Good evening everyone. Welcome to the new families in our community and to the families we know already and who demonstrate a very keen interest in their child’s education at St Joseph’s School. We hope you find your association with us to be enriching, positive and productive.

This evening we will begin with our school prayer which we pray often and is a prayer the students know and love. I invite you to become more familiar with our prayer by joining with me:

In the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit Amen.
Loving God, I offer you today all that I do, think and say. I offer you my work, my prayers, my play. I shall do my very best to make them pleasing to you and with your help my whole day will be my gift to you.

Tonight several members of the Leadership Team will talk to you as a whole group. Our ELC parents will then move to the ELC to hear specifics about pre-school and our school parents will remain in the Hub to hear about our initiatives. Class teachers have information handouts applicable to their class for you to take before you leave. These are on the tables along the window side of the Hub.

As principal of St Joseph’s School I am very proud to welcome you not only to this information session but to all that will happen at our school this year. It’s going to be a very special year as we mark and celebrate 60 years of education as the second oldest Catholic primary school in Canberra.

Our birthday celebrations will begin with our school fete on Saturday 19 March, the feast day of St Joseph. This is not too long away so the organising committee has left a volunteer sheet on your chair this evening.

There will be a number of activities and events throughout our 60th year so please support your school during this significant milestone.

In fact I encourage you to join in all that we offer you and your families at our school irrespective of our birthday and be part of this wonderfully supportive community. This is your school and you are very welcome here.

A significant reason for the welcome that is felt at our school is the staff and I’m proud to introduce them to you.
This is a highly regarded group of educationalists who are recognised within the education sector as being outstanding. We are blessed to have every member of our staff.

For the past 5 years we have been dedicated to our school Vision, **As a dynamic P - 6 Catholic school, St Joseph’s strives for excellence within a Christ-centred community and contemporary environment.** Our Vision is linked to our Mission which in turn is connected to our school symbol, the tree. Over recent years we have tended to refer more often to the crux of the Vision which the students were certainly more able to articulate, **...striving for excellence within a Christ-centred community...** I'm sure, I hope, you have heard that often.

As a staff we constantly reflect on our progress as a school. We analyse data and set goals for the short and long term. Of recent times we have pondered our progress towards our vision and we came to the realisation that in many ways we are beyond striving for excellence. We are excellent but we always have the capacity to grow...

As a result, we have re-visioned. We believe we are **Growing in excellence within a Christ-centred community. Growing in excellence within a Christ-centred community.**

The substitution of two words, *growing in* instead of *striving for* and the refinement of a longer statement has resulted in a very concise Vision for St Joseph’s School in 2016 and beyond.

I thank and congratulate everyone who has contributed to the point in our school’s history that we are at now.

Our Strategic Plan for the next three years will see us growing in excellence as we, amongst other things, further develop our philosophy of learning, create challenge programs to extend our students, grow leaders both staff and students, examine how we assess and use data to inform our teaching and learning programs, become more sustainable and develop our school grounds.

We are caretakers of St Joseph’s School. We are here in 2016 to honour those who have been part of this community since 1956 and to forge a path towards the future. Be a history maker, contribute to the on-going story of this school and leave your footprint at the best school in Canberra.