GRACE: NEWS



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Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Preschool students from Notre Dame of De Pere Catholic School and St. John Paul II Classical School are well on their way to learning about the Mass and God's love in a successful program called the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The program started three years ago at NDDP and has grown to include all four sections of the preschool population.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a program for the faith and spiritual formation of the child. Its focus is to deepen the child's existing relationship with God. It encourages a personal prayer life, full participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church, and the development of a deeper understanding of Catholic identity and tradition. This is accomplished through the use of materials, prayer, song, listening to the Word of God and giving each child time to work with provided materials. There is a short group

lesson and then time is given for individual prayers and play.

This CGS initiative at Notre Dame of De Pere is led by Mrs. Jane Charneski, Discipleship Coordinator and trained catechist teacher and assisted by Mrs. Jennifer Kopp, trained catechist teacher for Level I for NDDP three- and four-year-old students. One or two days each week, these students meet in the Atrium classroom, which is set up with child-sized religious education materials. The CGS program is a tie-in with the school's community and curriculum. The liturgical calendar is observed with colors and songs, and Bible verses are read and reviewed from the weekly scripture from Mass each week.

Mrs. Charneski shares, "All four sections are thriving with little learners on their journey of falling in love with Jesus."

The student and family response to this program has been overwhelmingly positive.

Families are invited to observe or help out and to sit in on class periods to see the students in action. Many compliments and kind words have been shared throughout the years, and parents have truly loved the large candle ceremony at year's end. Both schools are looking forward to training more instructors and assistants in the future as more sections are added.













President's Letter

Dear GRACE Families and Friends,

I have often shared with others that parenting

is the hardest job in the world. It's not for the faint of heart nor for those that don't like to get their hands dirty. The responsibilities of parenting can be overwhelming and downright draining, especially in families with multiple children. It is often unpredictable and is accompanied with a myriad of emotions, lack of sleep, guilt and peer pressure not to mention financial strain because, really, children are expensive.

Parenting, though, can also be the absolute, most rewarding job in the world because we experience unconditional love and a parent/child bond that is unique and precious. Parenting is a true gift involving not only immense responsibility but immense fulfillment on an extraordinary level through the depth of love and ongoing healthy sacrifice.

As parents, we have the opportunity to form our children in the Catholic faith in all that we do. We create lasting memories with our family traditions, funny jokes, vacations and each and every day mundane tasks- and don't forget, family prayer! We often find a deep sense of purpose in our hard work to raise children as they undoubtedly and often teach us something in return. One of the most rewarding aspects of raising children is the pure joy of watching them contribute positively to the world around them and make healthy decisions (sometimes involving overcoming hardship) as they mature.

My husband and I have three grown children- each experiencing their own unique path of growth and maturity to become adults. While they are adults now, they still need us as parents and still need our influence to become strong faith-filled individuals that make a difference for our world and for our Church.

Recently, Fr. Tim Shillcox shared about the intersect of how, as parents, we sometimes have to do the hard things especially when it comes to parenting on Sunday and bringing our children to church. His recent Facebook post, "Bring Them to Church", is a perfect reminder of our important job as parents related to priorities: the utmost priority to support and guide our children despite those who may judge or by falling prey to society's enticing distractions. Above all, as parents we have God on our side! Despite challenges, raising children yields profound joy even on the most difficult days.

So here's to our God-given blessing of raising happy children of all ages together in a world that needs the next generation to be faithfully wiser and stronger. Keep working hard, parents, it is truly worth it all!

Climbuly De sotell

GRACE President

Desotell family summer vacation July, 2023.



BRING THEM TO CHURCH

(Adapted from Fr. Tim Shillcox's post on Facebook October 30, 2023)

Saturate their lives with the Word of God. Even if they lay on the floor. Even if they need 437 goldfish and a sucker to be quiet. Even if you stand in the back swaying back and forth holding them. Even when it's hard.

> Even when your row looks like a small hurricane just came through.

> > Bring them to church.

Let them see you worship.

Let them see you pray.

Let them see you running toward the Savior... because if they don't see and learn these things from you, who are they going to learn them from? The world will teach them it's not a priority. The world will teach them it's okay to lay out, not to pick up their Bibles.

The world will direct them so far off course, confuse them, and misinform them that just being "good" is enough. The world won't teach them about Jesus.

That's our job.

Bring them to church.





FATHER ALLOUEZ CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Kay Franz 920-432-5223 (Elementary) 920-336-3230 (Middle) www.fatherallouezschool.org

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Kari Peterson 920-468-0625 www.holycrossfamily.org

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Interim Principal: Mrs. Sarah Sharkey 920-494-1931 www.holyfamilygreenbay.com

NOTRE DAME OF DE PERE

Principal: Mrs. Molly Mares 920-337-1115 www.notredameofdepere.com

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Jeff Young 920-336-3091 www.lourdesschooldepere.org

ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Interim Principal: Mr. David Gusloff 920-468-5026 www.saintbernardgb.com

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

Principal: Ms. Dana Vance 920-434-3822 www.sjbhschool.org

ST. JOHN PAUL II CLASSICAL SCHOOL/ CHESTERTON ACADEMY

Headmaster: Patrick McKeown 920-617-9542

<u>WWW.sipclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/</u> <u>chesterton-academy</u>

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Dr. Jamie Tyrrell 920-432-8242 www.stmoregb.com

Father Allouez Middle Days Electives Program

By Laura Blicharz, Director of Curriculum

Besides being the traditional "middle day" of the week, Wednesdays are fun days for Father Allouez Catholic School's middle school students. In a unique elective program occurring each Wednesday for the past three years at Father Allouez, students in grades five through eight set aside their daily schedule of core content classes and participate in elective classes. These courses are designed to boost students' growth, academic success and future planning. The elective classes enable the middle schoolers the opportunity to explore their interests, develop a wide range of



skills and build confidence. These Wednesday experiences may have a lasting impact on their educational journey and overall development.

Needless to say, many students claim that this is their favorite day of the week. Quinn, a current middle school student shares, "I really like having an elective day because it gives us a break from the regular school schedule while we still get to learn about more topics that we usually wouldn't be able to learn about. One of my favorite electives is cooking class. I like that one the most because it's so different from what I usually learn, but so fun at the same time."

Students can choose four classes each trimester and the classes change from one trimester to the next. Some of the courses that have been offered are:



Band
Theater
Service Learning
Robotics
Art Studio
Math Games
Student Leadership
Clever Science Investigations
Brain Games
Book Club
Stop Motion Animation
Art Podcasting

Math Lab
Broadcasting
Hispanic World Cultures
Stress Reduction - Self Help
French
World Traveler
Cooking 101
Archaeology
Forensics
Art Journaling
All About Money
Ready Set Save (or Spend)

Coding
Ukulele Club
Bucket Drumming
Yoga and Meditation
Artsy Craftsy
Study Skills
Yearbook Design
Time Travel through History
Word Play
Creative Writing
Adafruit Coding
Diving into the Gospels

Middle school is a crucial time for students to explore their interests and discover their passions. Elective classes can help students discover their strengths and guide their career choices. The offerings are a diverse range of subjects from the arts, technology, religion, literature, theater, life skills, math and science. This allows students to choose subjects that align with their learning styles and interests, making learning more engaging and relevant.

One student, Aubrey, relates her excitement about the program, "I love elective day because you get to choose a class you are interested in. It is so much fun! I especially love musicals because I love to perform." Electives help develop a student's social competencies because the class brings together students



with similar interests and can help form friendships with those in other grade levels. Success in these classes can also boost self-esteem and confidence.

Father Allouez Catholic School will indeed continue to offer elective classes for the middle school students. These classes provide a well-rounded education that includes not only core academic subjects but also opportunities for personal growth and development that nurtures students' physical, emotional, social and cognitive developments.

St. Bernard Robotics





St. Bernard Catholic School students are making strides toward technical challenges with their Robotics Teams. Second through eighth graders are eligible to join, and this year there are twenty students on six teams.

The St. Bernard Robotics Team competes in the VEX IQ Challenge, where young innovators come together to harness their skills in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to construct robots equipped to compete in engineering-themed games. This arena becomes a testing ground where theoretical classroom concepts meet practical application. This provides students an opportunity to exemplify skills not just in robotics, but in teamwork, leadership and communication, as well. The Team ties in with the STEM curriculum at the school, as there are STEM programs throughout its science program. This includes robots that teachers may utilize.



For the past three seasons, the teams have been adding to their goals. In the first year, they were just trying to understand how to build the robot and troubleshoot. In the second year, building became a little easier, and the students who had done it the year before assisted other teams. This year, the teams are moving along on their builds. The goal is to be able to compete with the coding, where the robot then can move autonomously, to score more points for their team.

Students and their families alike are excited about the SBS Robotics Team. Parent Laura Allard, whose son is a fifth grader on the Team, offers some thoughts: "Our son has looked forward to joining robotics ever since he found out about it in Kindergarten preview day. This is his second year on the team, and he is excited to start building! As a parent, I enjoy coaching and watching the kids grow as young adults and teammates. They have to think outside the box and work together to problem solve and find solutions. It is a big commitment to join the team, however, it is a beautiful thing to be a part of. It is so rewarding to see how much the kids learn and grow from the start of the season up until they start to compete."

Although this season's teams are set, students may look forward to signing up for next school year. SBS staff and the Robotics Team coaches wish to share their thoughts about the group. "We are eager to expand our Robotics Team, offering an increased number of students the opportunity to immerse themselves in this innovative and exciting field. Our aspirations include not just growing in numbers, but also in the scope and level of our competition. In the past season, we made notable strides by doubling our participation from two to four tournaments. This accomplishment fuels our ambition, and in the upcoming seasons, we aim to compete in five or six events, with the ultimate goal of earning a spot at the state competition. But we won't stop there. Our vision extends beyond state level. We are committed to fostering a team equipped with the skills, knowledge, and passion to reach regional and even national competitions. Each step forward marks our unwavering commitment to provide our students with enriching opportunities that challenge, inspire, and cultivate their potential in robotics and beyond."

With this inspiration, commitment and participation, the St. Bernard Robotics Team is sure to hit new heights each new school year!







Spotlight on Father Jose of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish and St. Thomas More Catholic School

It has been just four years since Ss. Peter & Paul Parish and St. Thomas More Catholic School have been blessed with Fr. Jose Lopez as pastor and mentor. Within his daily life, he celebrates Masses, trains Mass servers, is available for reconciliation and adoration, and is there to talk whenever and wherever he is needed, both within the church and the school.

"What led me to the priesthood was pursuing a vocation and asking what was my mission, my purpose," he shares. Finding the love of God has fortunately brought Fr. Jose to where he is in life now.

Fr. Jose was born in Jalisco, Mexico. When he was just about 12 years old, his family moved to Green Bay. Being a native Spanish speaker, Fr. Jose uses both languages to reach his parishioners, students and their families. He explains, "It's usually super fun with the kids. They are bilingual, but those who have recently immigrated to the States are in the early stages of learning. According to how

they talk to me, I talk to them." This means that sometimes communication comes out in the form of "Spanglish."

One significant connection that Fr. Jose has made with the students of St. Thomas More Catholic School is through playing sports and other activities, especially soccer. Three years ago, an unofficial St. Thomas More Soccer Club was formed, and the group has played for fun against the St. John Paul II Classical School School, with Fr. Jose as St. Thomas More's coach. Outside his busy days at the parish, Fr. Jose likes to read, learn, have meaningful discussions with friends, and "just hang out with people."

With a solid commitment to his church and school communities, it is hopeful that Fr. Jose's mission and purpose will continue to benefit everyone who knows him for many years to come.

Holy Family Catholic School's Deacon Dan and Sister Elena



Holy Family Catholic School is honored and blessed to include two ordained religious teachers within its staff. Sister Elena, a member of the Manitowoc-based Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, is currently teaching the third grade. Deacon Dan Gray, ordained by Bishop Ricken in 2020, teaches middle school religion classes. They both serve on the Faith Committee and collaborate to look at options for spirituality in the school.

Having been a religious Sister since 2007, Sister Elena has taught in a number of Catholic schools in Wisconsin, Hawaii, Arizona and Mississippi before coming to Green Bay. Her insights into teaching are meaningful.

She says, "Teaching means to share God's wealth of graces, truths, and love with His children. My students are a fun class to teach. Teaching isn't solely about the teacher teaching students; it is also about the teacher learning from the students. They have taught me a ton of God's joy. Each day while teaching I enjoy meeting God in the children. God is truly among us with each other.

I begin every day with religion class because it's a great way to begin the day with God and then throughout the day we can associate our faith with something else we learned that day. Plus, I enjoy that Catholic schools are wonderful safe places that foster reverence for God and respect for others. I totally enjoy sharing with the students a higher education of God and academics. It is wonderful to see students become independent and responsible while completing tasks that were once challenging."

Outside of her school commitment, Sister Elena loves to pray in nature, go for walks in neighborhoods or on trails, visit state or national parks, take photographs, create watercolor

paintings, visit the elderly and watch football games. Sister enjoys cooking meals and baking for the Sisters that she lives with in St. Agnes Convent.

She quips, "But most of all I love to grill!" She also hosts the Franciscan Moment Podcast for the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Deacon Dan Gray brings a wide range of experiences to his current calling. Having spent much of his adult life as a respiratory therapist,

upon that retirement, he decided to become a substitute teacher with GRACE. He now spends part of his week teaching religion as well as serving two area parishes as their deacon.

Regarding being a teacher, Deacon Dan shares, "I love teaching. I am grateful for the opportunity to be with these kids and to be part of their faith journeys. I want to encourage them to think about and understand their faith so that it becomes a part of who they are at every moment in time. Every day and every class begins with prayer. I especially enjoy the energy of middle schoolers. Watching them grow and mature over the past years has been fun."

HFCS humbly acknowledges the service and contributions that these two gifted educators are making to the school community and also thanks them indeed for their dedication.



Our Lady of Lourdes Celebrates Parent Homecoming

ur Lady of Lourdes Catholic School kicked off the 2023-24 school year with a fantastic new event for all OLOL parents and staff - Parent Homecoming! On September 8, the school gym was decorated as a replica of a high school homecoming dance, complete with a photo area, music, lights, drinks and snacks. The topper of the evening was a Homecoming Court, complete with the crowning of a King and Queen. This was the first year of the Parent Homecoming, and it was a resounding success with approximately 80 in attendance.

This event was created to help build a strong parent community at the start of the school year by bringing parents together without the need to fundraise. It allowed returning parents to reconnect after a busy summer, as well as afforded new parents the opportunity to meet others and to become fully immersed in OLOL's amazing culture. The event has been dubbed a "friendraiser,"

as its goal is to welcome all parents back into the strong, committed and fun culture of the school and to build relationships that can last a lifetime.

Given the positive reaction to the 2023 Parent Homecoming, it has been decided that this will be an annual OLOL event for all

parents to enjoy. The date is still to be decided for 2024, but it will most likely take place at the beginning of September. Check your calendars next summer and be sure to line up your "date" for the dance!









St. John the Baptist School Embraces Mass Buddies

S t. John the Baptist School is carrying on a special tradition that began 15 years ago and is staying strong! The students have had reading buddies for many years, but the Mass Buddies Program was started in 2008 by Amy Liebergen and Tara Nelson. Years ago, the kindergarteners attended once a month. At that time, the kindergarten teachers focused on preparing the class to participate in the monthly Mass. Now, by using the upper level students for modeling, the kindergarten students are able to attend Mass successfully from the beginning of the school year.

The Mass Buddy Program was designed as a way to pair a kindergartener with a sixth grader in order to attend Mass. The sixth graders pick up their buddies on their way to church and then sit with them during the Mass. This year, the seventh graders have paired up with the first graders, as well as the eighth graders pairing with the preschoolers, when they attend.

This program benefits both the young students and the older grades. The middle schoolers are very proud of their leadership. When an older student is reading or singing, the young buddy will be beaming in the pew. The participation in Mass has become more reverent by the older students due to the fact that they are the models for appropriate behavior. Another great result of the program is when buddies pass each other in the hallway during the day. Both of the buddies are equally excited. The students have asked to do other activities with their Mass Buddies, because it is so meaningful across the board.

With all of these benefits, this Mass Buddy Program will undoubtedly continue to be an important part of the Mass experience at St. John the Baptist School for many years to come!





GRACE Schools Christmas Concerts & Advent Programming 2023

SCHOOL	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Father Allouez Catholic School			
- Kindergarten - Nativity Play	Fri. Dec. 15th	10:00am	St. Matthew Church
- Grades K-4	Tues. Dec. 5th	6:00pm	St. Matthew Church
- Grades 5-8/Band	Tues. Dec. 12th	6:00pm	Resurrection Church
Holy Cross Catholic School	Thurs. Dec. 7th	6:00pm	Holy Cross Church
Holy Family Catholic School			
- PK-8 Choir/Band	Tues. Dec. 12th	5:30pm	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
Notre Dame School of De Pere			
- PK & K	Fri. Dec. 15th	1:30pm	School Gym
- Grades 1-4	Thurs. Dec. 7th	6:00pm	School Gym
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School	Thurs. Dec. 14th	6:30pm	Our Lady of Lourdes Church
St. Bernard Catholic School			
- Preschool-4	Mon. Dec. 4th	6:00pm	St. Bernard Church
- Band/Choir	Mon. Jan. 8th	6:00pm	School Gym
St. John the Baptist School	Thurs. Dec. 14th	9:00am 6:00pm	School Gym School Gym
St. John Paul II Classical School			
- Chesterton Academy Advent Lessons & Carols	Sat. Dec. 16th	6:30pm	St. Norbert Abbey
- Grades PK-8	Mon. Jan. 8th	6:00pm	School Verbetan Hall
St. Thomas More Catholic School	Mon. Dec. 18th	2:00pm	Ss. Peter & Paul Church



Toy to the world

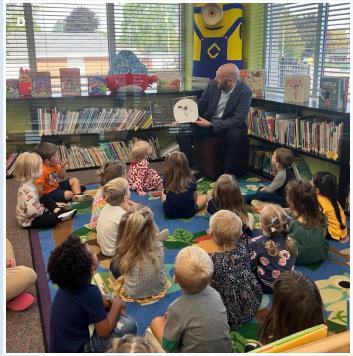


Around GRACE Schools









A. Holy Family Catholic School

Attending Mass and participating in religious events is a significant part of education at Holy Family Catholic School. K-8 students recently attended Mass at St. Elizabeth Seton with Father Dan and Sister Elena's Grade 3 class. They represented Holy Family Catholic School at a Diocesan-wide Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion celebrated by Bishop Ricken.

B. St. John the Baptist School

Mrs. Peterson's Grade 2 class from St. John the Baptist School recently practiced their nature smarts by going on a walk outside before the weather got too chilly! They are so thankful for the beautiful outdoor spaces that surround their church and school.

C. Father Allouez Catholic School

The Community Helpers Elective Class at Father Allouez Catholic School are pouring their enthusiasm and creativity into crafting fleece tie blankets. They plan to generously donate these blankets to the Ronald McDonald House, where each child is greeted with a cozy blanket, adding a sprinkle of comfort and love to their stay. These students are making the world a cozier place, one blanket at a time!

D. St. Bernard Catholic School

The preschool students at St. Bernard Catholic School had their first visit to the library this school year graced by two very special guest readers: Principal Mr. Gusloff and Assistant Principal Ms. Dudzik. Students loved hearing the silly stories that were shared! It was indeed a special time for students to see their principals in a fun light.











E. Holy Cross Catholic School

Holy Cross Catholic School Grade 5 students embarked on an epic Balloon Globe Project this Fall! Armed with scissors and their atlas, they carefully cut out continents and pasted them onto their balloon globes. Precision was key as they aimed to create an accurate representation of God's planet. The hands-on activity was not just a craft project for students; it was their passport to a world of geographical understanding, marking the beginning of their journey into the fascinating realms of our Earth's diverse landscapes and cultures.

F. St. John Paul II Classical School & Chesterton Academy

St. John Paul II Catholic School and Chesterton Academy's Walk for Virtues took place on Friday, October 13, this year. The Walk serves to bring the students and staff together in prayer, song, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament annually. The morning began with Holy Mass followed by a procession in the neighborhood around the school. Each grade level represented a different virtue on their banner, which included faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, humility, perseverance, and wisdom.

G.Notre Dame of De Pere Catholic School

Notre Dame of De Pere Catholic School recently had a visit from the De

Pere Fire Rescue Department! They came to talk to the second graders about fire safety and reminded everyone to have a safety plan at home. Students were also able to meet the newest member of the department, Stanley the therapy dog! It was a fun and eventful day learning about safety and getting to make a new furry friend.

H. St. Thomas More Catholic School

St. Thomas More Catholic School had a wonderful Hispanic Heritage celebration this year! There was an amazing talent show highlighting the students' many talents. Several families contributed delicious food to share. Achievements and contributions that the Hispanic-American community have made to the United States – and the Green Bay community in particular – were honored, as well. It was a special day!

I. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

Our Lady of Lourdes students recently had the opportunity to participate in the All School Mass coordinated by the Diocese of Green Bay and hosted at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. After Mass, the students had the opportunity to explore the Shrine grounds before returning to school. The Mass was live streamed for the students at all Catholic Schools throughout the Diocese of Green Bay who were unable to attend!





Important Dates

gracesystem.org/about-us/calendar

December 22-29, 2023: No School – Christmas Vacation

January 1, 2024: No School -

New Year's Day

January 2, 2024: Classes Resume January 15, 2024: No School – Teacher In-Service – MLK Jr Day

February 9, 2024: No School –

GRACE In-Service

February 23, 2024: Early Dismissal –

Teacher In-Service – End of 2nd Trimester

February 29, 2024: Evening Parent/

Teacher Conferences

March 1, 2024: Early Dismissal – Afternoon Parent/Teacher Conferences

March 4-8, 2024: No School -

Spring Break

March 29, 2024: No School -

Good Friday



April 1, 2024: No School –

Easter Monday

April 19, 2024: No School -

Teacher In-Service

May 10, 2024: Early Dismissal -

Teacher Workday

(Weather Make-Up Day If Needed)

May 27, 2024: No School -

Memorial Day

June 7, 2024: Early Dismissal -

Last Day of School

June 10: Teacher Workday

Calendar Raffle

Tickets for the 2024 GRACE Calendar Raffle are available for purchase through Sunday, December 31. Multiple drawings are scheduled every Wednesday and select other days throughout the calendar. The drawings are held at the GRACE Administrative Office, 1822 Riverside Drive, Green Bay. Winners will be posted on the GRACE website and to the GRACE Facebook page on the date of drawing.

Go to https://bit.lv/2024CalendarRaffle or scan the QR code!

Weather Alerts

Each GRACE school follows the school closing or delay information from the public school district in which it is located. Stay tuned to media communications when weather conditions deteriorate.











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