**Catholic Schools Week**

**3K**

The children in 3K keep busy in the classroom by learning through play. Each day brings new opportunities to try different things such as using a scissors, building a tall tower with blocks, playing at the water table, or painting with watercolors.

The children come to school eager and excited to see what the day will bring. A typical day begins with prayer followed by calendar and story time. The students do an art activity, and then it is time for a bathroom break before heading to Spanish or gym class. Of course all of that activity helps to build up an appetite for their shared snack. Afterwards, the 3K students will get engaged with a religion story at the flannel board before finishing up the day by rotating through five or six different center activities.

The 3K students are delighted when they get a chance to work with their sixth grade buddies each month. On buddy days, the classroom is transformed into an even more joyful place with many hugs given out when the buddies must head back to class. As the youngest members of the St. Joseph learning community, the 3K friends bring smiles to those who encounter them throughout the school day. God’s perfection is reflected in their innocence and beauty.

**4K**

The four–year–old kindergarten students at St. Joseph School learn to problem solve even though their problems might be putting on an assortment of winter clothes or playing with more than one friend. As problem-solving is a life lesson, we also learn other life lessons: to COOOPERATE, to be PATIENT, to be PROUD, to RESPECT others and our toys in our classroom, to be FAIR, COMPASSIONATE, and to be GENEROUS and not greedy, to be POLITE and use good manners. Through the performance of the Kindergarten Circus, we learn to be BRAVE and COURAGEOUS. We are OPEN-MINDED as we try to learn new things. And last but not least, we are WISE as we learn about God and all the important things a 4 & 5 year-old should know. The present and former 4K students always say, “We can’t believe how much we learn because it is always fun in 4K!”

**5K**

The kindergartners at St. Joseph School think we have the best school in the world. They like learning how to add, subtract, read, write, and speak Spanish, but they love learning about God. They understand that God loves them very much! The kindergartners enjoy being read to from the Bible. They look forward to going to Mass each week with their eighth grade buddies. The eighth graders are great role models and are always kind and patient.

The children are happy to have great friends at school. They enjoy going to their music, art, library, gym, guidance, and computer classes. The kindergartners like making art projects and learning by singing songs or playing games. They think their teachers are smart, kind, friendly, and funny.



**1st grade**

The first graders at St. Joseph School had a lot to say when asked why they feel their school is the best. They all agreed that they are very lucky to have SMARTBoards in their classroom. It was also evident that they enjoyed the fact that they have and iPad cart with enough iPads for everyone in their class to use. They often play learning games and do fun projects with the iPads. The next most popular answer was that St. Joseph School is great because the teachers are awesome. The teachers are kind, helpful, and funny. At St. Joseph School they feel very lucky to be able to attend Mass every Wednesday and on special Holy Days and to be able to talk about how important God is in their lives. Finally, the children all agreed that at St. Joseph School they do a lot of fun things. Some activities that were mentioned were bowling, the all-school movie, field trips, the school picnic, fish fry, ice cream social, the carnival, Fun Friday, and the Kindergarten Circus.

**2nd grade**

This week I asked the 2nd grade students this question, “Why do you like to come to St. Joseph School?” They then spent some time in quiet reflection and wrote down their thoughts. When I was able to look over their responses, I was filled with such pride as a teacher. There were two specific reasons why most of the students like to come to St. Joseph School.

The first reason that the majority of students had written down was that they loved coming to a school where the teachers and kids were very kind. They especially love Mrs. Menden, our new gym teacher, and Mrs. Marshall with her fun and creative art projects.

The second reason that the students love coming to St. Joseph School was because they get to learn about God. They like learning about the Bible and hearing many stories about Jesus and his ancestors.

Overall, the students in 2nd grade love coming to St. Joseph School. They find it a place where they can learn in a safe and friendly environment. It is like home!

**3rd grade**

When the third graders were asked what they liked about Saint Joseph School, their hands shot up. They didn’t have to think very hard to come up with many good reasons. They all seemed to agree that they like the teachers. They enjoy the fun activities that we do and everything they learn. They say that the teachers are nice to them and make learning fun. They also know that learning about God and being able to go to Mass is what helps make our school special. Much of what they mentioned was not tangible. It was evident that the feeling of being safe, loved and respected here at St. Joseph School is what makes it an extraordinary place to go to school. The faculty and staff and students come together as a community to maintain the great traditions of a Catholic school. 

**4th grade**

The fourth grade class loves St. Joseph School! When the fourth graders were asked to write what they liked about St. Joseph School, they immediately started to write, and the lists were very long. The number one response was that they get to learn about God, Jesus, different prayers, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, and hear and learn about many different Bible stories. The students also said they learn how to be a good Catholic. They learn this by doing different service projects that help people who are less fortunate than themselves. To them being a good Catholic also means being helpful and kind to other students, teachers, parents, and visitors to our school.

They thought the smaller class size was a positive aspect about attending St. Joseph School. Having a smaller class lets them work on many fun activities in class such as hands-on experiments, learning games, using technology in the classroom, working in groups, receiving extra help with work when needed, and fun writing activities. The students have many friends not just in their grade but in other grades also.

They wrote that the teachers are nice, fun, and make them feel cared for and welcome. Mrs. Ackley was mentioned often in the lists because her hot lunches are so delicious.

They also thought St. Joseph School had many extra activities available to them. Some of the activities they listed were forensics, cantors, band, Chess Club, Robotics, Art Club, Walking Club, Intramurals, Spanish Club, and athletics.

St. Joseph School is a great school with many positives – just ask any St. Joseph student!

**5th grade**

The fifth graders at St. Joseph School love the special bond that they make with their classmates due to the small classes that remain together for many years. This makes learning fun because teachers understand how their students learn best. Teachers give their students work times throughout the day and after school, so that students can ask questions if they need more help. St. Joseph has SMARTBoards, Chromebooks, iPads, and the computer lab that can be used to publish students’ work. Another way teachers expand their students’ learning is by taking their classes on field trips to places such as Discovery World, plays, and the observatory. The teachers are led by our wonderful principal, Ms. Cooney, who sets a great Catholic example for our school. The whole school attends Mass together weekly and celebrates each liturgical season in a unique way. Students and teachers enjoy St. Joseph’s lunch program that is led by Mrs. Ackley, a fantastic home-cook. The St. Joseph community has a welcoming spirit that embraces newcomers into the school family.

**6th grade**

When the 6th graders were asked why they like St. Joseph School, their responses were numerous. First and foremost they expressed their appreciation for the caring and thorough teachers as well as the Christian atmosphere present in the school. Students feel that they are accepted for who they are.

Sixth graders say that they are given a wonderful education complete with a great variety of specials: art, phy ed, guidance, music, Spanish, and technology – they really love using the iPads and the new Chromebooks! Lunchtime is a favorite of many with the delicious home cooked meals by Mrs. Ackley and then there are intramurals on Thursdays. After school activities are also appreciated – sports, Homework Club, scouts, Service Club, chess, robotics, forensics…

Last, but definitely not least, the 6th graders feel fortunate to be classroom buddies with two classes – third grade and 3 year kindergarten – we LOVE our time together.

**7th grade**

Our 7th grade class values our Catholic education at St. Joseph School and looks forward to celebrating the Eucharist together at Mass on Wednesdays. We appreciate the well-rounded education we receive and how the teachers go out of their way to help us achieve our goals. We enjoy going on a wide variety of field trips, creating fun projects, working with our 4K buddies on many occasions, having casual days once in a while, and seeing our friends every day! St. Joseph School provides opportunities for many extra-curricular activities like sports, forensics, clubs, and the school play. We take pride in our school’s service to others and feel our school is a very warm, safe, and inviting place to receive a great education!

**8th grade**

The 8th graders appreciate so much that St. Joseph School has to offer. Being part of a smaller class where classmates are close and helpful is a great benefit. In addition to the strong academic program spearheaded by helpful and caring teachers, the 8th graders recognize the many “extras” offered at St. Joseph School from the extended arts programs (art, music, the school play) to forensics and clubs as well as the extensive athletic program.

The 8th graders feel privileged to have access to modern technology such as iPads and Chromebooks. Last but not least, the religion program at St. Joseph School deserves recognition. From weekly Mass to service projects to our fall overnight retreat and working with our kindergarten buddies, everything works together to make St. Joseph a great school to be a part of.

P.S. We love the hot lunch!

