



Dear Parents,

September 4, 2019

We have had such an encouraging beginning to the school year that I think I need to boast a little about our children and teachers. I will begin with the “big kids,” our 5th and 6th graders.

On the third day of school this year, I asked one of our 6th grade girls how it was going. She gave me a “thumbs up” and said, regarding her teachers, “Great! They love us.” I cannot think of a better compliment for Sister Marie Amata and Sister Mary Faustina. St. John Bosco would agree saying, “It’s not enough to love the children, it is necessary that they are aware that they are loved.” My congratulations to these two fine Sisters who are working together to make this year a great experience for our “on-the-verge-of-adolescence” youngsters.

Sister Peter Marie is doing a masterful job with our fourth graders in setting the stage for a successful academic year. It takes a combination of firm discipline and joyful energy to create a classroom where learning can really flourish. The flourishing has begun in the fourth grade! Yesterday the children were learning why zebras have stripes and this morning they were outlining a story about a princess who made pizzas. Learning can be fascinating and fun!

Meanwhile, our second and third graders are behaving so well that I can only thank God. Every time I go into Mrs. Uhing’s or Sister Teresa Marie’s classroom, I see happy children listening intently or quietly working on their lessons. This is a true blessing for good behavior leads to spiritual and intellectual growth.

The first graders have been learning lessons from the great classic stories of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* and *The Tortoise and the Hare*. Pip, the puppet rabbit, comes out each day to help them learn their phonics skills before they tackle writing their own stories in their journals. I am so glad to have Mrs. Jochum as part of our faculty. She is a great match for these bouncy first graders and she enters each day with a smile and good cheer.

Life in the Kindergarten and Pre-K has been very engaging. These sweet little children already know how to sit on their places at the carpet when it is time to listen to Miss Kopetzky and Mrs. Tranmer and then eagerly explore at centers when it is time for their “hands on” learning. I am always amazed at the variety of activities, which these two excellent early childhood teachers have lined up for their students. Today, in Mrs. Tranmer’s room, for example, the students can explore the concept of weight as they place plastic bears on either side of a balance. In Miss Kopetzky’s room the children have all sorts of rocks and minerals to examine under a magnifying glass. What will tomorrow bring?

After two full weeks of testing, Mrs. Ward began her Title I and English Language Learners classes yesterday. I could tell by the smile on her face and from what I saw personally that all was going well. Her technology skills are triumphing as she uses the ipads to translate from English to Spanish and Spanish to English.

And what would we do without our Teacher Assistants, Miss Ziems and Miss Young? Well, we simply could not do without them. Their support of the teachers and students is critical to keep the St. James education train from derailing.

Finally, though not a teacher, I want to acknowledge Mrs. Hier. Being a principal in a Catholic School is a fabulous mission and at the same time a continuous whirlwind of demands and challenges. I could not do it without Mrs. Hier. She and I are a team in the office and also friends and that makes life at St. James a pleasure. We have a good laugh at least daily and sometimes I think that God might be laughing with us.

In a near future newsletter, I want to do more boasting about our wonderful staff for a school does not live by teachers alone. It takes the parish priests, administration, accountants, maintenance, custodians, cooks, volunteers, and many dedicated parents. Thank you for all you do for us. Please be sure to read on the backside of this letter that explains the area of our greatest need for your help.

Prayer to Saint James St. James the Greater, patron of our school, enkindle in our hearts the same burning love you had for our Lord. May we answer His call, as you did, to be “fishers of men”. May we possess your zeal for Christ, a love that led you to be the first Apostle to die for the faith. Protect, direct and bless our school family. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

We Really Need Everyone to Help! Parents, as you may or may not realize, our teachers are paid significantly less than their confreres in the public schools. Their lower salary is part of what keeps your tuition so low. Look at what a Catholic education costs in any other part of the country!

For years now, the St. James School Family has run the Scrip program and given the proceeds to the teachers as a bonus at Christmas time. This Scrip bonus helps narrow the gap, a little, and shows our teachers how much we appreciate their efforts and sacrifice.

Right now Jason and Nancy Murphy are carrying almost the whole burden of the Scrip program. We need many more parent helpers if it is to continue. The program was never meant to be run by just 2 people. It takes a large team with everyone doing a little. I would like every parent to please fill out the enclosed form which states how you will help with Scrip this year. Please return the form by next Wednesday, September 11. I will be contacting parents who do not return this form. Thank you. I know I can count on your help.

Early Dismissal: School dismisses at 1:20 pm on Monday, September 9 for a teacher faculty meeting. Buses will be running.

Volunteering at St. James School? The diocese has a new requirement. Every volunteer must complete the Safe Environment Training every year. Even if you have taken this before, you need to do it once again this year. Information will come home today.

Back to School Night *Thank you to all who attended the SFA meeting and Back to School Night on Tuesday, August 27. We estimated that 60% of our parents attended. Your presences means much to us!*

Tardy/Absence Policy: To be on time, your child must arrive at school by 8:05 am. If you arrive after 8:10 a.m. please walk your child (K-6) into church; do not have them wait alone in front of school. If you are going to be late or have a sick child, please call the school office to let us know. If we notice that your child is absent and we do not know why we will call you to confirm their absence.

Sick child? If your child shows symptoms of being ill (fever, vomiting, etc.) they should be kept home until they are free of these symptoms for 24 hours without the aid of medication.

Coming Home Today in the Communication Envelope:

How I will Help the Scrip Program form
Save Environment form
Scrip Order form
Crete Backpack form
Tuition Envelope

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.