Each year St Joseph’s School supports Caritas Australia during Lent for some very good reasons. Caritas is the Catholic agency for aid and development in Australia and is one of the world’s largest humanitarian networks. Fundraising and administration costs are kept as low as possible (around 10% of income). Caritas Australia is committed to: strengthening local capacity, improving access to essential services, working to sustain natural resources, and creating opportunities for education and employment.

Caritas maintains strong international networks that provide immediate aid in crisis situations—before, during and after events such as the recent Cyclone Pam. Caritas Australia also provides excellent educational and prayer resources which strongly support our core mission as a Catholic school.

The St Joseph’s School community works very hard at fundraising and there are many competing requests for our support; it is therefore important for us to be clear about the principles we use when deciding where to give help. Caritas does not proselytise or aim to convert people to Catholicism. Caritas Australia works to assist people in need throughout the world - assisting them to break free from the cycle of poverty, regardless of their ethnicity, political beliefs, gender or religion.

Stories about God and Jesus … (Prep)

Term 1 began with the Prep children becoming familiar with some Bible Stories about God and considering the natural environment. The children began with the first creation story in the Bible (Genesis 1:1—2:4a) and focused on the idea that God saw that creation was good. This led into a discussion about the goodness of creation in our school environment and about God’s presence with us and in creation. The beginning of Lent led to making connections between God’s creation and God’s plan that people help each other to live safely and happily together, for the good of all.

The children have been introduced to some songs that are about God and that speak to God and they have learnt how to be peaceful when praying to God. We have been learning different prayers to say to God in the morning, afternoon and before we eat. Leading up to Easter, the children were introduced to some stories about Jesus including the Easter story from the Bible.

Just Leadership … (Year 6)

2015 presents the Year 6 cohort with a refreshing set of opportunities to ‘step up’ into the role of student leadership. By delving into the depths of what charity and justice are, especially in terms of being Catholic, the students gain further insight into what being a just leader is.

In the unit this term the students have explored the concept of ‘values’ and how they guide a person’s life. The Year 6 students read short biographies of past leaders and categorised them in terms of their values. This gave the students an understanding of perspective and motivation for styles of leadership.

By exploring the Bible passage of The Judgement of the Nations (I was hungry and you fed me…Matthew 25:31-46), the students investigated the call to justice from Jesus. The students then learnt that Catholic Social Teaching is underpinned by the idea of the dignity of the human person and concern for the common good. In doing so the students were invited to take action and actively plan and participate in leading justly.

This final year of Primary School provides many opportunities for the Year 6 students to follow the example of Jesus and display their understanding of ‘just leadership’ as they interact with younger students and adults alike.

Reading the Bible … (Year 3)

In Year 3 this term, students were introduced to some scripture passages from the Old Testament and New Testament. Using Old Testament texts (including Isaiah 49:15-16), they considered some of the many different images that are used to portray God (e.g. fire, rain, potter, mother and refuge). They were guided to choose phrases from Psalms that praise God and some that give thanks to God. These words and phrases were then used to begin designing and sharing simple prayers of their own, both in the classroom and in school-wide prayerful settings.

In considering the New Testament the focus was on learning about Jesus from the Gospel stories. Learning about the cultural contexts in which the Gospels were written helped to develop a better understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. The imagery of Gospel stories was discussed to identify the different ways that Jesus is portrayed (e.g. as a shepherd taking loving care of his flock). Digital resources on the internet were used to locate relevant geographical information for towns, regions and vegetation named in the Gospels. The students learnt that the Bible is really a whole library of books and they are developing their understanding of whether selected texts are from the Old or the New Testament.

There have been many experiences shared with the whole school community as we began our school year and celebrated the religious season of Lent.
**Clues from the past … (Year 2)**

In Term 1 the children of Year 2 explored some of the characteristics of the Life and times of Jesus. The students asked questions about the Life and times of Jesus and used pictures and Bible stories to answer these questions.

They made connections between Jesus’ teachings and actions and the way members of the church community live today.

This term they listened to many Gospel stories about the teachings and actions of Jesus particularly miracle stories and parables used to teach Jesus’ messages of being fair and just.

The children revised the meaning of Lent and became more familiar with the stories about Easter.

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**Ancient Voices: Looking for God in the Bible Texts … (Year 4)**

During Term 1, the Year 4 students were introduced to using an adult Bible. In previous years the students have listened to, viewed and read Bible stories but in Year 4 the students use a class set of actual Bibles as well as accessing Bible search websites such as Bible Gateway.

The Year 4s have been introduced to the format of Bible referencing so that they can use these references to locate particular stories within its text. The Year 4s have investigated the structure of the Bible as a library of books and its development over a period of 1600 years by many authors. Historical studies of the Bible give much information about the periods of time and the situations during which the texts were written. The students have used some of this information this term in order to identify the authors’ message from some Bible stories.

From the website: [Together At One Altar](http://www.togetheratonealtar.com)

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**Unlocking Bible Texts … (Year 5)**

This term the Year 5 classes learnt about the Bible with a special focus on how religious communities use scripture. The Year 5s revised their skills of how to locate readings using scripture references. They also considered:

- how to locate particular characters and people in the Bible;
- how can the Bible can be used for prayer;
- what different Gospel writers say about a particular event;
- how Jews use scripture to worship God.

In order to investigate our focus questions, the students learnt how to use a range of Biblical tools. Tools such as timelines, online Bible search engines and Gospel parallels websites deepened our awareness of Biblical texts and allowed us to find and compare texts more easily.

By looking at the Psalms and the life experiences of some of the Psalmists, we explored ideas about the relationship between the writers of the Psalms and God, for example the parent/child relationship. Other themes were explored such as trust and doubt, praise, humility, loyalty and the greatness of God. We then used the Psalms as a model to create a personal or communal prayer.

Focusing on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, including the infancy narratives, we compared and contrasted parallel passages, to see how the writers shaped their Gospels for a particular community in a particular time and place.

Finally, we identified some features of a Synagogue and explained their importance in Jewish worship particularly in connection with using scripture in community prayer.
Created in God’s Image … (Year 1)

In Year 1 the children explored some Old Testament stories particularly about creation and Noah. They were introduced to the Catholic teaching that people are created in God’s image and they learnt that God made each of them, and that they are special.

In the beginning of the Term the classes focused on the first Creation Story (Genesis 1:1—2:4a). We identified the key elements of the story and sequenced and illustrated the events – the creation of light, day, night, sun, moon, stars, land, sea etc. They used their illustrations to create their own Creation Story Book.

The children also learned to create simple prayers of thanksgiving for God’s gifts and for the beauty of creation and have shared these during classroom prayer. As the weeks progressed the children engaged with the story of Noah and learnt about God’s presence in the lives of individuals in Old Testament.

This learning about God’s creation and our responsibility to care for it, connects with some of the key ideas we learnt about in our Science Unit - Schoolyard Safari. As the children have found bugs and beetles and we have discussed them as a class, we have thought about the insects as being creatures that we have a responsibility to care for.

Year One classes attended Mass on the Friday 6th March and particularly focussed on God’s promise to Noah symbolised by the rainbow.

St Joseph’s Prayer Day—19th March

The students were grouped vertically for the day in ‘teams’ of about 22 students within the four school houses: Marian, Anthony, Joseph and MacKillop. They participated in four prayer experience activities:

**Chalk Stations** – The students prayed a simple Stations of the Cross and responded using pavement chalk.

**Rosary Key Chains or Prayer Bracelets** – Students worked with beads to create a prayer bracelet and/or a Rosary Key Chain.

**Prayer Points** – In groups students created illustrations or photographs to depict our school prayer.

**Dramatic Stories of Jesus** – Each group prepared a dramatic representation of a Gospel story. These were presented to the school.