

September Newsletter 2009

SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST SCHOOL – HYDES

Dear Parents,

"It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year."



High hopes, high expectations, and excitement abounds. Yes, the beginning of another school year is upon us! Although many of us still long for that one more week or one more day of summer vacation, we realize that we have been rejuvenated -- a new beginning! Greeting friends the first day, new books, maybe new shoes, new school supplies, new teachers are all a part of the experience your child shares with other students and teachers at the beginning of a new school year! We are ready to begin this

new year with enthusiasm and to celebrate the uniqueness of each student and teacher. We ask God to bless the children as they grow in knowledge and the faculty and parents as they continue "to teach as Jesus did."

Welcome:

Once again, I welcome back parents and students who were part of Saint John School last year, and with equal enthusiasm, I welcome new parents and new students who join our school family for the first time. A heartfelt welcome back is extended also to the faculty and staff who are returning and to those new to our school. I can finally officially welcome Ms. Liesl Gercke. Liesl will be our new Spanish teacher. She has taught for the past three years and is eager to work in our Catholic School.

We pray for a successful school year, a year of cooperation and partnership between home and school. We look forward to your active participation in the Home and School Association. Soon you will be receiving valuable information about the works and plans for this year's Association and how you can help.

Theme:

An on-going task in Catholic schools is to maintain "Catholic Identity." This year the faculty and students are joining to follow the theme: "Celebrate Diversity." I visited each class the first day of school to explain our theme and to explain how we can accomplish this goal throughout the year by not saying or doing anything that will hurt someone's feelings. All teachers will be using the theme as a guide for discussion and infusion throughout the curriculum.

Back to School:

Just a reminder as we begin this new school year. In addition to the school supplies, uniforms and shoes, it is our hope that every student has access to a working computer and printer. Many of the teachers are online with notes and links to age-appropriate websites for students. There are also websites that enhance our curriculum produced by the textbook companies.



1st Issue:

This is the first issue of the monthly Newsletter for the 2009-2010 school year. Most families are accustomed to the format. I want to give a brief overview for the new families. The Newsletter will be online at www.stjohnhydes.org usually before the first of the month. It will not be sent home with the children. It includes highlights of the previous month and information concerning upcoming events. A tentative yearly calendar is also online, and each month the updated monthly calendar is placed online. I try to include short articles on parenting (reprinted with permission from Parents Make the Difference), the Readiness, Elementary and Middle School editions. In addition, Home and School Association news is included. We will once again attempt to email parents when the Newsletter for the coming month is put online. If you have changed your email address, please notify the office. If you do not receive notification, also let us know.

I hope you use our website, as we feel it is a good source of information for you.

Uniforms:

I ask for your continued cooperation in purchasing only the official summer and winter uniforms, as well as gym wear, from Flynn and O'Hara Uniform Company.

Progress Reports:

The report is part of an Internet-based Student Information System (SIS) called PowerSchool. This year we will continue with the computerized card. We will make use of the demographic and emergency medical sections. We also continue to use the Parent Access component of PowerSchool. What does that mean for you, the parent of a student in grades three to eight? You will be able to connect to PowerSchool and see an instant interim report anytime that is convenient for you. Arrangements have been made for those families who do not have an internet connection. We have computers in the library that can be used by parents. Parent access will be opened on or about October 1. Those parents who have attended the Parent Access workshop or have viewed the PowerPoint presentation online in the past for an older student will not have to repeat this process. If you have an older student and have access for him/her, you will automatically be issued the username and password for your child in the third grade. It is mandated from the Archdiocese that those parents who are new to Parent Access (parents of Grade 3 students and new students Grades 4 through 8) must view the PowerPoint presentation and obtain a username and password from the school. The Presentation can be found by going to the school website at www.stjohnhydes.org; click on Parent Information. You will see a link to PowerSchool – Parent Access Training and a second link PowerSchool – Parent Access Disclaimer Form. Watch the training and print out the disclaimer form and return it to school. I will then issue the username and password for your child.

Stand for Children and Youth:

Any parent or guardian, grandparent, etc. who wish to volunteer in the school or to accompany students on field trips must be STAND certified. New parents were sent an application and consent forms during the summer. Please complete these forms and return to school as soon as possible to begin the certification process.

Milk:

Again this year, our school nurse will be organizing the milk program. Students in Grades K through 8 and PreK who attend Extended Day may order milk for lunchtime. We offer white or chocolate milk. The charge for milk will be \$19.00 for the year for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. You must order for the entire year. This year we are also offering students who use Extended Care and attend morning Pre-Kindergarten classes to purchase milk for lunchtime. The yearly cost for the PreK 4 Extended Care students is \$19.00 for the year, and the cost for the PreK 3 Extended Care students is \$11.40 for the year.

If you would like to order milk, send your check, along with the milk order form which was sent home the first day of school, to Mrs. Tabassi, our school nurse. Make checks payable to Saint John the Evangelist School.

Playground Duty:

Each parent (Grades 1 through 8) is asked to assist with recess duty 3 days per year for each enrolled student in the school. The homeroom parent will notify families concerning scheduling, beginning with the 8th Grade. An explanation of playground duties is posted on our website. Compliance with the Archdiocesan Policy on the Protection of Children and Youth mandates that all volunteers must complete the volunteer application and consent forms, and participate in the online video presentation. They will then receive two booklets: one, the Statement of Policy, and the other, the Code of Conduct. These books are also online. If you need more information, please contact the school office.

Meet the Teachers:

Keep Wednesday, September 9, open on your calendar so that you can attend "Meet the Teachers" Night beginning at 7:00 PM. On this night, teachers begin formal communication with you concerning what goes on every day, and give you an overview of the year. These meetings are important to both parents and teachers. If students accompany you, please make sure they remain with you throughout the evening. They may not run around the building or in and out of doors. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. Prior to this meeting, there will be an important 8th Grade parent meeting at 6:30 PM in the 8th Grade classroom.

Demographic and Emergency Updates:

In an effort to update our computerized Student Information System, each student has brought home a demographic sheet and an emergency medical sheet. We ask that you check for the accuracy of the information we already have and supply the missing information before sending them back to school. If you have not returned them, please do so as soon as possible.

Cell Phones and iPods:

At a recent faculty meeting, once again, a discussion on cell phone and iPod use was held. The unanimous decision is that iPods and cell phones are not allowed at school. If any electronic equipment comes to school, it will remain in the Principal's office for the remainder of the day.

Applause, Applause:

Hurrah for all the students of Saint John the Evangelist School, as we begin a new school year filled with growing, learning and FUN.

Congratulations to the students who worked hard over the summer to complete the Harford County and Baltimore County Library Summer Reading Programs. As of this writing, our school has not received the official list from either library.

Congratulations to Sam Hartsoe, Grade 5! Sam will be performing in *The King and I* at Harford Community College. The show is being presented for 2 consecutive weekends, beginning the weekend of September 11. Sam will be well-prepared next year for our Saint John Drama Club! "Break a leg," Sam!

Extended Day:

The Extended Day program is offered to families who need child care for school-aged children. There is an additional charge for this service. The program is open from 11:15 AM to 6:00 PM and is located in the Church Hall.

Because we offer this service, students who are not picked up from school by 3:30 PM are sent to Extended Day and are charged the drop-in rate of \$13.00.

Labels and Receipts:

We have several ways that you can help the school. One is the "Labels for Education" program. All Campbell soup labels, as well as many other product labels, should be sent to the school office. Our school receives credit which can be used to purchase supplies. Another is the "Box Tops for Education" program. Target, Safeway and Giant also offer incentives to schools.

If you prefer to shop online, go to our school website at www.stjohnhydes.org

There is a link to schoolcash.com that will lead you to many merchants where you may order online and our school receives a percentage bonus.

We also recycle ink cartridges from printers.

Ident-A-Kid:

Again this year, the Ident-A-Kid Program will be at Saint John School. They will be here on September 29th to photograph, fingerprint, weigh, and measure children. Participation in the program is the option of individual parents. A fee will be charged and the parents will be provided with a laminated wallet size ID card (similar to a driver's license) with information about their child. An application envelope with additional information about the Ident-A-Kid program will be sent home with the children about one week before the program date. The local Program Director is Donna Aversa-Smith.

Homework Club:

Beginning September 15, Mrs. Zankowitz and Mrs. Thomas are offering Homework Club to students in grades 1 through 8, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:15 PM to 4:15 PM. Students are provided a quiet place to do their homework plus assistance and motivation when needed. At 4:15 PM, students will be walked to the front door of the school where parents will pick up their child. Students who are not picked up by 4:15 PM will be walked over to After School Care. Students do not need to attend both days and do not have to sign up for the entire year. The fee for each session is \$10.00. Please contact Mrs. Zankowitz at tzankowitz@stjohnhydes.org.

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

Officers:

New officers were elected at the last HASA Executive Committee Meeting. Kristen Wilson, Vice President, Laura Basilio, Treasurer, and Julie Plume as Secretary. Deb Golumbek will remain as President. New Members at Large are Chip Snouffer and John Canoles. Renee Banashak will continue as Member at Large and Chrissy Cassidy will serve as Hospitality Committee Chair.

Market Day:

Thanks to Mrs. Elliot, we now have a new Chairperson. Many have already received emails from Market Day and flyers will be coming home soon! Pick-up days are Mondays, between 2:30 PM and 3:30 PM.

Coffee and Chat:

Join us on Thursday, August 27, after Mass for a light snack and coffee. Reconnect with friends and meet some new ones!

1st H.A.S.A. Meeting:

On September 15th at 7:00 PM in the Church Hall we will be having the first general H.A.S.A. meeting of the year. Join us for wine and cheese and an outline of what the H.A.S.A. plans are for the year. We will recap last year's financials and give a schedule of this year's fundraising plans.

Innisbrook:

Innisbrook is one of our biggest fundraisers and that is because of our high level of participation. Buy wrapping paper! If you have questions after you get your package, please contact Martha Schumacher at (410) 557-6989.

Race for Education:

On October 16th we will be holding our 2nd Race for Education; packets will be distributed on September 9th. If you have questions about Race for Education or would like to volunteer on Race Day, contact Sherry Rukowicz at (410) 877-0578.

Classroom Lunch:

The classroom lunch program menu is online for September. Go to www.lunchboxprogram.com to register. Returning parents please remember to update your child's grade and teacher name to ensure that his/her lunch will get to the right

classroom! A big thank you to Chip Snouffer for running this program this year! First classroom lunch will be September 9.

- * All Kindergarten Parents and New Parents of students in Grades 1 through 8 may order a student lunch, delivered to the classroom, almost every Wednesday of the month. Follow the above link.
- ** Once a month we have a hot lunch in the Church Hall. All students in Grades K through 8 and PreK students who attend Extended Day can order Hot Lunch by following the above link. The dates for Hot Lunch are listed on the tentative calendar.

Volunteer Survey:

Please go online to the school website and visit the H.A.S.A. site for a link to our parent volunteer survey. This is our paper-free way of collecting volunteers for the various committees. All the H.A.S.A. programs are volunteer run; we need your support to be successful!

Here's to a great school year!

Jean Delcher



Parents make the difference!

Early Childhood - September 2009

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Teach your preschooler about the order & pattern of books

Does your child know how books work? This may seem like an odd question--after all, the way to make a book work is to read it!



Your child needs to understand the order and pattern of books (the mechanics) before real reading can take place. And while young children may not be ready for reading, many are ready to learn about book mechanics.

You can show your child how books work if you:

1. Choose a large book from your child's collection--with large pages and large print. Or get such a book from your library.
2. Show your child the front of the book. Say, "This is the front cover. Can you turn the book over?" When she does so, say, "This is the back cover."
3. Show your child the author's name on the book cover and read the name to her. Say, for example, "Marc Brown is the author of this book. That means he wrote the story that we are going to read. The author writes the story." Talk about the illustrator, too.
4. Open the book and begin reading. Use your index finger to indicate the upper-left hand corner of the printed words--the place where reading begins. As you read trace your finger down and to the right, following the natural order of print. Do this for several pages. Then use your child's finger to trace the words.

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Language Skills

Build your child's language skills by increasing verb vocabulary

Verbs have a great deal of meaning to young children. Preschoolers are active and engaged--so they can easily understand words that describe what they are doing. Once they learn verbs, they usually take to them and enjoy using them.

Here are three ways to build your child's verb vocabulary:

1. Explore synonyms. For example, tell your child he just sprinted across the room. Then explain that the word sprinted means to run really fast.
2. Find pictures of people being active in a book or photo album. Show your child the pictures and ask him to tell you what the people are doing. Are they eating, riding, jumping, swimming?
3. Play charades. Pretend to perform an action, such as sleeping. Ask your child to tell you what you are doing. Once he understands the game, ask him to pretend something for you to guess.

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Developing Thinking Skills

Give your preschooler plenty of practice making decisions

Success in school (and life) hinges on the ability to make good decisions. Your child's decision on whether to pay attention to the teacher or look out the window, whether or not to observe classroom rules, whether or not to do homework--all these can seriously affect his schooling and future.

Here are some ways to get your child started on the path of good decision-making:

- Offer choices. Ask your child if he would like cereal or toast for breakfast. Just make sure you find both choices acceptable.
- Make plans. Example: Your child will have a friend over tomorrow afternoon. What could they do together? Encourage your child to come up with suggestions. Write them down.
- Ask for your child's advice. Your child will feel empowered and competent if, once in a while, he gets to pick for you. Example: Let your child listen to music from two different radio stations. Ask him which one he thinks you should listen to and then listen to the one he selects.
- Explain. No one makes the right decision every time. In your child's case, making good choices may take a lot of practice. And sometimes you will have to overrule his decisions.

When you do, take time to explain why. Especially focus on the consequences of his choice. "I know you'd like to watch that movie, but I've seen it, and it's scary. I think it would upset you a lot right now. When you're older, we can think about it and talk again."

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Building Respect

Promote cooperation at home to improve school behavior

Kindergartners who are respectful at home have an easier time cooperating with teachers. That's because cooperation is a habit that develops through practice.

Here are some important types of cooperation to expect and reward. Encourage your kindergartner to:

- Share. Taking turns is the way to be fair.
- Listen. When adults talk, kids must pay attention.
- Follow through. Promises are not just words. They require action.
- Be honest. Provide true and helpful information.
- Pitch in. Life is easiest when everyone helps out.
- Follow directions. Obey school and home rules.

Meanwhile, do your best to set a good example. Be generous. Keep your word. Show interest in your child's opinions. Be trustworthy, and show respect for rules. All of these actions help things run smoothly at school, home and everywhere else!

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

Parents make the difference!

Elementary School - September 2009

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Study finds three ways to help your child succeed in school

Parents want their children to do their best in school. But what works? A study by researchers at Indiana University found that children do better in the classroom when parents:



1. Are positive. You know that your child is sensitive to your emotions. Not surprisingly, the study found that to also be true for parents' attitudes about schoolwork. Parents who thought their child could do an assignment successfully had a child who believed that, too. In addition, the study found that encouragement from a parent led a child to be more motivated. Model positive attitudes, and your child will copy them.
2. Break it down. A long assignment can overwhelm your child. One of the easiest things you can do to help is to break that big task into smaller pieces. The study found that when children worked at a task they thought they could handle, they did better at it.
3. Teach the importance of a final check. One of the best habits to instill in your child is to look over his work before handing it in. Oops – he added when he should have subtracted. He wrote their instead of there. Correcting these minor mistakes can lead to a much better overall grade. In addition, the study found that children who were in the habit of checking over their work were more likely to volunteer to answer questions in class.

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Motivating Your Child

Research reveals rewards are just a short-term fix for motivation

You're talking with your child about doing well in school. "Nick's parents pay him for A's," he says. Do you pay up? In families across the country, parents are unsure of what to do. Will rewards lead to better grades and behavior? Or will they simply produce kids who won't do anything unless they get paid?

Researchers are finding that rewards can work--for a short time. But over the long run, they tend to be ineffective. A recent Clemson University study found that giving prizes for reading led kids to spend less time reading.

Here are effective ways you can reward your child for a job well done:

- Offer a reward you're willing to give. Don't offer candy if you're concerned about nutrition.
- Tie the reward to the activity. "If you are reading, you can stay up 15 minutes past your bedtime."
- Don't waste your rewards. If your child loves to read, don't offer a reward for finishing a book. Save it for cleaning out the rabbit cage.
- Remember that your praise is a huge reward. A high five from you may be all your child needs.

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Building Respect

Teach your child to think about the consequences of behavior

Children often don't think about the results of their actions. So they don't see how leaving trash for someone else to pick up is disrespectful.

Here's an easy game to play with your child to help her understand that all behavior has consequences:

You think of a sentence about a simple event. For example, "The baby cried." Now have your child think of the reason this might have happened. "Because her sister yelled."

Then you (or another player) tell what could happen next. "They had to quiet the baby down, so everyone was late for school."

This is a good game to play when you're in the car or waiting in a line. It should help your child think about two important questions: What came before? What will happen after?

Then when you see your child doing something without considering the consequences, you can ask the questions: "What do you think will happen if you just leave your trash sitting there? What will be the consequence?"

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Building Responsibility

Teach your child to be responsible for mistakes

When school begins, many responsibilities are added to your child's life. Eventually, things fall through the cracks. Some kids are tempted to blame others. To help your child admit fault and learn from mistakes:

- Tell--don't ask. When you know your child has dropped the ball, don't give her the opportunity to shift blame. Instead of asking, "Did you study for this social studies test?" say, "I know you didn't prepare for your social studies test. The consequence is that you earned a D. From now on, please tell me when you have a test."
- Be understanding. Boost your child's confidence by complimenting good behavior and limiting criticism. Do not, however, make excuses. ("It's okay. You said that because you're tired.") It's better to say, "I know you're tired, but you still have to speak to me respectfully." This empowers your child to control her own behavior.
- Provide freedom. Kids who are overprotected at home may have trouble at school, where they need to be more independent. Build your child's confidence--and ability to handle failure--by giving her age-appropriate responsibilities. She might select her outfits for school or organize her room. Remember that mistakes are opportunities to learn.

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September EL Activity Calendar**

Parents still make the difference!

Middle School - September 2009

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Implement four basic steps for a successful year in middle school

Put your middle schooler on the path to school success! To help him start--and finish--strong this year:



1. Maintain routines. You relied on them when your middle schooler was a toddler, so don't abandon them now that he's nearly a teen. Routines give structure to his day and help him stay organized. So develop some commonsense school-year rituals and stick with them. Make sure you establish a morning, after-school and evening routine for your child.
2. Get involved at school. It's not always easy to stay connected to the middle-school classroom, but do it anyway. Getting involved shows your middle schooler that his education matters. You don't need to be "Volunteer of the Year" or attend every PTA/PTO meeting. Just make an effort to participate when you can.
3. Stay informed. It's easy to miss the fliers or handouts stuffed in your middle schooler's backpack. So ask him every day whether he's brought anything home that you should see. The same goes for his schoolwork. Just skimming his notes can fill you in on what's happening in class.
4. Support your child. Your middle schooler may act like he's "too cool" to need your love and guidance, but he's not. Never miss a chance to give him a hug or tell him you love him.

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Building Respect

Don't tolerate profanity; teach your middle schooler respect

Bad language is nothing new. People have been saying a "few choice words" for centuries. Unfortunately, though, these days it seems like they are saying more than a few. And they say them at younger ages.

Curb profanity in your family. Just because it is more common than ever does not make it respectful. It's highly disrespectful. And using it can get your child disrespected by people who could make a positive difference in her future.

You can clean up your child's language if you:

- Watch your own language. Your child repeats what she hears, so use alternatives, such as "Oh, snap."
- Stay calm if you hear bad language from your child. Don't give your child the satisfaction of shocking you. Just say, "That word is offensive. Do not use it."
- Create consequences. Some families have a "swearing jar." When a family member curses, she must put a coin into the jar. When it's full, the money goes to charity.

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Homework/Study Skills

Ask questions to improve your preteen's reading comprehension

Reading has always been an important part of your child's homework regimen. This intensifies in middle school. Your child will have to read more complicated material to learn subject matter. She will also read longer and more complex novels.

You can support your child as she moves on to higher-level reading. One way is by asking questions to check on whether she seems to understand what she reads. You may want to send a note to her English teacher to share your perceptions of how she's doing, too.

You can improve reading comprehension if you help your child:

- Make connections. Especially when reading fiction at the middle school level, your child should have some "me, too" moments. Parts of the story should remind her of herself, someone she knows or an experience she has had. Ask a question such as, "The girl on the cover of the book looks about your age. Does she do any of the same things you like to do?"
- "See" the book. Making pictures in your mind as you read is a wonderful way to improve understanding. Ask questions such as, "Where does the main character live? What do you think the place looks like?" Or, "What if you got to make the movie of this book? Who would you cast as the main character?"
- Make predictions. When your child understands a story, she will have some idea (or at least a good guess) of the direction the story is heading in. Ask, "You finished five chapters. What do you think is going to happen in the sixth?" Or, "So, did that book end the way you thought it would?"

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Building Responsibility

Ease into new middle school responsibilities

Even the most adaptable kids may find middle school a huge transition. So take time to talk to your child about how he is feeling.

Research from the U.S. Department of Education reveals that most middle schoolers are concerned with:

- Moving between classes. Navigating a large school to find several different classrooms is challenging. With your child, learn the resources available. Can students walk through the school before it opens? Is there a map to follow? What if new students are late to classes in the first days of school? Many schools do not mark new students tardy at this time.
- Managing lockers. Before, your child had a familiar desk. Now he'll have a hallway locker. Many schools offer practice sessions for opening and closing lockers. Also reassure your child that teachers are used to helping new students deal with lockers in the early weeks of school.
- Staying organized. Organization tools are a must in middle school. Your child will need a notebook to track assignments. A large binder with dividers for different subjects can be a lifesaver. So can a calendar where he can mark the dates for tests and projects due. Monitor your child's use of these tools.

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