



Dear Parents,

August 21, 2024



Welcome back to School! We have been preparing for weeks and are so happy to have your children with us once again. In this newsletter, I will share with you some of our preparations and goals for the 2024-2025 school year.

Spiritually, the St. James faculty prepared by doing our best to live holy lives during the summer, by praying for the children, and, more recently, by reflecting together on our vocation to joyfully bear witness to Christ each day in the classroom (and everywhere else). Our Monday meetings provide a great opportunity for us to encourage each other in this goal of joyful witness throughout the year. Some of you parents might enjoy hearing this talk on joyful witness by Chris Stefanik. Our teachers found it inspiring.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LccklgQU8SA>

We sharpened our classroom management skills the week before school started by taking an all-day booster review session of the BIST classroom behavior management program. This program fits very well with our Catholic School philosophy of education because it recognizes the dignity of all children and puts in place structures to help children succeed. Our goal is to help children develop their capacity to:

1. Make good choices even if they are angry or experiencing other strong emotions.
2. Make good choices even if others around them are making poor choices.
3. Do the right and responsible thing even if it is hard or even if they don't want to do so at the time.

A child who develops these abilities will have a greater chance for happiness and success as a teenager and adult.

Academically, we prepared by attending the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education's National Conference at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas from July 9-12. Every teacher of grades PreK – 6th attended as well as most all our specialty teachers. (Thank you to the St. James SFA for sponsoring our attendance!) Our repertoire of knowledge in teaching certainly expanded as we attended such session as: *Reaching the Reluctant Writer*, *The Art of Interactive Reading and Discussion*, *Lifting our Gaze: Better and More Beautiful Math*, *Seeing What History Frees Us to See*, and many others. Our goal is to give our students the gift of wonder and joy in learning so that they might continue to seek wisdom, virtue, truth, goodness, and beauty throughout their lives.

The building too was prepared for the school year with new up-to-date fire code doors for the cafeteria and gym area, new carpet and tile flooring in the kindergarten room, and many maintenance and deep cleaning tasks skillfully performed by our chief maintenance man, Dennis Bargman, and assisted by our cook, Rocio Mendoza. Our goal is to have a beautiful building which feels like a home.

The above is just a glimpse. I did not yet mention the work put in by our most capable Administrative Assistant, Ms. Staci Tyma who keeps straight so many records and reports demanded by the Nebraska Department of Education and the Diocesan Office. Her goal is to serve with kindness, order, and efficiency.

It takes a great amount of love and dedication to prepare for a new school year. Your children are worth the effort! They are blessed to have not only parents who love them, but a school with a faculty and staff who love them. Let us make it our goal to have both home and school working together and supporting each other for the good of our children.

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.

From the Mouths of Babes: Yesterday, one of our first graders gleefully exclaimed to Sister Peter Marie that she “gave her heart to Jesus” while on the swing at recess! So beautiful!

Back-to School Night: Parents, please come to Back to School Night this Tuesday, August 27. Please meet first in the parish hall for a brief SFA meeting in which you will be introduced to the officers and to learn about the Opportunity Scholarship of Nebraska. Following this short meeting, parents may go to the classrooms to meet your children’s teachers and to learn about their program for the school year. We will also have a meeting for children who qualify for Title I services.

Coming Home Today: Hot lunch notes, Parent Reminders, Safe Environment form, Crete Parks and Rec flyer, Cubs Scouts flyer.

