

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

April 5, 2018

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Parents,

With the Easter Season comes new life, and new perspectives. At St. Joseph Catholic School, it also brings to fruition the next level of a number of plans that have been in place for quite a while. We are very excited to share our news!

Thanks to the Bricks, Mortar and Technology grant from the Salem Catholic Schools Foundation, we were able to purchase 50 new Chromebooks for the middle school. This allows middle school students to be 1:1 with technology in the classroom. Students are currently using Google Apps for Education to organize and access their work, which makes it available both at school and at home on a computer. This will now make it much easier for students to be able to research, to access online textbooks, and to record and write about data they collect.

The 33 Chromebooks that were being used by the middle school will now be available to grades 3, 4 and 5. Teachers and students alike will be trained in how to access their Google accounts, how to interact with the Google Educational Suite, and how to access online documents through searches in both EBSCO and OSLIS (library systems with informational articles written at student levels - no Google searches!). Now, the computer can be used more readily as a tool in their core classes as they integrate technology into multiple projects and assignments.

We are also excited to announce that, thanks to a generous donor, we now have the funds to replace our K-5 science textbook series. But even better than that, we have been able to work with the Carolina Company, who has developed a hands-on collaborative curriculum with The Smithsonian Institute that includes both student textbooks, experiment guidelines, and all the scientific necessities needed to complete our science lab! We have worked long and hard to put a complete science program together, and we finally have the last piece! We anticipate receiving these by the end of April to really put them into play. Stay tuned!

Excited to be in Education,

Deb Dewar, Principal
St. Joseph Catholic School

Accreditation Update and Invitation



The staff of St. Joseph have been working diligently all year, studying the various aspects of our school and writing the chapters for our *Self Study* document, *Improving Student Learning: A Self Study Process for*

Catholic Elementary Schools.

We are currently on schedule. First drafts are being finished this week, to be reviewed by Monsignor Huneger and the School Advisory Council. Following the first round of revisions, these drafts will be made available to our school families for review and suggestions. If you are interested in seeing an advanced copy of this document, we will be holding a review session on Tuesday, April 17th from 5:30 to 6:30 in the cafeteria. We are looking for parents who are interested in reading through some of the chapters and giving feedback. All of our shareholders are important to us! The final document will be submitted in early May. Please continue to hold the school community in your prayers as we undergo this important process for our school improvement and accreditation

Benefit Gala/Auction

Tickets are now on sale for this year's benefit gala taking place on Saturday, April 28th at Illahe. Tickets are \$55.00 per person/\$100 per couple. Grandparents or alumni special pricing at \$45.00 per person or \$80.00 per couple.

There are a multitude of wonderful items to bid on. We hope that you can join us for this lovely event and support our largest fundraiser of the year!



Early Dismissal

This Friday, April 6th, will be an early dismissal day, for teacher professional development. Teachers will be using that time to dive into testing data, analyzing it to design learning strategies that will most benefit the skills needed as indicated by the STAR results. Individualized plans as well as small-group and large-group lessons will be addressed so that we're meeting the needs of all of our students. We spent quite a bit of time on this data, and now we need to apply it to what we do everyday in the classroom. This analysis is an ongoing process, and while it takes a lot of time and effort, it's so rewarding! Thank you for altering your schedule so that we can be the best that we can be for your students!

Student Surveys

The students took a survey for the accreditation process, and the results have been tabulated. Thank you to all of our students who have shared their perspective with us. What you think matters to us, and helps us to improve our school. Here is a look at what our students have said that they love about St. Joseph Catholic School”

“Everyone is happy and nice here,” SJCS student

“That you get to learn about God and Jesus,” SJCS first grade student

That we have the right to share God’s love with one another,” SJCS third grade student

“I like to write stories on the computers,” SJCS fifth grade student

“I like that even though everybody is different, we are all equal and loved,” SJCS sixth grade student

“I like how it is challenging, and is always pushing me harder to do better, while sometimes applying faith to it,” SJCS seventh grade student

“I like that we are taught fun and exciting things with great teachers,” SJCS eighth grade student

As you may have predicted, 17 students specifically wrote in “Recess” as their favorite part of the day. Other favorites included high academics or specific subjects (36 students), their teacher (25 students), and their friends or the happy atmosphere (41 students). Learning about their faith, and having their faith interwoven throughout the curriculum is important enough for 30 students to write it in, though 133 of 143 students checked that it was important to them.

In answer to the question *What should we be working on?* there were a number of answers written in. The most popular answers for the younger students were that students were nicer to each other, and that there were more after school activities. We may be asking for more club volunteers! For the older students, more technology was a concern, as well as having more hands-on projects. We hope that the changes that we’re making this spring will fill in these gaps! It’s great to get so much great feedback!

Academic Showcase & Open House



We can’t wait for this year’s Academic Showcase! We will have writing samples and science experiments to show off, among other things. Classrooms will be open for students to take tours from 2:30 to 3:00 on Thursday, May 3rd. And then, that evening, invite the whole family to come and visit. We are open from 5:30 to 6:30 for families to tour the projects. We are also welcoming new and prospective families. So get out those Ambassador Cards (for that \$1000 savings!) and bring an interested friend!

Spring Pictures

Spring picture packets recently went home. Please return to Mrs. Bartholomew all pictures you do not plan on purchasing, along with a check made out to LifeTouch for those pictures you wish to keep. If you have any questions, please



SLE Week of 04-09-18

The SLE for next week is: Displays curiosity and a love of truth through the eyes of faith. What does this look like in a student?

- Asks questions in class
- Tackles inquiry problems with vigor
- Shows resilience when learning something difficult
- Is honest and supportive with friends

Please talk with your child this week about what this means to you, and how your child can grow through this learning opportunity.

Weekly Prayer Corner

As your children grow, to help strengthen our Catholic faith and the values of our traditions, we would like to offer a weekly family activity to build in your understanding and practices together. This week's activity: At night, pray the Prayer to Saint Michael, asking for his help in fighting the temptation to sin

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



April Calendar

Friday, April 6—Half Day, Spirit Day (regular spirit clothes)

Tuesday, April 17—Accreditation Review Session in the cafeteria 5:30 - 6:30

Friday, April 20—Earth Day Spirit Day for the Food Bank - 2 cans

Saturday, April 28—Masquerade Ball Gala Auction 5 pm

Sunday, April 29—First Communion Mass for school students
10 am