



In Their Own Words: Reports From East Side Child & Youth Ministry

Kindergarten

Catechist: Brianna Brilowski

Our kindergarten class continues to grow each week as we learn more about God's love. We lead each class with the Our Father, rules of the classroom and a discussion about the week's events. Our bookwork guides us through our curriculum - lately, we've focused on our individuality, friendship and sharing God's love with others. We've grown individually and as a group. Individually, the students are becoming more independent - taking initiative to help a neighbor with workbook exercises, volunteering to say a prayer or clean up, and applying what they already know to new curriculum. As a group - we are listening more, speaking out of turn less, including everyone in group discussion and learning more about God, Jesus and Catholicism together. Next up, we'll begin our preparation for lent. Thank you for sharing your kindergarteners with us - our time together each Wednesday is a great blessing.

Grade 2A

Catechist: Sandy Pfister & Steve Sellars

The main topic for the second graders these days is "Sacraments". The second graders are eagerly waiting to receive 2 new sacraments: Reconciliation and First Communion. They have lots of questions and we spend time each class talking about them. We are focusing more on prayer and have put together the prayer books from the back of the book to use each week. Learning about the different Church Seasons has been fun and students created beaded necklaces that match all the colors of the liturgical year. We discussed the Parable of the Lost Sheep and had an art project in which they made their own sheep. "Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep that was lost."



Grade 1

Ashley Guttuso

First grade is full of energy! The past few months have been focused on different aspects of the Church. We have learned about the liturgical calendar, been introduced to the sacraments, and thought of our parish as a family. Our energy has been channeled into many songs and art projects to help us grow in Christ. We are continuing to practice the Sign of the Cross and Our Father. We are looking forward to learning more about each of the sacraments and celebrating the seasons of Lent and Easter!



Grade 2B

Catechist: Dan Woehrer

We are preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time! Some of the great things we are learning about are:

What are the Ten Commandments? They are laws that God gave us to help us love Him, ourselves and others and to help us live as good people.

God gives each of us free will. He lets us choose between doing what is right and doing what is wrong. God never forces us to love Him.

When we do wrong (i.e. when we sin), it hurts our relationship with God and with others. However, God never stops loving us. No matter what we have done, God will ALWAYS forgive us when we are sorry. (There is nothing in the entire Universe that we could do that God couldn't forgive!!!)

Please pray for us as we prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well as the Sacrament of Eucharist this spring!

Grade 3

Catechist: Nancy Gapinski

During Advent much of our time in the 3rd grade class was spent developing our skit for the Christmas Program. We talked a lot about the gifts that God gives us and how to share our gifts with others. The 3rd graders are now learning more about how to find the readings that they hear at Mass on Sunday in the Bible. We have touched on how some of the readings we hear from the New Testament refer to stories from the Old Testament. The children had a guest teacher recently- Mr. Ralph - and really enjoyed the video and discussion that they had about honesty. We started making individual prayer books that we will update each week with quotes, prayers, and pictures throughout the remainder of the school year. Parents should be very proud of the truly nice children they are raising; it is a fun class!

Grades 7 & 8

Catechist: Mary Roper

We continue our faith journey with Social Justice at top of mind. This semester we will gain a deeper understanding of justice and peace. We will also continue to build off last semester's teachings on the Sacraments as we reflect on how we see Christ's presence in our Church, our community, and our every day lives. My hope for my students is that they come out of this semester embracing their faith and bringing God's love to those around them.

Grade 4

Catechist: Jason Koltuniak

The Fourth grade remembered the gift of the Magi during their annual Christmas program. While listening to the tune of the Little Drummer Boy, each of the children processed to the altar bringing various gifts to present to the infant Jesus. When they arrived at the altar they knelt before the newborn king in adoration, and remembered the great gift that God has given us in his son Jesus Christ who is our Lord and Savior.

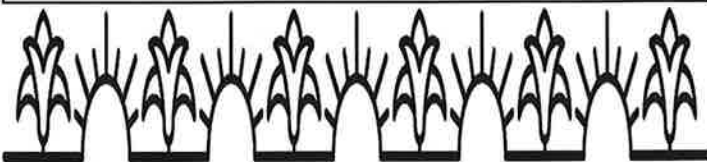
As we begin the new year and as Lent approaches, we will learn about the Ten Commandments and how sin in our lives separates us from the will of God. We pray that this Lenten season will help each of us to grow closer to Christ and bring forth a resurrection in our lives.

Grade 6

Catechist: Bob Boehm

With the end of January the 6th Grade finished our first book, "Being Catholic." We review a lot about the Sacraments, Creed and the Message of Jesus.

In February we will use the book "Meeting Jesus." Using the Bible we will look at His life as found in the Gospels and from the lives of His followers. We know that Jesus was fully Divine and fully Human (God and Man). "Meeting Jesus" looks more at the human nature of Jesus than just His miracles.



Grade 5

Catechist: Heidi Short

The Fifth Grade recently had a new catechist join their class. They certainly miss Mr. David (who was with them the first semester as part of his deaconate training) but are very happy with Ms. Heidi who is getting to know them better each week. The group has a real strong sense of community and they all care for each other and participate well in class. They are looking forward to the rest of this year, since it will be their last on Wednesday evenings. Next year they will be moving to Tuesday nights with the Middle & High School Group.

Grades 9 & 10

Catechist: Lindsey Draper

In one of our November classes, we answered questions regarding our understanding of Satan. We read excerpts of the Creation story; discussed how we are made in God's image; reviewed the teachings of the Church on Satan; and used the Handbook to connect the other parts of the class discussion to man's fall from grace. Fr. Mike talked with us about what he saw as core Catholic principles and the students shared their thoughts on the things we do that identify us as Catholics.

Each of the students was provided a copy of the liturgical calendar. Our evening's reading included explanations of the seasons reflected on the calendar and the discussion focused on Advent and the preparations for and practices on Christmas Day made by our respective families. In preparation for our visit with MacCanon Brown and the homeless Sanctuary, we used the last part of our class to make Christmas greetings for her to distribute. The December field trip to Haphatha Lutheran Church out of which MacCanon Brown currently bases her ministry to the homeless and other needy members of the community included us hearing from three members of their sanctuary "family." Eddie, Czerna, and Darius each told us their stories. Each expressed gratitude for every day of life and the safety Brown's program provides them. Czerna treated us to a song. We noted that, although the program served people who had very little, they provided refreshments to us, sharing the little they did have with us.

[As part of the connection ESCYM has developed with the program, students from each class carried donations for the program. The ninth and tenth graders gave the Christmas greetings made at the earlier class]. We want to thank all who contributed gifts and funds for the ESCYM Christmas party. We enjoyed the game that determined the gifts we received and appreciate the very nice presents themselves.

Because our January 24 class occurred on the Feast Day of St. Francis de Sales, we began our class by recalling the tour of the seminary Fr. Luke led for us. We read the January 24, 2017 letter Archbishop Listewski distributed as part of the Love One Another series, and in the second part of the class, returned to our text "The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth" and read from the Introduction to Catholic Morality chapter. Our discussion emphasized the Beatitudes and concluded with the meaning of "peacemaker" and how we can be peacemakers in our individual lives.

Our class on values began with students individually ranking the importance of people and other features in our lives and then working in groups to reach consensus as to which are collectively important. Our readings included the distinction between mortal and venial sins and what makes something moral.

Confirmation

Catechist: Ralph Stewart

The Confirmation group is looking forward to celebrating the Sacrament on April 23rd at Gesu Parish. The sponsors were invited to our January meeting and we had a great time learning, praying, and playing together. Our candidates are still busy completing their requirements. Perhaps you will see one of them at a parish meeting, doing a Liturgical Ministry at one of the parish Masses, or attending an enrichment experience in our community. Please welcome them!