



Dear Parents and Carers,

The word **Lent** comes from an old English word that means 'lengthen' and refers to the turning of Winter into Spring when the days lengthen and the cycle of life, by the grace of God, is being renewed once more. There are so many things around us during this season to be thankful for. There is more sunlight, birdsong is more noticeable, daffodils are beginning to grow, and trees are beginning to show signs of coming to life. These signs of new life are echoed in the season of Lent through which the Church bids us to reawaken our spiritual sensibilities and refocus on tending to the Lord who calls us: 'come back to me, with all your heart'. Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, brings to the forefront of our consciousness the importance of thankfulness for everything, including life itself which is a pure gift. The journey of Lent is a journey towards the new way of living that Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, promised to us through the power of our most celebrated season - Easter and the Resurrection of Jesus.



We tend to think that Christmas is the most important time in the Church's year, but the Resurrection of Jesus is by far the most important for Christians. When we as Christians say that our hope is in the risen Jesus, we mean it is our greatest hope. When Jesus rose on the first Easter morning, it was a brand-new kind of life. He promises this same life to all who hope in him. No wonder that Easter is the greatest feast!

"That you may not grieve as others do who have no hope"

1 Thessalonians 4: 13

We hope, as always, you find this newsletter interesting and informative. Please keep us in your prayers as we support your children in their Religious Education. Mrs. Bannister.

Dates from the Church's calendar:

18 th February	Ash Wednesday	22 nd March	Fifth Sunday of Lent
22 nd February	First Sunday of Lent	25 th March	The Annunciation
1 st March	Second Sunday of Lent	29 th March	Palm Sunday
2 nd March	St. David (Patron of Wales)	2 nd April	Maundy Thursday
8 th March	Third Sunday of Lent	3 rd April	Good Friday
15 th March	Fourth Sunday of Lent	4 th April	Holy Saturday
17 th March	St. Patrick (Patron of Ireland)	5 th April	Easter Sunday
19 th March	St. Joseph		

The Way, The Truth and The Life

Reception— Joy and Sorrow

This half term, the children our reception class will be learning about joy and sorrow. They will begin to understand that we are capable of hurting others and that we should always try to be kind to each other. They will learn that we can say sorry when we hurt someone, but we need to ask Jesus to help us to do this. They will also begin to learn that Jesus forgave those who hurt Him and know that we can forgive other people when they hurt us.



At Home

You could help your children by:

- talking to them about what makes them happy.
- talking to them about how they can be kind to other people.
- reminding them to say please and thank you and to say sorry when it is appropriate.

The Vine and The Branches

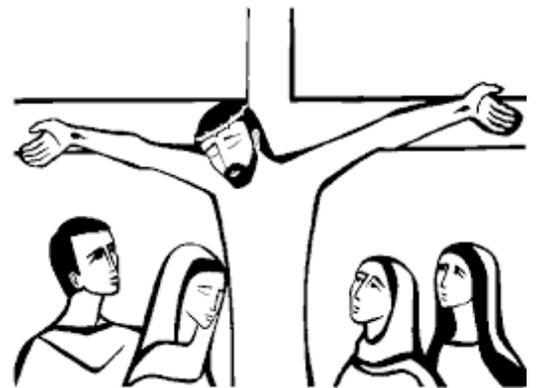
Year 1—Desert to Garden

The focus of this branch is to learn about the season of Lent as a time to prepare for Easter and to know the story of the last week of Jesus' life, His death, and resurrection. The Resurrection is revisited in the next branch, so this branch concludes with the women meeting the angel by the empty tomb. As in branch two, the visible angelic presence points to the divinity of Christ and to the message of God the Father, Creator of all that is seen and unseen.

At Home

You could help your children by:

- encouraging them to talk with you about their Lenten promise and discuss ways in which they can 'Let their Light Shine' during this holy season.
- reading a children's Bible to find out about the last week of Jesus' life and talking about the places, people and events in this narrative.





Year 2—Desert to Garden

In this branch, pupils in Y2 will revisit scripture to consolidate learning about the events of Holy Week. They will make links between the forgiveness Jesus shows at His Crucifixion and the ministry of Jesus studied in the previous branch. They will also explore how Lent is a time of reconciliation and forgiveness for Christians because they want to restore their relationship with God to be ready to celebrate the Resurrection. They will develop an early understanding of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The branch also focuses on the Easter Vigil Mass. Easter is the 'Feast of feasts' (CCC 1169), and the Easter Vigil is the high point of the Easter Triduum celebrating the passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

At Home

You could help your children by:

- reading the events of Holy Week together using a children's Bible.
- asking them about their Lenten promise and supporting them in this.
- discussing and modelling the importance of forgiveness.

Year 3—Desert to Garden

Following on from focusing on the Liturgy of the Word in the 'Prophecy and Promise' branch, pupils will focus on the second part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist. They will recognise that 'The Holy Mass is a miracle: we can be present at Jesus' death and Resurrection. With Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, we are celebrating the big feast of thanksgiving' (YCFK 75). The Eucharist is the meeting point with the kingdom of God. Jesus emptied himself into humanity (cf. Philippians 2:7) and through the Eucharist invites communicants to enter life in Him. It gives a thorough explanation of what happens at Holy Mass and the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. As well as learning about Mass factually, this branch offers the opportunity to think about the prayers that are said and sung at Mass and to know that these are a way people are invited to participate in responses.

At Home

You could help your children by:

- talking to them about all the things we have to be thankful for.
- discussing why Sunday is a special day for Christians.
- taking them to church, joining in an opportunity to attend Mass with school during Lent or Holy Week or asking your child how their experience of Mass was after they have attended.





Year 4—Desert to Garden

In this branch, pupils will explore Lent's themes of forgiveness and reconciliation and the idea that devotion to God leads a person to do good works. They will also look at Holy Week in St Matthew's gospel and see that St Matthew shows Jesus as the servant-Messiah. For Lent, they will explore two parables: The parable of the Lost Son and the parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

At Home:

You could help your children by:

- reading the events of Holy Week together using a children's Bible.
- asking them about their Lenten promise and discussing the meaning of the holy season of Lent.
- taking them to church, joining in an opportunity to attend Mass with school during Lent or Holy Week or asking your child how their experience of Mass was after they have attended.

Year 5—Desert to Garden

In this branch, pupils will explore what it means to sin and will learn about the last things as part of God's plan for salvation. They will hear that God's plan is for everyone to go to heaven. The children will also deepen their understanding of the Ash Wednesday liturgy and the symbols and actions linked with Lent.

At Home

You could help your children by:

- talking to them about what strengthens their friendships and the importance of listening to their conscience.
 - discussing their Lenten promises and supporting them in carrying these out.
 - asking the children to explain how the Ten Commandments and Jesus' great commandment are guides for living a good life.
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Year 6 - Desert to Garden

As the Church moves through the season of Lent, pupils will look at the rich symbolism of St John's account of the end of Jesus' earthly life. St John's gospel looks to bring out the significance of all that Jesus did in light of His Resurrection, though this is not understood by those present at the time. Pupils will recognise from the previous branch that the narrative works on two levels: an account of what happened and a revelation of Jesus' divinity. Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on the stories personally. Additionally, pupils will explore that St John uses images of light and darkness or water to increase the poetic richness of his text and will discover that St John's passion is the central narrative at the Good Friday service.

At Home

You could help your children by:

- discuss what they have found out in class and how it will affect their life journey.
 - talk about their understanding of the content and meaning of John's Gospel.
 - look at the Stations of the Cross and talk about their relevance for us today.
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