

St. Mary's Catholic School October 2021 Newsletter

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Do you know that in many cultures the word 'breath' and 'spirit' are the same thing? Breathing is a very powerful biblical image. ... in Genesis God creates humanity from the clay of the earth. Yet the human being is merely a lifeless work of clay pottery until God breathes into the nostrils of the human. It is that first breath that gives us life. In Hebrew, 'ruach' is the word scripture uses for describing the 'breath of God'. It's not so much a physical force but an essence—God's essence that sustains life. By virtue of our breath, we are connected to spirit. Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org>

In Aboriginal culture everything is connected. For the Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal people (South Australia) the law of Kanyini implies that everybody is responsible for each other. It is a principle of connectedness that flows through their culture. Because of connection, Kanyini teaches to look away from oneself and towards community. In North America, we tend to "separate things out, even the relationship between the mind and the body, but especially between ourselves, and other people, and nature, and spirit." All elements of the earth are interconnected: the people, the plants and animals, landforms and spirit and the breath of life. Everything is related to each other.

Source: What is Aboriginal spirituality? - Creative Spirits, retrieved from <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/what-is-aboriginal-spirituality>

Why does this matter? It matters because in a world becoming more connected through technology, we are simultaneously becoming more isolated. Isolation is a lack of connection, and a lack of connection with others, can result in poor decisions and actions toward others. It can result in 'entitlement' to expect others to think the same as ourselves and essentially it can result in an attitude of righteous to disrespect others.

Have a problem? Take a deep breath. Worried about someone? Take a deep breath. Did someone intentional hurt your child's feelings? Take a deep breath.

Breathe the spirit into your soul and let the spirit help you respond.

Not all problems require a solution; however, we can all react or respond better if we stop to 'take a deep breath' and if we stop to remember we should not be 'against each other'; we need to be 'for each other'. Especially in today's world when too many people feel justified in hurting another simply because they have lost the connection and accountability to others.

Be kind. Love yourself. Love others. Love your family. Love our beautiful school.

God Bless,

Jerelynn MacNeil
Principal



September 30, 2021
Happy Truth & Reconciliation Day!

St. Mary's Catholic School Goals 2021–2022

Whole School Spiritual Goal	Objectives	Action
<p>The school will foster a culture of mental health literacy, social- emotional wellbeing, and Spiritual wellbeing.</p>	<p>We will increase student knowledge and understanding of their own spiritual/mental health in the three domains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will learn to pray individually, as a strategy for helping oneself or another, especially when they feel helpless to help another. The phrase “in my thoughts and in my words” will be put into practice as an action for support. • The afternoon Walking Recess will give everyone a chance to focus on the importance of brain breaks and mental/spiritual health. • <i>Students will be encouraged to use Soft Start and Walking Recess as a tool for reflection time when they are having a hard day.</i> • <i>The fine arts (see new artwork in the hallways by Joel Robison) and ‘missions’ concept will be used as a tool for expressing spiritual wellbeing and calls to action.</i>
School Social Goal	Objectives	Action
<p>The school will foster an enhanced culture of mutual respect through teaching kindness, tolerance, patience, and personal prayer.</p>	<p>To improve student self-awareness and regulation helping students to recognize how to respond appropriately to social challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be encouraged to practice self-regulation and self-awareness when others are not around (doing the right thing when no one is watching). • Students will be taught a variety of strategies to express their feelings in a healthy capacity. • <i>Every class will implement and use a daily (mental health) non-verbal check in strategy.</i> • <i>Teachers/students will use Soft Start time to address students requiring attention for this goal.</i>
<p>Primary Academic Goal #1</p> <p>Create levels of high student engagement in primary science.</p>	<p>Weekly primary groupings for Wonder Time with “Mystery Doug”.</p> <p>The focus will be on Social and Emotional skills and attitudes that scientists and explorers use, linking Core Competency animals if applicable: Perseverance, Curiosity, Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Observation, Responsibility, Empowerment etc.</p>	<p>Students will practice observation, thinking and questioning (both short answer and long answer questions). Apply core competencies to these areas along with other Social Emotional attitudes.</p> <p><i>Encourage ‘wonder’ conversations while identifying areas students are interested in learning more about thus developing an atmosphere of new and exciting learning.</i></p>

<p>Primary Academic Goal #2</p> <p>Improve and expand ways students think about numbers.</p>	<p>Implement Number Talks during the day, at least four days a week.</p>	<p>Teachers will create designated conversations in the classroom specifically for students to strengthen their number sense and mental math skills while clarifying and communicating their thinking to others and learning from others' thinking as well.</p>
<p>Primary Academic Goal #3</p> <p>Primary will generate increased shared writing experiences</p>	<p>Primary teachers will meet regularly to co-plan writing activities and monthly focus. Group planning will streamline activities and share resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary classes will meet as a group to have students share their writing. • Primary will seek to inspire others through their writing and encourage peers to improve their printing and ideas for writing. • We will increase informal writing opportunities.
<p>Intermediate and Primary Academic Goal-common goal</p> <p>To continue to improve how the Core Competencies are learned, expressed, and assessed by students.</p>	<p>To improve self-assessment strategies as related to the Core Competencies and the curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school will use the Six Cedar concepts that relate aboriginal perspectives to the Core Competencies. All 6 Core Competencies Aboriginal concepts will be taught and used for ongoing assessment this year • A common self-assessment/reflection tool will be used periodically throughout units across the curriculum to highlight and identify the core competencies and for student self-reflection of their understandings. • Students will set goals and reflect and self-assess on the degree of achievement of these goals after each term.
<p>Intermediate Academic Goal #1</p> <p>To enhance individual writing skills</p>	<p>To focus on increasing personal connection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be encouraged to increase motivation to persevere longer with writing tasks through challenges. • Visual prompts will be used as a strategy to increase personal connection and extend thinking (new resources pilot project). • Teachers will create time to students to share their writing in differing and creative forums between peers.
<p>Intermediate Academic Goal #2</p> <p>To expand student technological skills for presentations.</p>	<p>The Comic Book program will be used to extend writing and generate an enhanced interest in writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will implement spiritual and mental health journaling into writing more frequently and expand this into new ways to use technology for sharing. • Students will be taught now to use the comic book program as a motivational mechanism for writing about personal experiences. • Students will also use classroom themes (academic/spiritual/ mental health) when incorporating classroom topics into comic book writing. A former New York Times editorial cartoonist will teach creative techniques through zoom.

Save-On Foods

If you buy your groceries at Save-On Foods, please tell the cashier that you are from **St. Mary's School**, and they will record your total sales in a binder. The school receives a percentage of all sales quarterly!

Thanks for supporting our school!



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REMINDER TO PARENTS:

NO SCHOOL:

Friday, October 8th
(day in lieu)

Monday, October 11th



Happy Thanksgiving



Smile ☺

Retakes Photo Day

Wednesday, October 20th
at 9:00 A.M.

**Wear brightly coloured clothing and
bring your best smile!**



Student, Parent, Teacher Interviews

Your child's teacher will contact you to set a
time to discuss your child's progress at school.

This year the school prefers a:

- ✓ Phone call
- ✓ An outside face-to-face meeting
- ✓ An inside meeting only if necessary.

Those present must wear masks.

Going away? Please let the
school know if parents are
leaving on vacation and
someone else will be looking
after or picking up your
children. Thank you!



PSG October 2021 Newsletter

And just like that, we're already one month into the school year! PSG has been busy getting to work! We hosted our Back-to-School Morning Coffee on the first day of school. This is a tradition that we will continue monthly throughout the school year. These coffee times are a great opportunity for catching up and building a warm school community. Besides there's nothing better to break up the morning school run than with a good cup of coffee and a friendly chat with some fellow parents. Our next **PSG Morning Coffee will be on Friday, October 15th starting at 8:20am.**

Our first hot lunch was on Friday, September 24th and it was a success! We've noticed that the kids love having different vendor options. After all, variety is the spice of life! Special thanks to the parent volunteers that came out to help. Beginning in October, we will have assigned grades for each hot lunch. If your child is in that month's grade, please consider signing up to serve on the PSG Facebook page. We are usually looking for around five to six volunteers and we meet at 12:00pm in the school kitchen. Our **next hot lunch is on Friday, October 15th** and we will be serving Taco Time and Domino's. Please don't forget that the deadline to order AND pay is midnight on the Tuesday before hot lunch.

Hot Lunch Volunteer Schedule:

October - Kindergarten

November - Grade 1/2

December - Grade 2/3

January - Grade 4/5

February - Grade 6

March - Kindergarten

April - Grade 1/2

May - Grade 2/3

June - Grades 4/5 & 6

PSG held our first meeting (while enjoying some fresh air and autumn sunshine under the new playground shelter!) on Tuesday, September 21st. We discussed our fundraising plans for the school year, as well as some of the items for which we hope to raise money. Did you know that last year we provided the funds for the school to purchase new computers for the computer lab? We also would like to continue raising money for additional playground equipment.

Our **next PSG meeting will be on Tuesday, October 19th at 6:30pm** (we will post on the PSG Facebook page a meeting location closer to the date). As always, we encourage ALL parents to attend. We welcome any new ideas, suggestions and/or input so please come join us!

Courtney Magro
PSG Chair



As part of our staff goals to focus on self-regulation in children this year, we have reviewed a resource from Jim Grant entitled **Grit, Mindset and Determination (The key to Learning by influence)** that we share here (in part). Philosophies of parenting and philosophies of teaching and learning ideally have the common goal of making children successful. We share Jim Grant's ideas with you for reflection and consideration.

An excerpt from Jim Grant's presentation on Grit, Mindset and Determination (The key to Learning by influence)

Grit is defined as a collection of hardy, timeless character traits that enable one to persevere in the face of setbacks, disappointment, and adversity in the pursuit of long-term goals. Characteristics include but are not limited to self-control, open-mindedness, delayed gratification, diligence, courage, tenacity, and hard work. The characteristic of grit comes from both nature and nurture.

Students who are NOT gritty may:

- Have a fixed mindset (give up easily, not have flexibility of thinking)
- Have feelings of entitlement
- Look for the easy way out
- Not be able to persevere
- Not be able to self-regulate and delay gratification
- Have a poor work ethic
- Are not resilient
- Do not persist when a task becomes difficult
- Are not reliable and do not make commitments

Has society inadvertently shielded many children from developing grit? Yes. To their detriment, too many children have been spared from having to deal with setbacks, obstacles, adversity, and failures.

Children with an **open (flexible) mindset** take the approach:

- I will not procrastinate
- Tomorrow is a new day
- I fall down, I get back up
- Nothing ventured, nothing gained,
- Rome wasn't built in a day
- I may fail, but I'll take the risk

"It's not our job to toughen our children up to face a cruel and heartless world. It's our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless." L.R. Knost

Helicopter parents

- Do their children's homework
- Contently rescue their children
- Protect their children from a dangerous world
- Spare the child from having to do chores
- Direct and orchestrate their child's likes
- Demand better grades from the teacher

Snowplow parents

- Remove hurdles in a child's way
- Protect the child from setbacks
- Shield children from disappointments
- Foster an entitlement mentality in children
- Weaken children's perseverance
- Undermine children's resilience

All adults influence a child's life. Parents, teachers, family, and community all contribute to how a child views the world, how they handle adversity, and how they develop philosophies that guide their life and determine their mindset.

- Whether we realize it or not our day-to-day expectations of children matter.
- How we model for them to problem solve social situations matters,
- How we hold them accountable matters,
- How we nurture their spirit matters,
- How we nurture their confidence, by allowing them to fail (in a safe manner) so as to lead them to a place of a flexible mindset matters.

If you would like to view this entire presentation, purchased by the school as a webinar, please click on the link <http://goo.gl/Wbcso8>



FACEBOOK (Social Media)



The school recognizes that parents take photos of their children at school events. The school, however, has a responsibility to protect the privacy of all students. Under no circumstances does the school authorize the posting of any photos at St. Mary's events on Facebook unless cleared through the principal.

We ask that all parents respect the privacy of all families at the school and not post photos of our students on Facebook.

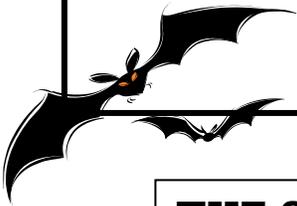


Halloween 2021:



At St. Mary's everyone dresses up on October 29th for the day!

We would like everyone to dress in appropriate costumes – the less props the safer! There will be an informal parade in the gym at 10:00 AM. Adults are welcome to attend wearing masks. This way everyone gets to see the costumes from Daycare to grade 6! All are welcome to attend!



THE ST. MARY'S CYCLISTS

Once again, St. Mary's has a bicycling team! We are taking part in the Fall GoByBike BC week, from September 27th until October 10th. Ride your bike for exercise, for transportation or best of all just for fun. All family members are welcome! To join you can register online on the GoByBike website. Then you can log your bike rides each day. When you register, please find the St. Mary's Cyclists, our team captain is Paula Veldman.



Thanks for joining our team!

There is an aboriginal proverb that says that everyone is a house with four rooms, a physical, an emotional, a mental, and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time, but unless we go into every room every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person.

