



Dear Parents

July 19, 2022

Summer greetings! I have often thought that God's first bible is the world He created. The beauty of His creation (flowers, trees, mountains, rivers, sea and sky, etc.) gives knowledge of who He is and propels our hearts toward Him. This year we will incorporate nature studies within the St. James science curriculum. Jesse Stuart, when describing his father in his book [A Penny's Worth of Character](#), exemplifies why a Catholic School should consider nature studies to be of irreplaceable value. He writes:

I remember my father unloading me from his back under a white oak tree, just beginning to get its leaves. "Look at that hill, Son," he said, gesturing broadly with a sweep of his hand. "Look up that steep hill toward that sky. See how pretty that new corn is."

Once on a rainy Sunday afternoon when we were walking between corn fields, he motioned for me to step up beside him and look. He pointed to a redbird on its nest in a locust tree. Here sat a redbird with shiny red feathers upon the dark background of a nest. It was just another bird's nest to me, until he whispered, "Ever see anything as pretty as that redbird sitting on that dark nest in the white drops of rain?" From this time on, I have liked to see birds, especially redbirds, sitting on their nests in the rain. My father was the first one ever to make me see the beauty in these little things about me.

Then there were the hundreds of times my father took me to the hills just to see the wildflowers. I thought it was silly at first, but as I continued to go with him, I learned more about wildflowers and appreciated their beauty.

So many times when I went with him, we sat on a log, maybe one covered with wild moss, looked at a wildflower for hours, listened to the wind in the leaves, and then got up from the log when the sun went down . . . He found beauty everywhere around him. He had eyes to find it. He had a mind to know it. He had a heart to appreciate it.

What if our St. James children had the eyes to see, the minds to know, and the hearts to appreciate nature's beauty all around them? If they did, I am certain they would understand that God is intimately present in their lives. They would have even more opportunity for lives of happiness and peace by taking in that which is beautiful and good. With this hope and final goal in mind, St. James children will be spending more time in nature this school year. Here is an outline of what we hope to observe in September and October.

September	Week 1	Seeds
	Week 2	Mini Beasts (Insect study)
	Week 3	The Harvest Moon (This may be moved to another week)
	Week 4	The Autumnal Equinox
October	Week 1	Autumn Leaves
	Week 2	Autumn Pond Study
	Week 3	Autumn Tree Study
	Week 4	Pumpkins

The children will have a nature journal in which to record their observations, ponderings, and any prayers that naturally spring forth from their observations of God's artwork. Poetry too will go hand in hand with the nature studies. I will be sure to send home the poem of the week for you to enjoy.

Charlotte Mason writes, “Let them once get in touch with nature and a habit is formed which will be a source of delight and habit through life . . .” It is with great joy that I anticipate all the good things which will come to your children as they learn to see and appreciate God’s first bible – the natural world He created.

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.

VACATION: Remember not to take a vacation from the practice of your faith over the summer! Make Sunday Mass a priority and perhaps you can even find extra time to worship and praise God at daily Mass. On long car trips consider praying the rosary for safety - asking for Mary’s blessing on your journey. It can also set a positive, peaceful tone for the trip.

Please Add to the Supply List: Please purchase a 2 inch wide white three ring binder for each child attending St. James School. We will use these for their nature journals.

OPEN HOUSE and SCHOOL PICTURES Please come to the St. James 2022-2023 Open House on Friday, August 12 from 9:00 – 12:00 pm. Have your children dress up for their school pictures. Drop off your child’s classroom supplies as you visit the classroom and meet the teachers. This Open House is for all St. James students grade Pre-K – 6 and their parents.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL St. James School begins on Tuesday, August 16 at 8:05 am. Children may be dropped off by the flagpole. It will be a full day with a 3:20 pm dismissal.

UNIFORMS Be sure to have your child(ren) in uniforms on the first day of school. If you want to trade, buy or give away school uniforms please come to the school office on Tuesdays and Wednesday mornings during August from 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Jumpers are \$5; pants, sweaters and shirts are \$1. Unused jumpers are always needed. Uniforms may also be purchased new at Dennis Uniform in Omaha.

HAIR STYLES: “Hair should be clean, well-groomed and its natural, God-given color (no hair extensions/feathers). Extremes in hairstyles are not acceptable. Boys’ hair may not go below the collar, ear lobes or eyebrows.” Please be aware as we approach August 16th that hair needs to be its God-given color and that shaved designs in boys hair are also not acceptable.

FIRST TUITION PAYMENT is due from each family by **August 2**. Thank you for paying promptly; this is very helpful with summer bills! Enclosed is a tuition agreement form for those who have not yet completed one.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT is Tuesday, August 23rd. The School Family Association meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. in the parish hall followed by classroom visits and a Title I meeting for parents of students who qualify. Back to School Night is a great opportunity to meet the teachers, and to learn about the curriculum and classroom policies. We hope to see all of you there!

BUY \$CRIP: You buy **gift cards** for your favorite places to shop at face value and a percentage goes to the school. \$CRIP is a wonderful way to support the school with no cost to you, since everyone needs to shop, eat, buy gas, etc. anyway. Stop by the office to get your Scrip or to find out more information.

Coming Home Today: Student supply list, School Calendar, and Tuition Agreement form for those families who have not yet submitted their signed form.