



Your weekly guide to school news, information and events.



St. Mary's
Catholic School

PRINCIPAL'S PAGE



Hope Peace Joy Love

Dec 2 | 2022

It's beginning to look a lot like...

COLD & FLU SEASON!!!

The cold and flu season is upon us, and we have had a lot of kids either out sick or coming to the office not feeling well. So, as a reminder, I am sharing some tips to help guide your decision on whether or not to send your child to school when they are feeling under the weather!

Illness Guidelines

There are two main reasons to keep sick children at home:

1. Your child doesn't feel well enough to take part in normal activities. For example, your child is overly tired, fussy, or unable to participate in expected activities.
2. Your child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.

Here are some guidelines to determine whether your child should stay home:

Fever with behavior changes or other illness:

- Keep home if fever is 100.4 or higher OR if the child also has a rash, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, behavior changes, stiff neck, difficulty breathing, etc. **The child may return when fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.**

Flu-like symptoms: Fever over 100.4 with a cough or sore throat. Other flu symptoms can include tiredness, body aches, vomiting, and diarrhea:

Diarrhea: Frequent, loose, or watery stools compared to child's normal stools:

Stay home, if child looks or acts sick, if child has diarrhea with fever, OR if child has diarrhea and is also throwing up. Students should remain home until diarrhea stops for 24 hours.

Coughing: Keep home, if severe, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, rapid or difficulty breathing, and medical attention is necessary. If your child is at school and actively coughing but otherwise feeling well, we may contact you and ask if we can have your child wear a mask until their coughing is resolved. If you do not wish for your child to wear a mask, we respect that, but also ask that you keep them at home to avoid spreading illness to other students and teachers.

Strep Throat: Stay home, for 24 hours after starting antibiotics unless a health care provider says it is okay to return to school sooner. Your child also needs to be able to take part in usual activities.

We appreciate your help in keeping all of our students and staff healthy and happy!

WHAT'S INSIDE



**a message from
your principal**

page 2-3

**food drive
winners!**

page 4

**important
reminders**

page 4

**science fair
winners**

page 5

A message from our principal



Dear Parents,

The season of Advent has begun, marking the beginning of a new year in the Church calendar...so....Happy New Year! The word Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means a coming, approach, or arrival. In the Church, it refers to the period encompassing the four Sundays prior to Christmas. It is a time of penance, of turning away from sin, and hopeful, joyous preparation for the coming of the Savior.

This is what makes Advent special for Christians: the recognition that Christmas is not just “the birthday of Jesus,” but a celebration of his coming into our world today, here and now. How does he come into the world today? Jesus is “born”—becomes physically tangible—through the celebration of the sacraments. It is by eating the Eucharist, washing in the waters of Baptism, being anointed with the oil of Confirmation and so on, that Jesus’ friends become part of the living Body of Christ (the Church) in the world today. For Catholics, then, every celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments is like a little Christmas.

During Advent, Christians prepare for this here-and-now coming of Christ by remembering the long years during which Israel waited for the coming of the Messiah, and by looking forward to the final coming of Christ at the end of time. You will hear both themes reflected in the Church’s readings during Advent.

Here are some practical ways that you can prepare to fully celebrate Advent with your kids. Remember, you don’t have to do it all—just choose a few practices to focus on and see whether they work for your family.

1. Get or make an Advent wreath - The Advent wreath is one of the most familiar and beloved symbols of Advent. Children love lighting the candles, one each week, as a way of counting down the time until Christmas. Darkening the room and praying by candlelight is also a good way to signal to children that we are entering a very special time, Advent wreaths usually consist of four candles, three violet and one rose, set in a circular wreath (usually made of evergreen branches). One candle is lit for each Sunday of Advent, with the rose candle being lit on the third Sunday (Gaudete Sunday, from the Latin word for “rejoice”). The violet (or purple) candles represent the penance and sacrifice we undertake to help us prepare for the Lord’s coming at Christmas; the rose candle represents the rejoicing of the faithful at the mid-point of Advent. You can purchase Advent wreaths inexpensively; on the other hand, you might find it more fun to make your own.

You can get free prayer materials to use with your Advent wreath from your parish or from the USCCB Advent website. For many more Advent wreath resources, including links to instructions about how to make one, see [Light Up Your Advent with These Advent Wreath Ideas](#).

2. Bless your Advent wreath - On the first Sunday of Advent, be sure to bless your Advent wreath. Use the blessing provided by the U.S. Catholic bishops at their Advent website.
3. Set up a nativity scene - St. Francis had the brilliant idea to create a scene depicting the nativity of Jesus as a way of teaching the people about the meaning of the Incarnation. Displaying a nativity scene (or manger set) in your home during Advent is a great way to remind everyone (not just little kids) about the true meaning of Christmas: the Creator of the universe entering into creation in order to save it. Here are a few ideas for ways to use your nativity scene:



A message from our principal



- Setting up the manger is a great activity for the Friday or Saturday after Thanksgiving. When you set it up, don't put out the baby Jesus; save that until Christmas Eve (or morning).
 - Some families like to have the baby Jesus appear in the manger overnight on Christmas Eve. That way, everyone can stop by the manger to greet the baby Jesus before opening presents.
 - You can also wait to put out the wise men. When you do put them out (perhaps on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent), consider placing them someplace far away from the manger, moving them a little bit closer every day until they "arrive" on the Feast of the Epiphany.
 - Another custom is to cut up small snips of paper to be "hay" for the baby Jesus; place the hay in a little bowl or cup near the manger. Every time your younger children do a good deed, they can place a piece of the hay in the baby Jesus' bed to get it ready for his arrival.
 - Use the manger set to tell the Christmas story to little children as the story unfolds in the Sunday and weekday readings throughout Advent. For example, hold the Mary and angel figure as you paraphrase the reading about the Annunciation.
 - Manger sets can be pricey—and fragile. Consider buying a nativity set second-hand, or make your own.
4. Make a Jesse tree - A Christmas-tree alternative during Advent is to make a Jesse tree, which is a tree decorated with ornaments based on symbols of Old Testament events preparing for the coming of Christ. It might include an ark or rainbow to depict Noah and the flood, for instance, and a ladder to represent Jacob's ladder.
5. Keep an Advent calendar - An Advent calendar, as the name implies, marks off the days of Advent. Some elaborate Advent calendars have a door to be opened for each day, with candy or a prize behind each door. You can purchase these at your local retailer or online.

If you want to observe the spirit of Advent, though, look for a more spiritually focused Advent calendar. The U.S. Catholic bishops provide an Advent calendar on their website, with activity suggestions for each day.

Another simple way to do an Advent calendar is to make a decorative paper chain: every day, your kids can add a single link to the chain. You can have them decorate the link with a Jesse Tree symbol or write a phrase from the day's Scripture readings on it...the possibilities are endless.

These are just a few ideas, but there are many more you could choose to make Advent meaningful and special for your child! There are many online sites that offer ideas for the celebration of Advent with children!

I hope that your Advent season is filled with hope, love, joy, and peace!

God Bless,
Mrs. Bridges

This & That!



St. Joseph's Food Pantry Thanksgiving Basket Food Drive

Last month the students, families, and staff of St. Mary's School collected food items to benefit St. Joseph's Food Pantry Thanksgiving Basket program.

After hearing about the greatly increased need in our community this year, one teacher was moved to inspire her class to provide enough food to complete 18 full baskets...one for each student. Students and their parents came through, and the class collected not only enough food for 18 complete baskets, but instead collected 21 baskets worth of food, plus some extra!!!

Mrs. Araas' kindergarten class was awarded the coveted Golden Trophy of Thanksgiving by collecting 21 turkeys, 15 pies, and 166 other items! In total, the school collected 24 turkeys, 2 hams, 23 pies, and 929 canned/boxed items to donate to the food pantry.

Way to go Kindergarten, and way to go St. Mary's families!!



DON'T FORGET

Pancakes with Santa

Saturday, December 3
St. Mary's School Gym
7:30 – 10:00 a.m.
\$5.00/person

Parents Day Out

Saturday December 3
St. Mary's Gym
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
RSVP required

Feast of St. Nicholas

Tuesday, December 6 – St. Nicholas will be coming to the school in the morning to visit all of the classrooms!

SCHOOL MASS CHANGE!!!

School Mass will be on Thursday, Dec 8 next week to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a Holy Day of Obligation. Students should wear Mass uniforms that day! There will be NO mass on Friday, Dec 9.

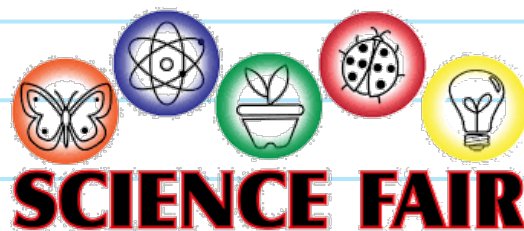
PTO Bake Sale & Dress UP

Friday, December 9
The December bake sale will be sponsored by the Prek4 classes. Students may dress UP for free

Check out the next page for more amazing St. Mary's Student Accomplishments!



5th & 6th Grade



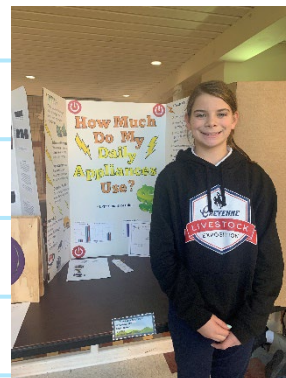
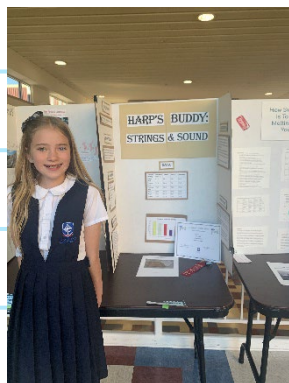
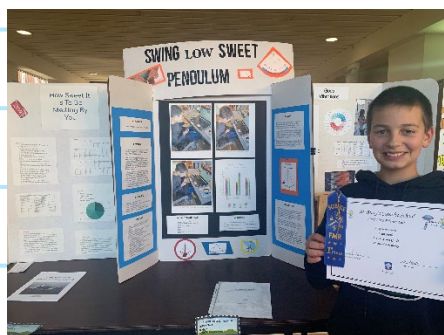
St. Mary's School 5th and 6th graders presented their Science Fair projects to judges on Thursday, November 17. All the projects were very impressive! Here are the top finishers for both grades:

6th Grade

1st Place – “Swing Low Sweet Pendulum” - Ezra Steele

2nd Place – “Harp's Buddy: Strings & Sound” – Eden Olson

3rd Place – “How Much Electricity do my Daily Appliances Use?” – Tehya Thompson

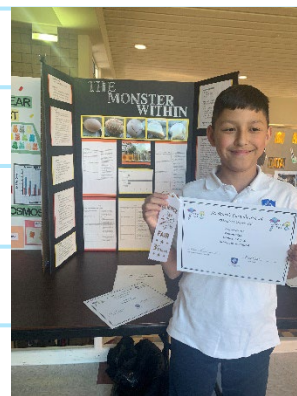
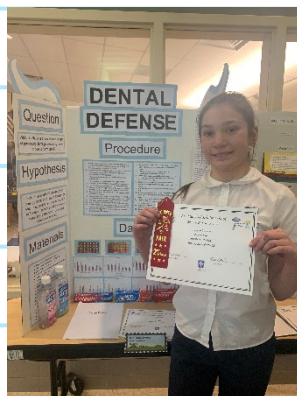
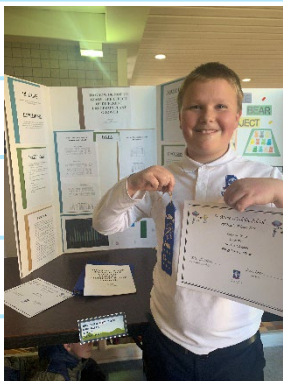


5th Grade

1st Place – “To Grow or Not to Grow: The Effect of Different Liquids on Plant Growth” – Kaden Kean

2nd Place – “Dental Defense” – Rilynne Rutar

3rd Place – “The Monster Within” – Domenic DiSenso



Well Done 5th & 6th Grade Students!!!

