

SIGNS OF GOOD FAITH

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Students at St Martin's Greenacres take great pride in designing and creating their own mosaic crosses for graduation



Graduation is always a special moment but, for students at St Martin's Catholic Primary School in Greenacres, coming together for the final time is the perfect opportunity to take pride in an extra special achievement.

From Year 6, each student has been designing and creating their own unique mosaic cross as a memento of their time at the school. The crosses, which represent creativity, faith and tradition, are presented to the school at their graduation ceremony.

"As a Catholic school, we wanted to do something that was symbolic for our students and allowed them to create a graduation gift that was meaningful to them," principal Christine Comas says.

"For us, seeing the students lined up with their crosses is a wonderful

moment. It's a sense of achievement and you feel like a proud mother because the students are leaving on a high and are taking away something that is personal to them.

"All the students are very careful of how they carry them – they hang them at home where they take great pride of place."

The creative freedom in designing and building their crosses encourages students of all faiths to explore and extend their creative and artistic skills as well as bolstering communication skills.

"They are engaging in the art of conversation," Ms Comas says. "They are talking to each other, they're not on their phones or on the computer – everything has to come from them."

Year 7 Kildare College student Grace-Emily completed her mosaic cross last year. "I was mostly excited but I was also nervous about how it would turn out," she says. "I loved the creative freedom. The colours I used are some of my favourites.

"At the graduation ceremony, everyone walked in with their crosses – it was exciting and I felt proud to be a part of the school's tradition in making my cross."

Brother Hugh is in Year 6 at St Martin's and beginning his own mosaic journey. "I'm not artistic so this is going to be a new challenge but I'm excited about it," he says.

The mosaic crosses are part of a robust visual arts program at the school, which also includes soap carving, pottery and planter boxes in the Sensory Garden. Around the school hang eight mosaic placards, created collaboratively over the years by students, teachers and volunteers, representing the school's eight values of safety, service, respect, honesty, pride, friendship, service and responsibility.

"There's always something different happening in the art room," Ms Comas says. "It's good we have our wonderful specialist visual arts teacher, Helen Williams, who loves this kind of work."



Top: St Martin's Greenacres principal Christine Comas with Grace-Emily and Hugh.