

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear members of the Lisieux community,

Last week, along with four of our current Grade 2 students, I attended the “ground breaking ceremony” for a new Catholic co-educational Secondary College in Armstrong Creek. Archbishop Denis Hart officiated at the ceremony, announcing that the new school would be known as Iona College and is expected to open in 2020. Archbishop Hart explained that the name “represents one of the earliest and most significant Catholic sites in the British Isles, the Monastery of Iona, founded in the fifth century.” He said, “Like Iona College, the Monastery of Iona was a centre of learning by the sea. Just as Iona College will serve and underpin a growing community, Iona was literally a rock of faith, an island monastery rich in knowledge, a centre of tranquillity in turbulent times and a force for spreading the Gospel.” The development of Iona College will support the growing need for Catholic education in Geelong and the Surf Coast.

Families are reminded that this coming weekend is a 4 day break for Lisieux students. While Monday is a public holiday for Queen’s Birthday, on Tuesday 12 June our staff team will continue their training in Visible Wellbeing. We look forward to finding out more about ways to make wellbeing explicit in our daily programs and practices.

Please see the attached entrance plan. As of Wednesday next week, when the students return from their long weekend break, our own entrance will be operational. Thank you for your continued patience as the road works have been completed.

Our Parents and Friends Committee meets tonight at 7pm in the staff room. All parents and friends of our community are warmly invited to come along.

God’s blessings for the week ahead,

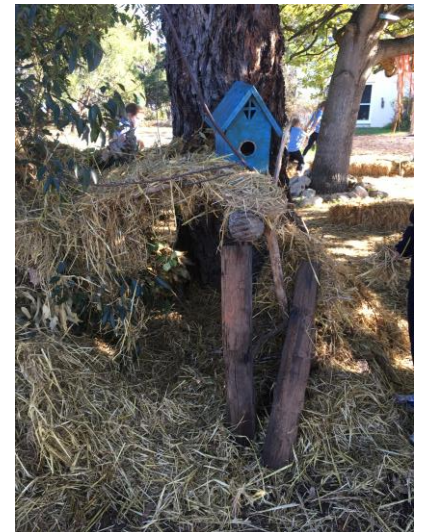
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SCHOOL CALENDAR

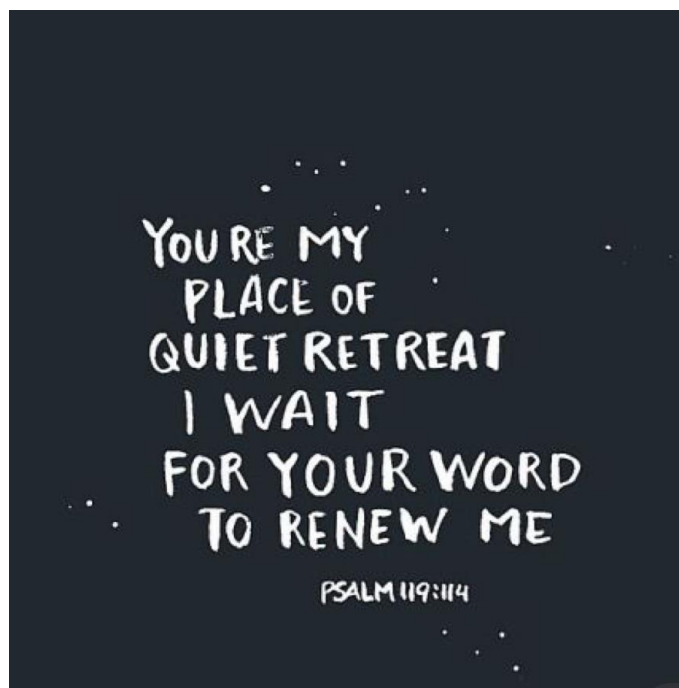
JUNE

- 7th Parents & Friends Committee Meeting
All welcome
- 11th Queen’s Birthday Holiday
- 12th Staff Professional Learning Day –
No Students



PRAYER

Jesus, You said, “Come to Me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Help us to set healthy boundaries and to be equipped for the work You have for us. Renew our minds, bodies and spirits. Amen.



NEW SCHOOL ENTRANCE

Please note that when students return to school after the long weekend on Wednesday 13 June, our own Lisieux entrance will be operational. Thank you for your patience while the road works have been completed - this process took much longer than we were initially advised. Please note the traffic flow instructions below which provide explanation for entrance / exit. We ask that families and visitors to the School adhere to these guidelines for safety reasons.



ENTRY FROM AND EXIT TO SOUTH BEACH ROAD

Mindful Parent, Mindful Child: How to Bring Mindfulness into Your Parenting

Mindfulness is an active, focused introspection that puts us in touch with our thoughts and feelings as they arise in response to life, allowing us to understand, work with, and direct them. As such, mindfulness holds tremendous power for Strength-Based Parenting and living.

A Brief Definition of Mindfulness

Mindfulness can conjure up images of a yogi sitting in the lotus position “omming,” but the way modern scientists and psychologists work with mindfulness is as a structured process of focusing the mind using three simple steps:

1. Focus your attention on a particular thing (for example, your own breathing, or the present moment).
2. Notice when your attention has wandered away.
3. Bring your attention back.

When you do this, you tune in to what’s happening in your mind in real time, in the flow of life. This gives you awareness of your thoughts and feelings as they happen.



Most people who try mindfulness, especially at first, find that their mind jumps from thought to thought, feeling to feeling. That’s okay. Thinking fast is what minds do. Mindfulness helps your mind slow down a bit. When this happens, you gain the mental space to actually get some control over your thoughts and feelings. It helps you become aware that your thoughts are separate from you. It allows you to gently grab a thought and turn it this way and that, select another to examine, and so on. With practice, you can actually choose which thoughts and feelings to pay attention to and act on—including choosing to have more strength-based thoughts.

When I teach mindfulness, I use the metaphor of a helium balloon on a string. When you’re mindful, the balloon is positioned directly above your head—fully present to your thoughts, feelings, and sensations in the moment. However, like your thoughts, the balloon slowly drifts away. When that happens, you’ll feel a tug on the string. This lets you know your thoughts have wandered from the present moment (maybe you were thinking about a work problem or what you’ll have for dinner). The tug reminds you to gently pull the balloon back over your head again, returning your awareness to the present moment.



When I started practicing mindfulness, I expressed frustration to my yoga teacher about how much my mind wandered. She gave me some wise and reassuring advice. She said that it doesn't matter how often the balloon drifts away. What matters is how much better you get at pulling it back.

“Bare Attention”: The Heart of Mindfulness

At the center of mindfulness is what yogis refer to as “bare attention”—experiencing all thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations without interpretation or judgment. That last part is tricky. Believe me, I know.

While I was writing my book *The Strength Switch*, Matt and I took the kids on a vacation. The first few days were great, but toward the end, Emily and Nick got sick of each other. Arguments broke out. Things came to a head one night when we sat down to watch a family movie. Emily decided to lie full-length on the couch so no one else (i.e., Nick) could sit on it. So, what did Nick do? He burped in her face—something he finds hilarious, being a teenage boy, and she finds disgusting.

And it worked! She jumped off the couch. He jumped on. She had a fit, screaming that he's the meanest brother in the whole wide world. Meanwhile, he spread his body as wide as he can to occupy every inch of the couch.

I tried to tap into their positive personality traits, encouraging them both to use their perspective and see how much fun they'd been having together for most of the trip. No luck. Both were angry and neither wanted to admit that they do, generally, like each other's company. Next I tried their forgiveness capacity. Again, I struck out.

At that moment, bare attention became my friend. As the kids got louder and louder, I became aware of my physical sensations. I noticed my chest tightening and my breathing becoming shallow. I felt the urge to cover my ears and shove a handful of popcorn in my mouth. I tuned in to my thoughts and heard my inner critic—that negatively biased part of me—whispering weakness-focused taunts: You're writing a parenting book and you can't even get your kids to stop fighting! I became aware that I was holding up this unpleasant scene against a dazzling mental picture I'd created of the idyllic family vacation families are “supposed” to have.



All of this took just a few seconds. But thanks to bare attention, a little bubble of mindful space formed that gave me a small but blessed pause in which to think, not just react. I could tune in to the negative story I was telling myself about what was happening and see how that was only adding pressure to the situation. Although I knew I hadn't succeeded in getting my kids to use their strengths, in that mindful space, I found the presence to summon my strengths:

- **My strengths of reason and perspective:** Kids fight sometimes. Fact of life. If a friend told me, "We went on vacation and the kids fought," would I think she was a bad parent? Ridiculous. Then a memory hit: Remember when we all went to Disneyland and Nick and Emily were fighting because of jetlag? You didn't let it faze you. As the more experienced traveler, you used perseverance and kindness to help them handle their jetlag, and you showed confidence that it would pass and it did. You can use those strengths now.
- **My strength of humor:** My kids aren't allowed to fight because I'm writing a parenting book? How absurd is that?!
- **My strengths of compassion and kindness:** It makes me feel sad to speak to myself so critically. I'd feel bad if I heard a friend being so hard on herself. As a parent, I don't have to be perfect; I just have to be present.

The mindfulness bubble saved me. I stayed calm. I didn't yell at the kids to shut them up so I could shut up the critic inside. I didn't shove the popcorn into my mouth for self-soothing. I weathered it with them, working on de-escalating things until they could become mindful enough of their strengths to get themselves under control. I said things like, "I know it's frustrating, but let's just take a minute and think about this... We've all been in each other's faces for too long. How about we go and do something else? ...I know you're fighting right now, but actually, the rest of the time you've had a pretty good time together. Emily, I know you're telling Nick he's the meanest brother in the world. But most of the time you're pretty good friends, you know? Half an hour ago Nick was pushing you on the bike and the two of you were laughing your heads off."



With mindfulness, I can:

- be present to the situation and to the story I'm telling myself about it;
- reframe both; and
- choose my actions; and
- help my kids learn to do the same.

These are tremendous powers for us as parents.

Mindful Parent, Mindful Child

Your mindfulness spills over onto your children. In one of my studies, I tested parents for their degree of mindfulness and then tested their children for their levels of mindfulness and stress. The results were staggeringly clear:

The more mindful the parent, the more mindful the child—and the more mindful the child, the less stressed the child.

Parent mindfulness sets up a successful coping loop in kids. This is something they can take with them wherever they go.



As a mindful parent, you can pass three benefits to your children:

1. You'll do a better job of parenting your child in the moment.
2. You'll be modeling an effective way to handle interpersonal conflict and other stressors.
3. You can coach your child in becoming more mindful.

Mindful parents can help kids become less reactive. When the child is facing challenges or is caught up in negative emotions, parents can ask questions to identify the negative-bias thoughts the child may be having, such as, "What's the story you're telling yourself right now?" And, "How about we just take a pause? What are you thinking? Is that a helpful thought? Is it an accurate thought?"