



St Oliver's Mini Newsletter

Term 4

Week 1

2016

33 Wigram Street, Harris Park 2150

www.stoliversharrisparc.catholic.edu.au

Ph: 9682 1244

Closing the Door of Mercy

As the Year of Mercy approaches its end point, one of the frequently asked questions is 'What will happen when the Year of Mercy ends?' Sometimes the response is that we will move on to another theme and that will be our focus. So neat and tidy!

Our reality is that whilst the formal Year of Mercy comes to an end, we are invited every day for the rest of our lives to celebrate mercy – God's mercy to us, the mercy we receive from others, the mercy we share with others, the mercy we are challenged to show in our care of creation.

Our world cries out for mercy. So many, especially those on the margins, continue to live with insecurity, pain, anxiety, brokenness. Our creation groans for our mercy and we must never stop responding to Pope Francis' question: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" (§160). What if mercy was packed away in a neat package and ticked off our to-do list because the Year of Mercy is coming to an end?



God's mercy is never-ending. Imagine if God pulled the pin on mercy towards us! We are called to be 'like God'. Our mercy and compassion towards others and creation must never cease. Whilst there is a ritual that contains the Closing of the Holy Doors on 20th November 2016, we must open our doors of mercy even more widely. Having had the opportunity to reflect on how gratuitously God has blessed us with mercy, even more are we challenged to share that mercy with others. Let's push the doors of mercy wide open; let's be welcoming of all who come into our lives. Let's take every opportunity to be women and men of mercy every day of our lives.

Anne Ferguson,
Mission Animation, Parramatta

DATES TO REMEMBER

October

- 12th Parish Mass – Stage 3 @ 9:15
- 16th Sacrament Enrolment Ceremony @ 10am Mass
- 18th Kindergarten 2017 Transition begins 9:00 – 11:00
- 21st Parish Mass – Stage 2 @ 9:15
- 25th Kindergarten 2017 Transition continues
- 26th Basketball Gala Day- Stage 2 and Stage 3
- 28th Mission Mass – Whole School @ 9:15

November

- 1st Kindergarten 2017 Transition continues
- 8th Kindergarten 2017 Transition continues

December

- 5th – 12th Swimming Program @ SOPAC
- 8th St Oliver's Christmas Concert @ 6:00pm
- 16th Graduation/Thanks Giving Celebrations – more information to follow

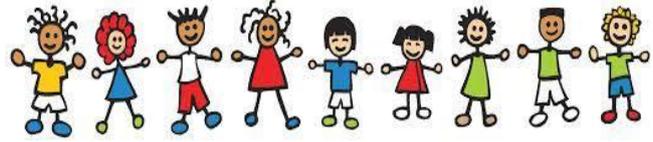
Thursday Assembly Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for giving me a family.
Thank you for my friends.
Thank you for our good school.
Please help the poor people, the blind and the sick people.
St Oliver, Pray for us. Amen

- Navleen Year 1



Focus On Learning



Helping kids focus in the age of distraction

By Sarah Wayland

Finding ways to turn your kids from *flitters* to *focusers* – how teaching your children to ‘stick with it’ can have lifelong benefits.

As a society we often debate about the ‘right’ amount of screen time, and with the introduction of personal screens over the last decade, to add to TV, laptops and desktops, the focus on a single task has slowly ebbed away. The British Psychological Society found that too much screen time (more than their recommendations of no more than 2 hours per day) could unintentionally cause permanent damage to a child’s still-developing brains. Impacting the capacity to focus, to concentrate and to give attention to tasks.

Distraction is often managed through the delicate art of re-direction or encouragement to combat the ‘but I just can’t do it!’ However, has this brave new world of binge watching TV, entertainment on demand and socialisation via hand held devices created kids that always have options for those tasks that require some stubborn determination? If so how might this new way of living and relaxing challenge our kid’s capacity to stick with a difficult task when they have a world of entertainment at their disposal?

Dr Daniel Goleman, an award-winning psychologist and TED speaker, emphasises the need for people to engage in skills that foster emotional intelligence. Goleman’s belief is that ‘Kids learn best when they can maintain sustained attention, whether to what a teacher is saying, their textbook, or their homework. The root of learning is keen focus; distractions kill comprehension. But the new normal for young people continually interrupts their focus with distractions.’

Neuroscientists tell us that the more a young person can practice keeping focus and resist distraction, the stronger and more richly connected this child becomes. By the same token, the more distracted, the less so. Rebecca finds that the evidence is clear in our own homes and in classrooms ‘we now have young people who are experts at ‘flitting’ from one device to another’ and she refuses to take a defeatist approach because without refocusing those ‘flitters’ to ‘focusers’ who risk the next generations creative or scientific masterminds we risk losing children who are able to ‘sit still and agonise over a task long enough to see it through to its marvellous end’

Tips for helping kids maintain focus and attention

1. Build your child’s focus

As with all tasks the aim is to start small and build your child’s capacity to master the concept of ‘sticking with it’. Cath, a school counsellor, finds that she can use the same strategies with the teens she works with and her primary school aged children when she gets home: ‘it’s all about breaks and rewards. Set a timer between breaks and then on a break they need to do something active like a push-up. Then there is a little reward for staying on task for a particular amount of time.’

2. Remember it’s all about the journey

Parents and researchers agree that understanding what can be gained from being focused is the key to engaging your ‘flittering’ child. Our solution driven society is often focused on what we receive at the end rather than the process to get there. Teaching your children to tolerate the unexpected can have wonderful benefits, as can sitting with something that may have previously been viewed as unachievable.

3. Keep calm and focus

Use calm methods to engage children who become distracted: ‘breathe, relax and high five each other’ when working alongside your child or when with a group of children. Talk about what might be achieved at the end and make it a fun process.

Screens, for all their negatives and benefits, are here to stay. Many argue that they provide complexity and new experiences to our children’s world by identifying exciting technologies but they also provide avenues to ‘opt out’ of the hard yards.

Reaching what you thought was unattainable by engaging in a single focus and ‘sticking with it’, can provide lifelong lessons.