



NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER

From the Director's Desk

The month of December promises to be a very busy one for all of us, both children and adults alike. We will be bustling about shopping, planning, decorating, and partying. It is a joyous, yet exhausting season for most. It can be frustrating, as well, especially when trying to find the perfect gift for those on your Christmas list. In today's society we are surrounded by the attitude ME and what makes ME happy. How wonderful, indeed, this season is, as it is a season for giving and doing for the good of others instead of me, me, me! Therein is the challenge for those of us with little ones, who, by nature, are ego centered. Since it is true that children learn much from the actions and attitude (and gratitude) of the adults around them, we might consider the following Christmas gift suggestions:

- To an enemy, forgiveness.
- To an opponent, tolerance.
- To a friend, our heart.
- To others, service.
- To all, charity.
- To oneself, respect.
- To every child, a good example.

Christmas day is a day of joy and charity. May God make you very rich in both this holiday season and throughout the year. And may you pass that gift on to your children in abundance. Christmas blessings to you and your family from all of us here at Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program.

News from the Threes

There is magic all around us these days! Our school is beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Our three year olds will be working on special Christmas presents for Mom and Dad. Christmas decorations, both for home and school, will keep our children very busy in these fun filled weeks. Hopefully, Santa will stop by for a short visit on the Feast of Saint Nicholas. Our children are excited to sit on his lap and give him their wish list. If your child does not want to sit on Santa's lap., he/she will never be forced. Our December themes are: Advent, Saint Nicholas, and Christmas. The three year old teachers and assistants wish you a Merry Christmas and hope you all have a happy and peaceful holiday with your families.

December Themes for Threes:

- Advent, Nativity, Christmas, Ornaments, Stockings, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Las Posados
- Number's 9, 10 and 11.
- Colors: red and green
- Shape: star
- Community Helper: Clergy, Postman, Sales Person and Delivery Person.
- Activities: A Visit with St. Nicholas, Santa's Workshop, Christmas Performance.



News from the Fours

It's the most wonderful time of the year! It is so wonderful for the four year old teachers and assistants to share in the excitement and anticipation of the Christmas season with your child! Their Christmas is always merrier and brighter because they get to share the joy of the season with your child. Christmas is a busy time of the year and your children will be busy all month long making ornaments and decorations for your home, that we are sure you will cherish for years. They will also be making a very special gift for each of you. The month of December is full of so much fun and wonder that we are all dizzy and dancing with delight. Our December themes are: Advent, Christmas, Gingerbread, Senses, Saint Nicholas and Winter. The four year old teachers and their assistants wish each of you a Christmas filled with blessings, love and joy. May the New Year bring you peace and happiness too.

December Themes for Fours:

- Letter: Jj, Kk, Ll
- Color: Green, Red and Purple
- Community Helper: Postman, Clergy, Sales Person and Delivery Person
- Numbers: 10, 11, 12
- Shapes: Star,
- St. Nicholas, Christmas, Winter, Advent, Nativity, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Los Pasados.
- Activities: A Visit from St. Nicholas, Santa's Workshop, Christmas Pageant.



Saint Nicholas:

Quite a few people believe that there's too much Santa in Christmas. Many equate Santa with commercialism. I think they're right. But I like to believe there's a bit more to jolly old St. Nick than shopping malls would have you believe. The character of Santa Claus is copied from the life of a real person, a saint named Saint Nicholas. Saint Nicholas was a Christian saint—and he was very REAL. He was the bishop of a city named Myra in Turkey in the early part of the 4th century.

The most common story told about St. Nicholas has to do with three young sisters who were very poor. Their parents were so poor that they did not have enough money for the daughters to get married. Every young girl needed money to pay for their wedding and to set up house for themselves. Nicholas heard about this family and wanted to help them, but he did not want anyone to know that he was the one who was helping them. Saint Nicholas climbed up on their roof three nights in a row and threw gold coins down their chimney so they would land in the girls' stockings, which had been hung by the fire to dry. After, two of the daughters had been able to marry because of the money mysteriously appearing in their stockings. Their father was determined to find out who was helping them, so he hid behind the chimney the next night. When he was discovered, Bishop Nicholas asked the father not to tell anyone else, but the father wanted everyone to know what a good and generous man the Bishop was, so he told everyone he knew. That is how we have the story and the tradition of stockings full of gifts today.

Add gifts to the poor to your list of Christmas to do's. Help your children make presents for others to stress the giving side of things. Even little things like baking cookies for Santa and leaving carrots for the reindeer, can show them how wonderful the anticipation of giving can be.



Santa's about giving, hope, and faith. Keep him that way in your household and he just may begin to grow on you. Francis P. Church described Santa of today the best: Little eight year old Virginia O'Hanion of 115 West 95th Street in New York wrote to the New York Sun in 1897, and said that some of her friends said Santa does not exist. She went on, Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so. Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?" Francis P. Church, the Editor wrote: Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary the world would be if there were not a Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were not Virginia. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We would have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Important Dates

- December 1: First Sunday of Advent
- December 2 - 6: Registration for New Families
- December 2 - 6: Santa's Workshop 9 - 11 a.m.
- December 3: Staff Meeting 8 a.m. PTA 9 a.m.
- December 5: A Visit From Saint Nicholas 9:30 a.m.
- December 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- December 10 & 12: Parent Teacher Conferences
Dismissal 11:30am
NO PM Classes
- December 17: Christmas Pageant 4's
Christmas Presents!
Group A: 9:15
Gallin, Gerardi, Ledesma
Group B: 10:30 Hughes, Utschig
- December 19: Christmas Performance 3's 9:30 a.m.
- December 18: Secret Santa Breakfast for Teachers
- December 20: Early Dismissal for Christmas Holiday
11:30 NO PM CLASSES
- December 23-January 1: Christmas Recess
- January 2: School Resumes



Advent

The first Sunday of Advent is almost here. It is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming, or birth of Jesus Christ. Some of us have dusted off our advent wreaths, bought new candles and prepared to begin the celebration. Many of us, however, are new to this celebration and aren't sure what to do, especially if you are celebrating with children, who may be a little uncertain what to do to make this a fun and instructive time without entering into the consumer frenzy which is the secular celebration. You can find many Advent Activities at CatholicMom.com.

Santa's Secret Workshop

We are excited to announce our annual PTA sponsored Christmas workshop for our preschoolers. Santa elves will greet all shoppers to the workshop from 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. from December 2nd to December 6th. Children and families can come and select Christmas presents for their family, friends, and even pets. Come check out the great selection, adorable gifts, and child-friendly pricing. If desired, we will provide "shopper helpers" to walk your child through the workshop. Savings abound! Order forms will be coming home shortly.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Sunday, December 8th is the commemoration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, whereby, Saint Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived Our Lady. Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin. Our great country is placed under her protection, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, and the cathedral in Washington, D.C., dedicated to our Blessed Mother is truly a magnificent structure that honors her.



Pre School Christmas Program and Pageant

Parents, family members, and friends are cordially invited to our preschool Christmas Program and Pageant. The dates are as follows:

- December 17th : Christmas Pageant
(Fours) Group A: 9:15 Group B: 10:30
"Christmas Presents"
- December 19th: Christmas Performance (Threes) 9:30 a.m.

Up and Coming

- January 2: School Resumes
- January 7: Staff Meeting 8 a.m. PTA 9 a.m.
- January 10: Christmas Party for Teachers
Early Dismissal at 11:30 a.m. NO PM Classes
- January 20: Martin Luther King Day - No School
- January 27 - January 31:
Scholastic Book Fair 9 - 11 a.m.
Mystery Reader's Week for Grandparents
- January 28: Pajamarama Day
- January 29: Grandparent's/VIP Day 9:30 a.m. (3)
- January 30: Grandparent's/VIP Day 9:30 a.m. (4)



School Closings

In the event of severely inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, school may be closed or the starting time delayed. The same conditions may also necessitate an early dismissal. School closing, delayed start time or early dismissal will be:

- Posted on the scroll bar of Channel 12 News
- Contacted through Blackboard Connect phone and e-mail messaging service.

If the Harrison School District is calling for a 2 hour delay then the morning classes here at St. Gregory's will be cancelled in addition to all morning extracurricular activities. The full day programs will begin at 11:30 a.m. If the Harrison School District is closed for the day, St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program will also be closed. Reports in the morning will be between 6:30 a.m. and 8 a.m. If no report is heard it can be assumed that the school is open.

PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE RECTORY OR THE PARISH HOUSE. If you need to reach Ms. Gaudelli please use one of the following contact numbers:

- School - 835-1278
- Cell - 393-8195

Important Reminders

- Make sure that your child's extra clothes are complete and that they are appropriate for the weather. With the weather getting colder, it is imperative that your children have adequate clothing for the changing weather conditions.
- Please make sure that you send your child to school with outdoor clothing that includes a warm coat, hat, Mittens (not gloves), and boots when necessary. Make sure that all clothing is clearly marked. We do go outside every day, unless the temperature is below 30 degrees.

If your child cannot go outside, please keep him/her at home, until he/she is able to participate in all of the school activities.

- Please make sure that you arrive at school on time for drop-off and pick-up.



A Letter From Jesus At Christmas

If you look for Me at Christmas
You won't need a special star----
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.
You may not be aware of Me
Amid the celebrations---
You'll have to look beyond the stores
And all the decorations.
But if you take a moment
from your list of things to do
and listen to your heart, you'll find
I'm waiting there for you.
You're the one I want to be with,
you're the reason that I came,
And you'll find Me in the stillness
as I'm whispering your name.
Love Jesus

