

Primary Newsletter September 2016

Welcome back. I hope you had a restful break and spent at least some of the time relaxing. **11th September is Education Sunday** and the theme this year is 'All are Welcome'. There is a booklet of thoughts and reflections which would be useful for staff prayer throughout the year. However the booklet opens with the prayer of Pope Francis:

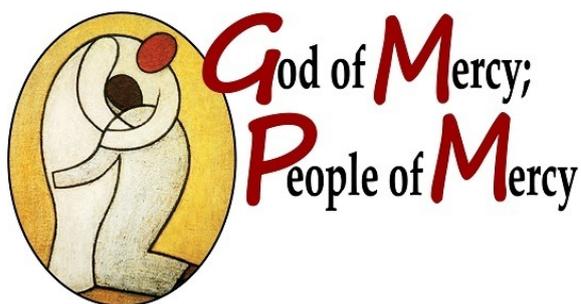
"May the church be a place of God's mercy and hope, where all feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel. And in order to make others feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged, the church must be with doors wide open so that all may enter. And we must go out through these doors and proclaim the Gospel."

If you replace the word Church with the word school you have a picture of what our schools aim to be, something we can reflect on daily. You will find all the resources for Education Sunday on the CES website. Go to <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/school-resources/item/1002985-education-sunday-2015/> and they should be there.

There is also a focus on the work of governors. At present there are a lot of directives from central government about schools. There is a focus on finance, exams, organisation etc. We need to pay attention to these things but we also need to ensure we do not lose our focus on who we are and our reason for being.

The Year of Mercy continues until

November. Our Chaplaincy Commissioning Service is early this year so as to take place within the Year of Mercy. It takes place on 6th October. Full details of this, together with more resources for the Year of Mercy, are in the Chaplaincy newsletter. Please also check the Chaplaincy Newsletter for details of our mini pilgrimages.



There will be a unit of work produced for the closing of the Year of Mercy. Please note this will be on line in October for use in November and will appear on the Year of Mercy section of our website.

Day for all Primary Coordinators with Bishop Declan - 14th October - Tortworth Court Hotel

This is an opportunity for all coordinators to come together and listen to Bishop Declan. He will be talking through his view of RE in the primary phase. We will also be exploring what makes outstanding RE and look at the teaching of other faiths. **The day begins at 10.15am. Tea and**

Coffee are available from 9.45am. During the day there will be an opportunity to share with others and look at resources.

Attainment Levels: At present RE is still using the levels of attainment and they are raising the level of work within primary. I would however like to review these and see if moving to end of year descriptors might be helpful. **I would like to set up a working party** to look at this. There would be a commitment to one afternoon meeting per term (based on a 6 term year) at least for the first two terms. The first meeting will be 12th October at 1.30 pm. All meetings will be at Alexander House. Other dates will be by arrangement with the group.

The Teaching of Other Faiths

One or two schools have indicated that there has been some concern expressed by parents about the teaching of other faiths. It is compulsory and there is a wonderful document **called “Meeting God in Friend & Stranger”** Fostering respect and mutual understanding between the religions. This is a Bishops’ Conference document and will provide you with a rationale for the work we do. This can be downloaded from: www.cbcew.org.uk go to publications and look for the title. For those of you interested in teaching Judaism there is a new book produced by the Jewish Board of Deputies. This is intended for GCSE pupils but I think as teachers you will find the information really interesting and could adapt it to primary. Entitled, ‘Judaism GCSE Religious Studies – The Definitive Resource’, it provides an unbiased description of the diversity within the Jewish community, and highlights the issues that are of most importance. Each topic is headed by a list of key facts, which is followed by fuller explanatory material.

It is available to download and also to purchase at a price of £9.99 (online) and £14.99 (hard copy). The downloaded version gives you permission www.bod.org.uk to make available for up to 5 members of staff.

The CCRS (Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies)

If you want to know more about aspects of faith and wish to acquire a qualification then the CCRS may be for you.

- The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) is managed and awarded by the Board of Religious Studies on behalf of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. It was introduced in 1991 to replace its predecessors, The Catholic Teachers’ Certificate and the Certificate in Religious Education. **Any teacher** who is, or who wishes to be, involved in Catholic Education may apply for the course. Please note that our course is specifically set up for teachers. The course consists of 8 modules in total; six core modules and two specialist modules. The core modules are: Old Testament, New Testament, the Person of Jesus, the Church, Sacramental Life, and Moral Understanding. Each module requires 10 hours contact time with a written assignment of 1500 words. **You may of course choose to do the modules out of interest and not complete the written assignment;** however you will not be awarded a CCRS certificate unless you complete the written assignments.

Practical details

- **Timing:** The certificate is normally awarded over two years with a maximum of 5 years to complete the course. The diocese will offer four modules a year on a two year cycle. Each year will consist of three core modules and a specialist module. You may choose to do four modules in one year to complete the course in two years or you may space it out over a longer

period if you wish. Once you begin the first module you must complete within five years. Each module will require two days. Four of the days will be in school time and there will be four Saturdays.

- **Assessment:** Full attendance for each module and successful completion of an assignment. This year our modules will be: Church, Sacramental Life, Christian Morality and Faith & Science.
- The main centre will initially be Alexander House in Bristol.

If you want to find out costs and timings for this year please look in the course booklet.

Key Dates for your diary in the next few weeks.

- 11th September - Education Sunday
- 16th September - NQT Day
- 22nd September - Downside Pilgrimage
- 23rd September - Prinknash Pilgrimage
- 24th September - CCRS begins
- 29th September - Glastonbury Pilgrimage
- 6th October - Chaplaincy Commissioning Service in Clifton Cathedral
- 10th October - Day for all Chaplains
- 14th October - Day for Primary RE coordinators with Bishop Declan

Advance Notice: Primary school Masses take place on the 14th and 15th June.

For full details of all courses and costs please look in our course booklet which can be found on our website: <http://schools.cliftondiocese.com>

You may find this prayer useful for staff as you start the new term.

*God of all life and longing
As we gather for the beginning of a new school year
We give thanks for this day and everything that has brought us here.
We ask your blessing on our new students and members of staff,
May they feel welcomed and invited to share their gifts and talents with us.
We ask your blessing on all who are returning
May they feel renewed and ready for what this year will bring.
Share with our whole school community the Holy Spirit that breathes your life into us
And leaves us open to the ways of your wisdom
so that we may become the people you want us to be.
May Jesus your Son be the teacher who guides our searching
and the bread that nourishes our hunger.
We make this prayer in his name.
Amen*

Prayer from :The Le Chéile Schools Trust

Resources:

- The Stapleford Centre has many useful ideas including 40 ideas for creative RE. These are method led rather than content driven so can be adapted to suit your syllabus. Go to www.stapleford-centre.org
- Cafod has increased the number of resources for primary RE and has resources for the Year of Mercy.
- The Scottish Catholic Education Service has some resources on its website. Although not directly applicable they might support some of your work.
- Catholic Teacher Resources. This is an American site and therefore we do not use the same syllabus but some of the things are interesting and although not everything is free they do have some free samples that might be worth a look. Go to <https://www.catholicteacherresources.com/>

Enjoy the term!

Thank you for all you do

Ann Fowler
Deputy Director