

In Their Own Words:

Reports From East Side Child & Youth Ministry

Kindergarten

Catechist: Brianna Brilowski

Kindergarten ended on a huge high note - we accomplished several goals set into motion this past fall. Each child learned a number of prayers, most of whom memorized the Our Father and Sign of the Cross. We learned a lot about Jesus' life, the different religious seasons and holidays. I'm proud that each child knows Christ - learned about Jesus' birth, death, resurrection, and most importantly his great works and moral compass - someone we can all strive to be more like. It was a pleasure leading our Kindergarten class - I hope your children felt as lucky as I did to look forward to Wednesday nights .

Grade 1

Ashley Guttuso

"It has been an amazing and growth-filled year in first grade! We have learned about so many things, from saints to church seasons to sacraments. Each child has had such varied and unique contributions to our conversations and lessons. We ended our year with an introduction to the seven sacraments. As we learned a little more about our sacraments, we continued to review and practice The Sign of the Cross and Our Father, which were main learning targets for the year. We also made prayer books, which included additional prayers we learned and shared: Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostle's Creed, Guardian Angel Prayer, Bless Us O Lord. Our brains, faith, and friendships have grown by leaps and bounds this year! I am so proud of each and every child who was a part of this group and can't wait to see who they continue to become, even when I'm no longer their teacher. Thanks for an awesome first year with ESCYM!!!"

Grade 2B

Catechist: Dan Woehrer

We recently celebrated First Communion! To prepare, we learned about the Eucharist and what it really means:
 *After the bread and wine are consecrated at every Mass, they are no longer bread and wine; they are now the Body and Blood of JESUS!
 *Have you ever heard the phrase, "You are what you eat"? If it's true, then if we receive the Eucharist (i.e. "eat Jesus") each week at Mass, after a while, we will become like JESUS!
 *The Mass is the greatest way we have to worship God. It is a gift to us that we get to experience every Sunday!
 Thank you for your prayers as we continue our journey of faith and learn how to "become like Jesus".

Grade 2A

Catechist: Sandy Pfister & Steve Sellars

Second Grade Religious Education ended in such a perfect way with the class receiving their First Holy Communion! It was a special day for them and their families. They will remember it always. In the last days of class, students answered some questions about their year in 2A (Chase, DiaLove and Emersyn were not available to answer the questions):

What was your favorite part of class?

Lourdalis: Our Christmas performance. Neylan: Hearing other people's prayers at the prayer table. Jada: Grow the vine. Orion: Everything. Nayah: Art. Carrie: Art. Elizabeth: When we made the God's eye.

How did you feel after you received your First Communion?

Elizabeth: I felt holy. Carrie: Happy. Nayah: Scared, nervous, happy, excited. Orion: Great. Jada: Happy. Neylan: I felt proud. Lourdalis: Good, scared, tired.

Name one thing you learned in second grade Religious education.

Lourdalis: That the first communion was the Last Supper. Neylan: I learned about what was going to happen at my First Communion. Jada: About Jesus. Orion: That God loves you. Nayah: The Eucharist. Carrie: That God is with you. Elizabeth: To trust God and pray more.

As you can tell from the answers (and the picture which shows the class with their prayer chain), the class had fun and learned much. For us, they were a wonderful group to teach and will be missed! The prayer chain is a great testament to how much we prayed together this year! Hope everyone has a Blessed and Peaceful Summer.



Grade 3

Catechist: Nancy Gapinski

The 3rd grade class finished out the year learning more about Lenten practices that help us prepare for Easter. We practiced for the Stations of the Cross prayer service and discussed Jesus' journey and sacrifice. Our class gave generously to the "Change Game" and they were delighted to win a pizza party. Way to go 3rd graders! Students continued to add to their prayer books and we discussed incorporating prayer into our daily lives. The 3rd graders had some great discussions about how to be disciples of Jesus in how we treat others. It was a pleasure to get to know this thoughtful group of children over this school year."

Grades 7 & 8

Catechist: Mary Roper

What a year of spiritual growth and development for the 7th and 8th graders! It was amazing to see our community growing stronger throughout the year. In our last class, we recapped all that we accomplished this year- what a list! Our time on field trips, studying the Sacraments, and the semester of social justice truly allowed us to be aware of God's love and the impact that we as Christians can make.

Thanks for a great year everyone! Have a fun summer!

Confirmation

Catechist: Ralph Stewart

The Confirmation group finished the year by celebrating the Sacrament on April 23rd at Gesu Parish. It was an honor and a privilege to walk with these young people on their faith journey. May God continue to bless them, always!

Grade 4

Catechist: Jason Koltuniak

Did you know that Jesus never blinks his eyes in the movie Jesus of Nazareth? Ask the the children this and they will tell you that it is true. Or consider watching the movie as a family together...it is a great and simple way to learn about the life of Christ!

As a 4th grade catechist this year, I am somehow left with the impression that God's eyes are always open and that he never stops watching over us. While I cannot tell you so much how each of the children's lives have been changed from attending Fourth grade Catechism class this year, I can tell you that I feel very grateful to have participated in a small part of their faith journey. It is my sincere hope that at least a seed has been planted in the hearts and minds of each of the children from attending religious education this year. I pray that seed will someday, as it is already, be transformed into something that is glorious and beautiful!

God's blessings to all of ESCYM on a fun and faith filled Summer!

Grade 6

Catechist: Bob Boehm

The Sixth Grade finished two books this year, "Being Catholic" and "Meeting Jesus."

The first half of the year looked at some of the important articles of our Faith: namely the Creed and Sacraments, as well as the Mass and symbols of the Catholic Church. We also surveyed the Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

In "Meeting Jesus" we looked at the human side of our Savior. How life might have been like in Palestine 2000 years ago. We saw Jesus in the Gospels as a Teacher, and Man of Compassion and Forgiveness. Several sessions also talked about Holy Week and Easter.

We ended the year at a session with parents playing SAVEO!

Grades 9 & 10

Catechist: Lindsey Draper

The last portion of the year included our class participating in the field trip to the Milwaukee Jewish Museum (3/21) where we viewed the fabric panels of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz through which she recalled family life before the Nazi invasion of Poland; the removal of Jews from her village; and her struggles to survive the tactics of the Gestapo.

We joined Mr. Bob's class March 28 for a study of the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes, and on April 4, following an exercise in which we used communication skills available if we couldn't speak, write or mouth words, we discussed Jesus' use of parables to help teach the meanings of his message. We each discussed one of the parables primarily found in Matthew.

In our April 25 session, we focused on the value of life and, using *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth* as the basis for discussion, reviewed our personal views in light of the Church's position on abortion, the death penalty, euthanasia and suicide. Our May 2 class revolved around issues relating to *truth*, as we again used the handbook as the basis for our discussion on the effects of lying, confidentiality, and the Eighth Commandment. The confidentiality discussion included a review of the Seal of the Confessional and an explanation of why the Church has an absolute prohibition against a priest revealing matters that were shared during the Sacrament.

Once again, we want to end the year thanking Mr. Ralph - who covered some classes when our catechist wasn't available - and Nadine Stoltz for all their support during the year.



Grade 5

Catechist: Heidi Short

The fifth graders have been spending a lot of time focusing on the sacraments the last part of this year. We've learned about the Sacraments of Initiation and what it means to become a member of the Church and live as one of Jesus's disciples. We talked about the sacraments of healing (Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick), and talked about our vocation in life (Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders). I found them to have some great questions and to really get along well which made it a lot easier for me to join them in the middle of the year.

They are very excited to be moving up next year.