

Saints News

*"St. Joseph School, following the Mission of Christ,
Where we Learn Our Faith, Live our Faith and Prepare for the Future"
~ St. Joseph Mission Statement*

December 2017

Dear St. Joseph Families,

We have begun this Advent season preparing our heart and now in just a few days we will rejoice that "the Great and Holy one is among us."

With the shepherds let us enter the stable of Bethlehem beneath the loving gaze of Mary, the silent witness of his miraculous birth. May she help us to experience the happiness of Christmas, may she teach us how to treasure in our hearts the mystery of God who for our sake became man; and may she help us to bear witness in our world to his truth, his love and his peace.

~ Pope Benedict XVI

We begin our Christmas break at 11:30am on Tuesday, December 19th, and we pray that your Christmas this year will be filled with joy, light and happiness and may the New Year be one of peace, harmony, and love for all mankind.
God Bless

Thank you to everyone who participated in Operation Christmas Child! Because of your generous and giving hearts we sent 45 boxes off to make Christmas brighter this year for orphaned children around the world. Thank you again!

Illinois Tax Scholarship Program **You can attend St. Joseph Catholic School for FREE**

Through the "Invest in Kids Act," Illinois children enrolled in private schools will have access to new scholarships. The scholarships offered through this program could cover **50 to 100 percent of tuition and eligible charges for next school year**. Key information about the program and application process is available on the diocesan website (cdop.org) and select CATHOLIC EDUCATION. Applications are being accepted as soon as the middle of December and scholarships will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis starting January 2, 2018, so it is very important to act quickly! Key information regarding the program and application process is available on the diocesan website (www.cdop.org) and select Catholic Education, or by contacting Mr. Bill Craig (billandgayle46@yahoo.com) or Mr. Larry Spialek (lrsplal@gmail.com, 309/642-0890)

School Cancellation

When you hear that Pekin School District #108 is closed due to inclement weather, St. Joseph School is also closed. The school closures are announced over the local TV and radio stations beginning around 5:45am-6:00am. You will also receive a School Reach announcement regarding the cancellation. Please do not call the school office, parish center or rectory as no one will be there to answer the phones at this time. Thank you.

Staff Free Dress Days

On special days you will notice the SJS staff wearing free dress. These days are what we call "Angel Days". The staff donates money to wear free dress to help families receive money in the form of a student scholarship for their child(ren) to receive a Catholic education.

Aftercare for Tuesday, December 19th

Aftercare will be having a Christmas party on Tuesday, December 19. The kids will have a hot dog lunch, watch a movie, and make an ornament! If your child will be participating in this aftercare party, please bring a side or dessert to share. Please sign up with Mrs. King as she will need a count to have supplies ready. If you have any questions, please email pkings@stjosephschoolpekin.com.

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St Joseph Christmas Program

The school Christmas Program is **Monday, December 18th** beginning at **6:00pm**. Students should report to their classrooms between 5:35pm and 5:45pm. The doors to the school will not be open until 5:30pm. The program will be held in the school gymnasium. We are asking each family to bring a canned good as admission to the program. We will then take these items to St. Vincent de Paul to help those in need this holiday season. We hope to see you there!

SJS Scrip Program

Attached is an early peek at the SCRIP Christmas special order form. We will offer a special order of our local retailers that support our school. Feel free to print this list out! A paper copy will be sent home in the Blue Folders on Thursday, November 30th. We hope this gives you a chance to plan for your holiday shopping! Orders are due Tuesday, Dec. 5th and will be delivered Thursday, Dec. 14th. If you have any questions, please contact the school office or Whende Rueschhoff at (309)-370-3437.

Spalding Scholarship Information

It is time to complete the John Lancaster Spalding Scholarship Fund Grants for the 2018-2019 school year. Tuition assistance scholarship grants are from the endowment fund, established as a result of the Diocese of Peoria ROOTED IN FAITH Campaign and named in honor of Archbishop Spalding, the first Bishop of Peoria. Grants will be available for the 2018-2019 school year for any students enrolled in or intending to enroll in a Catholic school located within the Diocese of Peoria whose families are members of a Catholic parish. All grants will be based on financial need objectively assessed. Information about the grants and application materials may be obtained from any Catholic elementary or secondary school in the Diocese of Peoria or on the Diocesan website www.cdop.org. Click on EDUCATION; then on OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS; and then on SPALDING SCHOLARSHIPS. Families of students currently receiving grants are reminded that all grants are for one year only and anyone seeking to renew a grant for 2018-2019 must reapply. The application deadline is April 15, 2018. Notification of grant awards will be made by mid-April. We will be hosting several training sessions for any families who would like to apply for a scholarship. If you or any parents have any questions, please feel free to contact Mrs. Ann Hart at 309-347-6108.

Recess

This is just a reminder to please dress your child(ren) in proper attire for outside recess now that the weather is getting colder. Send hats, mittens, warm coats, boots, scarves, etc. with your child(ren) as they will be going outside in all types of weather. When the wind chill or the temperature is zero degrees or less, we will have inside recess. Sometimes we might be inside for the morning playground time, but if the temperature warms up, we will go out for the lunch recess and primary afternoon recess. It is good for the children to be outside and get some fresh air and exercise. Thanks for sending them prepared for the winter weather!

Hats, Mittens, Gloves, Scarves Collection

This collection is one of our annual events with our Sister Parish on the Lakota Indian Reservation in South Dakota. We will begin our giving project of the above-mentioned items in the spirit of St. Nicholas. If you would like to participate, please send one or more of these items with your child(ren) to school beginning December 1st. We will continue to collect items through Tuesday, December 12th. All of the items collected are sent out early to ensure they are there for Christmas Eve. After Mass that evening, the priest puts out all our donations and this becomes the children's special Christmas gift. This is just another of the many ways we can reach out to our brothers and sisters in need. Thank you for sharing what you have with those most in need. Remember, winters are cold in South Dakota! If you have any questions, please contact the office.

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Random Acts of Kindness

As we are closing our Year of Mercy and heading into the holiday season, we want to remind each of you that you do not need to give up! That Year of Mercy should not end, but let it be the beginning of continual love which is the strongest emotion in our hearts and that kindness is the antidote to all the bad stuff. Attached, you will find a calendar of examples of Random Acts of Kindness to help you fill your soul up and remember that the world is actually pretty amazing. All this is to say that we want your life to be full of joy, love, and kindness. Not an easy task, but one we're ready to take on. Join us! We are encouraging you to continue your year of Mercy with random acts of kindness. Be loud with your generosity, and commit to being a better person throughout the year. Kindness is a daily practice, but this calendar can help and inspire you to join us throughout the month of December to stay focused on many acts of kindness.

St. Joseph Drop Off & Dismissal

As we have been in school for a couple of months, we just wanted to remind parents of the procedures for drop off in the morning and dismissal at the end of the day to ensure all students are safe. As you drop your child(ren) off in the morning, **please make sure you have them exit the car on the sidewalk side, not on the road side.** If you pick up your child(ren) after school, you need to park in the school parking lot. **Please do not park on the street or across from the middle opening (where the orange cones are placed), as the buses cannot maneuver around the cars.** Lastly, when dropping off in the morning, please make sure not to park and run into the school. If you need to run an errand, please park your car on the side road so traffic does not become backed up. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping everyone safe.

Santa Calls

As in the past, the Student Council members at PCHS will be doing Santa calls to students whose parents request it. If you would like to have one of "Santa's Elves" call your child as a reminder to stay on their best behavior, please fill out the form sent home in blue folders and return it to school by December 1st. Calls will be made between 6-8pm on Wednesday, December 6th and Thursday, December 7th.

Bishop's 2018 Festival Letter

Reverend Jenky has sent out his 2018 Festival Letter. Please see your RenWeb announcements to read the letter in its entirety.

To the Clergy, Consecrated, and Faithful Men and Women of the Diocese of Peoria:

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I can still remember the very first Men's March - it was a cold, dreary spring day. I have to confess I didn't expect a very large turnout. Boy was I wrong! So many years later, the annual Men's March and Mass still packs the Cathedral. Maybe as a fruit of this annual gathering, many programs have taken root in our parishes to enhance the faith-life of our men. And yet our contemporary culture continues to attack the very definition of manhood. It is harder and harder to be a good man.

The Church has always looked to St. Joseph as a model for all men - for workers, for fathers, for husbands, and for priests. I offer my 16th festival letter as a meditation on the importance of St. Joseph in the lives of our men, our families, and our parishes. I encourage families, Knights of Columbus, men's groups, and in a special way, all who work to form our young men, to read this letter together.

With the many challenges our Church faces today, let us find comfort and hope in the protection of St. Joseph.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C. BISHOP OF PEORIA

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Saint Joseph Alumnus of the Year 2018

In order to celebrate Catholic education during Catholic Schools Week, we at St. Joseph School would like to have our parish nominate individuals who attended St. Joseph's Catholic School in their youth and went on to be successful in blending their life with their faith. The selection committee will review these nominations and the alumnus of the year will be honored the weekend of January 27, 2018 during Catholic Schools Week Mass. You may drop your nominations off in the collection basket, at the parish office, or the school office by Friday, January 5, 2018.

SAVE THE DATE! SATURDAY, JAN. 27th!

St. Joseph School Alumni Basketball Event

- Men or women high school or older who attended St. Joseph School in Pekin, IL!
- Quarters will feature different age groups!
- Women's game will be followed by a men's game!
- Also includes an optional free-throw contest for those who can't play during the game!
- Afterwards we will have Mass honoring our Annual of the Year along with Taste of Pekin!
- St. Joseph School Gym, 300 S. 6th St., Pekin, IL

Proceeds go to St. Joseph School Scholarship Fund and Extracurricular Fund

Twelve Days of Christmas

Student Council Style

Begins Friday, December 1st

December 1 – Red/Green/Christmas Shirts with Jeans \$1.00
December 4 – Snowflakes on Fence and Windows
December 5 – Hot Chocolate
December 6 – Pencils/Suckers
December 7 – Christmas Sweaters & Hats
December 8 – Christmas Music throughout the school
December 11 – Teacher Snowman Contest
December 12 – 7/8 Make Christmas Cookies for lunch
December 13 – Pillows & Blankets
December 14 – Christmas Shirts with Jeans
December 15 – Christmas Movie Day
December 18 – 7/8 Serve lunch

Parent's Corner

Advent is a time of preparation. It's a time for families to prepare spiritually for the celebration of Jesus' birth. Advent means "coming". It's the season for:

- ~ remembering Christ's birth
- ~ looking forward to celebrating Christ's presence among us at Christmas
- ~ reflecting on our lives and deepening our commitment to follow Christ
- ~ looking forward to Jesus coming again.

Advent begins on the 4th Sunday before Christmas Day and ends at sunset on Christmas Eve.

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The first week is for anticipation and longing for Jesus' coming.

It's a special time of watchful waiting. Here are some ideas to share with your family:

~ Light the first candle on your wreath together. Share the meaning with your children.

~ Read together from the Bible. Here are a few suggestions:

James 5: 7-8 Romans 13: 11-14

Matthew 24: 42-44 Mark 13: 32-37

~ Make a paper chain stating a short prayer, phrases about giving, hope or wish for the future, small drawing per strip

~ Make a crib together for Jesus. During Advent, have family members add a small piece of straw or yellow yarn for each good

deed they do to prepare a soft bed for Jesus

The second week is for preparing our hearts for Jesus

Now it's time to light two purple candles on your Advent wreath.

~ As you light the candles, tell stories that share the theme of giving.

~ Read together from the Bible. Here are a few suggestions:

1 Thessalonians 5:19 – 23 Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 3:1-11 Isaiah 11:1-10

~ Write family Advent letters instead of buying traditional cards

The third week is for rejoicing

It is the week for celebrating in anticipation of Christmas.

Now is the time to light two purple candles and the rose-colored candle on your Advent wreath.

~ Read together from the Bible. Select another Bible reading to share with your family. Here are a few suggestions:

Isaiah 35:1-2, 10 Psalm 122: 1-2 Philippians 4:4-7

~ Perform a family play. Have family members enact the story of Jesus' birth based on Luke 2:1-20. You can use old clothes or extra fabric for costumes.

~ Make a scrapbook for Advent memories.

Sing and learn a new song together. Here are a few suggestions: "O Come, Divine Messiah," "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

~ As you light the candles, tell how you and your family can show their love for one another. Have each family member give at least one idea.

~ Share your hopes for the coming year.

~ Cut back on how much time your family spends watching TV or using the computer. Use the time to play games and do other Advent related activities such as:

- Advent Treasure Hunt
- Advent Charades
- Advent Spelling Bee

~ Read together from the Bible. Here are a few suggestions:

Luke 1:26 – 31 Psalms 121

Matthew 1:23, 11:28 – 30 Philippians 1:9 – 11

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The fourth week is for God's love and hope.

Christmas is almost here!

Now it's time to light all three purple candles and the rose candle on your Advent wreath.

Add a white candle to the center of your wreath. Make Christmas cards. Let children include drawings or messages, too.

~ Set a place for Jesus. At dinnertime, set an extra place to remind children that Christ is always with us.

~ There are many ways for your family to prepare for Advent. Here are a few suggestions as we begin preparing for Advent.

~ Make an Advent wreath with your family. Share the meaning of the wreath as it symbolizes the period of waiting for Jesus' coming.

~ Make an Advent calendar together. Then enjoy opening a door a day and sharing what lies behind the door.

~ Decorate your home for Advent. Use this time to be with your family members and explain the different symbols of the holiday.

Planning how to celebrate Christmas Eve

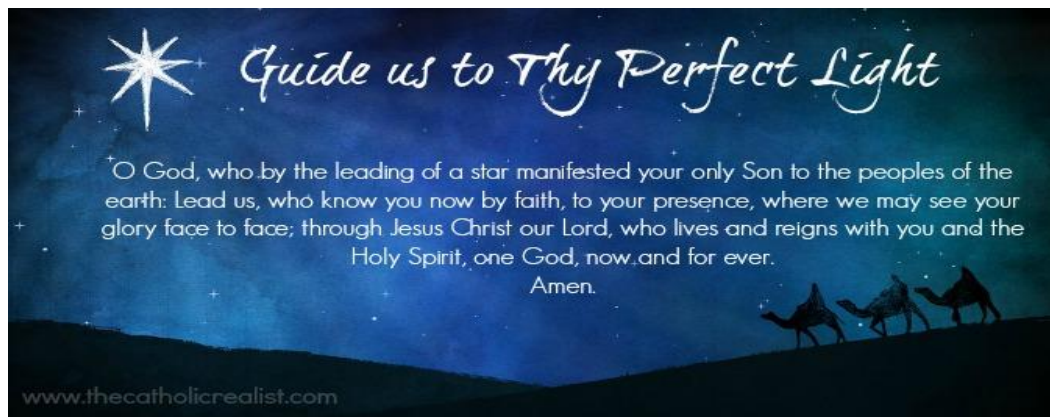
There are lots of ways to celebrate together. Here are a few ideas:

~ Plan to attend church services

~ Place Jesus in the manger to complete the Nativity scene.

~ Light all the candles on the Advent wreath, including the white candle. As you light them, remind your family members what each one represents.

Embrace the meaning and joy of Advent!



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December Calendar of Important Dates

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					GBB @ St. Edward 6 th Grade Tourney Mass – 2 nd Grade Preschool Tree Farm Field Trip Preschool Book Order Due	GBB @ St. Edward 6 th Grade Tourney Breakfast w/ St. Nicholas & Vendor Fair
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	BBB @ Hollis	BBB @ St. Mary's- Kickapoo	St. Nicholas Day 7 th Grade Field Trip Preschool Wendy's Night BBB @ St. Mark	Kindergarten & 1 st Field Trip BBB @ Home against Epiphany Parents Club Meeting	Mass -Brown Scapular-5th Grade 7th Grade Sophia's Kitchen	BBB @ Home against Visitation
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Preschool NO PM CLASS Extra-Curricular Meeting BBB @ Home against Bethel Lutheran Parent Ambassador Meeting	Preschool Practice for T-TH & M/W/F PM 3's 4 th grade Field Trip BBB @ Home against Peoria Academy	BBB @ St. Vincent de Paul 6th Grade Tourney Preschool No PM Class Kindergarten, First & Second Field Trip	BBB @ St. Vincent de Paul 6th Grade Tourney Preschool Christmas Program- 10AM(3); 5:45PM(4/5)	BBB @ St. Vincent de Paul 6th Grade Tourney Parents' Club Movie Night Mass-Advent Season-6th Grade Preschool Field Trip - John Evans & Morningside	BBB @ St. Vincent de Paul 6th Grade Tourney
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	Christmas Program-6PM Preschool Christmas Party & Book	Christmas Program- 9AM Dismissal for Christmas				

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	Exchange Christmas Meal for Teachers (K, 3rd, and 6th grade parents)	Break- 11:30AM Preschool Christmas Party & Book Exchange Preschool 11:15 Dismissal				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
						
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
			BBB @ home against Georgetown	School Resumes 8:40am Parents' Club meeting 6pm 7th BBB Honan Tournament	Mass – 7th grade Adoration Euchre 7:00pm 5th BBB Tournament @ St. Mary 7th BBB Honan Tournament	5th BBB Tournament @ St. Mary 7th BBB Honan Tournament