



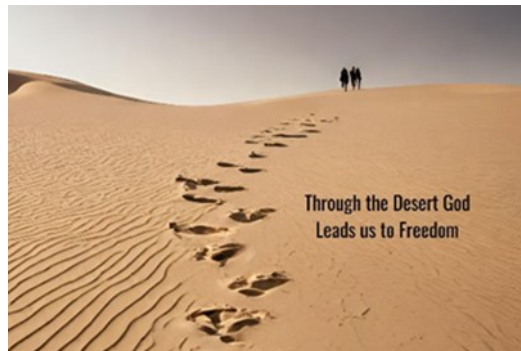
16th February 2024



**GOSPEL: VALUE:** Our Gospel Value the first week after the break is Love. Please reflect on this at home with your child.

### Weekly Reflection

This week we have been preparing for Lent and thinking about almsgiving, fasting and prayer. We talked in assembly about giving whatever we can to those more in need than ourselves, giving up or eating less of our favourite foods (chocolate for Mrs Kerrell!) and praying more; giving thanks to God for all of the good things in our lives. We marked the beginning of Lent with a beautiful Ash Wednesday Mass; the children sang so beautifully and shared in all the responses and I was incredibly proud of them.



As our families know, we had our Catholic School Inspection on Wednesday and Thursday. I look forward to sharing the Inspection report with you when we receive it in around 3 weeks. I would like to thank parents who took the time to complete the Inspection questionnaire with such lovely and positive comments about the school.

I would like to wish everyone in our Holy Cross family, especially our amazing children and wonderful staff a restful and happy half term. We look forward to seeing you on Monday 26th February.

*Mrs Kerrell*

Headteacher

### Lenten Resources (a reminder from last week)

Pope Francis has shared his message for Lent 2024 in a letter;

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-02/pope-francis-lent-is-a-time-of-conversion-and-freedom>.

Please follow this link to the CAFOD website where you will find resources for family prayer and a daily reflection: <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/lent-family-prayer-ideas>

Families may also like to sign up for the Lenten daily reflections:

<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/lent-calendar>

### Prayer

Pope Francis has declared that 2024 is a Year of Prayer. We would like to encourage our pupils and parents to visit our Prayer and Worship page on our website where you will find all the prayers that your child needs to learn. There is also a link to Cafod where families can find lots of prayers to say together.

<https://www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk/page/?title=Prayer+and+Worship&pid=228>





### Year 3 Celtic Harmony Trip

On Friday 9th February, Year 3 went to Celtic Harmony for our Stone Age Trip. We took part in a range of different activities that Stone Age people would have had to do to survive.

Our activities included: Den/Shelter building using branches and leaves to make the shelter as warm and waterproof as possible, watching our guide use 'knapping' to make a spear head out of a piece of flint, practising our hunting technique using 'spears', gathering different plants used for eating, making a soup using the ingredients gathered and practising trading as people in the Stone Age did not have money to buy things.

The children all had a great day, listened well and asked some really interesting questions to further their understanding of our topic.





# ATTENDANCE MATTERS





Congratulations to the winners of the KS1 Attendance Award, Butterflies achieving 99% attendance. Well done! The winners of the KS2 Attendance Award are Robins, also attaining 99% attendance. Well done!

Please ensure you are sending your child into school everyday, unless they are not well enough to attend. Attending school is so important and makes a huge difference to your child's learning. The gates open at 8:30am until 8.50am.

It is essential you notify us of your child's absence by 9am either by telephone or using the Pupil Asset report absence option on every day of absence. We need full details of why your child is unable to attend school. We are frequently having to contact parents, to find out why their child is absent from school. If you do not notify us of the reason for your child's absence it may not be authorised.

Absences over 3 days require supporting medical evidence, for the additional absence to be authorised. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, antibiotics and medical appointments.

Parents of children below attendance targets will be invited in for a meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer.

 Butterflies	99%	
Ladybirds	95%	
Dragonflies	91%	
Grasshoppers	98%	
Hedgehogs	94%	
Squirrels	88%	
Badgers	94%	
Foxes	98%	
Hares	94%	
Rabbits	95%	
Kingfishers	93%	
 Robins	99%	
Eagles	92%	
Owls	88%	

September — February 1/2 term			
Percentage Attendance	Hours of education lost	Weeks missed at school	School days missed
100%	0	0	0
97%	15	0	3
95%	25	1wk 1dy	5
90%	50	2wks	10
86%	70	2wks 4dys	14
80%	100	4wks	20
75%	125	5wks	25
70%	145	5wks 4dys	29
60%	194.5	7wks 4.5dys	39.5
50%	247.5	9wks 4.5dys	49.5

## Lost Hours of Education

Maintaining a high school attendance percentage is such an important factor in your child's success in learning. Your child's attendance percentage is available to view on the Pupil Asset. The table above shows you what this means in terms of lost hours of learning, this term.

# FOOD BANK

Please help us collect non-perishable foods for our food bank. The food bank is located in the entrance hall and we hope will support many families within our school community.

## DROP-OFF LOCATION:

School Office



# **Please could you provide**

## **New, unused and in date**

**EYFS** – Baby supplies (nappies, wipes, baby bath, baby shampoo, creams and lotions)

**Year 1** – Pasta, rice and spaghetti

**Year 2** – Cereals, biscuits, crisps/snacks and UHT milk

**Year 3** – Tinned food (beans, soup, spaghetti, tinned meat, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables)

**Year 4** – Jarred food (cooking sauces, sauces, mayo, jam, honey and condiments)

**Year 5** – Coffee, Tea, Sugar, Squash

**Year 6** – Toiletries (shampoo, shower gel, conditioner, deodorant, soap, flannels, toothpaste)



# LOOSE CHANGE CHALLENGE

The PTA is challenging each class from Reception to Year 6 to fill up bottles with change from

**1st February to 1st May.**

A fun challenge for the whole class to join together and help to raise funds for the school. There will be a prize for KS1 and KS2 classes who collect the most bottles with change.





# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MYLOL

AGE RESTRICTION  
13-19

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MyLOL is a free social networking and dating site aimed at teens. Profiles can publicly display users' images and information, including sexual orientation and personal interests. The service bills itself as "the number one teen dating website in the world", claiming to have more than a million users globally. Despite its popularity, the MyLOL app is no longer available from Google Play or the App Store, although the site is still active. In some countries, police forces and schools have previously warned parents about "sinister predators" and "inappropriate activities" on the site.

## FLIMSY AGE GATES

Although MyLOL states it is exclusively aimed at users aged between 13 and 19, there is no credible age verification system to prevent a younger child – or an older adult – from signing up to the platform. Coupled with the fact that it's impossible to establish a user's true identity on MyLOL, this raises a serious concern that the site could be used for grooming.

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

MyLOL maintains that it monitors all uploaded images for nudity or sexual content. It also claims to be able to detect suspicious keywords. However, there have been numerous reports of explicit content being found on the platform, with users often posting provocative, semi-nude pictures of themselves and engaging in flirty or sexually explicit conversation.

## POTENTIAL CYBER-BULLYING

MyLOL lets users 'vote' on other people based solely on their appearance, much in the same vein as the now-defunct site Hot or Not. This feature could easily lead to distress and bullying, especially if a young person's profile pics receive an unfavourable response. Various reviews of MyLOL have noted that bullying frequently becomes an issue in the platform's chat groups and private messages.

## IN-APP SPENDING

MyLOL is free to join and use, but it also offers paid-for memberships. Users who have paid money get their profile promoted at the top of the site and in search results. They can also earn additional credits for increased engagement with the platform – such as sharing, replying to messages and voting. At the time of writing, the monthly membership fee was \$9.95 (just under £8).

## DATA COLLECTION

According to its privacy policy, MyLOL collects user data including email addresses, contact details and interests. While the company says it is committed to protecting users' privacy, the small print states that information may be shared externally. MyLOL claims to follow procedures to keep data secure, but does not specify what these procedures are, or whether such information is encrypted.

## CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

MyLOL makes it easy to connect with strangers. In fact, the site's rewards feature encourages users to send private messages to people they don't know. There have been several media stories of adults posing as teens on MyLOL to connect with minors, which could lead to extremely dangerous situations, such as a young person meeting up with someone who has been posing under a false identity.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### DISCUSS ONLINE DATING

It's vital to talk to your child about the possible dangers of platforms like MyLOL – particularly the threat of online predators. Remind them of the risks of sharing intimate images and information with strangers and emphasise that most people don't realise they're being 'catfished' until it's too late – it really isn't wise for a young person to meet up with someone they've only spoken to online.

### EXPLAIN PRIVACY RISKS

Before your child begins using a service such as MyLOL, it's important that they understand the potential pitfalls of giving out their personal data on this type of platform. Explain to them, for example, that they shouldn't divulge any personally identifying information to people who they don't know, as scammers can be quite convincing when attempting to steal someone's identity.

### RESTRICT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child has access to a bank card or other payment method, they may be enticed into signing up for MyLOL's premium features. Having their profile boosted and receiving more attention could be especially tempting if their friends also use the site. You could consider altering their device's settings to disable internet purchases, or at the very least keeping an eye on their online spending.

### SET UP LOCATION ALERTS

If you're worried that your child may be planning to meet up with someone they've met on MyLOL, you could consider utilising GPS or WiFi location tracking technology to follow their whereabouts in real time. You can even set up a virtual boundary or 'fence' and opt to receive an alert to your phone if your child enters or exits a specified area.

## Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



The National College

NOS National Online Safety  
#WakeUpWednesday

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### Times Tables Rockstars

Congratulations to the following children for trying really hard with their times tables this week.

Hedgehogs:	Lottie	Squirrels:	Layla
Badgers:	Eliora	Foxes:	Roman
Hares:	Isabella	Rabbits:	Axel
Kingfishers:	Ella	Robins:	Christiana
Eagles:	Mollie	Owls:	Rafe

## Gospel Value Awards

### Integrity

**honesty, truth, honour, faithfulness**

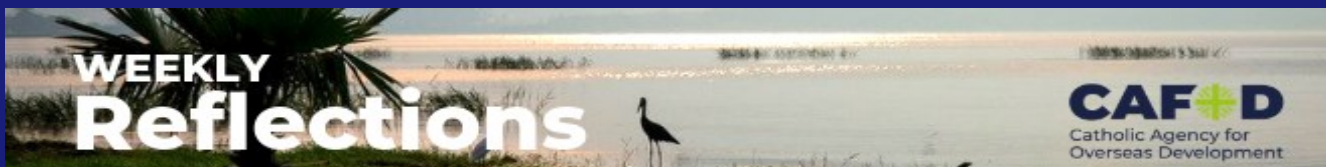
"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness."  
Matthew 25: 14-30



Congratulations to the following children who received the Gospel values certificate this week.

Butterflies:	Malakai-Chase	Ladybirds:	Gracie
Dragonflies:	Reg	Grasshoppers:	Phoebe
Hedgehogs:	Arnas	Squirrels:	Memphis
Badgers:	Hannah	Foxes:	Tilly
Hares:	Archie	Rabbits:	Attila
Kingfishers:	Hector	Robins:	Julia
Eagles:	Helith	Owls:	Eloise





Based on the gospel for Sunday 18 February, First Sunday of Lent: Mark 1: 12-15

**"The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan."**

Jesus goes out into the wilderness for forty days. He knows what it is like to be alone in dangerous conditions. He understands what it is like to be hungry and maybe even afraid.

But Jesus is never abandoned. As Brother Myers, a pastor from Liberia, reflects: "Jesus was driven by the Spirit of God... Satan forgot that Jesus wasn't alone. The spirit was still there."

James is a fisherman in Liberia who faces perilous conditions when he goes out to sea. He also knows what it is to be hungry and afraid. There are times when he spends hours in his boat without making a catch.

Thanks to your support, James now has the equipment he needs to fish safely and sustainably. He has a compass, a life jacket and a GPS tracking system, which helps him to find good fishing spots and return home safely.

His partner, Cynthia, now has more fish to sell and they are able to send their children to school, as well as save some money for the future.

Let us then not abandon our sisters and brothers when they are in need of help. Let us stand alongside them as they work to feed their families.

Compassionate God,  
you are always with us.  
Help us to walk alongside one another  
in challenging times, and  
to ease one another's burdens.  
Amen.



### **The Words of Pope Francis**

**#Lent** is about discerning where our hearts are directed. Let us ask: Where is my life's navigation system taking me - towards God or towards myself?

**Wednesday**  
**14<sup>th</sup> February**

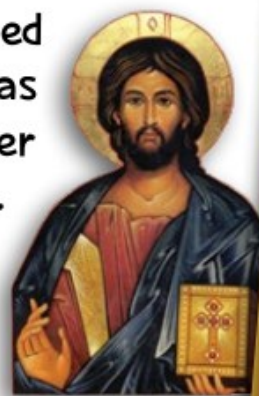


**Good News  
for Families**

**1**

**Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel**

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. After John the Baptist had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. "The time has come," he said, "and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."



Taken from the Gospel of Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024 Cf. Mark 1:12-15 (the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year B)

Which words stood out for you in this Gospel, and why? What does the picture make you think about? Now enjoy exploring this Wednesday's word, which is **LENT**.







**"I hope that we all will live Lent well, following Jesus and carrying within us a ray of his love for all those we meet."** Pope Francis

How many days did Jesus spend in the wilderness? Today is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, which starts our preparation for Easter. Lent is a special time when the Church invites everyone to examine their lives, to make Lenten promises and make a fresh start with God and with each other. It's a time to make a change for the better by turning away from things which are wrong for ourselves or others. Ask your child what the word 'Lent' means to them. What has your child been learning at school about Lent and about Lenten promises? You may want to tell your child something that you know about Lent.

**"Lent is a favourable season for deepening our spiritual life through fasting, prayer and charitable giving."** Pope Francis

Each of you say if there is anything you would like to start or stop doing this Lent and then make a Lenten promise. Perhaps you could: give up just five or ten minutes of TV, computer or social media time each day and use that time for extra prayer; make sure to read God's Word in the Bible or in *The Wednesday Word* each week; go to Church together; fast from a meal or snack and give the money saved to charity. Can you think of anything else - something which will help you to grow in love for God and each other throughout this Lenten season?



Dear Lord Jesus, please help me and my family to grow in love and strength during **Lent** through keeping our **Lenten** promises. Amen.

# WEDNESDAY WORDSEARCH



**SMARTSEARCHERS** FIND THESE EIGHT WORDS EITHER **ACROSS** OR **DOWN**

**JESUS  
PROCLAIMED**

**GOD'S  
KINGDOM**

**REPENT  
BELIEVE**

**GOOD  
NEWS**

**SUPERSEARCHERS** FIND THE WORDS **BACKWARDS** OR **DIAGONALLY**

R	L	G	S	M	R	E	P	E	N	T	N
N	G	O	D	S	T	K	D	T	K	A	T
P	M	O	W	M	O	D	G	N	I	K	R
P	R	D	O	O	G	O	G	W	N	M	S
R	L	O	E	S	U	M	N	O	G	J	T
P	R	O	C	L	A	I	M	E	D	E	D
E	V	E	I	L	E	B	R	T	O	S	N
J	N	W	P	S	A	E	M	L	M	U	E
J	E	E	B	E	L	I	E	V	E	S	W
M	L	S	W	E	N	L	M	K	B	O	S
R	I	R	U	L	R	T	T	E	R	N	S
N	T	L	W	S	L	R	S	W	D	W	M

**fobructy budrocve cinubto bremuainced**

The Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the wilderness  
and he \_\_\_\_\_ there for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

Cross out the letters **u b c** in the jumbled words to find 4 real words.

**Did you know?** The word 'Lent' comes from a shortened form of the older English word 'Lentzen' meaning 'Spring Season'. Families can find out more about Lent and how to make the best of this spiritual season at: [cbcew.org.uk](http://cbcew.org.uk)

Write a promise and then draw a big smile on Smiley

This week I will try my best to...

.....  
.....





# THE Wednesday WORD



## Encountering Christ The Wednesday Prayer Custom for Homes, Schools & Parishes

*Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families*



Set aside 10-15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross and remain still for a minute of settling silence.



Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Read the Gospel, aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.

### 1

#### Read

The Gospel for Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
**JESUS IS TESTED IN THE DESERT**

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. "The time has come," he said, "and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."

*Taken from Mark 1:12-15 The First Sunday of Lent, Year B*

### 2

#### Reflect

After reading the Gospel, did any words stand out? If they did, ponder or discuss them before proceeding with the reflection.

Mark's emphasis is distinctly different from that of Matthew and Luke. No details of the testing are given. Rather Jesus' sojourn in the desert seems almost a return to the peace of the Garden of Eden. The desert of Judea, between Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, is a noble and dignified solitude of smooth, sandstone hills. Nothing grows, of course, but wild camels and the occasional leopard prowl around. There Jesus was 'with the wild animals' as, led by the Spirit, he made his preparation for his mission. In what way was he tested? We may presume that in solitude and prayer he was working out the implications of the Voice from Heaven at his Baptism. How was he to run his course as the beloved Servant of the Lord? Precisely how was he to bring the presence of the Kingship of God into people's lives? The 'forty' is often used in biblical accounts for a period of preparation, as Israel's forty years in the desert, or the forty days between Easter and Ascension which prepared the Apostles for Jesus' leaving them and then for the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. We may use our forty days of Lent to reflect on how we may bring God's presence to bear in and through our lives.

How will you make best use of this time of preparation in Lent?

*Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB*

### 3

#### Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, hope, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, joy, forgiveness, hope or something else.

### 4

#### Pray for Families

**This Wednesday's word for our school families is LENT!**

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for our present and future Church, particularly for the families connected to our schools. You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as:

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



# WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS +

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024



1st Reading: *Genesis 9:8-15*

## The Covenant with Noah

God spoke to Noah and his sons, "See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again." God said, "Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh."



Lent is a time when the first reading at Mass really comes into its own. On the Sundays of Lent the Church leads us step by step through the preparation of the People of God for the supreme event of Easter, the Resurrection of Christ. In each year of the three-year cycle of readings the first Sunday starts with the Bible-story before Abraham. This year the Old Testament reading is the promise to Noah that God will never again let a destructive flood devastate the earth. The first thing Noah does on emerging from the ark is to sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for his deliverance. To this God replies with his promise, guaranteed by the reassuring sign of the rainbow (a sort of glorious pathway which binds earth closely to heaven). Each of the covenants God makes with his people emerges from the evil we humans do. There is no pretence in the scriptures; we are fallible, sinful human beings. Time after time it is the human partners of the covenant who fail, and break the relationship with God. Time after time God forgives and offers a covenant again, until he offers the new covenant in the blood of Christ. A good way to start Lent is acknowledging our sin and welcoming God's invitation to start again. What do you need to change in your life to make a new start with Christ?



2nd Reading: *1 Peter 3:18-22*

## The Pledge of a Good Conscience

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.



Lent reaches its climax with the renewal of our baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. This reading begins to prepare for this moment. Noah's emergence to new life from the waters of the Flood (amid devastation and destruction) is compared to, and becomes a symbol of, emergence to new life from the waters of baptism. Water is the source of all life. Just look at the way people so often carry a little water-bottle around with them! However, you don't really appreciate water as the source of life until you have been lost in the desert without any water, getting more and more desperately thirsty and weaker. See a drooping flower revive when it is given a few drops of water! The waters of baptism are a symbol not only of washing away sin, but more importantly of new life in Christ. To 'baptise' means to 'dip' in water. By baptism we are 'dipped' into Christ's death. We emerge from the water soaked through with the risen life of Christ, so that henceforth Christ is our life. This reading encourages us to prepare for the renewal of life at Easter by getting our conscience in good order. This needs thought, commitment and prayer, so that we are ready with 'the pledge of a good conscience'.

Reflect on the meaning of Baptism. What is the best way you can prepare for Easter?

**The waters of baptism are a symbol...  
of new life in Christ.**

**The Wednesday Word** Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God

**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church  
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

Happy Birthday this week and in half term to...

Rufus, Jayden, Isla, Ella, Leah, Ellis, Lucas, Isabella, Harley,  
Tehilah, Daisy, Keziah, Priscilla, Viktoria, Violet & Braven



### Golden Awards:

- Butterflies: Liam, for amazing and imaginative inventions.  
Esme, for being such a helpful member of Butterflies class.
- Ladybirds: Sreekuthrik, for learning all of his tricky words.
- Dragonflies: Eliza, for settling into Dragonflies class well.
- Grasshoppers: Oliwier, for his fantastic addition work in maths.
- Hedgehogs: Raysa, for outstanding effort in English.
- Squirrels: Milo, for trying his hardest.
- Badgers: Hayley, for writing a fantastic set of instructions.
- Foxes: River, for having a great attitude towards his learning especially English
- Hares: Aimee, for her excellent drama work in R.E. and English
- Rabbits: Diana, for showing resilience in her learning
- Kingfishers: Edward, for his fantastic R.E. work this week.
- Robins: Victoria, for showing in depth understanding and making excellent links in R.E., for the story of the Passover.
- Eagles: Logan, for beautiful R.E. work.
- Owls: Araibella, for being amazing and loving every minute of number minute.

### Menu week 1

## Diary Dates

### Multi Faith week

All clubs are 15:15 to 16:15

<u>Monday 26th February</u>	<u>Tuesday 27th February</u>	<u>Wednesday 28th February</u>	<u>Thursday 29th February</u>	<u>Friday 1st March</u>
Years 3 to 6 Chaplaincy lunchtime	Parent/teacher consultations 9:00 - 12:00	Year 2 reading zone 9:00	Year 2 reading zone 9:00	St David's house cake sale
Robins swimming		KS1 Karate	Years 1 to 2 Chaplaincy lunchtime	KS2 Assembly 9:00
KS1 Football			PTA meeting 2:00	KS1 Assembly 14:30
			KS2 Karate	
			KS2 Football	
			Parent/teacher consultations 15:30 - 19:00	

Please download our News & Events App for dates for the year. Details are available on the schools website under News & Events at [www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk](http://www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk)

Wishing everyone a lovely weekend.

Mrs A Kerrell

### House Points

Congratulations to the winning house this week, St David's