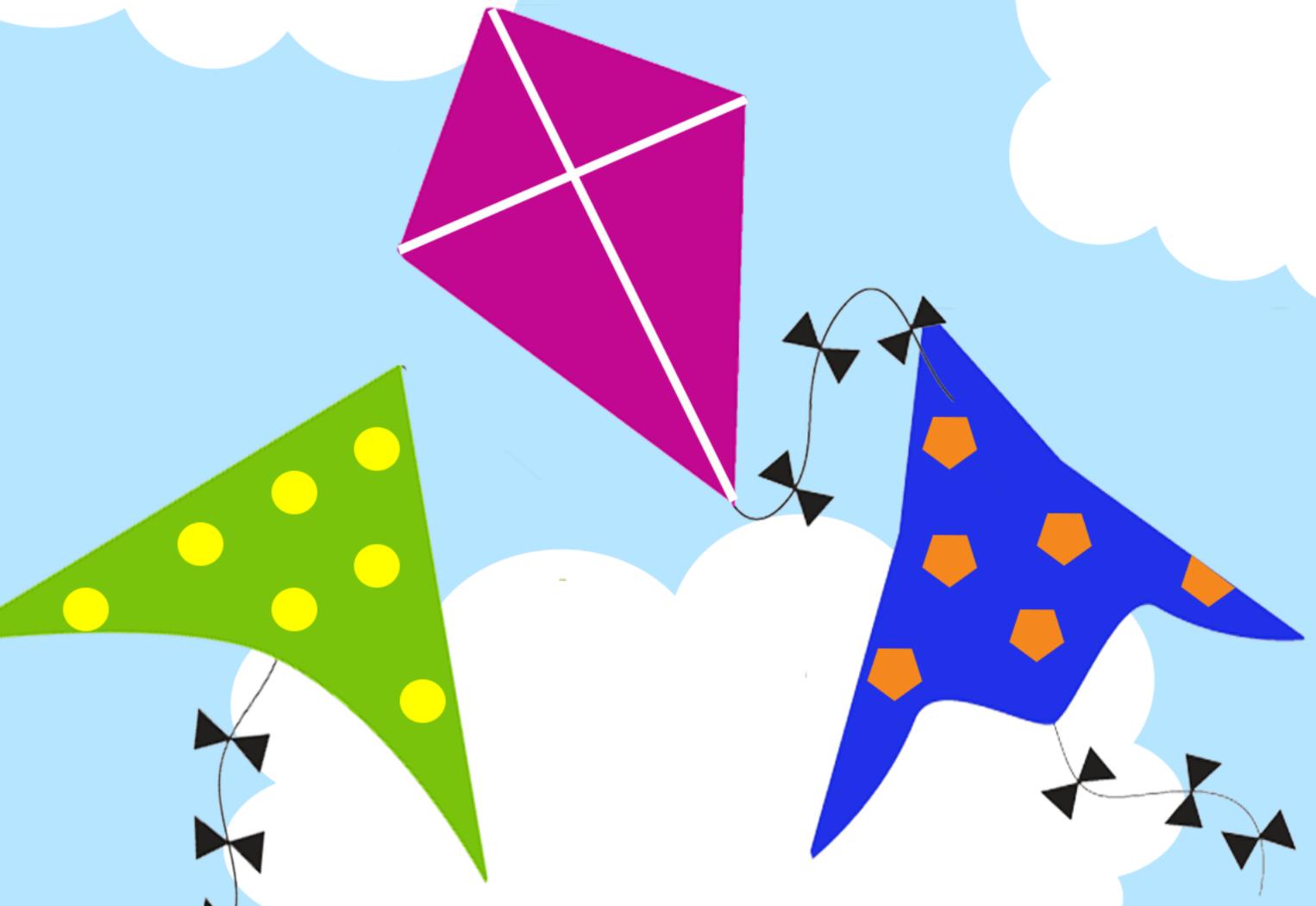


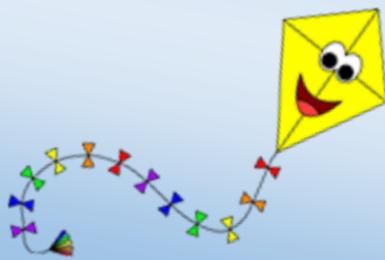
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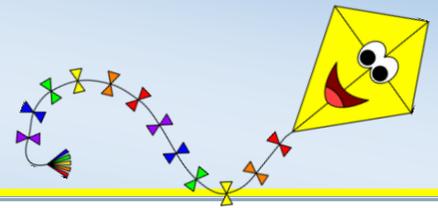
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary | Villa Maria House of Studies | Immaculata, PA 19345

LORD, YOU
LIFT ME UP!





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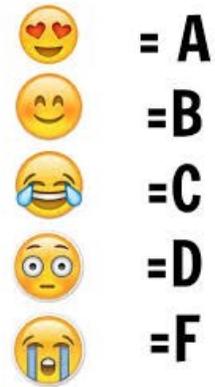
Sister Eunice Marie Timoney, IHM

♥ Love ♥ Creative Hope ♥ Fidelity ♥ Love ♥ Creative Hope ♥ Fidelity ♥ Love ♥ Creative Hope ♥ Fidelity ♥

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Proclaiming the Gospel Message in the Spirit of Jesus the Redeemer



In most schools, for effort, conduct, and special subjects (ex. art, music, foreign language, physical education, technology), four number grades are given such as 4, 3, 2, 1 with 4 being the highest grade. Consider making 3 the average grade where students start with a 3. A student who comes to class, participates, hands in their work on time, and cooperates should receive a 3. A student who hands in exemplary work far above the expectation, excels in the content, participates, and cooperates more than most would receive a 4. On the other hand, the student who submits late, incomplete work and does not participate and/or cooperate earns a 2 or possibly a 1.



Teachers may argue that using rubrics inflates grades. If a child completes the rubric, they deserve the highest grade. Teachers should re-examine the rubrics to ensure that they are challenging students and separating the best students from the good students.

Once the faculty can agree on the 4, 3, 2, 1 grades, they may have the harder conversation about the numerical 60 – 99 or A, B, C, D, F grades. Keep in mind that it is a sense of justice to the students to receive appropriate grades. If students believe they are a top student when they are average, they may be set up for later failures and experience disappointment in their academic careers. Further evidence shows that lenient grading reduces student effort.



Have a conversation at your faculty meetings over what does an A look like - a B, a C, a D, and a F. It may be good to keep these points in mind.

- In the beginning of the year, be very cautious of your grading and err on grading low. The student will be challenged to do better. Psychologically it is better to improve in your grades rather than go down in your grades.
- 80 has always and continues to be the grade considered to be mastery.
- Educate your parents and students that 80 is a good grade. As a faculty talk about how this understanding of grades will be presented to them.
- Take a look at your honor roll. If more than 50% of your students are receiving honors, is your system challenging students? By the way, in many schools more than 80 % of the class achieve honors.
- If everyone in your class is getting 95 and above on all your tests, are your tests too easy?
- Are you able to agree with your grade partners on grading?
- Examine your report card grades. Does your best student stand out among the others? How close are your grades?

Grade inflation has evolved over time and it will take time and effort on the part of educators, schools, diocesan offices, and school districts to correct. Reflecting on your individual part with the dilemma will allow for some progress to be made.

ⁱ <http://www.gradeinflation.com/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/economic-intelligence/2013/12/26/why-college-grade-inflation-is-a-real-problem-and-how-to-fix-it>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grade_inflation

Defining Characteristics of Catholic Education

An individual recently stated that she walked into two Catholic Schools and had a totally different impression from each one. One school portrayed all the characteristics of a Catholic School whereas in the other Catholic School she experienced none of the characteristics of a Catholic School. Upon further questioning over the experience, it appears that religious symbols were present in both schools; however, respect, discipline, and high expectations were quite evident in only one of the schools.



A simple Google search *Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools* produces several scholarly articles worth reading that are listed in the sources. One such source states the following. Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools flow directly from the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools as compiled by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB (*The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*, 2006), and from statements by Pope Benedict XVI and the American bishops. The characteristics define the deep Catholic identity of Catholic schools and serve as the platform on which the standards and benchmarks rest. The defining characteristics authenticate the standards and benchmarks, justifying their existence and providing their meaning. The Defining Characteristics include:



- Sustained by Gospel Witness
- Shaped by Communion and Community
- Accessible to All Students
- Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop
- Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ
- Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church
- Distinguished by Excellence
- Committed to Educate the Whole Child
- Steeped in a Catholic Worldview¹

While this provides much thought for reflection, practically speaking, what are the defining characteristics of a Catholic School? What did the person see in the first Catholic School that was not present in the other Catholic School? Take a look at the practical list below. Evaluate your own school. What do visitors see, and would they say that your school has the Defining Characteristics of a Catholic School?

Catholic Identity

- The administration, faculty, staff, students, and volunteers give witness to Jesus Christ by their behavior and conversations.
- Prayer encompasses the program. Days begin and end with prayer. Catholic traditional prayers and spontaneous prayers are prayed throughout the day. The members of the community are frequently remembered in prayer.
- A crucifix and Blessed Mother statue in good condition are present in each room.
- Religious items and pictures are placed throughout the school.
- Faculty and student body are aware of the liturgical season, for example, during the Advent and Christmas season, Advent wreaths, Christmas Trees, Nativity sets adorn the hallway.
- A sense of community is evident to all those involved with the school.
- The faculty and student body attend Mass, go to confession, and have religious prayer services throughout the year.
- Religion is taught not only as a subject but throughout the day.



Respect

- Students hold the door for adults and one another.
- Students stand and greet an adult when they enter the room.
- In the hallways, students greet faculty, visitors, and one another.
- If a student sees an adult carrying something, on their own they offer to help the person.
- Students have a healthy respect and understanding of authority.
- Boys do not wear hats inside the building.
- Courtesy is taught and expected at all times such as saying, *please and thank you*.



help

Discipline

- An atmosphere of calm and quiet permeate the hallways allowing for all students in classrooms to learn.
- Students know the expected behavior and respond.
- Students raise their hands in classrooms.
- Teachers do not accept inappropriate behavior that includes public put downs of other students in the classrooms.
- A uniform policy is enforced that includes: appropriate length of girls' skirts, clean uniforms without tears or holes, fastened top button of boy's shirts, appropriate safe shoes with shoe laces tied.
- Students enter and leave the building each day in a respectful manner.



High Expectations

- Grade 3 and above write in legible cursive at all times.ⁱⁱ
- Grades 4 and above write in blue or black pen for everything except math. Pencils are always used in math class.
- Assignments submitted on time that are neat, complete, and show good content. If the submitted assignment does not meet the child's ability, it is returned to the student to be redone.
- Students come to class prepared with books, charged tablets, and supplies ready to learn.
- Rigorous and relevant curriculum leading to career ready and college prepared students.



Faculty and Staff

- Faculty and staff live the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ in the way that they interact with one another, students, and parents.
- Faculty and staff pray together on a regular basis and participate in an annual full day retreat.
- Faculty and staff nurture and care for the students challenging them to be the best they can be at all times.
- Faculty and staff know and understand the Mission of Catholic Schools and in particular their individual Catholic School.



ⁱ <https://www.catholicstandards.org/the-standards/defining-characteristics>

ⁱⁱ Read, *A Case for Cursive Handwriting*, from the 11-16 edition of the Best Practices ABC Notes. For a copy email: smtadams@gmail.com for a copy.

Sources:

<http://ucsdcs.org/documents/catholic-identity/46-defining-characteristics-of-catholic-schools-final/file>

<http://www.phdcomics.com>

For additional information regarding the IHM Best Practices contact Sister Margaret Rose Adams, IHM at

smtadams@gmail.com

Reaching I-Don't-Care and Underachieving Students

By now I hope that some baby steps have begun to make a difference. Even if behavior has relapsed, don't give up. Remember that it takes about six months for a behavior to change! So at the end of this year, connect with next year's teacher to share what you've tried, what worked, what didn't, where you've seen some inroads. Don't be too hard on yourselves. We bully ourselves when we say, "I could have done better". The point is progress, not perfection!



It's wearying to hold these students accountable for their actions, their attitude or their lack of work. But it's unloving not to do so, because later in their lives they might meet a truly unloving or unsympathetic person who *will* hold them accountable (e.g. a judge, a parole or police officer). It can be exhausting to appear as if we like the unlikable ones, but if we want to motivate these children to learn and to achieve we have to communicate the message to their brains that someone likes them and cares about their needs. Adults are no different from children in this respect. We'd rather work for an encouraging, supportive, empowering principal than a controlling, critical one! Children like to see the same positive traits in a teacher.

As you prepare for next year consider techniques such as:

- ...asking students to repeat your directions step by step.
- ...during group work place four or five children together rather than pair-share.
 - Tell them who starts the discussion; the rest participate clockwise. At the end of the discussion ask each child to state what was said by *someone else* in the group. It's not as intimidating to report on another's response.
- ...put fewer problems on a page
- ...tell the child to pick 4 or 5 sentences/problems to complete
- ...work for a set amount of time (increase it a couple of minutes as the week goes on).

These students need to learn replacement behaviors for inappropriate ones. When someone refuses to read aloud in a reading group, supply a card from a pre-made

stack of alternate behaviors: “I pass” or “May I read silently?” You may be tempted to think that allows them to win! Well, they weren’t reading aloud before. Now at least they might be reading if only silently.

As small positive steps accumulate, create a success folder. This contains all the positive things the child has done, said, written or achieved. Even if you wouldn’t choose the same item as the child, that’s fine. Success is not about *being* the best, but *trying* your best.

Yes, it’s vital to take care of our students. But it’s just as vital to take care of ourselves. So this summer (and often during the school year), take time for yourself. Guard some *alone* time, read fiction, sleep better, and always remember our mantra...



PRIME TIMES



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

February, 2018

Lent Poem

Living these 40 days
Entering the journey
New life is coming
Time to prepare



The Germ Stopping Song

Tune: Row Your Boat

Cover when we cough, cough, cough.
Cover when you sneeze.
Use a tissue. Wash your hands.
Let's keep our own germs, please!

Washing Hands Song

Tune: Row Your Boat

Wash, wash, wash your hands,
Soap will make them clean.
Scrub the germs till they are gone,
Germs go down the drain.

I Love You Mommy (Daddy)

Tune: You Are My Sunshine

I love you mommy
My dearest mommy
You make me happy
When I am sad
I want to tell you
I really love you
When I'm with you
I'm so glad



Using Wikki Stix in Math

Wikki Stix are great for hands on math activities like creating angles or shapes. They are soft and pliable. They can be used for different kinds of fine motor skills such as forming numbers, letters, shapes and even art activities.



For angles, create a work sheet with 6 large squares. At the top of each square put the angle degree you would like the students to make using Wikki Stix. If you go on the Wikki Stix website you will see the many ways you can use Wikki Stix. They are reusable and fun to use.

The Verb Song

Tune: The Ants Go Marching

A Verb can make your body
move, hurrah, hurrah!
It tells what boys and girls
can do, hurrah, hurrah!

We jump, we spin, we roll, we fall,
It's action verbs that move us all.

If you need an action,
Verbs,
Are the words,
Have you heard?

Monthly Primary STEM Centers

- **February:** Going for the Gold! In honor of the Winter Olympics this month have an Olympic themed STEM center. Using a short video or book, introduce the students to the sport of bobsledding. Students will then use legos, paper towel rolls, popsicle sticks, tape, and a matchbox car (pretend bobsled) to create a course.
- **March:** Leprechaun Traps: Have the students read a book about Leprechauns. Challenge them to create a Leprechaun trap using pipe cleaners, ticky tac, and egg cartoons.
- **April:** What is the Value of Your Raft?: Challenge students to create a raft out of foil, straws, construction paper, and tape. When completed they will place the raft in a bucket or large bowl of water. On top of the raft will be placed a small bowl or cup. The students place one coin at a time in the cup to see how many coins their raft can hold before sinking. The highest value of coins wins.
- **May:** May Mystery Bags! Choose a variety of items such as coffee filters, popsicle sticks, cardboard, etc... and create three different bags. Students will then choose a card which will read either structure, weather, animals, transportation (list could go on). They will have to choose one of the three bags and create something according to the card they picked.

The Art of Making a Heart

Use this poem to help students make hearts:

First you make a "V".

Then, turn your paper and make a "3".

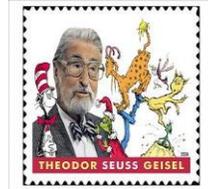
Cut me out very carefully.

And... a Valentine heart you'll see!

Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss

Dr. Seuss on the Loose

Tune: Old MacDonald



Dr. Seuss is on the loose,
And this is how we know.
Cats, hats, eggs, and ham,
Cats, hats eggs, and ham,
Cats, hats, eggs, and ham,
We love his fun book so!

Have You Ever Seen a Cat?

Tune: If You're Happy and You Know It

Have you ever seen a "cat" in a "hat?"
Clap 2x and repeat.

No I've never,

No I've never,

No I've never, never, never,

No I've never seen a "cat" in a "hat."

"fox" wearing "socks."

"fish" make a "wish."

Have fun creating your own rhyming verses.

Leprechaun

A Leprechaun is small and green,
He hides where he cannot be seen.
But if you catch one oday,
He must give his gold away.



March 17th – don't be seen

Unless you're wearing a touch of green
A shirt, a skirt, a button or sock;
A splash of green from the old shamrock
If you don't wear green so the Irish say
You deserve a pinch on St. Patrick's Day!

After teaching these poems have students find the nouns, pronouns, verbs, synonyms, rhyming words, and contractions.

Leprechaun Writing Ideas

How to trick and trap a leprechaun! What happened first, next, then, finally.

If I found a pot of gold, I would.....

Who is worth more to you than gold?

Parts of Speech Poem

From: Teacher's Notebook

This poem may be used when you are teaching or reviewing a particular part of speech.

A **noun** is called,
A person, place or thing.
Some examples include,
Teacher, desk, and ring.



A **verb** is an action,
Something you can do.
Run, jump, and walk,
Are examples you can use.

Adjectives are descriptions,
Like black, red, and blue.
Old, young, and large,
Are good examples too.

Adverbs are words
Used to modify,
Other verbs and adjectives,
And mostly end in "ly".

Pronouns are special
They replace nouns
He, she, and they
Are some that are found.

Quotation Marks

Tune: This Old Man

Quotation Marks come two by two.
Use two before, to when you're through.
Enclosed are words said by another.
Like "Clean this messy room," yelled mother.

Feast of St. Joseph – March 19th

Good St. Joseph
Help me grow
To live and love
As Jesus did.



You know the ways
To guide this child
Guide my heart
To do my part
In every day
In every way.

Good St. Joseph
Help me grow
To always know
Jesus loves me so!

Thank You Poem

We thank You, Lord
For a hundred things
For flowers that bloom
For the birds that sing
For the sun that shines
For the rain that drops
For ice cream and raisins and lollipops

Feast of the Annunciation – March 25th

The Angel came to Mary
Hoping she'd say yes
To be the mother of
Heaven's Son-come to earth.
Mary's yes to God's own plan
Sent Jesus to us as a Man.
Her yes was open to God's will!



Mary teach us every day
To echo yes and do our best
For Jesus comes
In every place
In every face
With so much grace.



Using **math songs** may help some students who find math difficult. Sometimes singing keeps it ringing in the brain. Try these two math songs.

The Doubles Song

Tune: The Farmer in the Dell

One and one is two,
And two and two is four,
Three and three is six,
So now let's try some more!

Four and four is eight,
And five and five is ten,
Six and six is twelve,
So now let's start again.

One and one is two,
And two and two is four,
Three and three is six,
So now let's try some more!

Four and four is eight,
And five and five is ten,
Six and six is twelve,
And now we reached the end!

Perimeter Song

Tune: The Farmer in the Dell

Perimeter is around.
Perimeter is around.
Oh, oh, don't you know,
Perimeter is around.

You add up all the sides.
You add up all the sides.
Oh, oh, don't you know.
You add up all the sides.

Mrs. J's Resource Creations and Math Mysteries

On "Mrs. J's" website, you will find a number of books at grade levels that you may use to encourage math thinking skills. There are a few that can be downloaded for free.

Here are three cool activities found on her website.

Cool Math Trick 1

- Step 1: Choose any digit below 10
- Step 2: Multiply your number by 2
- Step 3: Add 6 to your multiplied number
- Step 4: Divide the number by 2
- Step 5: Subtract the first number you picked in step 1 from the latest number you have come up with in step 4.

AND THE ANSWER IS3

Cool Math Trick 2

- Step 1: Think of any number
- Step 2: Double it
- Step 3: Add 10
- Step 4: Halve it
- Step 5: Take away the number you originally thought in Step 1.

AND THE ANSWER IS.....5

For younger children you might limit step 1 to any number 10 or below.

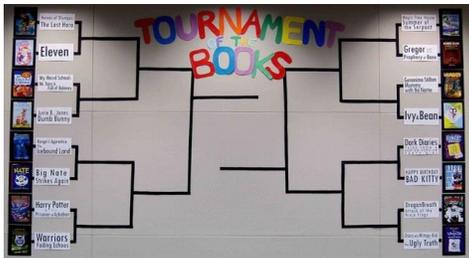
Cool Math Trick 3

- Step 1: Think of a number
- Step 2: Multiply by 3
- Step 3: Add 6
- Step 4: divide by 3
- Step 5: Subtract the number chosen in Step 1 from you answer in Step 4

AND THE ANSWER IS.....2

March Madness Tournament of Books

Here's the game plan.... Choose 16 books (mix of non-fiction and fiction). Each Friday in March, your students vote for their favorite books bracket-style, from Sweet Sixteen all the way to the Championship round. Each week divide your students into groups to read both books in their assigned "game". They will then have until Friday to read and vote on the book to advance to the next round. For example, the first week you would have eight groups each reading two different books. The next week you will have four different groups and so on each week.



Easter Bunny Poem or Song

Tune: A B C

Easter Bunny soft and white
Hopping quickly out of sight.
Thank you for the eggs you bring
At Easter time to welcome spring.
Yellow eggs and blue and red
In the grass and flower bed
We will hunt them everywhere
Did you really put them there?



April Showers

A little black cloud is passing by
And from it tumbles rain
You may get wet
And perhaps upset,
But the sun will shine again.

And please remember these showers
That fall throughout the day
Are April showers
For thirsty flowers
That you will pick in May.

Five Little Bunnies

Five little bunnies hopping on the floor,
One hopped away,
And then there were four.
Four little bunnies, sweet as can be,
One hopped away,
And then there were three.
Three little bunnies, I once knew,
One hopped away,
And then there were two.
Two little bunnies, oh what fun!
One hopped away,
And then there was one.
One little bunny, playing in the sun,
One hopped away,
And now there are none

Earth Day Activity

Create a worksheet with the words

Earth Day - Growing Words

at the top. Set up 3 columns. The first column numbered 1 to 10 with lines next to each number for students to write on. Second column number 11 to 20, third column 21 to 30. At the bottom of the paper print the words **PLANET EARTH** in block form so the students can cut them out.

Directions under Earth Day – Growing Words.

Cut out the letters at the bottom of the page. Put your initials on the back of each letter. Make as many real words as you can. Print the words next to the numbers. Have students share their words. Offer a prize to the students that have the most real words.

Butterfly Poem or Song

Tune: ABC

First comes a butterfly
Who lays an egg
Out comes a caterpillar
With many legs
Oh see the caterpillar
Spin and spin
A little chrysalis to sleep in
Oh, oh, oh, me oh my.
Out comes a pretty butterfly



MAXIMIZING LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

INCLUSION PRACTICES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



DIFFERENT BUT THE SAME:

Sharing Children's Books about Disabilities with Your Students

Is there an elementary classroom in America that doesn't contain at least the beginnings of a children's literature collection? The books we collect to read with our students, or have them read to themselves or a friend, can open up a world of imagination, information and discussion about topics including but not limited to disability. With thoughtful attention to selection and use, children's literature can be a vehicle for understanding the diversity of the world through the characters our students meet along the way. This practice, sometimes called bibliotherapy, provides the opportunity to discuss sometimes sensitive topics in a nonthreatening and productive way. Bibliotherapy can develop empathy and respect, key dispositions in today's world, starting but not ending in our classrooms.

USE BOOKS ABOUT DISABILITIES (DIFFERENCES) TO TEACH ABOUT LIKENESSES...

As teachers consider using books as tools to introduce or discuss disability, some first questions to consider may be "what, why and how?" When teachers wonder, "What do I want to share? Why do I want to share it through a children's book about disability? and How can I meet the goal of my lesson or discussion through my book selections?", possible answers can lead to teaching strategies and more relevant book selections. Consider these first questions and look for your answers to be the initial steps to the lesson you present or the discussion you facilitate. Below are possible answers to the questions you may be asking:

I want my students to learn about and discuss a particular disability: for this lesson, you are introducing disability through factual information that can be presented through fiction or non-fiction titles. In Brenda Miles' *How I Learn: A Kids Guide to Learning Disability*,

Resources

A collection of children's books on various disabilities and perspectives on disability and diversity:

www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2017/08/28/find-a-childrens-book-to-explain-disabilities-to-your-child-or-classmates/

Curated in conjunction with experts in the field, this search tool contains information and synopses of children's and young adult literature about or having to do with people with disabilities:

<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/books/>

A list for both children and adults from TeacherVision:

www.teachervision.com/childrens-books-about-disabilities

The Schneider Family Foundation Awards: American Library Association annual list:

www.ala.org/awardsgrants/awards/1/all_years

Books on Autism Spectrum Disorder:

www.readingrockets.org/article/using-childrens-picture-books-about-autism-resources-inclusive-classrooms

the main character talks not only about his learning disability, but about strategies he and his classmates with disabilities use to learn and be successful. Remember, however, that one book is one perspective. Continue with additional titles and discussion as needed to broaden student understanding and reflection. Emphasize that we have much in common, different as we may be.

I want my students to learn about and embrace the diversity of our world or community: Children can recognize disability as part of the diversity of their class, school or community. In such discussions, disability is portrayed as an attribute, a part of what makes someone who they are. While teaching about disability itself is an obvious outcome, consider highlighting other skills, features or issues than just the difference of the character with the disability. For example, books about children with Autism Spectrum Disorder like *My Brother Sammy* by Becky Edwards, describe the behaviors we often see as characteristic of autism (streaming sand through one's hands just for the sensory experience as opposed to building sand castles). Consider taking these actions and putting them on the board, then having the students put post-its under things they do too. This creates a graph, as well as a common experience for reading the book.

The story becomes a discussion of similarities not differences. Note

also that the book is written from a sibling perspective, which can also generate discussion.

I want to explore the idea of friendship: Eliza Woloson's *My friend Isabelle* teaches about friendship and similarities with simplicity and grace. The publisher, Woodbine House, offers a teacher's guide to help you work with this charming title.

I want to enrich my lessons with current or historical figures with disabilities: Include the achievements of persons with disabilities in the areas of history and current events you study. A book like *No Excuses: Growing up Deaf and Achieving my Super Bowl Dreams* by Derrick Coleman, Jr., teaches about disability through the story of a familiar sports figure.

I want to use a book that includes disability in order to explore classic curriculum areas:

A Character study: real and fictional characters: In *Be Good to Eddie Lee* by Virginia Fleming, Christy considers Eddie, who has Down syndrome, a pest, but when he shares his secret world her feelings toward him begin to change. The three characters in this story can become an introduction to character analysis - or a scavenger hunt for alliteration!

An Author study: Award-winning author Patricia Polacco includes among her many titles books like *Thank You, Mr Faulker*, an autobiographical story of a

struggling learner whose potential is recognized by her fifth-grade teacher. Students can recognize both disability and ability in Polacco's many stories.

In your search for titles, you may also wonder, "Is the most recently published book always the best choice? Do I have to have the latest off-the-shelf to teach well?" The answer is an emphatic "no!" The resources in this issue of ABC Notes contain some of the best in children's literature as listed by entities like the American Library Association, Vanderbilt University and Friendship Circle. Some date as far back as the mid twentieth century, so read, read some more, then decide which books meet your needs. Know that there is going to be more than one book that can answer "why, what and how," and that is the good news. But while there are some great titles to be found across the decades, all must be used planfully and judiciously. As teachers, we must be careful not to reinforce "otherness" or pity for the characters we meet in the books we select. Use books about disabilities (differences) to teach about likenesses, and enjoy the hunt for books that answer WWH? for you!

Geralyn Anderson Arango, Ed.D.,
Professor, Holy Family University

Claire Ann Sullivan, Ed.D.,
Professor, Holy Family University



Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Office for Persons with Disabilities & the Deaf Apostolate

Mass for Persons with Disabilities

Saturday, March 24, 2018 at 10:30 am

RSVP- www.opdarchphilly.org

IHM Good Writers Club



Grades 3 & 4

APRIL

Fuzzy wuzzy caterpillar
Wakes up by and by
Now you have two pretty wings
You're a butterfly!

MAY

Mary, my mother, be with me today,
Help me to be kind in what I do and say.

Grades 5 & 6

APRIL

Generosity makes us happier.
Happiness makes us more generous.

MAY

Give what you have.
To someone else, it may be
better than you dare to think.

Henry W. Longfellow

Grades 7 & 8

APRIL

Some succeed because
they are destined to;
Most succeed because
they are determined to.

Anatole France

MAY

Reputation is what others people know
about you.
Honor is what you know about yourself.

Louis McMaster Bujold



Spring, 2018

PROFICIENCY IN PENMANSHIP



This certifies that

has attained that level of proficiency in penmanship
required by the IHM GOOD WRITERS CLUB
for Grade _____

and thereby is entitled to this

Certificate of Merit

awarded by the IHM Good Writers Club

Date

Member of the official Board of Evaluators

PROFICIENCY IN PENMANSHIP



This certifies that

has attained that level of proficiency in penmanship
required by the IHM GOOD WRITERS CLUB
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and thereby is entitled to this

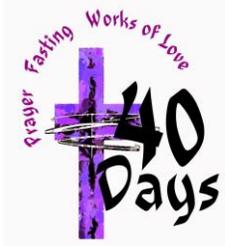
Certificate of Merit

awarded by the IHM Good Writers Club

Date

Member of the official Board of Evaluators

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION...Cover Sheet
I.H.M. ABC NOTES -- SPRING, 2018



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

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are very grateful to those who contributed creative Religious Education ideas to this *Spring 2018 Issue*. Their creativity has certainly enhanced this publication!

LENTEN GATHERING PRAYER



OPENING HYMN: Jesus, Remember Me ...

Psalm Psalm 19: 8, 9

Antiphon: Your words, Lord, are Spirit and Life.

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye.

Glory be to the Father...

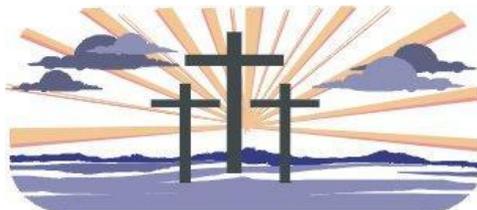
SCRIPTURE READING: Joel 2: 12-18
(Pause for silent reflection)

Sung Response: Jesus, Remember Me...

Intercessions R/ Lord, hear our prayer.
(Please pray intercessions spontaneously)

CLOSING PRAYER:

O God, bless us during this holy season of spiritual renewal. Cleanse our hearts, inspire our minds, and fill our souls with Your peace, as we continue to live, love and spread Your Word. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen!



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.

BLESSING & COMMISSIONING OF STUDENTS

Program for the Closing of the School Year

(A sample that can be adapted to your own school setting and traditions at the end of the year)



Celebrant: I invite all Students to stand.

We have come to the end of another school year. Each of us was called to grow in wisdom, age and grace, as we practiced living Gospel values and Christian virtues this year. During this school year we also celebrated the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Each class has fulfilled requirements of Religion, Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Computer, Art, Music and Gym. Students have excelled at writing, spelling, geography, art and various other contests.

You can be proud of your efforts! Now we pause to recognize and bless each of our students here today.

To the Students of Grade 1:

Congratulations on learning how much God loves you in His beautiful creation and in our wonderful family of faith. We are proud of your efforts to learn to read, and for all your participation in our school community. We bless you and commission you to practice the virtue of **JOY**, and we will welcome you as Second Graders in September.

Will the new Second Graders please be seated!

To the Students of Grade 2:

Congratulations on learning how much God cares for you, and on being initiated into the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. We are especially proud of you for developing your new skills of reading and writing. We bless you and commission you to practice the virtue of **KINDNESS**, and we will welcome you as Third Graders in September.

Will the new Third Graders please be seated!

To the Students of Grade 3:

Congratulations on learning the mysteries of the Creed of our Church, and striving daily to put this faith into practice! We are proud of your efforts to master the multiplication tables, as well as to investigate science all around us. We bless you and commission you to practice the virtue of **PEACE**, and we will welcome you as Fourth Graders in September.

Will the new Fourth Graders please be seated!

(over)

To the Students of Grade 4:

Congratulations on learning the Commandments and laws of our faith. The Beatitudes will foster your quest for happiness. We are proud of you for completing your assignments and striving for excellence in all that you do. We bless you and commission you to practice the value of **ORDERLINESS**, and we will welcome you as Fifth Graders in September.

Will the new Fifth Graders please be seated!

To the Students of Grade 5:

Congratulations on studying the Mass and the Sacraments of the Catholic Church this year. We are proud of your efforts to develop the skills and strategies to say "NO" to temptation and "YES" to right choices. We bless you and commission you to practice the virtue of **COURAGE**, and we will welcome you as Sixth Graders in September.

Will the new Sixth Graders please be seated!



To the Students of Grade 6:

Congratulations on learning about the many mysteries and amazing people of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as for completing your initiation into the Catholic Church through the Sacrament of Confirmation this year. We are proud of your writing skills, and grateful for your talent and dedication. We look forward to your participation and great enthusiasm next year. We bless you and commission you to practice the virtue of **RESPECT**, and we will welcome you as Seventh Graders next year.

Will the new Seventh Graders please be seated!



To the Students of Grade 7:

Congratulations on discovering the lessons of the life of Jesus, His parables and miracles, and the Beatitudes that will lead you to true happiness. We are proud of your efforts to show school spirit in your excellent participation in this year's activities. We know our younger students were encouraged by your example and companionship. We bless you and commission you to practice the value of **INITIATIVE** as the new leaders of our school, and we will welcome you as Eighth Graders in September.

Will the new Eighth Graders please be seated!

You leave here today to enjoy relaxation, family excursions, and a break from alarm clocks, school buses and homework. May you take with you the habits of prayer, value-based living, and enthusiasm for continued learning and reading wherever you go. Stay safe and close to God each day. May God bless you!

Religion Bulletin Boards

2017- 2018

Prayer

As we continue our focus on prayer for the remaining months of the school year, we will continue to share ideas for giving greater meaning to the time-honored prayers that are a part of our tradition



remaining months of the school year, we will continue to share ideas for giving greater meaning to the time-honored prayers that are a part of our tradition

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.

As we continue our focus on prayer for the remaining months of the school year, we once again emphasize the importance of helping students to understand the meaning of the prayers they say. As can be seen in the prayers chosen for this edition of the ABC notes, some can be related to scripture passages while others are a part of the rich tradition of the Church. Some have evolved over time as a response to the needs of the Church. For example, the Angelus is a prayer associated with the mystery of the Incarnation. Yet it has traditionally been said at noon in commemoration of the Passion of Christ. The ringing of bells during the praying of the Angelus was also a response to the needs of the Church and its people at the time. An interesting overview can be found on the April page.

The Angelus is also associated with the scripture passages associated with the Annunciation (March 25). This provides a good opportunity to integrate faith values into the curriculum as many noted artists such as DaVinci, Rubens and FraAngelica have used this as the topic of their paintings. An internet search of images of the Annunciation results in more than 300 depictions of the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary. The last page of this section is a worksheet that students can use to compare and contrast the paintings. Hopefully, they will arrive at the conclusion that while many things about the paintings are different, the message is the same.

Other prayers included in this edition are the responses at Mass, the Lamb of God, the Prayer to the Holy Spirit and the Divine Praises. These are all prayers that student should commit to memory. However, it is important for teachers to provide the students with a clear understanding of the meaning and background of the prayer.

March

Prayers of the Stations; The Angelus

**WE ADORE YOU, O CHRIST
AND WE BLESS YOU!**



**BECAUSE BY YOUR HOLY
CROSS YOU HAVE REDEEMED
THE WORLD.**

During the Lenten Season, a bulletin board reflecting the Stations of the Cross would be effective. Royalty-free images of the Stations can be found on several web sites including

<https://pixabay.com/en/stations-of-the-cross-jesus-712001/> and <https://www.megapixel.com>

Each day, during morning prayer, read the scripture passage related to a Station. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the scripture passage and how it might apply to our lives. For example:

Station 1: Jesus is Condemned.

How do you respond when someone accuses you of something? Do you remain calm as Jesus did or do you respond in anger?

Station 4: Jesus Meets His Mother

Do you take the time to meet with Jesus' mother each day in prayer.

*The Angel
of the Lord
made an announcement
to Mary*



*And by the power
of the Holy Spirit
she became the
Mother of God.*

THE ANGELUS

V: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,

R: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail, Mary, etc.

V: Behold the handmaid of the Lord,

R: Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.

Hail, Mary, etc.

V: And the Word was made flesh,

R: And dwelt among us.

Hail, Mary, etc.

V: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,

R: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom The Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The feast of the Annunciation is celebrated during March. While it is thought of as a prayer reflecting on the Incarnation, the noontime Angelus devotion seems to have derived from the long-standing practice of praying and meditating on Our Lord's passion at midday each Friday. For complete historical background of the Angelus, see <https://www.osv.com/Article/TabId/493/ArtMID/13569/ArticleID/10353/What-Is-the-Angelus.aspx>

This information would be helpful in understanding how the Angelus evolved into the prayer as we know it today. Use a Bulletin Board as a teaching aid to teach the Angelus and the meaning of each phrase so that it becomes more meaningful to students. Have older students complete the Annunciation activity found at the end of these notes.

April

Prayers of the Mass

Take and eat

THIS IS MY BODY



GIVEN UP FOR YOU

The celebration of the Lord's Supper during Holy Week provides an opportunity to review with the students the responses of the Mass. Place an image of the Eucharist in the center of the board. Periodically, change the wording of the bulletin board to review the responses of the Mass. These could include any phrase for which there is a response during Mass:

The Lord be with you. . .and also with you.

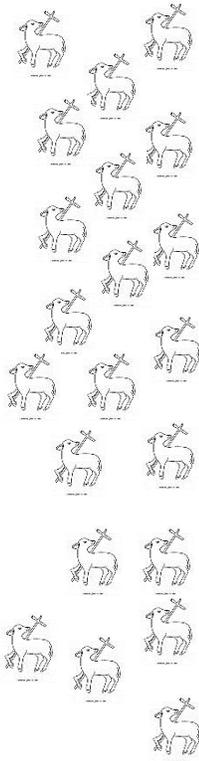
You came to call sinners . . .Lord, have mercy.

Lift up your hearts. . .We lift them up to the Lord

When we eat this bread and drink this cup. . .



**MY
SHEPHERD
IS THE
LORD**



The phrase, "Lamb of God" is used several times during the Mass. The lamb is a symbol for Jesus. In the Old Testament, people worshipped God by sacrificing animals. For the Jews a lamb was the main animal of sacrifice. Jesus was given the title "Lamb of God" by John the Baptist. St. Paul referred to Jesus as the Paschal lamb because of the sacrifice he made to redeem us.

Jesus is also the Shepherd who protects the sheep in his care. Dedicate a bulletin board to the Good Shepherd. Below a picture of Jesus put sheep that the students have completed. On the sheep have the students write their reflections on how Jesus is a Shepherd to them.

Good Shepherd Sunday is a good time for students to write letters of gratitude to pastors, bishops and priests.

May



In anticipation of Pentecost, teach/review the prayer to the Holy Spirit. Review the scripture passages (Acts 2: 1-4) describing the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. Depending on the level of the students, reflect on the Gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Have the students select one of the Gifts/Fruits to practice/pray for. On the Bulletin Board, place a flame for each student. In one section of the flame write the gift/fruit they have chosen; on the other section, place their name. In a petition during morning prayer, pray that each will grow in that virtue.

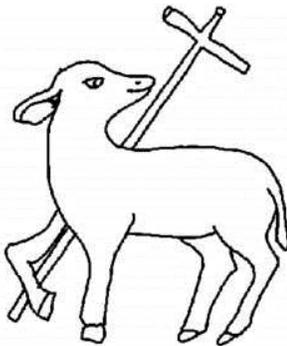
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.



Blessed be God.
Blessed be His Holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
Blessed be the name of Jesus.
Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in His angels and in His Saints.

May the heart of Jesus, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored, and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time.
Amen

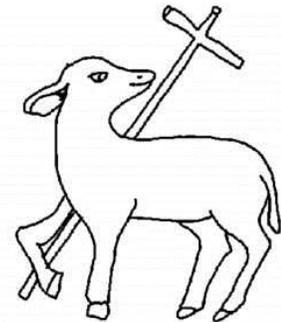
Explain Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Identify the monstrance, humeral veil and cope. Teach the students the prayers associated with Benediction, especially the Divine Praises. Duplicate the prayer card (above, right) and have the students include it as part of the daily prayer in the classroom.



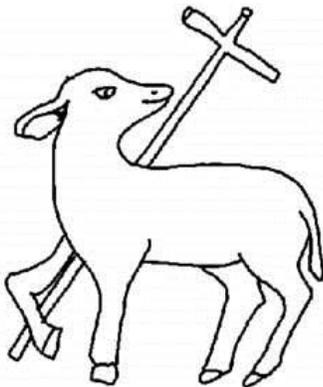
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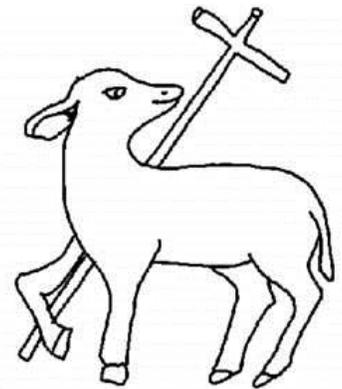
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The Annunciation

Do an internet search of artists' representations of the story of the Annunciation. Choose two of them. Complete the following:

1. Print out a small copy of each image and paste it in the boxes below.

A.



B.



2. Name the artist of each image.

A. _____

B. _____

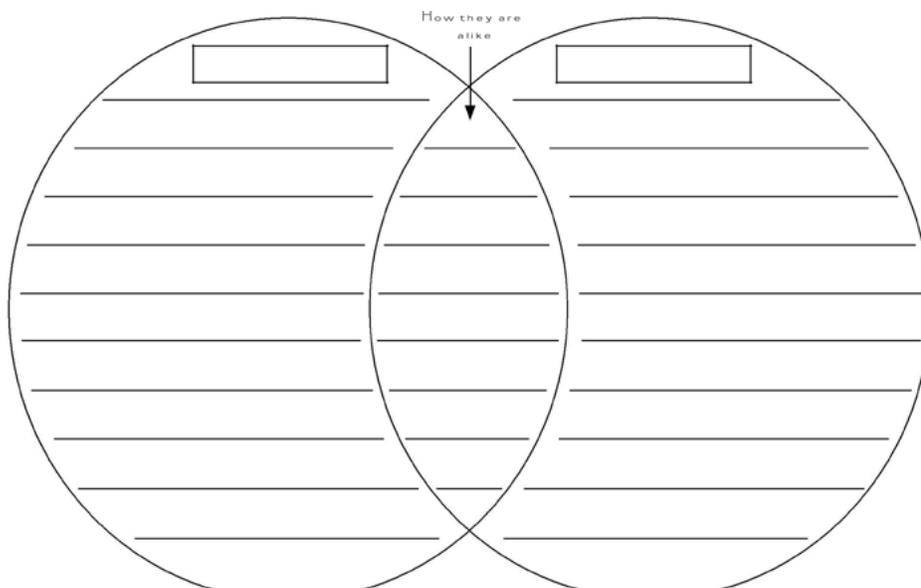
3. Date A _____

B. _____

4. Art medium used A _____

B. _____

5. Use the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the two images. On the back of this sheet explain what you discovered about the two pieces of artwork. How were they alike? How were they different? Which did you like best? Why?



CATHOLIC TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

New Advent

<http://www.newadvent.org>

The *New Advent* website is a useful tool for all Catholics, particularly for teachers and students. The home page highlights current news relevant to Catholics. The other tabs include an extensive encyclopedia, links to the Church Fathers and their writings, the Bible, and a library containing Church documents and articles about Catholic devotions and Sacraments.

Outside da Box

<https://outsidedabox.com>

The *Outside da Box* website gives teachers and youth ministers access to a treasury of videos geared to enhancing the faith life of young people. After creating a free account, the user can stream or download short films. Some videos are also available on ODB's YouTube channel.

Catechist Magazine

<http://www.catechist.com>

The *Catechist Magazine* website is a helpful tool for those looking for creative ways to enhance their religion lessons. The site contains activities, lessons, tools and strategies, that assist catechists in providing meaningful lessons for their students. This website also offers resources on communicating with parents.

Apps for iPad, iPhone, iPod

Sacred Space App

The *Sacred Space* app was produced by the Jesuits and Loyola Press. The app has a daily reflection and a prayer that one can listen to or read to assist their personal meditation.



Bible Trivia App

The *Bible Trivia* app is a fun way for individuals or groups to review basic bible facts and vocabulary. It offers players the option to hear audio clues or receive a Scripture verse, which helps them find the correct answer.



Vatican.va App

The *Vatican.va* app is the official app of the website of the Holy See. It gives users quick access to the Holy Father's daily message, his homilies and current Vatican news. The app also includes photos of the Vatican and a virtual tour of St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel. All content is available in seven languages.



Shared Wisdom

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

Religious Education Treasures

ASPIRATIONS AND OTHER PRAYERS OF MEMORY
(A “bank” for times of gratitude and for times of great emergency)



Compiled by Sister Eunice Marie Timoney, (1935 – 2017)

“Unless God enlightens us from within, our Christian existence will be superficial.” (Pope Francis, General Audience 5/15/13).

Spontaneous prayer is one of the formative ways to keep the pathway of God’s relationship open. Years ago in a homily encouraging Catholic educators, Monsignor Hugh Nolan told of his visits to aged and sick patients and of how, as soon as he began the Sign of the Cross, the patient would frequently continue into prayers he/she had learned as a child. Once I had someone tell me of a visit to an Alzheimer patient who responded the same way upon hearing the Sign of the Cross. The gift of the memory of God ... what consolation it is to all of us when most in need!

Suggested use: Choose by season or by feast and use at change of subjects/classes for a period long enough that it will be committed to students’ memory. Perhaps in conjunction with teaching partners, several different ones could be chosen. Add your own favorites.

Prayers to “center,” perhaps for the beginning of a session:

- **In the name of the Father who created me, in the name of the Son who redeemed me, and in the name of the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies me, I offer this action which I am about to begin.**
- **Let us remember the holy presence of God; let us adore His divine majesty!**
- **Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful; kindle in our hearts the fire of your love.**
- **My God I offer You all that I shall think and do and say
Uniting it with what was done on earth by Jesus, your Son.**
- **My God accept my heart this day and make it always yours!**

Prayers to our Blessed Mother:

- **My Queen, my mother, remember that I am yours; keep me and guard me as your property and possession.**
- **Mary can help, Mary must help, Mary will help, Mary wants to help!**

- **O heart most pure of the Virgin Mary, obtain for me from Jesus a pure and humble heart!**
- **Heart of Mary be my salvation!**
- **Our Lady of the highway, be with us on our journey; for all your ways are beautiful and all your paths are peace. (end of school day or at times of travel)**

Prayers to Jesus:

- **Heart of Jesus, I adore you; heart of Mary, I implore you; heart of Joseph pure and just, in these hearts I place my trust.**
- **Heart of Jesus I implore that I may love you ever more and more.**
- **Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like to thine.**
- **Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I love you!**
- **O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine.**
- **My Lord and My God!**
- **Dear Jesus, since I cannot now receive You, come spiritually into my heart and make it always yours. (Spiritual Communion)**

Make me a channel of your peace; where there is _____ let me sow _____.

Come Holy Spirit, come down from above, of our hearts for King Jesus make cradles of love.





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 6 of 6

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

Within the Christian family the gospel is experienced before it is heard. Through love two become one and they generate love. Parents then become the “first heralds of the gospel” to their children and that love continues to ripple through the family and into society. The vocation of fostering quality family life is fundamental to recognizing and transmitting the joy of the gospel. The *Joy of Love* spotlights love in the family. In chapter four Pope Francis tutors us on what love looks like in marriage by reflecting on St. Paul’s “love homily” (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7).

LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

Age-old wisdom suggests: “If you have nothing nice to say, say nothing!” This is the meaning of “**Love Bears All Things**” (#111-113). It means to “hold your tongue” (remain silent) or “hold your piece” (of information, opinion or insight) about a person if it will cause hurt or harm or spotlight the limitations of a person. “It implies limiting judgment, checking the impulse to issue a firm and ruthless condemnation.” (#112)

Speak well of each other. “Say the things that people need to hear, things that will help them. (Ephesians 4:28). Show the good side of your spouse, child, or sibling, not their weakness and faults. “In any event, keep silent rather than speak ill of them.” #113)

Expect to find goodness in a person. That is the meaning of “**Love Believes All Things**” (#114-115). This trustful attitude “enables a relationship to be free. ... Love trusts, it sets free, it does not try to control, possess and dominate everything.” (#115)

Trusting love fosters independence, openness, sincerity and transparency. When we know that we are trusted there is no need for secrecy, suspicion, and pretending to be anything other than who/what we are. Such trust generates freedom and eliminates deceit, falsehood, and lies.

Parent Ponder Points:

- Watch your words! Avoid asserting yourself at the expense of others by venting anger and resentment.
- Slander (harming a person’s good name) causes irreparable damage. “Hearts have been broken by harsh words spoken that sorrow can never set right.”
- Lying, deceitful behavior breaks trust and blocks growth in loving relationship.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is more characteristic of you: to vent frustration or to withhold criticism?
2. If an impartial, invisible guest spent the last three days in your home, would he/she view you as a dictator, spectator, or a facilitator?
3. Read *The Joy of Love*, # 111-115. What parts tug at your heart?

Love is Optimistic

Christian hope is more than wishful thinking. Hopeful love is a confident expectation that people can change and mature into God's vision for them. Love that **"Hopes All Things"** (#116-117) believes that a person has infinite potential. Hopeful love realizes that, **"though things may not always turn out as we wish, God may well make crooked lines straight and draw some good from the evil we endure in this world."** (#116)

A love that hopes is convinced that all events can have a positive outcome. **"This realization helps us, amid the aggravations of this present life, to see each person from a supernatural perspective, in the light of hope"** (#117) and, therefore, to anticipate the best and work with the least.

Christian Love **"Endures All Things"** (#118-119) meaning that it faces trials and tolerates challenges with a positive attitude. It communicates peacefulness while standing firm in the face of hostility, opposition or confrontation. **"It is a love that never gives up, even in the darkest hour. It shows a certain dogged heroism, a power to resist every negative current, an irrepressible commitment to goodness."** (#118)

Love persists regardless of the circumstances. **"Love does not yield to resentment, scorn for others or the desire to hurt or to gain some advantage."** (#119)

Parent Ponder Points:

- Pope Francis commented: **"The Christian ideal, especially in families, is a love that never gives up"** (#119). The ideal is a principle that sometimes feels out of reach. When you fail in your attempts name, claim, and tame the challenge and then begin again.
- Despair is the opposite of hope. Despair issues from depending on your own resources, strengths and abilities. Rely on God. If God calls you to it, God will see you through it. Reach out to others to restore balance and vision.
- When concern weighs you down or threatens your peace: pause, retreat and re-strategize but do not quit!

Reflection Questions:

1. When do you find it easiest to trust in the goodness of others? When is it difficult?
2. Recall a time when good came out of a sorrow/mistake/failure. In other words, a time when God redeemed a negative event.
3. Recall a time that you had a "dark hour" but were pulled through by the love of another.
4. Read *The Joy of Love*, # 116-119. What thought fills you with hope and grace?



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 DEL PAPA FRANCISCO PARA LOS PADRES DE FAMILIA

SEGUNDA PARTE 6 de 6 "La Alegría del Amor" (Exhortación Apostólica),

Capítulo 4: "El Amor en el Matrimonio"

Dentro de la familia cristiana el evangelio es experimentado antes de ser escuchado. A través del amor, dos se vuelven uno y generan amor. Los padres se convierten en los "primeros heraldos del evangelio" para sus hijos y ese amor continúa esparciéndose a través de la familia y en la sociedad. La vocación de fomentar una vida familiar de calidad es fundamental para reconocer y transmitir la alegría del Evangelio. *La Alegría del Amor* pone de relieve el amor en la familia. En el capítulo cuatro, el Papa Francisco nos enseña a lo que debe parecerse el amor en el matrimonio al reflexionar sobre la "homilía del amor" de San Pablo (1 Corintios 13: 4-7).

EL AMOR NUNCA SE RINDE

La sabiduría antigua sugiere: "¡Si no tienes nada bueno que decir, no digas nada!" Este es el significado de "El Amor Soporta Todas las Cosas" (# 111-113). Significa "sostener la lengua" (permanecer en silencio) o "guardar silencio" (de información, opinión o discernimiento) acerca de una persona, si puede hacerle daño o poner de relieve las limitaciones de una persona. "Implica limitar el juicio, contener la inclinación a lanzar una condena dura e implacable." (# 112)

Habla bien el uno del otro. "Di las cosas que la gente necesita escuchar, las cosas que les ayudarán" (Efesios 4:28). Mostrar el lado bueno de su cónyuge, hijo o hermano, no su debilidad y defectos. "En todo caso, guarden silencio para no dañar su imagen." (# 113)

Espera encontrar la bondad en una persona. Ese es el significado de "El Amor Lo Cree Todo" (# 114-115). Esta actitud de confianza "hace posible una relación de libertad. El amor confía, deja en libertad, renuncia a controlarlo todo, a poseer, a dominar." (# 115)

El amor confiable promueve la independencia, la apertura, la sinceridad y la transparencia. Cuando sabemos que se nos confía, no hay necesidad de secreto, sospecha, y pretender ser alguien distinto de quienes somos o de lo que somos. Tal confianza genera libertad y elimina el engaño, la falsedad y la mentira.

Puntos Para Reflexionar:

- ¡Cuide sus palabras! Evite expresarse a costo de los demás, desahogando ira y resentimiento.
- La calumnia (dañar el buen nombre de una persona) causa daños irreparables. "Corazones han sido rotos por duras palabras enunciadas por un tercero, dolor que es muy difícil reparar."
- La conducta mentirosa y engañosa rompe la confianza y bloquea el crecimiento en la relación amorosa.

Preguntas de Reflexión:

1. ¿Qué es más característico en usted: desahogar su frustración o retener la crítica?
2. Si un invitado imparcial e invisible pasó los últimos tres días en su casa, ¿lo vería a usted como dictador, espectador o facilitador?
3. Lea *La Alegría del Amor*, # 111-115. ¿Qué sección le interpela mejor?

EL AMOR ES OPTIMISTA

La esperanza cristiana es más que una ilusión. El amor esperanzador es una expectativa segura de que la gente puede cambiar y madurar de acuerdo a la visión de Dios para ellos. El amor que **"Espera Todo"** (# 116-117) cree que una persona tiene un potencial infinito. El amor esperanzado asume que **"a pesar de que no todo sale a veces como esperamos en relación al que amamos, algún bien aparecerá."** (116)

Un amor que espera está convencido de que todos los eventos pueden tener un resultado positivo. **"Esta comprensión nos permite, en medio de las angosturas que vivimos en ocasiones en esta tierra, contemplar a las personas con una mirada sobrenatural, con luz de esperanza"** (# 117) y por tanto, anticipar lo mejor y en ocasiones trabajar con lo que observamos posible.

El amor cristiano **"Soporta Todo"** (# 118-119) lo que significa que enfrenta pruebas y tolera desafíos con una actitud positiva. Comunica tranquilidad mientras se mantiene firme ante la hostilidad, la oposición o la confrontación. **"Es amor a pesar de todo, aun cuando todo el contexto invite a otra cosa. Manifiesta una cuota de heroísmo tozudo, de fortaleza en contra de toda corriente negativa, una opción por el bien que nada puede derribar."** (# 118)

El amor persiste independiente de las circunstancias. **"El amor no se deja dominar por el rencor, el desprecio hacia las personas, el deseo de lastimar o de cobrarse algo."** (n. 119).

Ideas para la reflexión:

- El Papa Francisco comentó: "El ideal cristiano, especialmente en las familias, es un amor que nunca se rinde" (# 119). El ideal es un principio que a veces se siente fuera de alcance. Cuando fracase en sus intentos, acepte nuevamente esa área, domestíquela y vuelva a comenzar, persevera siempre.
- La desesperación es lo opuesto a la esperanza. La desesperación surge por depender de sus propios recursos, fortalezas y habilidades. Confíe en Dios, si ha sido llamado es porque sin lugar a dudas Dios así lo ha querido. Comparta con otros para restaurar el equilibrio.
- Cuando la preocupación le pese o amenace su paz: ¡haga una pausa, aléjese , otórguese un tiempo para reflexionar y replantearse, pero no se rinda!

Preguntas para la reflexión:

1. ¿Cuándo le es más fácil confiar en la bondad de los demás? ¿Cuándo les es más difícil?
2. Recuerde algún momento de su vida en la que haya salido airoso de una etapa de gran dolor / error / o fracaso. En otras palabras, algún período en el que se vió redimido por Dios.
3. Recordar alguna vez en la que haya tenido alguna "hora oscura", en la que haya sido ayudado por el amor de otro.
4. Lea La alegría del amor, # 116-119. ¿Qué pensamiento le llena de esperanza y gracia?