



# Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I know that things have been turned on their head for everyone and so many of us are desperately trying to find a comfortable way through a complex situation which is set to last. Whilst many of you will be happy with the home routines that you have put in place, I thought that it might be useful to share some key bits of information with you to support you in these challenging times.

Please rest assured that, when life returns back to normal, any curricular or learning challenges that the current crisis may have created will be addressed and your child will be set back on track. These are clearly unique times and our response to such times needs to be calm and measured. Please be assured that anything positive that you do now will assist your child's development and that our children are resilient learners who, with the care of their parents and the professional help of a talented staff team, will succeed as long as we do not create unnecessary stress, pressure or obstacles now. We are all in this together as are children and families across the country! *'All will be well and all manner of things will be well!'*

## Age related hints and tips for home learning opportunities:

**In Nursery and Reception (EYFS)**, your children should be spending the majority of their time playing and actively exploring the world around them, being creative and thinking independently. Share and enjoy stories, songs and rhymes with them – cook, mark-make, dig and play. You may want to spend some time on Phonics Play ([www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)) supporting early reading skills. A little time each day practising letter formation with simple words would also be useful as would some simple maths for the children in Reception. There is a daily maths task on the White Rose

Website (<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>) which might help to get the focus right.

**In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)**, being creative, artistic, musical and explorative remain important skills. Our learning in Years 1 and 2 is not completely desk based and still encourages a beautiful exploration of the living, cultural and natural world around them. Colouring, building and cutting activities will still be key as they improve hand control for handwriting and letter formation. Reading stories together and talking about them will be of great benefit each day. Again



there is an appropriate daily maths tasks on the White Rose Website (<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>) and this allows for practise of key skills. A little writing each day of sentences to do with things that interest them would be useful in order to keep skills sharp. Most children love to make posters, booklets, leaflets, lists, letters and quizzes – any opportunity to write will be a positive one if you encourage it!

**In Key Stage 2** (Years 3 to 6), sustaining reading habits and talking about what they have read will be important each day. I would also suggest that if you are able to, make use of the daily White Rose Maths tasks (<https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>) with their useful videos, practice tasks and explanations.



Maybe your child could engage with a longer written task or use their reading and writing to research something that really interests them. Remember, writing isn't just about stories – children love to explore instructions, biography, historical reports, explanations, song writing and poems – use ANY opportunity that you can to get them writing!

### **Religious Education and Living Our Faith:**



Throughout the school, children will benefit from times to **read bible stories and to pray**. Obviously a focus on Holy Week and the great feast of Easter will be really useful. Please explore the following

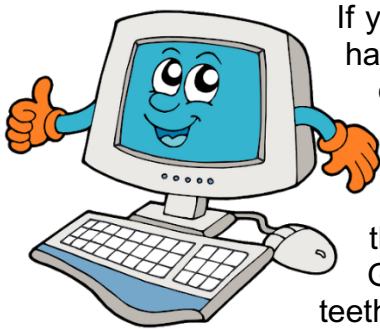
link to access some great daily prayer resources from TenTen:

<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/primary-subscription/prayers-for-home/>

Focusing on being an active person of faith, living their call to help others at this time would be brilliant. How about drawing a picture or writing a letter for someone that you know on your street or who is in a care home? This would be a real life example of love in action and is the ultimate response to our Religious Education experience.

Do remember that all of the tasks that you complete and activities that you carry out are part of a unique continuum of learning – a learning journey – and this will be different for each child in the class. Do not worry what others are doing; you know your child best!

### **Other Web Links:**



If you want to explore more opportunities for learning, the staff have put together a list of age appropriate links that may helpul on your child's class pages on the school website. Please do have a look!

Equally, your child may be benefiting from fully immersing themselves in the project about the centenary of Welwyn Garden City! This is something hat hey can really get their teeth into and we can display these as part of our Exhibition when we return to school!

Aim for some time each day where your child tries to work independently – they don't always have a member of staff learning alongside them in school! I would also suggest some time each day where your child directs what they are doing themselves – let them find a way into something interesting. It is important to remember that although the children from Year 1 upwards have about one hour of English and Maths each day, they also have lots of exercise and other creative opportunities – not all of their

learning is desk bound or has a written outcome. This is a time to be really creative and some days you may just go with the flow, following your child's lead, rather than following the tasks the teacher has set and this is completely fine! There may even be days when nothing particularly gets done because your children need some down time (as may you!) – do not worry!!! This is perfectly natural! A positive mental health and wellbeing for ALL is key!!!

### **Twitter Help:**



Over the Easter holidays, we will be focusing on reorganising the class pages of the school website to group as many ideas and links that we think will be useful. Twitter has been an excellent source of shared resources recently – do follow the school account (**@OurLadySchWGC**) as we often re-tweet learning opportunities as they arise.

### **Easter Holidays:**



This Friday, we would be breaking for the Easter Holiday and it is important that this break is marked somehow in our homes if we are to sustain things. We will even be doing this in school when we provide the emergency care for Key Workers' children which will look very different to what we have been delivering in school days!

It is strange to be breaking for Easter without the usual Holy Week preparations in school. We have missed Year 5 performing their Passion Play and have not had the opportunity to take part in our annual Stations of the Cross (led by Fr. Norbert) or our Lenten fundraising appeal.

However, maybe we can all join together in marking each day of Holy Week by reading a bible story together and praying as a community. We may be apart at this time, but our prayers can bring us together. Watch out on Twitter for ways that we can do this together during Holy Week. Prayer is an incredibly powerful tool and now is the time to join together in this pursuit as individuals across our world cope with loneliness, illness and uncertainty.

As we move towards the Risen Christ at Easter, perhaps we can reflect on our recent journey as explained by Pope Francis in his recent Urbi et Orbi poignant blessing in Rome (on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020):

"The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering.  
The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith.  
We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved.  
We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed.  
We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love.  
In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.  
The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us.  
Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. *Is* 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled"

May each of us be enlightened by the light of the Risen Christ when he fully reveals himself to us on Easter Sunday and may this give us strength, resolve and faith to find a path through any uncertainty ahead.

Rest assured that each of you and your children are held in the heart of our daily prayers. May God bless you and hold each of you in his loving hands.

Wishing you every blessing,

Richard Curry