Dear Parents,

Welcome back to our children after their first school holidays. For some children it can be quite an adjustment all over again much like the start of the year. We hope you all enjoyed precious family time over the break, and that the children are well rested to begin full time, every day school!

Thank you parents
Thank you for all the support that you give to our classroom. Coming in to help change the children’s books, hearing their words, helping with small groups, laminating, making play dough, dropping in to say hello, looking at your children’s artwork or their last piece of writing or just asking/clarifying questions is so very much appreciated.

Thank you all for organising to attend the compulsory Parent Teacher interviews. We trust you will find them a worthwhile and informative session. However please don’t feel that communication has to be restricted to just Parent Teacher Interviews. Good communication is vitally important so please feel free to see us at other times if there is a need.

For brief discussions, it’s best to talk when the school day is over. Should the matter require a longer discussion please approach us to organise a suitable time. Just a reminder that mornings are not a good time to chat, as the children are ready to go and need our attention. A good way to communicate in the morning is to slip a note into your child’s boomerang bag. Parents who are changing take home books will put any messages from the boomerang bags on our desk for us to read before morning tea time.

ICT Forms
During Term 1 you received the ICT Agreement Form, via email or letter, which needs to be signed for student computer access. If you have not yet returned this form, please do so as soon as possible. If you need another copy, please see either the office or your child’s teacher.

Parent help
Parent help in the classroom is always appreciated and valuable, and there are still lots of opportunities to help. If you are available, please speak to us as there are still gaps within the parent roster where your assistance would be beneficial and very much appreciated.
Numeracy and Language
We look forward to the children continuing to develop a love of reading books, increasing their confidence and ability as readers and writers.

Students will be beginning to learn the first 100 high-frequency words. You can help by saying these words slowly and stretching them out to see if you can hear the sounds helps the children in their writing. Clap the syllables, then say the sound chunks, for example the word “ship” is not sounded out like s, h; but as one sound as in sh i p (3 sounds in this word). It doesn’t matter if the children don’t hear all of the sounds straight away, just encourage them to write what they hear, then write the whole word for them, so they can make the comparison. Even one sound is great - it is where they start!

This term in Numeracy we will cover ‘teen’ numbers and place value. It is so important that children understand that 12 is one ten and 2 ones (for example). When they fully grasp this they won’t reverse the number, and write 21 for 12. We will introduce counting by tens, and look at patterns in number. Money will be covered this term and we will have a very practical use for money in our excursion to the shops later this term.

We will also continue to encourage the children to be relaxed about playing in the school grounds, and to take good care of one another.

Very Important People
Our VIP program is starting this term, which fits in beautifully with talking about our uniqueness and how special we are to God. One child is selected at random each week to be our Very Important Person. Each child will have one turn throughout the year. Please check your child’s Boomerang bag each Friday to see if they are the VIP for the following week and for details of what they need to bring.

Cross Country
On Friday 3 May the Preps will participate in the whole school Cross Country Event. The children will be preparing for this in PE class and will need to wear the colours of their team (T-shirt) or a MECS tribal top. If you are unsure what colours your student should wear please contact the classroom teacher. This will be held at school where they will run one lap around the primary playground track. Look out for event times in the school newsletter closer to the date.

Developmental Curriculum
On Mondays the children have Investigation time. Play and project based learning experiences are the major tools for teaching and learning alongside explicit instruction. The nature of the experiences for the children promotes creativity, imagination and scope for the child to invent and explore. This approach is very “hands-on” and avoids over-use of worksheets and cloned artwork. The learning experiences:

• Emphasises active engagement.
• Provide children with opportunities to explore process, (not just end products).
• Encourages children to pursue some of their learning experiences into ongoing projects for either short or longer periods of time.

At the end of the session, group discussion, children reporting to the group, personal reflection about what we already know, want to learn and have just learned, are all important ways in which children are made aware of their thinking and learning.

While skill instruction sessions and small and large group times are still used within the classroom, literacy, numeracy, and other areas of learning are integrated within a range of learning experiences.
Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings involve literacy rotation activities. Literacy activities are designed to immerse and reinforce specific literacy concepts, such as reading levels and LEM phonics (spelling), writing skills, speaking and listening.

Wonderful Wednesdays
From this week the children will attend school on Wednesdays. Please remember that the children will be very tired by Friday, and this can lead to some grumpiness, particularly at home. Try to give your Prep child early nights, and lots of rest and recovery time on weekends.

On Wednesdays we will introduce another style of literacy involvement. Literacy Learning centres will be offered based on a shared reading experience and will involve a well selected picture story or non-fiction book. A new book will be presented weekly.

As this “Wonderful Wednesday” session provides opportunity for children to write independently, parent help is invaluable and very much appreciated as children can be encouraged to “have a go” at developing this new skill, and be directed to the alphabet chart to help them find the sound they know they need to record. This is especially necessary in the early stages when many of the children only know the sounds for half the letters of the alphabet.

Core Studies focus summary:
Week 1: Autumn
This Week, we will think mostly about the season of Autumn. We will discuss aspects of Autumn, such as the cooler temperatures, the need for warmer clothes and the concepts of time and cycles. By far the most interesting thing to do is to notice the leaves change colour! Our Father has made an ordered world and seasons work together in His time.

On Tuesday 23 April we will have an incursion at 1:50pm featuring Dove Puppets. In this incursion Jeanette Drummond uses the show “The Ugly Duckling” to highlight the need to care for our friends, be inclusive, and appreciate each other’s differences

Weeks 2–9: God Gives Us People Who Help Us
This term’s Core Studies unit follows on from term 1: God made all things and God made me. Having discovered how people are special and are made in His image, and having looked at aspects of ourselves, we move on to discovering who the people are around us, and how God has given all of us skills and gifts to use together to help each other.

In the first weeks of this unit, the children will look at their family as a community, and at our school, as another familiar community. Students will then use these community examples as a basis for to relating to people in their own neighbourhood.

We recap our previous discussions on changes in themselves as they have grown. We then move on to discuss specific people in the community who help us, such as the fireman or policeman. We will have a fire truck visit us from the local fire station in week 7 (day to be confirmed). People who work in hospitals and doctor’s surgeries are people who also help us, and most children will be familiar with visiting a doctor’s surgery. Penny Turner will visit our class on Thursday 30 May, to present her program called HITS – Hospitals in the Schools. She spends time discussing what it is like to go to hospital. She shows and discusses instruments that help doctors look after you, and the meaning of calling the telephone number 000. The children will get to use all of the equipment in a structured play setting as well.

Finally we will have an excursion to visit the local shops on Wednesday 12 June. This is a well favoured and memorable excursion where children go to the bakery, the post office and Opportunity shop to make some purchases.
Where possible, you as parents can be involved in the class by sharing your experiences in the community, or to share information about your job. It is important that children realise the value of work and that people have jobs; they have special tasks that they carry out while they are ‘working’.

Our students explore:
- The idea that people working together in community was God’s idea.
- That each community is called to serve the Lord in their activities and relationships.
- That all communities may experience God’s blessings and grace.
- All communities are called to bring restoration or to achieve good and pleasing outcomes through its activities and goals.
- Each community is called to help the broader society; to bring peace and shalom; to seek justice for the weak and the needy; to enjoy times of creativity and using our wonderfully created bodies.

**Parent Night**
On Thursday 16 May we are inviting all Prep children and their parents to school for a special night of sharing together. The children will have some songs to sing to you, after which we will have a sharing time. The children will have been making booklets called “About Me”. The booklet will talk about how we are all made in our Father’s image, with special gifts and skills. People are special and your Prep child is special.

We hope that you can come along, it’s only for an hour, and it really is a lovely night. This is only for parents and your Prep child, so no siblings please. Please arrive at 6.30pm and we will finish at 7.30pm.

![2013 Dates for Your Diary](image)

**Library**
Thursday is library bags day. The children can borrow two books in Term 2.

**Social Play**
For the first couple of weeks we will set up a post office in the children’s social drama area. Later it will change to a doctor’s surgery/hospital, and then to a supermarket. Within the context of our core studies unit, children are able to dramatise certain roles of being an adult, and ‘feel’ what it is like. They try out roles they see adults take on, all under the guise of ‘play’. Role play has a very important impact on children’s development.

**Drink Bottles**
Please take your child’s drink bottle home on a Friday afternoon to wash, fill with fresh water and return it for use the following Monday.
ITEMS TO BRING ALONG TO SCHOOL

Week 1 (Monday 22 April to Friday 26 April):
Please send along any interesting coloured and shaped autumn leaves that you might have.

Week 2 (Monday 29 April to Friday 3 May):
Please research the meaning of your child’s name, and write it down in the box at the end of this letter, then send to school on Monday 22 April.

Week 3 (Monday 6 May to Friday 10 May):
Please send along one photo of your family for display and discussion. We will be discussing families, and how they are different.

Junk Materials
Contributions of junk materials have been greatly appreciated. Thank you for your help in this area. At the moment we have plenty of materials to spare so will not be in need of any for a little while. The exception is snack yoghurt containers, which we are still collecting.

Letter Sounds
Please continue to help the children to learn all the letter sounds. It is through associating sounds with the written form that children learn to read and write.

We will introduce the following sounds this term, as well as doing plenty of revision of known sounds:

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<th>Term 2:</th>
<th>Show &amp; Tell Items</th>
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Your Name is Special!
As discussed in the Parent Night section of this newsletter it would be appreciated if you can look up the meaning of your child’s first name, and write the description in the box. We will be cutting this out and pasting it into your child’s “About Me” booklet. We will be talking about the meaning of our names at school. You could talk about the reasons why you chose your child’s name too. Please return this slip to school by Monday 22 April 2013.

Yours in Christ

Jan Ormrod & Rebekah Clark
Prep Teachers
Please return the following to your classroom teacher by Monday 22 April 2013

My Name Is: ___________________________________________

My name means:
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

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