



# SJS Highlights

Second Trimester 2020

## *A Note from our Principal*

Time flies when you're having fun and growing in knowledge! During the second trimester, we continued to get used to the new flow of the school which allows for smoother transitions between classes and fosters a greater sense of inclusion and community. Improvements to the school building are ongoing as we strive to continually enhance our learning environment. Some of the adjustments that took place during the trimester include:



- Installation of Photovoltaic solar panels on new school roof which will help St. Joseph School operate energy efficiently with the aim of zero energy usage in the new addition, decrease our energy bill and teach our students and community the benefits of conserving natural resources.
- New lighting in several areas throughout the school with additional lighting installation and improvements planned for increased energy efficiency and lower energy consumption.
- Painting of first-floor hallway between the new office and the kindergarten to better match the new section.
- Upgraded school security including installation of keycard access, security cameras in every entrance and elevator access, panic buttons in all classrooms, alert warning lights in all hallways, and double vetting of visitors at new main entrance.
- Transition of Administration to new main offices and revised drop-off and pick-up procedures.



Thank you for your continued support and patience as we adjust to the new procedures.

We celebrated a fun-filled Catholic Schools Week! Thank you to all our parents, students, teachers and staff who helped us commemorate our 110-year history of Catholic education in this community and celebrate in conjunction with the other 5,092 Catholic elementary/middle schools in America.

Many of our students participated in contests, competitions, bees, concerts, performances, and games. We commend them for their hard work, courage, and perseverance, and are proud to call them Crusaders!

Congratulations to our teachers and students on their continued progress this year. We look forward to the fun, exciting and unique ways our students grow in their faith and knowledge over the final trimester of the school year!

Rita Stasi  
Principal



## School Highlights

### Preschool

Over the last trimester, our Preschoolers have been busy learning and playing! They practiced hard and performed well at their Christmas programs, enjoyed visits from a Downers Grove Library librarian, attended specials classes including Spanish, and always enjoy open play time! Our PreK4 Plusers planted an amaryllis bulb and take turns watering and measuring the plant. The students are making predictions about when it will bloom and observations about growth and transformation.



Our PreK4 Plus and 1st grade students went on a field trip to see a special live production of *Beauty and the Beast Enchanted Holiday* at the Tivoli Theatre! The students enjoyed the fun-filled magical musical that reminded us that beauty is more than skin deep. The production had several curriculum connections including Language Arts, Music & Dance, Communication, Reading Reinforcement, Bravery, Relationships & Family.



### Grade School



#### Thanksgiving Feast

Kindergarteners held their first ever mock Thanksgiving Feast after learning all about the Pilgrims and Native Americans. Each student created a place setting for the feast at which snacks, as well as songs and prayers of Thanksgiving were shared.

#### 100th Day

On February 7th, we celebrated the 100th day of school! The students did various hand-on activities and projects to see exactly how big 100 is. What a fun day!



#### Polar Express Day and Pajama Drive

A favorite day every year for our Kindergarten students is Polar Express Day when the students (and teachers) wear their pajamas to school! The children had a blast reading the Polar Express story followed by hot chocolate and popcorn while watching the movie. Additionally, the students collected and donated new pajamas for the Scholastic Pajama Drive, which matches pajamas and books for at-risk children. It was a fun day that truly got us all into the Christmas spirit of giving.

#### Officers Patti & Verine Visit

The Kindergarten children had a visit from Officer Patti from the Downers Grove Police Department. The children loved the talking police car, and Officer Verine did a wonderful job explaining the role of police in our community. They learned how to stay safe. We loved having community helpers visit St. Joes to talk to our classes about their roles in our community.





## Hospital Visit

Continuing a long-standing tradition, our 1st graders went on a field trip to Good Samaritan Hospital to participate in the Pediatric Orientation Program, which acquaints children to the sights and procedures in a hospital setting, with the goal to ease some fears of going to the hospital. In a mock tonsillectomy, students played the roles of a patient, parents, surgeon, nurse and anesthesiologist, and saw several hospital items. An ER doctor spoke to the group about visiting the hospital and answered some very good questions. The students learned about the importance of the hospital in our community.



## STEM Fun

STEM projects are a great way to emphasize what is being learned in class. Through creativity, trial and error and teamwork, our 1st graders conduct experiments, make observations, and adjust designs to obtain desired outcomes. During the second trimester they participated in several projects including building Thanksgiving tables out of dominos and popsicle sticks; conducting experiments with water, foil and pennies to create boats to see what shape would hold the most "pilgrim" pennies before sinking; creating Santa Parachutes with a small cup, pieces of string, tape and a coffee filter; building igloos using marshmallows and toothpicks; designing and building a shovel using straws, tape and Popsicle sticks to push "snow" blocks out of the way; and moving 100 pennies from one side of a page to another by way of LEGO, cubes, straws or popsicle sticks.



## Science: Elements of Earth and Light



During their science unit on the elements of earth, our 1st graders learned about rocks and soil. They discussed how weathering wears down rocks to create sand and soil, and how living things use soil. In small groups they investigated different types of soil – humus, clay, sandy soil, potting soil, and sand. They had fun discovering the differences between the types of soil.

They also completed a unit on light where they explored with flashlights and various materials such as wax paper, foil, plastic, and cardboard to discover which were transparent, translucent or opaque. They also tested materials to see which ones reflected light the best.



## Best Part of Me

The 2nd grade wrote and published a book called "The Best Part of Me" based on a book by Wendy Ewald that was read together in class. Each student wrote about a part of their body that they love and why. They enjoyed reading the book to the Kindergarten and Preschool classes.



## Shoebox Book Reports

For a fun twist on book reports, our 2nd graders read chapter books and picked a scene to depict in a show box. They shared with the class what the scene was and why they chose it.





### Christmas Café

A favorite tradition at SJS is the Christmas Café, hosted by our 2nd graders. This year marked the 6th annual Café where 2nd graders apply, interview, and train for their positions in the student-run “restaurant”. As always, it was a huge success and the family patrons enjoyed the experience. All proceeds from the Café were used to purchase toys, books, cake mix, frosting, candles, plates, napkins, balloons, streamers, and other party

decorations to help underprivileged children in DuPage and Kane Counties celebrate their birthdays. Through the Humanitarian Service Project, we helped create “Birthday Boxes” and “Party in a Bag” for children in need. This was a great way to tie in our virtues study of Gratitude and Generosity.



### Producer and Consumer Fair

During Social Studies, the 2nd graders held a producer and consumer fair. The weeks leading up to the fair, the students had the opportunity to earn “Crusader Coins” that they spent at the fair on goods and services made or provided by their classmates. The students were required to create a poster to show what they were selling/offering as a service, make an open/closed sign, create a business card and write a brief explanation about their good or service and how they came up with the price for it.



### Generosi-TEA

During the month of December our school community focused on the virtue of Generosity – giving without counting the cost. Our 3rd graders hosted a “Generosi-TEA” party! Before the tea, Mrs. Bordens and Mrs. Limberg discussed and used fun activities to help students understand courtesy, etiquette, manners, and why being a generous person is important. In order to put their good manners into practice, the students hosted the tea party, where they could each invite

one guest. The students and their special guests had a great time! To encourage acts of Generosity, the students donated a new teddy bear for the Teddy Bear Brigade, which helps provide comfort through stuffed animals to children in war-torn regions and in areas affected by natural disasters. This program is part of the Gleaning For The World Organization, an international humanitarian relief organization. The teddy bears served as the centerpieces for the Generosi-TEA party and were then boxed and donated.



### National Hour of Code

Our 3rd graders participated in the National Hour of Code by focusing on sequencing and functions using the website Kodable.

### Science: Human Body & Planet Research

Our 3rd graders have enjoyed reading some of the articles in a NY Times-published kids’ section about the human body and learning more about the systems that make our bodies function. They also started researching planets for upcoming reports.







### Southeast Region Tour

For stop three of their Southeast region tour, our 4th graders visited Jamestown, VA. They played the *Jamestown Survival* board game where only a few made it and some never made it to the end of the game! The Southeast tour also included a discussion of music. They listened to jazz, blues, Cajun, Dixieland jazz, and bluegrass! They learned about BB King and Louis Armstrong.



### Argonne National Lab Field Trip

5th graders visited Argonne National Laboratory, one of the U.S. Department of Energy's largest national laboratories for scientific and engineering research. Our students participated in the "Build a Better Battery" workshop, where they were able to experiment with different variables to create the best possible battery to power a small race car. It was a truly memorable experience for our students!

### Roller Coaster Persuasive Ad

5th graders completed their unit on persuasive writing. To prepare for this unit, students learned about the history of roller coasters, how they work, and the vocabulary words associated with roller coasters. They were then tasked with creating roller coasters by either drawing or constructing them. After researching roller coasters, they focused on various persuasive techniques in order to write a persuasive advertisement to convince the reader to come to their amusement park and ride their newest and greatest roller coaster. After putting the elements together, they completed their persuasive ads and visual displays. The end products were showcased at the All-School Open House in January.



## Middle School



### Sedimentary Rock Simulation

6th graders simulated the formation of sedimentary rocks. To do this they used two slices of bread, a pen cap, coin, and paperclip and compacted them together to simulate the millions of years it took to create sedimentary rocks. The compaction was in the form of science books and the students standing on the bread.

### Parts of Mass

Our 6th graders worked one-on-one with the 2nd graders to teach them about each part of the Mass. The 6th grade did a jigsaw in which each student was responsible to thoroughly know one part of the Catholic Mass. First, they did research. Second, they put together a slide presentation, where the entire class collaborated and created the presentation. Finally, after revisions and practice, each 6th grader paired up with a 2nd grader to help teach them about the Mass, especially about what we do and why we do it.



### Breakfast with the Bishop

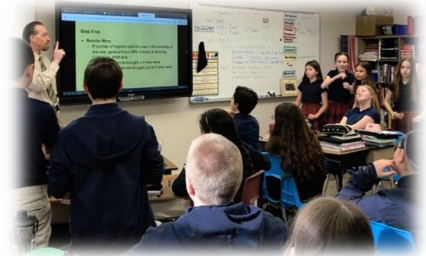
6th grader, Francie S., represented SJS at the annual Breakfast with the Bishop hosted by the Diocese of Joliet at the University of St. Francis. The morning included a special prayer service and breakfast with the bishop. The Diocese invited a student from each school along with a parent to participate in this special event.



### Ancient Empire & Ancient Roman Republic Simulations

During Social Studies class, 6th graders simulated the process of building an empire, with careful strategy to maintain it, and handling random obstacles of natural disasters. Built in the activity were all the decisions the old empires faced. Each class had six teams working together competing, planning, strategizing, and negotiating with each other. There were periodic time-outs for discussion to compare their actions with the historical material they were learning.

While learning about the Ancient Roman Republic and the transition between a republican government to being ruled by emperors, the students simulated the concepts of political intrigue, competition, and unethical moves such as assassinations (like what Brutus did to Caesar) and indictments. Each student pretended to be a Roman Senator and quickly created factions within the Senate. As the simulation progressed, Senators were eliminated. By the end of the project, we covered in one class period what in reality lasted about 100 years, and one student became the "Augustus," as did Octavian in 33 BC.

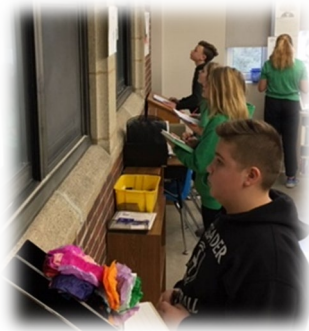
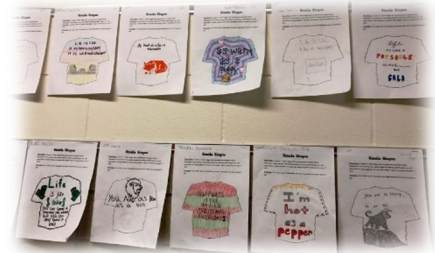


### Marshmallow Molecules

Hands-on learning is fun! To learn about structural and molecular formulas, our 7th graders did a lab where they created different molecules out of marshmallows and toothpicks. For example, to create a methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ ) molecule (formed when one carbon atom bonds to four hydrogen atoms), they connected the carbon atom (green marshmallow) to each of the hydrogen atoms (pink marshmallows) with toothpicks.

### Simile Slogans

During Language Arts class, 7th graders learned about figures of speech. To help them learn about similes, the students created t-shirt designs that incorporated original similes. The end results were creative, inspiring and related to a wide audience.



### Antebellum Period

Each 7th grade student "drafted" someone they considered a key person in the abolitionist movement of the Antebellum Period before the U.S. Civil War. They researched their figure to learn how they tried to end slavery, and how effective or influential their work was. From their research they made a museum-style poster, which was displayed around the classroom. The students then partook in a Gallery Walk where they rotated amongst the displays, taking a few notes about each figure's contributions and effectiveness. It was a fun way to share their work with their peers, to learn from each other, and to learn while being able to get up and move around.

### Children's Books

The 7th grade students wrote children's books for their 2nd grade buddies as part of a nouns unit in their language arts class. The students had to create an original book, complete with illustrations, using different types of nouns. Many students chose Christmas themes in time for the upcoming holiday. They then presented the books to the 2nd grade students and read them aloud to their buddies.





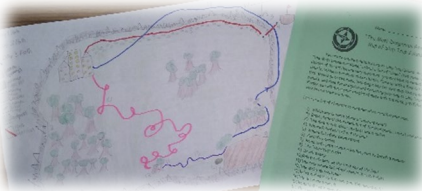


### Mock Trial

During the Second World War, the U.S. sent over 100,000, mostly Japanese Americans, to internment camps. Treatment, justification, and constitutionality were debatable. The 8th grade researched the topic and split into teams to challenge or defend the camps, with another group to hear the evidence and judge. This was done in a mock trial that they created.

### Valentine's Dance

The 8th grade Valentines Dance is a long-standing tradition at SJS. Ashley Payne, from the Center for Dance in Westmont, taught their after-school dance sessions. Prior to learning the steps of the hand-jive, Cha Cha and waltz, the students learned about the origin of each dance. On the big day, the boys sported matching Valentines bow ties, and the girls wore pink and red dresses. Ms. Feeney, Mr. Horneman and Mrs. Lyon served as judges as the students performed their dances. In addition to giving best in category awards, some students were honored for twirliest turns, congeniality and most valuable dancer. It is a special way to celebrate Valentine's Day and teaches valuable life and social skills.



### The Most Dangerous Game

After reading the short story "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell, the 8th graders created a visualization of the setting and plot with maps. The students used their close reading skills to find text evidence as support for their map drawings. It was a great way to include artistic talents in reading class!

### Washington, D.C. Trip

For the first time, our 8th grade class offered a trip to Washington, D.C. A majority of the class participated in this three-day adventure to our nation's capital over the Veterans' Day weekend with many parents accompanying their child. Together they were able to visit the Bureau of Engraving to watch money being printed and inspected; the National Archives to see the original Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution; and Arlington National Cemetery for the Changing of the Guard, and Arlington Cemetery. During this very comprehensive tour of D.C., their day visits included the Newseum, U.S. Capitol, Library of Congress, and Mount Vernon, as well as their choices of Smithsonian Museums (the American History, African American, Natural History, Holocaust, Air and Space museums, and the National Gallery of Art). Additionally, they took evening monument tours of the Jefferson, Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., WWII, Lincoln, Vietnam and Korean War Memorials. Photo stops included the White House, Supreme Court, a mock Oval Office, the Washington Monument, Ford's Theater and the Petersen House (where Abraham Lincoln died). It was a once-in-a-lifetime and memorable experience that won't soon be forgotten.



### Competitions & Awards

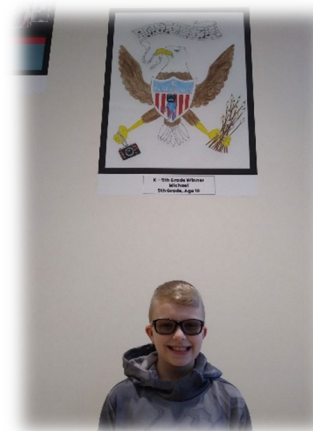
#### Knights of Columbus Essay Contest

The Knights of Columbus sponsor a yearly writing contest to highlight the importance of Catholic Education in America. This year's theme was "The Importance of Religious Freedom." The students finished essays without names or identifiers. These essays were read and judged by the Knights of Columbus and Father Al Heidecke. The name of the first-place winner is displayed on a plaque near the entrance of St. Joseph School. Knights members Mike Miller and Mitch Raines gave the presentation at St. Joseph School's yearly Catholic Schools Mass on January 28. Congratulations to our winners: 1st: Claudia S., 2nd: Jackie M., 3rd: Elizabeth L.!



#### Illinois Arts Education Week Award

5th grader, Michael G., was selected as the overall winner for the Illinois State Board of Education 38th annual Illinois Arts Education Week poster contest, in conjunction with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM). The theme was "Leadership is an art." The pieces had to include music, dance, theater, art and media. Beginning February 12th, Michael's piece will be featured as part of a yearlong art exhibit at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. He was recognized at two events – the ribbon cutting ceremony at the ALPLM and official recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education's during an upcoming board meeting.



#### Scholastic Competitions

Several 7th graders participated in scholastic competitions during the second trimester and did a great job representing SJS! Veronica R., Chris H., James N., and Peter Y. participated in the Benet Scholastic Bowl. Veronica R., Chris H., James N., Peter Y. and Sean B. competed in the Montini Math Contest. Chris received 4th place, Veronica received 1st place, and the team received 3rd place. Two teams participated in the Nazareth Scholastic Bowl – Samantha L., Audrey I., Johanna C. and Veronica R.; James N., Sean B., Chris H. and Peter Y. The teams placed 2nd and 5th among 16 teams. Our students did impressive work at all the competitions, and we are proud of them for their courage to participate and their stewardship of time and talent to represent SJS.



#### Science Olympiad

Congratulations to the 4th graders who competed in the Illinois Elementary Science Olympiad. The team successfully earned medals in 5 events: Circuit Wizardry, Fossil Frenzy, Traj-EGG-tory, Crimebusters, and Experimental Design. It was a great time putting our science skills into action. Great work to the SJS Olympiads Cameron B., Ellie B., Aspen C., Jack D., Danny F., Molly F., Michael F., Aiden O., Colin P., and Caitlin R. Thank you to the coaches – Frank Fetters, Kathryn Fetters, and Bob O'Brien – for making the experience possible.





## Geography & Spelling Bees

Students in grades 4 through 8 are eligible to participate in our annual Geography and Spelling Bees. Congratulations to the qualifiers from each grade and to the winners of the 2020 Bees!



### *Geography Bee Winners:*

1st: Noah D.  
2nd: Eli B.  
3rd: Jack D.



### *Spelling Bee Winners:*

1st: Brian L.  
2nd: Brayden B.  
3rd: Finn B.



This is Brian's second time winning the Spelling Bee! He attended the DuPage County Private School Spelling Bee and tied for 11th out of the 24 county private school spelling bee champs ranging in age from 4th through 8th grade. He spelled several difficult words over 13 rounds and 2.5 hours of spelling with the best of the school champions. We are very proud of him as he represented St. Joseph admirably!

## Enrichment Programs



### **Concerts**

Several of our students receive instruction through Band for Today on a variety of musical instruments. They recently had the opportunity to showcase their talents to their peers and family at concerts. We commend them for their diligence and perseverance in before and after-school practices, and courage to perform in front of admiring audiences!

We continue to offer a great selection of after-school Enrichment classes to our students during the Winter and Spring trimesters. Activities include Chess, Robotics, Acting, Drawing, Violin, Band, Piano, Advanced Spanish, French, Math, Science, Newspaper and many more.



## Christmas Program



SJS families look forward every year to our annual Christmas Music Program, a blessed evening that helps us prepare for the birth of Jesus. Students started learning their songs in October in Mr. Horneman's music class, singing a mix of traditional and contemporary music. In addition, the audience enjoyed a special Girls' Ensemble performance, made up of young ladies from 5th–8th grade who spent several Friday lunch hours practicing with their

vocal coach, SJS parent Emily Lancy, and Mr. Horneman. The concert concluded with parents, grandparents, and students all singing a couple of traditional carols together.



## Catholic Schools Week

We kicked off our Catholic Schools Week celebrations with an all-school open house! It was great to see our students and their families talking with their past, present and future teachers and showing off their projects! On display were our 8th graders' science fair projects and 5th graders' roller coaster projects. The celebration continued throughout the week with daily themes and activities such as crazy hat and sock day, career day, and 50s day. Many students dressed up as what they want to be when they grow up. We were able to enjoy several activities and traditions during the week including All-School Mass, wake up trivia, a student variety show, students vs. teachers volleyball, ice cream social, and a Wacky Science Show. We closed out the week with the Fun Fair, that is always a favorite and fun day. Thank you to all the volunteers who organized the activities and events to make it a fun week for our students and teachers in celebration of Catholic education.



## Variety Show

Our school community enjoyed the 8th annual Variety Show hosted by Mrs. Slisz and emceed by Chloe Mika and Elizabeth Lifka. There were singers, dancers, pianists, a ballerina, and comedy routines, including the tradition of our 8th grade boys (plus 5th graders Ben Gates and Riley Tellers) closing out the show with jokes! We're so proud of all the participants for their courage to share their talents with the SJS community.



## Faith Formation

### Ministry of Care

All classrooms at SJS are participating in a new initiative we call the Ministry of Care. Each classroom has "adopted" a senior citizen in the Downers Grove community and is finding ways to provide and show care. Many of our classrooms made Valentines for their seniors. Our 1st graders earned money by doing chores at home in order to send a flower arrangement to their senior. The recipients appreciate the care and one even sent Valentines back to her classroom!







### Blessing of Throats

In honor of St. Blaise's feast day, Father Al and Deacons Kozar and Ouska went through the school and blessed the throats of our students and staff.



### Confirmation Retreat

All 8th grade students at St. Joseph School and in the St. Joseph Religious Education program participated in a confirmation retreat at St. Joseph Church. National Evangelization Team (NET) Ministries facilitated the retreat, which included Mass, music, small group sharing, funny skits and testimonials.



## Events

### Father Daughter Dance

Thanks to an amazing team of parents, our school hall was transformed into a glowing, neon space where SJS fathers and daughters had fun dancing the night away!



### Mother Daughter Tea

**Save the Date!** Our second Mother Daughter Tea will be held on Saturday, April 18 from 11 am-1 pm at the Drake Oak Brook.

### Upcoming Events and Dates

2/29:	First Communion Retreat
3/30-4/3:	No School Spring Break
4/10:	No School Good Friday
4/13:	No School Easter Monday
4/18:	Mother Daughter Tea
4/26:	First Communion
5/1:	St. Joseph the Worker Mass
5/3:	First Communion
5/8:	May Crowning Mass
5/13:	Kindergarten Round-up
5/14 & 15:	VIP Shows (early dismissal 5/15)
5/22:	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Dinner
5/26:	Cap & Gown Mass
5/28:	PreK3 Last Day & Picnic
5/30:	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation
6/2:	PreK4 Graduation
6/3:	PreK4 Last Day & Picnic
6/5:	K-7 Last Day of School & Field Day

## Athletics Highlights

### Basketball

Congratulations to all our basketball teams on a great season! Our Boys 8A and Girls 5A finished the regular season in 1st place in their division! Good luck to all our teams in the playoffs! Go Crusaders!

### Spring Sports

- Boys Volleyball starts in March
  - Track & Field starts April 6th
- Have a fun, safe and successful season!



**CRUSADERS**  
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

## Alumni Highlights

### All State Choir

In October, Anne Harbauer (SJS 2016) auditioned and was selected to be part of the ILMEA All District Choir for the second year in a row. The District 9 concert was held in November at St. Charles East High School. Her high scores also qualified her to be a State singer. She was one of 64 Soprano II's to be selected from Illinois. Anne performed with the All State Choir at the Peoria Civic Center in February. Anne was also thrilled to be selected as a Benet Madrigal this year and is excited to be a part of the Benet Academy musical, The Addams Family, this March.



### College Commitments

Some of our Class of 2016 graduates have committed to playing sports in college next year. We wish them the best as they finish out their studies in high school and start their college careers!

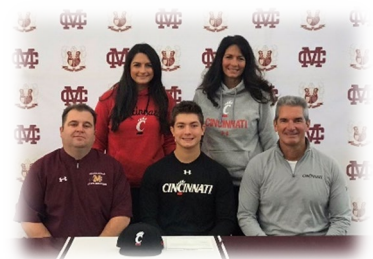
*Once a Crusader, always a Crusader!*



Abby Ryniec committed with the University of Illinois to play softball and will study in the College of Business.



Brenna Cohoon committed to run Cross Country and Track at Iowa State University and plans to study Journalism/Communications.

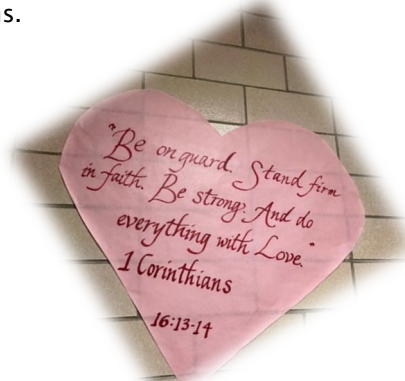


Mike Koszewski committed to play baseball at the University of Cincinnati.

*A Catholic education is an act of love. It is an act of love that forms the next generation of Catholics in our faith and tradition; that manifests a parent's sacrifice and commitment; that results in leaders for our world who serve like Christ himself. At Catholic schools, our high standards create more than successful students. They create faithful leaders educated for excellence and sent to serve. What better gift to give than a Catholic education for your child.*

Rev. John Belmonte, S.J., Ph.D.

Diocese of Joliet



Artwork created by our 3rd graders, inspired by the Bible and artist Robert Indiana.



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL  
EXCELLENCE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION