



St. Michael
Catholic School

Shaping disciples of Jesus
by igniting the spiritual,
academic and social growth
within each child

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: Tuesday, March 17

March 17, 2020

Dear St. Michael Catholic School Families:

Happy St. Patrick's Day! I hope that your family is able to do some of your own celebrations as we reflect on this historical Saint amidst all that is going on around us. I'll share some fun links, below.

PLEASE COME IN TODAY TO PICK UP ITEMS (Open until 3p.m.): If you are needing snow pants, boots, books or chromebooks, please stop in today to pick these up. I know many teachers emailed you about supplies that they want your child to have while at home. Our office will be open today from 9-3 p.m. We will also be open tomorrow 8 a.m. to Noon and will announce additional days and times if needed for picking up items.

St. Michael Catholic School will continue to be closed this week and we are on Spring Break next week. **This Wednesday, Archbishop Hebda has called for a state-wide day of prayer and fasting.** Please join our staff in praying and fasting from home or work on this Wednesday. Much prayer is needed as we come together to resolve the COVID-19 health crisis. Here is a link to a 3 minute prayer retreat that helps calm me and turn to God for all things: <https://www.loyolapress.com/retreats/lost-and-found-start-retreat>

Blessings, Mindy Reeder-Principal, reeder@saintmpl.org

[St. Patrick's Day Activities:](#)

<https://www.catholicicing.com/childrens-song-for-st-patricks-day/>

<https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/st-patricks-day-crafts-activities/7-fun-st-patricks-day-activities-families>

School Homework Recommendations & Travel

While students are home this week and possibly in the future, our teachers have planned for them to continue with their learning. We encourage you to support your child as time allows with these recommendations but know that we understand that this may look different for each family. **Please know next week during our scheduled Spring Break there are no student recommendations:**

Preschool Students: Teachers are sending home links and suggestions for extended enrichment over the next few weeks.

K-5 Students: Your child's teacher will be sending an email about specific homework if there is any this week, however, here is a recommendation:

- **K-1:** IXL - reading and math 15-20 minutes a day; reading with caretaker, or alone, 20 minutes a day; practice on writing 10 minutes a day
- **2-3:** IXL - reading and math 20-30 minutes a day; reading with caretaker or on own 30

- minutes a day; journaling/writing 15 minutes a day
- **4-5:** IXL - reading and math 30-40 minutes a day; reading on own 40 minutes a day; journaling/writing 20 minutes a day

Middle School Students: Teachers have practiced the Google classroom with students. Students should log in to their Google classroom and Educate to check for late or missing work. **NO NEW WORK IS BEING ASSIGNED THIS WEEK.**

If you are planning to travel internationally during spring break, please notify the school office as there may be a wait period before your children can return to class. At this point, we just need to know where you are going.

Follow information on the CDC website regarding travel, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

Email is our most efficient and clear means at the present moment for communications like this. Please watch for updates and further communications via email and our school newsletter.

Children's Mental Health Support

Mental Health Support: Please be aware that at this time our children are also feeling the anxiety of all that is happening around them. While school is closed, a routine is a healthy way of structuring your days. Included scheduled time for school work, outdoor play, free-choice reading, unstructured play and rest time. Address children's questions directly and honestly. Continuing with regular bed time and meal times is also helpful. Limit exposure to media and screen time as well.

Additional resources that you may find helpful:

- **Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians:** [COVID-19: The Path Through](#)
- **CDC Support:** [Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#)
- **Child Mind:** [Talking to Kids about the Virus](#)
- **National Association of School Psychologists/Nurses:** [Resource](#)
- **Children's National Hospital:** [COVID-19 FAQs for Kids](#)
- **Our School Counselor:** [Dr. Keri Brenden](#)

Keeping Your Family Healthy

Under the guidance of the MDH, we are recommending the following simple, everyday habits to help prevent the spread of illness throughout our school communities:

- Staff and students should stay home if they are feeling ill, have a fever of 100 degrees or more, or have flu-like symptoms-fever, cough and shortness of breath.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Use your own water bottle - do not share.
- Cover a cough. Cough or sneeze into an elbow or use a tissue and throw it away.
- Continue to notify the office of any illness so that we can be informed.
- At this time we will not plan on any large, all-school activities.
- Please wash your hands upon entering our building, if you are not feeling well, please do not enter.
- Lunch seating will be spread out.

We also demonstrated on Blues News Network (morning announcements) how to properly use our hand sanitizer, making sure students count to 20, cleaning their fingertips, fingers and wrists. In addition, we will also be practicing better hand washing routines. Thank you for helping them practice this at home.

Returning to School after Spring Break

St. Michael Catholic School students and staff are expected to return back to school on Monday, March 30; however, how this learning looks and classroom plans for safety and health of all students and staff will be implemented. Areas that our staff will be evaluating this week may include but are not limited to:

- Extended student online learning
- Splitting classes of 20 or more
- Possibly a revised school schedule
- Rearranging classrooms to keep social space
- Washing hand routines
- Recess changes
- Two grades per lunch period
- Adventures Plus and Preschool After Care split by grade levels or ages
- Pre-recording of lessons and readings
- Cleaning routines, entrance routines, maintenance routines

We will be monitoring recommendations from the Department of Health as we move forward. Please watch for an update by Friday, March 27 or earlier regarding any changes that may affect your child's learning environment or continued school closures.

IF LEARNING REMAINS AT HOME: Our staff have been working diligently to ensure that learning will continue even if your children remain at home. Staff will have office hours, be sharing flipped lessons, online resources, and plans in the weeks ahead if this is our plan. Watch for updates early next week.

Thank you for your patience as we consider all options to ensure the safety of all staff and students. **PLEASE NOTE ABOVE THAT IF YOU ARE TRAVELING WE ARE ASKING THAT YOU CONTACT THE OFFICE PRIOR TO RETURNING TO SCHOOL.**

Letter from Bishop Cozzens of the Archdiocese

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Across the twelve-county territory of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis are 91 Catholic schools with over 3700 employees serving over 29,000 students in preschool through 12th grade. After careful consideration of the recommendations of the Minnesota Department of Health, the decision of Governor Tim Walz to close public schools from Wednesday, March 18 through Friday, March 27, and review of the decisions of universities and other educational programs in Minnesota, and out of an abundance of concern that the effort may help shield the young, vulnerable populations, and the elderly from the possibility of contracting COVID-19, student access to all Catholic elementary and high schools in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis will be suspended on or before March 18, 2020 and remain closed at least through March 27.

Consistent with earlier guidance, the Archdiocese recommends that Catholic schools gather their teachers either this week or the week of March 22 to plan for how best to provide continuation of learning. We look to local Catholic schools for how best to engage students next week and through the end of the month.

These are extraordinary times and Catholic schools are served by extraordinary people. As the situation continues to develop, Catholic schools will evaluate how to best serve students in this difficult period. This will take time and patience. Catholic schools partner with parents in the education of their children. The present moment is an opportunity for us to work together with parents on how best to serve the needs of students. We do not have all the solutions today, and given the national emergency, we do not have to have all this figured out today.

Today, the Lord's Day, is a good time to step back from all of this and, trusting in the help of God, reflect on what this situation means for your family. We urge families, parents, pastors, heads of school and teachers to collaborate and assist in this educational endeavor. Together we can meet these challenges. During this period of closure, it is important to note that school buildings will be inaccessible to children, parents, or

community members. Local Catholic schools will provide more guidance in the days ahead. Our Catholic schools are served by tremendous teachers, staff, pastors, and leaders, who we stand in solidarity with at this time. Please join Archbishop Hebda and me in praying for children and families affected by these closures and for those suffering from this illness.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens
Vicar for Catholic Education

St. Michael Catholic School
16280 Duluth Ave SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372
952.447.2124 † saintmpl.org
