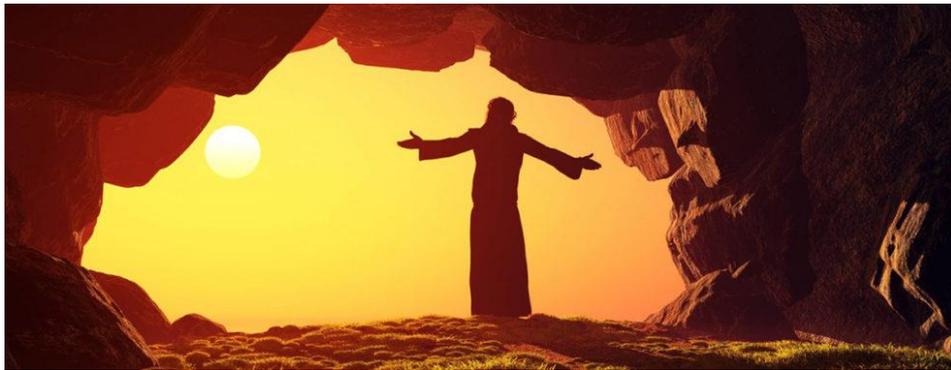




# St Mary's Catholic Primary School Newsletter Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020



As we start the third week of adjusting to our new circumstances, I'm sending this newsletter with the very best wishes to all our families. The St Mary's staff have been incredible, each playing their part in organising home learning activities and providing care to those who are currently in need. I am really proud of what we have achieved as a school community over the last three weeks. Please keep checking our website as most recently we have published a second home learning pack for each year group. We will be sending a regular newsletter and I would love to see photographs of all the home learning

successes for us to share. Please send your pictures to: [a3357@telford.gov.uk](mailto:a3357@telford.gov.uk)

I would like to thank you all for embracing home learning and for your ongoing support and warm wishes of support. Wishing you all a safe, healthy and happy Easter.

## Care Provision

If you think

### Free School Meal Vouchers

*You may be aware that the government have implemented a voucher scheme for all children entitled to free school meals on financial grounds (this does not include children on universal free school meals - years Reception to year 2). Initially this scheme was only to provide vouchers for term time while children could not attend school and access their free meal. On that basis we ordered vouchers on the 2nd April to be used from 20th April but asked them to be emailed as soon as possible. As of today they still haven't been issued but rest assured we are doing everything we can to chase these up to*





ensure you receive your entitlement as soon as possible. Since that date we were advised that the Local Authority would cover the Easter holiday period too but following difficulties in implementing this they have asked schools to do this on their behalf. We have tried to place the order this week but due to such high demand on the providers system, like many schools, we too are experiencing difficulties on getting this next order placed. Please be assured that we are working very hard to contact the voucher

provider and get these additional orders out to you as soon as we can. Please check your email accounts, including inbox, clutter and junk files, for an email from Edenred, the voucher provider. For parents without email access or for whom we have no email address we have placed orders for paper vouchers and again these will be with you as soon as the orders have been fulfilled and posted to your home address. We hope this has cleared up any questions you may have.

### Simple Mindfulness/Relaxation Activities for Children



The current circumstance can create additional stress for our children. Mindfulness activities can help a child to stop overthinking, worrying or being anxious and helps to focus and calm them. Take a look at some of the activities below and maybe give them a go...

child to think of 5 people they'd like to send kind wishes to

Practice kind thoughts by prompting your

Blow bubbles 'slo-mo' style, emphasizing a big deep breath in through the nose to fill the bubble... and out through the mouth as slow as possible

Squeeze and let go, tensing different muscles in the body for 5 seconds and then slowly releasing

Tune into the body by getting down on your child's level and feeling each other's heartbeats

Have a 'mindful' snack by describing the smell, texture and taste of the food

Explore textures in nature, take a walk to collect several different objects and observe/describe how each feels

By  
Ashton



Find shapes in the sky by laying down together and choosing different objects to search for in the clouds

Take a mindful walk pointing out sights and sounds along the way.

Slow down by having a snack in 'slow motion' and taking notice of the taste throughout

Explore smell by inviting your child to help you cook a meal while taking notice of each smell present

Try 'buddy breathing' and invite your child to grab a toy/stuffed animal to place on their tummy while they lay down and take slow breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth

Use a happy moment to 'soak in the good' by pausing with your child to observe the pleasant physical and emotional feelings present

Listen to some music and see how many different instruments you can each hear

Explore gratitude by going back and forth with your child (for as long as you can!) to name as many things possible that you are grateful for

### Things to do on your walks together

**Have a scavenger hunt.** Children love collecting & picking things up. There are so many things to pick up & collect along your walk pine cones, leaves, feathers, acorns, twigs etc. Take a bag with you to take home all your treasures.

Take a piece of paper & crayon with you to **do bark rubbings** or leaf rubbings.

**Make some noise.** Pick up some sticks of different sizes & textures, bang them against a tree. What noise do they make?

### EASTERTIME PRAYER

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Risen Lord,  
we greet you with joy  
this Easter season,  
and we thank you for the  
gift of new life.  
Bless our food,  
our family  
and our friends,  
and help us  
to celebrate the springtime  
in our hearts  
as we rejoice  
in the good news  
of your resurrection.  
Alleluia! Amen.

If you have more than one child with you, can you work together to bang out a rhythm. Collect some twigs, leaves, and stones to **make some pictures** with them. Write out their name or lay out a trail to follow.



**Climb trees.** Do make sure the tree is safe to climb and supervise all the time.

Find any fallen logs. Get the kids to walk across them, good for **balancing** skills and lots of fun.

**Play hide and seek.** This game has stood the test of time, you can't go wrong with a game of hide-and-seek. Trees make great

places to hid behind.

**Hug a tree.** Find a tree and give it a hug! What does it feel like? All hold hands around a tree, can you complete the circle? Find a tree & guess how many people you would need to completely hug the tree, then have a go!  
Can you find a tree that's too big to hug?

**Play tag,** but this time give everyone an object they must find & bring back to base. Could be a pinecone, acorn, leaf etc.



**Take a camera.** Get the kids to take photos of any interesting things they find, could be an animal they spot or an interesting tree.

**Track animal footprints.** Can you follow the prints where do they take you? Which animal made the print? If you're not sure you could always take a photo and look it up when you get

home. If you find any animal poo, see if your little one can guess which animal left the mess!  
Great game for little ones, really gets them thinking.

**Play word games as you walk.** I spy, alphabet game – go through the alphabet saying things you can see on your walk for example A= acorn, B=berries some of the letters will be tricky!  
Describe something you can see, while the others try to guess what it is you are describing.

**The Easter Story: Nine symbols**



1. Look and talk: what do each of these nine pictures have to do with the story of Jesus' last days? 2. In a line up? Is there a right order for the nine cards? Ask children to 'put them in the right order' and discuss how you might do it. 3. Kim's Game: put the cards (or even better 9 artefacts) on a cloth to observe for 1 minute. Cover, and ask children to re-draw or list. What did they miss? 4. Add three. Ask children if they added three more, to be about the end of the story where Christians believe Jesus came alive again, what three pictures could they choose? They might draw these. 5. Take away one by one. Which objects matter least at Easter? Ask individual children to take them away one by one. Which three are left, the ones that matter most? 6. Display Tree. Make a 'Holy Week and Easter' tree, with nine branches if you can. Children take, cut out and decorate each of the symbols. On the back they finish a sentence, or choose some appropriate words to explain the symbol, reflect on their own ideas or offer a prayer or meditation. All the symbols are hung on the tree. A branch from outside, or hanging them up outside is good.