



Cottesmore St. Mary Catholic Primary School

THE DIOCESE OF ARUNDEL AND BRIGHTON



Headteacher: Rachel Breen B.A. Hons.

1st May 2020

Dearest children

I hope you are keeping well, doing your best and still being kind. In my recent video, I showed you the Noah's Ark that I have bought for the school. I told you that I chose this one because it had a rainbow at the top and said that I'd explain why that is important. You might also be wondering why I got a Noah's Ark and what that has to do with what is going on right now.

As you also know, people everywhere are putting rainbows up in their windows. At first, this was to cheer children up as they went on their daily walks. Now, people are also doing it to celebrate, and thank, the huge range of key workers, particularly those working in the NHS, who are helping and caring for so many people. So, why rainbows?

In the Bible, the first book of the Old Testament is called Genesis. In this book, there is a story about a man called Noah and his Ark. I'm sure lots of you know this story already from school but, for now, you could ask your grown-ups to tell you about it if you can't quite remember. In the story, there was a big flood, and storm, which was very scary and worrying. A man called Noah built an Ark (a big boat) so that he could save his family and all of the animals in the world. This pleased God so much. At the end of the story, God says, in Chapter 13: 'I now set my bow in the clouds and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.'

What God was saying was that he would put rainbows in the sky to remind everyone of the promise of friendship that He has with all those on earth and to remind us that He will always be there for us. Always.

When my son Beauden (pronounced Boden) was baptised, I asked for this piece of scripture to be read because it reminds me of God's promise of hope and reminds me that good things will always come after a storm.

Rainbows are usually seen after rain, when the sun starts to break through the clouds. At home, I have a favourite saying: 'When it rains, look for rainbows. When it's dark, look for stars.'

I actually like rain, but in this saying, rain is used as a sign of harder times. So the saying means, that, even if it's a bit gloomy at times, rainbows (representing better times) will always come. So, my wish for you is that, throughout your life, you try not to focus on the gloomy but try to think about the light instead.

Seeing a real life rainbow is a promise of good things to come and rainbows can be a sign of hope. This is why the rainbows were suggested for the window pictures - because they represent hope. Hope that, soon, we will all be able to see our friends again and hope that, soon, more people will begin to feel well again. At school, I say to you, always have hope and always have faith and trust in God. The school vision says that we always want you to, 'Dare to dream and always have hope'. So, keep dreaming children and keep doing what you can to make the most of your life. It's precious and a gift.

My little boy Beau (Beauden), is actually named after rainbows. Beau is a French word for beautiful but it is also pronounced like bow as in rainbow, that's why we chose it. Rainbows are very special in our house, as is hope.

When Beauden was born, I bought him a picture with the rainbow saying on it and I hope that, as he grows up, he also learns, like you, that no matter what happens in life, there is always hope, there is always God and there is always the promise of something to look forward to.

Sometimes we just have to hunt for it. Remember that something positive will always happen that will make those who feel sad, smile again. I do hope that you feel that you can smile at the moment. Maybe take a moment now to give someone in your house a big smile – it will make you, and them, feel so much better (although don't forget what I also say which is that, it is ok to cry at times too – only smile if you really feel like it as you never have to pretend how you are feeling).

How was that? Did your smile make the other person smile back at you?

On Beau's 1st birthday, we had a rainbow theme party - rainbow balloons, a rainbow cake and even rainbow party bags (I told you rainbows are big in my house!). Anyway, when we were enjoying a separate family celebration, also to mark his birthday, it began to rain. Not too much, just a bit of drizzle, and not enough to stop the fun celebrations on a sunny day. Guess what appeared in the sky...yes, a rainbow! I couldn't believe it! I truly believe that this was a special sign from God to just remind me that He is always there. God has always watched over me and always helped me when things were a challenge so I truly believe that this was His sign to say well done for never giving up. God will be thinking the same about you too I'm sure and I imagine He is incredibly proud of you, just as all of us at school are.

In years to come, what you are doing right now will be talked about as part of History. When children in schools study the pandemic of 2020, just like you study things in your History lessons, the rainbows that you've put in your windows will become a sign of these times. Isn't that amazing? You are making History.

As you know, we have put a banner outside the school gate. It has a picture of the Cottesmore logo, a love heart and the NHS sign with a rainbow over the top. It is to show those working for the NHS, and other key workers, that we are supporting them, just like the rainbows in your windows do at home. I wonder if any of you have been up late enough to Clap For Carers, every Thursday night at 8pm? In my street, we all go outside our front doors and bang pots and pans, cheer and clap to show all those working so hard, to help others, that we say thank you. I have put a video celebrating these workers on the school website, do have a look. If you go to the Homepage, you will see an icon (next to Current Updates) that says Community, click here and it will take you to this video. On this page, you will also see that we are trying to make our own virtual Cottesmore Rainbow Wall. If you want to part of this, please email Mr Cutting (his email is on the website page) a picture of you holding a rainbow. Once he has enough pictures from our school, he will replace the example image with a Cottesmore one.

Finally, I am hoping to create a rainbow themed stain glass window to go on part of the big window that leads us from the ground corridor to the top one in our school. The one that looks out onto the school field. Whilst you are at home, you could start to think about designs. Think about a design that represents rainbows but also God's promise of hope and friendship. The design will need to be quite simple and I might take various parts, from differing designs, in order to create one final piece that I will commission at a later date. I will collect your ideas in once we are back at school.

Right my darlings, time for me to sign off.

Remember - always dare to dream, always have hope, always follow your rainbow and always reach for the stars!

Much love, Mrs Breen

