



**St. Mark Catholic School**  
Weekly School Bulletin  
December 5, 2014

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**Virtue of the Month – Hope**

Teachers discuss the Virtue of the Month with students by using either stories or activities to engage them into seeing the virtue in action. Ask your child what he/she is learning about "Hope" this month.

**Vocations Chalice**

3<sup>rd</sup> grade was presented with the Vocations Chalice at the conclusion of today's All-School Mass, and will be praying for vocations during the upcoming week.

**Reminders for Next Week**

**Today, Friday, December 5, 6:00 PM, Lion's Lair Gym (formerly Old Gym): HSA Movie Night/The Polar Express**

Note the new location; see details below.

**Monday, December 8, 8:30 AM, Holy Day of Obligation/Feast of the Immaculate Conception, All School Mass**

Mass will be held at 8:30 AM in the church. All are invited to attend.

**Monday, December 8, 3:30 PM, Cafetorium: Respect Life Club Meeting**

Respect for the Imprisoned – see details below

**Tuesday, December 9, 8:30 AM, Cafetorium: St. Mark Spelling Bee**

**Wednesday, December 10, Church: Advent Reconciliation, Grades 2-8**

**Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 PM, Preschool Music Room: HSA General Meeting**

Note the new location; see details below.

**Friday, December 12: All School Mass**

Our All-School Mass will be held at 8:30 AM in the church. All are invited to attend. This Mass will be presented by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. They will perform the Call to Worship, the Mass readings, and present the Communion gifts.

**HSA Movie Night & General Meeting Location Changes**

The location of tonight's HSA "Polar Express" Movie Night has been changed to the Lion's Lair Gym (formerly the Old Gym). All other details remain unchanged. See you there at 6:00 PM for a night of food, fun, and a great Christmas movie!

The location of the HSA General Meeting on Wednesday, December 10 at 6:30 PM has been moved to the Preschool Music Room. Please make plans to attend – your child(ren) have the opportunity for a homework pass! See more details in the HSA section below.

**December All-School Service Project**

This month, each class will be collecting funds to purchase items from the St. Mark Angel Tree. Teachers will provide specific information about their classroom collections.

**Reminder - Parishioner Tuition Status**

In order to qualify for the parishioner tuition discount, the annual minimum parish donation of \$800 must be paid by December 31, 2014. Please refer to page 7 of the Parent Student Handbook for more information. Checks (made payable to "St. Mark Catholic Church") may be placed in the weekly collection basket, or [click here](#) to submit your electronic payment to the parish and/or set-up recurring payments.

**End-of-Year Giving**

If you are considering an additional end-of-year donation, St. Mark Catholic Church and School are non-profit organizations that allow for you to make tax deductible donations. As the end of the year approaches and you review your tax-deductible donations, please consider donating

to your own St. Mark community. Please also check with your company to determine if matching funds are available.

- To make a donation to St. Mark Catholic Church, [click here](#).
- To make a donation to the St. Mark Catholic School Gap Fund, [click here](#).
- To donate towards St. Mark Catholic School's technology fund through the Digital Wish website, [click here](#).
- If you would like to make a monetary donation to a particular department or program at St. Mark Catholic School (i.e. Athletics), please [click here](#). Please enter the amount under "Miscellaneous," and specify the program in the "comments" section.

## After School Program News & Reminder

**After School Schedule - December 19:** The After School Program will close at 3:00 PM on Friday, December 19 (the regular school day will end at 12:00 NOON due to early release for Christmas vacation). A snack will be provided. Students will also have been served pizza at the class Christmas parties, but if you feel your child will want something additional, please send a lunch that day.

**After School Program Openings:** The After School Program has limited space available for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. If interested, please [click here](#), complete the registration form, and submit it to the school office.

## Subs Needed For All Grades & After School Program

Substitute teachers are needed for all grade levels and for the After School Program. These are paid positions with flexible hours. If you would like to be placed on the sub list, or have additional questions, please contact [Toni Jobes](#) regarding Preschool and the After School Program, and [Rene O'Connor](#) regarding grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>.

## School Sweaters – Lost & Found

Our stash of school sweaters in the Lost & Found is overflowing. Many students rely on this stash of forgotten sweaters to get into compliance for Mass on Friday. Beginning in January, this will no longer be an option, as all sweaters in the Lost & Found will be donated to the Used Uniform Sale at the end of December. Please encourage your child to stop by the receptionist's office and go through these forgotten items, or feel free to stop by yourself. We'd love to return them to their rightful owners!

## Games/DVDs/Craft Items Needed

As you're cleaning out closets and making room for this year's Santa deliveries, please consider donating your gently used board games (specifically checkers and chess), DVDs, and craft items to the school. Please contact [Toni Jobes](#) with any questions.

## Robotics Club

Robotics Aficionados: Invitations to join the St. Mark Robotics Club were sent via email to all students in 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades prior to the Thanksgiving break, along with the application form. At

this point, the Invention division is full (St. Mark is only able to send a maximum of three teams consisting of six students each for the Invention division.) There are still several openings for the Arena division. The deadline to respond is Friday, December 12. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Benavides at [liliana.benavides@stmcs.net](mailto:liliana.benavides@stmcs.net). Thank you for your continued interest and your support of the St. Mark Robotics Club. St. Mark teams have historically performed exceptionally well at the Diocese of Dallas Robotics Competition held each spring (let's just say we have MANY First and Second Place trophies in our trophy case), and we look forward to another successful year!



### **It's Not Too Late to Join the Respect Life Club**

The St. Mark Respect Life Club (RLC) always welcomes new members! Please join us Monday, December 8 from 3:30-4:45 PM in the Cafetorium. Our topic for the month is "Respect for the Imprisoned." We will have speakers coming from the prison ministry at St. Gabriel in McKinney sharing experiences and information with our children. The kids will create birthday cards for the imprisoned as their service for the month. Do you know the Corporal Works of Mercy? They are:

1. FEED THE HUNGRY
2. GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY
3. CLOTHE THE NAKED
4. SHELTER THE HOMELESS
5. VISIT THE SICK
- 6 VISIT THE IMPRISONED
7. BURY THE DEAD

Oftentimes, we forget about visiting and caring for the imprisoned. Join us this month and be a part of something we are all called to do. Parents are always welcome to stay. [Click here](#) to join! *"Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you are also in the body"* (Heb. 13:3)

### **2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grades: Buy Popcorn and Support the Yearbook!**

Students in 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grades: The middle school Yearbook elective will be selling popcorn next week to raise money to cover the cost of printing the yearbook. Popcorn is \$2.00 per bag, and can be ordered Monday, December 8 through Thursday, December 11. Exact change is appreciated. Payment must be made during the order process. Choose from White Cheddar, Salsa, or Butter flavors. The popcorn will be delivered between 9:30-10:30 AM on Friday, December 16 for a mid-morning snack. Please help support the yearbook and enjoy a tasty treat! (Please note: If you have allergy concerns, please visit the popcorn vendor's website at [www.deanan.com](http://www.deanan.com) to check the ingredients. Also, popcorn orders cannot be accepted on

delivery day, so if your child would like to enjoy a popcorn snack, please be sure the order is placed next week.)

## More Bottle Caps Needed

The Art Department needs more bottle caps in the following colors: yellow, green, and lime green. Students who bring at least 5 bottle caps to Ms. Tammy will receive a "Caught Being Good!"

## Don't Wait: Participate!



Calling all Dads! If you'd like to volunteer for a day at school during the month of January as a Watch D.O.G.S. Dad, you must sign-up by December 15<sup>th</sup>! For more information and the sign up calendar, [click here](#). You will need to be Safe Environment cleared before you can serve. [Click here](#) for more information on Safe Environment Training.



**Attention all St. Mark Families:** Check those backpacks today! Your personal auction invitation, DVD, and letter from the auction committee were sent home. R.S.V.P. and then prepare to join in the excitement at our biggest fundraising event of the year!

Two additional reminders:

1. Collection boxes for class basket donations are in the classrooms now. Please continue to send in your items. Don't recall our child's class basket theme? [Click here](#) for the list.
2. The Auction committee is still in need of volunteers to help spread the word, sell tickets, make solicitations, perform data entry, and assist with venue decorating and set-up. If interested, please contact Auction Co-Chair Raju Kattady at [rajukattady@hotmail.com](mailto:rajukattady@hotmail.com).



**Digital Wish Technology Donations:** St. Mark is now accepting technology-specific donations through Digital Wish. [Click here](#) to help equip our students with iPads and iPad carts, and feel free to share this link with family, friends and associates who might like to help.

## News from the Athletics Department

Our Varsity Football All-Stars played on the "East" team at the All Star Game held on November 23. Unfortunately the East team was defeated, but congratulations are in order to these boys who played a hard-fought game! Pictured below are Grant Y., Ryan S., Dane S., Miles P. and Ryan H., along with Head Coach Rick Shannon.



## Home & School Association (HSA) News



**Scrip Gift Cards:** Thank you to all who purchased Scrip gift cards! Plastic gift cards will be ready for pickup in the school office from December 17-18. If you need to make other pick-up arrangements or if you have any questions, please contact our Scrip Card Coordinator, Miki Heiss at [StMarkScrip@outlook.com](mailto:StMarkScrip@outlook.com).

Remember, ScripNow eCards can be ordered online year round, so continue to stock up for the holidays and beyond! [Click here](#) for instructions.



**Teacher and Staff Christmas Dinner:** The annual Teacher and Staff Christmas Dinner is coming up on Tuesday, December 16 at 4:30 PM. This event, hosted by Father Cliff and the HSA, is a way to show our appreciation for our amazing teachers and staff. Father Cliff will be providing the main entrée and sides. HSA will provide the hors d'oeuvres, desserts, beverages, and tokens of appreciation. Please help by signing up to bring something for the dinner or to help with set-up -- there are still some slots available. [Click here](#) for the Sign-up Genius. Thank you for helping to make this year's dinner an extra special evening for our wonderful St. Mark teachers and staff!

**Box Tops:** Please keep sending in your Box Tops. Remember to place them in a plastic bag labeled with your child's grade level and teacher name. We will have another grade level competition in February!

**Upcoming HSA meeting:** Save the date for the next HSA General Meeting: December 10, 2014 at 6:30 PM in the Preschool Music Room, ECE Building Room #307 (note location change). All St. Mark parents are encouraged to attend. Join us to help plan future events and

volunteer for upcoming activities for our school! **As a special incentive, all parents who attend will receive a homework pass for each of their children!**

**Used Uniform Sale:** Please consider donating your gently used uniforms to the Used Uniform Sale. This sale will take place in January and the funds generated will be put towards HSA activities. Donations can be dropped off anytime in the school office.

## In Alumni News...

**Two St. Mark Alumni Mentor 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Via Student Council:** Two alumni from the St. Mark Class of 2011 are currently serving as the Student Body Presidents at their respective high schools and agreed to be interviewed by our St. Mark Student Council officers. Emily P. is the Student Body President and current Senior at Ursuline Academy, and Alexander E., also a Senior, holds the same position at Jesuit College Preparatory School. (Incidentally, Emily has also served as her Class Treasurer and Alexander as his Class President during their respective Freshman, Sophomore and Junior years!) Interview topics ranged from advice for a successful Freshman year in high school, to favorite St. Mark memories. Our Student Council officers, Nicola L., Savannah H. and Janice R., will be presenting a full summary of their interviews to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class in the coming weeks. Several questions concerned the high school application process, which is quite timely for our students.

As luck would have it, on the day that Alexander visited, the Jesuit Theater Group also performed for our 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, so he joined the audience and stayed for the show. We had quite a presence from Jesuit with us that day, and they were all great role models for our students.

Do you have a St. Mark alum in your house who would like to mentor our current students? They simply need to register for our "Lifetime Lions" alumni organization by [clicking here](#) or by contacting [Debbie Reed](#). It's a great experience for everyone involved, and it qualifies for service hours.

## Seen & Heard Around St. Mark

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reads to Kindergarten:** On Thursday, our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students visited our Kindergarten classrooms armed with books. They each chose a reading buddy and read the book aloud. Our students participate in paired reading activities each school year with the goal of increasing proper inflection, pronunciation and reading fluency.

**Advent:** Advent season has begun, and our students are recognizing it in many ways. They are busy making Advent wreaths and calendars and discussing the meaning behind it all. See the photo of first grade's Advent craft at the top of the bulletin. Our preschoolers are in on the act as well. On Monday, Father Cliff paid them a visit. He talked with them about the meaning of Advent and the different ways we can recognize it. He explained that we wait patiently for Jesus during this time. He also discussed St. Nicholas and distributed prayer cards and calendars to the students.



**Jesuit Theater Group Visit:** The Jesuit Theater Group performed comedy skits for our 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders on Wednesday. They covered topics such as procrastination/motivation, homework priorities, sharing, self-confidence, friendship, teamwork, and when it's appropriate/inappropriate to play video games and to use social media. Our students definitely learned some valuable life lessons through laughter!



**The Story of the Library Christmas Tree, By Mrs. Hollenbeck:** About 13 years ago, I was at the Downtown Plano Dickens Christmas and the Plano Public Library was raffling a Christmas tree filled with children's book character stuffed animals. I fell in love with it, joined the raffle, and was sad when I didn't win. I was telling Mrs. Steinkirchner about it and one day, she gave me a "Thing One" stuffed animal and told me to start my own tree. That spring when I went to the Texas Library Association Conference, I bought a few more characters and the next Christmas, bought a little table top tree to display them. After a few more years of conferences and gifts from St. Mark families, I had to buy a full-sized tree. Now the entire 7-foot tree is covered with children's book characters. The tree has truly been a community effort, and the children love looking at it and picking out favorite characters. I even hear the middle-schoolers in the hall saying "she's put up the tree!" Next time you're at the school, stop by the library and check out the Christmas tree ... yet another symbol of our motto, "Where Faith and Knowledge Meet."





**It's "Curtains" for the Old Stage Curtains!** Thanks to Father Cliff, the stage in the Cafetorium boasts brand new curtains, and they're St. Mark green! They will help to provide a fitting backdrop to the Spring Musical performance later this school year, which Father Cliff himself is spearheading for the first time. More details on the expansion of the Spring Musical elective to come.