



Parent Newsletter

St Mary Magdalene Secondary

Issue No 5 Tuesday 17th January 2023

The St Mary Magdalene lesson

As of this term, all lessons in the secondary phase have been taught following the 'St Mary Magdalene lesson' structure. This is a flexible but recognisable lesson structure designed to ensure that students are supported and challenged to achieve their full potential.

The St Mary Magdalene Lesson

To be truly effective, all instruction must be interactive.

At SMM we expect all teachers to make learning visible so they can ensure all students are learning.



Throughout the lesson: **Involve students. Monitor performance. Provide feedback.**

One of the most important questions in education is whether teaching something directly (sometimes called 'direct instruction') helps or hinders learning compared to having students discover the material for themselves. In studies where students are either provided, or not provided, direct instructional guidance, students learn more when guidance is provided than when it is withheld. On the other hand, so-called 'discovery learning' has been found to consistently lead to unimpressive, and even negative, achievement gains. However, direct instruction is most effective when it includes opportunities for students to talk, make sense of the material, and practise the material to mastery. Lessons therefore involve clear and concise teacher presentations and explanations ('I do it'), which are then followed by whole-class and pair discussions and problem solving ('we do it') and then focused, individual work ('you do it').

We know from cognitive science that humans can't take in and remember lots of information all at once, so our teachers are ensuring that students learn by information being taught gradually, so in lessons there may be several 'I do it'-'we do it'-'you do it' cycles. Throughout all lessons, students' understanding is being checked up on – through verbal responses (from choral responses where the whole class responds together to cold-calling where students are called without being asked to raise their hand), signals (like thumbs up/down) and written responses (such as teachers checking books during lessons and work being done on mini-whiteboards).

Our teachers have received training in this model, and are sharing best practice. We have been excited to see students respond so well to these changes and look forward to this supporting their continued academic success.

Message from the Chaplain

Some people love surprises, others hate them. Some want to know exactly what's going to happen, others enjoy spontaneity.

As January settles down and we get used to seeing 2023 written down, I wonder whether you are hoping for some nice surprises in your year or if you have things planned that you hope will happen.

I am always struck by God's big plan for his wonderful world. A big plan that expresses his love and concern for those he has created, but enough love to let us work it out in our own way and in our own time.

Some people ask the universe for good things, others challenge themselves to work real hard to see changes in their fortunes. I like to pray.

I pray for the plans I have, the hopes I have, the people I might meet who could help me on my journey.

I pray about the surprises that might come my way, the things that feel like obstacles and the things that bring joy and celebration.

My prayers extend to those who face the world and can't imagine what the year will hold, either because they are fighting through each day or because the present time stops them from making plans.

Please join with me in praying at this time.

**For those in need and those in joy.
For those who plan and those who are stuck.
For those who sense God beside them and those who have no one to turn to.**

God, like a caring father for us all, Hear our prayers and surprise us with your love. Provide for us so that we may make plans that bring you glory.
Amen.

[Rev. Dominic Hubbuck](#)
School Chaplain

Poster competition

In December, all students were invited to enter a competition, creating a poster on the theme 'What makes me a St Mary Magdalene student?'. We received a lot of fantastic entries from across all seven year groups, and Mr Greenwood and Mr Hussain spent a long time trying to choose the best poster.

The winner of the poster competition is **Eniola in 11GAO**, who will receive an R5 and a £50 gift voucher.



Eniola, 11GAO

There are also three runners up: Victoria in 10PTO, Malaiyah in 9JAN and Neriah in 8AGZ, who will each receive an R4 and a prize. There were many other fantastic entrants, the best of whom will receive R3s. Many of these posters will be displayed around school to celebrate our school's values, and our students' talents.

RBG Poetry Competition

As a part of enrichment programs in the Library, students from SMM have entered the National Poetry Day competition with children and young people from across Royal Greenwich schools. This year, students were invited to write a poem inspired by the theme of The Environment. The judging panel were overwhelmed by the quality of the entries: the poems were passionate, emotional and demonstrated impressive engagement with the theme. Published poet Debra Bertulis, who runs the RBG online poetry session this year chose a winner and a runner-up. A huge well done to everyone who entered the competition and I am glad to announce, the winner of the KS5 was "The Environment is in Danger" by Funanya Odu, Year 12! Well done to Funanya.

Library "Christmas Short Story" competition

Among many fantastic entries from our pupils the below stories were outstanding, therefore we are pleased to announce the winners of the Library "Christmas Short Story" competition.

- Adedotun Adewale 8YHJ - "Christmas, Christmas"
- Oceanne Serago 12AML - "Christmas In Universes"
- Funanya Odu 12ODA - "Pleas Think of The Elves"



These amazing short stories will be featured as part of our student library collection of stories where all members of the school community will have a chance to read them.

Well done all!

Mr R. Hussain
Principal