



Immaculate Conception Faith Formation Newsletter — May 2017

Do the best you can. Everybody goes through difficulties with parenting. We all go through the joys of it and we go through the difficulties of it. It's the greatest journey. *-Author Unknown*

Grade 1:

This has been an amazing year for me, and hopefully for your children as well. The past few months have been filled with a lot of information (and questions) as we started our Lent Season into Easter. The children learned about the most important time of our church calendar. They made Lent Journals in the beginning of Lent to learn about the season and its significance. They made Triduum mobiles to learn about Jesus' last days, and of course, Easter. The children were taken to church to learn about the Stations of the Cross. Last week, the children watched a special video commemorating the 100th anniversary of the sighting of Our Lady in Fatima, Portugal. Afterward, they were taken up to the church to pray the Rosary. They expressed a great deal of interest in this and instructions were sent home with them. Please find the time to do this with them every so often as it is an integral part of their Faith Formation.

It has been an amazing year for me teaching your children and guiding them in the path of Jesus. I hope I helped strengthen their faith, and may God guide them always.

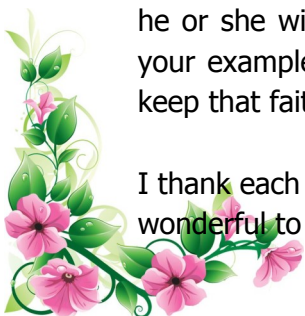
Grade 2:

I cannot believe our journey to First Reconciliation and First Communion is just about over. In one week our children will be making First Communion, and what a journey it has been! You should be very proud of your children as they have worked very hard this year, studying, learning their prayers, making their chalices, learning about the different things in our church, how to act and participate in Mass and learning their songs. They made First Penance, a huge step in their life, and how well they all did! You should be so proud of them!

This week we saw a beautiful movie about Our Blessed Mother at Fatima. Then we went upstairs to church to pray the Rosary for the reparation of sins and peace in the world. It was wonderful to hear all their voices rising up to the Lord in sincerity. They brought papers home with them explaining how to say the Rosary and the words of the prayers so they could continue to pray the Rosary at home as Our Blessed Mother requested of us. Please set aside some time at least once a week to say the Rosary as a family together.

It is so important that you, as parents, will continue to bring your child to Mass each weekend so he or she will continue to receive Jesus often and recognize the importance of worship through your example. It is only through your faith that they will grow stronger in theirs. Please help to keep that faith going.

I thank each and every one of you for all your support and help this year. You have all been so wonderful to me. God bless all of you. See you in Church!





Grade 3:

Our 3rd Grade Faith Formation journey continued onward to the Lenten passage preparing us for Easter. We learned about the symbols of Lent: ashes for sorrow of sin, holy water for belonging to God through Baptism, cactus for the desert, candle for prayers, and purple for Lent. Our class made prayer banners to remind us to *Pray, Fast, and Give*. We discussed a diorama to make of the Pilgrimage Journey to Jerusalem. Baptism, Penance, and Eucharist are especially important sacraments during Lent. Baptism cleanses, Penance strengthens, and the Eucharist nourishes us with Christ's Body and Blood. Our families and fellow parishioners were invited to pray the Stations of the Cross with Grades 1 through 5. We are always eager to share our faith!

We can choose to love God, our loving Father. His arms are always open to us in His willingness to forgive us when we are truly sorry. Our class learned about sin, both venial and mortal. We shared stories of people forgiving one another. The sacrament of Penance has several parts: examining our conscience, contrition, confession, penance, and absolution. Penance is a celebration of God's love for us that we can celebrate with the community, individually, or both!

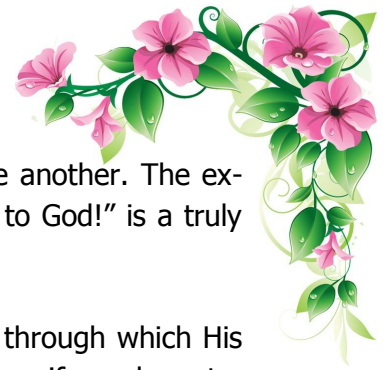
Jesus cared for and healed the sick. The Church continues this in the Anointing of the Sick. Our class learned about the oil of the sick, used to anoint the sick for the healing power of the Holy Spirit. This sacrament is for the whole Church to pray together for the elderly, sick and others in need. As Catholics, we believe in eternal life with God. With a Funeral Mass, the Church thanks God for the life of a person who died. Everyone who has died in faith will celebrate eternal life with Christ in heaven.

The Triduum, or Three Days, celebrates that Jesus passed from death to life. The Third Graders discussed symbols of new life and created representative pictures. We learned about Holy Thursday and the First Eucharist, Good Friday – the death of Jesus, and Easter Saturday, "Christ is our light"! The Easter Season is our celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. Our class assembled "Amazing Grace" craft kits. His grace and our salvation are truly amazing!

Together, with Grades 1 through 5, we shared the story of Our Lady of Fatima through a beautiful video. "The Day the Sun Danced" revealed the true courage, faith, and strength of Lucia, Francesco, and Jacinta to tell Our Lady of Fatima's message to the whole world. Our Lady stressed the importance of saying the rosary, revealed the existence of Purgatory, the dangers of hell, and to pray for repentance and the conversion of sinners. Our class joined Grades 1 through 4 in learning how to recite the rosary using rosary beads.

Now as our 3rd Grade Faith Formation draws to an end, we will continue to travel onward in the footsteps of Jesus. Let us share the Good News of Jesus! As Jesus and His disciples lived out the Good News, we too can continue to do so through our own efforts and also with our families, parish family, and community. Together we can live the good News and continue to





grow as His disciples, living out what we have learned, and respecting one another. The expression, "Our talents are God's gift to us; how we use them are our gifts to God!" is a truly insightful one!

By using our God given talents we become beacons of His light; doorways through which His love can shine through! We can open those doorways and light those beacons if we chose to. As Jason Gray sings out, "We bring the kingdom come." in his beautiful and inspiring song *With Every Act of Love*. Check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0JYr7pqNIg>

Thank you for entrusting your precious ones with me! We've shared a wonderful journey together. God Bless and Happy Upcoming Summer!

Grade 4:

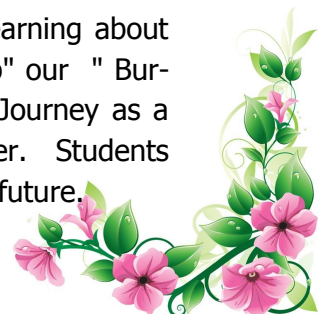
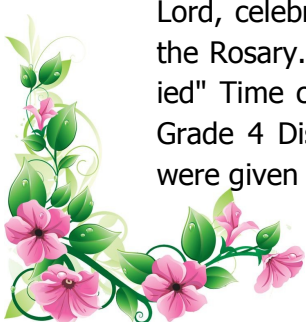
It is with mixed emotions that I prepare this last newsletter for our 4th Grade Faith Formation Class. It is so hard to believe our time together is ending. We had a great year filled with many wonderful memories.

Congratulations to our students and their families for making our program a priority in your lives. The majority of students were in attendance for most of our sessions with our class achieving Perfect Attendance on numerous occasions. We are so grateful for your support and dedication.

As we conclude our year, I am also happy to say that we have completed our studies of the Ten Commandments and our 4th grade curriculum. The remaining units focused on the Seasonal Chapters of Lent, Palm Sunday, The Triduum, The Easter Season, and the Resurrection of Our Lord. We also discussed our responsibilities in our faith journey. These final chapters made us aware of OUR role in the future of OUR Church.

Throughout Lent and this Easter Season, we had the opportunity to share many interesting experiences. We celebrated the Feast Days of St. Patrick and St. Joseph by hearing about their lives and enjoying some treats traditionally associated with both Saints. We learned about the Last Supper and the Jewish Celebration of Passover. We got to see a Seder Plate and taste matzos. To more fully understand the last days of Jesus, we participated in the Stations of the Cross. In Church, along with Father Leo and members of our community, we followed the footsteps and Sacrifice of Our Lord.

Our final classes found us making projects designed to relate Spring to the Resurrection of Our Lord, celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Blessed Mother at Fatima, and learning about the Rosary. Students were encouraged to explore their progress as we "Dug Up" our "Buried" Time capsules from the Fall, made booklets that contain "A Record of My Journey as a Grade 4 Disciple" and were asked to complete a reflection of our time together. Students were given the opportunity to choose the highlights and offer suggestions for the future.





On a personal note, many of you know that I will be retiring this year. I would like to thank Father Leo, Sister Susanne, Mrs. Lucivero, my colleagues, and all the parents and students for this truly rewarding experience. It was my honor to serve in this program and a privilege to work with so many wonderful people. I know my personal journey of faith has been enriched by sharing this time with all of you.

I thank God for calling me to be a part of the Faith Formation Program here at Immaculate Conception Church in Norwood. I have been blessed to be a part of your lives. I look forward to seeing you in Church and around our community. Please know that you will always have a special place in my heart.

May God Bless You All...

Grade 5:

The fifth grade has been talking primarily about respecting and loving God, each other and themselves. According to our faith's teaching we are called to love one another, forgive one another, and be a true support system, always guiding each other to the light of Christ. We have used our creative minds to develop a skit that plays out the selfless love of our Faith Formation teachers. Writing the skit was truly a group effort! Through this creative art form we were able to express our admiration and respect for all that our catechists do. This skit shows the selfless and unconditional love shown to them by their teachers, past and present. I am so proud of the 5th grade for coming up with the plot of this skit and realizing in their daily lives how many examples of Jesus' love they encounter and how they can also bring that love to one another.

**There is no need to get to a place of prayer.
Pray wherever you are.**

