Dear Parents,

Have you seen and read the notes on the fence as you come into kinder or school? Our Kindergarten staff met with the Primary staff during the week prior to school commencing and had breakfast together. We talked about starting our year with a spirit of thankfulness. We hope you will join with us by completing the ‘I thank God for…’ form with your child and bring it back to kinder, so we can add this to our fence.

The word ‘Kindergarten’ translates to ‘child’s garden’; MECS Kindergarten is named deliberately because we aim to be a place where children (and families) can delight in God’s presence, play in His wonder- and awe-filled world, and grow and learn in a secure and loving environment.

Good News! Great Joy! All People!

As teachers met together we were reminded of the passage in Luke 2:1-14 that tells the story of the angels appearing to the shepherds.

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people.” (Luke 2:10)

God communicated through the angels that the birth of Jesus was the best thing that had ever happened and it would be for all people. As teachers in Christian education we were challenged by the question, ‘What does it mean for us, our students and our families to be a community of good news and great joy?’ How fortunate and thankful we are to tell of the good news and to celebrate this great joy together that we can share with everyone! Over the year we hope to unpack this good news, the Word that is true, our Saviour who is Christ the Lord who brings hope to everyone, with our kinder children through our everyday interactions and through wondering at the beautiful creation around us.

Orientation

The year has started extremely well, with the children settling into their groups with happy, enthusiastic and smiling faces! We are delighted to see the children walking so confidently into kindergarten. Our first day was a great success and acted as a transition for children who had been coming to K3 or Busy Bees last year.

Thanks to Karen, Lee and Lynda who stepped in to make the day run smoothly.

While the beginning of the year may seem to start slowly, the orientation weeks allow staff to quickly get to know each child, be available to meet children’s needs and help develop ideas in play, as well as allowing the children to get to know other children in their group. We spend time during these early weeks introducing our class guidelines and how to be safe and caring at Kinder. These guidelines are based on the ‘We choose virtues’ program which focuses on 12 virtues that come under 3 headings: ‘We Obey; We are Kind; We are helpers’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 13 Feb</td>
<td>K4s</td>
<td>Teddy Bear Picnic</td>
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<td>Please send along a teddy.</td>
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<td>Tuesday 17 Feb</td>
<td>K3s</td>
<td>Blue Day</td>
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<td>Thursday 19 Feb</td>
<td>K3s</td>
<td>Yellow Day</td>
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<td>Thursday 19 Feb</td>
<td>K3</td>
<td>K3 ‘Learn about Play’ Parent evening</td>
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<td>7:30-8:30pm</td>
<td>Parents</td>
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<td>Tuesday 24 Feb</td>
<td>K3s</td>
<td>Red Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 23 Feb</td>
<td>K4</td>
<td>K4 Family ‘Learn about Play’ Community Evening</td>
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<td>5:00-6:30pm</td>
<td>Families</td>
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<td>Thursday 26 Feb</td>
<td>K3s</td>
<td>Green Day</td>
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<td>Friday 27 Feb</td>
<td>K4</td>
<td>Connect Morning Teas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>In the main school staffroom</td>
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<td>Tuesday 17 March</td>
<td>Bluebird</td>
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<td>Parents</td>
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<td>Thursday 19 March</td>
<td>Rosella</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
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<td>Monday 9 March</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Labour Day Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 2 March</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Kinder Jumper orders due</td>
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Community Noticeboard
We now have a common space for notices and information in the centre of the Piazza on the storeroom cupboard doors. Pamphlets and notices are available for you to help yourself. Remember if you are borrowing from the Parent library to enter your book and date when you take and return a book.

Kinder Jumpers
We are making available the opportunity to for you to purchase a kinder jumper (sloppy joe) with our printed logo. There are a selection of colours and sizes. You can view them online at http://www.ramo.com.au/category/hoodies/sloppy-joe

An order form will soon be available. Please fill it in and take it to the office by Monday 2nd March.

Top Tales books is coming to MECS Kinder. You will notice a display near the Community Noticeboard. After viewing the books you can make an order by placing your order form and money into the black money box in the Piazza. The Kinder will benefit with new books from your purchases. Please take note of the due date for orders.

Piazza
Please remember to supervise your children in the Piazza area. The time waiting for your session to start should be calm and engaging for the children, so that when they enter kindergarten they are ready for learning. Children should not be jumping or climbing on furniture or under tables, but waiting quietly with you or talking with a group of friends. We have a cupboard with some picture story books and toys that you can access, however please make sure your child puts them away once they have finished with them.

Arrival and Departure
Please remember that the kindergarten staff are very busy at the beginning of each session and their first priority is the needs of the children arriving. Speaking with the staff after a session is best, or please arrange a time with us. This way we have the least amount of disruptions at the beginning of a session.

The children will be packing their own bag at the end of each session. We would appreciate you coming to the door one at a time, and we will send your child to the door to meet you when we see you. We have asked the children to wait with us until we say their name. This ensures your child is handed over to you safely. Please let your child’s teacher know if one of your authorised nominees is going to pick up your child, via a short message in the attendance book.

By having parents wait in the Piazza we avoid congestion in the playroom and are promoting independence and self-help skills in the children – they are already showing us how capable they are! Once all of the children have been dismissed, the staff are then available to chat with you. Thank you for your cooperation with this process.

Kinder Connect Morning Tea
Our wonderful Community Development Officers organise a morning tea for kinder parents in your group where you can relax, have a cuppa and connect with each other. The dates for this term are displayed at the top of this newsletter. We hope you can come! Toddlers and babies very welcome.

Helping at Kindergarten
Thank you all for placing your name on the roster to come and help us. The ‘Helping at Kindergarten’ list is displayed in the kindergarten playrooms, which outlines some duties in which you could be involved.

The following pages will give you a brief update on what’s happening in each section of the Kindergarten.

Blessings,

Wendy Mason – Early Years Coordinator
POSUM AND KOALA NEWS

The 4 year old children have been exploring their sense of belonging at kindergarten as they get to know their educators, space and play mates. God made people special - we are the crowning glory of creation, and we are designed to work in community with each other.

During Term 1 we want to continue to build a sense of belonging, a place where children feel happy and safe, where learning together is fostered. As the children become familiar with their new routine, classroom, teachers and classmates, we work towards a classroom community where each child is known, respected and valued. Group rules are established together, giving children ownership over their own behaviour at Kindergarten.

We have looked at the BIG book, the Bible, where we find God’s story. Because God created us He knows us - our lives have meaning because we are known by God. We are all made uniquely in the image of God, with different gifts and talents. God’s intimate knowledge of us is beautifully described in Psalm 139. It is important that little children begin to explore who they are, what they like and dislike, and work towards an understanding that we are all made by God. We want children to realize the wonder of their own creation by God, and their importance to God.

During these orientation weeks we have explored the idea of holidaying with our family, and heard from each other about the types of things they did over the summer. From these discussions we have moved from familiar, family discussions to areas of interest, such as sea creatures. On Friday 13 Feb both K4 groups will attend together for the first time. We want to celebrate the day with a Teddy bears Picnic, as we meet new friends and begin to build our classroom culture.

Please send along 1 Teddy on Friday.

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at our family as a Community, where God has given parents the special job of caring for their children as they grow. We will also look at ourselves, our emotions and how we affect others around us.

‘Learn about Play’ Community Evening- A fun evening for the whole family!

On Monday 23 February all K4 families are invited to come to Kinder for a special evening to learn about looking for learning in children’s play. We will start the evening with a short introduction from your child’s educators, and then visit some kinder play areas. We invite you to bring along a picnic tea, to celebrate our evening of learning together. We will begin together at 5.00pm, and will be finished by 6.30pm. Please bring along dinner for your family (either a picnic or take away) and a picnic rug. We hope you can come along to this special evening.

We are looking forward to a wonderful term.

Wendy, Robyn, Cherie and Andrea-4 year old Program Educators
BLUEBIRDS AND ROSELLAS NEWS

The 3 year olds have started the year fabulously. On the first day, they settled leaving Mum or their Grandparents with ease and coped extremely well with beginning to learn about our Kinder culture including the routine for washing hands before a snack, wearing their hats outside and sitting together on the mat with legs crossed.

They even learnt their kinder theme song:

I’m a little Rosella/Bluebird
So are you,
We love Jesus
And He loves us too
When we get together
Then we sing
Thank you Lord for everything!

From Feb 17, we will be learning colours. It would be great if you could dress your child in the colour for the day (as shown below) - either fully in the colour or just one item of their clothing, such as a T-shirt or even just socks!

**Colour dates to remember:**

- Tuesday 17 Feb   Blue
- Thursday 19 Feb  Yellow
- Tuesday 24 Feb   Red
- Thursday 26 Feb  Green

‘Learn about Play’ Parent Evening- A fun night for parents at Kinder!
On **Thursday 19 Feb** all K3 parents are invited to a fun evening to discuss how your child learns at kinder. This evening is just for parents, as we look at the importance of allowing children to learn through discovery and exploration, often called ‘Play Based Learning’. We will start in the Sunflower room at **7:30pm and finish at 8:30pm** with a cuppa and a chat.

Well done K3’s, we are going to have a wonderful year!

*Lee and Karen-3 year old Program Educators*

BUSY BEES NEWS

It’s very exciting for me to come back to Busy Bees and be able to work in the Kinder room, and to meet and work alongside parents and their beautiful children. All the children were excited as they came along to Busy Bees - some returning from last year and others entering a new experience. I encourage all the parents to get to know each other in their session – it makes for an enjoyable time together.

The children have already enjoyed making painting masterpieces - for some it was their first painting experience. Singing is also something they do very well – the mums are not bad either!

*Lynda – Playgroup Leader*

Blessings from all of the Kindergarten Staff,

*Robyn, Cherie, Andrea, Lee, Karen, Susan, Lynda & Wendy*