

ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CLOVELLY

DEC 2024 | SUMMER ISSUE

# Faith & Family

ST ANTHONY'S QUARTERLY E-MAG



Celebrating  
Gratitude &  
Community Spirit!

*Family recipes,  
interviews,  
upcoming news &  
much more*

# From the Principal



As we close the chapter on 2024 and prepare to embrace the promise of a new year, I find myself reflecting on the many blessings that have graced our St Anthony's community this year. December is a special time—a season of gratitude, joy, and hope—and it reminds us to cherish family, faith, and the warmth of togetherness.

This past year has been filled with moments of growth, learning, and celebration. From academic achievements to spirited service projects and faith-filled gatherings, our students, staff, and families have come together in countless ways to make this school a truly special place. Your partnership and unwavering support have made all the difference, and for that, I am deeply grateful.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us take time to pause, reflect, and spread kindness to others. May the spirit of this season bring peace and joy to your homes and strengthen the bonds that connect us as a faith-filled family.

On behalf of the entire St Anthony's School faculty and staff, I wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

*"This past year has been filled with moments of growth, learning, and celebration."*

*Anna Novak*

PRINCIPAL

## Christmas Artwork



**Jame Aloschi - Year 6**

**Title The Birth of Our Saviour Jesus Christ**

# 2024: A Year of Gratitude and Community Spirit

By Anna Novak

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone in our school community for their support throughout 2024.

We have a wonderful community spirit here, which is highly evident in your attendance at school events and your presence. Thank you to the children. They are the reason we are here.

Their enthusiasm for life and learning is a wonderful example to us all.

To you, our parents, the primary educators of your children, I give thanks for your support and partnership in providing so much for the children. No matter what your contribution over the year, big or small, it is appreciated and has benefitted the children.

On behalf of the students and their parents, I would like to thank the dedicated staff of St Anthony's.

We especially thank members of staff for their professionalism, outstanding commitment, patience, collaborative spirit, and for the love and care that they show to the students each day, encouraging them to strive to achieve their very best.

I also wish to thank all the parents who have worked in partnership with the school to improve the learning outcomes for our students.





**May the blessings of  
Christmas be with you, and  
may God bless you all.**

Throughout the year, we have enjoyed a series of fantastic events that have not only added vibrancy to our school life but have also strengthened the bonds that make St Anthony's such a special place. From the exhilarating Colour Explosion Run to the infectious energy of the Olympic Fun Day, the heartwarming Grandparents Morning Tea, and the celebrations of Mother's Day and Father's Day – each event has left a lasting impression on our school community.

As we look forward to 2025, I hope it will bring great joy and growth to our students, teachers, and the entire school community. May it be a year of improvement and development for all, with love and service at the heart of everything we do.

May the blessings of Christmas be with you, and may God bless you all.

**Love & Service**

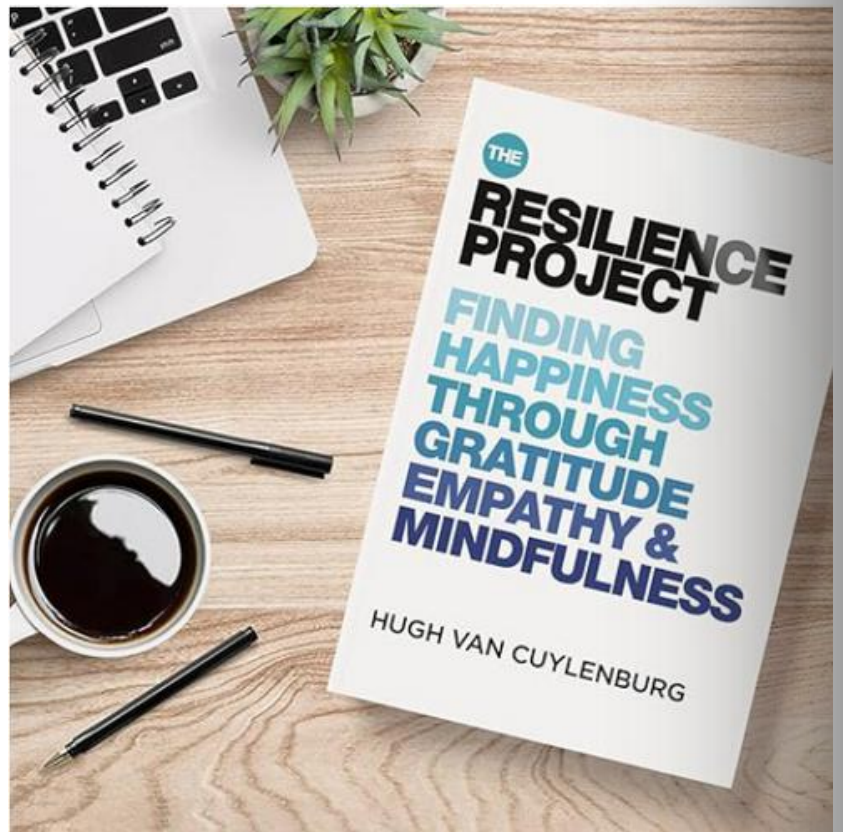
# Building Resilience in the Classroom

BY MARIA IORFINO  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL & YEAR 4 TEACHER

“Mindfulness is the key to finding joy in the present moment and building emotional strength for life’s challenges.” -Hugh van Cuylenburg

With a recommendation from a colleague to read 'The Resilience Project' by Hugh van Cuylenburg, I was totally confronted with the mental health statistics in Australia and seeing children in today's society behave the way they do and how to be kind and think of others. As part of my classroom teaching I have incorporated some of the strategies that Hugh recommends in the book to help students become happier and more resilient.

The research is clear; the more positive emotion you experience, the more resilient you will be. For that reason I focus on the three key pillars proven to cultivate positive emotion; **Gratitude**, **Empathy** and **Mindfulness**. The Resilience program also has strong central points on Connection, Purpose, Kindness, Emotional Literacy and Physical Health. In the book I was captivated by the heartfelt stories of a teacher, his experiences from places around the world and his growth of knowledge on how we can live a happier and more fulfilling life by being grateful, empathic and mindful in our actions, words and thoughts.

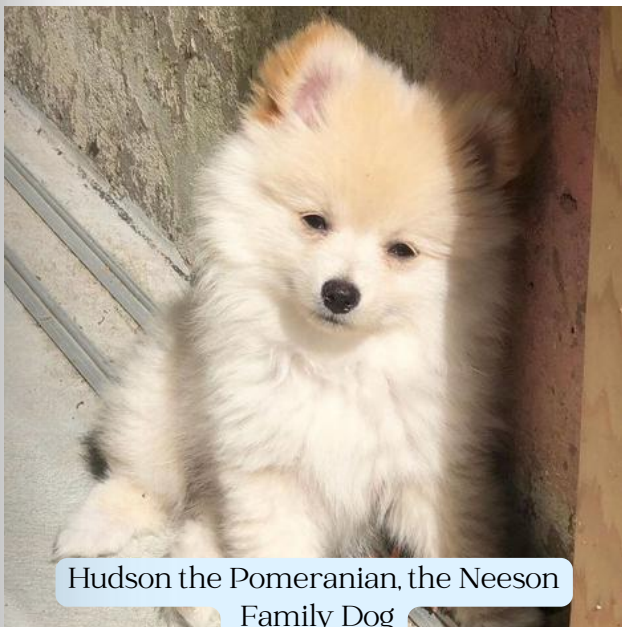


# Meet Laura Neeson



Laura at the Family Educator Christmas Gathering with other FE's

Laura Neeson has served as a Family Educator for six years. With a background in PR and Marketing, she has also received training in pastoral care and missionary leadership, areas that reflect her true passion. Laura is a devoted wife and mother to two children, Massimo (14) and Chloe (11), as well as the proud owner of a beloved Pomeranian named Hudson.



Hudson the Pomeranian, the Neeson Family Dog

## Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Earlwood, in Sydney's Inner West and moved to Bondi in my 20s and then never left the east.

## What does a typical day look like for you at St Anthony's?

I work 2.5 days a week at St Anthony's and lots of what I do happens behind the scenes! I begin each week with a session of Playgroup for parents and siblings in the St Anthony's library & depending on what's coming up I will spend time designing & creating materials for upcoming events and take-home initiatives, creating the e-magazine, newsletter or videos.

## What's a fun fact about you people might not know?

I'm an identical twin so many people get quite a shock, or feel slightly confused if they run into my twin and think it's me but can't work out why I don't recognise them!

## What have you loved about your time at St Anthony's?

Some of my most memorable moments have been celebrating events like Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Grandparents Day, with this year's Paint & Sip for mums being a standout—it was such fun!

Beyond the big events, I've also deeply valued one-on-one connections with parents. Those pastoral conversations, where I've walked alongside people through challenges, have been a privilege.



Husband Antony & daughter  
Chloe

## What are your hobbies or interests outside of work?

I am currently studying for a Graduate Diploma in Theological Studies, and I am absolutely loving it! Exploring the Scriptures and uncovering their deeper meaning has been incredibly enriching. It's fascinating to see how they beautifully fulfil so much of the Old Testament, weaving together God's plan for humanity.

Walking and reading are my two favourite ways to unwind but I don't often have the time to do them!



La Santa Scala in Rome  
on her recent trip

## What's your favourite Bible verse?

My favourite Bible verse is Romans 8:28: *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him."*

This verse resonates deeply with me because it reminds me of God's unwavering presence and sovereignty, even in the midst of challenges. It's a powerful reassurance that no matter what we face, God is weaving everything together for a greater purpose. It inspires me to trust Him completely and find peace in His plan, even when the path isn't clear.

## Who is your favourite saint?

How can I choose just one?! I'm drawn to the deep mysticism of St. Teresa of Avila, the humility and joy of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and the intellect and boldness of St. Catherine of Siena. However, St. Augustine is my favourite—his powerful conversion story and his beautiful, timeless writings are true treasures of the Church.



Laura & her twin Mina



Hudson often attends Mass  
with the family



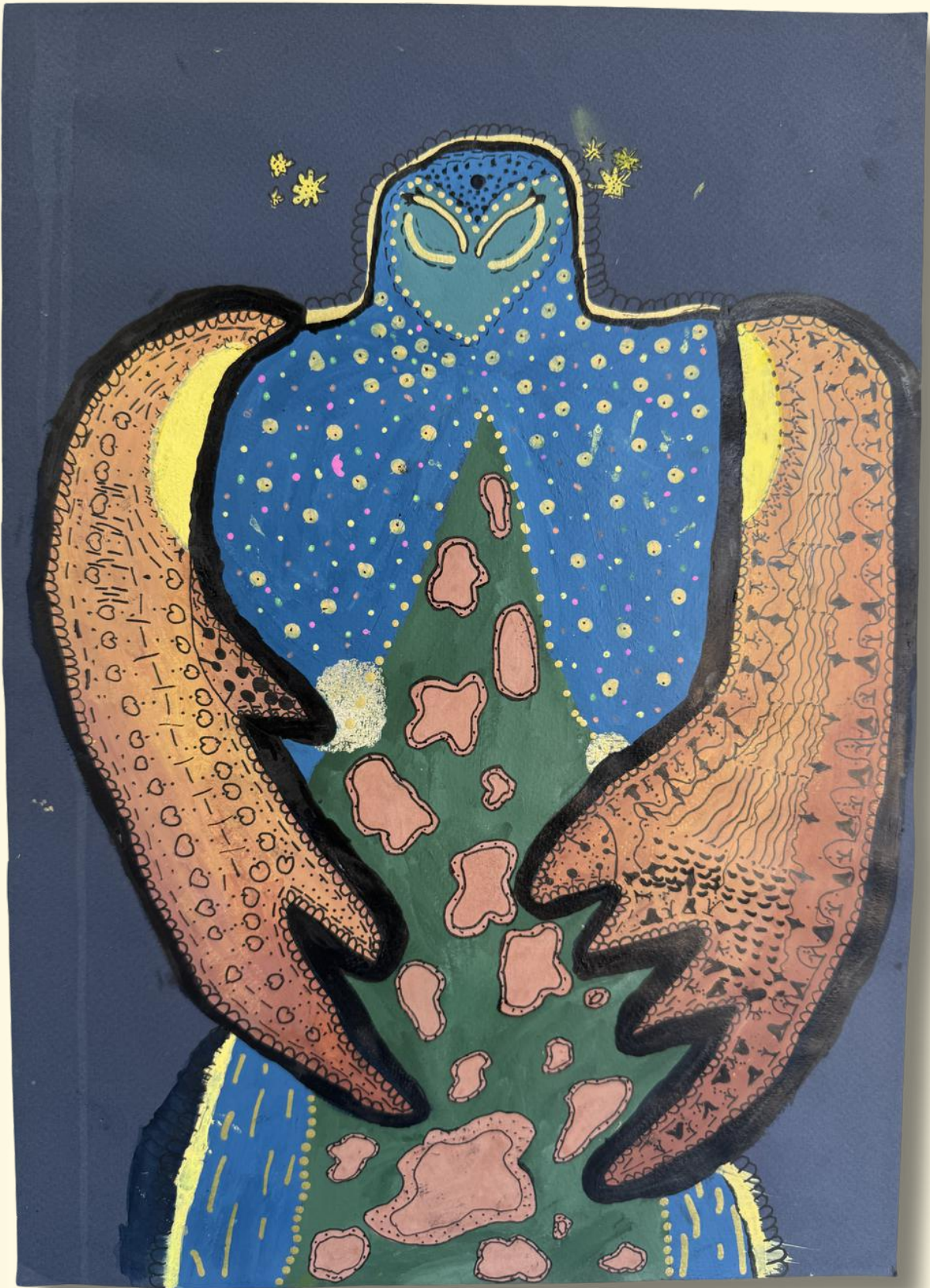
Laura's First Holy Communion



Antony, Son Massimo & Chloe



## Christmas Artwork



**Adelaide Ivy Zenere - Year 6**  
**Title: My Birth Angel**

Family Recipe

# Golden Syrup Ginger Crunch Slice

Makes approx 24

🕒 30 Minutes

Thank you to Mrs Temple for her yummy Ginger Crunch Slice Recipe!



**Store at room temperature for up to 3 days, or up to 7 days in the fridge.**

## Ingredients

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- 330g butter, softened
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1 cup self-raising flour, sifted
- 1 cup plain flour, sifted
- 5 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 cup golden syrup
- 2 1/4 cups pure icing sugar, sifted

## Method

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### Step 1

Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease and line a 3cm deep, 20cm x 30cm (base) lamington pan.

### Step 2

Using an electric mixer, cream 250g of butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Stir in flours and 1 teaspoon of ginger. Press into pan. Prick all over with a fork.

### Step 3

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until light golden. Turn onto a wire rack to cool.

### Step 4

Heat syrup, icing sugar, and remaining butter and ginger in a saucepan over low heat for 3 minutes, stirring, or until butter has melted. Spread over cooled base. Allow to set. Cut into pieces. Serve.

1

## Opening School Mass

Our Opening School Mass will take place on Friday 14 February 2025 at St Anthony's Church at 9:00am. All parents and carers are invited to join us for this special Mass celebration to kick off what will be a wonderful year of learning and growth.



2

## Shrove Tuesday!

We're gearing up for a fun start to 2025 with our Annual Shrove Tuesday Feast Day! Parents will be invited to donate pancakes and volunteer on the morning to help our school community to celebrate the beginning of the Lenten Season with a delicious pancake feast! Stay tuned for details! Date: Tuesday 4 March, 2025



5

## Celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany

The Epiphany House Blessing is a beautiful tradition that commemorates the moment the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem to worship the newborn Jesus and present Him with gifts. This centuries-old custom is typically observed when the Christmas tree comes down. Families mark their doorways with chalk, writing the year and the initials of the three Wise Men (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar) to bless the home for the coming year. This simple but meaningful act invites God's protection and grace into the home throughout the year.



&  
let God

THE FUTURE  
IS BRIGHT

Oh you GO GIRL

YOU  
got  
This

breathe

str BE

BE  
BRAVE

XOXO



# FAREWELL YEAR 6 2024!

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

AND WITH YOUR SPIRIT

family & faith

JUST KEEP SWIMMING

I can

This

Going to The Great Aussie Bushcamp in Year 5 - Emily Gazo



Year 5 camp, and the times in year 4 was great.  
-Isabella Hobart



Dream Big

When we went to school camp in Canberra -  
Zak Crittenden



Camp - Tanea Prado



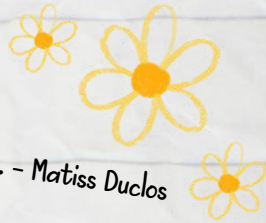
Going to camp was very fun and we could  
connect with other students!  
- Callum Fowler



# What's your favourite Memory?

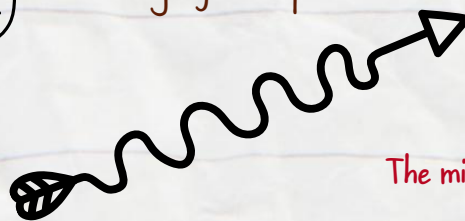
Being in year 2- James Aloschi

The Yr 5 camp, my first excursion in kindy  
when we went to a farm, and the 2023  
surfing day.- Ella Crawshaw



Having fun with all my friends. - Matiss Duclos

The mini fete 2020.- Henry Wheeler



My kindy buddy when we first met them it  
was so exciting and I still miss my buddy  
to this very day.- Sophia Whittaker

My favourite memory was when I went to  
and was at the eisteddfods. - Tilly Wu



Swimming and Athletics Carnival.  
- Luana Mellick

Year five camp and the surfing lessons.  
- Charli Darington



Every Memory with my friends.  
- Ruaridh Frazer

Meeting so many new people and new  
teachers. Having lots of help at this  
school is also a great memory because  
none of the teachers wouldn't let me give  
up and they would always help me when I  
needed it. - Adelaide Zenere



My friends and teachers - Emily Gazo



all of my friends who are going to different schools  
-Isabella Hobart



Dream Big

My friends and teachers- Zak Crittenden



Camp - Tanea Prado



Going to camp was very fun and we could connect with other students!

- Callum Fowler



Being in year 2- James Aloschi



# What will you miss most about St Anthony's?

Year five camp and the surfing lessons.  
- Charli Darington

The Yr 5 camp, my first excursion in kindy when we went to a farm, and the 2023 surfing day.- Ella Crawshaw

Swimming & Athletic carnival.  
- Gregory Moutopoulos.

the community and how little people there are in the school. - Matiss Duclos



The mini fete 2020.- Henry Wheeler

My kindy buddy when we first met them it was so exciting and I still miss my buddy to this very day.- Sophia Whittaker

My favourite memory was when I went to and was at the eisteddfods. - Tilly Wu



*“Do not be afraid to dream big. Be confident in your abilities, and always trust in God, who is with you on every step of your journey.”*  
— Pope Francis



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## Christmas Artwork

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**Almudena Gamarra Angulo - Year 5**  
**Title: The Journey to Jesus**



# FIRST STEPS, LASTING MEMORIES: OUR FAMILY'S KINDERGARTEN JOURNEY

By Dr Mary Cantrill

Dr. Mary Cantrill, mother of Maya Cantrill who began Kindergarten at St. Anthony's this year, reflects on her daughter's remarkable growth and the warm embrace of the school community.

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Our daughter is nearing the end of her Kindergarten journey at St Anthony's, and reflecting on her first day of school reveals a remarkable transformation. She has grown into a confident, eager learner who thrives in this beautiful school community. She has embraced independence, built meaningful friendships, and adjusted wonderfully to this new chapter. We are so proud of her.

The first two terms brought both highs and lows. During this time, we navigated a home renovation, moved house, and faced personal challenges, including my father's illness and hospitalisation. We said goodbye to the only home our daughter had ever known, and to a beloved preschool, as we began this new journey. Despite the changes, the excitement of our home renovation, our daughter's progress, and her school experience brought light and joy to this transition.



Her introduction to St Anthony's and her teacher, Mr Harry Toole, exceeded our expectations. Mr Toole's approach focused on helping children adapt socially and emotionally, creating a supportive space for students to process feelings, take breaks, and learn emotional regulation. His kindness allowed our daughter to feel safe and supported as she navigated new experiences and friendships.

Over time, friendships blossomed. She initially hesitated, particularly around the boys in her class, but by Term 3, she was enjoying meaningful connections with her classmates. She learned to set personal boundaries and confidently advocate for herself, with Mr Toole guiding her every step of the way.



The introduction of the Dojo system and a reward system brought excitement and motivation. Reading groups, art, library visits, Spanish lessons, sports days, and buddy activities provided a structured, dynamic learning environment that enriched her experience.

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*Miss Cheryl's skipping program and the buddy system provided a sense of safety and belonging.*



The unstructured playground space was a bit challenging at first, but Miss Cheryl's skipping program and the buddy system provided a sense of safety and belonging. Our daughter grew confident through this structure, and her buddy became a source of warmth, guidance, and security.

Health challenges arose during the winter months as our daughter faced a series of illnesses that impacted her hearing and led to surgery. Despite these hurdles, she demonstrated incredible resilience.

With the support of Mr Toole and Mrs Novak, she overcame challenges, maintained her love for reading and learning, and earned both a class award and the Principal's Award for her efforts. Her health journey became the focus of a heartfelt presentation about her admiration for her ENT, Dr. David Lowinger.



*The support and welcoming spirit of St Anthony's staff have made this transition seamless and joyful.*

Separation was occasionally a challenge, especially after holidays, but these moments became easier with time and with her new involvement in guitar and keyboard lessons. Harry's care and attention made all the difference—he went above and beyond to ensure each child felt valued and celebrated. When our daughter was ill on her birthday, his effort to call me so the class could sing to her over the phone deeply touched her and made her feel loved.

Our family feels truly blessed to be part of the St Anthony's community. Through the efforts of Laura, the family educator, and numerous school events—Grandparents' Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, carnivals, fundraisers, and excursions—we've connected with other families and built meaningful relationships.

The support and welcoming spirit of St Anthony's staff have made this transition seamless and joyful.

We are so grateful for the kindness, care, and opportunities offered by the St. Anthony's community. Thank you for making our family feel so welcome.



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## Christmas Artwork

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**Matilda Wu- Year 6**

**Title: The Ascension of the Star**



# *Alpha in Action: Igniting Faith and Fellowship Among Teachers"*



"For the disciple of Christ to evangelise is an obligation of love".  
Pope John Paul II

In 2024, staff at St Anthony's were given the opportunity to come together in faith through the Alpha program.

You may be asking: What is Alpha?

Alpha is a way to renew an encounter with Jesus Christ, based on the fundamentals of Christianity. Staff had the opportunity to engage in discussions and be transformed by the Gospel of Jesus. Alpha is based on 3 key elements:

Connection - over a meal, building relationships

Watching - a series of films to explore faith

Discussions - to respond to the encounter, and contribute thoughts and feelings.

Staff began each session with breakfast; fruit, yoghurt, juice, fresh focaccia, pancakes, a selection of toasts, croissants, and the list goes on! They were welcomed with warmth and a feeling of anticipation of what each week's topic would be.



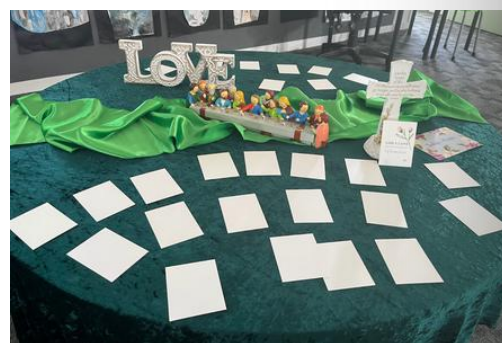
Then over multiple weeks, they watched different films. These videos covered key elements of the Gospel, allowing all to explore their questions about life, faith and God.



After each film staff were able to respond and contribute to discussions. Topics covered included questions such as: "Who is Jesus?", "Why and how do I pray?" and "How does God guide us?".

The beautiful part about offering Alpha to staff was that it met each individual exactly where they were at in their faith journey. It was like a bridge that connected each person, allowing them to freely express their thoughts and feelings.

Halfway through the program, the staff then participated in a full-day immersion through an Alpha Retreat Day - run by Rev Dr Chris Ryan MGL, Director of the Areté, centre for Missionary Leadership. The day involved; prayer, reflection, films, art and then sharing the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit opened hearts and allowed staff to explore what was in their hearts



# What Did Our Staff Think?

The Alpha faith program is exceptional because it creates a welcoming and open environment for individuals to explore life's big questions, regardless of their background or beliefs. It fosters meaningful discussions and genuine connections, making faith exploration a shared, enriching experience for everyone involved.

**Anna Novak**

Alpha has given me a renewed sense of belonging and acceptance by Our Lord Jesus. Alpha provided a wonderful opportunity for staff to deeply engage with the beautifully presented content. Further, it increased my sense of mission and identity regarding my faith in Our Lord Jesus. Deep, active faith that needs consistent nourishing. Alpha provided a harmonious platform for that nourishment and deep engagement in questions that were perfectly designed for participants to explore and question their own beliefs.

**Honey Hartley**

of the Holy Spirit in my life and how it helps me see it in others and the world around me. Alpha has provided me with the opportunity to engage in discussions about my relationships, and life questions and ultimately Alpha has given me time to think about some of the things I truly don't understand and want to explore further in my faith.

**Marie Iorfino**



Fr Chris Ryan MGL, leading the staff retreat day

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## Christmas Artwork

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**Charlotte Ingram - Year 5**

**Title: The Journey Through Life**





## The Light of Christ This Christmas By Fr. Laurie

As we celebrate the joyous season of Christmas, we are invited to reflect on the humble and beautiful story of Christ's birth. In the quiet of a stable in Bethlehem, God revealed His boundless love for humanity through the gift of His Son. It is in this moment—simple yet extraordinary—that heaven touched earth, and the light of Christ began to shine in the darkness.

The Nativity story reminds us of hope and humility. Mary and Joseph, exhausted and turned away from many doors, found refuge in the humblest of places.



There, surrounded by simplicity, the Savior of the world was born. The shepherds, the first to hear the good news, responded with open hearts, leaving everything behind to encounter the Christ Child. They returned to their lives transformed, carrying the light of that holy night into the world.

In our own lives, this message is as powerful today as it was over 2,000 years ago. Christ's birth assures us that we are never alone—He is Emmanuel, God with us. His presence brings peace to troubled hearts, light to those in darkness, and hope to those who may feel weary.

# "The light of Christ is not meant to remain in the manger but to be carried into the world."



This Christmas, I see that same light reflected in the spirit of our St. Anthony's school community. It shines in the joyful faces of our children, in the care and dedication of our teachers and staff, and in the generosity of our parents and families. The way we support one another, celebrate together, and reach out to those in need reflects the very heart of the Christmas message.

As we gather with loved ones to celebrate this season, let us remember that the light of Christ is not meant to remain in the manger but to be carried into the world. This Christmas, I encourage each of us to be a light for others—to share God's love with those who are lonely, burdened, or in need of hope.

May the peace, joy, and blessings of Christmas fill your hearts and homes. Let us begin the New Year with a renewed spirit, trusting in God's faithfulness and love for us all.

Wishing you and your families a very happy and holy Christmas!

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## Christmas Artwork

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**Sophia Whittaker - Year 6**  
**Title: God's Plan**



# THANK YOU FOR READING!

*Click Here*

*Do you have a family recipe you would like to contribute for our next edition?*

*We'd LOVE to hear from you.*

*Just click here and email it through!*