



This year Lent begins on Wednesday 18th February. Lent prepares us for Easter and for the renewal of our baptismal promises. Lent means 'springtime', and it is a good time to 'spring clean' our lives. We do this by trying to be like Jesus, who went into the desert to pray for forty days before he began teaching people. During Lent we journey towards Easter, fasting, praying and reflecting on what Jesus taught and did for us so that we can truly be ready to celebrate Easter.

Shrove Tuesday is the name we give to the day before Ash Wednesday, which has also become known as Pancake Day. The word 'Shrove' is the past tense of the verb 'shrive' which means to be forgiven for your sins by showing Jesus you are sorry. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday when a special service is held. During the service the priest will use ashes to make the sign of the cross on your forehead. The crosses are usually made from blessed palm leaves from the previous Palm Sunday which are burned and mixed with a little water. The cross symbolises a new beginning when we ask God to forgive the things we may have done wrong. It also reminds us that we are followers of Jesus and we must try our best to grow

closer to God. Lent is forty days long if you don't count Sundays (when we get a day off because Sundays are always a mini celebration of Easter. Whatever you give up for Lent, you can treat yourself to some on Sundays).

The Church uses colours to give us different messages. During Lent the priest wears purple vestments at Mass, which shows that this is a time for thinking about what Jesus did for us, and how we can be a better friend to him. Keeping your Lent promise is a way of showing Jesus you are his friend, and praying is a way of talking to him.

During Lent, try to remember to say Good morning and Goodnight to Jesus, by saying a prayer when you wake up and just before you go to sleep. You can tell him about your plans for the day, and in the evening you can talk to Jesus about how you feel things have gone during the day.

Once again the children will be given a Walk With Me calendar for Lent and a Day By Day booklet for you to share at home. Like Jesus you can pray in difficult times. When you pray, never forget that you are talking to God. God will listen to you because He cares for you and all His children. You don't have to be in church to pray, you can pray wherever you are and God will hear you. Here is a prayer to help on the Lenten journey.



Dear Jesus
 Help me to love others
 as much as you
 love me.
 Help me to be kind and
 good to my friends and
 family and to follow in
 your footsteps.

Amen



Father Hudson's Society Good Shepherd Appeal

During Lent St Mary's will be taking part in Father Hudson's Society's Good Shepherd Appeal. This is your child's way of being part of helping those in need in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Your child has been given a self assembly collecting box and may also be involved in other fund raising activities. Please encourage your child to put the money that would have been spent on sweets and other treats into the collecting box. You can find more information about the work of this charity at www.fatherhudsons.org.uk

World Cancer Day



Thank you to everyone who came to school wearing odd shoes or odd socks on Wednesday 4th February to raise money for World Cancer Day. This was organised by Joseph, Chris, Danny and Nat from Year 5 and they managed to raise £250.

World Book Day



This year World Book Day falls on Thursday March 5th. This year we are combining this special day when we celebrate reading, with a fund raising event organised by Amie and Darci from Year Six for the SMA Trust. The girls are asking everyone to come to school dressed as their favourite book character and to bring a 50p donation which will go to the trust. This money will be spent on research into finding a cure for Spinal Muscular Atrophy.



Parents' Evening

This term Parents' consultations will all take place on just one date: **Thursday March 26th**. Appointments will be between **3.30pm and 8.30pm**. Appointments will be made using the online booking system. You will be informed closer to the time when this has been set up so that you can make an appointment that is convenient for you. If you have any difficulty booking then please contact Mrs Hambridge.

Attendance

We now have a new attendance policy which will be available to view on our website after the half term holiday. We have also produced a request form to enable parents to request leave of absence during term time if this is necessary, rather than writing a letter. These will be available to print from the website or from the school office.

Well done to our top 3 classes for attendance for this half term:

1st	Year 6	98.42%
2nd	Year 1	96.73%
3rd	Year 4	96.43%

Inspire Maths

Inspire Maths sessions have been held this half term for years 6, 5, 3 and Reception. These have been very well attended and have been very enjoyable sessions for parents and children. The remaining classes will be having their Inspire Maths sessions during this half term on the following dates:

Thursday 24th February	9.15am	Year 4
Wednesday 4th March	9.15am	Year 1
Thursday 4th March	1.45pm	Year 2



Key Stage 2 Production

Key Stage 2 children will soon begin working on this year's production: 'Pirates of the Curry Bean'. The dress rehearsal will be on Thursday 19th March at 1.30pm and the performance will be on the same date at 6.30pm. Tickets will be available to purchase from the office closer to the time.

Swimming

Swimming has now finished for Year 4. Year 3 will start their swimming lessons on Wednesday 25th February. The coach will leave school at 9.00 so please make sure children are on time. Further information for Year 3 parents / carers will follow.

Food Dudes



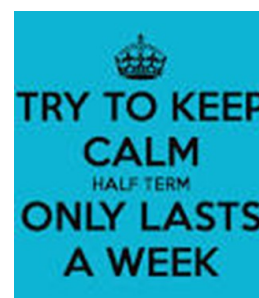
We have had several visits from the Food Dudes who have been encouraging children to eat more fruit and vegetables. They will be coming in to speak for the whole school on Friday March 6th to launch the Food Dudes project for school dinners.

EON Smart Kids Science Workshops

We are very grateful to Mr Deocampo, one of our parents, who has nominated St Mary's to receive a free science workshop from EON. We have been lucky enough to be offered two workshops for Years 5 and 6 which will take place on Thursday 30th April. Many thanks to Mr Deocampo for the nomination.

Have an enjoyable half-term break.

Ms O' Beirne - Principal



Masses

Tuesday 24th February	Year 4
Tuesday 10th March	Year 2
Tuesday 24th March	Year 6

Class assemblies

Friday 27th February	2.30pm	Year2
Friday 6th March	2.30pm	Year 1
Friday 13th March	2.30pm	Reception

Special Events

Tuesday 3rd March	Reception class eye tests 9.30am — 11.30am
Thursday 5th March	Mr Jones from SVP to work with Years 5 and 6
Saturday 6th June 2015	First Holy Communion 10.00am at St. Mary's Church
Sunday 7th June 2015	Celebration Mass 11.00am at St. Mary's Church
Saturday 4th July	Reconciliation 11.00am at St. Mary's Church

Training Days (School closed for children but open for staff)

Friday March 27th 2015
Thursday May 7th 2015
Monday July 20th 2015
Wednesday September 2nd 2015

Term Dates

Spring Half Term Holiday	Break up on Friday 13th February, return on Monday 23rd February
Easter Holiday	Break up on Thursday 26th March, return on Monday 13th April
May Day Bank Holiday	Monday 4th May
Summer Half Term Holiday	Break up on Friday 22nd May, return on Monday 1st June
Summer Holiday	Break up on Friday 17th July (20th July: Staff Training)
Autumn Term	Children return to school on Thursday 3rd September

