



# St Oliver's Mini Newsletter

Term 1

Week 7

2016

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**Gospel Luke 15:1-3. 11-32** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

*Your brother here was dead and has come to life.*

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained.

'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them: 'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. 'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it is only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found."

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**Reflection** - In the Gospel of Luke, we learn that the Pharisees and scribes are not happy with Jesus because he was hanging out with sinners. Their grumbling prompts Jesus to tell one of the most beloved stories of forgiveness in the Scriptures. It is about the Father ready waiting to forgive the son and celebrating his return. God is the Father and we are the son. We turn away from God but God is always waiting for us to return. God is the loving, compassionate father who reaches out to both the loyal son and the lost son.

Praise: Loving Father, I praise you for your constant love and compassion in your mercy.

Repent: I am sorry for the times I turn away from you as the lost son

Ask: Please help me to be forgiving of others constantly as you do.

Yes: I want to be close to you and forgive others relentlessly and not hold grudges. **Amen**

Help us be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and to keep an open door in our willingness to forgive and act towards others in mercy and love.

**Caritas Project Compassion** - So far we have raised \$452.50 as a school for Project Compassion with Year 3 raising the most money this week. Let's see if we can at least meet the goal of \$800. St Oliver's is a very generous community with such compassion. [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion)

## Dates to Remember

### March

- 7th–11th Catholic Schools Week – Invitation sent out to all families
- 11th Whole School Beginning Mass
- 14th Cross Country @ Robin Thomas Reserve – Years 3 - 6  
Coffee and Chat @ 14:30 in the hall
- 18th Parish Mass – Stage 2  
Whole School Assembly – Stage 2 @ 14:30
- 21st Back up Cross Country
- 22nd Easter Raffle wrapping @ 2pm
- 24th Easter Raffle drawn
- 25th Good Friday – no school**
- 27th Easter Sunday**
- 28th Easter Monday – no school**
- 30th School Photos

### April

- 8th LAST DAY OF TERM 1
- 25th ANZAC DAY – no school**
- 26th First day of Term 2

### N BRIEF

- God sets his people free.
- Experience God's goodness.
- God lets us start over.
- Forgive as God forgives.
- We can always come home.



# Focus On Learning



## Social skills for children By Michael Grose

*School brings different types of learning, including social interactions and how to make friends. Parents can lay the foundations at home by teaching their kids important social skills. Children who are able to form friendships when they start school are happier at school and also learn better. More significantly, positive friendships have long-term implications for social and indirectly academic success. Friendships don't develop in isolation. Kids acquire these skills when they play with their siblings and interact with children and adults outside their family. Today's children grow up with fewer siblings, fewer opportunities for unstructured play and less freedom to explore friendships than children of even ten years ago. Parents can help kids develop important social competencies by teaching them sociable behaviours at home, being good role models and providing opportunities for kids to play with each other in a variety of situations.*

### Here are 7 important social skills to help children to develop:

- 1. Ask for what you want** - Help children ask for what they want. It means they don't throw tantrums, whinge and sulk or expect parents to guess what's on their minds. We need to give children the chance and opportunity to ask for what they want. Sometimes we need to ignore shrugs and grunts and expect them to articulate their wishes. This is the basis of civil behaviour, as well as a basic human skill.
- 2. Good manners** - Teach kids good manners, in particular the three 'power words'. These words are very persuasive because they have a way of breaking down barriers and people's defences. These three words are: your name; please; thanks. These terms are the basis of good manners, and, when used, will increase the likelihood of getting what you want.
- 3. Sharing** - Sharing is a basic social skill. The notion of sharing is a pre-requisite for playing with and forming relationships with others. Other children like to play and be with those who share their time, possessions and space with them. Sharing is the start of empathy as it shows sensitivity to other people's feelings.
- 4. Holding a conversation** - Holding conversations with others is a lifetime friendship skill. Conversations require self-disclosure, which can be challenging for some children. Good conversationalists give of themselves, but also take an interest in the person they are talking to. Many children forget that good conversations are two-way events, and tend to focus solely on themselves. Children within conversations need to learn to ask good or interesting questions; to take turns when speaking and to show you are listening by making eye contact and not interrupting.
- 5. Winning and losing well** - Kids need to learn to win without rubbing others noses in it, and lose gracefully without throwing tantrums and making excuses. Wanting to win is natural, but they need to do so in a way that they maintain a relationship with other players so they will play again. Losing may make kids feel bad, but kids need to control their negative feelings so that others will play with them again.
- 6. Approaching and joining a group** - The ability to approach strangers in social situations is valuable skill that opens up many doors, both friendship-wise and business-wise. These skills can be learned and practised during childhood, so that it becomes second nature in adulthood.
- 7. Handling fights and disagreements** - Disagreements happen in families and among friends. The key is to make sure disagreements don't lead to the breakdown of friendships. It's important to get across to kids that having an argument or disagreement doesn't mean that a friendship is over. Strong friendships, like strong family relationships, withstand disagreements. In fact, they only serve to strengthen friendships.

*As parents we often focus on the development of children's academic skills and neglect the development of important social skills, such as: talking with others while playing, showing an interest in others, smiling, offering help and encouragement when needed, a willingness to share and learning how to enter a game or social situation, which contribute so much to children's happiness and wellbeing.*