



SJS Highlights

First Trimester 2019

A Note from our Principal

We kicked off the year in our newly renovated building and are excited about the improved flow of the school that has provided a more cohesive learning environment for all. Our teachers and students are enjoying the additional classrooms and overall enhancements. While there are still some finishing touches taking place, including moving the main office to the west side of the building, we are excited that our preschool classrooms moved from the church basement so all our students and teachers are finally under the same roof! We are thankful to our school and parish community for your continued generous support to make these improvements possible.



We are blessed to have Father Al Heidecke serving our parish as Pastor. He joined us this Summer from St. Joseph Parish in Manteno and was installed during a beautiful mass on September 8, 2019 by Bishop Conlon. Additionally, we welcomed Mary Ann Feeney as our Assistant Principal. She was previously the Principal at Notre Dame School in Clarendon Hills and is a wonderful addition to our administration. New teachers joining us this year include Mrs. Deneen Wojtaskiak, Middle School Science; Mrs. Maria Almeida, Spanish; Mrs. Kristen Beirne, Art; Mrs. Camille Petrick, Kindergarten Aide, and Ms. Kathleen Roe, Middle School Aide.

For the second year in a row, St. Joseph School was voted the Best Preschool in the Suburban Life 2019 Readers Choice contest! In addition, SJS was voted Best Grade School – a new category this year! We appreciate the support from our community and are grateful for our students, parents, teachers and staff for making SJS #1 in the western suburbs!



Our school is always abuzz as our students increase their knowledge through various learning methods. Whether using our new Promethean Boards, White Boards or new Wonder reading series, we strive to provide an excellent education in innovative and engaging ways in a faith-filled environment. We're excited to share with you some highlights from the first trimester. Congratulations to our teachers and students on all the progress they've made so far this year. We can't wait to see where this year takes us!

Rita Stasi
Principal

School Highlights

Preschool

The Big Move

Our preschool teachers and aides worked hard over the long Columbus Day break to move their classrooms from the Church into the School building. The students and teachers are loving the new classrooms!



Grade School

Science Days

Our Kindergartners have so much fun during Science Day each month! During the first trimester they learned about sink and float, built apple structures, tasted apples and made an apple volcano! They also did Halloween experiments including candy corn sink or float, candy pumpkin STEM towers, build-a-monster, and making slime! Thank you to our parent volunteers that help make Science Days a success!



Children's Farm Field Trip

Our Kindergartners took their learning outside the classroom when they visited the Children's Farm in Palos. The students got to experience a real working farm. They saw how the animals live, what they eat and how they feel and sound. It was a wonderful opportunity to have a hands-on experience.



Community Workers

Kindergarten had special visits from a few Community Workers including firefighter and SJS parent, Tom Farr, who taught us about fire safety, and Mrs. Boyle's dad, Dr. Balesteri, who talked about ways to stay healthy and take care of our heart.

Thankfulness Project

Our 1st graders started getting ready for Thanksgiving by reading *Thanksgiving Is* and created turkeys to show what they are thankful for.



Seed Science

In science lessons our 1st graders learned how seeds travel. They had fun exploring seeds with magnifying glasses and opening seed pods to find seeds inside!





History in Our Community

Our 2nd graders went to the Downers Grove Museum to learn more about the history of their community. They were able to see what it was like to live in the 1800's and experience some of the games kids used to play back then! In Social Studies class they compared what life was like in the past to what it is like now. To prepare for their trip to the Downers Grove museum, they researched their community beforehand and interviewed someone who has lived in Downers Grove for a long time to understand how the community has changed over time.

Agriculture in the Classroom

Mrs. DeVries from the Department of Agriculture has visited our 2nd graders a couple of times this year to teach them about agriculture. During her first visit the students learned about apples and created apple timelines. On her next visit, she taught them about pumpkins and the students made their own life cycle of a pumpkin.



Arboretum Field Trip

Our 2nd and 3rd graders went to the Morton Arboretum to learn more about ecosystems such as forest, prairie and ocean, as well as producers, consumers, photosynthesis and decomposition. They had a good time and learned a lot despite the unexpected snowy weather!



All Saints Day Saints Museum

To celebrate All Saints Day, it has become a tradition for our 3rd graders to research a saint and then create living art to display at a "Saints Museum" in the Church Hall. Through their research and respectful representation of the saints, the students were able to feel a human and spiritual connection to our beloved saints. An added feature this year was the ability, through a QR scan, to listen to a brief audio summary of each saint as read by the student representing him or her.

Google Earth & Pumpkin Globes

In Social Studies, the 3rd graders used Google Earth to identify and label all of the continents and oceans. After doing their research, they made their own pumpkin globes!



SJS Hershey Factory

As part of their social studies region tour, 4th graders worked on assembly lines making Hershey "Kisses". After they reflected on their work and discussed how machines would the work. The students have been using Google Classroom to research different regions and turn in their documents.

Silk Road

Our 5th graders traveled the Silk Road in social studies. They each came from a different city with different items to trade. They faced obstacles and could only move when their number was called while they were on their journey. They greeted each other in their native language and tried to be the first one back to their home with an item from each city.



Middle School

Hands-On History

During Social Studies, our Middle Schoolers often participate in hands-on activities to help them better visualize a particular lesson. While learning about Ancient Mesopotamia, the 6th graders simulated what happened in Ancient Mesopotamia. With a limited amount of supplies and time they had to become innovative and build levees, channels, and reservoirs in order to protect their village and farms, yet trap water to use for later. Marbles were rolled down the center aisle, which served as the river, to test their work. They learned that the Ancient Sumerians had to live near the rivers for water, as land away from it was desert. However, rivers flooded each year.



To better understand the Neolithic Age, the class was split into groups to represent hunting and gathering clans, along with one farming clan. Like people of the Neolithic Age, they hunted, gathered, and had to work together, in order to feed their clan. Questions and answers represented the food being hunted and gathered, or grown by the farmers. They left the simulation knowing why humans transitioned and civilization began.

Outdoor Ed

Many of our 6th graders went to Camp Tecumseh in Indiana for a 3-day Outdoor Ed experience where they studied and experienced Environmental Science first-hand. They enjoyed various outdoor activities including hiking, archery, canoeing, and learning about different animals and the food chain.



Rosary

It is a tradition at SJS that our 7th graders lead us in praying the rosary as a school community as we celebrate the memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. On Friday October 4th, our school community came together to pray the rosary, keeping in mind the intentions of each grade from preschool to 8th, and celebrating the Joyful Mysteries.

Cemetery Statistics

Typically our 7th graders walk to the Downers Grove Main Street Cemetery to collect data from the tombstones (names and years of birth and death). The winter-like weather on Halloween kept the group from making the trek to downtown Downers Grove, but our creative teachers prepared a make-shift cemetery around the school so the students were still able to work in groups to carefully and neatly gather their data in an organized list so they could calculate lifespans. Then they categorized the information in a frequency table and used that to create colorful histograms with descriptive titles.



Springfield

The 8th graders took a full-day field trip to Springfield, Illinois, to enhance their learning about Illinois government and Abraham Lincoln's influence upon the state and nation. After an Amtrak ride from Joliet to Springfield, the class visited several sites, including the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Old State Capitol, Lincoln's Home, and the new State Capitol where they received both private and individual tours. They also visited Oak Ridge Cemetery to visit Lincoln's Tomb and some special war memorials for Illinois Veterans.



Chicago Architectural Tour

The 8th grade class participated in an architectural day in Chicago giving them opportunities to visit iconic and unique places that make Chicago special. In addition to visiting favorites like Millennium Park and Willis Tower, students also visited The Chicago Architecture Center where they viewed the largest 3D model of Chicago and learned about the city's diverse neighborhoods. In addition, they visited The 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial which is the largest exhibition of contemporary architecture, art, and design in North America. Lastly, no day

in Chicago would be complete without a lake and river tour on the Famous Wendella Boat. The students had a memorable, fun and highly educational day.



Diocese Devotional Project

Four 8th grade students attended the training for the Diocese Devotional project. The focus this year is classroom sodalities, a special type of prayer club, to honor the Blessed Mary. With the leadership of these dedicated 8th graders, we look forward to starting this devotional project in each classroom in the coming weeks.



AROUND THE SCHOOL

Elements of Art

All of our students at SJS learn the seven elements of art. This trimester they worked on the element of color and learned about the artist Piet Mondrian. Older students learned how to blend and create secondary colors from the primary colors, then used their new knowledge to create art with color schemes. Younger classes worked with color to create festive fall art.



Dia de Los Muertos Collaboration

Grades 3-8 learned about Día de Los Muertos- The Day of the Dead - an annual event celebrated in Mexico and many countries in Central and South America. The day is all about celebrating one's ancestors. Students enjoyed an immersive learning experience through collaborative efforts in studying Dia de Los Muertos in Spanish class with Señora Maria, creating a presentation on the subject in Computers class with Mr. Christian, and creating colorful sugar skulls, tissue paper flowers and full skeletons in Art class with Mrs. Bierne. Students that celebrate Day of the Dead with their families shared their traditions and experiences in class.



After School Enrichment



This Fall we kicked off over 14 different classes in our After-School Enrichment Program and had great response from our school community. We have over 150 students participating in Enrichment classes. Some of the amazing programs we offer to our students are: Band, Violin, Cooking, Drawing, French, Advanced Spanish, Chess, Drama, Robotics, Running, Readers Theater, Math, Science and Newspaper!

Move Your Feet

On Friday, October 25th, our students walked around the St. Joseph School and Parish campus to demonstrate the importance of Catholic education for our 7th annual "Move Your Feet to Give a Child a Seat." The march is part of a widespread campaign across the Diocese of Joliet to demonstrate the importance of Catholic Education in all communities and to raise funds and awareness for Catholic education. Through this effort, our students raised \$680 for the Catholic Education Foundation!



Southpaw Strikes Out Bullying

Chicago White Sox mascot Southpaw visited SJS to host an assembly about bullying. Southpaw guided our students through the four different types of bullying: Big Mouth, Hands On, Stay Out, and Cyber. He then taught our students what they can do to prevent bullying through his 4-step PAWS method: Practice Confidence, Always Use Your Voice, Walk Away, and Stand Up For Others. The students had a ball with Southpaw to strike out bullies!

Teacher Highlights

Chicago Marathon 2.0

3rd grade teacher Mrs. Bordens and 2nd grade teacher Miss Biernat ran their second Chicago Marathon to raise awareness for those with spinal cord injuries like Mrs. Bordens' sister, Kathryn. Together, they raised \$3400 for Unite to Fight Paralysis (U2FP), an organization whose goal is to improve the lives of those living with paralysis. They crossed the finish line together at 4:47! They appreciated the support and encouragement from the SJS community before and during the race.



Family Additions

Mrs. Lyon and her husband traveled to Colombia in August to adopt their three daughters, ages 5, 7, and 8. The girls are doing well and loving school. They are a blessing and each day is filled with new excitement.

Athletics Highlights

Football

St. Joe's varsity team completed the regular season in second place with a 4-2 record. It then rolled through the playoffs before defeating St. Michael's to win the championship. The JV team finished the season with a 3-3 record before finishing on a high note with a playoff victory over Immaculate Conception.



Cross Country

Fifth-graders Marko Z. and Katie C. and sixth-grader AJ Z. all finished in the top 25 at multiple meets this fall. Marko's fastest mile time was 6 minutes, 9.4 seconds. Katie's fastest mile time was 6:34.6. AJ's fastest time for 1 ½ miles was 10:50.3. Two other St. Joe's runners – Maggie B. (fifth-grade girls) and Evan S. (sixth-grade boys) – placed in the top 25 at the Marmion Academy Co-Ed meet. Marko was St. Joe's top placer at the championship meet at Lewis University in Romeoville on Oct. 5, placing 19th among all fifth-grade boys.

Volleyball

Fifth- and sixth-grade A & B teams reached the semifinals of the end-of-season tournament. A special shout out goes to the 6B team – and coaches Grace Schamber (SJS Class of 2016) and Mary Schamber – which finished its season in first place with a 9-1 record, then took second place in the end-of-season tourney. The 5B girls finished the regular season in 2nd place. Congrats to all our volleyball teams on a great season!



Upcoming Events and Dates

11/20:	Mojo's Fundraiser
11/25:	Parent Teacher Conferences
11/25-11/29:	No School Thanksgiving Holiday
12/12:	Christmas Program
12/17:	Chipotle Fundraiser
12/20:	Early Dismissal
12/23-1/3:	No School – Christmas Break
1/6:	Classes Resume
1/12:	PreK & K Open House
1/26:	All School Open House
1/27-1/31:	Catholic Schools Week
2/1:	Fun Fair
2/8:	Father Daughter Dance
2/22:	Green & White Gala



Alumni Highlights

Metamora Redbird Golf Classic

Luke and Myles Marciniak, helped their Montini golf team take third place out of 18 schools at the Metamora Redbird Classic on September 14, 2019. Luke was a top finisher earning a 5th place finish with a 74. Myles rounded out the day with an 85!



Catholic High School Presentations



Representatives from several local Catholic high schools, including many SJS alumni, gave presentations to our 7th and 8th graders. Schools included Benet, Immaculate Conception, Montini, and St. Francis. We love when our alumni return during these visits!



Montini Homecoming

SJS alumna Kylie Boyer was crowned Homecoming Queen at Montini Catholic High School's Broncopalooza Homecoming Dance. Fellow alum, Myles Marciniak, was nominated to Homecoming Court.



Alum Goes Pro

David Edwards is playing offensive tackle in the NFL with the LA Rams. He was drafted this Spring following a successful football career at the University of Wisconsin.



Lights! Camera! Acton!

Patrick Wimp created a digital short comedy series *Brothers From The Suburbs*. The series won Best Scripted Digital Series at the Austin Film Fest, as well as, many other awards at festivals throughout the United States! Patrick accepted this award in front of the creators of *Game of Thrones*!



Most Valuable Athletes of the Week

Congrats to two SJS alumni for being voted Suburban Life's Most Valuable Female Athlete of the Week! Brenna Cohoon was voted MVA for cross country at Downers Grove South High School and Paige Pickering was voted MVA for volleyball at Montini! We are proud to call them Crusaders!

