



St. Agnes Academy News

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Headmaster – James Stankiewicz

Headmaster Headlines...

Useful Ideas to Make the Most of Our Lenten Experience

As we begin this holy season of Lent, it is important that our students understand both what we are celebrating and the meaning behind our traditions and symbols. Below are some guidelines and explanations that may help you guide your child through the 40-day journey with Jesus.

What is Lent? Lent is a 40-day preparation period before Easter. It began on Ash Wednesday (March 6). We skip Sundays when we count the 40 days. Lent is a journey and a time of renewal and change. During Lent, we try to discover areas of our life that need change. We look to Jesus for direction and try to turn away from those things that distract us from Him.

Colors: The decorations and the priest's vestments during the Lenten season are purple to signify the royal colors to prepare for the King.

Ashes: The official name is Day of Ashes. We call it Ash Wednesday because the faithful have their foreheads marked with ashes in the shape of a cross to symbolize that they belong to Jesus, who died on a cross. It is also a reminder of the mark that is put on one's forehead at Baptism. Ashes are used to symbolize death and mourning and to remind us of our own mortality. It is a reminder that God created us and that we need to live a godly life and repent before we face God again. The ashes come from burning the palms that were saved from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

Themes: We follow the four Lenten themes of Forgiveness, Service (Almsgiving), Fasting, and Prayer. Rather than asking, "What should I give up for Lent?" perhaps you can focus on what you can do for others or try to limit those things that distract you from God. Some ideas for families using the four themes:

• **Forgiveness:** As a family or individual, pick a "Prayer Person of the Week" who wouldn't usually be considered a friend. Pray for them, individually or as a family. They could be people you hear about on the

news, a person you dislike at the office or school, or somebody your teenager fears or envies. Pick a different person each week or even each day!

• **Service:** Fill an Easter basket with plastic eggs. Each time a family member does a good

deed, have them privately write it on a slip of paper and insert it in one egg. Then ask the "Easter Bunny" to add candy to each egg that contains a good deed. Read them and enjoy the candy on Easter. Some other service ideas for children: using their own money to buy a favorite food item to donate to the food pantry. Putting money saved from bad habits like soda, candy, etc. into the Rice Bowl boxes you take home. Boxes are located at church entrances. Money is collected at church during Holy Week and given to the needy through Catholic Charities. Older kids can surprise a neighbor or relative with free babysitting. Challenge kids to think of three service areas to cover each week: their family, their town, and the wider world.

• **Fasting:** Try "fasting" from all of the noise that normally fills your house. Try a family vow of silence (and no technology!) on a certain night after supper. Encourage family members to retreat to a quiet spot by themselves to read, work on a hobby, pray, or just think. Try giving up TV or the computer as a family on a chosen day or night.

• **Prayer:** Use Lent to explore new forms of prayer as a family. Attend a weekday Mass or even daily Mass! Assign different family members to the task of investigating new prayers or prayer forms to try. Kids can also ask other adults, family, or friends to share their favorite prayer. You can also write a prayer of petition and write it in the parish prayer journal. Because it is Lent, end each prayer with thanks to Jesus for the great love He's shown us; ask Him to teach your family even more about love during the Lenten season.

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Friendship wreaths made by second grade art class.

During Lent, students' religion classes will focus on this season and will be attending Mass at least one time during each school week. Father Chris will be making an appearance in each classroom to say an "Instructional Mass" and will also have each class join him in church to conduct Stations of the Cross and offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

-Jim Stankiewicz

Calendar of Events:

- March 18-22 - Iowa tests
- March 18 - School board - 6 p.m.
- March 27 - Girl Scouts
- March 29 - Third quarter marking period ends
- April 5 - First Friday Mass - 9 a.m.
- April 8 - School board - 6 p.m.
- April 10 - Middle School Science Fair 6-7:30 p.m.
- April 15-19 - Spring vacation
- April 18 - Holy Thursday
- April 19 - Good Friday
- April 21 - Easter Sunday
- April 25 - DA Strive Conference - Eighth grade
- April 26 - Science Fair - MCLA



NEWS BITS...

Middle School Science Fair Is Scheduled April 10

The 8th annual St. Agnes Academy Middle School Science Fair will be held on Wednesday, April 10. It will be open to families and the public from 6-7:30 p.m. Students have completed all experimenting and analysis of data. They are writing conclusions and working on putting together their final lab reports. Please be sure to join us on April 10th to celebrate all of their hard work.

"Stop the Bleed" Kits Deployed Throughout St. Agnes Parish

Earlier this month, the entire staff of St. Agnes Academy, along with Fr. Chris, were trained how to stop severe bleeding. The training was led by State Police and Berkshire Health Systems staff, but also included emergency personnel from the area. Topics included showing and practicing the proper use of various medical supplies including gauze that contains clotting agents and various types of tourniquets.

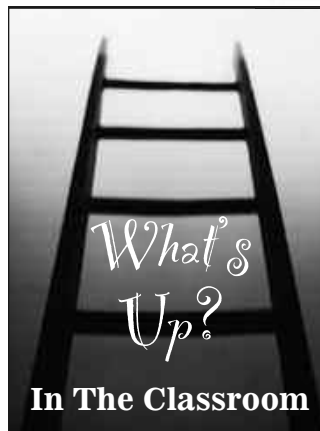
Through the generous funding from the Knights of Columbus, and the help of Linda Sinopoli, our school nurse, we have been able to deploy "Stop the Bleed" kits in each of our parish buildings and several at Camp Holy Cross. In each building, the kits are located in a wall cabinet next to our AEDs. They can be found in the vestibule of the main entrance to the church, the cafeteria entrance of the School, and on the first floor of the Pastoral Center (opposite the CCD Office).

It is our hope that these kits are never needed, but it is good to be prepared! Thanks again to the Knights of

Columbus for again supporting our school, parish and Camp Holy Cross!



School location for Stop the Bleed kits



In Mrs. Leja's and Mrs. Kulpa's pre-Kindergarten, students have been learning about dinosaurs. We were treated to a few days of talks and demonstrations from our local expert, Michael Leja or "Mr. Mike." He shared many interesting facts, as well as many toy dinosaurs. They learned about herbivores and carnivores, as well as flying and aquatic

reptiles. It really has been an enjoyable unit for the children. We will be finishing our study by going on a make-believe dinosaur hunt.

Our next event for both classes will be to have a little Irish fun as we learn about rainbows and magical Lep-



Pre-kindergarten students learn about dinosaurs.

rechauns. Our walls will be wearing a little bit of green as we prepare for St. Patrick's Day.

During the last weeks of the month, Mrs. Kulpa's class will enjoy a unit on nursery rhymes. The four-year-old class will be doing a unit on the five senses.

In Mrs. Patti's kindergarten, we are anxiously awaiting spring's arrival since the groundhog did not see his shadow. We have celebrated the 100th Day of School by making projects to show what 100 looks like. The class proudly shared them with their classmates and everyone did a wonderful job!

Since returning from February vacation our kindergarten class has been very busy. We began Unit 4 in our Reading Street Series, with the theme being "Where our Adventures will Take Us." In math, we have begun to learn about addition and writing addition sentences. For Lent, we will be learning about what the Lenten season is all about. We will learn and read the Stations of the Cross to help the children learn more about Jesus' love and sacrifice for us. The class is making their own Stations of the Cross book that they can bring home and share with their families. We will also be attending Mass weekly during the Lenten season.

In March, we celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday and Dental Health month. The children shared their favorite Dr. Seuss books and we read some of our favorite Dr. Seuss books in class. Some of our class favorites were: *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* and *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut*.

In Mrs. Shapiro's first grade, the class had a nice break during February vacation and is back to work. In math, the children are finishing up Chapter 5 about place value. Next, we move on to extending addition and subtraction facts to 20.

In reading, students are learning about and discussing the concept of change. Throughout this unit, we will be finding out how places, people, animals, plants, and weather change. The big question for this unit is: What is changing in our world? Students also visited the Dalton Public Library to help out with the story hour project. Guest readers for February/March are Addison, Sully, William, Juliana, and Skyla.



First graders enjoy Dr. Seuss Day.

In religion, the children entered the Lenten season learning about the importance of this time by attending Mass on Ash Wednesday. We will be attending Mass on Fridays during Lent and begin our Stations of the Cross book.

As a part of the first grade science curriculum, students are learning about weather. The students read *Gilberto and the Wind* as an interdisciplinary activity. To conclude the unit, the students will construct pinwheels to demonstrate wind power.

During Read Across America Day, first graders celebrated the birthday of the author known as Dr. Seuss by reading his books. They also enjoyed listening to (guest reader) Mrs. Vivien Delgado who read *If I Ran the Zoo* by Dr. Seuss. Then, they did a follow-up art project illustrating their own made up animal in the zoo and enjoyed special Dr. Seuss cupcakes while watching *The Lorax*. All had a good time! Thank you Mrs. Delgado.



Second grade reads "Stage Fright on a Summer Night," part of the Magic Treehouse series.

In Mrs. Blefari's second grade, February was a fun-filled month even though it was brief. Most of the children completed their next benchmark test and did very well. It is impressive to hear the children read these days. They are reading with expression and using the word attack skills that they've been taught. We read orally on a daily basis and I can't believe how much progress they've made since September! Many thanks to parents and guardians who have been reading with them at home. Please keep it up. It's working!

In math, we've moved onto geometry. Plane and solid figures, lines of symmetry, congruent shapes and patterns are some of the geometric topics we've been working on. The children are enjoying this subject. It's a bit of a change from the computation that we've been working on since September. Our next chapter is money.

In religion, we are finishing our preparation for First Reconciliation. The children will be receiving this sacrament in the next few weeks. It will just be part of our regular religion class. In the next few days your child will be bringing home a sheet that will assist them in examining their conscience. You may want to ask your child if they feel they have anything they'd like to discuss with you. We will be practicing here at school. I've found that the more "matter of fact" we deal with this, the less worried the children become. Please keep them in your prayers. This is a big step for them.

February also brought plenty of Valentine fun. We had a great time making a "Harry Hippo" or a "Henrietta Hippo." We had a great time filling those hippos too. The children enjoyed a decorate your own cookie

(thank you Mrs. Lange) and juice. Then they opened their Valentines. After that, there was plenty of time for dancing! All in all, everyone had a good time.

In March, we will be talking about St. Patrick and also talking a bit about Ireland. We will also be going to Pinegrove Manor to participate in Mass with Fr. Chris and share a bit of St. Patrick's Day fun with the residents. There is lots of discussion about a visit from Shaun the Leprechaun. Will he come since St. Patrick's Day is on Sunday? We'll have to wait and see!

In Mrs. Todriff's third grade, students are busy writing kind notes to each other. After reading *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* we feel it is important to spread kindness through our actions, words, and messages. In religion class, we are discussing how we can grow closer to Jesus by doing kind acts for others.

We are in the middle of Unit 4 in reading exploring "What it means to be unique." While reading our stories, mostly biographies, students are practicing comprehension skills: finding main idea, fact/opinion, inferring, and summarizing. Students wrote a persuasive paragraph in class and their final copy is being typed during computer class with Ms. DeMarco.

Since early February students have been tracking the amount of time they read at home. They document the titles and number of minutes read in a book log. We then incorporate a mini-math lesson to find the number of hours and minutes read! Hopefully building reading stamina!

In math, we are still relating multiplication and division. Word problems are sprinkled in between. Sometimes we use cursive writing to write our math concepts and goals. We are finishing energy forms in science. In social studies, we are expanding our knowledge of the First People, specifically the way of life within the Wampanoag tribe.



Grade 4 makes layers to better understand the formation of sedimentary rock.

In Mrs. Adams' fourth grade:

Religion: We have studied about the Sacrament of Confession and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We have focused on the fourth through the sixth Commandments and the Law of Love. We have named ways that Christians show love for others and all of God's creation.

ELA: We have finished our unit on puzzles and mysteries and have begun Unit 5, *Adventures by Land, Air*

and Water. The students were especially intrigued with *Smokejumpers, Life Fighting Fires.* The guiding question for Unit 5 is "What makes an adventure?" Comprehension focus is on author's purpose and important ideas. Writing strand focuses on fantasy and text evidence. We celebrated the class' publication of *Fourth Grade Adventures.*

Math: We worked on two- and three-digit quotients and larger in division; zeros in division; and problem-solving strategies. We have started the chapter on measurement with customary units.

Social Studies: We have finished our state research projects and poster presentations. I was impressed with the hard work most put into their research and presentations and their individual creativity.

In Ms. Young's fifth grade, the class has been busy discussing the preparations we make for the Lenten season, as well as the Communion of Saints and traveling the narrow path that leads to eternal life. We also discussed the Lord's Prayer and how it reminds us of how much God loves us, and the entrance of Original Sin into the world.

In math, the class has been working on geometry, including angles, rays, points, circles, quadrilaterals, and triangles. In reading, the girls and boys have been learning about artists and inventors. They have read stories about Leonardo da Vinci, Waterhouse Hawkins, who created dinosaur models that were realistic, and Mahalia Jackson. They have been continuing to work on comprehension strategies and have acted out some of their stories.

In science, the students have finished up classes on climate and elevation. The girls and boys will be learning about systems within the human body.



Fifth grade creates comic strips using their weekly spelling words.

In Mr. Lange's sixth grade:

Math: Sixth graders are currently working on multiplying and dividing fractions and mixed numbers. They are also solving algebraic equations involving fractions across all four operations. They excelled at multiplying fractions, which will serve them well when dividing fractions. This chapter also closes out with some basic prob-

ability concepts. Our fraction unit leads right into the next unit on rates, ratios, and proportions.

Science: Students have begun the unit on biology, more specifically what defines life and living things, and how they are categorized. There are some new ideas which have surprised them due to the higher level concepts conflicting with their preconceived assumptions. They will delve into cells and use microscopes to study them further.

Literature: Students are excited to start a new non-fiction selection, *Hidden Figures*, by Margot Lee Shetterly. This fascinating book focuses on the African-American women who provided mathematical calculations for NASA during the years after World War II.

Social Studies: All three of our middle school classes have been using their amazing creativity to develop trivia games as final projects for their current Social Studies units. The games for grades 6 and 7 are based on information they've learned in our study of ancient China. We are all looking forward to playing the finished products!

Religion: Students continue their study of important events and teachings in the Old Testament.

In Mrs. Dudziak's seventh grade:

Math: Seventh graders have begun working with rates, ratios, proportions, percents, and consumer math (discounts, taxes, etc.). They are excited because they are starting to really see how the math they do in school is related to real life examples. The next unit will be focusing on geometry: angles, lines, two-dimensional and three-dimensional figures.

Science: The seventh graders enjoyed learning about Earth's resources. Students in grade 7 have just begun a unit on biology, with a focus on ecology, reproduction, and habitats. Eventually, the next unit will begin their studies on physical science, starting with potential and kinetic energy.

Language Arts: We are learning to write more effective narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive paragraphs by including topic sentences and transitional words and phrases.

Literature: We finished our unit on non-fiction and will begin reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Social Studies, All three of our middle school classes have been using their amazing creativity to develop trivia games as final projects for their current social studies units. The games for Grades 6 and 7 are based

on information they've learned in our study of ancient China. We are all looking forward to playing the finished products!

Religion: Grade 7 is discussing the impact and achievements of monasteries and convents in the history of the Catholic Church, including a mini-research project on the Book of Kells.

In Mrs. Jamros' eighth grade:

Math: We learned to classify and evaluate polynomials. Currently, we are working on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing polynomials. We will finish the unit by learning to factor them.

Science: The 8th grade is working on a project about climate change involving *An Inconvenient Truth*, its sequel, and a documentary taking a different point of view entitled *The Great Global Warming Swindle*. They are also seeking out some more current research in order to represent an assigned state and viewpoint in a mock Congress debate. They are very much engaged in class discussion and are excited to learn about this connection of science, politics, and current events. Afterwards, the eighth grade will learn about biology, including photosynthesis, cellular respiration, genetics, and heredity.

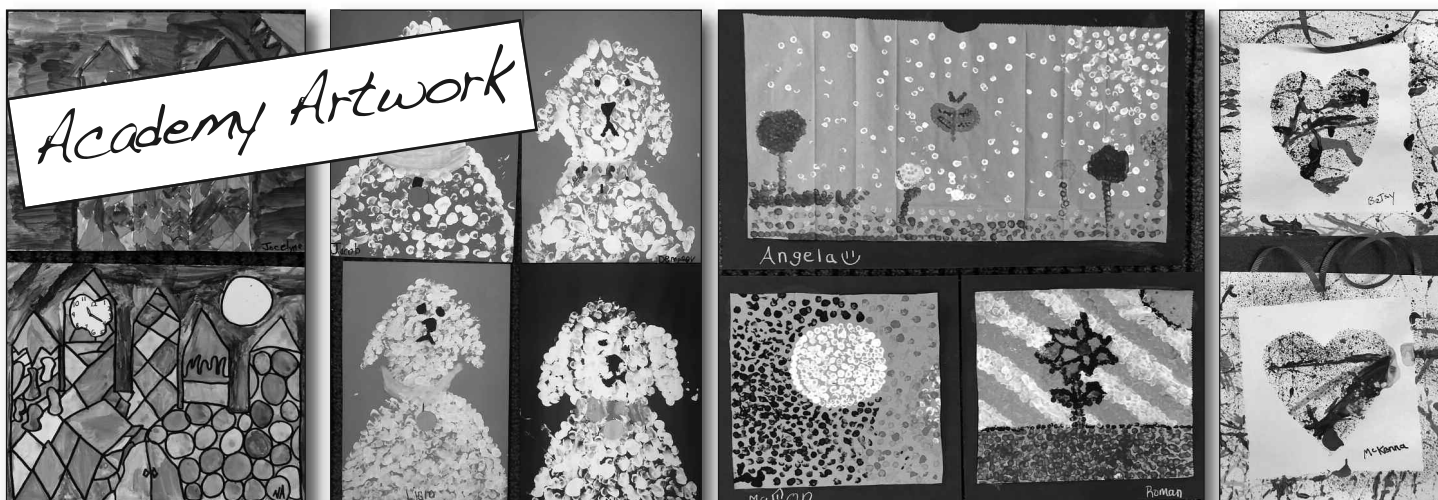
Language Arts: We learned how to evaluate thesis statements and organize our essays. We practiced by writing a persuasive essay.

Literature: We wrapped up our unit on drama by reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Religion: We have been studying the parable of the Good Samaritan and are learning that when we act for the good of others without thought of personal gain, our actions are truly moral. We have also been discussing ways to build a just society that honors and promotes human dignity.



Eighth graders are busy in math class.





Letter from Burkina Faso

Sr. Linda Answers the Call

March 2019

Water is Life

Every day in Sub-Saharan Africa we come face to face with the reality that “water is life.” We see first-hand that access to clean safe water is a privilege.

We all are aware of basic facts related to consumption of unclean water. Polluted water isn’t just “dirty.” It can be deadly. Cholera, diarrhea, typhoid, and dysentery are linked to contaminated water. Every 90 seconds worldwide, a child dies from preventable water-related illnesses.

Our neighbors struggle to access safe water. Women and children spend hours each day transporting water. Many travel several kilometers to obtain what we have by simply turning on the faucet.

We recently had the privilege of drilling wells in our region. The team drilled eight times. Five produced good sources of water. The others were dry holes.

Our drilling sites were at existing churches and sites that have been designated for a new church plant. ‘Going to the well’ for water is a social activity as well as a necessity. Women must stand in line and wait their turn to draw water. Placing the wells near a church brings an opportunity to offer the ‘Living Water’ as well as natural water to the people.

We have the money to drill two more wells. In order for the team to return to our region, we need to have enough funding to drill five more wells. If you are interested in helping us reach this goal, please contact Sheltering Wings or look on our website for Water Project – Kimini.

-Sr. Linda and Ruth Cox

