Catholic Education & Mental Health Week

Catholic Education Week and Mental Health Week take place from May 2nd to May 6th. This year’s theme “Catholic Education: Rebuild, Restore, Renew Together.” Throughout this week staff will be providing a variety of opportunities to celebrate and learn more about Catholic Education and mental health strategies.

For more resources regarding mental health please visit: https://smho-smsm.ca/covid-19/parents-and-families/

Mental health resources are available to students and families through Kids Help Phone, which offers 24/7 counselling and referral services across the province. To use this free resource, children can call 1-800-668-6868, or text CONNECT to 686868.

School Newsletters and Cash on Line

Our website has many links. Not only will school newsletters be online, but you can also reach the following links: Principal Message, School Council and much more.

Please be sure to sign up for our newswire service. Information about this is included in your family package you received. This is the direction our school will continue to take in helping us cut down in paper costs and to be environmentally friendly.

Dates to Remember

May 15—1st Communion
May 18—Track/Field
May 18—Confirmation
May 23—Victoria Day (No School)
May 24—EQAO begins

For more information regarding the new EQAO assessment please click on the following link: https://www.eqao.com/about-eqao/media-room/videos/information-parents-guardians-about-primary-junior-assessments/
Welcome to Kindergarten Night

On Monday May 30th, 2022 we will be hosting our JK Orientation with our newest families to St. Teresa of Avila School. We are looking forward to meeting everyone! More information will be sent shortly to families who have registered.

Congratulations to our Beacon of Hope Recipient Carson W.

The Beacon of Hope initiative is a Board award given to a junior or intermediate student who is an ‘unsung hero’ at their school. These individuals are contributors to the life of the school, they come to school each day ready to give it their best and add to the positive climate of our schools. The winners give witness to the virtues. Carson will be recognized at our Grade 8 Graduation ceremony. Congratulations Carson!

Umbrella Project

Congratulations to our April winners for Self-efficacy. You did an outstanding job of modeling this skill. Our April winners are: Orion, Cameron, Wyatt M., Finn, Lucas, Ellie, Chester, Chloe, Harlow, Sophia W., Gabrielle, Breea, Matteo, Ethan L., Dihain, Tristan, Ethan K., Liam, Judah, Hannah, Weston I., Audrey, Eden R., Stella, Emily M., Alex L., Jordyn, Kelan, Datsun, Casey. Our May focus is Optimism.

Mother’s Day Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for the love of mothers you have given us. Whose love is so precious that it can never be measured. Whose patience seems to have no end.

May we see your loving hand behind them and guiding them.

We pray for those mothers who fear they will run out of love, time and patience.

We ask you to bless them with your own special love.

Amen

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**Impromptu** | **1st** | **2nd** | **3rd**  
---|---|---|---
Grade 8 | Alexa G | Olivia W | Meher K  
Grade 7 | Victoria K | Jacob K | Nandana  
Grade 5 | Brinley F | Luke K | Norah M  
First Year of French | Libby K |  |  

**Prepared Speech**  
Grade 8 | Alexa G | Meher  
Grade 7 | Victoria | Jacob | Emily M  
Grade 6 | Adelaide D. | Emmett S. | Eden R  
Grade 5 | Ethan K | Harjaap S. | Brinley F  
First Year of French | Libby K | Judah D | Olivia B
Mrs. Reinhart’s Grade 1 Class

On Tuesday April 26th, the Grade ones met with Mrs. Miltenburg for a guided tour of our church to better understand the symbolism and the meaning of Mass. Students were invited to look around and ask questions.

Mrs. D’Arcy’s Grade 8 Class

Our Grade 8 class had a wonderful experience during their Mount Mary retreat. Students participated in faith and community building activities. A highlight of the retreat was their hike to the stunning waterfalls.

Congratulations to our OECTA Young Writers

We had 11 entries into the OECTA Young Writers competition, and 4 of our students had work advance to the provincial level! These students were:

Alexa G.
Meher K.
Paige J.
Daniela V.

Remember the Writers’ club continues to meet on Wednesdays at noon.

The Passion

Congratulations to Mrs. Jakeman’s class on their outstanding presentation of the Saint Luke Passion. All your hard work and dedication really paid off. Some students played as many as 3 different roles. While there were too many excellent performances to name, Tyler V. will be remembered for his portrayal of Jesus. Many thanks to Mrs. Russell and her class choir who contributed significantly to the overall story. Thank you, Mr. G for being the voice of God and Simon of Cyrene. Thank you also to Mrs. Brown’s class for providing angels. It was wonderful for us to be able to be together again at the church for such a special occasion.
Building A Bridge Within Our Community

St. Teresa of Avila School decided to build a bridge with Tiny Homes. Jesus was a carpenter and did outreach work with the homeless. St. Teresa of Avila, challenged us to work with our hands as God’s children.

We decorated our bridge with our St. Teresa of Avila motto: “Yours are the Hands”. We feel that Tiny Homes is a role model for this. We also had every student in the school contribute to the decoration. They each picked a colour and made a dot with a Q-tip, creating confetti out of the hands to spread good work, like confetti.

During our Lenten season we collected offerings of gift cards (Dollarama, Mark’s Work Warehouse and Tim Horton’s) and any donations of used cell phones.

As a school we built and stained a picnic table that the Tiny Homes community can use in their community building.

All classes planted seeds (vegetable and flower) in terra cotta pots and hand painted them to add to the landscaping of tiny homes.
May - Optimism

This month we are taking on a skill that will help us look on the bright side, even when winter oversteps its seasonal timelines. That skill is **Realistic Optimism**.

How will realistic optimism help my child?

We often hear sayings about looking on the bright side of life. Turns out that looking on the bright side can actually improve your child’s mental and physical health. Mix that with helping them have a realistic look at the obstacles they may face, and you have a strategy for success. Achieving goals can be challenging and a negative outlook can defeat children before they even get started. Learning to be realistically optimistic will help your child link their dreams to the steps they will need to take to achieve them and help them take on life with a positive attitude.

**Help your child anticipate and plan for obstacles**

Obstacles become less daunting when we have thought them through and have strategies to deal with them. When your child approaches challenging situations this month, help them think through some of the obstacles they may face and potential strategies they can use to deal with them.

For example, if your child has a test at the end of the month that they are quite worried about, think through what the stress points are and then help them actively build evidence that they will be able to handle those challenges...

Busy schedule? Print out the calendar for the month and have your child block out some study times in advance so they can visualize the extra time they have to study.

Classroom too noisy? Help them build confidence working in a noisy environment by taking them out to a coffee shop a few times to do their homework and practice that skill.

Don’t like multiple choice? Get them to study by making up a multiple choice exam for you from their material. Then have a good laugh together as you try to complete their test. By tying laughter and positive feelings to that style of test they are more likely to feel positive and optimistic when they experience another similar test.

There are so many ways to prepare for obstacles in life while building confidence for the next time we may face a similar challenge. When possible, make the preparation something that will encourage a positive mood. Help your child feel empowered and optimistic by anticipating and preparing for challenges.

**Consider the way you explain your own life to your child.**

We know that children are most likely to pick up their primary parent’s explanatory style. What does that mean? That means that if you are an optimist, your kids will likely be too. If you tend to put a negative frame on your life events, your children will also learn to interpret the world this way.

This explanatory style is changeable with some easy shifts in the words you use. To build your child’s optimism and their ability to see a path through tough times, think about these two key shifts in the way you explain the world:

1. **Temporary vs. Permanent**

   When bad events feel permanent, it can hinder your child from believing they can change their circumstances. In contrast, when difficult events happen, as they will in every life, show your child that most of these are temporary and can be overcome with time. Start by avoiding “always” and “never” in your explanations. “This kind of thing always happens to me” feels pretty permanent. The more temporary your child sees challenging times to be, the more they will be optimistic for the future.
May - Optimism

2. Specific vs. general/pervasive

It’s easy to see patterns in life and group them all together but this style of explanation can leave us feeling pessimistic about our chances to make change. Try to be specific about the issues you face. For example, if someone at the office is unkind to you, try to keep the issue to that person i.e. “John was unkind to me” instead of “people are unkind to me” or “men are always like this.”

Think about this when you describe yourself too. Everyone is lazy sometimes, but when we generalize a feeling to our whole character we become less optimistic for change. For example, after a lazy day with nothing crossed off the to-do list you were hoping to accomplish, try saying “I was feeling lazy today” instead of “I am lazy.” The latter is more specific to the situation at hand and leaves room for tomorrow to be different, while the former seems unchangeable. When we see our issues as pervasive to all areas of our lives it’s hard to be hopeful for something better. The more specific we can get, the more the situation will seem like something we can overcome.

Remember, to build optimism look at your own explanations of the world and aim for temporary and specific explanations over permanent and pervasive ones. Your child will follow in your footsteps.

Teach your child to reframe challenge

Learning to see the positives in our challenges is a technique called positive reframing. This skill is critical in helping children build optimism, even when life gets rainy. The goal isn’t to find excuses for procrastination, mean behaviour or to change reality. It is to help them find the true bright spots in their difficulties, neutralize their negative feelings and beliefs, and prepare them to move forward.

How can we teach this valuable skill?

As we all come to realize when we become parents, we can’t force our children to see the world a certain way. Just putting a positive frame on their difficulties for them can backfire and make them feel like we don’t understand what they are going through. Instead of giving your own positive perspective, try these two techniques to get your children thinking about their own reframe.

1. Help your child make new observations or think about the accuracy of their limiting beliefs by asking good questions. This can help them to tell a new story about what happened to them. Here are some options:

- What was positive in the situation?
- What growth can I get from this situation? How did this event make me better?
- How can I turn this disaster into a win?
- What is the best way to act in this kind of situation?
- What went right?
- What umbrella skill can I work on building from this experience?

2. Neutralize the negative feelings with a little humour.
Before working through some of the questions for positive reframing, use a little humour to help them get into a positive state of mind. It will be much easier for them to see their situation in a new light.

See this blog for a more detailed look at coaching children through the challenges of building realistic optimism.

Until next time,

Dr. Jen, The Umbrella Project
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