

# ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY PARENT NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023

[stjohnsacademynd.org](http://stjohnsacademynd.org)

*Expressing Gratitude to Our Donors*



*We are extremely grateful for the generosity of all our donors who have contributed in prayer, volunteer work, or monetary donations towards helping us "Finish the Vision".*



## Important Dates

- December 1st - First Friday Early Dismissal - 11:45 am
- December 5th - Kids' Kingdom Annual Jammie Party (Feast of St. Nick Celebration)
- December 10th - Christmas at the Academy - 3 pm
- December 11th - Middle School Christmas Concert - 6pm
- December 15th - Kids' Kingdom, Pre-K & Kindergarten Christmas Program - 2 pm
- December 18th - Grades 1-6 Christmas Program - 6pm
- December 21st - School Holiday Movie @ Bison Cinema
  - Classroom Parties - 1pm
  - Christmas Caroling - 2pm
- December 22nd - Jan 1st - No School - Christmas Break
- January 2nd - School Resumes



# FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

ST. JOHN'S



ACADEMY



Families of St. John's Academy,

In last month's issue, I mentioned that I had come to the realization that November is my favorite month of the year, as we focus on our final days, remember those who have gone before us, and recognize those who have excelled in living out the faith. However, as we begin the month of December, I'm starting to have second thoughts about which month is my favorite!

For those who have children and/or are in the business of working with children, the season of Advent, or the Christmas season as the majority of the world refers to the weeks before December 25th, is truly a magical time. The visible excitement, joy, and anticipation that children exude this time of year is truly contagious.

As an adult, some of that excitement can be drowned out by the lengthy to-do lists that come with the holiday season. Christmas shopping, holiday parties, cooking, cleaning, decorating, other seasonal obligations, etc. can be overwhelming and can rob us of that child-like joy. To let these commitments and duties interfere with the joys and blessings that this time of year can bring can be a real tragedy. To prevent that from happening, one really has to be intentional about how we go about our days.

Recently, my family finished watching the 3rd season of the Chosen series. I realize that the program can be a little controversial in that some liberties are taken with the content but for me watching the Chosen has not only been enjoyable, but it has truly aided in my spiritual growth. I say that for the simple reason that it has helped me grasp the reality of Christ and has increased my desire to seek and know Him.

Watching this series has served as a powerful meditation exercise as I am drawn to consider what it was like for the apostles to wrestle with His ways as they attempted to understand, to follow, and serve Christ. The program does a good job of showing the humanity of the apostles, their struggles and challenges. More than anything, I've come to realize just how amazing God is, and how perfect his love for us is. This realization has helped bring back some of that child-like joy that I see in the children at our school. Viewers of the program are likely impacted in different ways, and I don't mean to insinuate that watching the Chosen is a Christian obligation. Rather, it has highlighted to me the need to spend time in intentional, focused prayer and meditation to truly grasp the reality of God and the story of our salvation through His son, Jesus Christ.

I've referred to the book "The Talent Code" before, but I love the main ideas that the author, Daniel Coyle, discusses. The secret behind greatness is three-fold 1). There must be a spark - to initiate an intense drive, 2). There must be great teaching/coaching 3). One must put in the time (10,000 hours to be precise). If we apply that concept to our faith; 1). We must have an event, an experience, that generates an intense spark and drive to pursue our Lord. Christ, out of His love for us will provide this spark if we give him the opportunity. 2). We must have great teaching/coaching which is available to us through the Divine Teacher, through early Church Fathers, the Saints, and through Church teaching. Finally, we must put in the time.

As the saying goes, "there's no time like the present", which is precisely the reason for the season of Advent. Making time for God will inevitably generate that spark to grow in our faith and ultimately bring back that child-like Joy that we see in our children.

May God bless us all this Advent and provide that spark to draw us closer to His Sacred Heart!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature of Jeff Trumbauer in black ink.

Jeff Trumbauer  
Principal - St. John's Academy





# Mrs. Mahoney's Kids' Kingdom

November was a month of reflection and gratitude. We spent time talking about all we were thankful for...God, Jesus, 'his mommy' (Mary), our parents, siblings, mac 'n cheese, 'sketti,' our beds and stuffed animals, hugs...the list was long! Many of our projects revolved around this topic of thankfulness. These little ones understand, and it was heartwarming to listen to their thoughts and reasoning. During our Station work, we measured for math lessons and enjoyed color science experiments. We studied turkeys and found out many interesting facts about them!

As we start another busy month, we hope you find time to slow down and snuggle up with your family. We look forward to enjoying the excitement of the season together in our classroom. Our days will be filled with crafts, singing, stories, and wonderful Christmas music. We will continue to work on eye contact and verbal skills, phonics, math concepts, and fine motor skills...all with a holiday theme, of course!



❄️❄️❄️ *Happy Holidays* ❄️❄️❄️







# Mrs. Gange's Kids' Kingdom

Get ready for a holly jolly month full of kindness, the Gingerbread Man, and a heartwarming tale that will warm your soul: the true meaning of Christmas! This month is one of the busiest, but so meaningful! I'm thrilled to share the story of Jesus with all your little ones!





# Library

Consider a gift to SJA and our Library this Christmas season. During the Christmas season, a “Giving Tree” is in the main hallway by St. Joseph’s Chapel. On the tree, are pictures of books from our library that have been damaged, are old, books from a series that we are missing, or student requests. We would appreciate your help in replacing and updating these books. Please choose a card from the tree, put the card and check/cash in an envelope found under the tree. There is also a donation sticker you can fill out. Please give payment and tag to someone in the office for the library to purchase the books! We thank you so much for your support and have a blessed Christmas season!



**DECEMBER  
VIRTUES**

**WEEK OF DEC 3RD: GENEROSITY**  
**WEEK OF DEC 11TH: GRATITUDE**  
**WEEK OF DEC 18TH: KINDNESS**



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# Mrs. Neville's Pre-K

Pre-K has been very busy! We've been having so much fun playing and learning together. Here are some of the last month's highlights:

- For Friendship Friday, we learned about pets. One of our activities was writing "pet words" with magnetic letters.
- To develop hand and finger strength, we have been playing with Play-Doh. This is actually pre-writing skill, but lots of fun at the same time!
- We did various Thanksgiving themed centers such as: letter recognition, fine motor, number matching, and books.





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For more information on our Community of Saints program, visit:  
[www.stjohnsacademynd.org](http://www.stjohnsacademynd.org)





# Kindergarten



It seems like we just changed the calendar to November. Calendar time is a favorite in kindergarten. The students can hardly wait for their turn to help put up the numbers, draw tally marks for the weather, and ask students the word on the flashcard.

Another favorite activity is when we get together with our prayer partners. Our 4th grade friends came to the Kindergarten classroom and everyone made an owl using a toilet paper roll, cupcake holders and construction paper.

Show-n-tell is also a big hit in kindergarten. Each week we learn a letter from the alphabet. Students get to bring 1 item that starts with that letter. A few highlights for the letter c were Caterpillar payloader, a coach, and challenge coins.







# First Grade

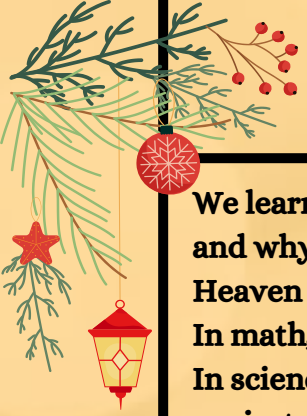


The First-Grade students have been busy reading, writing, and learning math. Each day we take time for prayer and practicing our virtues is part of our daily path. We have had fun celebrating Halloween, writing to the Veterans, and sharing what we are thankful for. We are excited for the next holiday and what the true meaning of the season has in store. We appreciated the help from the other classes to send our Veterans thank you cards.

**Happy Holidays to all from the First Grade and God Bless Everyone!**







# Second Grade

We learned a lot about the Saints this month and why we celebrate these holy men and women, and why we ask for their prayers and intercessions. How blessed are we to have the Saints in Heaven praying for us!

In math, we have been working on addition and subtraction story problems with multiple steps. In science, we discovered matter and properties of materials through hands on learning with projects and experiments.

We are now enjoying taking AR tests to track our reading goals and to help us dive deeper into comprehension and vocabulary skills.

Each week, we pray and spend time with Jesus, during adoration. We let God speak to our hearts while peacefully spending time with the Blessed Sacrament. What a blessing to have this opportunity during our school days!

It was another month filled with learning, faith, and fun in 2nd grade!





# Third Grade

What has 3rd grade been doing lately?



- Explored the mystery of our Faith in the Holy Trinity
- Learned even more multiplication facts and techniques.
- Wrote a 3-paragraph essay about a job we were interested in and then turned that job into a "Turkey in Dressing" before Thanksgiving
- We will start preparing for the Advent Season with our Jesse Tree - decorated by your very own 3rd graders.
- We will be reading a novel about chocolate...lots of chocolate...





# Fourth Grade

November started off with one of our favorite days of the year in fourth grade. We worked hard in October to prepare for All-Saints' Day and really enjoyed representing these heroes of our Faith during the All-Saints' Day Mass and Saint Parade.

Another highlight of this month was creating beautiful sunset landscape pictures using watercolor pencils. Then each student wrote their very own haiku to go with their artwork. It was inspiring to see their creativity come alive.

The week before Thanksgiving we did a novel study on the classic book *Molly's Pilgrim* by Barbara Cohen. We learned that there are many different kinds of pilgrims.

We are looking forward to the month of December and all the exciting events that come with preparing for the birth of our Lord.





# Fifth Grade



We are continuing to work hard academically and grow a lot in our spiritual life. We are now learning about division and getting into long division where we are understanding that if we keep practicing, we will eventually “get it.” (The great virtue of perseverance. 😊)

We have just completed our unit on Early Explorers in Social Studies, and we are continuing to learn more about ecosystems and the cycles involved in Science. In Reading/Language Arts, we are learning about plurals, inflectional endings, comparing/contrasting, sequence, and Greek/Latin roots as we read many interesting stories.

In Religion we are reading a book about our classroom saint, St. John Bosco. It's amazing how much we can relate to the saints and all they have to teach us! We gave careful consideration to all the things we are thankful for during this month of gratitude as we made a colorful cornucopia.





# Middle School



Now that we have our second class of 8th graders and have had the privilege of watching this group of amazing students complete 3 years with us, the middle school teachers can see how much learning takes place in SJA's Middle School. Academically, our students are ready to soar when they reach high school, but there is another piece of their education that can't be measured with test scores. Some, in fact, may consider this even more important in the grand scheme of life. This piece is leadership and serving.

Every day the middle school students gather in the chapel to begin their day with prayer. This includes one decade of the Rosary. At the end of each week, students will have said a full Rosary. (We even make up for the days we miss for vacations.) Every student has the opportunity to lead this morning prayer. By 8th grade, our students are incredibly comfortable at taking the mic and leading 50+ people in prayer. This is only one small piece of leadership that is expected of our students. Students read and serve at mass; they participate in speech contests. They present in front of their classmates on a regular basis. Not one of our students ever hesitates when they are called to get up in front of a group and lead.

Our students are also expected to serve others in a variety of ways. If you want to see the middle schoolers in action, join us for a weekly Mass in the Zebedee Center. At the end of Mass our students clean up and get the space ready for gym classes in a matter of 10 minutes. No one complains. No one shirks their duty. They are all a part of our school community and know that it is a gift to God to serve in whatever capacity they are asked. Our 8th graders even have a formal opportunity for service in their Servant Leadership class. They will end their experience at SJA with an overnight trip to Minneapolis where they will pack food at Feed My Starving Children. Students that have gone on this trip often say that packing food to feed the hungry is one of their favorite parts of the 8th grade trip. Add that their education in faith and the responsibility to be a light for others...we are setting our students up for an amazing future of serving God and others.

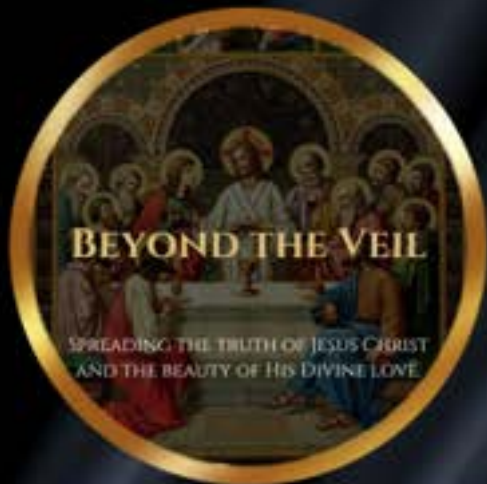
*6th graders load donations for the Winter Gear collection that was lead by the Jamestown Rotary Club.*



*SJA 6th graders present vocabulary skits to teach vocabulary words to their classmates.*







## Exploring the invisible realities of the existence of God.

### Getting Ready for the "Big Day"

Excerpts from: The Advent of the Word

Prayer Resources the **Word among us** (Dec. 2020)

Have you ever noticed how we live by seasons? Our calendars may break life up into weeks and months and years, but it's the seasons that really count for us.

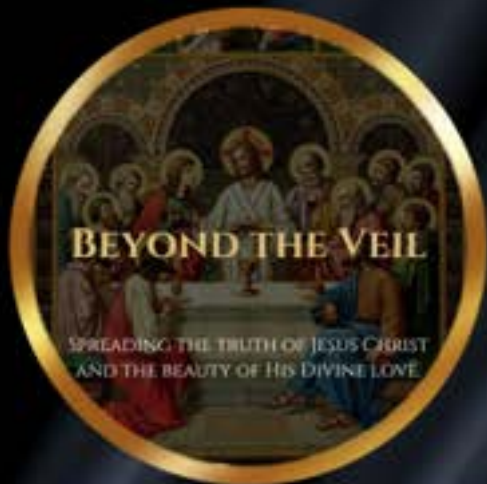
And nothing seems to get more attention than sports seasons. Whether it's football, baseball, cricket, or soccer, all the seasons follow a general pattern. Initially, people get excited about their home team as the games begin. But as the season progresses, fans gradually turn their attention to the teams likely to win the championship, whether it is the Super Bowl, the World Series, or the World Cup.

In a similar way, the season of Advent is filled with activities, all of which lead up to one special time. From the very start of the season, special lights and decorations begin appearing around homes and shopping centers. Candles begin to light up windows, and specially decorated trees show up in homes and office buildings. Christmas cards start circulating in the mail, and gifts for loved ones are bought and wrapped in brightly colored paper.

That's how Advent begins, but as Christmas Day draws near, our focus changes. While the activities remain, and may even increase, our attention moves from a season toward that one special day. Maybe we are thinking about what it will be like to have a family gathering or to enjoy a special meal together. We may take some time out to count all of our blessings or look forward to Christmas Day itself as a time to give thanks.

Continue to next page





## Exploring the invisible realities of the existence of God.

**A Season for Joy.** While thoughts like these are good and even pleasing to the Lord, there is a deeper dimension both to the season of Advent and to Christmas Day that God wants us to experience. For these whole four weeks, even as we go about all our preparations, God wants to open our eyes to the glory of Jesus' birth. His desire is that on Christmas Day, above all the other joys of family gatherings and the giving of gifts, we will experience the joy that comes from knowing that God gave up his only Son not to condemn us but to bring us eternal life (John 3:16).

**Lift Up Your Eyes.** The glory of Advent and Christmas is that Jesus has come among us as the Word made flesh to give us the answers we crave. Even today, the primary mission of the Holy Spirit is to unfold for us all of the things that Jesus taught when he walked the earth (John 14:26). And in that unfolding, we begin to see our lives, this world, and even heaven in a new and exciting way.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is the living Word of God. This is what we are celebrating this season. And what's more, this is what we have the hope of experiencing when Christmas Day dawns. Jesus wants to give us a new vision for our lives, a vision that goes beyond what we tend to think about every day. He wants to take us into his world, the heavenly Jerusalem, and show the Father to us so that we can live a new life. And as he opens our eyes, he also wants to shower us with an abundant supply of gifts—double measures of his love, his mercy, and his power. All we have to do is open the door and let him in. As Christmas Day draws closer, take the time to look to Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the Son of God. He was sent by the Father to save us and to reveal God's love to us. Don't miss out on this precious gift. Rather, take hold of it every day by carving out extra time for prayer. Try to go to Mass more frequently. Seek reconciliation with God through Confession. Whatever you do, be sure that you are fixing your eyes on Jesus and asking him to make himself known to you.

the **WORD**  
among us®

**O most loving Father, grant that I may at last gaze forever upon the unveiled face of your beloved Son. - St. Thomas Aquinas**





# Nov.-Dec. Breakfast 2023

## SJA Cafeteria

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MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
20 Cereal Bar Cereal Fruit	21 Mini Doughnuts Cereal Fruit	22 Yogurt Cereal Fruit	23 Happy Thanksgiving! No School!	24 No School!
27 Breakfast Pizza Cereal Fruit	28 Muffin/Omelet Cereal Fruit	29 French Toast Cereal Fruit	30 Egg Bake Muffin Cereal Fruit	Dec. 1 Mini Long John Fruit Cereal
4 Egg Cheese Biscuit Cereal Fruit	5 Cereal Bar Cereal Fruit	6 Pancake Sausage Wrap	7 Pop Tart Cereal Fruit	8 Caramel Rolls Cereal Fruit
11 Breakfast Pizza Cereal Fruit	12 Muffin/Omelet Cereal Fruit	13 French Toast Cereal Fruit	14 Yogurt Cereal Fruit	15 Mini Doughnuts Cereal Fruit





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# Nov.-Dec. Lunch 2023

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

20

Chicken Burger

21

Pizza Sticks

22

Ham w/ Roll

23

Happy

24

Baked Beans

Spaghetti Sauce

Potatoes & Gravy

Thanksgiving!

No School!

Ham & Cheese

Turkey Sandwich

Apple Crisp

No School!

27

Hamburger

28

Baked Potato

29

Chicken Nuggets

30

Spaghetti

Dec. 1

Potato Smiles

Ham & Cheese

French Fries

Breadstick

Pepperoni Pizza

Roasted Chic Peas

Roll

Ham & Turkey

Ham & Cheese

Sunbutter & Jelly

Ham Sandwich

Turkey Sandwich

Wrap

Sandwich

Sandwich

4

Hot Dog

5

Chili/Cheese

6

Teriyaki Chicken

7

Meatballs

8

Baked Beans

Breadstick

Veggie Fried Rice

Potatoes &

Mac & Cheese

Ham & Cheese

Turkey Sandwich

Breadstick

Gravy

Sunbutter & Jelly

11

BBQ Riblet  
on a Bun

12

Tator Tot  
Casserole & Roll

13

Taco/Bag  
Salsa

14

Mini Corn Dogs

15

Cheese Pizza

Corn

Green Beans

Ham & Turkey

Ham & Cheese

Sunbutter & Jelly

Ham & Cheese

Turkey Sandwich

Wrap

Sandwich

Sandwich