St. James Catholic School

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December 2016 Newsletter

Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe that November has ended and we have begun the season of Advent! Sister Cristina and I would like to thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with us this past month to share your child’s successes and areas of growth. It is so wonderful to see the students’ progression in a short 3 months and we appreciate all the work you do to prepare them for school, so that their experience is a happy one.

The children used their learning about how animals get ready for winter to create our very own bear den for hibernating in our classroom! We will be turning the den into a manger scene next week for the children to explore the Nativity story. Thank you to those who were able to send in costumes and props!

As the cold weather approaches, we find ourselves waiting and preparing for that special day, December 25th. The children are learning that Jesus’ birthday is a very important day for us as Catholics. Each week during Advent, we will be reading stories which retell the story of Jesus’ birth. As a class and as a school community, we will be preparing our hearts for Christmas.

We have been learning about feelings with Mrs. Clapp through a program called Second Step, which features developmentally appropriate ways to teach core social-emotional skills such as empathy, emotion management, and problem solving. We have been sharing what makes us feel happy, sad, scared, mad, etc. and have been learning how we can look at our friends’ faces for clues about how they might be feeling. Ask your child about our friends ‘Impulsive Puppy’, ‘Be-Calm Bunny’ and ‘Slow-down Snail’. They join us for these discussions.

We have been continuing our study of the alphabet and have learned many sounds! We have even been working on some “Reading Magic” where we blend sounds together to create words! We are also continuing our “Letter Magic” work where we are practicing our letter formation. Please continue to practice printing using proper pencil grasp when letter sheets come home, as well as reviewing learned sounds. Our Borrow-a-Book program will begin in January. In the meantime, we are working on recognizing the following “Popcorn Words”: a, I, in, is, it, to, and, the.

We have been continuing exploring with patterning, reviewing numbers and counting using 1:1 correspondence. We have been keeping track of how many days we have been in school – can you believe we are already at 60 days? Please continue to help your child find patterns around your home, and use real-life counting experiences to help students understand numbers.

We have attached the December Scholastic flyers. If you are interested in ordering any books for your child, please complete the order form and return it to us in your child’s communication bag by Monday, December 5th. If you are purchasing any books as Christmas gifts, please let us know and we can arrange a time for you to pick them up, rather than sending them home with your child. \*Cheques or online payment only please!

\*Our Kindergarten Christmas Concert will be in the gym on Thursday, December 15th. The children will begin their performance at 9:30. The children are welcome to wear Christmas colours! Hope to see you there!

\*Please remember to return ‘Mr. Zippy’ communication bags daily!

\*Important Reminder: As the weather gets colder and the winter weather approaches, the children will need hats, mittens (waterproof), neck warmers, a warm jacket, snow pants and boots. You are reminded to **please label everything**. Please be aware that one of the educational goals for your child is to be able to dress independently. Your child will show this by managing zippers, pulling his/her own hat onto their head, manipulating sleeves, putting fingers into mitten holes and remembering the correct sequence (i.e., first snow pants, then boots, etc.). Try using a timer to see if they can “Beat the Clock!”

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a joyful New Year! Thank you for your continued support.

~Mrs. Simpson & Sister Cristina

**Home Links**

If you are looking for some extra activities to do with your child at home, these ideas will help reinforce what we are doing in class. Your child can:

-practice writing their first and last name (capital at the beginning and then lower case letters to follow)

-practice writing letters (both capital and lower case letters)

-practice rote counting from 1-31 and beyond (you can count objects or just count numbers aloud)

-practice writing and recognizing numbers from 1-10 and beyond

-make patterns with household items. Try making shape, colour and size patterns with objects you find.

-play board games that reinforce the concept of counting, colour recognition, turn taking, etc.