

WHAT IS ????

Our Lady of the Pillar is a busy place! The following is a quick overview of some of the traditions and happenings on the campus throughout the school year. Please also consult the School Handbook for additional information and answers to more specific policy related questions.

FALL ACTIVITIES

FIRST DAY INFORMATION PACKET PICK-UP

Packets of forms and general information are given to each family at the beginning of the school year. Parents who wish to get a head start on completing forms, etc., can pick up their packet the week prior to the opening of the school year, August 11-15, from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m., in the hallway outside the school office.

ROOM PARENTS/HOMEROOM TEACHERS MEETING

A mid-August meeting that allows room parents and teachers a chance to exchange ideas, plan field trips, discuss activities, and determine funds needed for such events. Mothers' Club provides a continental breakfast.

KINDERGARTEN PARENTS/STUDENTS GET TOGETHER

A social meeting for kindergarten parents and students usually held in mid-August that provides an opportunity for them to meet each other and the teachers and see the classroom prior to the first day of school. Mothers' Club provides refreshments.

SNEAK A PEEK SUNDAY

The classrooms will be open on the Sunday before school opens, August 17, between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., so that families can "sneak" a peek at new classrooms and drop off school supplies for the new school year. Informational packets may also be picked up at that time.

WELCOME COFFEE FOR PARENTS

An informal coffee for all parents on the first day of school from 8:00-9:00 a.m. is held to welcome new families and reconnect with old friends. Mothers' Club provides refreshments in the PLC.

OPENING-OF-SCHOOL EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

Our first All-School Mass, usually held within the first full week of school, is celebrated to welcome all students and pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit throughout the new school year.

PILLARFEST

A parish-wide event organized by the Men's Club to welcome everyone back after the summer. Full of food, fun and games for the whole family! Pillarfest, which began in 2000, has grown each year and is a great way to end the summer and relax with new and old friends.

CATECHETICAL SUNDAY

A special Mass is offered in the fall to recognize all Catechists who teach the Catholic faith to our students. During the Mass, a special blessing is bestowed on them. This Mass is an opportunity to show our appreciation and to pray for them as we begin the school year. Mothers' Club hosts a reception afterward in the PLC.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

This is a parents-only Open House to give parents an opportunity to visit the classrooms and meet the teachers. Each teacher presents information on curriculum, classroom format, and class expectations.

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS/BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

On this day we take time to honor St. Francis, the Patron Saint of Peace, and the founder of the Order of St. Francis (O.S.F.). An All-School Mass is celebrated to honor both St. Francis and our Franciscan Sisters. Since St. Francis was also a great lover of animals, a special blessing is given to our family pets on the convent lawn. Parents are encouraged to bring their pets to school and meet the children for this blessing. Children may also bring photos of pets or stuffed animals to be blessed.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF THE PILLAR

The Archdiocese allows each school one additional holiday of their choice during the year. We often choose the Feast of Our Lady of the Pillar that honors the Blessed Virgin Mary. For more information on the background and history of our Parish and Patron Saint, refer to our School Handbook.

LIVING ROSARY

Since October is the Month of the Rosary, the OLP students honor Our Blessed Mother by praying a living rosary in the church at 2:00 p.m. Children assemble around the church in the formation of the rosary and recite the prayers aloud with the entire school participating. Parents are encouraged to attend.

MISSION FESTIVAL

Each class coordinates games at this school-wide event with funds being donated to our sister school, the Morning Star School in India.

OLP BOOK FAIR

The annual Scholastic Book Fair is held each year in conjunction with Grandparents' Day, for two primary purposes; to promote reading and to raise funds for the school library. Books, gift items, and computer software are available for purchase. The event is usually held for three consecutive days with the help of Mothers' Club volunteers. The students' visit the fair during school and are allowed to either purchase books or make a 'wish list' for items to be purchased at a later time. Teachers and the librarian may also fill out classroom wish lists to be displayed at the fair. Parents are encouraged to visit the fair at anytime.

GRANDPARENTS'/SPECIAL PERSONS' DAY

This is a day to honor the special bond between grandparents and their grandchildren. Since some grandparents are either deceased or living out of the area we also include other special persons in our children's lives. On this day, grandparents/special persons are invited to school for Mass followed by a lunch in the PLC. Box lunches are available. The event is coordinated by the Mothers' Club. School is dismissed at noon on this day for a faculty meeting.

FIRST RECONCILIATION RETREAT

This is a 90-minute retreat for parents and children who are preparing for their First Reconciliation. It is conducted by an Archdiocese sponsored team called Retreat Evangelization And Prayer (REAP) Team and held on a weekday evening. The purpose of the evening is to focus on the importance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Skits, personal stories, and group participation all facilitate an enjoyable, educational and thought provoking evening.

PRAYER PARTNERS' MASS

This mass is held in the Fall of each year to give second grade students and their prayer partners a chance to meet and celebrate Mass together. Prayer Partners are parishioners who volunteer to pray and correspond with a 2nd grade student preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion. This tradition is designed to enrich their preparation and reinforce their involvement in the OLP Parish community. The students and their families meet with prayer partners before Mass, sit together during Mass, and enjoy a small reception afterwards. The Mothers' Club hosts the reception.

HALLOWEEN PARTY

Room mothers of primary grades assist the children in changing into their costumes at 1:45p.m. The parade begins at 2:05p.m and is held in the parking lot. The room mothers plan individual parties in each classroom after the parade.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

On November 1st we celebrate All Saints' Day with an All- School Mass. Each eighth grader portrays a saint and composes a short biography read during the opening procession. This gives all the students an opportunity to honor our saints and become better acquainted with the lives of these great men and women.

HIGH SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

On the first Sunday in November, all area Archdiocesan high schools hold an open house from 12-4 p.m. All interested parents and students are invited to attend. This event is designed to assist parents and students in selecting a high school under the Archdiocesan-wide admission process.

SCHOOL AUCTION

The Mothers' Club and Men's Club organize a dinner/auction to raise funds for school and parish events and improvements. Volunteers solicit donations from merchants for both a silent and oral auction. All adult parishioners and parents are invited to the event to raise funds for the Mothers' Club and Men's Club.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are usually held on a Thursday evening and Friday morning. Individual 15-minute conferences are scheduled for primary grades. Teachers for the upper grades are available in the cafeteria during these times on a first-come first-serve basis. Parents are always encouraged to schedule individual conferences when desired.

THANKSGIVING MASS

An All-School Mass is held on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to celebrate all of our many blessings and pray for those less fortunate. First graders dress as Indians and Pilgrims and process down the aisle at Mass. Every child donates a canned good during the Offertory to be given to the poor in our local community.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Celebrated the first week in December, all second graders from the parish and OLP school receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. Parish priests as well as additional visiting priests concelebrate. Parents and siblings are welcome to also receive the sacrament. A small reception is held afterwards in the PLC hosted by the MC Hospitality Committee.

AUTHORS' TEA

This 8th grade event is designed to give the eighth graders an opportunity to share their composition work with family, friends, and faculty. Their essays, poems, short stories, etc. are displayed and each student has the opportunity to share orally one of their selections. Refreshments are provided by the class.

DUBOURG MATH CONTEST

Students are selected from each of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades to compete in an area math contest that is held at Bishop Dubourg High School in St. Louis.

ST. NICHOLAS VISIT

In the spirit of the St. Nicholas tradition, St. Nick visits each classroom to see the children and distributes candy canes.

TEACHER APPRECIATION EVENT

In appreciation for all their hard work and dedication to our school and to the children, the Mothers' Club hosts an annual social during the Christmas season for the faculty, administration, and staff of OLP. Mothers' Club board organizes this event.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

This annual parish-wide event is organized by the seventh and eighth grade students, parents and teacher and is held on a Saturday in December. The program includes breakfast, fun activities, a toy, a skit and a visit/photo with Santa. This is also a fundraiser for the Eighth Grade.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Another holiday tradition at OLP is the Christmas program. Our music teacher coordinates the all-school program to showcase our musical talents during this special season.

MOTHER TERESA'S SOUP KITCHEN

Every year OLP parishioners host a lunch for approximately 100 guests from Mother Teresa's Soup Kitchen in St. Louis. Parishioners provide and serve the food and students assist in creating place mats. In addition, the 8th grade performs a holiday skit.

PRO-LIFE MASS

An All-School Mass is held on the last day of school before Christmas vacation to pray for the sanctity of all human life. Each student brings a baby item for Our Lady's Inn to be collected during the Offertory. This usually coincides with Red and Green Dress-UP Day.

RED AND GREEN DRESS-UP DAY

The students dress-up in red or green on the last day of school before Christmas to celebrate the holiday.

GEOGRAPHY BEE and SPELLING BEE

Students in 5th-8th grade compete in a geography bee. Classes compete individually first, selecting the top three contestants from each grade. These twelve students compete for a school-level winner who will be given a written test. Depending on the score, he/she may go to the State competition. Students in 5th-8th grade also compete in a school spelling bee. The winner goes to the Post Dispatch Finals Bee, which feeds the state / national competitions.

DAD'S EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

A Mass is celebrated to honor our dads and all that they do for each of us. All dads and their son(s)/daughter(s) attend Mass at 7:30 a.m. A reception is held afterward in the PLC. The 3rd grade room parents host the reception.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' WEEK

This is a festive week in celebration of all Catholic Schools, to recognize and give thanks for the benefits of a Catholic education. The week begins with an opening Mass at 10:30 AM on Sunday, followed by a reception in the PLC and SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE. The 1st grade room parents host the reception. During the week various activities are planned for the children. Some activities in the past have been patriotic day, companion time, 50's day/sock hop, visits from the Imaginary Theatre, 8th grade Regional Mass, and other similar celebrations. The week closes with a Mass on Friday and noon dismissal.

ALLELUIA SERVICE/ALLELUIA MASS

On the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday we celebrate an Alleluia Service for the "Burying of the Alleluia". Alleluia banners made by the students are brought to the service and then put away until Lent concludes. Alleluia, which is used to express joy, praise and thanksgiving, is not said or sung during the Lenten season. After Easter, the banners are again presented during the Alleluia Mass in celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord.

FIRST COMMUNION MEETING

This is an informational meeting for the parents of all OLP school and PSR Communicants to discuss all the details of First Communion. The meeting includes such topics as; prayerful preparation, important dates, dress code for Communicants, Communion Retreat, banners, Communion Practice Day, seating arrangements, etc. It is mandatory that all parents attend. Refreshments are provided by the second grade room parents.

MOMS' EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

A Mass celebrated to honor our moms and all that they do for each of us. All moms and their children attend Mass at 7:30 a.m. A reception is held afterwards in the PLC and hosted by the Men's Club.

ASH WEDNESDAY

An All-School Mass is held at 9:35 a.m. for all students and parents. Ashes are distributed in observance of the beginning of the Lenten Season.

VALENTINE'S DAY/RED DRESS DOWN DAY

In honor of St. Valentine the students have a red dress down day. Individual parties are held in each classroom and organized by the room parents. We also have a wonderful tradition of remembering our Franciscan Sisters on Valentine's Day. The children are encouraged to make Valentines for the Sisters. Donations are accepted. This project is organized by the 8th grade students and their parents.

LENTEN SERVICES

Every Friday during Lent the students and faculty take time to reflect on the importance of this holy season of prayer, fasting and alms giving. On Friday at 2:15PM either Stations of the Cross or Benediction and Scripture Readings are held in the church. Parents are always welcome.

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

During the forty days of lent, The Blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration in the rectory 24 hours a day. Volunteers are always needed. During the remainder of the year, adoration of the blessed sacrament is held once a week for 24 hours beginning at 8:00 a.m. Wednesday morning until 7:00 a.m. on Thursday morning. All are welcome. Families/Individuals are invited to commit to a regularly scheduled hour.

LENTEN FISH FRY

Every Friday during Lent, the OLP Men's Club organizes a Fish Fry in the PLC. Volunteers from the parish and school help prepare, cook, and serve for this popular fundraiser and community building event.

LIVING STATIONS

The eighth grade class performs the Living Stations for the students on the Wednesday before Easter Break and on Good Friday for the Parishioners.

SCIENCE FAIR / INTERNATIONAL DAY

These two events take place on alternating years. The Science Fair is optional but encouraged for the middle school. For International Day each class selects a country. They study the history, culture, clothing and food from a particular country and share it with the rest of the school. On this day students rotate around the school as a class to learn more about each country.

KINDERGARTEN SCREENING

This takes place in March to screen and test incoming kindergartners. During these two days current kindergartners do not have school. The Mothers' Club Hospitality Committee provides refreshments and a warm welcome for the applicants and their parents in the school cafeteria.

RECONCILIATION

A Reconciliation Service is held twice during the school year (Advent & Lent) to give all the students in grades 2-8, an opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. Dates will be on the calendar. Parents are always welcome.

MISSOURI MATH CONTEST

Students from 4th, 5th, and 6th grades are selected to participate in this contest sponsored by the Missouri Mathematics Teachers' Association.

SPRING ACTIVITIES

CONFIRMATION

Seventh graders from the parish prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation during monthly meetings on Sunday evenings under the guidance of the Parish Youth Minister. The Sacrament of Confirmation is usually held on a Friday evening in April. The 4th grade room parents host a reception in the PLC.

ARCHDIOCESAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Two grades are selected each year to participate in a regional music festival with several other area Catholic schools. Each class prepares and performs for the other participating schools.

BANNER DAY

OLP school and PSR First Communicants and their families celebrate 8:30 a.m. Mass together a few weeks before First Communion. Afterwards students gather in the cafeteria to assemble their First Communion Banners. Patterns of Eucharistic symbols are distributed a few weeks prior to the day to be made into cloth symbols. The banners are provided on Banner Day and students simply attach the symbols to the banner. The banners are then hung in the school hall and later moved to the church for First Communion. The banners remind everyone of the upcoming celebration and the need to pray for the Communicants as they prepare for their special day. Refreshments are provided by the 3rd grade room parents.

FIRST COMMUNION

Second graders from OLP school and PSR receive the sacrament of First Communion as a class at 2:00PM on a Saturday in April or May. After a year of preparation the special day of celebration has finally arrived! The celebration is open to everyone with assigned seating for First Communicants and their parents.

JUST ME APPAREL/UNIFORM SALES

Just Me Apparel is our retail uniform supplier. Uniforms can be purchased from their store in Manchester, MO. School sweatshirts and gym shirts are ordered separately through a Mothers' Club representative over the summer. Used uniforms are also available for sale or trade at Back to School Night or by calling the used uniform Mothers' Club representative.

EIGHTH GRADE PLAY

Eighth graders express their theatrical talents in their annual spring play. Performances are held at 1:30PM and 7:00PM in the PLC. All are welcome.

MAY CROWNING

This annual event is a special time to honor our Blessed Mother. It is a dress UP day for all students. The day begins with an All-School Mass. First Communicants, dressed in their Communion attire, stand as honor guards for a special procession of the graduating eighth graders. At the entrance procession, each student presents flowers to the Blessed Mother. The Mass is followed by a luncheon for the eighth graders and their families. All are welcome to attend. Each eighth grader makes a brief speech on their years at OLP. In appreciation for all their hard work and dedication throughout the year the Mothers' Club provides lunch for the entire faculty, administration and staff at OLP. The 6th grade room parents host the luncheon.

FIELD DAY

A greatly anticipated day begins with a prayer service and Sportsmanship Awards. The day is filled with games and activities. The school is divided into teams which rotate through field games coordinated by the Mothers' Club. The Mothers' Club provides lunch. Class spirit and team spirit awards are given and the day concludes at 1:30pm

GRADUATION LITURGY AND RECEPTION

Another long awaited celebration recognizes all the achievements and accomplishments of our eighth grade class. The Mass is celebrated at 6:00 p.m. and followed by a reception in the PLC hosted by the 7th grade room parents.

CLOSING LITURGY AND AWARDS PRESENTATION

The last day of school includes a closing All-School Mass at 9:35 a.m. to celebrate the successful school year and to pray for a safe and healthy summer. Mass is followed by an awards presentation for a wide variety of academic and athletic awards. Afterwards students return to their classrooms and are dismissed. Final report cards are mailed.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

SCHOOL BOARD/PARISH COUNCIL

Monthly meetings are held for each of these organizations and all are welcomed and encouraged to attend. School Board usually meets on the first Monday at 7:00 p.m., Parish Council on the second Monday at 7:00p.m. Check the School Calendar, Newsworthy Notes and the church bulletin for scheduled meetings.

GIFT WRAP FUNDRAISER

During the fall fundraising drive, each student is asked to sell wrapping paper products and gift items. The current vendor, Innisbrook Wraps, returns 50% of all proceeds to OLP. Prizes are awarded to top sellers and 100% participation is encouraged. These funds are used to fund various activities and enrichment programs. In addition, Innisbrook items can be purchased on-line at any time throughout the year for 50% return to our school at www.innisbrook.com.

GROCERY GIFT CARDS

Grocery cards are an ongoing fundraiser that provide dollar for dollar same as cash value for gift cards purchased at OLP: for Dierbergs and Shop N Save. They are for sale at the Rectory, School Office and in the car pool line on designated days. OLP recovers 5% of all sales. In recent years funds have been used for technology improvements to the Computer Lab.

SCRIP

Similar to the grocery gift card fundraiser, cards to local retailers can be purchased with a percent of sale going back to OLP as profit. There is no cost to the buyer.

ST. PATRICKS' CENTER

Every second Tuesday of each month, food is brought in by the children and parishioners for donation to St. Patrick's. Individually wrapped lunch items such as sandwiches, cookies and dried and canned fruit are requested. Each grade is assigned a Tuesday to bring in the food for this needy cause.

DRESS DOWN/ ADD-ON DAYS

"Dress Down" (out of uniform) or "Add-on" (wear something seasonal in addition to school uniform) days are held periodically throughout the year to celebrate special events for the school or serve as reward to individual students or classes. Parents should use discretion in helping their children choose appropriate clothing on these days. Please consult the school handbook for specific guidelines.

SCHOOL FAMILIES

Students and teachers are divided into groups, with K through 8th grade students in each group, lead by one or two teachers. These family groups participate in a fun, team- and community-building activity each month, such as trivia contests, family picnics, scavenger hunts, etc. A goal of this activity is to promote leadership of older students, who share responsibility for planning group activities with the teacher supervisors.

BELLARMINE SPEECH CONTESTS

Students, grades 5th-8th, memorize prepared speeches and skits and compete as individuals or as a duet in an area speech contest four times per year.