



October 23, 2020

Dear St. Mary's Families,

I hope your family enjoys a cozy weekend together as we enter the final week of October. We may only have four days of school this coming week, but those four days are going to be busy! Please ensure your child comes to school each day wearing a clean mask and that they have a spare mask stored in their backpack in case the mask he or she wears to school becomes soiled or dropped during the day. In addition, please remember that St. Mary's mask policy is still in place and if any parent needs to enter our building before, during, or after the school day a mask MUST be worn. Entering and being in our school requires that a mask be worn, it is not an option or suggestion. Although the City of Joplin no longer has a mask ordinance in place, our school policy requiring masks has not changed and signs are still posted on our front entrance doors as a reminder. Several parents have entered the school this week without masks and as we are experiencing a rise in local Covid-19 cases, we need to remain careful and responsible. Thank you.

Pink Out Day is Wednesday, October 28th in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month. Students may wear jeans with any shade of pink shirt (red is not deep pink, which several boys tried to explain to me last year) with jeans on this day.

Halloween will be celebrated at St. Mary's on Thursday, October 29th. The fun will begin with a costume parade starting at 8:30 a.m., and Mrs. Lone's 5th grade class will be leading the way. The classes will parade within the school and then proceed outside so parents can join in the fun. The northern section of the school parking lot will be closed off after morning drop-off so parents can bring lawn chairs or stand where cars usually park. Students will exit the school through the Early Childhood entrance, walking in the middle of the closed-off

parking lot until reaching the main entrance of the school. At this point students will walk on the sidewalk and go around the side of the school and parish building, entering back into the school through the south parish doors. Parents are also welcome to line up along the outside of the sidewalks or in the church courtyard to watch the parade. We ask that parents attending the parade wear a face mask and social distance as much as possible, in addition to not handing out candy to the students as they walk by. Students will return to their classrooms following the parade and [class Halloween parties will begin then, ending around 10:00 a.m.](#) Parent involvement at Halloween parties this year is limited to the designated room parent and one additional parent helper per class due to Covid-19 precautions. Parents who are acting as a room parent or helper are asked to remain in that specific classroom and not “party hop” to other classrooms to see other children or take photos for other parents. Although this is different than in previous years, it is a necessary adjustment to make this year and I appreciate your respect and understanding of this policy. Don't forget that school dismisses at Noon and After School Care will be offered until 5:30 p.m.

[Parent-Teacher Conferences are being held on Thursday, October 29th](#) from 12:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. Due to Covid-19, there are several options for conferences this year. Conferences can be held in-person in your child's classroom (with masks and social distancing protocols in place), by phone, or by Zoom meeting. Many parents signed up for conferences during our Open House in August and your child's teacher will be reaching out to you to confirm your conference time and which option you prefer. If you did not schedule a conference time at Open House, please reach out to your child's teacher to find a convenient time to meet.

[Please join us for a spooktacular Trunk or Treat event following Parent-Teacher Conferences from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the St. Mary's School parking lot.](#) Trunk or Treat is hosted by our 5th grade students and parents as a fundraiser for their spring trip each year. In addition to trunk or treating, there will be lots of games and activities for everyone—lots of outdoor games, a maze, tie dye mask making, and you don't even have to worry about dinner! Chili, hot dogs, chips, and drinks will be for sale in the courtyard area in front of the school, and Kona Ice will be available for a sweet treat. If you would like to enter the Trunk or Treat event and contest, you are welcome to decorate a car, truck, boat, motorcycle, or any other mode of transportation you would like to bring. Set up for the event starts at 6:00 p.m.

and there are great prizes for the entries that place 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the trunk or treat judging. If you have any questions about the event, please call the school office (623-1465). Mother Nature is going to cooperate so we can enjoy a beautiful fall evening outside, but if we have to reschedule due to weather, the make-up dates are Friday, October 30th or November 7th. [More details about the event and ways to help are attached to this email, thank you!](#)

[Día de los Muertos \(Day of the Dead\)](#) is celebrated on November 2nd, and [students have been learning about the holiday in their Spanish class](#). It is celebrated in Mexico and several other Latin American countries, as well as many places throughout the United States. The holiday coincides with our own Catholic celebration of All Souls Day when we remember and pray for our loved ones who have passed away. One of the traditions surrounding this holiday is to make an altar to honor those who have died. We are making a community altar at St. Mary's, and students have been invited to bring a picture to place on the altar of a loved one who has passed away. Fr. Justin Monaghan, pastor at St. Mary's for many years, passed away earlier this year on April 24th, and we would like to honor him in a special way on our altar. If you have a photo of him that you would like to share in addition to a family photo, we would be happy to place it on our altar. Father Justin baptized many of our students, and he gave several of our 5th graders their First Holy Communion. You will be able to view our altar during parent/teacher conferences on Thursday, October 29th in the main school hallway. Students may bring pictures beginning Monday, October 26th and they will be returned November 13th. Please write your name on the back of your photo to ensure it is returned. If you have any questions about the school project, please contact Mrs. Black. [Thank you, Mrs. Black for this wonderful St. Mary's tradition that helps teach an important cultural and religious holiday and also helps us remember and honor our loved ones who have passed away.](#) Gracias, Mrs. Black!

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated around the country each January and during this special week, Joplin Area Catholic Schools recognizes our dedicated and loving community with two special awards, the [Educator of the Year Award](#) and the [Benefactor of the Year Award](#). If you know an educator who goes above and beyond to educate, nurture, and inspire students, please consider nominating her or him this year. If you know of a JACS supporter who is generous in sharing their time and talents in ways that help our schools thrive,

please consider nominating him or her as well. Nomination forms are attached to this newsletter and are also available on the JACS website.

Thank you for all that you do for your child and family, including the commitment you show in their academic and faith formation by sending them to St. Mary's. Please remember that cooler October temperatures are here, and students should be wearing a jacket or coat so they stay warm and cozy during recess as the weather continues to cool down. [As a reminder, Winter Dress Code goes into effect on November 1st and shorts may no longer be worn to school, as well as a few other uniform adjustments.](#) Please refer to your Family Handbook for more information. I will include more details in next week's Communicator Newsletter as well.

God bless and take care,
Joanne Lown
jlown@jacss.org

Important Dates to Remember:

Wednesday, October 28 th Awareness	Pink Out Day supporting Breast Cancer
Thursday, October 29 th around 9:00 a.m.	Halloween Parade starting at 8:30 a.m. Classroom Halloween Parties starting
available until 5:30 p.m.	Noon Dismissal, After School Care
p.m.	Parent – Teacher Conferences, 12:30 – 6:00
Friday, October 30 th	Trunk or Treat, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
November 2 nd – 6 th	No School – Fall Break Scholastic Book Fair at St. Mary's

Monday, November 2nd

Inter-State School Photo Retakes

Tuesday, November 3rd

5th Grade Presidential Speeches starting at

8:30 a.m.