

March 2011

Catholic Schools Eco Newsletter: No.19

Greetings from ARC and welcome to our latest Catholic Schools Eco Newsletter. When we asked for submissions for our February edition, we had no idea we would receive so many responses about your school's eco activities! We promised to send you another newsletter after the half-term break – and here it is.

In this edition:

A. St Peter's Catholic Primary in West Sussex has a blessing for a new lime tree

B. All Hallows, Somerset, runs another timetable crash and has some bushcraft training

C. The 2011 International Year of Chemistry invites you to get involved in possibly the biggest experiment ever undertaken

D. In Bristol, Holy Family School has an eco day and competes for Woody the Eco Warrior

E. St Brendan's Sixth Form College, Bristol: Didcot Power Station and Bristol Zoo

F. News of an Eco-Faith Conference in London: 22 March 2011.

A. St Peter's Catholic Primary, East Grinstead, West Sussex: the blessing of a new lime tree

This was written for St Peter's Catholic Primary School eco newsletter in 2010 by Year 6 student, Daniella Coxall:

"During the famous Hurricane in October 1987, two of the three lime trees in the grounds of St Peter's School were blown down and at the moment, the remaining one is being monitored by a parent tree specialist because it may be diseased and need to be felled.

"Last year's Class 6 did a project on lime and linden trees and it was decided that as a leaving gift to the School and future generations of pupils, they would present the School with a replacement lime tree, which was planted earlier in the year. On the 8th of June this year, an Eco-celebration get-together was held at the school and the current eco committee, last year's eco committee and lots of other special people, including the town Mayor, gathered together, to hear Father Steven bless the new lime tree, and celebrate the Green Flag Award.

"The award is the result of 10 years of hard work on the St Peter's Eco-Schools project, led by Mrs Joy, Mrs Dodsworth and many other hard working eco-supporters. It was a lovely afternoon gathering with tea and cakes afterwards and it was especially nice to see some of last year's class 6 come back to help us celebrate."

To see more of St Peter's inspiring eco newsletters, please visit the school's website:

www.stpeterseastgrinstead

B. All Hallows School: Timetable Crash and bushcraft survival training

When we first heard about All Hallows School's Timetable crash for Earth Day a few years back, we were really excited (some of its amazing activities are outlined in our Newsletters No.3: <http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=230> and Newsletter No.4: <http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=240>)

We have also received news of the timetable crash that All Hallows is preparing for March. Dr Debbie Niblock, the school's Education for Sustainable Development co-ordinator, adds: "It's very much from the organising/teaching perspective but it may encourage others to have a go. Afterwards there will be pictures and pupils' work that might be suitable for a future issue".

"In keeping with the strong Catholic ethos of our school, pupils at All Hallows are encouraged to participate in outdoor activities locally as well as engage in debates concerning local and global environments.

"Climate Change Week (March 21 – 27) offers an excellent opportunity to do both. A timetable crash on Monday will see the entire school take part in a national eco-challenge: exploring practical solutions to help combat climate change. The nature of the task is top secret and will be revealed on the day. This makes it very exciting as well as slightly daunting (as the person organising) – will there be enough to keep children involved for the whole morning?

"Although no preparation is required, the topic ties in with part of the PSHE (Personal, Social Health & Economic education) programme for Seniors in the preceding week and on the day a variety of spin off activities will be available for those who need extension material.

"With a few other logistical considerations, relating to staffing and access to ICT rooms, the day offers a wealth of learning outcomes: developing creativity, problem solving, team building, communication and ICT skills, decision making and enhancing environmental understanding of a complex issue. Selecting first round winning entries will be part of the pupils' remit, and then the Eco-Council will choose the finalists in each category, to be put forward to the national competition. It promises to be a stimulating day.

"But it's not over there. A clothes-recycling initiative involving the whole school is also planned and the Eco-Council are off to a local forest to begin their bushcraft survival training, learning skills, and nurturing a passion for the outdoors, they can pass on to Junior pupils during their regular Forest-School sessions.

"I hope other schools have already registered for the Climate Change Challenge on Monday 21st March. We will be by our computers at 9 am waiting for the Challenge to be revealed! Will you?"

See: www.climateweek.com/challenge for full details.

C. International Year of Chemistry looks at global water issues

Would you like to take part in the world's biggest chemistry experiment? The 2011 International Year of Chemistry has launched a worldwide experiment inviting school students to explore one of Earth's most critical resources, water. Students will participate in activities highlighting the role chemistry plays in issues of water quality and purification.



The results of their investigations will contribute to a Global Experiment, which will possibly become the biggest chemistry experiment ever. For more details about how you can take part, visit: <http://www.chemistry2011.org/>

D. Holy Family School in Bristol has an Eco Day and competes for Woody the Eco Warrior

This term, the children and staff at Holy Family Primary School in Patchway, Bristol, are making a phenomenal effort to be a healthy, happy and ECO-friendly school. With the whole school ECO project of using recycled goods and scrap pieces at playtimes well under way, the ECO committee is coming up with new ideas of how to reduce waste and increase awareness about being green!

The children at Holy Family are planning on having an ECO day where they have all their lessons without the use of light or electricity. All the children will wear an item of green clothing so the school will literally be turning green for the day. The ECO team will lead the school assembly and the afternoon will be devoted to each class continuing with their ECO project while the business club run a special FAIR TRADE afternoon for children and parents.

The year six children's eco project has been a running success – where they have decided to “say NO to toast, and YES to fruit” in line with their campaign for the pupils at Holy Family to lead a healthy lifestyle!



The children set up a fruit stall every break time and sell fruit from a local grocery store. “It is a great opportunity for the children to taste a variety of fruits such as pomegranate, pineapple and melon,” says Rishmal Birk, the year 6 teacher. Some of the children from the other year groups are also dedicated gardeners and attend gardening club every week, where they are beginning to grow their own vegetables!



Friday celebration assemblies have also begun to include Woody the Eco Warrior, who spends the week in the class that scores the highest points on being ECO friendly and saving energy.

The ECO committee secretly visits each class and rates them on their eco friendliness by checking things such as whether they have recycled all their paper and whether their taps are turned off. Michaela Mattis, aged 10, exclaimed: “It is a really good idea because it makes people turn the lights off and we all try to win Woody the Eco Warrior for our class!”

E. St Brendan's Sixth Form College, Bristol: Didcot Power Station and Bristol Zoo

Environmental Studies students have been out and about looking at very different sides of the environment – from visiting a coal power station to cuddling lemurs at Bristol Zoo.

The A2 students had a very interesting trip to Didcot Power station to see the dirty side of energy production. They were treated to a tour of the site and were amazed at the sheer size of the turbine

hall, which was as deep as it was tall. They also got a look into a turbine as one was being stripped down and repaired. Lots of wires, metal and magnets; not quite as simple as heating water to produce electricity, as one tutor was heard to say! The students did find out one advantage of working at a Power Station was the free car wash to get rid of all that grim coal dust!

The AS students had a slightly different experience with a day at Bristol Zoo to learn about breeding programmes to safeguard endangered animals. Close encounters with animals occurred during the interactive session; it started with the cute animals such as a miniature tortoise from Egypt (very sweet), to a cane rat (useful as bushmeat food but not great when running towards you), to the definitely less impressive cockroaches – especially when they take the time to relieve themselves in your hands!

But, remember, you need all species to make up an ecosystem and each animal has a role. After a good look around the entire zoo there was still time for the students to enjoy the zoo's interactive activities, such as seeing if you can stand on one leg longer than a flamingo and a great competition to see who could run the fastest and beat a leopard. Needless to say, no one could and the jury is still out as to whether Pat was the fastest runner! Personally I think it was me but the speed gun was not quite working at the time!

Jane George

F. Eco-Faith Conference in London: Tuesday, March 22, 2011, 1200-1630

We'd also like to tell you about a forthcoming Eco-Faith Conference which is taking place on Tuesday, 22 March. As part of the Climate Week Activities, the event is aimed at young people exploring how faith communities can work together to address environmental issues. This really is about taking positive action and the organisers, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), promise fantastic speakers and practical workshops.

If you are aged between 16-25 and interested, do please register; although tickets are free, spaces are limited. For more details contact Lucy Champion: lucy@interact-uk.org.uk or telephone: 020 7482 4020. And to register: <http://eco-faith2011.eventbrite.com>

If you would like to share your activities, do please contact us. Next time, we hope to tell you of news from Irish schools and the inspiring eco work they are involved in.

Victoria Finlay, Communications Director (ARC) and
Nicki McHugh, Water Schools Programme Manager

PS: If you'd like to stop receiving this letter then let us know, or – much more encouraging for us – if you think there's anyone who'd like to hear these stories, and contribute, then ask them to register and we'll add them to the list.