



Dear Parents,

February 11, 2026

With Lent almost here, I find myself reflecting on free will and the fallen angels in Hell. These pure spiritual beings were created by God as good. They all had intelligence and free will. They all, at first, far surpassed any human person on earth in beauty, power, and perfection. But they fell and became horrors. We call them demons. One became Satan, or Lucifer, the most deformed of the demons.

The fallen angels did this by their own free and fully informed choice. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that these fallen angels, though created good, "became evil by their own doing." CCC 391

What power resides in free will! By our free choices we shape our lives. We, like the angels, have the power to make ourselves evil, even though we were created very good. We also have the power, through our own choices and with God's grace, to become eternally glorious in Christ. The beauty and perfection which we can become is far beyond anything we can conceive. St. Catherine of Siena writes that a soul in grace is "so beautiful that even the angels are in awe of it" and she teaches that if you saw it, you would die of joy. "The Dialogues – St. Catherine of Siena"

To attain to such glory and goodness, our free choices are necessary but not enough. We absolutely need God's grace as well. The good news is that He wills to give it to us! He desires our eternal perfection, but he will not make it happen without our free choices for the good.

Lent is a time when we look again at our decisions in life. It is a time when we can repent of our sin and evil choices and opt for the good. The stakes for deciding rightly are just as high, if not higher, than that of the angles because once we die, our eternal destiny, like theirs, is fixed. Then there is no more choosing. How grateful we should be to God for the season of Lent and the opportunity it offers to repent of our bad choices and to choose again and again that which is good.

This Lent, choose well.

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.
Sister Mary Alma, C.K.

Kindergarten Preview: Today is the day! If you have a child who will be five years old by July 31, come to Mrs. Vasa's Kindergarten room this evening, Wednesday, February 11, at 5:00 p.m. to learn about our program and how to register. See why our Kindergarten children love school and their teacher!

Health and Wellness Policy Meeting: On Tuesday February 24th at 5:45 pm we will be having a Health and Wellness meeting. This meeting is open to all parents and is their chance to give their input on St. James School's health and wellness policy. This includes Nutrition (lunches), Physical Fitness (PE & Recess), and overall student Wellness. If you would like to give input but are unable to attend in person, please contact the office or email alycia-bates@cdolinc.net.

Good Shepherd Scholarship: It is time to be applying for the Good Shepherd Scholarship once again. The flyer in your packet coming home today has the eligibility information. Please go to www.goodshepherdscholarship.com to fill out the application as soon as you can. Tuition at St. James School next year is \$3,100.00 per child. The scholarship takes \$1,800.00 off your tuition and enables you to be eligible for the Sacred Heart scholarship.

You will need:

1. Your email address
2. Your 2024 or 2025 tax forms
3. Your 1040 form
4. Your W2 form
5. Your social security number and your children's social security numbers
6. Date of birth for your children
7. Information on taxable income
8. Information on nontaxable income (child support, food stamps, government assistance)

Need help filling out the Good Shepherd Scholarship? See the flyer coming home today and sign up for a time to get help on February 26 during Parent Teacher Conferences. Make sure you bring the items listed above.

Planning Committee for St. James Schools' Future Growth: Some parents are meeting with Sister Mary Alma and Father Stoley to share hopes and plans for the possible expansion of St. James School. Our meeting will be on Wednesday, February 25 at 4:45 p.m. in the parish hall meeting room. Please let Sister Mary Alma know if you are interested in attending.

Calendar Lottery: St. James School's one main fundraiser, the Calendar Lottery, is coming up soon. Look for tickets to come home in the communication folder on Wednesday, March 11. Our parents did a fabulous job last year. Let's see if we can do it again this year and help the school flourish.

Coming Home Today: Lenten Calendar, Reading Encouragement Letter, Good Shepherd Scholarship Information, Good Shepherd Scholarship Application Help Sign Up, Parent-Teacher Conferences Sign Up Information, Crete Park and Recreation Flyer.

Upcoming Dates:

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| Feb. 18 | Ash Wednesday – Lent begins |
| 20 | Stations of the Cross – 2:20 p.m. |
| 24 | First Penance Parent Meeting 6:30 p.m. in parish hall |
| 25 | Feast of St. James celebrated in school |
| 26 | Parent-Teacher Conferences |
| 27 | No School |
| March 1 | No School |
| 4 | PreK Open House 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. |



Good Shepherd Scholarship Announcement – 2026-2027 School Year

We are pleased to announce that the Lincoln Diocese will continue to offer Good Shepherd Scholarships for the 2026-2027 academic year for students who attend Diocesan Catholic Schools. Since the Good Shepherd Scholarship Program was announced in 2019, the Lincoln Diocese has awarded over \$17.1 million dollars in financial aid to families who attend Catholic Schools. Since the program began, the Good Shepherd Scholarship Program has:

- Provided scholarships to 22% - 25% of Catholic School students each year
- Attained a 100% Graduation Rate for senior scholarship recipients (84% Nebraska Rate, 85% U.S. Rate)
- Awarded over 9,500 student scholarships, 30% of those scholarship recipients identify as minorities

The **Good Shepherd Scholarship** for the 2026-2027 academic year will be \$1,800 for grades K-8 and \$2,100 for grades 9-12 and will cover families within 225% of the Federal Poverty Level. To be eligible for the Good Shepherd Scholarship families must complete an application and upload tax document through the **FACTS Scholarship Management** program. Any family may apply, regardless of religious affiliation. For more information or to apply for these scholarships go to www.goodshepherdscholarship.com.

Good Shepherd Scholarship Program – 2026 - 2027

1. Good Shepherd Scholarships (GSS) are for families who are within 225% of the Federal Poverty Level and have students in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade who attend participating Lincoln Diocese Catholic Schools.
2. Families must apply in FACTS for all scholarships and submit 2024 or 2025 Tax Forms, including the 1040, other required tax forms and W-2 statements for each parent.
3. The FACTS application is one \$45 fee for all scholarships, including GSS and local Catholic school scholarships.
4. Families must complete the FACTS Scholarship application each year in FACTS to be eligible for scholarships.
5. Scholarship applications start January 1, 2026 and the deadline to complete the application is March 31, 2026.
6. The definition of income follows the Federal Lunch Program guidelines (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/eligibility-manual-school-meals>).
7. To apply for Good Shepherd and local scholarships go to www.goodshepherdscholarship.com.

25-26 Fed Poverty Level	
Family Size	225%
2	\$47,588
3	\$59,963
4	\$72,338
5	\$84,713
6	\$97,088
7	\$109,463
8	\$121,838
9	\$134,213
10	\$146,588

Problem Solving #5

**My kids are very different ages -
no book will work for everyone.**

You might be surprised

There are some wonderful books out there that really do appeal to a wide variety of ages. See the list at the right for some ideas of picture books and chapter books to try. Remember, picture books are still highly appropriate and helpful for older children, and younger children can appreciate longer narratives, especially when they can keep busy doing a quiet activity while they listen.



Different experiences of the same book

Your five-year-old and your ten-year-old are experiencing life in very different ways, but even though they won't experience a book in the *same* way, they can both experience the same book in a way appropriate to their age. For example, maybe your younger children won't really understand the suffering of a character in the way your older children might, but your younger children might be drawn to the way the characters seem very brave.

It's okay to read different books

If you have toddlers and very little children, as well as older children, you may decide to read some things separately for this season of life. Perhaps you read a short bedtime story to the toddlers and then work through reading aloud a novel with your older children after the little ones are in bed or while they are taking naps. Whatever decisions you make should work for your family *at this particular time of life*. You can always change things up as the children grow!

GOOD SHEPHERD SCHOLARSHIP 2026



If you need help with the application please use the QR Code to sign up for a time during Parent Teacher Conferences



Feb. 26 sign up for Help

YOU WILL NEED:

W-2 for 2024 or 2025
1040 tax for for 2024 Or 2025

APPLY AT HOME

FACTS Online Or scan the code below



The Good
Shepherd
Scholarship

Parent-Teacher Conferences Conferencias de Padres y Maestros

Use this link or QR Code/Usa el
Enlace o QR Code:

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

February 26

9am-12pm

1pm-5pm

6pm-8pm

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9am-12pm

1pm-5pm

6pm-8pm

