

Apostolic Briefings & Communications



Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary | Villa Maria House of Studies | Immaculata, PA 19345

Learn
lead



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Serve
succeed



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IHM Best Practices

Catholic School Classrooms

Every day across the United States, Catholic Schools open their doors to teach the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ. While well known for strong academics and positive discipline, the specific purpose of Catholic education is the formation of children and young adults who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel, and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints.¹ The question becomes, when people walk into your classroom, are they able to determine that they are in a Catholic School? All students in a Catholic School must respect the faith in order to remain enrolled. Read over the following and see how you may further inculcate Catholicism in your classroom.



Obvious Physical Images



At the minimum, all Catholic classrooms should have a crucifix, a Blessed Mother statue, and one religious bulletin board. Prayer corners enhance the spiritual life of the students. The Bible should be placed in a prominent location and this Bible should be used in class instruction.



Classroom Prayer



One goal of Catholic Education is that students should develop a personal relationship with Jesus and that is done through prayer and reflection. Children should pray at the beginning and end of the day and before and after lunch. In departmental situations, each class should begin with prayer. The required prayers for each grade listed at the end of this article should be prayed in order that students commit them to their memory. Spontaneous prayer, prayer in your own words from your heart, may be taught and learned. Begin by asking students to pray for their needs during the morning prayer time which will also allow the teacher to have a better understanding of their students.

Teach your children to pray for the Pope, bishops, the Universal Church, government leaders, the sick and the deceased. Encourage the students to pray a Hail Mary whenever they hear a police, fire, or ambulance siren. The rosary comforts people in time of need. Pray a decade of the rosary with the youngest students and you will give them a lifetime gift.

Animated by Communion and Community

Your class becomes a small Christian Community. Everyone learns how to respect one another despite differences. Teachers treat students with respect, who in turn respect the teacher and one another. As the teacher, let your students know that bullying and mean behavior is not welcome at anytime in your room. If a student acts inappropriately towards another, there will be consequences. While everyone makes mistakes, we learn from our mistakes and learn to live as the early Christians.



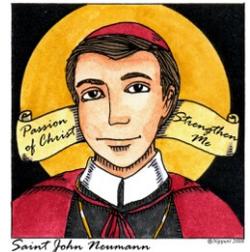
In our society, respect needs to be taught. Require that students stand when the principal, pastor, or an adult enters your room. Invite the priests from the parish to visit your room. Ask the priest to bless all of you when he leaves.

Consider doing an outreach project with your class. All parishes have homebound parishioners just waiting for someone to reach out to them. Get the names of 2 or 3 and have your students write to them at least once a month. Rather than mail the letters, ask for some families to deliver the notes. You may also make sandwiches for homeless shelters or collect various items. The more directly you involve the students, the greater the understanding they will have of serving those in need.

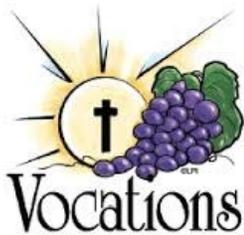
Collect mission money weekly to be sent to missions outside the United States. Each diocese has a Holy Childhood Association who will come to your classroom to talk about the great needs of the poor throughout the world. Our students need to learn to think beyond our own borders, and in the process they become grateful to God for all that they have.

Saints

Who is the patron saint of your school? Consider having the students adopt a patron saint of the classroom. Involve them in the discussion with Internet research. Find a picture of the saint and display the picture in your classroom. At the end of your morning prayer each day, pray to the school patron saint and your classroom patron saint.



Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life



We need priests in order to have the Eucharist. The plain and simple fact remains that the declining number of priests will greatly affect the Catholic Church. Everyone needs to plant the seeds of vocations in order to have a harvest at sometime. While the priest is in your classroom, ask him to talk about his vocation. Today in many locations, students have never seen a sister or understand religious life. You may contact a religious community in your area and ask is it possible for a sister to come to your school.

A Catholic Worldwide View throughout the Curriculum

A *Spirit of Catholicism* should permeate your curriculum. The Catholic Church has always stood for a love for wisdom and passion for truth. As you are preparing your lessons, ask yourself about a Catholic Connection and you will find it closer than you expect. Religious art and music compose some of the richest culture in the world. Science and social studies correlate very well with the Catholic Church because the Church has been ever present in both curriculum areas. Have you ever considered a religious field trip? Catholics may be very proud of all our Church does for all the peoples of the world.



Recommended Prayers for Each Grade

- Grade 1:** Short Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God.
- Grade 2:** Short Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God, One of the Acts of Faith, Hope, or Love and a short Act of Contrition.
- Grade 3:** Long Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed or Confiteor, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God, Long Act of Contrition.
- Grade 4:** Long Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed, Angelus/Regina Coeli, Grace Before and After Meals, Angel of God, Long Act of Contrition, Long Acts of Faith, Hope and Love
- Grades 5, 6, 7, 8:** Long Morning Offering, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed, Angelus/Regina Coeli, Grace Before and After Meals, Memorare, Hail Holy Queen, Angel of God, Long Act of Contrition, Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love.

Parent Engagement



Getting to know the parents of your students and establishing a working relationship will greatly help you during the course of the school year. Take a look at these points to see how they develop communications.

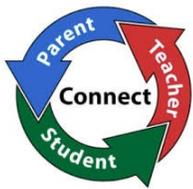
Build the Parents/Guardians Trust

- Parents need to be assured that their child will get a good education in your classroom. At your Back-To-School Night share your education and credentials with them. Let them know that you will always have the best interest of their child even though the child and or parent may not see it that way.

Understanding Parents

- Make a list of non-English speaking parents and students whose primary language is not English
- Understand that different cultures interpret words and actions differently. If you are working with multiple ethnicities in your room, see if someone on your staff may help you better understand the cultural nuances.
- Most parents are more protective of first-born children. First time parents have more questions.

Show You Care



- Share with the parents the good things that are going on in your classroom. There are many good websites that allow you to share the student's work electronically with parents. The parents love to see the work. <https://web.seesaw.me/> provides student driven digital portfolios and simple parent communication without cost.
- If you have concerns about a child, the teacher should be the first to communicate with the parent. Pick up the phone or email parents before a situation gets too serious.

Establish Your Authority

- Insist that parents call you by your professional name – Mr. or Mrs. and your last name. Call parents by Mr. or Mrs. also to keep the balance.
- Whenever you are talking with parents, be sure to look them in the eye. Looking someone in the eye will give you self-confidence and self-assurance.
- Be very careful of any social interactions you have with parents outside the classroom.
- Never post anything on social media that could later harm you.

Concerns with Parents

- If you are having a problem with a parent, before you send a note, email, or text home to a parent make sure you show a colleague prior to sending.
- Inform your principal if you are experiencing a problem with a parent. If you are having a meeting with the parent, ask the principal to sit in on the meeting. Make sure the parent knows that the principal will be present.
- If you are having a parent meeting, consider starting the meeting with a prayer and you will be amazed how the prayer diffuses a difficult situation. Suggested prayer: Heavenly Father, please send your Spirit here today with us as we talk about your child. Help us to work together to bring him/her to be the best version of himself/herself. Be with us here today. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen. Please note: be mindful of parents who are not of the Christian faith in an opening prayer.



Show Empathy

- Using these five simple words may help greatly, "I am sorry that happened." Today's parents have many concerns. Take the time to listen to them.

Always remember that the parents are sending the best children they have. They are not keeping their good children at home and sending you the problem ones. The parents are trying their hardest. Ask yourself; is there anything I can do to make this parent's life easier?

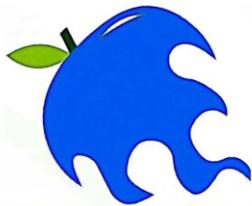
New Catholic Schools Week Logo



NCEA has created a new theme to celebrate Catholic schools. “Catholic Schools: Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.” encompasses the core products and values that can be found in Catholic schools across the country. Not only are we teaching students to become future servant leaders, faith-filled disciples and enriched citizens in our communities, we, as educators, are growing with them. In Catholic schools, we are all learners, servants and leaders. These shared qualities are what make Catholic schools work. They are what make Catholic schools succeed.

The official CSW logo brings the theme to life. The open book made up of multi-colored pages symbolizes how all areas of Catholic schools blend together, with faith — symbolized by the cross — at the forefront. Catholic schools are vibrant, dynamic and excellent.ⁱⁱ

Get Ready . . . For . . . IHM Edcamp Year 2



Edcamp IHM is coming our way on **Saturday, October 28, 2017** to be held at **St. Aloysius Academy, 401 S. Bryn Mawr Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA 19010** Starting with registration at **8:30** and going until around **3:00** it will be a great, free, professional development day. You may register today at <http://ihmedcamp.weebly.com/>

Edcamp is an organic, participant-driven, grass roots, computer and educational learning opportunity created by educators for educators. Edcamps held throughout the United States provide a professional development experience like no other and they are posted at www.edcamp.org. Teachers register free of charge and converge on a given location on a non-school day. Because it is the teacher’s choice to attend, a synergy arises where everyone tries to help each other learn. While there, some educators post a topic that they will present. A schedule is produced of several workshops and participants head to the class of their choice. If teachers do not like the topic or are not learning, they are encouraged to get up and leave to go find another workshop. At the end of the day, everyone gathers to share what they have learned. It is well worth exploring the concept and if you attend one, you will not be disappointed; however, you will be amazed. AND, just think, **IHM Edcamp on Saturday, October 28, 2017** to be held at **St. Aloysius Academy**, in Delaware County is that opportunity for you!

Sources:

Edcamp: <http://www.edcamp.org>

NCEA: <http://www.ncea.org> This site contains the Catholic Schools Week logo along with other pertinent information.

Miller, Archbishop J. Michael, C.S.B. *Five Essential Marks of Catholic Schools:* <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/education/philosophy-of-education/five-essential-marks-of-catholic-schools.html>

<http://www.learnersedgeinc.com/blog/10-strategies-for-dealing-with-difficult-parents>

For additional information regarding the IHM Best Practices contact Sister Margaret Rose Adams, IHM at smgtadams@gmail.com.

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ⁱ <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/education/philosophy-of-education/five-essential-marks-of-catholic-schools.html>

ⁱⁱ http://www.ncea.org/csw/Planning%20Tools/Logo_Guidelines/CSW/Planning_Tools/Catholic_Schools_Week_Logos_and_Themes.aspx?hkey=82977ac5-0f2e-458e-98f6-4c4cc8ab7f9c

REACHING I-DON'T-CARE and UNDERPERFORMING STUDENTS

“I dare ya to teach me...”

“Ya really think I’m interested?”

“This stuff is boring!”



If this sounds all too familiar (and personally frustrating), read on.

First of all, the chip on her shoulder does not have an arrow on it, aimed at you! So don’t take the attitude personally. You have probably read many times that the key to reaching a troublesome, difficult or underachieving student is relationship. The problem is that these are just the kind of students we don’t want to have a relationship with! So how do we do this? Most authors who have been teachers will tell us that we should begin with a one or two minute chat with the student on a non-academic topic:

“I saw you at the soccer game. What did you think of that goalie?”

“Great haircut, Kelly. You look pretty.”

Beware though. These students are hardwired to sniff out phoniness. So don’t try to create a warm, fuzzy atmosphere. Be specific and move on. “I’ve noticed that your work is much neater these days. Good job!” You could jot these comments on sticky notes and put them on the desks as you monitor. “Neat printing. Keep it up!” “Good effort on that last math test.” Using rewards or insincere praise won’t work.

Here’s a list of the 7 Capital Sins when working with I-don’t-care students:

Criticizing

Blaming

Complaining

Nagging

Threatening

Punishing

Using rewards as bribes for control

These negative approaches don’t change negative behavior. Students resist, even resent the above. They dig in their heels. They defend their position. Be patient with yourself. It takes six months to a year for a behavior to change! At first you’ll get the eye roll, the shoulder shrug or that teeth-sucking sound. But if you persist in non-confrontational conversation, eventually you will get positive results. Students who show disrespect to adults have often not been treated with dignity. Oddly enough, disrespectful methods are often used to bring about respect. Instead of, “You better get to work, or else...” try saying “How can I help you get started?” You’re sending

the same message, i.e. the child has to do the work, but he might not get his back up as quickly.

I-don't-care students are fearful. The fear comes in a variety of forms: fear of failure, criticism, appearing stupid, or even appearing *smart!* Troublesome students would rather appear bad than stupid. They must save face at all costs. Many times they lack confidence; and not just the difficult students either. If a good child has helicopter parents, the *I-don't-care* attitude may mean *I-never-had-to*.

So create a classroom environment where students can safely risk making mistakes. (Kathleen Kryza has a free poster about a risk-taking classroom at her website which you can print out for your room. Go to www.kathleenkryza.com and click on free resources.) Research reveals that exercise improves mood, relieves stress, depression and anxiety. It also helps to improve reading and comprehension skills. (see Dr. John Ratey's *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*)

Periodically take a "brain break", have the students move from one group (or place in the room) to another. Something as simple as sending an aisle of students at a time to the board works wonders. Those who use smart boards know that only one or two children can be at the board at a time. What's the rest of the studio audience doing? Even older students cannot remain seated for a 35-45 minute period without becoming listless or restless. Exercise and fresh air motivate the brain cells to fire together. So keep windows open! Clear off the posters from those chalk boards, and get the students out of their desks! If you use study guides, try leaving fill-ins for I-don't-care students. Copying endless power point notes is brain numbing for them. For example:

The only way to get _____ to _____ their behavior, is first to _____ our own.
(people) (change) (change)

An I-Don't-Care attitude:

...is an acquired skill. It served a purpose for the child at some point. If you can find the cause, you can help the child achieve an underdeveloped skill.

...is communication. It's an attempt to solve a problem.

...occurs in patterns. Try to isolate the trigger and you can change the pattern.

...has a function. Students wouldn't show the attitude if they weren't getting something out of it. Something as simple as giving them positive, specific attention at an off (or unexpected) time surprises them. It shows that you've spotted the good they can do.



DON'T BLAME THE LETTUCE!

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If you plant lettuce and it doesn't grow well, you don't blame the lettuce! You try to figure out what went wrong. Yet when we have problems with family members, co-workers or students, we blame the other person. Blaming has no positive effect. Neither does coercion or arguing. So...no blaming, no arguing, no ultimatums. Just understanding!

Remember our motto from years ago: never, ever, ever give up!

PRIME TIMES



Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Immaculata, Pennsylvania 19345

August, 2017



Poster Ideas Classroom Policies

Listen to instructions
Enter and exit prepared
Always try your best
Respect yourself and others
No excuses

When you enter this classroom:

- Learning is fun and
- Cooperation is expected.
- Our positive attitude and
- Mutual respect are part of
- Everything we do and say!

In this classroom we

Do not do **EASY**.
We make **EASY**
Happen through
Hard work and
Learning.

Six things to share with your students the first week of school

1. You are important.
2. You are listened to.
3. You are responsible for your actions.
4. Anything worth doing takes effort.
5. Everyone makes mistakes.
6. Each day is a new beginning.

September Songs



Days of the Week

Tune: Are You Sleeping

Every week has seven days,
See how many you can say.
Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday, Saturday.
What's today? What's today?

The Listening Song

Tune: Are You Sleeping

Eyes are watching,
Ears are listening,
Lips are closed,
Hands are still,
Feet are very quiet,
Glad that we can try it.
Listening well. I can tell.

Class Stationery

At the beginning of the school year have your students draw a self- portrait on a small square of paper. Glue the pictures like a border around a blank sheet of paper then photocopy it. Ta-da! You now have fun, easy, and cheap stationery to send home weekly letters or homework. Students also enjoy seeing it as a border around test papers. To break up the monotony you can change it quarterly or seasonally.

Time Capsule

The first week of school create a class time capsule. Have students complete a worksheet where they list all their favorite things (book, food, color, place, etc...). Also include first day of school pictures and their height. Seal it up and decorate it when finished. Put it in a special place in your classroom. The last week of school complete the same worksheet. Then on the last day of school open the Time Capsule and let the students see how they have grown and if any of their answers have changed.

October Poems

Leaves

October leaves are lovely
They rustle when I run
Sometimes I make a heap
And jump in them for fun.



Jack O'Lantern

The Jack O'Lantern chuckled
Then winked his funny eye,
"I would rather be a pumpkin face
Than be inside a pie!"

I Can Learn

Tune: Sing A Song of Sixpence

When I think of Jesus
I'm happy as can be.
I love Jesus dearly –
Jesus loves me.
Even though I'm little, Oh,
I can learn to do
Helpful things to please my Lord
The same as each of you.

Columbus Day Song

Tune: "Farmer In The Dell"

In 1492,
In 1492,
Columbus sailed across the sea,
In 1492.

For 70 days he sailed,
For 70 days he sailed,
Columbus sailed across the sea,
For 70 days he sailed.

He came to a new land,
He came to a new land,
Columbus sailed across the sea,
And came to a new land.

Exploring he did go,
Exploring he did go,
Columbus sailed across the sea,
Exploring he did go.

He sailed back home to Spain,
He sailed back home to Spain,
Columbus sailed across the sea,
Then sailed back home to Spain.

November Ideas

A Turkey Ran Away

Tune: I'm A
Little Teapot



I'm a little Turkey,
My name is Mr. Ted.
Here are my feathers,
Here is my head.
"Gobble, gobble, gobble," is what I say.
Run, run, run, "It's Thanksgiving Day!"

Use the poems and songs as a grammar lesson. Ask students to find common nouns, proper nouns, pronouns, action words, adjectives, and rhyming words. Use a variety of crayons, markers, or colored pencils to locate the different parts of speech.

Turkey Hand Idea



Have students make a turkey with their hands and decorate it. On the same paper or lined paper have them copy this poem. For younger students, print out a copy of the poem to be attached to their turkey.

This isn't just a turkey,
As anyone can see.
I made it with my hands,
Which is a part of me.
It comes with lots of love,
Especially to say
I hope you have a very
Happy Thanksgiving Day!

Phonics Songs

Hard and Soft C Song

Tune: Are you Sleeping

What does C say?
What does C say?
S/ or k?
S/ or k?
Before i, e, or y,
I, e, or y,
C is soft.
It says S.



What does C say?
What does C say?
S/ or k?
S/ or k?
Before a, o, or u,
a, o, or u,
C is hard.
It says K.

By: N. VandenBerge

Hard and Soft G Song

Tune: Are you Sleeping

What does G say?
What does G say?
J/ or g?
J/ or g?
Before i, e, or y,
i, e, or y,
G is soft.
It says J



What does G say?
What does G say?
J/ or g?
J/ or g?
before a, o, or u,
a, o, or u,
G is hard.
It says G

By: N. VandenBerge

You may want to ask the students, "Is there anything soft C and soft G have in common." I, E, and Y. What do hard C and hard G have in common? A, O and U.

Sparkly E!

Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star



Hello, my name is Sparkly E,
And you'll love to meet me.

When I show up, vowels say their name.
Which changes words like Sam to same.

Sparkly E will make no sound,
E likes the end when it comes around.

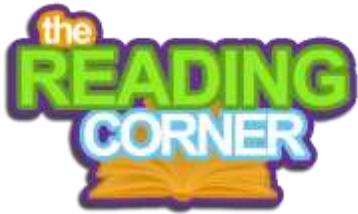
Locating the Main Idea

The main idea is what the story is mostly about.

1. Ask yourself, "What did I just read?"
2. Look at the title.
3. Look at the pictures.
4. Look at clues that are used repeatedly.
5. Read the first sentence and last sentence or first paragraph and last paragraph.

Questions I can ask myself about what I am reading:

1. What is the story mostly about?
2. Is this fiction or nonfiction?
3. Is someone telling the story?
4. Who are the characters?
5. What is the setting?
6. Is there a problem?
7. If there is a problem, what is the solution?
8. Can I retell the story?



Roll and Retell



Materials: one die

The student rolls one die.

If the student rolls a one dot, the student tells:

- What the story is mostly about?
Two dots
- Who are the main characters?
Three dots
- Where does the story take place?
Four dots
- What happened at the beginning?
Five dots
- What happened in the middle?
Six dots
- What happened at the end?

Making Shapes

Materials: craft sticks, markers in assorted colors, Ziploc bags

Directions

1. Place 2 craft sticks directly next to each other – side by side
2. Draw a shape-half on one stick and half on the other stick. You can draw a smaller size of the same shape near the bottom of the sticks.
3. Repeat step 2 with different kinds of shapes in different colors.

Children need to match the stick pairs and place them side by side to complete each shape. If you are making sticks for a number of children, be sure to number the back of the sticks and place in a Ziploc bag that has the same number on it.



When someone says or does something *unintentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's **RUDE.**

When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's **MEAN.**

When someone says or does something *intentionally* hurtful and they *keep doing it*—even when you tell them to stop or show them that you're upset—that's **BULLYING.**

The "oops" Box

Materials: shoe box or any small box, even a baby wipes container can be use, flash cards, colorful paper or contact.

Decorate a small sturdy box with colorful paper or contact. Cut a large hole in the top. Place cards in the box. The flash cards may be sight words, number recognition, shapes, colors, math facts...and so much more. If possible, laminate the cards for durability.

Directions: Student picks a card from the box. If the student can read what is on the card, he/she can keep the card. If not, the card goes back into the box. Whoever collects the most cards wins the game. But watch out for the "oops" card. If the student draws this card, then he/she must return all the cards collected.

A, B, C order using craft sticks

Materials: craft sticks or popsicle sticks

Directions: Print vocabulary, spelling, science, or social studies words on the sticks. You may want to type the words on labels and place them on the sticks.

- Student places the sticks in A, B, C order then copies the words on lined paper and have a classmate check the order.
- Number sticks and Ziploc bags to prevent them from getting mixed in other bags.

Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall

Tune: "This Old Man"



Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall
There are seasons, four in all.
Weather changes, sun and rain and snow,
Leaves fall down and flowers grow.
Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall
There are seasons, four in all.
Look outside and you will see
Just what season it will be!

"I'm Finished"

No matter what subject, project, or activity, inevitably, more than once a day, you will hear "I'm finished...now what?" An easy and fun "go to" is to give each child a classroom eye spy list of around 20 items. When a student finishes his/her work he/she can pull out the list and quietly look around the room for the items described and write the answers on the page. For example: "I spy a word that contains a short i"- answer: pig. You can customize it to your own classroom and even add extra educational things to your walls for them to look for. Once they find them all they can receive a sticker or other reward and are given a new list.

Noodle Measuring

Swimming noodles can be found in lots of stores as summer ends. They can be used for a number of classroom activities. One of the activities is measurement. Noodles can be cut into 1/2 inch, 1 inch, 6 inches, and 12 inches or whatever sizes you measurement you are working on. Students can use the cut noodles to measure items in their desks, backpacks, lunches, and objects around the room. They can work in small groups or teams to see who can find the most objects. They can also compare their findings with other groups or teams. Students record the findings in the back of their math copybook, in a tablet, or on scrap paper. The noodles can be stored in shoe boxes or stacking boxes for future use. Noodles can also be used to compare measurements and to create fraction pieces. It can be a homework assignment asking students to find and list things in their homes that are 1/2, 1, 6, 12, inches long.



Prayer for the New School Year

Anonymous

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the opportunity of another school year, a new beginning, a clean page, a fresh start. Give our students and teachers a mind to work hard and the will, courage and grace to do well as they aim for excellence. Help them to make the most of each opportunity presented, and to put their best foot forward no matter the circumstance.

When things get difficult, grant them a spirit of perseverance to push through and not give up. May their faith not fail in times of trial, but indeed grow stronger. May they know that You are their God, their very present help in times of trouble even in the academic arena.

Help our students and teachers to work in an atmosphere of

unity and cooperation. Should disagreement or conflict arise, empower peacemakers and ministers of reconciliation to move speedily and wisely to restore peace, harmony and order. May there be no room for violence or abuse on any level.

Strengthen and comfort those students and teachers who are coming from homes or personal situations filled with strife. Strengthen and comfort those who are secretly hurting and broken within, but still have to show up, focus, and do their duties.

This year may lives be changed, hearts transformed and your plans and purposes established as they obey Your will. We ask and pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

***BLESSINGS THROUGHOUT THE
SCHOOL YEAR!***

AUGMENTED REALITY...

COULD TRANSFORM THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



We have been teaching with technology for quite some time now. Many of us have become fairly adept at using technology in our classrooms, even some who say they are not tech savvy. But does being comfortable with technology suggest we have reached a plateau? I do not think so. There are still many new inroads to be explored and charted.

Take **Augmented Reality (AR)**, for instance. **Augmented Reality** is a technology that superimposes a computer-generated image on the user's view of the real world, thus providing a composite view. This kind of view augments the elements of the real world that enhances a person's current perception of reality. Augmented Reality apps are written in special 3D programs tying contextual digital information or animation in the real time world. This is distinctly different from Virtual Reality (VR), which replaces the real world with a simulated one.

Augmented Reality has been around longer than we realize. Thomas Caudell coined the term for Boeing in 1990 while working with electricians on complicated wiring. It made its first commercial debut on that "first down" yellow line on television in a football game in 1998. We have seen it many times watching a soccer or football game when the announcers circle a player, or draw the distance on the field to complete a goal, or when they draw the maneuvers of the players to demonstrate a previous strategy.

AR technology is frequently used in healthcare, public safety, tourism and marketing. Technology, in many areas, has advanced with lightning speed from industry into the personal use of the ordinary person. Yet, it is a conundrum as to why it is taking so long for **AR** to make the same transition. **Google Glass** is the closest **AR** makes its way into the ordinary lives of people and, last but not least, the world of education!

Google Glass is an optical head-mounted display designed in the shape of a pair of glasses. Teachers have used **Google Glass** in the classroom. Students can purchase their

own pair for about \$10 or \$15. "Google Glass displayed information in smartphone-like hands-free format. Wearers communicated with the internet via natural language voice commands."¹ "Currently, however, access to **AR** technology for educational purposes **is mostly limited to smartphone apps.**"² But never despair, if you have an iPhone there are many **AR** apps with which to delight you and your students. Just ask your students to share the mobile experience with you and their classmates. Ask them to download some of the apps and play them in the classroom, if they do not already have them.

Want to whet your appetite? Just watch an **AR** video demonstration of Spider-Man's Web-Slinger where he slings over your city streets, or on a poster lying on your desk using an **AR** app and your iPhone camera.³ www.youtube.com/watch?v=oH_LfXnkIRw

"Currently, however, access to AR technology for educational purposes **is mostly limited to smartphone apps.**"⁴ But never despair, if you have an iPhone there are many AR apps with which to delight you and your students. Just ask your students to share the mobile experience with you and their classmates. Ask them to download some of the apps and play them in the classroom.

*Below are the 5 top **Augmented Reality** apps for education*

1. Google Sky Map – This is an **Augmented Reality** app which makes learning about astronomy interesting and fun. Instead of looking at descriptions of constellations in a book and then attempting to identify them in the sky, you can use [Google Sky Map](#) to directly identify stars and constellations using the **camera** on your smartphone. Simply hold your smartphone up in the direction of the sky to receive automatic identification of stars and constellations. Point your **phone**, Google Sky Map will automatically identify the elements which appear on your camera lens.⁵

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.stardroid&hl=en>

2. FETCH! Lunch Rush - Recently released by PBS KIDS, FETCH! Lunch Rush is an augmented reality **app** to teach math skills to elementary students through the use of

¹ Wikipedia.

² <http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/future-classroom-technologies/>

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oH_LfXnkIRw

⁴ <http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/future-classroom-technologies/>

⁵ <http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/augmented-reality-apps-for-education/>

visualization. Designed in 3-D, the app [uses your smartphone camera to place graphics on your camera over real-world surroundings](#). The app then teaches elementary students to add and subtract using real-world scenarios which allow for visualization while solving math problems. FETCH! Lunch Rush is designed for use with the iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad and is available for free at the [App Store](#). It is the first augmented reality app for education released by PBS.⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aviG5uQ8pHU>

3. GeoGoogle - GeoGoggle is a great helper when it comes to acquiring geography skills and judging distances to specific destinations. Students can learn geographical measurement such as latitude and longitude by applying GeoGoggle to real-world surroundings. The app also allows you to calculate altitude and the distance between two points using a 3D compass. Like other augmented reality [apps](#) the app uses overlay graphics combined with real-world surroundings to help you learn the fundamentals of geography. GeoGoggle is a free app and is designed for Android 2.1 and higher.⁷

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9z2QjNC0Bc>

4. ZooBurst - This is a nifty augmented reality app to help elementary level students learn through visual imaging. With this app, students get to interact and become a part of a story. ZooBurst allows you to engage in digital storytelling by designing storybooks complete with 3-D characters. The digital storybooks can be customized using a library of thousands of images and [users](#) can add Adobe flash animations, narrations, and speech balloons to the story. Once the book is completed, students can become a part of the story via webcam. They can also click on the characters in the story to learn more about them.

The digital storybook created by ZooBurst can be rotated enabling you to view it from any angle. ZooBurst can also be used to help students create presentations and [communicate](#) complex ideas which would otherwise be difficult to explain. Check out this [video presentation](#) to get a better idea of how ZooBurst works.⁸

5. Acrossair - is a browser which can be used in real-world surroundings and in the classroom for learning and discussion. The browser can [carry apps that push the](#)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ <http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/augmented-reality-apps-for-education/>

[boundaries of the uses of augmented reality](#). You can find locations near you and share your locations with friends. Students can also create interactive classroom projects, and participate in interactive photo walls displaying wiki and multimedia on a classroom topic.

Another fun **feature** of Acrossair is that it enables you to engage in classroom discussions via Twitter AR. After sending out your tweet, you can launch Acrossair to [check out the latest tweets by people near you](#) via geotagging **technology**. Imagine holding up your phone and seeing tweets by the people around you.⁹

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_mUFS992Cw

Augmented Reality has the potential to bring new dimensions to education. It has the power to unlock the everyday world for educators and our students. It can stimulate new interest and enthusiasm by thrusting young learners deeper and engaging them in new experiences in the real world with endless possibilities. Let us hope it will not take too much longer to expand its applicability on all devices, so that, we may bring learning to life for our students...and then watch the magic happen!

⁹ Ibid.

Arrive Curious



Leave Inspired

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR EDUCATORS...BY EDUCATORS**

Bringing out
the Best in
the Teaching
Profession!

When: October 28, 2017

Where: St. Aloysius Academy
401 S. Bryn Mawr Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Schedule:

- 8:30 Gather/Breakfast/Create Sessions
- 9:15 Opening (BYOD)
- 9:30 Learning Session 1
- 10:30 Learning Session 2
- 11:30 Lunch ---Pizza Lunch Provided by Sadlier
- 12:15 Learning Session 3
- 1:15 Learning Session 4
- 2:30 Celebration of Learning/Wrap up
Including reflective practice
Chances on Awesome PRIZES



"EXPERTISE"
NOT
EXPERTS

REGISTER: www.ihmedcamp.weebly.com

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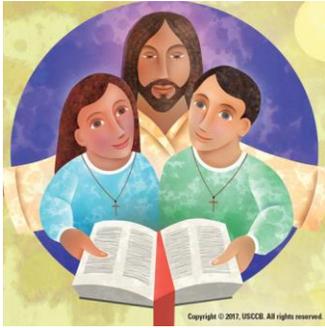
Act 48: You will receive an email with details after you register on Eventbrite

Questions: email: ihmedcamp17@gmail.com

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Our vision is simple: innovative professional learning for educators. Edcamp is open to all educators at every level. We need your expertise to add to the professional conversation. Join us

Don't Miss This Educational Event of the Year! Register Today!



1001I.H.M. ABC NOTES -- FALL, 2017

USCCB CATECHETICAL THEME, 2017 – 2018 “LIVING AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES”

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Prayer Service in Honor of Our Lady of Fatima

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Parent Advice from Pope Francis - Part 4 (Based on “The Joy of Love”)

Sister Patricia M. McCormack, I.H.M.

Also Translated into Spanish by Sr. Eileen Reilly, IHM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are very grateful to those who contributed creative Religious Education ideas to this *Fall 2017 Issue*. Their creativity has certainly enhanced this publication!

Evangelizing is the Church’s mission. It is not the mission of only a few but it is mine, yours, and **our mission** . . . Who is the real driving force of evangelization in our life and in the Church? “It is the Holy Spirit who today, just as at the beginning of the Church, acts in every evangelizer who allows himself to be possessed and led by him. The Holy Spirit places on his lips the words which he could not find by himself, and at the same time the Holy Spirit predisposes the soul of the hearer to be open and receptive to the Good News and to the Kingdom being proclaimed” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelium nuntiandi*, no. 75).

Take a few moments and read over the next four sentences. **Choose one** to focus upon right now.

Think back on a recent **encounter** with the Risen Lord in your own life.
 Reflect upon a time that you **accompanied** someone on their journey of faith.
 Pray over the strengths and weaknesses of the **community of faith** in which you worship.
 Recall when you felt called to be **sent** as a “missionary disciple”
 and to help spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

(This reflection could lead to sharing with the person beside you.)

Let us pray to the Father, through Jesus, the Son, and in the Holy Spirit of truth:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. As faithful followers of Christ, we desire: | ALL: to live in union with Christ our Lord. |
| 2. As ardent disciples of Jesus, we hope: | ALL: to seek what He seeks and love what He loves. |
| 3. As children of God, we pray: | ALL: to remain close to the heart of Jesus
as He remains close to his Father’s heart. |
| 4. With Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, | ALL: we contemplate the mystery of God in our world,
in human history and in our daily lives. |

And now let us pray in the words of Christ: ALL: “*Our Father . . .*”

Lord, You Give the Great Commission

Text: Jeffery Rowthorn

(Tune: “Abbot Leigh,” or “Alleluia, Sing to Jesus,” or “God of Day and God of Darkness”)

Lord, you give the great commission: “Heal the sick and preach the word.”
 Lest the church neglect its mission and the gospel go unheard,
 Help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity:
 With the Spirit’s gifts empow’r us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you call us to your service: “In my name baptize and teach.”
 That the world may trust your promise, life abundant meant for each,
 Give us all new fervor, draw us closer in community:
 With the Spirit’s gifts empow’r us for the work of ministry.



Let us share with one another a sign of Christ’s peace.



PRAYER SERVICE IN HONOR OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

*Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Mary's Apparitions at Fatima
May 13, 2017 to October 13, 2017*

Call to Prayer: Throughout the course of human history, wars have repeatedly threatened the cause of peace in the hearts, homes, and lands of many;

however,

Where would we be without our faith?

Where would we be without the God of all Creation?

Where would we be without the gift of His Mother, Mary?

The Catholic Church has approved a number of apparitions of Mary, who has shown her faithful love and compassionate care for many people in various parts of the world. When the world was threatened by World War I, Mary chose three simple shepherd children to proclaim her message of praying the Rosary for peace and doing penance. This year, as we celebrate the 100th. Anniversary of Our Blessed Mother's apparitions at Fatima, let us continue to pray to Our Lady of Fatima for world peace. Like the Fatima children, let us proclaim the Fatima message of praying the Rosary and doing penance for our sins. May the Miracle of the Sun live on in our hearts. May our Mother Mary continue to intercede for us and for peace in our hearts, our homes, our country, and our world.

Opening Hymn Choices: **In Fatima's Cove**
 Our Lady of Fatima
 Immaculate Mary

Psalm 121 (1-8): The Lord is My Guardian *(Please alternate stanzas)*

I raise my eyes toward the mountains.
 From where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
 the maker of heaven and earth.

God will not allow your foot to slip;
 your guardian does not sleep.
Truly, the guardian of Israel
 Never slumbers nor sleeps.

The Lord is your guardian;
 the Lord is your shade
 at your right hand.
By day the sun cannot harm you,
 nor the moon by night.

(over)

(2)

The Lord will guard you from all evil,
will always guard your life.
The Lord will guard your coming and going
both now and forever.

Glory be to the Father...

Scripture Reading: Luke 1: 26 – 38

Sung Response Choices: **In Fatima's Cove** (*Refrain only*)
 Immaculate Mary (*Refrain only*)

Intercessions: Response/ Lord, hear our prayer.

That Mary will intercede for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, we pray...

That Mary will intercede for world leaders, we pray...

That Mary will pray for the health of all who are sick, we pray...

That Mary will pray for all those who are far from home, we pray...

That Mary will pray for all those who protect our country, our world, we pray...

That Mary will be with all those at their hour of death, we pray...

Closing Prayer: Let us pray the prayer that Our Lady of Fatima taught the children of Fatima to pray...

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of Your mercy. Amen.

Closing Hymn Choices:

In Fatima's Cove
Our Lady of Fatima
Immaculate Mary



Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us!

Religion Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards have an important place in every classroom. They should be interactive as they provide a way to introduce new concepts or display student work related to the concept. Every classroom in a Catholic school/PREP program should have at least one bulletin board dedicated to increasing student awareness of faith values. They should be changed/updated on a regular basis throughout the school year. Teachers and catechists should create boards that are equally engaging and educational. The use of interactive boards in the classroom ensures that students recognize the importance of the posted materials.

2017- 2018 – Prayer

As teachers we sometimes find humor in the interpretations our students give to the things they have been taught. This can often be found when students are asked to write/illustrate some of the time-honored prayers of our faith. Which of us has not seen phrases such as “Hail Mary, full of grays” positioned under an illustration of an elderly woman with gray hair or thought of a Fruit of the Loom commercial while reading, “May the soles of the faithful department get dressed in peas.” I am sure the Lord himself looks down and smiles at the innocence with which some of these are written, but I also wonder what we can do as Catholic educators to help our students understand the prayers they are saying and to focus more on praying rather than reciting prayers.

Teaching children to pray is something that is not only essential, but also something that will last them a lifetime. This school year, our bulletin board suggestions will focus on some of the prayers we use on a daily basis with an attempt to make them more meaningful and understandable.

In September, we will focus on prayers of “beginning.” This will include the Sign of the Cross, the Morning Offering and Prayers at the Beginning of Class.

October’s Bulletin Boards will be an attempt to help our students understand the language and meaning of the Hail Mary. Since the Feast of the Guardian Angels falls in October, it is appropriate to focus on Angel of God during this month.

The month of November gives two more time-honored prayers to consider: the prayer for the Holy Souls and Grace before and after meals.

During the remaining months of the school year we will focus on the following:

*December-O Mary, conceived without sin; Hail and blessed be the hour
January – Our Father, Glory be to the Father
February –Apostles’ Creed; the Nicene Creed
March – Prayers of the Stations; The Angelus and The Regina Coeli;
April – Prayers of the Mass
May – Come Holy Spirit*



September

The Sign of the Cross; the Morning Offering



September provides the opportunity to reflect on beginnings—a new school year, a new classroom, a new teacher, new students. It is a good time to teach children to bless themselves correctly and to explain to them the meaning of the Sign of the Cross which we use at the beginning of all prayer. There are some wonderful resources that can be used to teach the Sign of the Cross on the following web sites:

<http://www.catechist.com/blog/archives/199-20100114.html>

<http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com/2011/08/sign-of-cross-activities.html>

<http://www.catholicicing.com/4-tips-to-teach-kids-how-to-make-sign/>

The Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all our associates, and in particular for the intentions of our Holy Father for this month.

Prepare a bulletin board with the morning offering on it. This prayer has numerous variations—some more appropriate to different levels-- (See separate page) but the main idea is to start your day giving to God everything you may encounter during the upcoming day. This prayer was written in 1844 by Fr. François-Xavier Gautrelet, S.J., one of the founders of the Apostleship of Prayer, as a way for Christians to make a daily offering of themselves to the Lord. It is important, when teaching the prayers, that students be introduced to vocabulary that might not be familiar to them. such as “Reparation.”

The intentions for the Apostleship of Prayer can be found at

<http://www.popesprayerusa.net/2017-intentions/>

A Short Morning Offering for Children

*Thank you, God, for giving us this day;
help us to be like Jesus in all we think, do,
and say.*

Amen.

*Give me strength, O Lord,
So that I may make the right choices,
Be kind and good to others.*

*Please keep my family and friends safe,
Throughout the day and into the night,
And please let me always know you are
always with me,
Guiding me and Loving me.*

*In Jesus Christ's name, I pray
Amen.*

Be Near Me, Lord Jesus

*Be near me, Lord Jesus!
I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever
And love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children
In Thy tender care
And take us to heaven
To live with Thee there.
Amen.*

Direction of Intention (St. Francis de Sales)

*Dear God, I give you this day. I offer you
now all of the good that I shall do and
promise to accept, for the love of You, all of
the difficulty that I shall meet. Help me to
conduct myself during this day in a manner
pleasing to you.*

*(This, and the following prayer are also a good prayers
for the beginning of a class. Just change the word
"day" to "class" in the above prayer.)*

*Direct. O Lord, all our actions and assist
them with your grace so that all our words
and works may come from you and by You be
happily ended. Through Christ Our Lord.
Amen*

Morning Prayer

*I adore You, O my God, and I love You with
all my heart. I give You thanks that You have
created me, made me a Christian, and
preserved me this night. I offer You the
actions of this day; grant that all of them
may be according to Your holy Will, and for*

*Your greater glory. Save me from sin and
from all evil. Let Your grace be always with
me.
Amen.*

**For older students, an introduction to
the Liturgy of the Hours is a good
Morning Prayer.**

Good Morning My Lord:

*Thank you for keeping me safe through the
night,
Please watch over me during the day,
and keep me safe from harm.*



OCTOBER

Hail Mary; Guardian Angel Prayer

Hail Mary	Hello, Mary
Full of Grace	You are very special to God
The Lord is with Thee	God is always with you.
Blessed art thou among women	You are a very important woman.
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.	Because God chose you to be the mother of His Son, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God	Mary, as God's Mother
Pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death.	Talk to God about us always, even though we do wrong



Hail Mary

The Hail Mary is one of the most frequently used prayers of our Catholic Faith. Yet, if not explained properly, it has little meaning beyond the frequently recited words. It needs to be taught. Following are some suggestions:

- Use a bulletin board to paraphrase the prayer.
- Although we may update the words "thee," "thou," and "thy" to "you" and "your" it is important to teach the children what these words are since they will hear them when the traditional form of the prayer is used.
- Teach the scriptural background of the phrases of the Hail Mary. A good pictorial version of this can be found on the following web site.

<http://www.marypages.com/HailMaryinPictures.htm>

Guardian Angel



**Angel of God, my Guardian dear,
To whom God's love entrusts me here.
Ever this day be at my side
To light, to guard, to rule, to guide. Amen.**

October 2 is the feast of the Guardian angels. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life. Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God [CCC 336].

God in His great love for us gives each of us our own unique guide, a guardian angel, at birth to keep us going in the right direction on our path towards heaven. Give the students an outline of an angel to represent their guardian angel. Have them name their angel and write a prayer to their angel on the reverse side asking his/her help.

NOVEMBER

Prayers for the Holy Souls; Grace Before and After Meals



Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



The month of November is dedicated to the Holy Souls. The faithful are encouraged to pray for the souls of the deceased. Praying for the souls of those who have died is an ancient practice of the Church, one that is based on the Catholic teaching regarding Purgatory. Prepare a bulletin board with the prayer for the faithful departed as the focal point. Ask students to contribute a picture of deceased family members, friends and relatives that they want to have remembered in the class prayer intentions during the month. Place these pictures on the bulletin board. Each day set aside a time of prayer to remember these deceased loved ones.



GRACE BEFORE MEALS

BLESS US, O LORD, AND THESE THY GIFTS WHICH WE ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE FROM THY BOUNTY, THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.



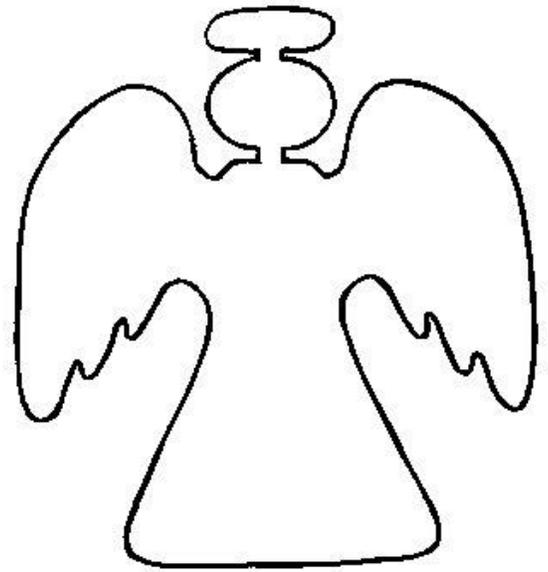
GRACE AFTER MEALS

WE GIVE THEE THANKS FOR ALL YOUR BENEFITS, O ALMIGHTY GOD, WHO LIVES AND REIGNS FOREVER; AND MAY THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

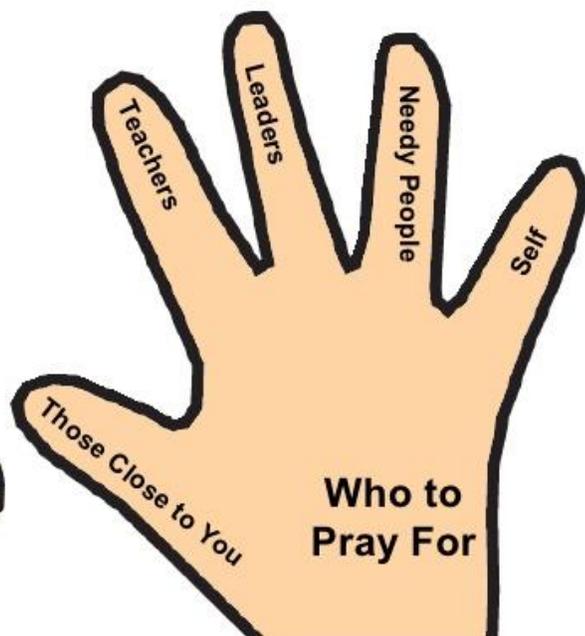
The prayer for the Holy Souls is generally incorporated into the Grace said at the end of a meal. With the celebration of Thanksgiving during November a good opportunity is presented to combine the two concepts by focusing on the prayers offered before and after meals.

Prepare a bulletin board with a Thanksgiving background. Place the meal prayers in the forefront. Have the students design prayer cards to use at home for their own Thanksgiving feast.

Younger students often trace their hands at Thanksgiving time to create turkeys. Show them how they can also use their hands as an aid to prayer. This is a prayer help developed by Pope Francis before he became pope. A good resource with a printable and video showing how to use this for preschool children can be found at: <http://ministry-to-children.com/five-finger-prayer/>



Hands For Prayer



CATHOLIC TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Instruct the wise and they become wiser still. Proverbs 9: 9

Common Sense Media

<https://www.common sense media.org>

The *Common Sense Media* website provides reviews of movies, videos, television shows and apps. This site includes a variety of resources for those trying to screen all forms of media young people consume.

Sadlier Religion

<http://www.sadlier.com/religion>

The *Sadlier Religion* website contains a wealth of resources for catechists as they begin a new school year. When the user scrolls down the page, one finds the *Catechist Cafe*: resources for catechists; the *Family Center*: ideas for use at home; and the *Leadership Library*: articles and tools for catechetical leaders. This website is updated seasonally, so check frequently for more resources.

Catholic Apps

<http://catholicapps.com/>

The *Catholic Apps website* is a helpful tool for those looking for Catholic apps for android and apple products. The website compiles summaries of apps that are relevant for Catholics for personal and professional use.

Apps for Ipad, Iphone, Ipod

Bible for Kids App

The *Bible for Kids* app is a an interactive tool for young children to learn bible stories from the Old and New Testaments. The stories can be read to children, or they can listen to them through the app. Each story is accompanied by colorful, moving graphics that will certainly hold the attention of primary age children. In addition, each story has a follow-up activity.



Discerning Hearts App

The *Discerning Hearts* app is a good resource for those who are looking for spiritual guidance in making decisions. The app contains a collection of podcasts of prayers, articles and reflections, which discerners can listen to and pray with as they reflect on God's action in their lives.



Formed App

The *Formed* app is similar to Netflix with Catholic content. It offers users the opportunity to register for a seven-day free trial, to determine if one wants to purchase a \$9.99 monthly subscription. Access can be purchased for individual use or parish use.



Shared Wisdom

Two heads are better than one. Please submit your favorite technology resources for Catholic religious education at s.carmen@yahoo.com. Submissions will be included in upcoming issues. Many thanks to those who shared tools for this issue.

The IHM Charism and St. Alphonsus Liguori in Religious Education: Adapting the “Virtue of the Month” for the Classroom

Many schools and religious education classes follow programs that encourage character development and/or the growth of the virtues. It is helpful to examine the meaning of virtues to understand why these programs are implemented. According to *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1803), a virtue is a “habitual and firm disposition to do good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but also to give the best of himself (herself). The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his (her) sensory and spiritual powers; he (she) pursues the good and chooses it in concrete ways.” St. Gregory of Nyssa said, “The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.”

St. Alphonsus Liguori formulated a plan to grow in holiness and salvation by following a virtue of the month. Father Daniel Lowery, C.S.S.R. outlined this practical guide in *Growth Through Virtue: Month by Month with Saint Alphonsus Liguori* (1984) and in the August 1996 issue of *Liguorian* in the article “Virtue of the Month.” Father Lowery stated, “The important point, frequently emphasized by Alphonsus, is that Christian virtues are not theoretical constructs to be admired but practical gifts to be used in living Christian life.”

The IHM Congregation continues this Alphonsian tradition by highlighting virtues, patrons, and Scriptural texts each month as well. In keeping with this tradition, we suggest a school-wide / religious education program-wide “Virtue of the Month” program, based on the works of St. Alphonsus Liguori. It is another way of sharing our IHM Charism with the elementary schools and parish religious education programs.

Although Father Lowery’s book and article begin with January, this guide will start with September, offering suggestions for the summer months as well. There will be an overview of each virtue according to the teachings of St. Alphonsus. There will be practical suggestions to help students grow in the specific virtue. You may have to make adjustments to meet the different grade levels.

Many good programs are already being used in our schools and religious education programs, including the IHM projects—“Gathering the Peaces” and “Our Lady of the Millennium, Mother of the Redeemer.” We hope that this plan will be another valuable tool you can use. We also hope it will help us to deepen our understanding and appreciation of our Alphonsian heritage. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the resources to lead your students to a virtuous life as they try to “become like God.”



September

Virtue: Mortification, the Renewing Gift



This seems to be a difficult virtue to begin a school year. Nevertheless, if it is considered the “renewing gift,” it might just be appropriate, following a summer of doing one’s own thing and having more freedom and less responsibility. According to St. Alphonsus, mortification refers to our struggles against evil tendencies or inclinations. It is the Christian practice of dying to self and of restraint. Alphonsus gave examples of fasting, controlling one’s tongue, and overcoming attachments and resentments to illustrate mortification. For students, this “dying to self” could be lived by the way they look out for others first.

1. Encourage students to invite new students to play with them at recess, instead of staying with the same group all of the time.
2. Begin the new school year consistently, following the rule of calling only on those students who raise their hands and wait to be called on; remind students that they should not get in front of students in line or onto the bus.
3. Give someone else the best seat on the bus or in the cafeteria.
4. Allow someone else to be the “captain” of the team. Teach “captains” to pick the less-skilled players first so they don’t always feel left out. Encourage the players to resist resenting the other teams’ successes.

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October

Virtue: Recollection, the Enlightening Gift



This refers to walking in the presence of God. St. Alphonsus said, “The more we walk in the presence of God, the better we recognize his beautiful qualities and strengthen his love in our hearts.” We can recognize God’s presence in the following ways: by picturing Jesus with us, seeing God in his creation and the fall will provide a great opportunity for this, reminding ourselves of the presence of God, and realizing that God is in each of us.

1. Reinstate the tradition of blessing the hour to remind us of the presence of God.
2. Take a nature walk and examine the beauty of creation. If this is not possible, show a video of some of the beautiful sights in our country, in our world.
3. Read Psalm 139 and ask students to share their thoughts or have them draw a picture of it.

4. Make an effort to spend a few minutes each day in quiet prayer. Encourage children to go to your prayer center.

November

Virtue: Prayer, the Unifying Gift



Prayer is the heart of the “Virtue of the Month” tradition presented by St. Alphonsus. Without prayer, spiritual growth will not occur. For St. Alphonsus, the Eucharist is the center, and the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the greatest prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

1. Take your class to church for Adoration, especially if your parish has daily or weekly Adoration.
2. Review and practice all the parts of the Mass for students to fully participate in the Liturgy.
3. As Thanksgiving approaches, remind students that the word *Eucharist* means thanksgiving, and encourage them to attend the parish Thanksgiving Mass.
4. Review all types of prayer with students and pray these with your class.
5. Again, make an effort to spend a few minutes in quiet prayer each day. Do not rely only on the prayers you say together as a class.
6. Display a book for students, families, and visitors to write out their intentions.

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December

Virtue: Love of the Cross, the Redemptive Gift



Even though this is the season of Advent, the virtue for December is Love of the Cross. St. Alphonsus said, “The Love which Jesus entertained for the cross was so great that he embraced it from the first moment of his Incarnation.” Jesus was born to save us from our sins. He loved us so much that he suffered and died on the cross. We all have sufferings in life, but we must try to be like Jesus and accept our sufferings with as much cheerfulness, gentleness, and love as possible.

1. Many people in our neighborhoods are bearing the cross of poverty. Show our love for those who suffer from poverty by having a food drive, clothing drive, or toy drive.
2. Since this is a season of cheerfulness, develop positive attitudes in your students. Help them to see how Jesus did not complain, resist, or fight what was going to happen to him. Resistance, complaining and fighting are part of negative attitudes.
3. Read the story of Jesus’ birth as well as the Crucifixion to see how much God loves us.

4. Look at some pictures of the stable. Notice the crossbeams used. Show the connection between the Incarnation and the Crucifixion.
5. Encourage students to ask for something for someone else and not for themselves for Christmas

January

Virtue: Faith, the First Gift



Faith is God’s first gift. Faith is possible because God revealed Himself and His truth to us. Jesus is the fullness of God’s revelation. Faith is our response to the revelation. St. Alphonsus said, “It is not enough only to believe all that our holy faith teaches us; we must also direct our lives in accordance with our faith.”

1. Read and act out the story of Abraham from Genesis.
2. Provide many opportunities to read from Scripture during Religion class.
3. Study the Baptismal promises, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Nicene Creed to review the truths of the Catholic faith.
4. Highlight the Saints of the Day and introduce classes to Novenas and Litanies, in order to familiarize them with the many Catholic traditions.
5. Teach the students the Act of Faith.

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February

Virtue: Hope, the Hidden Gift

Hope is centered on God. According to St. Alphonsus, we do not realize how faithful God is to the promises He made to us. It is the virtue that calls us to believe and trust that God is always with us, no matter how difficult life might be.



1. Teach children the Act of Hope.
2. Read the story of Joseph and his brothers, as well as the story of Moses and the Exodus, to illustrate God’s providence.
3. Take the students to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and explain how the sacrament builds our confidence in God’s mercy and love.
4. Teach students aspirations such as, “My God, I place my hope in you.”

March

Virtue: Love of God, the Greatest Gift



The virtue of charity is the very heart of the Christian life. Love of God is central to the spirituality of St. Alphonsus. This virtue reminds us of God’s great love for us and of our love for God. God’s love is revealed in His Son Jesus. Doing God’s will shows our love for God. We can also show our love of God in the way we express gratitude and thanksgiving to Him.

1. Spend time in preparation for Holy Week and the Easter Triduum.
2. Teach children to express gratitude and thanksgiving in daily prayer. We must constantly give thanks to God who loves us so much.
3. Pray for vocations. Pray that all people will have the courage to do God’s will in their lives. Sponsor vocation talks with postulants, novices, and seminarians.
4. Teach children to express gratitude to family members, teachers, and friends.
5. Give thanks to God for your life and for all life.
6. Avoid selfish actions. Show love through community service and acts of kindness.

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April

Virtue: Love of Neighbor, the Unselfish Gift



St. Alphonsus said, “Why, therefore, must we love our neighbor? Because he or she is loved by God! We must love all whom God loves!” St. Alphonsus encourages us to live in the spirit of peace, to practice almsgiving, to avoid rash judgment and uncharitable speech. Because we know how much God loves us, we try to love our neighbor as God loves us.

1. Teach children to speak kind words and to use words of encouragement.
2. Avoid watching videos that include violence and hatred, especially in some of the superhero movies.
3. Encourage students to reach out to students who are not as popular or “cool.”
4. Ask students to create a list of how we can work towards peace in our classroom, school, family, and neighborhood.
5. Make a list of all the loving acts you witnessed in a day. Share the lists with the class.

May

Virtue: Poverty, the Enriching Gift

Jesus identified with the poor. St. Alphonsus was very committed to serving the poor. He spoke of “poverty of spirit” and a spirit of poverty. We must be detached from material possessions and worldly power. We are encouraged to share, to hear the cry of the poor, and to work for social justice.



1. Encourage children to give joyfully and to share with those who have less.
2. Use school-wide service projects that will help those in most need. Encourage students to give time instead of money.
3. Teach the children the importance of using only what they need. Think of all the things we waste, and how we can try to recycle and be more conservative.

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June

Virtue: Chastity, the Personal Gift



St. Alphonsus saw the practice of the virtue of chastity as another way of trying to do God’s will. This virtue encourages us to live a moral life and avoid those things that might hinder our holiness of life. We must avoid the near occasions of sin; this is the most effective way to grow in chastity.

1. From a young age, encourage children to use their best manners and good speech, avoiding improper language.
2. Teach what it means to “Avoid the near occasion of sin.” Give examples of these in respect to chastity, especially to middle school students.
3. Encourage students to like and respect the good in themselves.
4. As summer approaches, remind students of positive behaviors, attitudes, speech, and attire that is appropriate.

July and August

Virtues:

July: Obedience, the Liberating Gift

August: Humility, The Honest Gift



The virtue of obedience is our positive response to the authority of God. He is the source of all law. We must live according to the laws of God. Humility is the virtue that tells us that all our gifts come from God. We are nothing without God.

1. Spend time as a family. Discuss specific ways we must obey God, and how obedience is required in school, at work, in the neighborhood, and in our families.
2. Share with one another how we must speak to those in authority.
3. Ask the members of your family to imagine what their lives would be like without all the gifts that God has given to us.
4. Think about truly humble people-those who know that their gifts truly come from God.



Seek First the Kingdom

Parents in Partnership with God – Sharing Faith with Children

A Ministry of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Immaculata, Pennsylvania

PARENT ADVICE FROM POPE FRANCIS -- PART 4 of 6

The Joy of Love (Apostolic Exhortation), Chapter 4: “Love in Marriage”

Generosity in thought and deed is a hallmark of loving relationships and one of the elements of love that St. Paul praised in his letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 13: 4-7). Pope Francis’ reflection on this scriptural passage forms chapter four of *The Joy of Love*. In this Apostolic Exhortation Francis suggests what love looks like in marriage and in the family.

LOVE IS GENEROUS

Generous people share freely of their time, talent or money for the good of others. They expect nothing in return. They delight more in giving than in receiving. They know that “*generously serving others is far more noble than loving ourselves.*” (#101)

Christian generosity balances care for others with self-care, recognizing that authentic self-love is “*a psychological prerequisite for being able to love others.*” (#101)

Jesus called us to love others as we love ourselves. If we have a Godly sense of self-love we will thrill to love others, that is, to do the best for others even at the cost of personal sacrifice. “Self” can be spelled with a capital “S” or a lower case “s.” Capital “S” self is made in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, chooses whatever leads the soul to a closer imitation of Jesus. Lower case “s” self, however, represents the “Me, Myself, I” attitude that yields to selfish interests at the expense of the true good for others and our own true selves.

Parent Ponder-Points:

- Spontaneously identify observed behaviors as “Capital S” or “Small S.” Ask: “Was that capital or small S?” “Which self was that?”
- Introduce your family to the Generosity Prayer that is often attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola: “*Lord, teach me to be generous: to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to look for any reward, save that of knowing that I do your holy will.*”

Reflection Questions:

1. When do you find it easy to be generous, and when it is most difficult.
2. Recall a life-incident that affirms this thought: “It is in giving that we receive.”
3. Read *The Joy of Love*, # 101-102. With what thought do you most resonate?

LOVE REJOICES WITH OTHERS

Love looks for the best in others. Love supports the dignity and uniqueness of individuals. Love takes pride in the interests and efforts and experiences of the loved one. Members of a Christian family are like cheerleaders for each other. Rather than be threatened by the accomplishments of spouse, child or sibling, a loving person is quick to express appreciation and affirmation of efforts, abilities, and good works without comparing and competing.

Christian love experiences joy for the success of others and cultivates empathy when they fail. Love values effort more than results and is quick to offer compassionate, constructive feedback when results are unsatisfying. *“If we fail to learn how to rejoice in the well-being of others, and focus primarily on our own needs, we condemn ourselves to a joyless existence.”* (#110) The world of “me, myself, and I” is isolated and lonely.

The family home must be a supportive shelter – both physically and psychologically – where, *“when something good happens to one of its members, they know that others will be there to celebrate it with them.”* (#110)

Parent Ponder-Points:

- What makes your home a supportive shelter rather than merely a place to eat and sleep?
- Determine an icon for celebrating efforts and achievements that marks the place where the person sits at the food table. For instance, a special dinner plate or a table figurine that holds balloons or a congratulatory sign/symbol, or a miniature trophy cup, etc. Use it to honor effort or achievement, not only for big, public accomplishments but also for character effort – whether or not it had a successful outcome.
- It is human nature for a person to want to spare a child or spouse from failure by taking over the task. Resist that urge. It is counterproductive to the goal of encouraging effort and enjoying the fruits of success.

Reflection Questions:

1. When do you find it easy to rejoice with another person’s success and when is it most difficult?
2. Do you compare your children? Do you hold one child up as a standard for a second child? Have you ever been compared? How did comparison affect you?
3. For each member of your family identify two qualities that are unique to that member and worthy of celebrating. (Do not repeat qualities.)
4. Read *The Joy of Love*, # 109-110. What thought(s) most speak to your heart?



Busquen Primero el Reino

Padres de Familia Cooperando con Dios-

Compartiendo su Fe con sus Hijos/Hijas

Un Ministerio de las Hermanas, Siervas del Inmaculado Corazón de María

Consejos para los Padres de Familia del Papa Francisco

De su exhortación Apostólica en el
Capítulo 4: "El Amor en el Matrimonio"

EL AMOR ES GENEROSO

Las personas generosas comparten libremente su tiempo, talento o dinero solo por el placer que les proporciona hacerlo, por otorgarle un bien a otros. Ellos esperan nada a cambio, se deleitan más en dar que en recibir. Saben que *"servir generosamente a otros, supone otro nivel de entrega que va más allá de solamente el amarnos a nosotros mismos"*. (# 101)

La generosidad cristiana equilibra el cuidado de los demás con el autocuidado, reconociendo que la auténtica capacidad de amarnos a nosotros mismos es la base y *"un requisito psicológico para poder amar a los demás"* (# 101).

Jesús nos llamó a amar a los demás como a nosotros mismos. Si tenemos un sentido divino de autoestima (me aprecio y me quiero como soy), estaremos felices de poder amar a los demás, es decir, proyectar con mis acciones beneficio y servicio a otros, incluso a costa del sacrificio personal. El "yo" puede ser deletreado con una "Y" mayúscula o una "y" minúscula.

La connotación del "Yo" con mayúscula, reconoce que todo lo que soy fue regalado por Dios, y me constituyo como criatura a su imagen y semejanza, por lo tanto, la motivación que se deriva de hacer el bien y actuar con bondad desde el alma, nace para asemejarse con otros al actuar de Dios. El "yo" con minúscula, sin embargo, representa la actitud de un "yo" que es vulnerable a ceder ante intereses egoístas a expensas de lo que pudiese ser "verdaderamente" bueno para los demás y el suyo propio.

Preguntas Para Reflexionar

- Reflexione e identifique comportamientos o acciones que usted haya ofrecido a otros que pudiesen ser categorizados con un "Yo" con mayúscula o con un "Yo" con minúscula.
- Presente a su familia la oración de generosidad de San Ignacio de Loyola. Esta oración fue escrita por el santo, dedicada a San Francisco Javier, Patrón de las misiones, cuando fue enviado como primer misionero a Oriente.

Señor Jesús enséñanos a ser generosos a servirte como Tú mereces a dar sin medida, a combatir sin temor las heridas a trabajar sin descanso sin esperar otra recompensa que saber que hemos cumplido tu santa voluntad.

Preguntas Para Reflexionar:

1. ¿Cuándo te resulta fácil ser generoso, y cuando te es más difícil?
2. Recuerda algún episodio de vida en la que hayas experimentado esta afirmación: "Es en dar que nosotros recibimos."
3. Lee "La alegría del amor", # 101-102. ¿Qué idea expuesta en el texto te interpreta mejor?

EL AMOR SE REGOCIJA EN OTROS

El amor busca lo mejor en los demás. El amor apoya la dignidad y singularidad de cada individuo. Los miembros de una familia cristiana se enorgullecen con los esfuerzos desplegados por alguno de sus miembros, de las acciones que hubiesen podido haber ofrecido algún bienestar mayor hacia otros.

Trabajan y actúan como un verdadero equipo se estimulan y alientan permanentemente. En lugar de sentirse amenazado/s por los logros de cónyuge, hijo, hija, hermana o hermano, muestran su orgullo y contento por los logros de alguno de sus miembros en esta área. No necesitan de comparaciones, tampoco les interesa competir entre ellos.

El amor cristiano experimenta alegría por el éxito de los demás y cultiva la empatía cuando fracasan. El amor valora el esfuerzo más que los resultados y es rápido para ofrecer compasión, retroalimentación constructiva cuando los resultados son insatisfactorios. *“Si no alimentamos nuestra capacidad de gozar con el bien del otro y sobre todo nos concentramos en nuestras propias necesidades, nos condenamos a vivir con poca alegría.”* (# 110) El mundo del "yo, yo y yo" se experimenta vivencialmente en aislamiento y soledad.

El hogar debe erigirse como espacio de refugio de apoyo, tanto física como psicológicamente - donde *"alguien, que logra algo bueno en la vida, sabe que allí lo van a celebrar."* (# 110)

Preguntas Para Reflexionar:

- ¿Qué hace de su hogar un refugio de contención y apoyo en vez de simplemente un lugar para comer y dormir?
- Proponga ritos familiares que celebren los esfuerzos y logros. Por ejemplo: deleitarse con un plato especial, o unos globos o una felicitación, signo / símbolo, o un trofeo en miniatura, etc., cuando alguno de los miembros de su familia ofrezcan algún bienestar a los que le rodean. Que su hogar se constituya siempre como aquel espacio en él se honre el esfuerzo o logro, no sólo aquellos reconocidos en eventos públicos, sino también para legitimar los esfuerzos de bien diarios desplegados por sus miembros.
- Resulta comprensible que un padre desee proteger al hijo/a o a su cónyuge de un fracaso, asumiendo la tarea por el o ella. Resista ese impulso. Resulta contraproducente, al revés, estimule a perseverar, a intentar de nuevo, ya que conquistar metas regala una satisfacción personal incuestionable que alienta a seguir en la misma senda.

Preguntas Para Reflexionar:

1. ¿Cuándo te resulta fácil alegrarte con el éxito de otra persona y cuándo te resulta más complejo?
2. ¿Comparas a tus hijos? ¿Le haces sentir a uno que debe alcanzar las mismas metas que el otro?, ¿Alguna vez has sido comparado?, ¿Cómo le afectó dicha experiencia en tu niñez?
3. Para cada miembro de su familia, identifique dos cualidades que le son particulares y propias a ese miembro y celébrelas. (Trata de no repetir las.)
4. Lea “La Alegría del Amor,” # 109-110. ¿Qué pensamiento(s) le interpelan y hablan a tu corazón?