



Dear Parents,

August 13, 2020



Welcome back to School! Our hearts rejoice to have the children with us once again. We have been preparing for weeks and are ever so ready to begin. In this newsletter, we will share with you some of our preparations.

Spiritually, we prepared by doing our best to live holy lives during the summer, by praying for the children and their families, and, more recently, by attending a

retreat as a faculty. During this retreat, our teachers reflected on their vocation to bear witness to Christ each day in the classroom. A Christian witness is like a living flame that enkindles faith and love of God in others. We realized that we needed to depend on Jesus in order to succeed in this mission of witnessing to the children. Self-reliance in such a task can only lead to failure. We chose to entrust our teaching mission and ourselves to the care of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Chances of success are now 100%!

We sharpened our classroom management skills by taking a two-day training session with a program called BIST. This program fits very well with our Catholic School philosophy of education as it recognizes the dignity of all children and puts in structures to help children succeed.

We prepared academically by taking several days of professional development in reading instruction and technology enrichment. Our primary grade teachers spent hours working together as a team in sequencing phonics skills from Kindergarten through third grades.

Finally, we prepared and prepared and prepared for a safe return to school during this time of COVID-19. How?

- We zoomed with professionals from Catholic Health Initiative so that we might better attend to the physical and emotional health of the children.
- We replaced the schools' air filters with Merv 13 filters – the kind used in hospitals.
- We procured extra masks for the children and a washer and dryer to make sure the masks are clean.
- We obtained gallons of hand sanitizer and put up new dispensers.
- We displayed distancing signs and markers in the hallways.
- We restructured our arrival procedures to include screening, and our dismissal procedure to avoid the clusters and clumps of humanity along south brick wall.
- We repositioned our Mass seating – including children in the choir loft. The 6th graders will love this!
- We rearranged our lunchroom to provide distancing and put down markers to help the children with the new arrangement.
- We put up a screens in the front office, hot lunch check-in desk, and on the counter where the children pickup their lunch trays in the cafeteria.
- We regrouped our recess shifts, taking on extra duties, to allow for fewer children on the playground at one time.
- We made a private, yet monitored, waiting area for children who would show symptoms of the illness.
- We limited visitors in the building.
- We purchased disinfecting equipment and materials and scheduled frequent disinfecting routines.

- We spread out the desks in the classrooms and individualized materials.
- We restructured our PE, Library, and Music classes.
- We are now planning and training for possible distance learning and hoping we will not need to use it.
- Etc. etc. etc.

The list could continue and easily double in length but this gives you a good idea of the groundwork. Your children are worth the effort. Of all the return to school measures, one of my favorite is the “Welcome Back” banners. Be sure to see them on the north and south ends of the building. We all thought that the children needed to know, now more than ever before, that they have a school with a faculty, staff, principal, pastor, and God who love them.

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.

PS I wish the designer could have put uniforms on these banner children but we ran out of time!



First Holy Communion

The plan right now is for last years’ Holy Communion students, who are now third graders, to begin receiving on the weekends from September 12- October 11. See information coming home from Sister Teresa Marie.

Back-to School Night

Back to School Night is scheduled for Tuesday, August 25 at 6:30 pm. Please join us for this event on Facebook Live through the school website. <https://www.st-james-crete.org/>

Exposure to COVID

If a student has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes without a mask and in less than 6 feet distancing then:

- If ill person is in strict isolation, the student may return (if symptom free) 14 days after contact.
- If ill person or child leaves home, the student may return (if symptom free) 14 days after isolation begins.
- If ill person is not able to isolate and the student or ill person are not able to go elsewhere, the student may return 10 days after ill person’s initial symptoms plus an additional 14 days.