

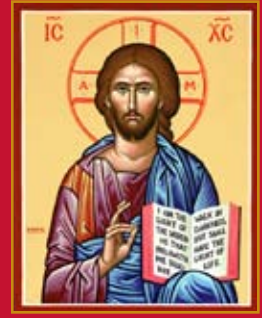


ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL
CATHOLIC
EDUCATIONAL
ASSOCIATION



NEWS

THIRD ANNUAL SPECIAL NEEDS CONFERENCE

January 18-20, 2009
Supported by the
Catholic Daughters of
the Americas

Keynote Address: The
Catholic Imagination.
Brother Rick Curry, S.J.,
Ph.D.

Br. Rick Curry will present a narrative on the founding of the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped (NTWH) and the efforts to instill a Catholic imagination in its students.



Hotel

Doubletree Guest Suites Charleston-Historic District
181 Church Street
Charleston SC 29401

Reservations: Ask for the NCEA Conference Rate.

Tel: 1-843-577-2644

Fax: 1-843-577-2697

NCEA Special Rate (Single/double occupancy)
\$129.00

For more information or to download a registration form, please go to http://www.ncea.org/UserFiles/File/Elem/Special_Needs_Conference_2009.pdf.

NCEA 2009 CONVENTION (ANAHEIM) ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS NOVEMBER 3, 2008

NCEA is coming to Anaheim,
California for the 2009 NCEA
Convention and Exposition & NPCD
Convocation, April 14 to 16, 2009.



On November 3, 2008, the preliminary program, convention and hotel registrations will be available online at www.ncea.org/events/NCEAConventionCentral.asp. Please visit our web pages for an updated preliminary program, all registration and housing forms, as well as other important information.

This year, we have created a “user-friendly” registration form and process. PLEASE NOTE: In order to take advantage of the group registration rate, ALL attendees MUST be listed and submitted together. There will be no add-ons to the group rate once registration forms have been received.

Plan to register early: those who register between November 3, 2008 and January 30, 2009, will be entered into a raffle for 4 “one-day-park-hopper” Disneyland tickets and other prizes. Don't miss this opportunity to participate in well-planned educational sessions at the convention and fun-filled evenings with family, friends, and colleagues.

Schools to Receive Public Alert Radios

As part of a massive effort to safeguard children across the nation, the federal government is providing private schools with free special-purpose radios that will alert officials to local weather hazards and other emergencies. Every religious and independent K-12 school and preschool in the

Year of St. Paul

June 29, 2008 - June 29, 2009



*“For I decided to know nothing among you except
Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”*

—1 Cor. 2.2

country is slated to receive a radio sometime in September 2008.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the public alert radios provide warnings about, and offer responses to, a host of emergencies, such as “an approaching tornado, ...a derailed train posing a hazardous material threat, or the urgent need to be on the lookout for an abducted child.” The expectation is that the early warnings and proposed responses will save lives.

Upon receiving the radios, private school officials will have to register them, program them, and complete a license agreement affirming that the federal government owns the radios. The agreement allows private schools to use the equipment without becoming recipients of federal financial assistance. Since the program is voluntary, school officials also have the option of rejecting the radios and returning them to the government at no charge. Information about registering, programming, licensing, or returning the radios is available at: <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>, established by NOAA to provide a comprehensive overview of the program. The site includes operating instructions for the radios and a



helpful section of frequently asked questions (<http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/faq.htm>).

To provide school personnel with even more information, officials at the U.S. Department of Education have set up a series of conference calls to review the program and respond to questions. The dial-in number is (888) 390-0980; the pass code is 8723261. Dates and times are as follows:

Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at	1:00 pm (ET)
Monday, September 8, 2008 at	1:00 pm (ET)
Thursday, September 18, 2008 at	1:00 pm (ET)
Monday, September 29, 2008 at	11:00 am (ET)

Two years ago, the federal government distributed public alert radios to every public school in the country. CAPE has been working with government officials since that time to ensure the program’s extension to religious and independent schools.

From *Cape Update* (Council for American Private Education), 21 August 2008

DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE

“WE NEED NEW BLOOD!”

If you are the Principal of a Catholic elementary school, it is not uncommon to wear many hats. It’s probably safe to say that in addition to the Development Director, principals are also encouraged to ask for money or volunteer support to keep things running at an efficient level around their schools. Whether we’re asking volunteers or donors for their ongoing support, it’s not uncommon to hear the following line: “*We need new blood!*” How many times have you heard this?

In this month’s column, I’d like to address three solutions concerning the search for “new blood.” We all know how much dedication and sacrifice it takes to keep Catholic schools running. The three solutions entail:

- recruiting new parents,
- prospecting for volunteers, and
- empowering your parents to be your “sales force.”

New Parents

First, let’s take a look at what seems to be obvious when it comes to engaging new volunteers, but can often be forgotten: new parents. Each August brings a new set of parents,

who are sending their first child to kindergarten or first grade (or pre-school, if applicable). They’re new. They’re anxious. They’re excited! They’re even open to someone taking their hand, just like their son or daughter, except you have the opportunity to ask for their involvement. How do you do this?

Before going any further, it should be noted that one should first build a solid relationship with new parents before asking for monetary support. One of the best ways to do that is to get to know them. Here’s a tip that has worked well for some in the development profession. When a family enrolls their child(ren) they are usually required to fill out a form that includes a wide range of information. If it is your job to raise money, you want to look at each new family form and pay particular attention to their employer(s) and position(s) within the company. (If you don’t already include this information, consider adding it for next year.) This is one way to gauge which families might have the greatest capacity to support your school financially. It can also indicate if one of the spouses stays at home, as this type of parent may make an excellent volunteer at your school.

It is vital to call these parents at the start of each year to

introduce yourself and request the opportunity for a visit. Do not ask them for money on your first visit. You have to make sure they like your school first! Keep in mind you have eight years to build this relationship and ask for money annually. But the sooner you get to know them and get them “plugged in,” the sooner they will be open to supporting your school above and beyond tuition...if you ask! You can run the risk of leaving “money on the table” if you wait to ask until their children are in junior high. Why? Because then they will tell you that they’re saving that money for high school tuition.

Prospecting for volunteers

If you’re looking solely for volunteers, take a walk near the child drop-off area before and after school. There’s a good chance you’ll see some of the same parents who are socializing with each other between dropping off and picking up their children. That’s usually a fair indication that they stay at home. Even if that’s a false assumption, you can make your presence known during these times and discover that on your own. Start by showing interest in them. Ask them what they think of your school, what keeps them busy during the day, what their interests are, etc. You get a feel for the parents and they become more comfortable with you. In return, you begin to discover who can assist you with special projects, whether it’s a fundraiser or day-to-day activities at your school. The bottom line here is that you want to give “new blood” the opportunity to participate in your school’s mission.

Parents as sales force

The administration of a school does everything possible to promote the school. But we all know that parents are the greatest sales force for the school. Provide pertinent information to those parents who are most involved with your school. You want parents to be walking ambassadors for the school and in order to make that possible you need to provide them with key information to keep them “in the know.” This allows each parent to speak positively and to be well-informed when your school is brought in social settings outside of school. Once or twice a year pay special visits to your most involved parents (especially those who are *new and recently involved*), or give them a call, or send them an e-mail with the “latest and greatest” that’s taking place at your school. This is one part of the cycle to seek, discover, and implement new sources of stewardship to your school.

In conclusion, the “new blood” is there. They’re just waiting to be asked. But keep in mind it doesn’t all have to be done by you. You can inform and empower your parents to be the “valuable volunteers,” who go out and recruit other volunteers. They can accomplish this simply by sharing with others the good that your school is doing through its mission. When it comes to seeking “new blood,” keep in mind the four “I’s”: **Identify, Inform, Involve, and Invest**. Your success will become their success. And they will want to share this with others.



Jeremy Belsky

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NEWS FOR TEACHERS OF PRESCHOOL & EARLY GRADES

CELEBRATING ADVENT WITH CHILDREN

The season of Advent takes place during the four weeks before Christmas. The word *Advent* means “coming.” During this season, we wait and prepare for the coming of Jesus on Christmas day. Purple is the liturgical color that reflects this time of waiting.

It is important to help children celebrate the season of Advent. This can be accomplished in many ways. Children can create a symbol of Advent, become familiar with a scripture passage that is read during the season of Advent, and learn about a saint whose feast day is celebrated during the season of Advent.

A Symbol of Advent

One of the most well known symbols of Advent is the Advent wreath. This wreath is made from a circle of evergreen branches with four candles—three purple and one pink. The circular wreath reminds us that God’s love for us never ends. The color green symbolizes our hope in the coming of Jesus. The candles symbolize that Jesus is the Light of the World. One candle is lit at each Sunday of the Advent season. With the lighting of each additional candle, the light of the Advent wreath grows brighter, symbolizing that Christmas, Jesus’ birth, is getting closer. The purple candles symbolize faithful expectation and the pink candle symbolizes joy.

Help each child make an Advent wreath. Give each child a piece of tag board. Using green paint, have each child make a thumbprint circle on the tag board. Have each child dip his entire pointer finger in purple paint and make three “candles” on the circle of green. Have each child dip his entire pointer finger in pink paint and make one “candle” on the circle of green. Each week of Advent, invite each child to “light” one candle on his Advent wreath by dipping his smallest fingertip in yellow paint and printing this on the top of one of the candles.

As the children light the candles on their Advent Wreaths, sing the following song with them to the tune of *London Bridge*. Add another verse each week of Advent.

- Week 1. Advent is the special time, the special time, the special time.
Advent is the special time, we **wait** for Jesus’ coming.
- Week 2. Advent is the special time, the special time, the special time.
Advent is the special time, we **prepare** for Jesus’ coming.
- Week 3. Advent is the special time, the special time, the special time.
Advent is the special time, we are filled with joy.
- Week 4. Advent is the special time, the special time, the special time.
Advent is the special time, Christmas will soon be here.

An Advent Scripture Passage

During the Advent season we hear special passages from Scripture. On the first Sunday of Advent (November 30, 2008), Isaiah portrays us as clay and God as the potter who molds the clay (Isaiah 64.7). Here is the abridged reading (Isaiah 63.16b-17, 19b; 64.5-8):



You, LORD, are our father,
our redeemer you are named forever.
Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways,
and harden our hearts so that we fear you not?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage.
Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful;
all of us have become like unclean people,
all our good deeds are like polluted rags;
we have all withered like leaves,
and our guilt carries us away like the wind.
There is none who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to cling to you;
for you have hidden your face from us

and have delivered us up to our guilt.
Yet, O LORD, you are our father;
we are the clay and you the potter:
we are all the work of your hands.

Provide each child with a small amount of clay. Encourage the children to form or mold symbols of themselves from this clay. Invite the children to place their creations on the prayer table. Throughout the season of Advent, remind the children that God molded each of us into the person we are.

A Saint Whose Feast is Celebrated in the Advent Season



On December 13, we celebrate the feast of Saint Lucy. Share the story of Saint Lucy with the children:

Saint Lucy loved Jesus very much and lived her life showing this love. Although Lucy’s family was wealthy, when she grew up, she gave everything she owned to the poor. She talked to God in prayer often. She had beautiful, sparkling eyes and people could see God’s love shining from them. The name Lucy means “light.” Her feast is celebrated during Advent, when we await the coming of Jesus, the “light of the world.” In Sweden, this day is celebrated by the wearing of crowns of candles by children. Saint Lucy is the patron saint of those with eye diseases and of the blind.

Help children make a crown of candles like those worn on the feast of Saint Lucy. Give the children a small ball of air-dry clay and have them shape it into a snake. Then show them how to join the two ends together to form a ring and place it on a small paper plate. Invite the children to color the clay green with markers to symbolize evergreens. Give each child 3-5 small birthday candles and have them insert these into the clay wreath. Encourage the children to take their wreaths home and share the story of Saint Lucy with their families.

Conclusion

Advent is the season in which we wait for the coming of God’s Son, Jesus.

For children who are anxiously awaiting Christmas day, we can help make this time of waiting more meaningful by involving them in activities that focus on this special season of Advent.



Julie Brunet
National Creative
Consultant,
William H.
Sadler, Inc.



Renée McAlister
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TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS WITHOUT A GYMNASIUM

Teaching in confined spaces with limited resources is a common problem for physical education instructors nationwide. As is the case with many Catholic schools, Immaculate Conception does not have a gymnasium or any outdoor field space to enhance its physical education curriculum. However, seeing the school's resources for what they are, rather than for what they are not, enabled the effective elimination of frustrations resulting from a lack of space. Once this paradigm shift occurred, specific advantages to teaching physical education in small spaces were realized. Consequently, the focus of teaching the physical education class has shifted towards lessons that work harmoniously with my environment, rather than against it.

Body weight calisthenics and partner-resistance training is an effective way to promote muscular development, core stability, and endurance in elementary-age children. This type of training, coupled with a rudimentary form of plyometrics, requires little space to implement. The consistent application of this exercise program has clearly enhanced the strength of our student population, as confirmed by our favorable results with the *President's Physical Fitness Test*. Since a large percentage of our students participate in sports programs outside school, the daily physical education training our students receive better prepares them for the specific demands of their



chosen sport. In addition, body weight calisthenics, partner-resistance training, and plyometrics enhance the musculoskeletal health of young children, thus helping to prevent the most common types of sports-related injuries.

While small spaces may not provide the ideal environment for playing large scale team games, they are certainly conducive to developing sport-specific skills. In fact, teaching sport-specific skills in confined spaces allows our students to focus on mastering the fundamentals of a given sport long before they are asked to apply them in game situations. In terms of developing team skills, two-on-one drills for soccer, basketball, or floor hockey effectively teach offensive cooperation, moving without the ball, and defensive positioning. These team skills can also be applied to other sports as well.

Despite working with limited space, a solid foundation for physical development and sport-specific skills can be established effectively. The first step is to focus on what is possible, rather than reacting only to the existence of limitations to excuse our failures. This paradigm shift can ultimately prepare our students for success as our school continues to grow in the future.



Andrew Pohl

Immaculate Conception School, 1431 N. North Park Ave., Chicago IL 60610

WHAT GETS STUDENTS EXCITED ABOUT LEARNING?

Young people live in a world of images and technology. Many students are motivated by incorporating graphic elements, music, and text into their studies. They are much more excited and focused if they can use images to enhance their learning. My students love to be involved in Jeopardy or a 20 Questions PowerPoint game as a review before a test. If your students know how to use PowerPoint, they can make their own games and present them to the class. In addition, during Guided Reading, I introduce new vocabulary words to the class. They then find definitions and synonyms for each word and write a sentence for comprehension of the word. They go to a website to make a word search or a crossword puzzle and print it out to share with their peers.

In today's world it is essential that our children become proficient in computer skills. Computers support lifelong learning and will allow students to adapt to our global world and what the 21st century is asking of them.

There is so much information on the Internet for teachers and students alike. Immerse your students in technology and see how it broadens their knowledge and engages them in new and exciting ways.

Below are reliable resources that I use:

- <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/>
 - word searches/crossword puzzles and much more
- <http://scholastic.com> (free)
 - interactive language arts activities, science, social studies, math, Spanish PreK-12
- <http://unitedstreaming.com> (school must purchase)
 - fabulous short films for every subject K-12
- <http://readwritethink.org> (free)
 - sponsored by the International Reading Association
 - Includes lesson plans and interactive student activities: click on student resources for interactive ideas for your own lesson plans.
- <http://elaine.sage1.googlepages.com/>
 - interactive websites/award winning book websites



Elaine Sage

St. Francis Xavier School, Wilmette, IL 60091

NEWS ABOUT THE YEAR OF ST. PAUL

THE YEAR OF ST. PAUL

Since 2 July 2008, Pope Benedict XVI has been doing a series of exegeses on the Epistles of St. Paul at his General Audiences. He begins by saying:

“Today I would like to begin a new cycle of Catecheses focusing on the great Apostle St Paul. As you know, this year is dedicated to him, from the liturgical Feast of Sts Peter and Paul on 29 June 2008 to the same Feast day in 2009. The Apostle Paul, an outstanding and almost inimitable yet stimulating figure, stands before us as an example of total dedication to the Lord and to his Church, as well as of great openness to humanity and its cultures. It is right, therefore, that we reserve a special place for him in not only our veneration but also in our effort to understand what he has to say to us as well, Christians of today.”

It is the Holy Father's intention that Catholics today un-

derstand and appropriate the meaning of the Pauline epistles, not merely regard them as documents of the past. As he said on 27 August 2008:

*“Moreover, it is he [Paul] who writes: “I do it all for the sake of the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9: 23), exercising with unre-served generosity what he called “anxiety for the Churches” (2 Cor. 11: 28). **We see a commitment that can only be explained by a soul truly fascinated by the light of the Gospel, in love with Christ, a soul sustained by profound conviction; it is necessary to bring Christ's light to the world, to proclaim the Gospel to all of us. This seems to me to be what remains for us from this brief review of St Paul's journeys: to see his passion for the Gospel and thereby grasp the greatness, the beauty, indeed the deep need of the Gospel for all of us. Let us pray the Lord who caused St Paul to see his light, who made him hear his word and***

profoundly moved his heart, that we may also see his light, so that our hearts too may be moved by his Word and thus that we too may give the light of the Gospel and the truth of Christ to today's world which thirsts for it."

The Holy Father's reflections on St. Paul's epistles are available at the Vatican's web site at: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2008/index_en.htm.

Other Resources

The official web site of the Year of St. Paul (*Anno Paolino Bimillenario della nascita di San Paolo Apostolo*) may be accessed at: <http://www.annopaolino.org/index.asp?lang=eng>.

Resources on the Year of St. Paul from the USCCB are available at: <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/stpaul/index.shtml>.

Document on indulgences granted during the Year of St. Paul may be viewed here: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/tribunals/apost_penit/documents/rc_trib_appen_doc_20080510_san-paolo_en.html.

Some interesting early images of St. Paul are available at the Catholic Culture web site at: http://www.catholicculture.org/Culture/LiturgicalYear/overviews/St_Paul/st_paul_images.cfm.

The Places of St. Paul: Malta

After being held prisoner for two years and after hearings before the council of priests, before the Roman procurator Felix and his successor Festus, before Herod Agrippa II, and again before Festus, he appealed to Rome on his citizen's right. So he was sent to Rome under guard. (Acts 21.27–28) On the way they were shipwrecked on Malta but finally landed at Puteoli (Puzzuoli). Paul was imprisoned (A.D. 60) in Rome but was allowed to conduct his ministry among the Roman Christians and Jews who visited him. Of his final fate tradition says that he was beheaded south of the city, near the Ostian Way, probably during the persecution of Nero. A lesser tradition claims that Paul was released after his first imprisonment and that he went East again, and perhaps also to Spain, before his martyrdom. Some scholars believe that Paul was executed after his initial imprisonment, probably A.D. 62. St. Paul's tomb and shrine are at the Roman basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls.

"After we had reached safety, we then learned that the island was called Malta. The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us round it. Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one



Rabat (Malta). St. Agatha's Catacomb.

another, 'This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.' He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They were expecting him to swell up or drop dead, but after they had waited a long time and saw that nothing unusual had happened to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god. Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It so happened that the father of Publius lay sick in bed with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and cured him by praying and putting his hands on him. After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. They bestowed many honors on us, and when we were about to sail, they put on board all the provisions we needed. Three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there for three days; then we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. There we found believers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage." (Acts 28.1-15)

Feast of St Paul's Shipwreck Valletta, Malta

On his return from the Holy Land in A.D. 60, Saint Paul was shipwrecked on the island of Malta, as recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Saint Paul is the Patron Saint of Malta and the anniversary of the shipwreck is now a public holiday, celebrated with church services. The day is a public holiday throughout the islands.