

Principal's Post – 20 July 2017

Welcome Back to Term 3!

Dear Parents and members of our school community,

Welcome back to a new and exciting term. Once again we have had a busy start and the term ahead is full of new and exciting learning experiences. I hope that the break was an opportunity for children to relax and to spend quality time with family and friends.

Enrolments for 3 year old and 4 year old Kindy 2018.

There are still a few places available in the three day a week 4 year old Kindy program. If your child is born from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, please ensure that they have been enrolled. **We can't know** the names of every sibling. Additionally, there are places for children who turn 3 before June 30th 2018 to attend the Monday full day 3 year old program. As there will be no other children in the Kindy rooms on a Monday, this Kindy promises to be a very calm and peaceful environment for these precious children. Please let family and friends know of this 3 year old Kindy.

I read over all the school reports and I was happy to hear that there were only a few "typos" that missed my eagle eyes. One phrase kept recurring in reports for students from Year 3 to 6. It was that Sally or Ben or Tyson needed to learn his or her tables. How can we help children memorize their tables? It is not as simple as learning a tables chant as is often suggested by parents.

Memory can often be a good reflection of what we do. If we regularly sing along to a favourite song, each line tends to remind us of the next line. However, if we then try to sing the song by ourselves, without the aid of an accompanying recording, we often find that forgetting one line means subsequent lines also can't be recalled. I see this at Mass when our projector fails. All of a sudden the congregation has forgotten the Creed.

A similar thing can happen if we engage in rote recitation of the times tables. This method is only useful if we want to have a method to fall back upon when all other methods fail. Basically this method can only produce the equivalent of a song lyric where, remembering what "4 8s" are is only possible if you can remember "4 6s are 24" and "4 7s are 28".

A better form of knowledge is one where a child knows the answer to each multiplication problem as soon as they see it, much like being able to read a word as soon as you see it.

Knowing the answer to each problem is then independent of knowing the answer to other times table problems. This type of knowledge can be gained only by practice at producing the answer.

One method for undertaking this type of practice is something like the old flash-card method. Head down to Officeworks and buy a pack of plain white index cards. (see photo)

Write a problem on one side of a card ($4 \times 8 = ?$), and the answer on the other side. With a shuffled deck of cards representing all of the problems in the times tables, a child can practise producing the answer to each problem, and then check their response by turning over the card.

Knowledge of the times tables is not useful by itself. A child must learn to apply the knowledge in a mathematical context.

It is important, though, that a child's knowledge of the times tables is not allowed to remain as a list of independent facts. A child needs to engage in activities that demonstrate the connections between the multiplication facts in the times tables. It is important to see how 4×8 and 8×4 are connected.

Ultimately they will also need to see how $4 \times 8 = ?$ and $32 \div 8 = ?$ are connected. To achieve this the child should be provided with activities that require the application of their arithmetic knowledge in a way that can demonstrate and lead the child to uncover these connections.

Practice with this sort of material can help kids develop a knowledge base that results in reliable retrieval of facts and the sort of flexible application of this knowledge that is required in higher-order problems, such as solving for x in $2x + 3 = 11$. If you struggle to come up with an answer to this problem, I would not suggest relying on a times tables song to help you out.



Our deepest sympathy and prayers are extended to Mel Crosby on the recent death of her dearly loved father. Also to Sarah Murphy on the tragic death of her cousin who passed away after a motor accident.

This prayer has been a source of comfort to people over the centuries. May their dear souls rest in peace.



*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Are YOU a Former Student or Staff Member?

Are you a former student or staff of St Joachim's, Xavier College, Our Lady Help of Christians, Our Lady of Mercy or Ursula Frayne Catholic College? We are looking for you to join the newly formed Alumni. Let us help you reconnect with your old school and friends. Go to our website www.ursulafrayne.wa.edu.au and complete the registration form (under Community) or contact Mary McGonigle on 9470 0925 or alumni@ufcc.wa.edu.au to have a form sent to you. In 2019, we celebrate 120 years since our foundation school was opened and we would like to have as many former students and staff join us in celebration.

Helen M O'Toole

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Principal