sometimes there are items on back order. Happy reading!

SPECIAL ORDER: For parents who would like to order Easter books for delivery before the holidays please have your order in by the 14 March and mark the order EASTER BOOKS BOOKCLUB ORDER.

ST JOSEPH’S FAMILY CAMPING WEEKEND

Everyone is welcome at the St Joseph’s Family Camping weekend. We are trying a new location this year, so bring the canoe, raft, fishing rod or boat and kick the feet up at what is sure to be a great weekend.

When? 21st-23rd March (Friday – Sunday)
Where? Lake Moogerah Caravan and Camping Ground. Address: 1 Muller Park Road, Moogerah QLD 4309
Cost? $24 per night (2 People). $7 per extra person on site per night. Payments made on arrival.
Bookings: Bookings through Josh O’Keeffe – jookeffe@bne.catholic.edu.au or return the below form to the office. Communal gathering area and fire place will be available.