



Dear Parents,

September 9, 2026

If I had to choose the two most important aspects of a Catholic Elementary education, I would choose faith and literacy formation. I want to talk about both in the next couple of newsletters and eventually show how the two can go together. This letter will focus on what parents can do to help children love reading.

Read to your child every day and the results will be evident! Mem Fox, a well-known child literacy expert, states that children should have a minimum of one thousand books read to them before even entering kindergarten. That may seem overwhelming, but if parents were to read just one book a day to their children, the goal would be accomplished in three years. Remember children's books are short and can often be read aloud in just five to ten minutes. If you are too busy on a certain day, try having an older sibling, aunt, uncle, or grandparent read to the young ones. Reading is good for everyone!

When reading to your children, the goal on your part is not to get them reading fluently on their own, leave that to their teachers. Your goal is to give them a love for reading. Read for fun, for joy, for love! Be playful, changing your voice to match the characters. Children will laugh as you try to take on the persona of the Big Bad Wolf, Cinderella's fairy godmother, and the like. You may ask some questions once you finish the book such as "What was your favorite part of the story? What character did you like best? If you wrote the story, would you make any part different? A simple discussion of a story after it is read builds comprehension skills but remember to keep it light and enjoyable. We want reading to be fun and not a chore.

Parents of younger children please don't forget nursery rhymes. They are extremely important developmentally. A child who has experienced many nursery rhymes is better able to distinguish phonemes (the sounds of letters and letter combinations) and will better succeed in mastery phonics.

Oftentimes parents will read to their children from infancy through the primary grades and then stop once the children have become more independent readers. Never stop reading to your children. Father Michael Morin, the pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish and past superintendent of Pius X High School, still gets together with his siblings to read aloud and discuss books. Reading aloud is not only intellectually stimulating, but also family strengthening. It is such a simple and enjoyable way to bring all kinds of goodness to your children. Let's start doing it today!

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.

Calendar Change: As announced in an earlier memo, **there will be no school on September 24 and 25** so that the four Sisters and some of our faculty/staff may attend the Mass and Beatification ceremony in St. Louis of soon-to-be Blessed Fulton Sheen.

Drop Off and Dismissal Times: St. James School begins at 8:05 am. Children may be dropped off as early as 7:30 a.m. but no earlier, please. Dismissal begins at 2:20 p.m. on Mondays and 3:20 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Uniforms: Be sure to have your child(ren) in uniform. If you want to trade, buy or give away school uniforms please come to the school office. Jumpers are \$5; pants, sweaters and shirts are \$1. Unused jumpers are always needed.

Coming Home Today: Farm to School Program Flyer

Upcoming Dates:

September 24, 25	No School
September 29	Picture retakes
October 1	Parent-Teacher Conferences 9: 00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m. -5:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.