

On Friday, 27 March 2020, Pope Francis gave an extraordinary blessing “to the City [of Rome] and to the World” normally given at Christmas and Easter. Pope Francis read from the Scriptures, gave prayers of supplication, and invited us in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; and concluded with the Urbi et Orbi Blessing.



A reading from the Gospel of Mark

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

For weeks now it has been evening. Darkness has gathered over our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We find ourselves afraid and lost. We are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us.

The disciples had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers us. The tempest lays us bare of what nourishes our souls, of which we cannot be deprived - to belong as brothers and sisters.

We look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. We are sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – but who without any doubt are, in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: exercising patience, offering hope, taking care to sow not panic and share responsibility. They understand and have shown us that no one reaches salvation by themselves. This is the force of the Spirit ... courageous and generous self-denial.

How many fathers, mothers, grandparents, and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze, and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering, and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognise and foster the grace that lives within us.

Help us find the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. Let us recognise that we are called to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity, and solidarity. May we embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain helping us protect ourselves and others. Give us strength of faith that frees us from fear and gives us hope. May God's blessing come down upon us as a consoling embrace.

***Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies, and comfort our hearts. You, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: “Do not be afraid.”
And we, together cast all our anxieties onto you.***

RSE & PSHE

The government have announced that they are allowing more time for the statutory elements of RSE and PSHE. They are now expected to be in place by the Summer Term 2021.

We have received several emails with your concerns over the implementation as we know we must put a Catholic Lens on any scheme or programme we are using.

It is important that we can highlight and show we can adhere to church teaching within the DFE guidance/PSHE guidance/Journey in Love/Ten: Ten etc...schemes and programmes of work that schools have bought into. We are hoping that the CES will make concrete statements soon - but until then we wanted to be ahead and make sure we get this right for our schools and the Catholic church we are serving.

With that in mind we will be hosting a series of zoom meetings where we can outline how this can be adapted, keeping within the law for the needs of your Catholic school communities.

In due course we will email the school, giving dates of the meetings and details on how to register your attendance. Please try to ensure Religious Education coordinators and PSHE Coordinators attend the discussion. If you do not have access to Zoom then email Pat at p.peel@rcaol.org.uk and we will contact, you in a different way.

Catholic Certificate in Religious Education

CCRS registration details for new candidates have been sent out to headteachers, together with an additional letter about course arrangements for existing students. If there are any questions or issues you may wish to be addressed please contact either p.mannings@rcaol.org.uk or p.crilly@rcaol.org.uk.

Archdiocese of Liverpool Pilgrimage

Our pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela for October 2020 has been postponed until next year. The new dates are **Monday 18th to Friday 22nd October 2021**. Those people who are already booked on have been contacted by Joe Walsh Tours. For those of you who have not signed up, there will be a new flyer coming out in the Autumn Term. In the meantime if you have any further enquiries please contact Pat Peel – p.peel@rcaol.org.uk or Louise Falshaw l.falshaw@rcaol.org.uk

Section 48 and Monitoring Visits

There are no Section 48 inspections or monitoring visits for this Summer Term. We will wait for the government to advise on when the Section 48 inspections can begin to take place again. Do not unnecessarily be concerned about either an inspection or monitoring. The Education Team will be in touch with schools in plenty of time to consult with renewed and realistic dates in the future.



SYNOD

A revised timetable for the Synod will be sent out at the end of June. The proposed dates for meetings etc. have all been postponed. The date for submission for points for action has passed, but there is still a great prayer and reflection on the Synod website which looks at life through during Coronavirus. It might be useful to use with staff as schools return.

All resources are also available on the Synod Website: www.synod2020.co.uk/resources/schools.

The Synod assemblies may be useful for staff, children, their families, and school community.

The God Who Speaks

The Bishops of England and Wales have asked our Catholic communities to celebrate this *Year of the Word* in some way. The information on the following websites have been adapted in light of our lockdown.

1. What can we learn from St Jerome at this time of self-isolation? We think the answer is lots; so, in this section we have suggested some ways you can socially distance in the company of St Jerome. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks/word-at-home/home-alone-with-st-jerome/>
2. The website for The God Who Speaks linked to the Archdiocese of Liverpool - <https://thegodwhospeaks2020.org.uk/> has some great new resources and ideas of what we can do at home, perhaps to send as a prayer pack for families and possibly to use with key worker children or those who are back in school with you.



Family Resources

Exploring ways to experience faith in the home



God Speaks in our Time

Resources to reflect how God is speaking to us in these times



Scripture in Song

A resource for praying with scripture throughout the year

Rainbows Bereavement Support

As time goes on, unfortunately more and more you, your staff and the children may find you are dealing with the more difficult consequences of the current situation we find ourselves in. The Rainbows Bereavement GB Support Group have updated their support. There is free access and links for information and a bereavement pack, 'When somebody dies' CD and details about 'Silver Linings' including access to downloads. <https://rainbowsgb.org/>

"Natural disasters, such as floods or epidemic illness and human driven crises, such as terrorist attacks, loss of life through accidents, suicide, criminal acts, such Crisis Events can thrust people into painful circumstances so suddenly that whole communities grieve as one. When this happens, people become highly vulnerable and experience many emotions that they did not think they were capable of feeling, prior to the crisis event. Adults who are straining to find answers may be able to cope by supporting each other and by finding ways to exist within this new reality and children will need support too. Rainbows Bereavement Support hopes that Silver Linings Community Crisis Response Programme will help fulfil some of the support needs of the children."

CAFOD

As always, CAFOD have produced amazing resources for Home Learning and prayer.
<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-teaching-resources/Home-learning-primary>



CAFOD's Summer Campaign

Summer of Hope

This summer, like never before, we are called to be signs of hope for our world. Your action for hope can mean fewer families have to ask: "How do I keep my child safe if we don't have water for handwashing?"

What can I do?

You and your family are invited to be part of a Summer of Hope to ensure clean water and food reaches some of the poorest families in the world during this global emergency. Recreate at home the events you will miss this summer and have fun transforming them into a sign of hope through raising money for [CAFOD's Coronavirus Appeal](#).

- School sports day cancelled. [Hold one in your back garden!](#)
- Summer fayre postponed. Play 'guess the sweets in the jar' or 'treasure hunt' online!
- Missing out on a summer BBQ? Get together on Zoom and share your cooking tips!

How can I get involved?

1. Find your activity in our [A-Z of fundraising ideas](#).
2. Start collecting sponsors and [set up your JustGiving page](#).
3. Hold your socially distanced event with your family, school community or parish.
4. Tag your photos with [@cafod](#) [#summerofhope](#).
5. Pay in your donations through [JustGiving](#), or the [CAFOD website](#).

CAFOD's progress so far

Thank you to all our supporters for their amazing support so far! We have raised £11,853 from our target of £100,000 to provide clean water and food to those who desperately need it.



Missio

<https://missiontogether.org.uk/teaching-resources/>

Missio has some great downloadable resources. Plenty of home-schooling ideas, prayer resources and fundraising ideas. Missio is the Pope's charity where children fundraise for children.

All Our Resources

Download our free resources for schools and children in England and Wales. All of our materials include scripture, prayer and call to action, making them an ideal way to explore faith and engage children. They also cover areas of the **RE Curriculum Directory** on 'Mission' and 'Vocation to Mission' (refs 2.5.1 & 2.5.2).



Homeschooling

Resources for homeschooling, support staff caring for children in school.



Liturgical Calendar

Resources for Advent, Lent, and key feasts in the Church calendar.



Resources by month

Liturgies, assemblies and more, arranged by month for easy search!



Prayer resources

Ways to pray with Mission Together

Little Red Box Scheme

For almost 200 years, Missio has been supporting world mission, providing missionaries with the spiritual and material support they need to enable local people to build and sustain their own faith communities. Our famous Red Box encourages Catholic families in England and Wales to give what they can to help communities overseas.

In England and Wales there are Red Boxes in over 200,000 homes and together we have collected millions of pounds for the missionary Church. As the children's branch of Missio, Mission Together invites children to help children around the world by fundraising and giving to the Little Red Box – our very own Red Box for children.

You can use the Little Red Box at home, in a parish group or as a class. It's up to you!



Laudato Si

This year was the 5th Anniversary Laudato Si' Week celebrated 16-24 May. Catholic communities around the world were invited to take a next step in our Laudato Si' journey. We were asked to commit to an ambitious action that grows our response to "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."





Thank you to Tracey from All Saints, Anfield.

"During the week of Laudato Si' anniversary, we asked our pupils to go outside and photograph the beauty of nature whilst remembering the message/theme of Laudato Si. The response was fantastic, so we put together a short film with all the photographs sent in and shared it with our Twitter and You tube community

<https://twitter.com/AllSaintsL4/status/1263877950514044933?s=20>

Wow! Incredible work and thank you for sharing. Below, is just a small selection of the photographs taken...



It is not too late ... why not consider doing some of the following activities for outdoor learning?

- ✚ 'Womblyn' activities (see ideas below)
- ✚ CAFOD resources
- ✚ <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-teaching-resources/Laudato-Si-animation>
- ✚ Plant a tree to represent your long-term commitment to creation
- ✚ Create a Laudato Si club or integrate some ideas into one of your clubs already being run at school.
- ✚ Further ideas and further reading and understanding of projects <https://laudatosiweek.org/>
- ✚ The resources are mainly adult based; however, they may give you and school some ideas.
- ✚ Use thought provoking posters, stories in other curriculum areas

'Womblyn' Lyn Rawlinson, headteacher at St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Helen's, began a campaign to clear rubbish from a beach she visits regularly. With her love of the Wombles, a combined name of 'Wombles and Lyn' and a Facebook group named, the 'Barmouth Bay Womble' – her campaign began... <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2716416201733444/> She has invited us to be a part of this group. And here is a little update... *"Because of the virus, the Wombles are back in their burrows self-isolating! But they continue to do their part in looking after the world!! One of the pictures is of plastic toys that have been found on the beach but could potentially kill sea life. The others are just either old and have been in the sea for that long or have travelled far to reach Wales."*



We will be delighted to share your news, photographs etc. through our newsletter. This is a chance for us all to be involved in just a small way to help our environment.

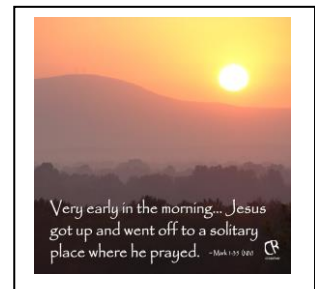
Mental Health and Well-Being

Prayer

In this difficult and unprecedented time of Coronavirus, how many of us have heard or said, 'I will pray for you,' or 'You are in my prayers' and 'Please pray for...' ?

Prayer can help us in so many ways giving us ...

- a sense of God's presence
- receiving a sense of presence through feelings of unconditional love, prayer, or the ability to heal
- a belief in God's continued presence whatever happened and however ill or distressed people might be – this has been especially important for those people who are socially isolated or lonely.



Prayer is often a connection to our parish communities but with social distancing this has been taken away from us. However, a request to 'please pray for me' is about being held within another's or the community's framework of faith and belief – of being connected with others and with a sense of something greater than the self.

This 'being for others', where it occurs spontaneously and authentically, must be a positive element in mental and emotional well-being in that it takes the person away from concentrating on their own pressing needs (however fleetingly). It is an unselfish activity, which involves a reaching out to others and a perception of the needs of others – a disposition that is required at the heart of anyone's prayer life.

A Mental Health Foundation report found that a lot of people spoke about how their beliefs gave them peace:

"Now I think, when I want to pray, I find it very peaceful and it doesn't matter what crazy world I am in at the time, with stress around me, I just feel very at peace..."

"If I'm in stress or crisis sometimes, one of the things I do is go to church, not to a service, but to be in the sanctuary of the church. The peace – just to be there in a peaceful, beautiful space that is huge and that is, sort of, the creation of human enterprise."

"I feel prayer can be a great help in achieving calm and in maintaining a sense of balance and harmony."

'Please Pray for Me': The Significance of Prayer for Mental and Emotional Well Being Julia Head



Thank you to Lorna from Christ the King, Liverpool

We shared a video message with our school families yesterday...*After every storm comes a rainbow.*

Hope you enjoy our message of

hope <https://youtu.be/jZAJiFSvK98>www.christthekingcatholicprimary.co.uk



Thoughts on Sleep and Mental Health. Why not have a little look at the variety of support below and choose one thing or more to improve your well-being and sleep patterns?

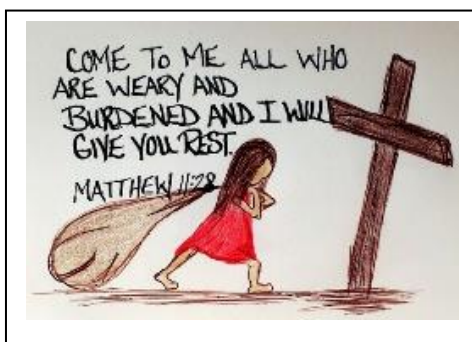
<p>Christian Meditation Practicing meditation for just 10 minutes a day can be helpful. To get started, sit somewhere quiet and focus on your breath. How does it sound, and how does it move your body and the air around you? When thoughts drift into your mind, acknowledge them but stay focused on your breathing. If you find it difficult to stay focused, acknowledge that you are having trouble focusing, and return to your breathing — without judging or criticizing yourself.</p>	<p>Environmental Improvements From your bedroom to your classroom, your car, or your locker at the gym, you have a few places you can call your own. Transform these areas into places of mental health refuge, filling them with natural mood boosters, like a sachet scented with lavender essential oil, or happy reminders, like photos of loved ones. Decorate your spaces with colours that make you happy. Write an inspirational message or positive affirmation on a mirror, so you can see these encouraging words when you see yourself.</p>	<p>Spend time outdoors each day Time outdoors makes you feel better. If you get more sunlight during the day report lower levels of depressed mood and anxiety, and higher feelings of job satisfaction. The more light exposure you get during the day, helps reinforce your natural circadian rhythms (your sleep cycle). The light you receive during the day contrasts with the darkness you experience in the evening, signalling to your brain that it's time to begin melatonin production and start the process of falling asleep.</p>
<p>Guided Imagery Use all your senses to create a mental image and experience it in your mind. Start by remembering a happy memory or envisioning a relaxing environment. Nature-based guided imagery in particular has been found to be an effective form of anxiety management. You can use these same exercises to calm yourself to sleep. Imagine drifting off to sleep in a hammock by the beach.</p>	<p>Social Support Reach out to others for support. The more sleep-deprived you are, the less likely you are to want to reach out, but it's important to avoid this kind of social isolation. Instead, talk to close friends about how you are feeling. If you are not comfortable opening up, continue to spend time with friends and loved ones who care about you and lift you up. Strong social relationships improve your mental health and are even associated with longer life.</p>	<p>Progressive Muscle Relaxation PMR is another technique commonly used to help people fall asleep, although you can just as easily use it during the day to take your focus off stressful or racing thoughts. To get started, lie down, and close your eyes. Pay attention to your breath, and gradually work through your body, progressively tensing each group of muscles one at a time, before relaxing.</p>
<p>Breathing Exercises Deep breathing exercises help you focus on the body, instead of sad or anxious thoughts. By slowing down your breathing, you naturally slow down your body and your mind, inviting the stress to melt off as your body physically relaxes. You might try visualizing the air traveling as you breathe, alternating breathing between different nostrils, or exhaling for longer than your inhale.</p>	<p>Volunteer To take your mind off your thoughts, focus on others instead. Turn your energy outwards to your community. Studies have documented the link between volunteering and better physical and mental health, higher self-esteem, lower depression symptoms, and increased happiness. Volunteering can also be a way to grow your social support network.</p>	<p>Create a Calming Bedtime Routine. If you fill your bedtime routine with calming activities that help you relax and make you smile, you can give yourself a respite from your troubles and get in a better emotional mindset before bed, which will naturally make it easier to fall asleep. Popular choices include aromatherapy, reading, listening to music, taking a bath, or enjoying a cup of bedtime tea. Dedicating 30 to 60 minutes a day to these activities may help restore your mental health.</p>
<p>Exercise Several Times a Week. Exercise holds the happy honour of both boosting mood and aiding sleep. Studies consistently show exercise is correlated with better sleep quality or duration. It physically tires the body, encouraging deeper sleep at night. Don't exercise too close to bedtime, or you may be too wired to fall asleep! Exercise is also used as a treatment for mild to moderate symptoms of depression. There are so many options... dancing, bicycling, walking, gardening, have all been proven to improve anxiety and depression. A twice-weekly yoga regimen significantly and immediately reduced anxiety symptoms</p>	<p>Journaling Journaling helps many people process their emotions in a healthy way. One study found that writing for 20 minutes, on four separate occasions, about their emotions surrounding a significant trauma alleviated anxiety among a sample of otherwise healthy adults. Results were sustained at a three-month follow-up, too. Some people who find themselves stressed or anxious before sleep will write in a bedtime journal before bed, emptying their anxieties and worries from their mind onto the page. Even taking 5 minutes to write a to-do list helped people fall asleep faster, according to one study.</p>	<p>Therapy If you start to notice that your mental health issues persist throughout the day, consider finding a professional therapist to help. One type of therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, is effective in treating both mental health disorders like anxiety and depression, as well as sleep problems, as they can both stem from unhealthy thought patterns and behaviours.</p>
<p>Observe What You Eat and Drink. Your diet plays a role in how you feel throughout the day, both physically and emotionally. It can also either help you sleep better — or worse, as anyone with acid reflux can attest. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and overly spicy or sugary foods past the afternoon. Caffeine can increase anxiety while also keeping you way up past your bedtime. Instead, adopt a healthier diet, stay hydrated throughout the day, and limit dinner and late-night snacks to sleep-promoting foods like bananas, legumes, nuts, dairy, and fish.</p>	<p>Did you know there is a best temperature for sleep? The best temperature for sleeping is 60 to 67 degrees Fahrenheit (or 15 to 19 degrees Celsius). ...And for those of us with children and grandchildren the best temperature for sleeping babies and toddlers is a bit higher, between 65 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit (18 to 21 Celsius) ... (fingers crossed!)</p>	

'When will life go back to normal? And, what will that new normal even look like? As summer approaches, you may find yourself longing for events that you would typically look forward to, such as, holidays or time spent with your family. Without these usual benchmarks, uncertainty does not sit well.

Humans have been able to survive because we are able to plan. We are socialised from childhood to believe that there is an order in which things should happen. Under normal circumstances, you would be able to assemble the resources necessary to achieve a plan, and then go and implement it.

We are wired to avoid uncertainty because it makes us feel negative emotions. You might find that you're mourning the loss of events that you were anticipating, such as weddings, parties and not to mention the will we/won't be welcoming children back to school. It may help to tell yourself about the things you are grateful for. It can be reassuring to understand that your feelings are very normal.

Antshel, Director of Clinical Psychology,
Syracuse University 2020



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Come & See

Thank you to Pam, Head teacher and staff at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Widnes for sharing key worker children's creative ideas for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Home & School Learning Packs

We hope you have all received our letters and Come and See packs to support children's learning and hopefully it has saved you a little of your precious time. Packs have been sent for Pentecost, Reconciliation and Universal Church. If you have not received them and would like a copy, please email j.rourke@rcaol.org.uk or p.peel@rcaol.org.uk or d.hegarty@rcaol.org.uk



Thank you to Michelle from Our Lady's, St. Helen's

"A note to say thanks and to let you know about the positive response to the home learning tasks I have had from staff and families. "



Formal Assessment and Religious Education Data

A little reminder ...In our headteachers letters sent via email over the past few weeks, we assured schools that there is no requirement to formally assess children this term. Data collated from the beginning of lockdown can be transferred over to the next academic year.

As a school you may wish to complete the data from Spring and Summer through informal teacher assessment. We would anticipate that data for this academic year will be either slow or continue to stay the same. However, if there have been expectations for Religious Education throughout lockdown and children have shown progression, then of course this should be shown in your data, if you feel there is enough evidence.

Please do not unnecessarily be concerned about the data. Any future monitoring or inspections will allow for this unprecedented time. Rather see this an opportunity that children will or are continuing to consolidate their learning. We will monitor the situation and give further advice, as necessary.

New Religious Education Curriculum Directory

This work is continuing well - Zoom calls are becoming much more beneficial to enable us to work at a quicker pace. For now, there are seven branches of the curriculum. Dcn Paul Mannings (Secondary Adviser) and Julie Rourke (Primary) are representing our Archdiocesan team in the working party. This will ensure that the primary and secondary curriculum is progressive.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP



Collective Worship and prayer for home and school

We would advise that where possible please continue in your small bubbles to gather for worship each day. A few moments to stop, pray and speak to God can have enormous benefits for children's well-being and your well-being too! Here are a few ideas ...

- * Use the same gathering or closing prayer, the same piece of music as this will encourage familiarity, consistency, and certainty. In this small way we can take away any unknowns. It gives teachers and staff time too, to not worry and plan about what can I do next? After all we are all worrying about our own families too.
- * Sending prayer packs or ideas on your website will prompt children in remembering their Collective Worship at school.
- * Why not upload a school prayer card, a prayer from your mission statement that they can use daily – perhaps when they go to sleep?
- * You might ask children to pray alone or with their family each day.
- * There may be a pattern of prayer such as...
Day 1 pray for your own family, Day 2 pray ... school family, Day 3 ... for friends and community, Day 4 ... for the whole country, Day 5 pray for the world.
- * Children may enjoy gathering items from around the house/school to make a focus table
- * Ask children to make items for their focus table – decorate a cross, make their own prayer card. Make paper flowers or use some greenery from a garden if possible.
- * Why not add some music or hymns onto your Home Learning page be careful of copyright or add some links for children to access online? There is a good website for free provided for Church of England schools <https://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/songs-and-hymns/>
- * Prayer Spaces website offers some great ideas for prayer at home and at school.
<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/>



Thank you to Katherine from St. Joseph's, Warrington

"We've decided to do a #PrayWithUs series of videos to keep in touch with our families in a spiritual way. We are releasing a new video everyone Friday in May with a different member of staff leading the rosary. <https://youtu.be/WtjxMoZRYA>

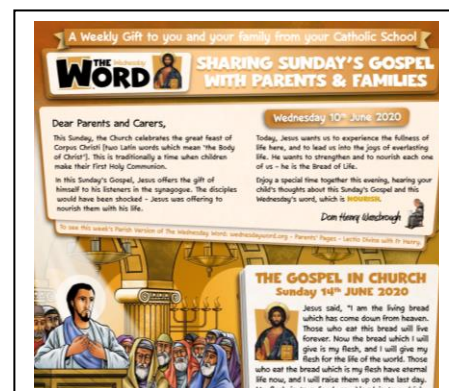
We're releasing new videos on our Twitter page (@StJoes21) each week so feel free to have a look."

Wednesday Word

While schools are closed, all printing and subscriptions are paused for now! There are free-of-charge 'online' editions of *The Wednesday Word*, until things return to normal.

<http://wednesdayword.org/school/index.htm>

- The Primary School *Wednesday Word* is an outreach which shares Sunday's Gospel with all school families, in a unique way.
- The 'offline' weekly handouts consist of high-quality Sunday Gospel leaflets and booklets which are given to children each week - as a gift.
- This is a weekly Gospel 'gift' from the school to the child to take home, which then becomes a 'gift' from the child to the whole family.
- The free editions could be used to send home to parents/use with key worker children/made available online for children and parents to read and complete the activities.



Christian Meditation

Following the effects of the pandemic, you may find that meditation will help children and staff. Here are a few thoughts and ideas to get you started if it is something you have not tried before. There are a lot of meditation practises that are religious and non-religious. We would advise schools to offer *Christian meditation* as this adheres to Catholic Church teaching. **Meditation is not intended to replace the sacraments and other forms of prayer or Collective Worship, but rather, can help enhance their experience.**

One of our schools, St. Bernadette's, Wigan has shared great insight into how, why and the benefits of introducing it into their school.

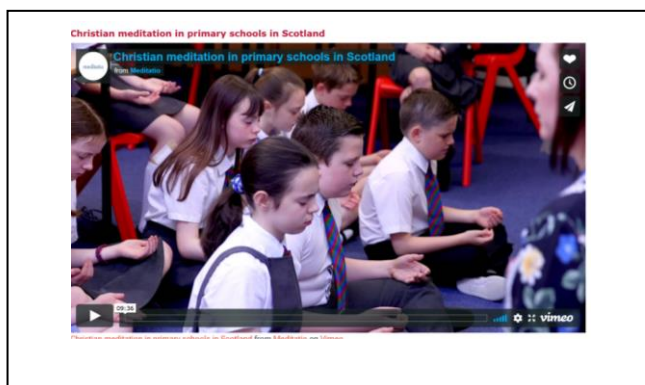
<https://vimeo.com/95470337>



St. Bernadette's, Wigan - The School Journey

330 views · May 16, 2014
Vimeo · Meditatio

The website ... <https://christian-meditation.org.uk/reaching-out/meditation-with-children> offers plenty of advice and film clips of how you may use it in school.



When this practice is shared in schools, the children are introduced to it as prayer, a way of being with God through listening, rather than talking, to Him. It is a way of being silent in a busy, noisy world and being open to

the spirit of Jesus working in our hearts. Children enjoy meditation and it attunes them to listening and being attentive.

So, what happens in meditation time at school or home? How do children meditate?

It is a quite simple practice: Make a quiet space with a candle, flowers, or bible. This provides a focus and the children can help to set it up. The children sit on a chair or cross-legged on the floor with a straight back to help with paying attention.

Benefits:

Deepens the children's personal relationship with God
Leads to increased self-knowledge and self-acceptance
Increases the desire to build community with others
Reduces stress and increases children's sense of well-being and harmony

Children are:

Still and silent, and experience God in the silence
More considerate and loving
More caring and thoughtful of others
Kinder to friends
Eager in anticipation of their meditation times
Calmer and more relaxed
Still for longer periods

They close their eyes gently. They silently say a prayer word (or mantra) to help them focus against distraction. The word we use is Ma-ra-na-tha, said in four equal syllables. It is an ancient Aramaic prayer from the Bible meaning Come Lord. The teachers play a CD of music and a song, which the children can sing, after which a chime will sound at the start and then the end of meditation. When the children first meditate, the meditation period will be just a minute or two long, rising over time to between 5 and 10 minutes, depending upon the children's ages. Teachers meditate with the children. Most importantly, and as with all prayer, there is no measurement or judgment – the act of praying is enough.

The 3 Ss – Silence, Stillness and Simplicity

Sit still and upright with your back straight.
Place both your feet flat on the floor or legs crossed if sitting on the floor.
Place your hands on your lap facing either upwards or downwards.
Close your eyes lightly.
Be aware of your normal breathing pattern for a minute or two as you relax.
Silently, inside, begin to say your sacred prayer word or mantra "ma-ra-na-tha," in four equal syllables.
Listen to the sound of your sacred word as you say it, slowly, gently and continuously.
If thoughts and images come, keep returning to simply saying the word.
Maintain this stillness for the entire period of the meditation.

Here's what children have said about meditation:

"You visit your heart room when you meditate".

"Meditation is a great way to move closer to God".

"Sometimes when you are praying, you don't really take the time to listen to what he is saying".

"You know that meditation will make you calm down and think about what you are doing next, not what has gone before".

"If you are angry about something, it makes you feel okay and nothing bad is going to happen, and you feel happy and relaxed".

<https://christian-meditation.org.uk/reaching-out/meditation-with-children>
<http://www.meditatio.co.uk/education/children-and-young-people/>

We are in the midst of a highly teachable moment. There is no doubt that this period will be referred to for the rest of our lifetimes. We have a chance to go deep, and to go broad. Globally, we are in this together. Depth is being forced on us by great suffering, which as I like to say, always leads to great love. *Richard Rohr*

Staff & Governor Prayer Resources

- liturgyoffice.org/News/coronavirus-prayers/
- <https://www.liverpoolcatholicresources.com/>
- <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2020/03/16/prayer-resources-for-use-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Archbishop Malcolm invites us to pray together with him through these times:

God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of your Son.
Jesus Christ. Amen.

Staff Prayer & Christian Meditation

Why not try using the reflection on the front page of the newsletter with staff?
(socially distanced!)

“Let us pause.

I invite you to take time to reflect and if you are able, be with God.”

Read the Scripture slowly.

Pause.

Slowly read again.

Pause.

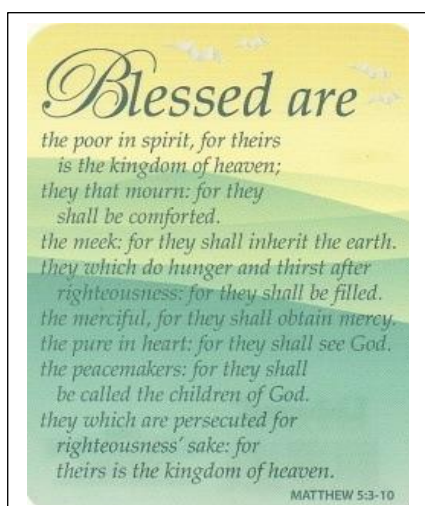
Read one paragraph at a time with plenty of silence in between each one to give
time for reflection.

At the end of the reflection reading play some quiet music and allow for further
reflection and time to talk to God.

Thank you to Ian from St. Ambrose, Speke



Ian regularly shares Scripture, poems, and inspirational quotes with all the staff. He laminates the cards to offer prayer and reflection time in their busy day.



“And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.” (Kitty O’Meara)

Data Protection Reminder Please only use school emails in correspondence with the Archdiocese.

Email change: p.peel@rcaol.org.uk d.hegarty@rcaol.org.uk j.rourke@rcaol.org.uk a.kelly@rcaol.org.uk



A huge thank you for the truly amazing dedication that each of you have shown in this time of uncertainty and constant change.

You have and are dealing with teaching in a time that we have never known.

We miss you and it is a privilege to work alongside you all.

Please stay safe and be kind to yourselves when you can.

Know that our prayers are always with you.

Please get in touch if we can support you in any way.

If you are able, have some rest and relaxation over the Summer.

More than ever before you deserve it!

Christian Education Team



A huge thank you to our LACE Cluster group for their time, support and sharing Good News.

Maria Reichinger, St. Paul & St. Timothy's Infants
Joanne Mitchell, Our Lady's Bishop Eton
Elizabeth Martin St. Paschal Baylon
Angela Brough, St. Cuthbert's
Lisa Maddocks, St. Margaret Mary's Infants
Michelle McCoy, Our Lady's
Charlotte Chenery, Sacred Heart
Catherine Topp, St. Chad's
Rachael Dooner, St. Mary's (Blackbrook)
Angela Sothern, English Martyrs
Louise McIntyre, English Martyrs
Kate Dooley, St. Basil's
Charlotte Hillier, St. Michael's

Lyn Rawlinson, St. Thomas of Canterbury
Sam Stirrup, Sacred Heart
Katherine Daly, St. Joseph's
Ian Mackenzie, St. Ambrose
Tracey Williams, All Saints
Hannah Ready, St. Francis de Sales Juniors
Clare Finnegan, St. Margaret Mary's Juniors
Rowena Swarbrick, St. Joseph's
Amy Mc Cormack, St. Mary's Junior
Dympna Bradley, Great Crosby
Louise Tracey, St Patrick's
Susan Elwin, St. Benedict's