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# NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2009

## SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST SCHOOL - HYDES

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Dear Parents,

I can hardly believe we are already thinking of Thanksgiving! All we need do is to look around outside to see the beauties of God's creation! What better way of giving thanks than through prayer.

Loving father,  
help us to appreciate  
all you have given us  
and to use well  
the gifts of life, freedom, nature,  
and the love you have given us.  
Forgive us for the times  
we are not thankful for all we have.  
Help us to remember  
those who are less fortunate,  
and to share with them what we can.  
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus,  
our Savior and our Brother.  
Amen.



On behalf of the entire faculty and staff, I wish each of you a Happy Thanksgiving!

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### **Open House:**

We will be hosting an "Open House" for prospective students and parents. This year we have scheduled Thursday, November 19, from 9:00 AM until 11:00 AM.

Current parents are also welcome, and again this year, we have added an additional time from 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM. We are suggesting that you visit the classrooms your children will be entering next year. For example, if your child is in PK 4, you visit our Kindergarten. If your child is in Kindergarten, visit Grade 1 and so forth. The Open House in February for Catholic Schools Week will be spent with your child in his/her classroom. That makes this Open House perfect for looking ahead! In a few weeks, you will be receiving a personal note from the teachers of your child's future grade, inviting you to attend their "Open House." You will be able to see the textbooks that are used, the [Archdiocesan Course of Study](#) for each subject, and how our curriculum is presented at each grade level. We hope we will see many of you joining us during American Education Week.

### **Scholastic Book Fair:**

Our school Book Fair will be held the week of November 16 from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. On Friday, November 20, the Book Fair will close at 10:00 AM. Again this year, we will have the classroom wish list program where parents and students may purchase books from book titles

chosen by their teachers. Brochures will be sent home the week prior to the Fair with examples of just a few of the many selections available. At times, not all items in the brochures are sent to the Fair. Students will be allowed to browse and shop during the week, but all are invited to attend. Purchases may be made by cash, check, or credit card.

**School Uniforms:**

As of November 1, winter uniforms are to be worn. Please check the Handbook for the required winter wear. School sweaters may be worn during class time. School sweatshirts may be worn on gym days.

**End of Trimester 1:**

Wednesday, November 18, will be the last day of trimester 1. The last day to earn Accelerated Reader points will be Friday, November 13. The second trimester begins on Thursday, November 19.

Progress Reports for trimester 1 are scheduled for distribution on November 24. Students will have a noon dismissal on Monday, November 30, so that parent conferences can be held from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

**I "Read to the Principal" Club:**

Each year, I make time for students in Grade 1 to visit my office and read a favorite book to me. We enjoy the book together and the student receives a pin which reads: "I Read to the Principal." They will also receive a pencil, a bookmark and a certificate with the same logo. I am looking forward to sitting with our young readers as they share a favorite book.

**Applause, Applause:**

Thanks to everyone who made our Race for Education another huge success! We have surpassed our goal of \$25,000.00. As soon as we have the final figure, I will announce it to all. Thanks to Sherry Rukowicz, our Race Coordinator, to all of the parents who organized the day for us, to all the parents, grandparents and friends who cheered the racers on and, last but not least, to all of the teachers and students who ran or walked the many laps to earn money for our school. All students received a ribbon of participation. Please refer to H.A.S.A. section for more "Race" details.

The following are the class winners by grade, and each received a special ribbon for their accomplishment:

- |              |                      |             |                  |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| PK 3         | – Ian Brady          | Grade Three | – Megan Dodson   |
| PK 4 AM      | – Devin Rukowicz     | Grade Four  | – Bradley Hock   |
| PK 4 PM      | – Ava Ozazewski      | Grade Five  | – Jordan Loundas |
| Kindergarten | – Samuel Ehrlich     | Grade Six   | –                |
| Grade One    | – Andrew Spencer     | Grade Seven | – Mark Bauer     |
| Grade Two    | – Kirkley Moessbauer | Grade Eight | – Calvin Curtin  |

Calvin Curtin was the school-wide winner by running 61 laps; he received a special trophy. I am sure everyone slept well on the evening of the race! I know I was tired just watching the children race around the track.

**Take Charge of Education:**

This is an easy way for our school to raise money. Target donates up to 1% of every purchase made with the RED card (Target Visa credit card, Target credit card or Target Check Card) to the school of your choice twice a year. In September, we received a check for \$217.72 from Target. If you shop at Target stores and use their credit card, why not designate our school as your school of choice!

**Vision and Hearing:**

On November 12 and 13, Baltimore County Department of Health will do vision and hearing screening on students in PK 4, Grades 1, 4, 8 and all new students to the school. If you would like your child to be screened, and they are not in one of the above grades, please call Mrs. Tabassi, our school nurse, or send her a note and your child's name will be placed on the roster to be screened.

**Drama Club:**

The play this year is *Much Ado About Coconuts* by Andrew Ross. There is a change in the rehearsal schedule. This will only affect a couple of days. The cast and crew have been given their schedules. We are all excited about the beginning of rehearsals. This will be a great show again this year. Stay tuned and thank you for your continued support. Everyone mark your calendar for March 12 and 13 of 2010.

**Social Action:**

The Social Action Committee got off to a very artistic start this school year! The students decorated pumpkins that were sent to Stella Maris in time for Halloween. Many thanks to Reese Jones' family for donating the pumpkins!

Our SAC will continue throughout the school year with outreach activities to help those in need in our community. Our November activity is "Everything but the Turkey." SAC members will prepare baskets of donated boxed and canned foods which will then be sent to our parish office which will, in turn, distribute the baskets. Further information will follow. Our next meeting will be on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Our Social Action Committee moderators are Mrs. Macek, Mrs. Donohue, and Ms. Creamer. Mrs. Ann Marie Smith is our indispensable parent helper.

**Student Council**

Our Student Council Halloween raffle was a big success. Jessica Bauer, Grade 4, was the lucky winner. She took home lots of scary Halloween decorations.

**Tuition Credit:**

We want to thank our current parents who are ambassadors for Saint John School. They spread the good news about our school to others and, hopefully, that results in another family

joining our school families. Again this year if you refer a family and that family registers and attends Saint John next year, to show our appreciation you will get a \$500.00 credit applied to your tuition. So, talk it up and remind prospective parents of our "Open House" on November 19.

### **Home and School Association (H.A.S.A.):**

#### Innisbrook

Thanks to all for their work with the distribution of Innisbrook items this year. And thanks to Martha Schumacher and Mary Beth Bressler for leading the team! Our sales were lower than last year, but still great! Our profit was about \$10,500.00.

#### Race for Education

We made it! We have exceeded our goal of \$25,000.00 and have secured ourselves an extra day off school! Mark your calendars – November 25 is now a day off!

Race Day was great; the weather cooperated! In case you missed it, we were on WMAR's Morning Show LIVE! We think there is a link on their website for all who want to see it! Congratulations to all of the grade winners and thank you to the children (and teachers!) who ran so tirelessly!

#### November H.A.S.A. General Meeting

The November General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, at 7:00 P.M. in the Church Hall. After a brief H.A.S.A. report on finances and upcoming events, we are pleased to announce that there will be a presentation by several teachers on Internet Safety. Whether you have a middle-schooler with daily Internet access or an elementary school student who is just learning the ropes, this is a presentation that will be helpful for all parents as we learn the hazards of the Internet. Please join us.

#### Mardi Gras Madness!

Save the date for this year's big event - March 6, 2010. Tickets will be going on sale soon, so watch for an order form.

#### Father/Daughter Sweetheart Ball

We are happy to announce that H.A.S.A. will be sponsoring a Father/Daughter Dance on Friday, February 12, 2010, in the Church Hall. Please contact Donna Weitz if you would like to help plan this fun-filled night.

#### Market Day

Thanks to everyone who placed an order in the month of October. Our profit for this sale was \$286.38. Our profit percentage is based on the total sales - the more orders we place, the higher profit percentage. Thanks to all of the volunteers who helped set up tables, unload the truck, and pack orders.

November - PIE MONTH

We will once again have a school-wide PIE contest. We will be working with the Knights of Columbus to donate pies for their Thanksgiving food drive. The class that donates the most pies will be awarded an ice cream sundae party.

Please also consider ordering your holiday pies from Market Day.

**Order due date: Tuesday, November 10 at 11:00 PM.**

**Order delivery date: Monday, November 16.**

**GO GREEN** - Place your order and prepay on line at **Marketday.com**. Our account number is 14391. Your order will be pre-packed and ready for you to pick up on delivery day. EXTENDED PICK UP from 2:30 PM to 6:00 PM (Diane & Bob Elliott, 443-299-8220)

Have a great month and a Happy Thanksgiving!

*Jean Delcher*



# Parents make the difference!

Early Childhood - November 2009

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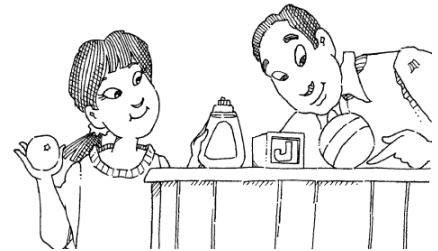
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## Create a learning environment at home for your preschooler

As a parent, you are your child's first and most influential teacher. The activities you and your child do together set the stage for her academic success.

To create a learning environment at home:

- Look for concrete ways to help your child learn concepts. For example, your child comes home and says, "We counted to four at school!" Reply, "That's great! We need four plates on the table for dinner. You can put the plates on and we'll count them together."
- Review and expand upon concepts. If your child is learning shapes, say, "I see circles and squares in this room. Can you bring me something that is a circle and something that is a square?" Once that is done, say, "Did you know that a triangle has three sides? Let's look for one of those, too!"
- Engage your child's senses. Each day, talk with her about what she sees, hears, feels, smells and tastes. Help her learn the words that describe these, such as loud, rough, salty and sour.
- Give your child plenty of opportunities to practice social skills. Social skills are a big part of the curriculum in preschool and kindergarten. But some experiences, such as learning to be a good host and a polite guest, are best accomplished outside of school.



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### Talking & Listening

## Encourage your preschooler to show gratitude

Being thankful is more than a courtesy. It's a mind set that changes how kids look at life. To help your preschooler enjoy gratitude:

- Say thanks with pictures. Have your child draw pictures of things he appreciates. Or take photos and let your child dictate the captions.

- Role-play. Act out situations that involve thanks. What should your child say when he receives a present? What if he already has the item? What if he doesn't like it?
- Be creative. Help your child make and send thank-you cards. Encourage him to give thanks by saying kind words and doing favors.
- Imagine. What would it be like without certain conveniences? Try baking bread for a week instead of buying it. Or walk to a nearby store instead of driving. Then enjoy a new sense of gratitude for everyday gifts.

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## Discipline

# Proper praise can make a big difference in your discipline

Studies show that praise is a key part of discipline success. But what kinds of praise work best? Parenting expert Alan Kazdin, Ph.D., explains that effective praise is:

- Upbeat. When you praise your preschooler, sound excited.
- Specific. Describe exactly what your child did right.
- Physical. Reinforce your message with something like a gentle hug, smile or thumbs-up.
- Dependent. Use praise when it's meaningful and earned.
- Instant. Make sure praise is directly connected to your child's good behavior.
- Frequent. Take advantage of opportunities to compliment your child. You should praise your child more often than you criticize!

Parents sometimes mistakenly add criticism to praise. For example, "I asked you to put on your pajamas, and look! Hooray! You got them on!" (There's the praise.) "Too bad you didn't do that last night." (There's the criticism.)

Instead, keep it positive. And don't worry that you might sound too happy. Kazdin promotes enthusiasm and says, "Enthusiastic praise, however sincere you may feel it to be, is always much more effective than sincere punishment, which is the usual alternative."

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## Development Milestones

# Know how your child will learn on the journey to kindergarten

Your child will mentally develop by leaps and bounds from the time he turns three to the time he is ready to start kindergarten as a five-year-old.

Between ages three and four, your child can:

- Put similar objects in groups.
- Match colors.
- Make towers of blocks or line them up from biggest to smallest.
- Understand parts and wholes. (One slice of pizza is a part, the entire pizza is the whole.)
- Draw something representative. A stick figure is a man, a round body and head with a tail could be a dog.
- Work on an activity for up to 15 minutes (this varies).
- Listen, watch and learn from a preschool teacher.
- Give first and last name and age.
- Begin to understand the difference between today and yesterday.

Between four and five, your child can:

- Rhyme words.
- Identify many colors.
- Understand that things happen in order.
- Produce a much more detailed drawing. The man may have a hat and clothes; the dog may have a collar.
- Count to at least five, and often much higher.
- Give name of street and town.

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**Click here to view the  
November EC Activity Calendar**

# Parents make the difference!

## Elementary School - November 2009

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## Do you know the ABCs of parent-teacher conferences?

Children learn their ABCs when they start school. You can also use the ABCs to get the most out of your parent-teacher conference.

Here's how:

**A** Ask questions. Before the conference, jot down a list of questions you want the teacher to answer. Bring the list with you to the conference. Here are the kinds of questions you may want to ask:

- What skills will my child be expected to master this year?
- What will my child learn this year?
- What are my child's strengths and weaknesses?
- How does my child get along with other children in the class?
- How can I best help my child be a successful learner?



**B** Be honest. You know things about your child that can help the teacher help him learn more. So share what you know. She'll want to know his likes and dislikes. She'll also want to know if there are any problems or concerns. If a grandparent has just died or a family member has lost a job, your child may be worrying about those things in school.

**C** Cooperate. A teacher may share a concern about your child during the conference. If that happens, work with the teacher to come up with a plan to address it. You and the teacher both want what's best for your child. Decide what you'll do at home and how she'll help your child at school. Set a date to meet and review how the plan is working.

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### Setting Expectations

## Help your elementary schooler develop an achievement attitude

Attitudes are like mental pictures. Basketball players who can picture themselves scoring a basket can usually do just that. Students who have a positive picture of themselves being successful in the classroom are more likely to achieve.

As a parent, you have the ability to help your child create positive pictures and positive thoughts about what she can do. Here are some ways you can help your child create an attitude of achievement:

- Picture success in school. Help your child create a mental picture of success. "I want you to see yourself getting an A on that book report."
- Stress the importance of effort. If your child is struggling, say, "When you studied hard last week, you got your spelling words right. You can do it."
- Give the positive behavior you see a name. "I was so proud when you were kind to the new boy in class today."

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## Discipline

# Choose research-based, effective ways to discipline your child

Have you ever met a happy, well-behaved child and wondered what her parents were doing right? Are they super strict? Really relaxed? Hopefully neither, because research shows that being too strict is destructive, and being too permissive isn't healthy, either. The best approach is to strike a balance.

Remember to:

- Be positive. Parents are most successful when they motivate children with love, not fear. So avoid punishments and put the biggest focus on what your child does right. Correct in a caring, constructive way.
- Set limits. Part of loving a child is protecting her and helping her get along with others. This requires rules. Choose rules carefully, research suggests, and enforce them with empathy. It helps to ask yourself, "Is this rule necessary?"
- Use consequences. Consequences are not the same as punishments. The best ones are directly related to behavior. For example, "Uh oh. You left your toy outside again, and it got ruined in the rain."
- Give choices. Over time, you want your child to develop self-discipline. When you allow her to make age-appropriate choices, she gains confidence and responsibility. Present only those options that are okay with you. ("Would you like this or that? You choose.")
- Manage emotions. It's natural for parents to sometimes feel angry, frustrated and to explode! Ahead of time, plan how you'll handle these feelings safely. Wait to discipline until you're calm. ("I am angry about this. I'm going to calm down in my room, and we'll discuss it later.")

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## Homework/Study Skills

# Choose science projects that teach concepts

Your child has to make a project for the science fair, and you're determined that he'll: 1) do it himself (not at the last minute), 2) learn from it and 3) enjoy it. So where should you start?

Head for the library (there are countless books on kids' science projects) and choose a fun, manageable activity that teaches at least one key science concept, such as:

- Organization. Your child might sort things into groups, such as certain kinds of leaves or rocks.
- Cause and effect. How does one thing influence another? How does sunlight affect plants?
- Systems. Notice parts that make up a whole. What makes an old-fashioned clock tick?
- Quantity. Think about measurements, such as weight, size, temperature and proportions.
- Representation. Your child can draw a large picture of some-thing tiny to show it in detail.
- Change. Some changes can be seen quickly (like ice melting), while others take longer (such as summer turning to fall).
- Relationships. How does the appearance of something relate to what it does? (Think about gills on a fish or the neck on a giraffe.)

Once your child has picked a project, divide it into small parts with deadlines. Outline the plan, collect supplies and offer guidance. Discuss what he's learning and encourage him every step of the way!

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**Click here to view the  
November EL Activity Calendar**

# Parents still make the difference!

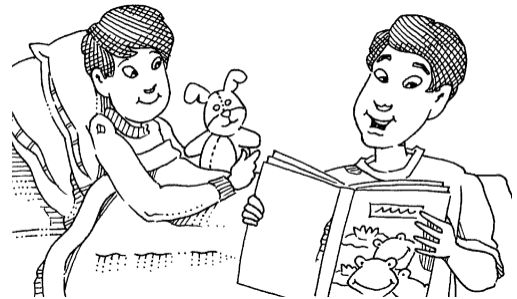
Middle School - November 2009

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## Turn your middle schooler into a responsible, independent person

Your preteen's ever-shifting behavior may make you downright dizzy sometimes. One day, he's mature and dependable. But the next? He's fussing about the house rules like a cranky preschooler. Welcome to adolescence!



These next few years are all about change and growth. And while it would be nice to wave your magic wand and turn your preteen into the independent, responsible adult he'll hopefully grow to be, it doesn't work that way. Like nearly everything else related to parenting, it's a process.

You can turn your preteen into a responsible young person if you:

- Insist he pitch in with younger siblings. How about having him handle his little brother's bedtime story tonight?
- Give him meaningful chores. Don't assign busywork. Look for tasks that matter.
- Let him run his own errands. Who says you're the only one capable of picking out a poster board for that upcoming school project?
- Allow him to get a part-time job. Pet sitting or mowing lawns are great ways for preteens to earn money and develop a good work ethic. As long as he keeps his grades up, consider letting him go for it.
- Rely on him when you need help. Why clean the gutters or change the oil in the car by yourself? There's a talented preteen nearby!

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### Coping With Adolescents

## Understanding preteen brains helps you respond to your child

Parenting a middle schooler in today's times can be a challenge. Your preteen acts like he knows everything, and at times he seems so grown up.

The important word is "seems." It doesn't matter how "cool" your child acts--it will be years before he thinks like an adult. Keep in mind that:

- Emotional thinking usually wins out over rational thinking at this age. That's why middle schoolers may lash out if they think they've been "dissed." Your child is not ready to stop and think: "I'd better cool it, because I might get in trouble." He responds with emotion only. Have your child practice instant responses, such as shaking his head and walking away. Counting to 10 before blowing his top can work, too. And don't take angry comments your child may make to you personally.
- Your child lives in the moment. He doesn't grasp that his semester grade may drop if he doesn't study tonight for his test. To him, the end of the semester is light-years away. What he does tonight can't possibly affect the end of the semester. Don't force your middle schooler to make a connection he is not ready to make. Instead, set firm rules about studying and stick to them.

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## Motivating Your Child

# Focus on goals instead of grades to improve academic success

Think helping your middle schooler with homework is the ticket to his future success? Think again. Studies show that the best way to help your child succeed may be to remind him that working hard today has a payoff tomorrow.

In other words, make him see that doing well in school is about more than getting good grades. It's about reaching his goals someday.

Why does linking school success to goals matter? Possibly because the teen years are when kids begin growing into the adults they'll one day be. And even though they're breaking away from their parents, they take Mom and Dad's guidance seriously.

In fact, "lack of guidance" is cited as the main reason capable kids don't go onto college.

After reviewing data from 50,000 students over a 26-year period, researchers also found that, by middle school:

- Kids begin losing interest in grades. For many preteens, hanging out with friends and having fun mean more than making the honor roll.
- It's tough for parents to build relationships with teachers. Since kids have several teachers every day, it can be hard for parents to get to know them all.
- Parent involvement matters. But stressing the long-term benefits of doing well matters even more.

- Helping with homework produces mixed results. Some kids enjoy the aid; others see it as meddling. Still others find it confusing. This is because parents may explain things differently than a teacher does.

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## Reinforcing Learning

# Master skills, strategies to make study time more productive

In middle school, your child must increase his skill level to work independently and well. Consider sharing and practicing ideas like these:

- Answer six key questions. Advise your child to always find out: who, what, when, where, why and how. This will lead to a basic understanding of many reading assignments. It will also help him write an outline.
- Know vocabulary. Your child will struggle with an assignment if he doesn't understand the language in it. Encourage him to use the dictionary or talk to the teacher for clarification.
- Grasp important information. Many assignments will require your child's understanding of the difference between central ideas and details. Practice this with your child, saying something like this: "Jim dropped tears on his blue shirt as he walked up to the house." What is more important, the fact that Jim had a blue shirt or that he was crying?
- Compare and contrast. Can your child tell how things are alike and how they are different from one another? This skill will help your child with several subjects, particularly English and history. Ask your child, "How are a bulldog and a poodle alike? How are they different?"

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