

December 15, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Brrrrrrrrrr. It's cold! It's winter! It's Bemidji! And it's almost Christmas! Doesn't that bring back nostalgic stories? Share them with your children as you create new ones in the process. There are soooo many ways to enjoy this wonderful holiday season.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: Tomorrow is our annual Christmas Program which includes a concert featuring our bands and choirs and a musical play. The students have been working diligently under the direction of our music teacher, Mrs. Anne Will, in preparation for this event. I thank Mrs. Betty Anderson for being our accompanist this year. Please join us either at the afternoon performance, beginning at 1:30, or at the evening one starting at 6:30. The Parent Association will offer hospitality after the afternoon program. For the night performance, upper **grade students should report to the band room by 6:00 and all other students to their classrooms by 6:15**. What a wonderful way to get into the Christmas spirit.

Much thanks to our PK students who entertained us last week with beautiful Christmas music at their programs. We were warmed by their exuberance and enthusiasm.

THANK YOU FOR THE CHRISTMAS GOODIES: Yum, Yum, Yum! The office abounds with delicious treats of the season. The staff and I greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness, generosity, and culinary skills. Thank you so much.

ADVENT PROJECTS: Blankets, mittens, Tubs of Love, articles for Servants of Shelter.....whatever the classroom project, we are grateful for the cooperation and participation of our students and families as we practice the attitude of giving.....Advent Prayer Services occur each morning when we don't attend Mass. Mrs. Hengel's first grade, Mrs. Swedmark's kindergarten, Mrs. Williams' eighth grade, and Mr. Belanger's sixth grade will be our prayer leaders in the remaining days. Join us in the gym at 8:30 A.M....Students in grades three through eight will have had the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation during the Advent season.

CHRISTMAS PARTIES: As usual, the last day of class before Christmas vacation will be one of partying with classmates. Some classes are having gift exchanges; others are not. Check with your child for specific details.

GEOGRAPHY BEE: The first oral round of our Geography Bee will be on Friday, December 18, at 10:00 in the church. Over sixty students in grades four through eight will vie for the chance to advance to the finals in January. Test your own personal knowledge of geography and be amazed at what our students know.

MIDTERM GRADES: It's that time again. Students in grades five through eight will get their midterm marks this Thursday or Friday. Parents, please ask to see them. Discuss them and then sign and return the form to school by next Tuesday. The end of the second grading period is January 15.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL: The last day of classes for students for 2009 is Tuesday, December 22. School resumes for the New Year on Monday, January 4, 2010. Teachers have an inservice day on Wednesday, December 23

H1N1 VACCINATION CLINIC: St. Philip's School will host another H1N1 Clinic on Monday, December 21, at 1:30. The injection or nasal spray will be available to all students and staff. Students nine and younger who need the booster may get it at this time, provided they received the first dose on or before November 24th and have another signed consent form. There will be adequate amounts of injections and nasal sprays available. Consent forms for grades 6-8 accompany this letter. Consent forms for all other students are available in the school office.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEW YEAR: January will bring the finals of the Geography Bee, the start of the Spelling Bee, a math meet, the end of one quarter and the beginning of the next, Catholic Schools Week and its activities, the first drawings of the new 52 Club, a Parent Meeting, Information Night, and the opening of registration for the 2010-2011 school year. Lots to do.

52 CLUB RAFFLE: How are you doing with your ticket sales? Need more? Our goal is to have all tickets sold by mid-January. Remember that you are responsible for the tickets that you received. You will need to turn in the money or turn in the unsold tickets in January. Good luck in selling that winning ticket!

WINTER WEAR: With the cold weather upon us, it is necessary to dress for the conditions. Although many students come to school in a warm car, they should be prepared for possible emergencies. They also have to go outside daily if the temperature is at least zero. Coats, gloves, snow pants, boots, and hats help keep bodies warm. If you have sent any of those items with your child and you can't find them now, please check our Lost and Found. It's full.

MEAL PROGRAM: At any time during the year, if your economic circumstances change, you may apply for benefits through the Federal Meals Program. This could reduce lunch costs from full payment (\$2.10) to reduced (\$.40) or free. The benefits are wonderful.

At the same time, please remember to keep your meal accounts current. When you receive a reminder, please pay in a timely manner.

PARKS AND RECREATION EVENTS: The Bemidji Parks and Recreation Department announces affordable activities for all ages. Santa's Workshop held at the Public Works Building from 3:30 until 6:00 on December 16 & 17. This is an opportunity to make gifts for others at a cost of \$5 per gift. Candy Land at Neilson Reise on Friday, December 18, from 5:30 to 7:00. Cost-\$2.50 for student/child and \$3.00 for adults. Parent and Preschool Skate: Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 10:30 at Neilson Reise Arena. Cost-\$1. Manic Mondays at Nymore Park on January 18, 25, and February 15, from 1:00-3:00. Adult Co-Ed Broomball running from January 10 through March 7. Cost-\$360 per team of 10-12 members. Visit www.ci.bemidji.mn.us or call Samantha Parker at 333-1857 for more info.

SERVICE HOURS: Please remember to submit your Service Hours by e-mailing us, dropping us a note, or filling out a Service Hour form. It really doesn't matter how you let us know that you have completed some hours, only that you do. Most families are obligated to fulfill thirty hours. As of the end of November, sixty-five families still had not submitted any hours. Is your family one of them? Every family, parish or not, needs to do their share. Thanks.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS....the babies who are entering our lives.....the friends and relatives who are leaving....our men and women in the armed services....those who are experiencing difficult situations.....those who will be away from families this holiday season....those who are hurting....our world.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS: On behalf of the St. Philip's School staff, I wish to extend our sincere wishes for peace, hope, and joy to each and every one of you. May God's gift of Jesus be warmly received and forever cherished. Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." John 1:14

Very truly,

Carol Rettinger
Principal