



St. Thomas the Apostle School

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December 7, 2011

Dear Parents,

We hope that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving with your family and that you enjoyed the extra time off with your children. What a beautiful season it is to give thanks to our Lord for all of our blessings.

Advent

It is time to prepare for our Savior's birthday celebration! Our hallways will soon be filled with the jingling of bells and the cheer, "Jesus is coming, Jesus, is coming" as Msgr. Hermes visits each classroom, reminding the boys and girls about the real reason for this joyous season! The month of December is always packed with so many different things to do between decorating, purchasing gifts, and baking. During these first few weeks of Advent, we are reminded that this time of year is really meant to be a time of waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus.

There are so many different Advent traditions in which families can participate. The Jesse Tree, Advent wreaths and Advent calendars are just a few ways of making these last days until Christmas a season of joy and expectation. Attending Reconciliation, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, lighting the Advent wreath, and participating in service projects are some of the ways students will be getting ready for Jesus while they are here at school. Doing these activities as a family is another way of letting your children know just how special this Advent season truly is.

Holy Day of Obligation

Tomorrow, Thursday, December 8th, is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and is a Holy Day of Obligation. Please check your parish bulletin for specific mass times. Students will be attending mass together on Thursday, December 8th at 1:15 at the Oak Street Church. If you have not done so already, please fill out the permission slip posted on our website and return it to your homeroom teacher by 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Christmas Programs for K-4

Congratulations to our students in grades K-4 for their outstanding performance at our School Christmas Shows this past week.

We thank Mr. Dragoo for his time and effort invested in putting on this beautiful production. We also thank the teachers for their flexibility with rehearsals and all of the parent volunteers for their assistance with costumes, props, etc.

Character Building Program

Again this year, we continue with our positive behavior incentive program for the students in grades K-8. Students earn "Good Deed" slips when they demonstrate acts of kindness toward staff and other students. At the beginning of each month, we hold a drawing with the slips that the students have filled out and dropped in a special box in the office. A name from each grade level is drawn monthly for an opportunity to choose a prize, such as a homework pass, pizza coupon, etc.

The names that were drawn for the month of October are:

1st grade: Elliot W.
2nd grade: Will F.
3rd grade: William S.
4th grade: Grace B.
5th grade: Aida A.
6th grade: Michael A.
7th grade: Keeley H.
8th grade: Kyle B.

November winners were:

Kindergarten: Michael D.
1st grade: Annie F.
2nd grade: Olivia S.
3rd grade: Markus P.
4th grade: Faith D.
5th grade: Ben L.
6th grade: Fatima G.
7th grade: Kyler F.
8th grade: Emily M.

We congratulate all of the students listed above and thank all of the students who were recognized for their kind deeds/positive behaviors this past month.

In addition to our behavior incentive program, our school counselor, Mrs. Ritchie, is working with each classroom to discuss positive behaviors, peer relations, and social skills. We are so very blessed to have Mrs. Ritchie at our school so that she can offer these important programs and services to our students!!!

ITBS (IOWA Test of Basic Skills)

Enclosed with this month's Family Letter is a chart with our building results on the IOWA tests. Student results are listed by the year they will graduate from St. Thomas School. We are proud of our scores, but also recognize there is always more room for growth. The enclosed chart again confirms that the longer our students are enrolled at St. Thomas School, the further above grade level they score.

No Uniform Day

Last month for our November "No Uniform Day," our 6th graders collected \$304.27 for St. Jude's Children Hospital. For December, our 5th graders collected \$264.67 for Feed My Starving Children. Thank you to those students and staff who contributed to these worthy causes.

In January, the 4th graders will be collecting for the Leukemia Organization called Pennies for Patients. We hope that all students will be able to sacrifice \$1.00 of their own money to help support these great programs each month. Please check pages 25 and 26 of the Parent Handbook for the Out of Uniform Day dress code.

Emergency/Medical Info.

It is extremely important that any medical conditions that your children have are listed on the emergency cards in the office. **Please be sure your cards are current with medical conditions, medications, and emergency contacts/phone numbers.** Over the counter medications including cough drops, may not be sent to school unless there is a doctor's note.

Attendance Procedures

Please review our Attendance Policy on page 7 of our Parent Handbook. We ask that you do not leave a voice message, emails, or notes for the homeroom teachers. We need you to call 815-459-0496 x201 to leave a message for the school office with your child's name, homeroom, and reason (symptoms) for absence. Whenever your child is sick for more than one day we ask that you call the school office **each** day. Thank you for your understanding.

Protecting God's Children

Another reminder that if you want to volunteer at school in any capacity (field trips, coaching, lunchroom, etc.) you must have a background check (forms can be obtained at our school office) and take the class, "Protecting God's Children." The class, called Virtus, can be accessed via our school website link. We value all of our

volunteers and appreciate your cooperation with following this diocesan mandate.

Uniform Resale

Mrs. Cindy Milanovich continues to manage our Uniform Resale Program which offers gently used Dennis Uniform items for sale at a fraction of the cost to buy new. Mrs. Milanovich is here the first Wednesday of every month from 7:40 – 8:15 a.m. and by appointment. You can call Cindy at 847-322-3233.

Aerosol Ban

We ask that students not bring any aerosol cans (deodorants, etc.) to school due to asthmatic students and staff. Students wishing to bring deodorant for after gym class may bring a stick or roll-on type but no sprays. Thank you for your cooperation.

Recycle

Please send in used ink jet cartridges for recycling to the school office. We have a depository box stored on site. We can not accept toner or laser cartridges. Thank you.

Christmas Break

December 21st is our last day before Christmas break. It is also a half day of school with dismissal at 11:00 a.m. Busses will be running both ways. **There will be NO ET after school on Dec. 21st.** School resumes on Wednesday, January 4th.

As we are quickly approaching our Christmas break, we want to thank all of you who have helped make this first part of the school year so successful. The spirit and cooperation of our parents is certainly one of the many strengths of the St. Thomas School community. It is noted and very much appreciated. Enjoy the rest of the Advent Season and have a very merry and blessed Christmas.

Sincerely,
Deanne Roy, Principal

Enclosures

Jr. High Dance

ITBS Test Score Results
School Spirit Wear...Now ONLINE
School Nurse's Flu Season Warning
Student Council News
Trojan Times
Marian HS Freshman Placement Test