

6 January

Feast of Epiphany



Chalking the Door

This is a lovely Epiphany custom from Austria and parts of Germany. On 6 January people write a special sign in chalk over their front door. They do this to remind them of the visit of the Magi or Three Kings to the baby Jesus.

The sign is made from the year split in two with the initials of the names that are sometimes given to the magi, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, in the middle.

So: 2023 is written as: 20+C+M+B+23.

These initials, CMB, also stand for the Latin phrase, **Christus mansionem benedicat**: which translates as '**May Christ bless the house**'. In writing this sign we are asking Christ to bless the home and all who live in it.

This year we are inviting our schools to begin this lovely tradition by marking the lintel of their classroom and outside doors. You might like to use the following prayers as you do so. This could be done by individual classes or by all classes at the same time.

Prayer as you chalk the lintel

Gather at the door.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of Light and of love bless our classroom/school. Make it a place of learning, love, care, joy and hope. May all who enter here know that they are welcome. Help us to remember that when we go out from this place we are called to bring your light to all we meet.

We mark our door with the symbols of the Magi. **20 + C + M + B + 23**

May the light of Christ live in this place and in our hearts always. Amen.

Having marked your door, you may now like to place the Magi figures at the crib while praying the following:

Loving Jesus, may we be like the Magi and always recognise you in our lives. Be with us, protect us and guide us. Help us to always show your love to one another and to all in need. Amen.

Finish by singing 'We Three Kings' or 'Three Kings Long Ago'