



October 2015

# CATHOLIC SCHOOL CHRONICLE

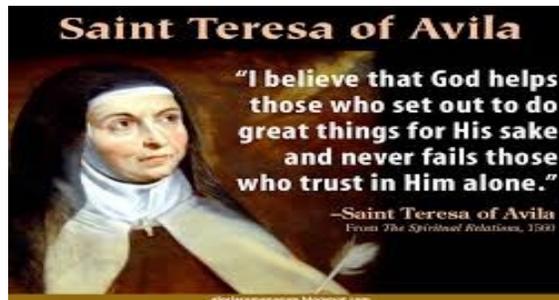
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October is an exciting month. The Catholic Church will celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint Teresa of Jesus (Teresa of Avila). Saint Teresa of Jesus reformed the Carmelite Order with the help of John of the Cross. She advocated penance, silence, and a simple habit without shoes from which comes the term “discalced.” Saint Teresa is a Doctor of the Church. Two of her quotes are: “Always think of yourself as everyone’s servant,” and “Look for Christ Our Lord in everyone and you will then have respect and reverence for them all.”

Also during the month of October, Pope Francis will canonize the parents of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus- Louis and Zelig Martin. We celebrated a memorial dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7<sup>th</sup>.



“...I bend my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes it’s name.”

Ephesians 3:14-15

## DIOCESAN SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

### Our Lady of Lourdes Kindergarten

Our Lady of Lourdes Kindergarten achieved NAC Accreditation in June, 2015! The road leading to that achievement was long and filled with challenges and triumphs.

(Read more about this wonderful achievement on page 2.)



## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM. . .

**The family which experiences the joy of faith communicates it naturally. That family is the salt of the earth and the light of the world; it is the leaven of society. *Pope Francis, October 27, 2013***

Recently, I have given a lot of thought to the role of the family in education. In the article, *Rules and Relationships: Which comes first?*, author Sarah McKibben stresses the need to make connections with families by not only having them come into the classroom but by knowing what is coming on in their community as a means of relating. She give many cultural examples. I would love to hear about strategies we are using in our schools. What are you doing to relate to and engage families in your school or classroom?

### OUR LADY OF LOURDES KINDERGARTEN ACCREDITATION CONTINUED...

We began our journey by participating in Child Care Resources' Infant/Toddler Program. With God's watchful eye over us, that year the Infant/Toddler Program was expanded to include the Preschool so that all of our classes benefited from the program! We used ITERS and ECERS program evaluation tools to assist in making our improvements. We made tremendous strides during that year.

At the completion of the Infant/Toddler/Preschool program, we were invited to enter the Child Care Resources' RISE program. The focus of the RISE program is to prepare centers for accreditation. The is a five year program dedicated to helping centers address each and every standard endorsed by the Association of Early Learning Leaders (NAC Accreditation). They provided monetary stipends to enable the center to purchase items that specifically addressed NAC standards.

After working for two years in the RISE program, we entered into NAC's Two Year Self-Study period. All stakeholder's were active participants in this study. Each standard was evaluated and a plan was then developed to ensure we met each one. Both teachers and parents had to adjust to classroom changes and changes in school-wide procedures.

Everyone affiliated with the center dedicated themselves to the idea of continuous improvement which is the essence of accreditation. The realization that because we work with God's most precious gifts, our young children, we can never become complacent and "rest on our laurels." At the end of the Self-Study period we applied for our validation visit. During the two day validation visit, our validator toured the school, examined staff and children files, observed in five randomly selected classrooms and completed the NAC Classroom Observation Tool, examined lesson plans and student portfolios, toured the facilities, and met with me, the administrator, to discuss the center's goals for the upcoming year.

After the validator's visit, we had to wait for the Association of Early Learning Leaders to meet and approve our application. Two months later we were notified that our application had been approved and we received out Certificate of Accreditation!

It was a long and winding road, but we have arrived at the first destination on our journey as the first accredited preschool in the Diocese of Birmingham! Currently we are working toward our second destination which is to continue accreditation status thought the process of an annual report to the Association for Early Learning Leaders. Please join us in celebrating our achievement and join is on this journey to excellence through continuous improvement!

### Why Assessment?

- ◇ Assessments provide direction to both the teacher and student
- ◇ Informal assessment results help the teacher determine pacing, measure depth of knowledge, and check for understanding or mastery
- ◇ Assessments provide evidence of application and transference of knowledge
- ◇ Assessments help us "know" our students, they give us insight into each learner so that we may met their individual needs

**Our FOCUS  
On  
ASSESSMENT is  
NOT  
about teaching to  
the test!**

**It's about...**

**Knowing our  
students and  
GROWTH!**

## RESOURCES

### Ten Articles Worth Reading (according to ASCD)

1. *How We Got Grading Wrong, and What to Do About It* (October 2013)
2. *Tapping into the Power of Gratitude* (November 2013)
3. *What If They Don't Show?* (March 2014)
4. *If you Build It: Tinkering With the Maker Mind-Set* (June 2014)
5. *Lesson Closure: Stick the Landing* (June 2014)
6. *The Two-Minute Relationship Builder* (June 2014)
7. *Teaching to the Teenage Brain* (September 2014)
8. *Three Ways to Engage Parents in High-Poverty Settings* (September 2014)
9. *Writing a Master Plan* (April 2015)
10. *Why Glorify Failure to Enhance Success?* (June 2015)

Education Update/2015



Blessed are your  
eyes because they  
see, and your ears  
because they hear.  
Matthew 3:16

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **ACTM (Alabama Council of Teachers of Mathematics): October 22 & 23 McWane Science Center, Birmingham**  
This is a wonderful conference normally held in Montgomery with many opportunities to attend interest based content/grade specific sessions.
- **2015 ESOL Educators Conference: October 30 The Junior League of Birmingham 2212 20th Ave. S. Birmingham, AL 35223**  
This conference is only \$35 for the entire day including lunch and would be a fantastic opportunity for those serving English Language Learners to expand their repertoire of strategies to better reach these learners.
- **Alabama Reading Association 47th Annual Fall Conference: November 12-13, Birmingham Marriott at Grandview, Birmingham**  
This local conference attracts Nationally acclaimed speakers that this year include Jeff Anderson author of *Mechanically Inclined*, Ann Marie Corgill Alabama Teacher of the Year 2014 and author of *Of Primary Importance*, and Kwame Alexander 2015 Newbery Medal winner for his book *Crossover*.

If you or your team have a specific interest or would like to be a part of a book study on a certain topic please contact Julie Emory-Johnson at: [jejohnson@bhmdiocese.org](mailto:jejohnson@bhmdiocese.org).

Julie will be offering sessions in various parts of the diocese on “hot” topics in education so look for those to be announced here in future issues of the Chronicle.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- ⇒ **October 15th-Student Youth Protection Audit due to CSO**
- ⇒ **October 18th-21st-Catholic Leadership Summit Atlanta, GA**
- ⇒ **October 22nd-23rd -ACTM, McWane Center Birmingham, AL**
- ⇒ **October 30th-ESOL Educators Conference, Birmingham, AL**
- ⇒ **November 4th-Pac Meeting, Benedictine Sisters' Retreat Center**
- ⇒ **November 10th-Principals' Meeting**



Serve one  
another humbly  
in love.

Galatians 5:13



**OUR VISION AND MISSION**

**OUR VISION:**

Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Birmingham provide an excellent educational experience in the Catholic tradition enabling all students to develop their God-given talents.

**OUR MISSION:**

The mission of the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic School System is to educate our students to seek God in Truth and for loving service by teaching the message of the Gospel, forming a community of faith, providing the whole child with a Catholic and Christ-centered environment, and inspiring all to reach their full academic and spiritual potential.

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**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE**

|                         |                     |                                                                                            |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SUPERINTENDENT:         | FRAN LAWLOR         | <a href="mailto:flawlor@bhmdiocese.org">flawlor@bhmdiocese.org</a>                         |
| DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:  | REV. JOHN MCDONALD  | <a href="mailto:directorofeducation@bhmdiocese.org">directorofeducation@bhmdiocese.org</a> |
| DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM: | JULIE EMORY-JOHNSON | <a href="mailto:jejohnson@bhmdiocese.org">jejohnson@bhmdiocese.org</a>                     |
| EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT:    | CHRISTINE SALBERG   | <a href="mailto:csalberg@bhmdiocese.org">csalberg@bhmdiocese.org</a>                       |

**P.O. Box 12047, 35202**  
**2121 3rd Avenue North, 35203**  
**Birmingham, Alabama**  
**205.838.8303—Fax 205.838.8330**  
**www.bhmcatholicschools.com**

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