



ST. MARY

THE BUSS TRIP

Newsletter

Mission Statement: St. Mary Elementary School, in collaboration with its parents, educates the "whole child" in a Catholic environment. This allows every child to meet the challenges of a continuously changing society.

IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, December 4th

- Pre-K Donuts with Dad
- Book Fair Family Night @ 5:30-7 pm

Tuesday, December 8th

- Holy Day Liturgy @ 1:00 pm

Wednesday, December 9th

- Gr 4 visits Heritage Hill
- Preschool Story Time (1-2 pm)

Tuesday, December 22nd

- Christmas Program @ 6:30 pm

Wednesday, December 23rd

- Christmas Break begins @ 11:30 am

Friday, December 25th

- Christmas Day



Happy December Birthdays!

Noelle Schumacher	12-3
Madeline Alft	12-5
Oscar Arroyo	12-7
Elizabeth Whiting	12-14
Andrew Long	12-23
Emma Huss	12-23
Octavia Strohm	12-27
Mary Ahles	12-31

Catholic Identity ... Prayer

Our new Catholic Identity theme for this month is "prayer". This is very appropriate during this special season of Advent. According to the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, the definition of prayer is a "vital and personal relationship with God". For children, prayer is speaking with God and listening to His response. God is constantly trying to open those communication lines with us by making Himself available if we would just listen. Unfortunately, we don't always use those opportunities ... "God incidents" to fully take advantage of God's communication with us. There are many types of prayer that an individual can use to communicate with God ... **adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise.** The highest form of prayer is the liturgy or the Mass. It incorporates all the different types of prayer that can be offered to God and it provides us with the spiritual nourishment that our bodies need ... the Eucharist. During this season of Advent and preparing ourselves for the greatest gift ... Jesus, let us use this opportunity to be a little more prayerful with God. One suggestion might be to use each week during Advent to say a particular type of prayer with your family. It would certainly broaden your scope of prayer and it may make praying and prayers more interesting for the children. It is amazing what can happen when children pray. As I watched the activities of this weekend, my neighbors putting forth the time, expense, and effort to make their homes a beacon of lights and displays, I wondered if they are going to put the same effort into making sure that their hearts are as well prepared for the "**reason of this season.**" It is very easy to fall into the grasp of the secular aspect of Christmas. Advent is a time for preparing ourselves for the gift of Jesus and one of the best ways to prepare is through prayer. It only takes a moment to offer a prayer to God ... and it doesn't cost anything.



Season of Advent

We have begun the Season of Advent. The students and staff are using this special season to prepare themselves for the greatest gift ...

Jesus. To prepare their hearts, they are praying, looking to give service to others, and making some financial sacrifices. Here is what that looks like.



- Advent Post Office – They purchase a 10-cent Christmas card and provide a special Christmas message for someone in school. The Student Council delivers those special messages before the end of the day.
- Smile Train Program – They are collecting donations to provide a very special Christmas gift to a child who has a cleft palate. This gift is an operation that will correct their disability and bring joy and self-esteem to their life. Each operation costs \$250 and our school goal is two gifts/operations.
- Community Clothes Closet – They are collecting new socks and underwear for the needy. With warm feet come a warm heart and hopefully a joyous Christmas.
- Advent wreath and prayers – They pray each day for others ... so that everyone can see the wonders and joy of Christmas.

You too can be apart of our Advent celebration by helping us cover our Christmas tree with socks and underwear or by joining us on the Smile Train program. You can also send a Christmas card to your child.

Advent Donuts with Dads

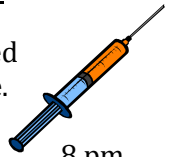
The 4 year-old Pre-K group for Mrs. Bowen will host a special activity with their dads on **Friday, December 4th from 6:30-7:15 pm** called “Advent Donuts with Dad”. This event will kick-off the Advent season and the children will make Advent donuts and sing songs with their dads. Grandpas are also invited to attend.

Advent Holy Hour

An Advent Holy Hour will be celebrated at St Patrick's on Thursdays (December 3,10,17) at 6:00 pm by Deacon Rick Dvorak and Mr. Don Schultz. The Holy Hour includes Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Evening Prayer and Benediction. Participation booklets are provided. Families and children are invited and encouraged to attend! As the busyness of this time of year is so distracting and rushed, please consider spending a quieting and peaceful hour (or any portion thereof) at the end of a busy day to prepare for the celebration of Christmas with all it's meaning.

Menasha Health Department Update

The Menasha Health Department has issued the vaccination dates for the H1N1 vaccine. The vaccinations will be given on Wednesday, December 9th from 4 pm to 8 pm at Butte des Morts Elementary School in Menasha. There is no cost to children who reside in the city or town of Menasha. Please refer to the letter attachment from the Menasha Health Department for specific details or call 967-3520.



St. Mary's Scholastic Book Fair:

Our Book Fair began on Tuesday. It is set up in the concession area of the gym. Feel free to come and browse through the book offerings during the day. Through a generous donation from the First National Bank – Fox Valley, all children will receive one free book. On Friday (4th), we will have **Family Night from 5:30-7:00 pm**. Bring your family to have dinner, a chance at great door prizes, and purchase a book or two. All proceeds from the Fair will benefit our school library. The Fair will end on Monday, December 7th at noon.



St. Mary Christmas Program

The St. Mary Elementary School Christmas Program is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 22nd at 6:30 pm** in the school gymnasium. Our theme for our program is the "Voices of Christmas". Mr. Arboleda is looking for parents who play musical instruments. Please contact the school office if you fit that category and would like to try something new and different. For those individuals who would like to view the program, but do not like to venture out on cold, snowy, wintry nights, there will be a dress rehearsal at 1:00 pm that is also open to the public. Mark your calendar for this special event.

St. Mary's and St. John's Employment Opportunity

They are in need of a full time **Business Manager** who would have responsibilities in Finance, Personnel Facilities and Fundraising. They are also looking for a **Parish Life Coordinator**. This part time position will plan, organize, staff, coordinate and lead efforts to promote parishioner involvement and evangelization. Please e-mail to jsell@tcces.k12.wi.us or call Jean Sell at 725-7714 for more information.

Basketball Champ!

Congratulations goes out to 3rd grader Abbi Thelen, who placed 2nd in both the Free Throw and Hot Shot Contests in the competition sponsored by the Neenah/Menasha Elks Lodge #676. It was held on Saturday, November 21 at Neenah High School.

TCCES Food Service Important Notice

We would like to remind all parents of the importance of maintaining a positive balance in your child's lunch account. We are currently experiencing problems with a number of students taking meals when their account doesn't have sufficient funds. This pattern creates a huge stress upon the cash flow in the TCCES Food Service and may cause the Food Service program to consider a rate increase on the meals to alleviate this situation. We never want to deny any child a meal, however if there are insufficient funds in the account we will be force to deny them a lunch.



Low account balance notification is sent out semi-weekly via email to anyone who has accounts below \$10 and monthly statements are sent to all hot lunch accounts. We feel very strongly that this procedure provides plenty of notification for all families. If you are not currently receiving these notices via email, you need to call the office (**967-0107**) to verify the information that we have on file for your family. In addition, if your family is experiencing difficulty in maintaining a positive balance on lunch accounts due to financial hardships, contact the office to determine other options or meal plans. Thank you for your cooperation on this very important matter.

Lynn Graves – Director of TCCES Food Service