



SAINT JOHN  
*the Evangelist*  
—  
CATHOLIC PARISH DAPTO



### ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

**Parish Priest:** Fr Francis

Phone: 4261 1315

Parish Office Hours: Tues–Fri 9am – 4pm

### ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

**School Principal:** Mrs Michelle Rodwell

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# St John's Journal

## Term 1, 2025

A joint school and parish project –  
working together to create a thriving Catholic Community.

Matthew 5:16 “...let your light shine...and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

### Let us pray...

“Heavenly Father, we pray that we may value the journey each of us takes, as we walk together in Christ. May each of our journeys provide nourishment, encouragement and inspiration that help us connect, so that we may strengthen our faith and build a living community, founded in your love for each of us.”



**Ruby T (5 years old)**

Interviewed by Charli M (Year 6)



Tell us about your grandparents.	My Nanny and Poppy live in Berkeley. We like to go to their house because we get yummy lollies.
Tell us about your family pet, if you have any.	We had a dog named Sandy who is 8. We gave him to mummy's uncle to look after. Sandy lives with him.
What are your hobbies?	I like to go to the pool. I do singing and I like to perform. I like to play with my cousins.
What is your favourite cartoon character?	I love Barbie and I like The Barbie Movie too.
What is your favourite meal?	Maccas. I like to get Big Macs and chippies and lemonade or apple juice.
What is your happiest memory?	My friend is Cassidy and we went to preschool together. When we were little Cass hugged me and made me feel better when I was sad. It made me so happy.
What do you want to be when you grow up?	When I grow up I want to be a YouTuber and work at McDonald's. Maybe I will be a teacher too.
What is the best thing about school?	I love sports days. I like to do Maths too, especially addition.
Tell us about your best friend at school.	Cassidy is my friend and we go camping together. My other friend is Willow and we go to singing lessons together.
What is your favourite bible story or story about Jesus and why?	My favourite story is the story about the lost sheep. I love that the man just looked and looked for the sheep until it was found. He was so helpful!



**Max C** (6 years old)

Interviewed by Jai S (Year 6)



Tell us about your grandparents.	They like to go on holidays and Gran is a good cook. They give me toys when I visit.
Tell us about your family pet, if you have any.	I don't have one. I would like to get a dog.
What are your hobbies?	I like to jump on my trampoline. I have a Nintendo switch and I play MarioKart and Pokemon and Skylanders. Skylanders is my favourite.
What is your favourite cartoon character?	My favourite person is Zane. He is from Ninjago.
What is your favourite meal?	I like to eat wraps.
What is your happiest memory?	I really liked going on holidays with my family. We went to Airlie Beach and swam. I saw a turtle.
What do you want to be when you grow up?	I want to be a soccer player.
What is the best thing about school?	I play handball with my friends.
Tell us about your best friend at school.	My best friend's name is Santi. He likes soccer and he's good at sports.
What is your favourite bible story or story about Jesus and why?	My favourite story is Noah's Ark because he takes all the animals away to a different place, so they are safe.



Luca M (8 years old)

Interviewed by  
Isla P (Year 6)

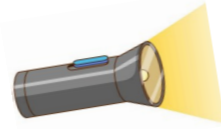


Tell us about your grandparents.	My Nan is 72 and my Poppy is 73. They both grew up in Australia.
Tell us about your family pet, if you have any.	I used to have a snake. It was a children's Python. I think it was brown, and it died before I was two years old.
What are your hobbies?	My hobbies are soccer and karate. My favourite sport is soccer. I play soccer with Rowdy, Benjamin, Liam, Eli, Harry, Ayrton, Christian and Orlando.
What is your favourite cartoon character?	I love Alvin and the Chipmunks. My favourite character is Alvin. The show has lots of action.
What is your favourite meal?	My favourite meal is pasta, because it has tomatoes, and I put chilli in it. It's very good. I also like to have seafood in pasta.
What is your happiest memory?	When I was playing soccer in the Under 7's, it was the last game, and we hadn't lost any other games previously. It was being filmed. In the last five seconds, I scored a goal from halfway!
What do you want to be when you grow up?	I want to be a soccer player when I grow up, so I can score lots of goals. It's a very fun game to play. I started playing soccer when I was four years old.
What is the best thing about school?	The best thing about school is sport, because there are different activities to do, and I have lots of energy.
Tell us about your best friend at school.	My best friend is named Liam. We were both born in June. I was born on the 8th of June, and Liam was born on the 17th of June. I met him in hospital, and my dad was best friends with Liam's dad.
What is your favourite bible story or story about Jesus and why?	My favourite bible story is about the lost sheep, because the good shepherd has to find all of the sheep that are lost. I also like the Resurrection, because all of the people were shocked that Jesus came back, and the angel told everyone that Jesus was okay.



**Celeste N** (11 years old)

Interviewed by  
Ruby M (Year 6)



Tell us about your grandparents.	I have two grandparents that live in Hungary, so I have some Hungarian background. Sadly, my grandpa passed away, but I do have a grandmother from Melbourne who comes and visits every so often.
Tell us about your family pet, if you have any.	No I don't, but I'm begging Mum and Dad for a dog before 2026.
What are your hobbies?	Definitely gymnastics! But I had to quit because it was too expensive. I also like drama, dancing and singing. I'm starting netball this year.
What is your favourite cartoon character?	Patrick Star from SpongeBob Square Pants and the mother (Wilma) from The Flintstones.
What is your favourite meal?	Curry with rice, but it HAS to be chicken curry with a really nice sauce...and it has to be made by my mum!
What is your happiest memory?	When I was little, I would be so excited every night to wear my bear jumpsuit to bed. Once dad even picked me up and tipped me upside down. Mum took a photo of it and I was laughing so hard.
What is your favourite holiday destination and why?	Jindabyne, because I get to go on the long road trip there and we have our holiday house there. We play this game called 'spotlight' which is hide and seek in the dark, and afterwards we have roasted marshmallows!
What do you want to be when you grow up?	I want to be an Olympic gymnast or sprinter!
What is the best thing about school?	Seeing my teachers Mrs Scales + Mrs Mackie and seeing my friends as well as learning because not many people get the advantage of learning.
Tell us about your best friend at school.	My bestie is Audrey S and every single day we have a laugh, hang out together and sometimes we go home together. When we hang out together we go to the pool and have lots of fun! Audrey never eats her brekkie and she is always hungry, so I tell her she needs to eat her breakfast everyday - even though I'm not her mum.
Who is someone you really admire and why?	I admire Simone Biles because I know every fact about her that you could ever know. She has been my idol ever since I started gymnastics when I was 5 years old.
What is your favourite bible story or story about Jesus and why?	The Washing of the Feet. I love this story because Jesus shows his love to all the people as equals, even though they were all different and it wasn't a job people expected Jesus to do. It's important to be humble and show respect for others, and Jesus shows this in this example.



St John's Primary School: Staff Member

**Mrs Beringer**



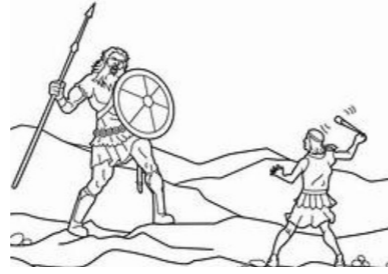
Interviewed by  
Lily T (Year 6)



Where did you grow up or go to school?	Forbes NSW. I went to school in Redbend Catholic College. That was my secondary school. And for primary I went to St Laurence O'Tooles.
What was the best thing about school?	Making friends, I loved sport, meeting boarders from remote NSW areas. My favourite sport at school was probably athletics. I also loved learning about agriculture.
Family members?	There are 8 children in my family. I am the second youngest of 8 children.
Tell us about your family pet.	I have a Cavoodle, and his name is William.
What is your happiest memory?	The arrival of my three girls, and becoming a mum. And becoming Assistant Principal of St John's Dapto.
What are your hobbies or interests?	I love creative arts, I consider myself to be quite creative. I like working around my house and gardening. I also really love fishing. I once caught a barramundi, and it was almost a meter long.
Did you always want to be in the job you have now? Was there another job you wanted to do?	No, from a very young age I wanted to become a teacher. Four of my sisters are also teachers.
Do you volunteer anywhere? Please give some details including the importance of service in your life?	I volunteer on the St Vincent De Paul food vans. Both in the McArthur and Wollongong areas, and I find this extremely rewarding.
How important is faith and religious beliefs in your life? Add any appropriate information you are willing to share?	My faith is extremely important to me. Especially in my most significant times of need. I firmly believe, when my third daughter Eden was born, a very traumatic experience, I prayed to God, and he intervened. And he ensured she was okay.
Who or what inspires you and why?	Anyone with a disability, because they have many obstacles to overcome in life and I'm in awe of those who do this.
What is your favourite bible passage, verse or story about Jesus and why?	I love the woman at the well. Because it teaches us to be accepting of everyone, not to be prodigious or racist or judge others.
Any life challenges you have overcome and are willing to share?	The most challenging thing I've experienced recently is my mother passing away.

St John's Parish: Parishioner

## Mr David Ritter



I was born in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Crows Nest on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1944. It was the Mother Superior of Saint Anthony's Home at Croydon, Sydney, who suggested to my mother to call me David. I spent the first 4 years of my life in Saint Anthony's home.

My mother and I arrived at Dapto by train on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1949. We lived in a one room flat at the rear of the old Central Hotel, which at that time was being used as Spicer's Boarding house in Bong Bong Road. When living in the boarding house, there was no electricity or running water.

In 1950 I started at Saint John's Primary School. Sister Bernard Joseph was Mother superior at that time. Other sisters that I recall are: Sister Benedict, Sister Cornelius, Sister Gerard Majella, and a young novice named Sister Dara. I also remember the sisters as being very self-sufficient, as they had a veggie garden and hens in their back yard, and also a beautiful Blood Red Plum Tree. I recall every Friday afternoon a couple of the sisters would go over to the old church and clean all the brass candle holders and brass altar rails ready for Sunday Mass.

In 1950 we also we moved into a two-bedroom house at in Werowi Street, Dapto. When we moved into the house, I asked my mother, where was the water tank. Mother told me that they were now illegal. How times have changed!

1956 was my final year at Saint John's and this was the year that we got ready for the Primary Final Examination and also for your Confirmation. Sister Gerard Majella was my last teacher at St John's. They say that fact is stranger than fiction, so here is one for the books. When I started at Saint John's in 1950, there was a brother and a sister named Peter and Rosemary O'Leary. About 40 years later I was to learn that they were my 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins.

In 1957 I started at Christian Brother College in Crown Lane, Wollongong and left there at the end of 1959. Christian Brother College was later known as Edmund Rice College, when it moved to West Wollongong.

In 1961, I got an apprenticeship with AIS Port Kembla as a fitter and turner but was sacked in my 3<sup>rd</sup> year. I completed my apprenticeship at Thirwell and McKenzies at Port Kembla. I then went back to North Wollongong Technical College to earn my Mechanical Engineering Certificate.

Whilst in Dapto, I became the first Queen Scout in Dapto. I left Dapto in 1970 and moved to Sydney, as I'd obtained a job as an air-conditioning design engineer. However, I returned to Dapto in 1987, due to poor health.

I did not go to church at that time. My mother became very sick, and in 2002 I became her carer, so that she could live out her life in her home. I knew how much she loved going to mass every Sunday, and seeing her friends there, so I suggested to my mother that we buy a wheelchair and that I would wheel her over to mass on Sunday mornings, and that is how I came back to the church. Sadly, my mother died of cancer in 2004, but I have kept coming to our Dapto church ever since.

Over the years I have volunteered in numerous ways, to support the parish community. I have managed the church bingo, helped with maintaining supplies for the parish coffee area, money counted and helped out at church on Sunday mornings. I am an active member of Saint Vincent de Paul and I co-ordinate the return and earn for the Parish, where I manage a small team of volunteers.

My favourite story from the bible is David and Goliath. David means beloved. He was chosen by God to be king of his people, and at the age of 12, killed Goliath...a giant. David also refused to kill King Saul when he found Saul asleep in a cave, and he also wrote many Psalms. I believe that I was named after King David.

**Editor's Note:**

2025 is moving very quickly. Thank you to everyone who has made this edition possible. Special thanks to Kate Wilkins and Alana Stroligo, who have become the school co-ordinators for the project this year. They have been assisted by five student reporters who have done a wonderful job, that has made my role as editor, an easier task. Thank you to the six individuals who have shared their stories for us to enjoy. You have helped to make our Catholic community stronger.

Lastly, to all who read these stories, may your Lenten journey draw you closer to Christ.

As we continue to journey towards Easter, may you and your loved ones stay safe and well.

Warmest regards to all.

Liz Negro



**Student Reporters:**

Year 6: **Charli M, Jai S, Isla P, Ruby M, Lily T**

**St John's School Co-ordinators:** Mrs Kate Wilkins and Miss Alana Stroligo

**Food for thought...and sharing!**

How important is **faith** and **religious beliefs** in **your** life?

Consider what you do to share this with others.

This journal is digitally available via the school and parish websites.

Limited paper copies are available at the school and parish offices.