



# St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School

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St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School, 841 Shirley Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 9JJ

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023

Dear Parents,

This weekend, we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent, which heralds the start of our season of preparation.

“The Lord is coming. May we await him with open hearts!”

Pope Francis

And boy, we sure are getting prepared here in school: on Wednesday, our Christmas tree was delivered and now takes pride of place in the hall; the delivery was taken in the middle of KS1's Nativity practice, which felt very fitting. This coming Monday, we take KS2 down to church for our first run through of our Carol service, allocating readings and soloists. At the youngest end of our school, Reception are busy practising their performance for next Friday.

However, with all this going on around us, we are also very clear that it is not Christmas *yet*. The season is one of preparation and renewal, and this will hopefully be made clear to the children as we start each day with a whole school Advent reflection, led by a different member of staff.

### **Golden Book**

**Reception:** Jimmy Gorman for showing such an enthusiastic attitude towards everything that he does! Jimmy has tried very hard this week with practicing writing his letters and numbers and completing all of his work with a smile on his face. Jimmy is a great role-model to his peers as he is always so polite, follows our rules around the classroom and encourages others to do the same. Keep up the hard work, Jimmy!

**Year One:** Archie White has showcased his brilliant acting and singing skills this week whilst rehearsing for the KS1 Nativity. All of the adults are very impressed with his efforts to learn his lines and his brilliant volume and expression. He is also working extremely hard in the classroom, working independently and giving 100% effort in every task he is given. Keep up the amazing work, Archie!

**Year Two:** Marysia Nadolna for being an absolute super star *all* of the time. She is so positive about her learning; she loves to be challenged, and she is a perfect example to her peers of how to behave by being a role model to others. She always shows the value of being attentive throughout all of her lessons and in everything she does! She has a key role in the nativity too and has done a brilliant job of learning her lines. Just fabulous!

**Year Three:** Mila Caine for always having a confident and willing attitude to all aspects of her school work. This week Mila produced a great description based on our current book '*Stone Age Boy*'. Mila is always willing to help others in class and around school and takes great pride in doing so. Well done, Mila!

**Year Four:** Poppy Nixon is an example to all of her classmates; she allows kindness and love to guide her, which ensures that she is a helping hand to all of those who need it. She has written a beautiful prayer to share with the class this week which shows how she tries to put others around her first. She gives her best effort every lesson to produce lovely work and has allowed her creativity to fly this week in Literacy. Well done, Poppy!

**Year Five:** Ailish Kingston for having a fantastic week. She has displayed such a

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positive attitude to all subjects this week resulting in some excellent work. She also helped to lead a lovely, thoughtful class Liturgy with three of her peers which set us up nicely into the season of Advent. Keep up the excellent work, Ailish.

**Year Six:** Bianca Hammondson – our Head Girl - for her absolutely outstanding RE knowledge. She blew the tour guide at St Chad's Cathedral away with her responses to questions this week and she altar served during Mass at the Cathedral so reverently. She also helped to lead a beautiful prayer and liturgy session this week, all about the first week of Advent, and the theme of 'Hope'. She never fails to impress in our RE lessons!

### Wednesday Word

## **THE GOSPEL IN CHURCH** **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023**



Jesus said to his disciples, "Be on your guard, stay awake, because you do not know when the end time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad; he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his own task, and orders the doorkeeper to stay awake. So, stay awake - because you do not know when the Master of the house is coming; it may be evening or midnight, cockcrow or dawn. If he comes unexpectedly, he may find you still sleeping. What I am saying to you now, I say to everyone: Stay awake!"

The message from the Gospel is very clear: we are to 'stay awake' – in doing so, we can pause and reflect on the real reason and true meaning of Christmas and give thanks for God for the gift of Jesus in our world.

### Why not buy an extra present?

There is a famous Christmas song, 'Why Not Buy An Extra Present?' with the message that there will be some at

Christmas with nothing. We know that Father Paul and the parish take this very literally, with the Jesse Tree in church, whereby people take a gift tag to buy a present for a family less fortunate.

Here at school, we are doing the opposite: children will, in the coming weeks, write you a letter to ask you to buy one *less* present. The children mean this quite literally: the intention behind this is the money that you will save can be anonymously donated, in a sealed envelope so nobody knows who the envelope has come from, containing as much or as little as you want. The Mini-Vinnies will count this money and donate it to Brushstrokes, where it will pay for Christmas dinner for the needy families and deprived people of Birmingham.

Our staff are leading by example: this year, our Secret Santa has a five-pound limit. The idea is that whatever is saved on not spending more is also donated to charity – again, in a sealed anonymous envelope so nobody knows how much or who from. This will go to the same worthy cause.

### PTA Disco

Both afternoon events were amazing –DJ Dave really set the mood with his lights and his music. Behaviour from the children, as you would expect, was exemplary, and everything was wonderfully organised by our PTA committee and parent volunteers. I think I may have even caught some of the adults throwing a few shapes themselves! Honestly, my thanks to all involved.

The discos themselves raised £610 which **ALL** goes towards our fundraising efforts – the snacks and the DJ were paid for by kind donations from parents and local businesses who support our school so the dream of a minibus might yet become a reality.

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### **Parish Christmas Fair**

This is all booked in for Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December, complete with Santa's grotto, various stalls, cake and hot drinks, and a bottle tombola. We have organised an own clothes day for all children (and staff) for Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December, in exchange for a bottle (preferably alcoholic).

### **Year Six's visit to St Chad's**

This was a great success: we travelled to the centre of Birmingham by train (itself quite a treat) and then spent the day at Birmingham's Catholic cathedral, learning about its history and its purpose. We then celebrated Mass, visited the piety stall, and ate our lunch in the crypt. Best of all, in my opinion, were the compliments the class received on their behaviour – both at the cathedral itself and also on public transport.

### **Reception Nativity**

This will take place next Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm. All are welcome – please come and join us for a cup of tea or coffee and a mince pie. All donations received will go to our Advent charities – Father Hudson's and our links with Rwandan Schools.

Thank you to the executive committee of the Mini-Vinnies, who wrote to our local supermarkets to ask for donations of mince pies that we could sell, raising money for our Advent charities.

And a huge thank you to Gillian from Monkspath Tesco, who was the first to reply and donated 120 boxes for us!

### **A celebration of Arlo...**

Arlo in Year Two is taking part in a 5k race this Sunday. So far, he has raised an amazing £875 for Birmingham Mind – a whopping 437% of his original target! The parents from Year Two have donated £130 pounds between them – how amazing!

Please do not feel you have to give any more but, as a school, we just wanted to draw attention to Arlo's amazing charity work!

### **INSET Day**

School remains closed on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January due to staff INSET – training on positive handling and de-escalation techniques. School will re-open for children on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January, with our Breakfast Club accepting students from 7:30 and our gates opening at 8:45.

### **School closed for voting**

We have received communication from Birmingham's Election Office that they intend to use the school on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May for the Police and Crime Commissioner and West Midlands Combined Authority Mayoral Elections. School will be closed to all children on this day.

### **Parking at the end of the school day**

Thank you for taking on board last week's message. Both myself and Mr Hawkins have been present at different times at the start and end of the school day, and there has been an improvement from the vast majority of our parents. I appreciate your support in this matter, and in making the site outside the school gates as safe as possible for all our pupils.

### **Lights around the school site**

As you will have hopefully noticed, the external lights on the pathway and outside the front of school have been repaired and, in some cases, extra lights installed. This again makes our site safer and brighter. For the next two weeks, our internal lights are being replaced and upgraded, in an effort to both save money on energy costs and protect the environment.

### Maths INSPIRE workshops

These have been arranged for the Spring term. The format will be a lesson that takes place at 9am in the hall, to which parents are invited, to learn more about the resources we use in school and the teaching methods that the teachers employ. Please see the dates below for advanced notice of when the workshops are taking place:

Tues 16th Jan:	Year Six
Thurs 18th Jan:	Year Five
Tues 23rd Jan:	Year Four
Thurs 25th Jan:	Year Three
Tues 30th Jan:	Year One
Thurs 1st Feb:	Year Two
Tues 6th Feb:	Reception

### Birthdays this week...

Happy birthday to Rory in Year Six who will be eleven tomorrow, and Alyza in Reception who will be five on Sunday! Happy birthday, both!



### Two Whole School Masses

These are taking place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. Parents, please walk down with us! You would be more than welcome and hugely appreciated.

### December dates for your diary

**Fri 1<sup>st</sup> Dec:** Year Six (Group One) at Dementia cafe

**Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS2 Reconciliation Service 2pm

**Thurs 7<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Year Three First Confession 6pm at Church

**Fri 8<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Feast of the Immaculate Conception School Mass Year 1-6 at Church

**Fri 8<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Year Six (Group Two) at Dementia café

**Fri 8<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Reception Nativity 2pm

**Mon 11<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS1 Nativity for Year One parents 2pm

**Tues 12<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS1 Nativity for Year Two parents 2pm

**Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Own clothes day in exchange for 'Bring a Bottle'

**Fri 15<sup>th</sup> Dec:** 'Starchitects' KS1 at Mac

**Fri 15<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Choir / keyboard concert 2pm

**Sat 16<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Parish Christmas bazaar 2-4pm\*

**Tues 19<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS2 Carol Service 7pm

**Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS2 Old Rep for 'Peter Pan'

**Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> Dec:** Christmas Jumper Day / Christmas dinner

**Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec:** Whole School Mass (including Reception) 9:30

**Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec:** School closes for Christmas at 2pm

### January dates for your diary

**Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Jan:** School closed for staff INSET

**Tues 9<sup>th</sup> Jan:** School re-opens for children

**Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Six Parent Meeting 6pm parish hall

**Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Jan:** First Mass of New Year 9:30am at church

**Sat 13<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Six children Confirmation workshop 10am-12pm

**Sun 14<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Six Mass 10am

**Tues 16<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Six Maths INSPIRE workshop 9am

**Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Five Maths INSPIRE workshop 9am

**Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Four class assembly 9am

**Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Six Confirmation sponsor workshop 2pm

**Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Six Confirmation 7pm

**Tues 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan:** Year Four Maths INSPIRE workshop 9am

**Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Jan:** School choir at Young Voices

**Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Three Maths INSPIRE workshop 9am

**Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Five Class Mass 2:30pm

Have a wonderful weekend and enjoy the cold, crisp mornings, the darker evenings closing in, and the arrival of Christmas lights everywhere in sight.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mr Clinton'.

Mr Clinton