STAFF SUPERVISION: 8.40am - 3.45pm
7 April 2011

Dear Parents and Friends

The true meaning of the celebration of Easter is Jesus Christ’s victory over death. His resurrection symbolizes the eternal life that is granted to all who believe in Him. The meaning of Easter also symbolizes the complete verification of all that Jesus preached and taught during His three-year ministry. If He had not risen from the dead, if He had merely died and not been resurrected, He would have been considered just another teacher or Rabbi. However, His resurrection changed all that and gave final and irrefutable proof that He was really the Son of God and that He had conquered death once and for all.

Through the events of Easter, we are given eternal hope and the gift of life. On Easter Sunday we hear the words “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice.” These words reflect the joy of Christ’s resurrection. Another message of Easter is the call for us to be people of peace. After His resurrection, the first words spoken by Jesus were, “Peace be with you.” With our world experiencing so many conflicts, let us consciously take this example given to us by Jesus and be people who bring peace, happiness and goodwill to others this Easter.

A Safe, Inclusive, Happy and Respectful Community. For 2011, our theme is ‘Light Up Our World.”

Our Value for Term One is “Love.”

SCHOOL MASS
When we return after the Term break, we will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus with a School Mass on Thursday 28 April at 12.00pm. Please come and join us as we celebrate this special time in our Christian story.

ENROLMENTS 2012
Enrolments for Prep 2012 are now being accepted.
There will be an Open Morning on the 5 May.
Tours will be conducted at 9.30am and 12.00pm. Enrolments close on the 27 May.

It is most important that current families with a Prep student for 2012 make application now so that we are in a position to know how many places we have available for new families. There has been strong interest in positions for next year, so please ensure you enrol now.
The Annual General Meeting of the School Advisory Board was held last Thursday. Annual Reports were submitted and elections took place. John McEntee accepted the position of Chairperson with Paul George filling the position of Deputy Chairperson. Kristina Elvery will continue as Secretary and will be assisted by Phill Goulding as Deputy Secretary. The only retiring member was Brooke Di Muzio. On behalf of all, I thank Brooke for her time as a Board member and for her many valuable contributions. I also thank the Advisory Board for all their support and input into deliberations and decisions in what was a very busy and active past year. The next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 28 April.

The Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association was held last night. The PA has experienced another successful year and I congratulate and thank all members for their generous and active contributions. Three members vacated positions. I thank Bernie Kamphuis who stepped down as President and Sue Hollowood as Vice President. Together, after two wonderful years of shared leadership of the PA, they have ensured that this group has continued to grow as a vibrant and effective Committee. Esther Dooley has resigned as Assistant Treasurer. Esther has given many hours to this role and I thank her sincerely. Veronica Collum has moved from the position of Secretary where she filled the role so admirably to President. Veronica will be supported by Maree Brick who has taken on the role of Vice President. Maureen Fell will continue as our very able Treasurer and will be assisted by Christine McAllister. Sharon Shannon has accepted the position of Secretary. The PA is looking forward to working once again for the good of our students and would appreciate new members joining. Please come along to our next meeting which will be held on 4 May at 7.00pm in the Staffroom and support the work of the PA.

I was pleased to announce to the School Advisory Board that following a successful application lodged prior to Christmas to the Catholic Education Grants Committee, our original grant of $468,000 for the next stage of our Building Program has been increased to $795,000. This will make a big difference in supporting our repayments in the future. Plans for the next stage of our Master Building Program are being prepared and it is anticipated that they will be ready to lodge to Council for approval early next Term. Plans include the building of a new Administration Centre, refurbishment of the current building that houses the Offices, Library, Prep and Yrs 2WS and 3LR classes to provide updated learning spaces for Yr Prep- Yr 2. The refurbishment of the single storey building that will provide a Library/ITC facility, LOTE and Music/Drama spaces along with a recording room. The completion of this project will ensure that learning spaces at St. Mary's support our beliefs about learning in the 21st century.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY PROJECT
St. Mary's School and Parish have accepted an invitation to participate in a Project named the "Catholic Identity Project." This Project will seek information as to how we see ourselves as Catholics and provide us with data that will shape our future as a Catholic community into the future. We are the first School and Parish that has been offered this opportunity. Today all families will receive a letter requesting your participation in this survey. I ask that you please support this project and complete the online survey. It does take an hour to complete but if you could spare this time, your participation would be very much appreciated. Attached to the letter is a coupon for you to fill in and return to the Office. In appreciation for your support, you will be entered into a draw for either a Family ticket to "Funfields" in Whittlesea or a Movie Family Gold Pass. (lucky winner can choose) Students in Yr 5 and 6 will complete this survey early next Term.

CELEBRATING MOTHERHOOD
All Mothers are invited to a Mass and Luncheon to celebrate Motherhood on Friday 13 May at St. Mary's Church. This will be a special occasion where the gift of Motherhood
can be reflected upon and celebrated. An invitation will come home via your child.

SHARE the DREAM - FAMILY GAHERING
A special gathering for families will be held from Friday 15 April-Sunday 17 April 2011 at Xavier College Barkers Road Kew. There will be workshops and special activities throughout the weekend supporting and promoting family life. Please go to www.sharethedream.org.au for further details.

CONFIRMATION FAMILY EVENING
A Confirmation Family evening will be held in the Church commencing at 7.00pm on Tuesday 3 May for all families who have a child wishing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in June. It is expected that at least one parent attends with their child.

NAPLAN
Each year students in Yrs 3 and 5 participate in the National Assessment Project. These assessments will be undertaken on 9-11 May. It is important that your child attends school on these days.

SINCERE SYMPATHY
On behalf of all at St. Mary's, I offer sincere sympathy to the Wolczko family on the recent death of Clare's father, Rollo Jackson (grandfather of Jackson, Toby, Hollie and Ben.) Rollo is also the father of David Jackson whose children Matthew and Emily previously attended St. Mary's.
I also extend sincere sympathy to Svonka Lovric on the recent death of her father. (grandfather to Nikol PW)
We shall remember and pray for you all at this time of sadness.

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAY
The school will be closed for a professional development day on Thursday 19 May. The staff will be working with John Marks on the use of effective feedback in the process of supporting and developing professional growth. This is in line with our goal to embed the strategy of Peer Coaching in our professional learning plans.

TERM FINISHES
Term 1 will finish at 1.45pm on Friday 8 April for the Term break. School will resume on Wednesday 27 April at 8.50am. Please note, commencement day for Term 2 is Wednesday due to Easter Monday holiday and Anzac Day Public Holiday.

COMING EVENTS
April
7  Easter Parishurgy 2.30pm
8  Term 1 finishes at 1.45pm
27  Term 2 commences 8.50am
28  School Easter Mass 12.00pm
May
3    Mothers' Day Stall
     Confirmation Family Night 7.00pm
5    Open Morning Tours 9.30am & 12.00pm
     Strategic Planning Meeting 7.30pm

TERM 2 IMPORTANT DATES
May
3    Confirmation Family Night 7.00pm
9-11 Yr 6 School Camp
     Yr 3 and 5 NAPLAN Assessments
17  School Photos
19  School Closure
23  Family Photos
25  Yr 6 Transition
27  Prep Enrolments Close
June
7  Yr 6 Transition
9  Prep 2012 Offer of Places
13  Public Holiday
16  Confirmation Retreat Day
24  Confirmation 7.30pm
26  Confirmation 2.00pm
28  Parent/Teacher Interviews
29  Parent/Teacher Interviews
July
1  Term 2 Finishes
I wish everyone a joyful Easter as you celebrate the Risen Lord. May the peace of this season surround you and your family.

Regards

Helen

END OF TERM

Term 1 will conclude at 1:45pm tomorrow Friday 8 April and re-open for classes on Wednesday 27 April.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Congratulations to the following children who will celebrate their birthday over the next two weeks: Harrison Dafilis, Hayley Dafilis, Katelin Jernejcic, Olivia Jones, Sarah Marchetti, Alegría Cauchi, Jacob Lowe, Connor Melville, Leon Posani, Ruby Colley, Jacob Leahy, Milla Mikac, Tiyasha Skenanayake, Xander Wilson, Lachlan Brady, Lawrence Payne, Mary Blake, Aaron Pingiaro, Kristen Rosch, William Toomey, Stefan Ficarra, Danielle Di Falco, Joshua Jones

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

Congratulations to the worthy recipients of this award to be presented at Assembly.

Year 6C Nicholas Di Giacomo, Bridgit Callipari
Year 6D Josh Bowler, Joshua Munro
Year 6G Jessica Dyson, Lucas Lin
Year 6MS Sarah Bibby, Jordan Gabriel
Year 5B Keely-Anne Alco, Lachlan Scully
Year 5H Sarah Catania, Jesse Thompson
Year 5S Daniel De Maria, Jacqueline Cowley
Year 4C Jarod Bowman, Natalie Lewis
Year 4GM Frances Collis, Rhys Humphry
Year 4PM Gabrielle Neal, Asher Trigg
Year 3LR Matisse Febbrarino, Matthew Atkinson
Year 3R Sophie Collins, William Dynes
Year 3WR Dominic Akuei, Evalyn Taylor
Year 2C James Mantis, Mia Guerresi
Year 2M Matthew Pane, Annaliease Neal
Year 2WS Amelie Damien, Ciara Wilson
Year 1C Kiara You, Adrian Salvatore
Year 1ML Matthew Marinucci, Georgina Bezkorowajni
Year 1R Alexandra Roseman, Keanu Ana
Prep S Julien Ambrose, Melanie Carbis
Prep B Ella Cain, Hemish Dharnikota
Prep W Charlotte Luff, Shae Steen

SCHOOL PHOTOS

School Photos will be taken on Tuesday 17 May with Family Photos being taken on Monday 23 May. Order forms will be sent home early next term.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Thursday 19 May

NO SCHOOL
Spotlight on Learning

Literacy News 2011 – Reading at St. Mary’s

Reading is a major focus of the Literacy Program at St. Mary’s. Students learn about reading in a variety of ways. As a reader students are encouraged to be thinkers who use a range of strategies when reading. Some strategies that students are encouraged to use include predicting the text, connecting with the text, visualising when reading and questioning before, during and after reading.

As teachers we provide students with quality literature and expose students to a range of authors. Mem Fox is an amazing Australian author who has written over 30 books for children. She has received many honours and awards for her work as an author. Mem has **Ten Read Aloud Commandments** that highlight some simple approaches that parents can use in helping develop their children to become readers. These include:

1. Spend at least ten minutes every single day reading aloud
2. Read at least three stories a day
3. Read aloud with animation
4. Read with joy and enjoyment
5. Read the stories that the kids love
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page
9. Never ever teach reading
10. Please read aloud every day, mums and dads, because you just love being with your child

(For more information about reading and Mem Fox follow link; [http://www.memfox.com/ten-read-aloud-commandments.html](http://www.memfox.com/ten-read-aloud-commandments.html))

At St. Mary’s students are encouraged to read every day, exploring a range of texts, authors and series.

For more information about reading with your child, reading strategies or book selection please see Elizabeth Whiting Year P-2 Literacy Leader or Di Manthos Year 3-6 Literacy Leader

Learning Highlights

Prep W is going Troppo with Technology!

As part of our school goal to develop a positive and contemporary learning community the Preps in Prep W have been experimenting with ipods and have been contributing to our newly created class blog. You can check out our page, “Discovery Den” at [roomw.global2.vic.edu.au](http://roomw.global2.vic.edu.au). We would love it if you would leave a comment (no surnames please or anything that identifies your child, eg. Bill, Harry’s dad in 5P) and tell us what you think of our blog.

Stay tuned next term and share in our learning about Change.

Last week the students tried out some of the different applications on the i-pods. This is what some of them had to say:

I played a game on the i-pod. You got to move a face around to make a funny face. (Fletcher).

Playing with the i-pod was really fun because it had lots of different games that were kind of new. (Flynn).

I like the i-pod because it had games on it. (Sophie).

I like playing with the i-pod because I have one at home. (Joe).

We look forward to Mrs Leone downloading some more great apps to enhance our learning.

What is a blog?

A blog is something that you get on the internet (Sienna).

A blog is something that you can put pictures on and write questions (Shannon).

Lots of people from all over the world can look at our blog. I like seeing who has looked at our work because they like it (Fletcher).

A blog is something that people look at from all over the world and we can look at other people’s blogs too. I like our blog because I like seeing how many people have looked at it. (Eoin).

I like blogs because we can write on there. (Alexandra).

A blog is something where you can write about yourself or your class (Shae).
It is an exciting time to be in education with all the wonderful and engaging tools we have access to at St. Mary's. We believe that these tools assist learners to be stimulated in their learning and provide an avenue to state their opinions and thoughts in areas related to their different inquiries.

At St. Mary's we are using Forums on myclasses and now we are beginning to introduce Blogs in class to allow learners to voice their thoughts in an online forum with teachers who moderate content and context. The students also have the possibilities of reading comments posted by students and experts from around the world.

Whilst there are many advantages with using these technologies, it does come with responsibility and consequences. At school we have talked about the importance of being a cyber-safe user. In a world where technology is an integral part of our learning it is imperative to understand the responsibilities involved in uploading photos, using names and details about personal life on the worldwide web. At school throughout this term all grades have discussed issues on Cyber safety and how to be a responsible Global Citizens. Cyber safety will continue to be discussed and actions taken at school to ensure that the ongoing safety of our students and staff.

Unfortunately it has been brought to my attention that there are a number of students who have become members of Facebook and have uploaded school photos on this site. The uploading of school photos is NOT ALLOWED This is stated in the St. Mary's permissions of internet usage which were distributed at the beginning of the year and signed by parents, students and teachers.

Most significantly, Facebook states that “You will not use Facebook if you are under 13”. Students can be reported to Facebook and access denied. Parents need to really be aware of this restriction, monitor and supervise the use of this site.

Thanking for your support and assistance in keeping our students safe while learning and interacting online. If you require assistance or further information in this area please email me gleone@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au and ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Authority) is a great resource for parents is http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/.

On Thursday 28 April between 9am and 11am the Year 5 (9 to 10am) and 6 (10 to 11am) students will be participating in an interactive presentation on Cyber Safety. This will be held at school and presented by Maryanne Panucci (Psychologist) in the St Mary’s school Lab. Parents are most welcome to attend these sessions.

Gabriella Leone (Contemporary learning Leader and ICT Leader)

SPORTS NEWS

DISTRICT TRIALS

Over the past week we have had a number of Year Six Students attend District Trials in a variety of sports, aiming to reach the state teams. Well done to all students who tried out. Congratulations to the following who were successful and now move to the Division Trials next term.

Basketball: Curtis Howden Crhak, Ben Plunkett, Ryan Bowkett, Caitlin Williams & Greta Miller.
Netball: Jesse Leigh Boskovski & Rhiannon Garraway
Football: Curtis Howden Crhak, Bailey Thompson, Richard Abiharb
Soccer: Marcus Casalis & Jalon Wilson

Good Luck at the Division Trials.

BASKETBALL GRAND FINAL REPORTS

The boy's basketball team played Watsonia North at their home court. The team played really well and won by 15 points. The final score was 29-14. It was a tough game, and even though we won, they were good sports and a tough opposition. We had a perfect season and were undefeated. We had a lot of fun representing our school. The players are: Aiden H, Tom W, Lachie M, Ryan B, Curtis H-C, Ben P, Ramone A, Tom K, Liam B, Josh B with Mr Gilmore as our coach. The boy's continue their season in Term 4 at the zone knockout stage.

The girl's basketball team played the same school at the same place. They played really well, but were defeated. The final score was 24-10, which means they lost by 14. The girls played their hearts out and tried really hard. They have had a lot of fun playing other schools and representing St. Mary's. The players are: Meg J, Bridget M, Sarah B, Greta M, Georgia H, Caitlin W, Micaela R, Rhiannon G, Ally B, Jean C and Michaela G with Mr Gilmore as their coach.

Written by Aiden H, Bridget M, Lachie M & Tom W.
**PARENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

**SCHOOL DISCO**

The 1st disco for this year will be held on Friday 6 May. Junior Disco: Time 5:45pm-7:30pm. Any children from Years Prep, One and Two. Senior Disco: 7:45pm - 9:30pm - Any children from Years Three, Four, Five and Six. More details to follow after the holidays.

**TUCKSHOP VOLUNTEERS**

The following volunteers are rostered on for the week commencing 27 April & 2 May

Wed 27  R Williams, H Simoncini
Thur 28  C Cimino
Fri 29   K Pearson, V Mellino, J Mantis, E Tamburro, M Fell, S Shannon
Mon 2   T Williams, L Fisher, D Scarpa
Tues 3  T Dwyer
Wed 4   N Callipari, C Ganikis
Thur 5   C Adamidis, A Miller
Fri 6    A Garavelos, K Reading, M Mayne, N Clayton

**UNIFORM SHOP HOURS**

The Uniform shop will be open for business during the following times:

- **Monday:** 8:30am - 10:00am
- **Wednesday:** 2:30pm - 4:00pm
- **Friday:** 8:30am - 10:00am

You may order through the office, just complete the order form and return it back to school.

**EASTER RAFFLE**

Thank you to all our families who donated items for our Easter raffle. Due to your amazing generosity we were able to offer 151 prizes for the children’s delight. A big thank you to the ladies who gave up their time to wrap all the prizes and organise the raffle.

The first three prize winners were:-

1st prize  Jonah Fisher  Year Prep 5
2nd prize  Riley Gamble  Year One ML
3rd prize  Patrick Tobin  Year Three R

Fundraising Committee.

**PARISH NEWS**

**M.A.T.E.S. 2011**

**Mothers And Toddlers Extended Support**

An invitation to Mums, Dads, Grandparents & Caregivers with pre school children. We meet every 1st & 3rd Tuesday during school term 10.00am - 11.30am Meeting room next to the hall at St Mary's. **Next session Tuesday 5 April 2011**. Activities for children Morning tea for parents & carers. Contact Helen Brennan for more details 94321281.

**DIAMOND VALLEY DEANERY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

In our parish, there are over 50 very active groups. If the mission of our parish is to progress and flourish, the formation of people in these groups is essential. So I would like to give you information about a leadership formation program and invite you to consider participating. The program is for those parishioners presently involved with a parish group who would like to enhance their leadership skills, those new to parish ministry, and those who would like to take more responsibility in the parish. The program has benefits for the participant in their role within the parish but also in other areas such as work or other voluntary involvement. Similar programs available in the general community would cost well over a thousand dollars. Recognizing the importance of developing leadership skills, the parish will pay for the program expenses so there is no financial cost for you. The program is not too academically demanding but pitched so that the average person can understand and appreciate the information. So as not to be too intense and to fit in with the usual work, family and other commitments, the program is spread over 18 months See attached flyer for details of the program. I encourage you to contact me, before Wednesday 27th April, if you are interested. **Fr Steven Rigo**
MEN'S SHED WEEKEND WRONG PHONE NUMBER
(Sorry to all readers who may have called the wrong mobile number as it was written in the last newsletter) (Sorry to Scott - the owner of the previous number!). As mentioned, Father Steve has cleared 29th, 30th April and 1st May for this inaugural Men's Shed weekend. This camping weekend will take place at a private campsite near Bonnie Doon (Lake frontage, open fire, accommodation and tent sites) - 2 hours from Greensborough.

Please express your interest by emailing phill.goulding@hotmail.com or phoning / texting Phill on 0417327618. (yes this is the correct number). The initial plan is to keep it simple - bring your own everything (but if the discussions move towards a coordinated meal on Saturday night, we can arrange it when we know numbers). More details about the concept of Men's Shed can be found at http://www.mensshed.org

FEES: Note that the current fees are:
$9.00 per child in the mornings
$12.00 per child in the afternoons.
Families are advised to ensure their accounts are paid daily, weekly or fortnightly. We accept cash, cheque, EFTPOS and credit card.

PLEASE FINALISE YOUR TERM 1 ACCOUNT BY 8th April 2011.

BOOKINGS or CANCELLATIONS: We would like to remind families that from term 2 you will be able to manage your own bookings and cancellations online with Camp Australia. We ask that you please observe Camp Australia's Cancellation Policy and cancel any bookings where possible within 7 days. Any cancellations made after 7 days notice will still incur charges unless you can provide a medical certificate for your child's illness. We ask that last minute bookings and cancellations be directed to the Coordinator as soon as possible by leaving a clear message on the answering machine: including the family's name, children's names and exactly what sessions you are making a booking or cancellation for. We also ask that if leaving messages in the diary that they are made clear with the child's/children's full name and whether you are cancelling or booking for a morning or afternoon session.

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS PROGRAM
DATE REMINDERS:
FRIDAY 8TH APRIL 2011 - LAST DAY OF TERM 1
The Program will be running an extended afternoon session. The cost is $20 per child including lunch, afternoon tea and activities. Normal Friday Afternoon Bookings do not apply, so please ensure you book in for this session if you require care.

WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL 2011-START TERM 2 REGISTRATIONS are now open with Camp Australia.
All families who will require care from Term 2, including families that were already using the Program this Term, must register with Camp Australia prior to requiring care. You can register and manage your account and bookings at www.campausralia.com.au. If you have any concerns or questions please speak with Tanya at the Program or call on 9432 7103.

STAFF DEPARTURES
Sadly at the end of this Term we say goodbye to two of our long standing staff members Carmen Marciano and Marian Newnham. Both ladies have brought so much to the Program over the years and will be greatly missed. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Thanks, The OOSHP Team
COMMUNITY NEWS

CENTACARE - GALA BALL
Centacare celebrating 75 Years of service to the community looks forward to the pleasure of your company at the 75th Anniversary Gala Ball on Thursday 19 May 2011. For further information please phone 9287 5517.

REGISTRATION DAY - ELTHAM LACROSSE CLUB
Come and join a great family friendly club for Season 2011. Places available in all age groups; Junior girls and boys, senior women and men. REGISTRATION DAY - Saturday 9th April, 11am - 12pm Eltham Lower Park, Main Rd, Eltham Training is FREE and it’s on now, so come and have a go Wednesdays (Girls) and Thursdays (Boys) 5:30 to 6:30pm. More info - http://www.elthamlax.com/

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND
Married couples, make 2011 the year that you prioritise your relationship. It underpins your family life. Please join us for a Marriage Encounter weekend this year. Our weekend helps you to remember why you married and gives you skills to maintain your love for each other. Couples and a priest present the weekend. It is based around catholic values but you don’t need to be catholic to attend. The next weekends will be held on 8-10 April, 3-5 June and 19-21 August. For further information and bookings contact Peter & Erika Smith 9899 0824 or Email vicbookings@wwme.org.au. Checkout the website for more information on www.wwme.org.au

NATIVE PLANT SALE
Sunday May 1st, 10am - 3pm Cnr Brougham St and Main Rd, Eltham (Mel 21 J7). Autumn is a great time of the year to be planting in your garden. There are tubestock to advanced plants, and lots of indigenous plants too. This is always a very popular event, rain, hail or shine. This year we are having propagation demonstrations also, including grafting of natives......from 12 noon onwards.

Australian Plants Society Yarra Yarra is a not-for-profit community group, promoting growing Australian native plants.

2011 MAJOR RAFFLE
2011 Major Raffle and your chance to win 4 Fabulous Ford Cars. All money raised with this raffle goes back towards providing improved facilities for our parish and school. A book of ten raffle tickets was issued to the eldest child last week. The tenth ticket is free with every book of nine tickets sold and returned via the office. Please return your tickets through the office by 07/04/11. All tickets have been pre-purchased so it is important that all tickets are returned (sold or unsold).

Additional books can be ordered by contacting Andrew Wolczko on 0425 841 039. Thank you for your continued support. Good luck! Drawn 20 May 2011. Andrew Wolczko
How to talk more with your kids

The links between school achievement and parents’ ability and propensity to talk with kids from a young age is indisputable.

If you were to focus on one thing to give your child an advantage then do what should come naturally - talk with them.

The links between school achievement and parents’ ability and propensity to engage in conversation with kids from a young age is indisputable.

The language stimulation they receive when they talk with parents is one factor. The language of first borns is generally more extensive and richer than their siblings who spend less time in one-on-one situations with a parent.

But engagement in conversation with parents benefits kids in a far broader sense. It is trite to say that kids learn a great deal from their parents but, in fact they do when we talk with them.

In many ways it is through conversations that kids get a real sense of us and who we are. It is by talking with kids that we impart some of our knowledge, ideas, wisdom and thoughts as well as how we get a window into their worlds and how they think.

Getting conversations going with kids can be a massive challenge. Busy schedules, homes designed for individual enjoyment rather than group living, and kids that clam up are some of the blockers to conversation that parents meet.

So you may need to be a little cunning, a little proactive and a little inventive to get some chat going at home.

Here are five ideas to help you get more conversation going in your family:

1. Turn off the TV (and other screens). Most homes have a range of electronic screens that you compete with to get their attention. Don’t be afraid to take control of those screens and create a little conversational space. Start with a screen-free day each week or screen-free hour each day if you are a home full of screen junkies.

2. Turn on the TV (and other screens). If you can’t beat them, join them. Some television programs provide great conversational fodder particularly for older children and teens. This can range from “who’s going to win Australian Idol?”, “what happens to the winners of Australian Idol?” to “what is the point of Australian Idol?”

3. Have more mealtimes (with the TV off). The family that eats together talks together…or they should. I have a theory that families with a strong food culture (i.e. they love food and value the whole eating experience) have strong bonds. So make mealtimes special and insist that kids sit until everyone finishes rather than they eat all their peas. Avoid turning mealtimes into food fights that you can’t win.

4. Move more. If sitting and chatting is not your child’s thing then try getting them up and moving. Boys will often talk when they walk or play so consider getting some action happening. When their hands are busy the tongues will often loosen up.

5. Try shoulder-to-shoulder parenting. Sitting together in a car, washing dishes and playing a game can provide opportunities for talk. Take the eye contact out of the equation and you may find the talk just flows with some kids.

Every family has their own way of getting the talk happening. Figure out what works for you and make sure it happens. It seems to me that the best communication in families happens when no one is working at it BUT in busy modern families you do need to work at communication. That is the way of it. You have to work hard at family.

Published by Michael Grose Presentations. All rights reserved.
For more ideas, support and advice for all your parenting challenges visit: www.parentingideas.com.au

PO Box 167 Bannarring VIC 3926  P. 03 5983 1798  F. 03 5983 1722  E. office@parentingideas.com.au

Comments from participants in previous Leadership program:-

The program was well structured, engaging enthusiastic participation.

... Having the opportunity to meet people from other parishes having the same focus and interest in parish life.

Very good format, which was well presented and which presented the participants with all the right tools required for starting up any project in our parishes.

I really enjoyed the learning. Peter's intellectual vigour and his enthusiasm

Thank you for the opportunity to meet others in the deanery on this level of sharing. I found Peter an excellent and caring facilitator, rich in experiences of church and business.

Good presenter. Good venue. Good teaching with plenty of interaction.
About the Leadership Program

This Deanery Project aims to support the development of leadership for ministry in our member parishes.

The Leadership Program is designed to develop the leadership capabilities of lay people within the communities where they live.

The program (running from the second half of 2011 through 2012) consists of four main components or phases (input – core and elective, as well as a parish project) which will be arranged to meet the needs of the participants – it is very ‘parishioner’ friendly! and for this reason is spread over the 18 month period to fit in with the usual work, family and other commitments.

Who is the program for?

The program is for those parishioners who would like to enhance their leadership skills, those new to parish ministry, and those who would like to take more responsibility in the parish or deanery.

What’s involved

Module 1 (Term 3, 2011)
4 input sessions* covering fundamentals of church, ministry and leadership

Module 2 (Term 4, 2011)
Choosing of project with parish team and at least one input session*.

Module 3 (Term 1, 2012)
Start project and at least one input session*.

Module 4 & 5 (Terms 2&3, 2012)
Combination of project work and input sessions* once a month to review project and continue learnings.

Module 6 (Term 4, 2012)
Final report to Leadership Program group and graduation.

*(1 ½ - 2 hrs)

Information Evening

At the information evening, the outline of the Program, the timeline, expectations of participants and parishes will all be discussed by the facilitator – Peter Price.

About our facilitator

- Peter Price (M.Min, Ph.D.)

Peter has a background in human resources in the corporate world. He is currently chair of the Department of Theology: Mission and Ministry at Yarra Theological College (Box Hill). Peter’s main interest is in Pastoral Planning and he has provided planning consultancies to many parishes in Melbourne, to the Diocese of Ballarat and to the Australian Bishops’ Conference. His recent Ph D dissertation analysed the theology and practice of the Australian Church regarding Laity.

Peter has led this program in other Archdiocesan deaneries and parishes with great success, and we look forward to him working with us again for our second Leadership Program in the Diamond Valley.

Register your interest

Contact Fr Steven (9435 1543)