



# St. Mary's News

*"Where Faith and Learning Go Hand in Hand"*

December 2010

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves." – Sir James Barrie

## Note from the Principal

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### Help Your Children Know the Benefits of Charitable Giving

Parents sometimes have the feeling that the holidays have become little more than an attempt to fulfill the expectations of children.

The event can be more. Done correctly, adding the idea of helping others during the holidays can bring children joy right now. It can create a holiday tradition that will enrich the season for the rest of their lives.

You can start early by explaining to small children that some people may not have a holiday dinner without help from the bell-ringing Santas. Kids will love putting a few coins into the kettle.

Those who believe in Santa Claus may wonder why there are so many Santas and why they don't leave toys for every child. Explain that Santa needs help. The children will be thrilled with the idea of picking out a toy that Santa could give to a poor child.

It's easy for parents to feel they are a little poor themselves this year. Still, a gift doesn't have to be expensive, and the joy of choosing one could be something a child looks forward to each year in the future. Choosing a gift should be fun and an expression of love.

A story about why other kids may not get much during the holidays could be in order. Tell your children about recent floods or hurricanes that destroyed other kids' parents' homes and belongings. Don't make the story too frightening.

Older kids would enjoy helping you select the cause you choose to support this year. Make the choices interesting and encourage them to give part of their cash Christmas gifts to help others. Teens would enjoy going with you to help serve a free dinner at the church or soup kitchen. Inviting teen nieces, nephews, or pals to join you is a plus.

Thank you to those families who have chosen Shepherds for our Adopted families. We still have a few left if you have not chosen a Shepherd.

Thank you for donating items to the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution's annual Christmas Package Program, Catholic Charities, Room In The Inn, Women's Shelter and Urban Ministries.

We will collect pop-top items and Christmas dinner food for Urban Ministries and Christmas baskets this month. **Please send in all food donations by December 14.**

## Religion Question of the Week

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**Second Sunday of Advent** - (God is a Just Judge)

First reading: Isaiah 11:1–10 (Justice for All)

Second reading: Romans 15:4–9 (Christ saves everyone)

Gospel: Matthew 3:1–12 (Repent!)

**Adults:**

What action can I take to turn my mind and heart around this Advent?

**Children:**

What does the word *hope* mean to me?

## Partners in FAITH

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This is a very busy time of the year. Rushing through holiday activities, stressing out at the mall, and feeling pressured to meet holiday expectations can sap a family's joy at Christmas. The main article on page 1 reminds readers that simple steps can help a family receive the gift of love this year.

We do not know much about the magi who visited Baby Jesus. What we do know is that they undertook a perilous and difficult journey to visit a king. The lessons in this story on page 2 can strengthen a family's trust in God and build lifelong prayer habits in the children.

The Holy family was, in some ways, a family just like ours. The Scripture Lesson on page 2 gives readers a glimpse into how God gave them the strength to meet their unusual challenges.

## Character Traits for December (Caring, Compassion, Empathy, and Kindness)

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Our main focus this month is Caring. Students will discuss Compassion this week

**Compassion**

a sense of feeling or empathy for someone else's misfortune

Students can show compassion for someone they know has a problem. Compassion also means that you can feel something of what someone else is feeling when he or she is going through rough times. Everyone will have some sadness in his or her life at one time or another.

To reinforce what your child is hearing at school, we feel it is extremely important that you help your child to understand what compassion means. Share with your child what compassion means to your family and discuss how your family shows compassion to others. Discuss how a sickness can affect a student and his or her family and what it means to show we care in a time of need.

### Suggested Readings (The Character Education Series):

- *Two Good Friends* by Judy Delton (Grades K – 2). Bear discovers that Duck has no food in his house, and Duck finds Bear has food but his house is a mess; between them, they find compassion and understanding to meet the needs of both.
- *The Cat Next Door* by Betty Ren Wright (Grades K – 3). The death of a grandmother is difficult for a little girl, but the cat next door makes all the difference for her.
- *Moonfall* by Susan Whitcher (Grades 3 – 6). No one believes Sylvie when she sees the moon fall out of the sky into her neighbor’s lilac bushes, but she finds it and gives it a bath in a solution that includes soap, toothpaste, baking soda, vinegar, silver polish, and a few drops of her Magic Bubbles.
- *Back Yard Angel* by Judy Delton (Grades 4 – 6). Although Angel loves her little brother Rags dearly, the constant responsibility of caring for him weighs heavily on her young shoulders.

### A Bountiful Spectrum of Celebrations

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December is a month of celebrations and holidays that span many different countries and cultures. Don’t miss out on any of them. Here’s a guide to what your friends and neighbors are up to this month:

**Hanukkah.** The eight-day Jewish holiday begins this year at sundown the day before December 2, 2010 (because the traditional Jewish calendar begins at sunset). Hanukkah marks the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem following the Jews’ victory in 165 B.C.

According to the Talmud, the Jews had only enough olive oil to keep the eternal flame in the Temple burning for a single day—but miraculously, the oil continued to burn for eight days, during which time the Jews were able to produce and consecrate fresh oil for the flame.

Hanukkah is observed by the lighting of a nine-branched candelabrum, called a menorah. One candle is lit each of the eight nights, with a central candle lit each night to light the others.

**Al Hijra.** The Islamic new year observed on December 7, 2010—the first day of the month of Muharram, when the prophet Muhammad and his followers emigrated from Mecca to the city now known as Medina in the year 622. Several years earlier Muhammad had advised some Muslims to leave Mecca to escape persecution, but remained there himself until growing hostility prompted him to relocate.

Hijra means “migration” in Arabic, and is related to the Latin *hegira*, which also refers to a journey or migration.

The Islamic new year is not marked by religious rituals or observances, but many Muslims use the occasion to reflect on the past and future, as well as the original Hijra itself.

**Christmas.** This Christian holiday celebrates the birth of Jesus, sometime between the years 7 and 2 B.C. The word Christmas comes from Christ's Mass, a phrase first recorded in old English as Cristes mæsse in 1038.

Christmas began to be observed with feasts and celebrations in the Middle Ages—the online encyclopedia Wikipedia notes that King Richard II of England hosted a Christmas feast in 1377, with twenty-eight oxen and three hundred sheep eaten.

The colonial Puritans of New England disapproved of Christmas celebrations, which were banned during the 17th century. But other colonists observed the day with Christmas trees and nativity scenes. President Ulysses S. Grant signed the law making Christmas a federal holiday in 1870.

**Kwanzaa.** A seven-day celebration of African heritage and culture observed from December 26 to January 1. Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by activist Ron Karenga to provide African Americans with a holiday that emphasized their shared history and experience. The name Kwanzaa is derived from “matunda ya kwanza,” a Swahili phrase meaning “first fruits.”

Houses are decorated with African art and colorful cloth, and seven candles are placed in the kinara, a candleholder. The central candle in the kinara is black, with three red candles on the left and four green candles on the right.

The candles represent the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. As one of the candles is lit each day, observers are invited to contemplate the principles.

## School News

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Answers and References for CatholicQuiz of the Week™

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| 1. a. the father of David (Isaiah 11:1) | 2. b. Davidic (Isaiah 11:1)          |
| 3. c. wolf (Isaiah 11:6)                | 4. a. baby (Isaiah 11:8)             |
| 5. a. Repent (Matthew 3:2)              | 6. c. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:3) |
| 7. a. True (Matthew 3:5-7)              |                                      |

### Kindergarten

Our kindergarten pilgrims and Indians put on a fabulous performance for our parents, families, and friends last week at our Thankful Feast Luncheon. Thank you to all of our parents who made the event a huge success.

Over the next three busy weeks we will travel around the world to learn how children from different countries celebrate this very special time of year and discover the origin of symbols used during the holidays. Some of the places we will visit include Italy, Mexico, England, Germany, France, and Sweden. On December 16<sup>th</sup>, we will wrap-up our holiday fun with a Polar Express pajama party.

You will not want to miss the K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Christmas Program on December 3<sup>rd</sup> in St. Mary's gym. We will take the stage again on December 8<sup>th</sup> following Mass at the Bethlehem Party.

We would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas Season! Remember, HE is the reason for the season!

## **First Grade**

December is a busy time for First Graders! We are looking forward to our first field trip to the Roxy to see "A Christmas Carol" on December 15. We will also decorate a classroom tree and make Advent wreaths as we learn about Advent. Please plan on attending our special musical productions in December. The K-3 Christmas Program is December 3 at 7:00, and the Bethlehem Party is December 8 from 9-11.

## **Second Grade**

Second Grade is working hard. We have just started Unit 4 in Social Studies, We the People, where the students will learn about our government. We are also moving along in Math learning Subtraction Strategies. The students have enjoyed writing back and forth to their pen pals in Pennsylvania. Please encourage your child to study their vocabulary index cards as well as their Faith words nightly. In addition, please study the Act of Contrition every night as it will help prepare your child for First Penance. Please remember to have a jacket as we will continue to go outside for recess. I look forward a magnificent December!

## **Third Grade News:**

Third Grade is moving right along! We are working on Adjectives and Adverbs in English. We are reading about Pocahontas to incorporate our Social Studies discussion of the Powhatan Indians and Jamestown. We will also complete a colony project. We are discussing Earth's resources in Science. In Math, we are working with money, number patterns, and comparing numbers. Get ready for multiplication soon! We are also looking forward to our field trip to the Roxy on December 15. Please remember to bring coats to go outside for recess. Looking forward to an excellent December!

## **Fourth Grade**

The 4<sup>th</sup> grade participated in Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF to benefit disadvantaged children throughout the world to tie in with our study of the Good Shepherd and the Corporal Works of Mercy. We raised over \$90 for this worthy cause. Thank you to all who assisted our efforts!

In December, we will complete our Life Science unit with the human body and conquer two-digit multiplication in Math. The read-aloud is the Newberry Award winning novel *The Whipping Boy*. Our projects for December include an oral recitation of a well-known poem and a choice of genre, either Fantasy or Adventure, for the book report.

I look forward to seeing you at the Bethlehem Party on the 8<sup>th</sup>, the Christmas Program on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and our class party on the 16<sup>th</sup>!

## **Fifth Grade**

D.A.R.E. graduation was held on November 15 for the fifth grade students of St. Mary's School. D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is presented by the Clarksville Police Department to fifth grade students in Montgomery County. For eight weeks, Officer Amberlace Oldham presented alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette facts to the class. Students talked about making healthy and wise decisions and how to handle peer pressure. The final assignment for students was to write a commitment (report) to make wise decisions about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Trinity Amabile, Cassie Evangelista, and Caitlin Phillips were chosen by the class to present their reports at graduation. Congratulations to the following students for their commitment to remain drug-free: Trinity Amabile, Ian Blankenship, Beth Carroll, Michaela Elder, Cassie Evangelista, Michael Mullins, Katherine Ochoa, Caitlin Phillips, Kellum Porter, Evan Rivers, Noah Stafford, and Zach Wozniak.

### **Greetings from Middle School**

6<sup>th</sup> graders are working on their research report for Ancient Greece. Final drafts are tentatively due Wednesday, December 14, 2010. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are entering a Tennessee Bar Association video contest titled, "Tennessee's Unique History of Law and Liberty." 7<sup>th</sup> graders have chosen to do their video on the Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are learning about the periodic table in Science and our government in Social Studies.

Student Council will sponsor a Santa Claus workshop for K-2 December 17, 2010. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will make Christmas lists, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students will make ornaments, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will read "T'Was the Night Before Christmas."

December is full of activities for the faculty, staff, and students at St. Mary's: Christmas performances, the Bethlehem Party, the end of the second grading period, Christmas parties, and the long holiday break.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade Reading classes are in the process of completing the discussion of their novels and preparing for the novel tests. The seventh and eighth grade English classes are revising and proofreading the final drafts of their research reports. In addition to learning the procedures for writing research papers, the eighth grade is completing a requirement for Confirmation. Pre-Algebra students are learning how data collected from surveys, polls, and questionnaires is gathered, organized, displayed, and interpreted.

The Middle School is busy practicing for the Bethlehem Party on December 8. We look forward to performing our rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

The Middle School teachers wish all our students and their families a very merry and safe holiday season. We look forward to seeing everyone on January 4, 2011.

### **Recycling**

Third Grade's class project incorporates lessons from science, social studies and math. We are collecting: CapriSun pouches, small chip bags, candy wrappers from the Mars, Wrigley and Cadbury Inc. (Snickers, Twix, M&Ms, and Skittles) and cookie wrappers from Nabisco or Keebler. Our "trash" is recycled into new products. By sending in these product wrappers, we are also raising money for our school. Please go to [www.terracycle.net](http://www.terracycle.net), if you would like more detailed information.

The 4th Grade class is already hard at work recycling. This year they are collecting aluminum cans and all forms of paper (newspaper, magazines, catalogs, white and colored copy paper). The students will collect recyclables each morning during carpool. Please bring items at this time. Thank you for your assistance!

### **Library News**

Our students in grades second through fifth have been learning about Melville Dewey and the Dewey Decimal Classification system. You may want to quiz them about it and see what they have learned. Our sixth graders drew beautiful illustrations for the ten major classifications which are displayed on the bulletin board outside of the library. Our middle school students are busy learning about research techniques and our focus in library is citing sources. After they saw *Dracula* at the Roxy, our seventh graders did some research and compiled an interesting background on the subject. Our kindergarten and first graders have learned about Halloween and Thanksgiving holidays by reading books from the non-fiction section.

Our dear Ms. Gemma misses the children and is still working on gaining transportation. Our *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth* by Jeff Kinney has arrived and we received two extra copies. The books are paperback copies and if you are interested in purchasing one of them, they cost \$6.99. We can't keep that series of books on the shelf due to their popularity! The book would make a nice gift.

Our library skills parent volunteers include; Melissa Gomez, Diane Hammond, Martha Kenney, Jamie Pertl, the Quinteros and Christie Schumacher. A special thanks to the Quinteros for covering the paperback series of the Berenstain books! They truly are a dynamic duo!

Thank you so much for your contribution!

### **Art**

Wow! Casino Night was so much fun! The children's class projects from art were a success! I hope you enjoy having them as much as the children enjoyed making them!

The students have been working with ceramic clay. The projects will be fired in our kiln after Thanksgiving. Their projects will be ready to take home before Christmas break. We are learning about stained glass during the month of December.

I thank my parent volunteers for getting down and dirty with us during clay time! The following parents have volunteered during November; Marilyn Carroll, Kelly Gibbons, Diane Hammond and Christie Schumacher.

I would also like to thank the parents who signed up for after school art lessons with me. We have completed clay and are moving onto drawing during December, and painting during January. If you are interested in signing your child up for lessons, you can send a note to school and I will contact you.

## Congratulations

We received some very exciting news! One of our St. Mary's students is the first place winner of the "Christmas on the Cumberland, Winter Wonderland" poster contest! Our very own sixth grader; Katlyn Melton has received this honor! Katlyn was awarded \$50.00, a framed copy of the poster, and her art class will receive a Subway party! Lucky for us, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders share art class together! A Grand Opening Celebration was held on November 23, 2010 in the "As the River Flows" museum at McGregor Park, next to Wendy's. Natalie Wieber was also chosen as a finalist. Natalie received a goody bag and a certificate. Both girls were honored at the opening celebration.

## Important December Dates

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December 1-31

- National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month
- Safe Toys and Gifts Month

2 – 9	Hanukkah
3	Grades K – 3 Christmas Program 7:00 pm
4	ICCCW Craft Fair – Family Life Center (Immaculate Conception Parish)
7	National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
8	<b>The Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass 8:15 am</b> Bethlehem Party following Mass Dismissal following Bethlehem Program
10	Grades 4 – 8 Christmas Program 7:00 pm
11	Santa Breakfast at St. Mary's School
10 – 17	Human Rights Week
13	Grades 4 – 8 fieldtrip to the Roxy
15	Bill of Rights Day Grades 1 – 3 fieldtrip to the Roxy
16	Christmas Parties after lunch
17	Wright Brothers Day Dismissal begins at 11:00 am
December 20 – January 3	Christmas Vacation
25	Christmas Day
December 26 – January 1	Kwanzaa
December 31	New Year's Eve

January 4      School Resumes

Required Confirmation Lock-In Retreat

Friday, February 11 – Saturday, February 12 at St. Mary's

Students will need to bring a sleeping bag, pillow, toothbrush, etc. You will receive more details