

Upcoming Event Dates:

Dec 1st – Advent Mass 9am @ ESM
Dec 1st – 2nd – Kindergarten Parent Meetings
Dec 3rd – Report Cards sent home
Dec 7th – Christmas Clothing Day
Dec 9th – Christmas Character Day
Dec 13th – Turkey Dinner
Dec 14th – Christmas Light up Day
Dec 16th – Ugly Sweater Day
Dec 17th – PJ Day and Bingo
Dec 17th – Last Day of classes before Christmas Break

Jan 4th – TUESDAY is the first day back for Students after holidays



Principal's Message

December, 2021

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas..." – or is it? As I begin writing my message, there is no snow on the ground, and the forecast for December 1 is +18! However, there are other indicators that Christmas is near – lights on the houses, Christmas trees being decorated and the unusual number of commercials telling us of the great Christmas deals. I have often heard people debate when is the best time to begin decorating for Christmas – immediately after American Thanksgiving, at the beginning of Advent, or I have even heard arguments that suggest anytime after Halloween is 'fair game'. While one part of me thinks this is far too early, I have to admit that I have tried to convince my wife that there are certain merits to leaving our lights and decorations up all year – primarily the amount of time it takes to set up and take down. Needless to say, I have yet to win this battle.

As a school, we have created a bit of a tradition in regards to decorating. We like to get together just as the Advent season is beginning to, hopefully, bring a little more joy to our students. On Friday, November 26, staff gave up their afternoon to decorate the school. As the students arrived on the following Monday, their faces were aglow – not just as a reflection from the quantity of lights we set up, but in delight of all that was done for them (at least that is what I would like to believe).

As we continue examining the Advent season, our school will also reflect on its importance within our faith. At the pinnacle of our faith is the birth of Jesus Christ, God made incarnate. The season of Advent, consisting of the four Sundays prior to Christmas where Christians prepare for the coming of Christ, began on Sunday, November 28, 2021. Our school will continue to celebrate the Advent season, beginning with a Mass on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, prepared by our 6MI class and celebrated by Fr. Kevin. While the 6MI class will be the only class welcome in the gym, the rest of the classes will have the Mass live-streamed to them. I feel so blessed that we can gather as a community and continue to celebrate the Mass as we prepare for the coming of Christ. We will also be having weekly celebrations leading up to the Christmas holidays. I would encourage you to discuss with your child the importance of this occasion and what the school is doing to help in preparation.



Of course, part of the school's preparation is coming together as a community to help celebrate the season. While we have had to cancel or change so many of the things we had traditionally offered, I am pleased to announce that we will be having our turkey dinner. On Monday, December 13, all students (Kindergarten – grade 6) and staff are going to be treated to a turkey dinner. Special thanks to London Road Market for their generosity in preparing this meal for a very affordable cost. If you are able to volunteer to help serve the meal between 10:15 and 11:45, please contact the office. Also, in an effort to keep some 'normalcy', we will be sponsoring special dress-up days throughout the month and have our school-wide pajama and BINGO day on Friday, December 17.

As we say goodbye to this year, we will also have to say goodbye to a number of education students who have been completing their practicum at our school. Mlle Aurora Gray was completing her PS III, her final education practicum before becoming a teacher, and was working in our morning French Immersion kindergarten. We have also had three students from the University of Lethbridge complete their PSI round: Miss Elizabeth Lajoie was with Mrs. Mead and our grade 3 English class, Miss Chelsey Galbraith was placed with Mrs. Nelson and assisted with our 4 English program, and Miss Justine Johnson was shared between Mme Campmans and Mme Bouchard. We would like to thank these student-teachers for their hard work and wish them all the best on their educational journeys.

As a reminder, the Christmas break will run from December 20 to Tuesday, January 4, 2022.

Merry Christmas and God bless! I hope to see you all in the New Year.

Dan

Mme Bouchard's December Message 2021

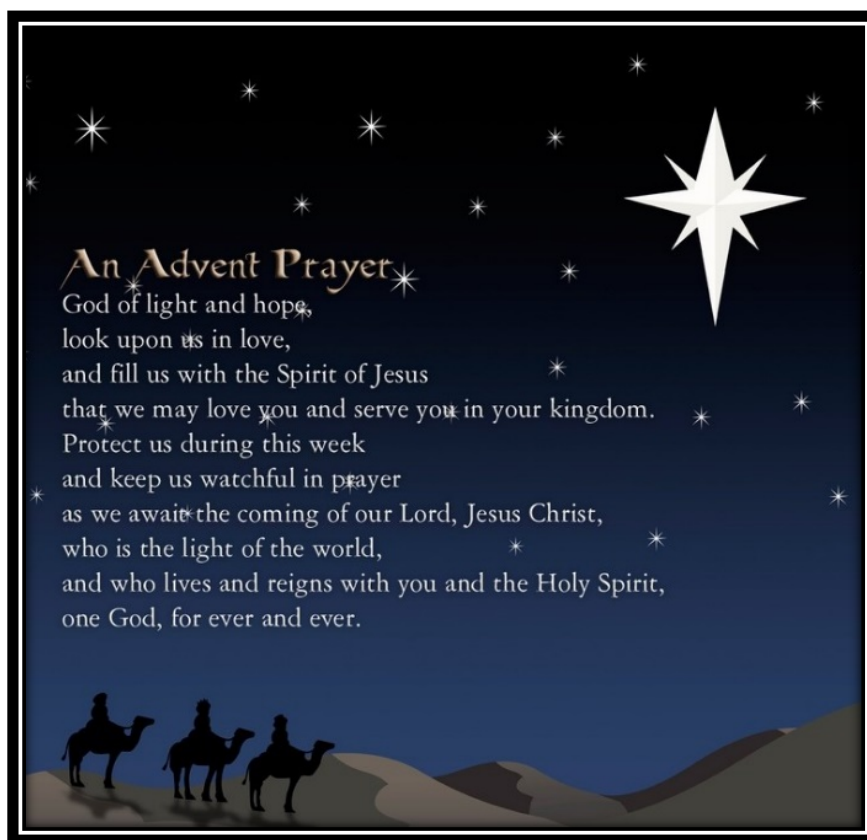
It's the most wonderful time of the year! Welcome to the Advent Season. This is a magical time of year as we prepare our hearts and our lives for the true meaning of Christmas and the anticipated hope of Jesus. Let us prepare our hearts, our lives and the way for Jesus.

Each week during Gospel Time we continue to explore our faith theme: Together on the Journey. We have been learning about the different saints of our schools. During December, the Saint we will focus on is the Blessed Mary.

Saint Mary leads us as an example of faithfulness and devotion to God. Saint Mary is our Patron Saint so we ask that she pray for our students, our families, our communities. We will walk alongside St. Mary through the Advent season.

December is a wonderful time to celebrate our faith. Father Kevin will join us to celebrate the 1st week of Advent mass on Wednesday, Dec. 1st. The grade 6MI class will be hosting and the rest of the school will participate virtually. In the weeks that follow we will have the Week 2 and 3 Advent celebrations hosted by our grade 2MI and 2/3PSI classes. These will be shared with the classes virtually.

We wish you and your family a blessed Advent season. We pray for joy in your hearts, hope in our God and love for all. May God Bless you and keep you. Merry Christmas!



Turkey Dinner:

We are blessed again to be able to provide our Turkey dinner for our students and staff on Monday December 13th. A messenger will be sent out to ask for volunteers. All volunteers are required to show proof of vaccine.

House Team News:

November's Winner is Black Bears! Congratulations!

Samaritan Stars:

This year we have chosen to change our Perfect Attendance monthly draw to our "Samaritan Stars" draw instead. In light of the always changing world we live in we don't want to encourage kids to come to school if they are sick just because they can be entered in a draw. Instead, as the students do good deeds and display exemplary actions/attitudes, their fellow classmates can nominate them and put their name in a jar. From here we draw names to win a cheque for \$25.00.

For the month of November our winners were: Matthew in 3ME and Parker in 3ME

TRANSPORTATION:

School buses are provided by Southland Transportation.

Bus Maps can be found at: <https://www.southland.ca/lethbridge/>

Download the MyBusSchool App.


This is the best way to monitor changes and updates to your child(ren)s bus routes. This is also the best way to check for delays.

For the most up-to-date routes please go to the southland website:

<https://www.southland.ca/lethbridge/>

OUR SOUTHLAND RIDERS CAN USE...

MyBusStop

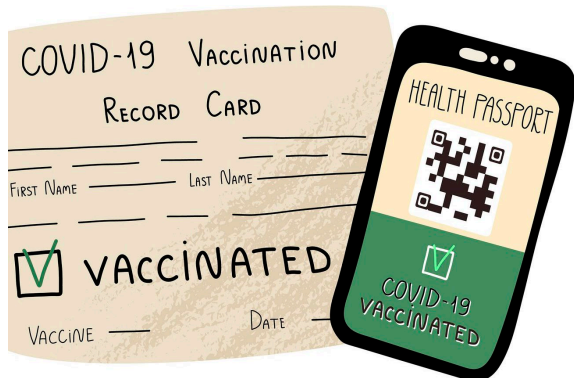


REAL-TIME SCHOOL BUS TRACKING FOR:

- ROUTE STOPS
- ROUTE SCHEDULES
- TRAFFIC
- BUS LOCATION
- BUS PROGRESS
- POSSIBLE DELAYS

ECOLE ST. MARY'S CODE:
FBS6XT7WPK

For more information, visit: www.holyspirit.ab.ca/transportation/mybusstopapp



Proof of Vaccine

Holy Spirit Catholic Schools have implemented proof of vaccine for all Visitors. Parent volunteers, contractors, community members, visitors and all person's over 18 are required to show their QR code and have it scanned in the office and then will be allowed to enter the school. We still remain a CLOSED Campus. Proof of vaccine does not mean you can come into the school at any time just to visit. We still require you to book an appt with the office.

If you do not have a mask, please wait outside and call the office, then we can send your child outside to meet you.

Office Phone: 403-327-3098

MASKS

EVERYONE is required to wear a mask.

Please send your child with their own mask and an extra one in their backpack. We DO NOT always have the appropriate size for your child(ren). Please be safe!



For more information about our 2021/2022 school year visit our division website at https://www.holyspirit.ab.ca/resources_publications/news/whats_new/updated_guidelines_for_2021_2022

House Keeping Items:

- ✚ Send a Water Bottle with your student. There are fill stations but no water fountains.
- ✚ If you have moved, please email esmoffice@holyspirit.ab.ca with your address change.
- ✚ Our monthly newsletter is sent out at the beginning of the month and can be found on the website.
- ✚ Closed Campus – Visitors must come to the office with proof of vaccine
- ✚ Call the office if your child will be late or absent for any reason. 403-327-3098

December 2021 Calendar



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| | | | 1 Advent Mass 9am@ ESM K-Parent Meetings | 2 K-Parent Meetings | 3 Report cards sent home | 4 |
| 5 2 nd week of Advent | 6 | 7 Christmas Clothing Day | 8 | 9 Christmas Character Day | 10 | 11 |
| 12 3 rd week of Advent | 13 Turkey Dinner for Students and Staff | 14 Christmas Light up | 15 | 16 Ugly Sweater Day | 17 PJ Day Last day before Christmas Break | 18 |
| 19 4 th week of Advent | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 Christ is Born |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

January 2022 Calendar



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|----------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 New Year's Day |
| 2 | 3 NO SCHOOL Christmas Break | 4 First day back Baptism of the Lord | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 NO SCHOOL PD Day | 29 |

December

Together on the Journey



St. Mary

Schools: École St. Mary, St. Mary Taber
Our Lady of the Assumption

"And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.'"

Luke 1:46-49

OLA



ST. MARY

Mary, the mother of Jesus, commonly referred to as Mary, Mother of God, Saint Mary, Virgin Mary and Blessed Virgin Mary, is one of the most admired figures in Scripture, and considered by many to be the greatest of all Christian saints. She was chosen and prepared by God to be the mother of His Son, because she freely chose to cooperate fully in the graces given to her and in the vocation she received. She was a willing servant who trusted God and obeyed His call. While her life held great honour, her calling also required great suffering. Though there was joy in motherhood, there was great pain in the privilege of being the mother of the Messiah. Despite these things, she responded to God with great obedience and submission to His plan. Her life never robbed Jesus of His glory, for her mission was to witness the glory of the Son of God.

The Miraculous Medal

"The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals, etc." (CCC 1674). There are many devotions that Catholics have to Mary, from devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe to Mary, Undoer of Knots. One particular sacramental devotion is the Miraculous Medal, which has held a special place in the heart of many Catholics since 1830, when the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Catherine Labouré and asked her to create it.

"O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

The rays that shoot out from Mary's hands "symbolize the graces I shed upon those who ask for them."

Mary standing on the globe, with the head of a serpent beneath her feet.



The year 1830 on the Miraculous Medal is the year the Blessed Mother gave the design of the Miraculous Medal to St. Catherine Labouré.

12 stars represent the 12 Apostles.

The cross reminds us of Jesus' cross of redemption.

The "M" reminds us that Mary is both Mother and Mediatrix.

Two flaming hearts. The left heart, circled with thorns, represents Jesus. The right heart, pierced by a sword, symbolizes Mary.



There is no superstition, nothing of magic, connected with the Miraculous Medal. The Miraculous Medal is not a "good-luck charm". Rather, it is a great testimony to faith and the power of trusting prayer. Its greatest miracles are those of patience, forgiveness, repentance, and faith. God uses the Medal, not as a sacrament, but as an agent, an instrument, in bringing to pass certain marvelous results. "The weak things of this earth hath God chosen to confound the strong." (1 Corinthians 1:27)

*"Then Mary said,
"Here am I,
the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me
according to your word."
Then the angel departed from her."*

- Luke 1:38

December

Together on the Journey



St. Mary

Schools: École St. Mary, St. Mary Taber
Our Lady of the Assumption

Feast Days and Celebrations December 2021

- 8** Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 12** Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 12** National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous People
- 25** Christmas Day/The Nativity of the Lord
- 26** Feast of the Holy Family
- Jan. 1** The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

As you journey with St. Mary this month...

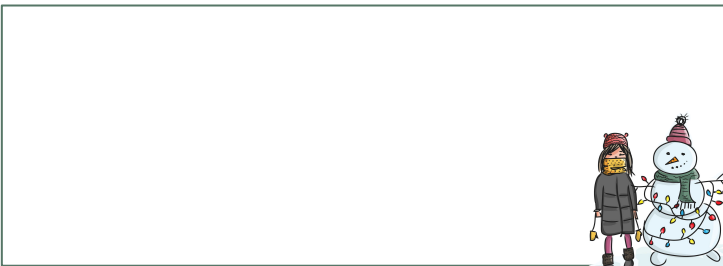
WEEK ONE

What do you think it was like for Mary and Joseph to talk about this baby having been conceived miraculously? To receive the visit of the wise men, to fly by night into Egypt, to return to Nazareth? Imagine yourself in one of these scenes. What might God be teaching you through this scene?



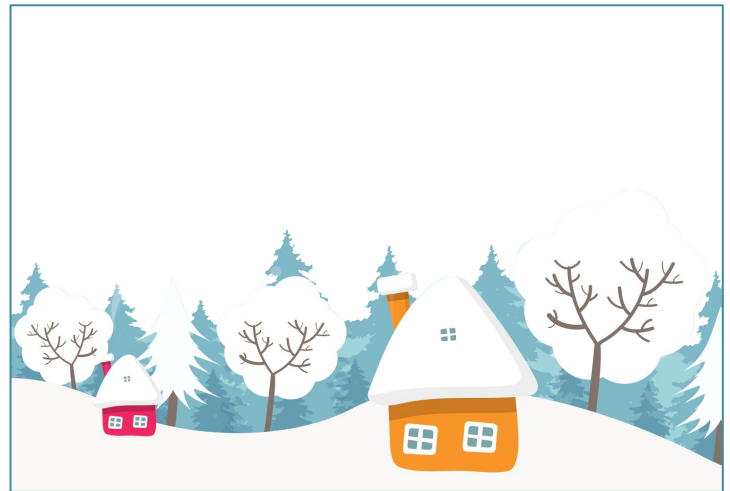
WEEK TWO

We all have many memories of Christmas - memories of family, food, presents, and the rest. When you think of Christmas, what makes you think of Jesus? Spend a few moments today thanking God for that memory.



WEEK THREE

Think about your mother today. How has her life blessed you? Where does she need your prayers? Offer a prayer to God today for your mother.



WEEK FOUR

Who do you consider a spiritual parent? Who in the Church has handed on the faith to you? Who in the Church has taught you about the Bible? Which family members? Which priests or deacons or bishops? Remember their teaching and thank God for them today.



Sources: *Daily Lessons from the Saints* by Fr. Brice Higginbotham

[6 Fascinating Facts about Mary, Mother of Jesus](#)

[What Is The Miraculous Medal](#)

[Association of the Miraculous Medal](#)

Sunday Gospel Readings

Dec. 5th/2nd Sunday of Advent
Luke 3:1-6

Dec. 12th/3rd Sunday of Advent
Luke 3:10-18

Dec. 19th/4th Sunday of Advent
Luke 1:39-45

Dec. 26th/Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Luke 2:41-52



Your Guiding Adventure Starts Here!



At Girl Guides, we aim to empower every girl to be everything she wants to be by providing them a safe space to shine, take the lead and explore new challenges and interests. Registration for the 2021-2022

Guiding year is now open!

Register at www.girlguides.ca/joinnow