

THE CCD FAMILY CONNECTION

Cooperative for Christian Development Grades 1-6

Number 6

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So much for good intentions! I've been trying to send a weekly newsletter, really. Adjusting to having a combined program with two sessions is taking a bit longer than I anticipated. All in all, though, our year is going well. Catechists are using creative methods and the children have meshed so beautifully. I think that blending our two parish programs into one has made the children aware of even more schoolmates who are Catholic. After the Christmas break, I'd like to send a survey to gather some feedback from your family.

Until then, here's a calendar update along with a few items as well as the completing of *Gift-giving Strategies of the Magi*.

New Catechist in 4A

It didn't take long to fill Renee Johnson's opening in the 4:15 fourth grade class. Pat Abbrederis, who taught in St. Joe's CCD for the past 3 years, agreed to return. Pat is a retired schoolteacher whom many of the kids know because she has volunteered in several public schools since retirement. It was our luck that I caught up with her at church and she mentioned she missed the kids. Then Renee gave me her notice. Praise God who saw our need even before we did! Thank you Mrs. Johnson for the good work you were doing in 4th grade. And welcome back Mrs. A! We're glad you said "yes."

Bad Weather Cancellation Policy

Wasn't expecting to need to remind you about the area snow policy just yet, but last week proved me wrong.

How do I know if CCD has been cancelled due to snow or other inclement weather?

- If school is cancelled, CCD is cancelled.
- Listen to local radio stations.
- Call the office — x114 - listen to the message.

City parishes follow this policy:

If school cancels all classes or after-school activities, we cancel. If wind chill is minus 20 or colder, we cancel.

If school doesn't cancel, but the weather turns bad later in the day, coordinators will keep on top of weather reports and communicate with one another. We will decide together whether or not to cancel. That decision will be made by 2:30 p.m. and messages will be put out.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Dec. 27 – No CCD, Christmas Break

Jan. 3 – No CCD, Catechist Meeting – St. Joe's center
6:00 soup's on
6:30 meeting begins

Jan. 10 CCD session

Jan. 17 CCD session

Jan. 24 CCD session
We will hold prayer award ceremonies at 5:15 and 7:30. Children who have passed one or more prayer levels will receive ribbons. Parents are invited to attend.

Jan. 31 CCD session

Notification of Absence

Families, you have been very good about notifying the office when your child will be absent. Just a note, though. Phone calls should be made before class begins if at all possible. Leave a message. The answering machine at St. Steve's sometimes garbles the messages, so forgive us if we make a safety check call even though you left a message.

Also, I don't check e-mails after 3:30 as I'm busy getting ready for Assembly. If you can't e-mail sooner it's best to just call

Gift-giving Strategies of the Magi

from an article by Mary Sperry in *Our Sunday Visitor Weekly*

In our last newsletter, we began to look at Sperry's idea of using the gifts of the three wise men to enhance our own gift-giving strategies. On Dec. 3, I wrote about the comparison of giving gold to our giving of service. Today we'll equate the gifts of frankincense and myrrh to gifts of enrichment and gifts to be used.

Gifts of enrichment

Jesus is priest, prophet and king. Frankincense is an appropriate gift for a priest. The smoke rising from the burning incense symbolizes prayers rising to God. Both in Jesus' time and today, priests use incense for special liturgies and benediction. We recognize Christ as the high priest, offering the perfect sacrifice to his Father. In the sacrifice of the mass, we offer our lives to the Lord. How might our gifts to someone bring enrichment rather than clutter?

Give the gift of an experience that will enrich the recipient's life.

Tickets to a show

Fare for a long-dreamed-of experience (even if it's sky-diving)

Send someone on a mission trip.

Help someone learn something new.

Pay for language classes for someone who always wanted to travel to foreign countries.

Sign someone up for extension classes to learn something that reminds them of their grandparents –

woodworking so they can use grandpa's tools, quilting so they can use that quilting frame from grandma...

Offer a monthly ride to the library.

Help someone deepen an interest.

Send a good cook to a class to learn a new technique.

Give a gift certificate for an advanced class to a dancer, swimmer, skier....

Gifts to be used

In Jesus' time, burnt offerings were made in the temple. Offerings of animals, grains or oils were consumed by the fire either in part or wholly consumed. Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice – his own life to save us. What gifts might be like burnt offerings – gifts to be used?

Give something that a family can share to bring them closer

Get a membership at a museum, a zoo,,,

Tickets to a Packers game

Replace something at the end of its useful life – one item goes out and one comes in

Exchange a favorite sweater, a much-used appliance...for a new one

Hire someone to make needed house repairs

Give something that can be wholly consumed –

Deliver a homemade meal

Present movie passes or a magazine prescription.

If you haven't finished your Christmas shopping, perhaps some of the suggestions will give you an idea.

Merry Christmas!