St. Jude Preschool

Have you noticed a name change recently? Or have you noticed a cute little Jaguar Cub in addition to our usual mighty St. Jude Jaguar?

Mrs. Shari Diedrick with Lucas Edgell

In promoting all we have to offer in our parish day school, you may have noticed a subtle change from “St. Jude School” to “St. Jude School & Preschool.” Although this may seem to be an insignificant change, the purpose is clear - to raise awareness of our preschool program.

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St. Jude Drama Club

Is proud to present Dear Edwina Junior on April 20th and 21st at 7:00 p.m. in the Elyria Catholic Auditorium. It is a beautiful day in Paw-Paw Michigan, and all of the neighborhood kids are on their way to Edwina Spoonapple's house. Edwina has created the "Dear Edwina Show" in which the kids act out letters written by people seeking Edwina's expert advice! Edwina is the best advice giver around...but when it comes down to it, will she be able to take her own advice and solve her own problems? This play is both heart-warmig and hilarious!!

Adult (9th grade and above) tickets are $6, K-8 students are $3, and children through the age of Pre-K are free.

To purchase tickets, please email cmalone@stjudejaguars.org.

St. Jude School and P.S.R. students continue the Lenten "journey" with some new twists on the ancient Traditions.

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Dear Parishioners,

Since last Advent, when we started using the new liturgy translation, we all are more conscious of reflecting on the meaning of the prayers at Mass. As human beings, it is so easy to just go into “automatic mode” and do things “rote” without allowing the prayers to touch our hearts.

As Catholics we believe the Eucharistic celebration of the Mass is our highest form of prayer. It is a Sacrament in which we encounter God and we welcome Him into our lives and hearts. We believe this, but, how can we be engaged even more deeply in this mystery? For many it seems Mass is mostly a “duty”…. an “obligation”. This attitude can be a negative factor on us and be an obstacle. A better approach is to see the Mass/Eucharist primarily as a welcome opportunity to be spiritually nourished. If we truly make this slight adjustment, we will be blessed with new insights and growth. For example, if you are invited by a special friend to dinner, you joyfully anticipate the event. You make sure you come on time and not leave early. You hopefully reinforce a significant relationship and savor every moment by sharing life experiences and the food at the table. The Mass is similar to this and more, if we allow God’s grace to touch our hearts.

We begin the Eucharist with song and a warm welcome to all in our parish family. We humbly acknowledge our faults, ask forgiveness and then carefully listen to the “breaking of the word”. The Scriptures are the inspired word of God, but often they seem mysterious to us. This is only normal whenever we take any passage out of context. Therefore it is so important to reflect and study as to what was intended by the author. So many wonderful resources are available both in hard copy and online. The role of the homily is to connect the reading of the day to our everyday lives. The Word of God can touch people in different ways during different times of their lives. Here the Spirit of God is working, if we can just be still and focused. During the petitions, we pray for the needs around us and a humble openness on our part to God’s will.

The second part of the Mass is the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We offer our gifts, the bread and wine and ourselves as we are. Here it is so important that we leave all our concerns on the altar in the Lord’s hands. In the preface we enter into a dialogue with the priest as we all “lift up our hearts”. In the words of consecration, God becomes sacramentally present in the Eucharist. Now we savor this profound sacred relationship by praising God and praying for each other’s needs again. We conclude this portion by remembering all who have gone before us and humbly acknowledging our own mortality. This portion ends with the great “Amen”. Here we all publicly agree with all that was said in this prayer.

The Communion rite begins with the “Our Father”. We extend an external sign of peace to all in the family before being bonded as one “Body of Christ” in Communion. This is all part of the procession of life and that is why we stand, if possible. After Communion there is an intentional period of silence for private prayer and thanksgiving.

The last part of the Mass is the final prayer and dismissal. There is a critical part of the Mass. Here we are all “sent out” to continue to “live out” and bring the Gospel ideals of the Body of Christ into our real world and culture today. Here we are all regularly challenged to continue to use the opportunities we have to continue to build up the Kingdom of God in our world today.

This is our mission in life. We are all of different ages and stages. Lent provides an opportunity to stay focused on the essentials.

My prayer is that our loving God continue to bless our parish family and we all be church for each other as instruments of healing and peace. With best wishes I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Frank P. Kosem, Pastor
This school year marks the tenth anniversary of St. Jude Preschool! Although the mission has always been the education of students prior to kindergarten, the preschool program has undergone significant change since its inception.

We now offer three programs to fit a variety of family needs.

Our **three-year old program** is offered on Thursday and Friday for either a full or half day. Students must be three years old by June 30, 2012 in order to enroll. In the three-year old program, students learn to communicate effectively and play a responsible role in their classroom community. Problem solving and logical thinking skills are emphasized in addition to creative play. In addition to addressing emergent literacy, the preschool staff also stresses skill development in the areas of math and science. Students have the opportunity to develop gross motor skills through physical education class and fine motor skills in the classroom. In religion class, the three-year olds learn about God by developing positive attitudes about themselves.

The **four-year old program** is offered on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday for either a full or half day. The four-year old program provides a variety of activities to prepare your child for kindergarten. The students particularly like The Letter People Program, a comprehensive literacy program that promotes early literacy skills including alphabet letter recognition, phonics, and comprehension. Each week, children are introduced to a new letter with a series of hands-on activities that are integrated throughout all content areas and in learning centers. The focus of math and science becomes readiness for kindergarten math and science activities. To increase independence and develop confidence, students are encouraged to participate in show-n-tell activities and present their “All About Me Tee” to the class. In religion class, the four-year olds continue to discover and learn about the many gifts, talents, and abilities God has given them.

The **Pre-K program** is offered five days a week in the morning or for the full day. Our Pre-K students are integrated into the school through a variety of activities – eating lunch in the cafeteria, attending school assemblies and pep rallies, and participating in social activities such as Grandfriends Day. The Letter People, introduced in the four-year old program, is expanded so that students increase their vocabulary, recognize that words share phonemes, and identify simple sight words. Writing skills are given special emphasis as students enjoy journal writing activities. In math, children explore the concepts of time, money, and weight and continue to learn about classification and counting of items as well as the concepts of patterns and series. Children increase their science knowledge and vocabulary through simple science experiments. The students continue to learn about God through participation in school wide religious events such as prayer services and Ash Wednesday Mass.

### Upcoming School Events

| April 19 – New Parent Orientation Breakfast | May 15 – Internet Safety Program |
| April 20 – 8th Grade Retreat | May 16 – Spring Band Concert |
| April 20 & 21 – Spring Musical | May 18 – End-of-Year Picnic for Three-year olds |
| April 27 – Alumni Mass & Breakfast | May 18 – 7th and 8th Grade Spring Dance |
| May 1 – Mom’s Picnic for Four-year old & Pre-K | May 22 – End-of-Year Picnic for Four-year olds & Pre-K |
| May 3 – Mom’s Tea for Three-year olds | May 23 – Graduation for Four-year old & Pre-K |
| May 3 – New Student Shadow Day | June 1 – 8th Grade Graduation |
| May 5 – First Communion | June 4 – Fun and Field Day |
| May 8 – May Crowning & Mother’s Day Mass | June 5 – Last Day of School |
New Secured Entrance & Safety Gate at the School!

Families now have another entrance available at the School! We understand and appreciate that it can be difficult at times to find a parking space in the area surrounding the main entrance to the school by the green canopy. This is particularly problematic for those folks who are carrying things to and from the school and have to walk long distances. We apologize for this inconvenience. The safety and security of the children is always our utmost concern, which precluded the use of ‘non-monitored’ entrances, up until now. We have provided another alternative by converting the door by the ‘peace garden/outdoor classroom’ into a secured entrance that is monitored and controlled by the office staff. This includes the installation of an intercom, 2 color security cameras, remote door release and a digital video recorder. For those of you unfamiliar with this entrance, it is located just around the corner from the door to the kitchen.

We encourage you to utilize this entrance in addition to the main entrance if needed. (Please respect our request for no parking from 8am to 10am in the first space back in that area. We have this reserved for our daily delivery of food for the lunch program)

A new gate on the west side of the school building. The gate is closed every day during the lunchtime recess hours to ensure the safety of our children while at play. For any visitors to the church and school campus, there is sign on the gate which directs drivers to use the rectory driveway entrance during these hours. This is another project supported by St. Jude Parent Club, whose mission is to enhance the educational experience of our children by supporting the school financially and through coordination of parental participation to reflect the ideals of St. Jude School and our Catholic faith.
AND STILL THEY COME...

No one of us can be oblivious to the tragic unfolding of the history of the sexual abuse of minors by priests and religious men and women that has rocked the church in the past decade. Along with this is the questionable handling of cases by bishops and other church administrators. And the incidents are not limited to the United States but are world-wide.

Along with this bad news is an alarming statistic. While the Catholic Church still holds as the largest Christian religious body, the second largest is the growing number of former Catholics. The exodus of Catholics from the body of the church may be the fallout from the sex abuse scandal, but the ever increasing spirit of secularism and relativism in Western culture leads the way. Secularism touts the value of material things and getting the most from life now. Relativism considers little to be of absolute value and one belief system is as good as another. The common response of so many of our younger folks today to issues of life’s meaning and what the future holds – “whatever!”—is indicative of these trends.

In spite of all of this bad news, statistics show that each year, throughout the world, a significant number of people seek out and enter the Catholic faith community. Here at St. Jude, just before Advent, we received into the Catholic Church four people baptized and raised in other Christian churches. At Easter we will celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation for three more adults. The story of each person’s journey is unique to them but beneath it is the working of God’s mysterious grace. Welcoming these people into our faith community is certainly an occasion for rejoicing, but it also reminds each of us of our responsibility to be “evangelizers,” ever vigilant for those who may be seeking what they perceive that we have. Extend a welcome, reach out a hand and bring them along. Be an agent of that mysterious grace God is offering to them. Become a participant in their story and their journey.

If you are interested I invite you to consider becoming a “journey sponsor” or RCIA team member and share your own faith experiences with these inquirers and seekers. We all have a “faith story” to tell. These are graces to be shared with others. Let me know if you are interested.

Fr. John
SACRAMENTS and ‘sacramentals’: Making God “more visible” in our world

By Ann Chadowski, Director of Religious Education

I once worked with a person who was eagerly anticipating entry into the Church and when I asked why she was so excited, she didn’t hesitate when she gushed, “Because you Catholics have SACRAMENTS!!”

Sacraments – outward signs of God’s Love and Grace. Tangibles. They make the invisible visible.

At St. Jude this year, our children are learning about and experiencing Sacraments – the capital ‘S’ kind, including Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, et cetera – as well as the small ‘s’ kind: signs and symbols which “make God more real by using everyday things to point out God’s Presence in our midst.”

Our parish community might be interested to learn that...

Our children (both at St. Jude School AND P.S.R.) have prayed the “Stations of the Cross” as written specifically to include the “Character Themes” they have devoted themselves to all year – through the eyes of Respect and Fairness and Cooperation, Self-Discipline and Courage, Caring and Kindness and Fairness, Responsibility and Citizenship, Honesty and Trustworthiness, and Stewardship. As they reflected on this ancient devotion, they did so with a renewed relevance.

LENT began with a question, not a command: WILL YOU “Turn away from Sin and be faithful to the Gospel?” That required the students to make a response.
LENTEN themes this year focused on Jesus’ call to FAST, PRAY and GIVE ALMS, but classroom were asked to reflect on items like SPONGES (wringing out to ‘make room’ = Fasting; ‘soaking up’ = Prayer; ‘being full to the point of Saturation’ = what you contain comes off on all you touch. The eighth graders learned the “:  Fasting = Rearranging. Prayer = Remembering. Giving alms = Restoring. They received purple ‘R’ locker magnets and ‘R’ bracelets.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, for both the PSR and St. Jude Students took advantage of the symbol of the Mirror: “Do I see myself – and act – the way God sees me?” “Do I reflect God’s Love to all I meet?” Some classes used a Magnifying Glass: to look for things I cannot see or know; to see more clearly, in greater detail, larger something I already know; to Focus.

The members of this year’s First Communion Class received “dazzling white” t-shirts at a special Rite of Enrollment, held on the Sunday when the story of Jesus’ Transfiguration was proclaimed. Just as the apostles began to see Jesus “in a new light” from that moment on, so are we, as a parish, called to view these youngsters in a new way as the complete their growth in Faith and Knowledge and eagerly anticipate receiving Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time on May 5.

Eighth grade students at the school continue to spend each Friday morning, learning more about what it means to be Catholic. Three members of the upper grades are immersed in prayer and learning as they prepare to participate in the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. ALL students in the P.S.R. program and at the school are participating in their own STEWARDSHIP commitments, centered in Jesus’ teaching at the end of Matthew 25: “When I was hungry, you fed me... When I was thirsty....”

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**There are two ways of spreading light:**

*to be the candle* **or the mirror that reflects it**
Students in the four-year old and Pre-K programs must be four years old by September 30, 2012. Each preschool classroom is staffed with a certified childhood educator and a certified aide. Also, to accommodate working parents, before and after-school extended care is available. You may have heard the phrase, “Preschool is the new kindergarten!” Enrolling your child in a quality preschool program is critical, especially as much of the previous kindergarten curriculum has now become part of the preschool curriculum.

Please contact the school office if you are interested in more information about the St. Jude Preschool program. We are happy to offer a tour or allow you to observe preschool classes during the day.