

What's New at St. James

from the desk of Ms. Saunders, March 5, 2021

March is the Month of St. Joseph

The Church traditionally dedicates the month of March to the special veneration of St. Joseph, whose feast day is March 19th. "He was chosen by the eternal Father as the trustworthy guardian and protector of his greatest treasures, namely, his divine Son and Mary, Joseph's wife," says St. Bernardine of Siena. "He carried out this vocation with complete fidelity until at last God called him, saying 'Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.'" Due to St. Joseph's leadership of the Holy Family, he has been declared the protector and patron of the universal Catholic Church.

Catholic Liberal Education/Classical Education Recap--Parent Meeting, February 25, 2021

As many of you know, last Thursday, St. James hosted an informational meeting which was designed to introduce background in Catholic Liberal Education (or classical education), presented by ICLE (Institute for Catholic Liberal Education) representative, Colleen Richards. Also speaking and providing clarification of our curriculum initiative was Ann Lachowitzer, current LeBlond principal and incoming St. Joseph Catholic Schools Partnership President. Mrs. Lachowitzer has first-hand knowledge surrounding the implementation of a classical curriculum. We are thrilled to have the chance to gain in wisdom from Mrs. Lachowitzer's experience. We are appreciative of both of our speakers, but I feel that there are still a lot of unanswered questions and unaddressed concerns. Following are a few thoughts to consider.

In past years, St. James has experienced a great deal of staff turnover. This turnover in both teaching staff and administration has resulted in learning gaps. Benchmark data and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) results have not been as high or as consistent as we would like. It is clear to me that our students need more foundational instruction. Retaining teachers that have previously been hired will go a long ways toward improving this. In more recent years, we have seen some gains in this area. It is my view that our students in grades K-4, are beginning to reap the benefit of teachers who have chosen to stay at St. James. A curricular change at this juncture provides our teachers the chance to come together to improve their individual classroom instruction from a school wide perspective. All teachers will be studying ways to teach our kids how to think more critically and in greater depth across all grades levels. Statistics show that student performance and test results will improve with

the establishment of classical education. A continued concentration on reducing staff turnover will only make these gains greater.

Classical education refers to authoritative, traditional, enduring, and excellence in education. With the implementation of this initiative, St. James will become the third school in the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese to be classified as a classical school. St. Regis Academy is located in south Kansas City, and St. Charles Borromeo Academy is located in Gladstone. We will be a nice addition in that we will geographically span the Diocese. The process of collaborating has already begun among the three schools. Both principals of these schools have reached out to me. I will be traveling very soon to see what their curriculum and text book situations look like, so that we can gather our own ideas to build ours. In August, a plan is in place to bring teachers from all three schools together to get to know one another and to provide a chance for teachers to ask questions and help one another to better understand classical education. I am very excited about the chance for our teachers to have these conversations and this extra support that they can use to improve their own instruction. I would also like to take teachers this fall to these other schools so that they can observe classical classrooms in action.

As of right now, we do not have a detailed implementation plan, but we are in the beginning stages of building one. Nothing is set in stone, but I am anticipating that we will start with history across the building at the beginning of next school year. Other content area instruction will remain the same as it currently is. After teachers become more comfortable with classical instruction in their history classes, we will move to other content areas. I feel like the next logical step will be the addition of literature and reading instruction. Latin will also factor in at some point after the implementation of history. Once we experience success in these areas, other more technical classes like science and math will follow. I am hopeful that we will have a solid framework within three years. I believe that we need to be purposeful in our implementation and to give teachers the chance to grow in comfort and confidence. Collaboration within the building as well as with the other Diocesan classical schools will be a key part of our growth.

We are so fortunate to have such caring and hard-working teachers at St. James. They have already begun working very hard to begin the learning process about not only what Catholic liberal education is but how they can apply it to their own classrooms. The booklet, "The Introduction to Classical Education: A Guide for Parents" by Christopher Perrin makes a very powerful statement: "Students need academic discipleship. To this end, classical (Catholic) educators cannot simply teach subjects; they must teach students made in the image of God. As teachers, they are also shepherds." It is our job to give our students the very best education we possibly can. It is our job to help our students reach their faith and academic potentials to the best of our ability. I believe that Catholic liberal education, or classical education, is the perfect tool for this.

I strongly encourage each of you to contact me at any time to discuss any comments, concerns, or questions that you have. I am learning about this just like the rest of the staff, but I will do my very best to find the answers you need. I am dedicated to the future of St. James, and I am excited by the possibilities that I see. I am grateful for the blessing that God has given me in allowing me to serve the students and families of St. James.

Email: jsaunders@saintjamescatholic.school

Office phone: 816-238-0281

Cell: 660-483-0627



Shout Out to LeBlond Dance Team and Girls' Basketball

A big shout out to the LeBlond Dance Team for winning state three years in a row! Impressive! St. James is proud of Emma Weiland, senior, and Paige Perry, sophomore, for representing us so well! Great job!!!!

We are also excited that the LeBlond Girls' Basketball team will advance to Elite 8 play. The Lady Eagles will play Saturday, March 6th at 1:00 p.m., in the Class 2 State Quarterfinals at the LeBlond Grace Gym. This will be the first time since 1994 that the Lady Eagles have advanced to quarterfinal play. We are especially proud of junior varsity players Kenzie Duke and Olivia Flores and varsity team member Kyla Conard! Thank you so much for representing St. James.

We are so proud of all of our former St. James students.

#oneteamonefamily

#itsagreatdaytobeaneagle

School Store

If you would like to purchase any St. James apparel, please click on this link.

https://stores.inksoft.com/st_james_stjoseph/shop/home

Upcoming Dates

Trash Bag Monday Due. March 4

LeBlond/St. James Spirit Jeans Day. March 5

Pay for Jeans. March 8

End of Third Quarter. March 12

Day Light Savings Day. March 14

First Day for Shorts. March 15

Optional Parent/Teacher Conferences. March 18 (Watch for sign up form to come home)

St. Joseph's Day, No school. March 19

Iowa Testing. March 22-31

Yearbook Order Forms Due. March 26

Easter Break. April 1-9

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen.




St. James Catholic School


 Facebook


"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:32

 120 Michigan Avenue

 (816) 238-0281

 jsaunders@saintjamescatholic...

 saintjamescatholic.school/

