

Vol 01 | March 2021

St. Michael School

NEWSLETTER



PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

There's a story of a science teacher giving a lesson on the anatomy of sea animals. She mentioned that although whales are the world's largest mammals, it would actually be impossible for them to swallow anything larger than a grapefruit. Little Annie quickly raised her hand and interjected, "Miss, that's not true. Jonah was swallowed by a whale." The teacher rebuked her, saying, "I'm sorry Annie, but that's simply impossible." Little Annie looked at her teacher and exclaimed, "Well, I'll ask Jonah myself when I get to heaven." The teacher responded, "What if Jonah isn't in heaven?" Little Annie shrugged and replied, "Then you ask him."

As the father of three young daughters, I know how tenacious little ones can be. With the celebration of Ash Wednesday last month, the Church enters into the season of Lent, a time before Easter that we take a moment to reflect on our relationship with God, challenge ourselves to become better versions of ourselves, and repent for wrongdoing in any areas of our lives. The story of Jonah is often known most for him being swallowed by a whale, but there is much more to this story that is definitely applicable to our Lenten journey.

Jonah was a reluctant and borderline defiant prophet. He tried to run away from God when God called him to do a task. It was in this process of running that he wound up in the belly of a "big fish". When he finally was spit out, he conceded and proceeded to do as God asked him, which was to call the city of Nineveh to repentance. Through his preaching, the city of Nineveh and all its inhabitants were saved from the wrath of God.

One question we can reflect on from this story is, how have we run away from God? During this Lent, we challenge ourselves and our students to run to God instead of running away from Him. As challenging as this past year has been with many restrictions and changes, if we have a constant faith, we will also have a constant hope, a constant purpose, and a firm foundation no matter what life throws our way. Our theme this year, the Serenity Prayer, has been a reminder to put our trust in God in all circumstances. May our faith be as tenacious and trusting as a little child.

God, grant me to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

MR. KAINOA FUKUMOTO

Principal



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Established in 1944, Saint Michael School is a private parochial Catholic school in the North Shore area on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. St. Michael views itself as an integrated part of a larger living faith community, committed to the goal of a Christian education.



CREATING A STUDY-FRIENDLY SPACE

Children and teens share a common need for a study space furnished with a good desk and chair, adequate lighting, shelving for school books, plugs for electronics and appropriate school supplies. But what about the elements that make it a comfortable and comforting haven conducive to studying?

Walls offer a great space to hang pictures of family vacation memories or special events that can remind your child of happy moments. Print positive and encouraging words, phrases or quotes; cut them out from the newspaper or magazine; or simply write them onto a decorative piece of paper—even a Post-it® note—and put them on the wall. A few examples:

“We are with you 100%!”

“You are doing great things.”

“Be yourself always. Don’t change so people will like you. The right people will love the real you.”

“The number one skill in life is not giving up.”

No walls? No problem. Buy a desk calendar to designate a study space and place it wherever your child will be studying that day. S/He can use the calendar as a calendar or for doodling—one spectacular doodle per day! You can also tuck a sheet of acrylic or plastic into the corners of the calendar and place family pictures, pictures of friends, phrases or quotes underneath.

Good lighting is a necessity. Natural light is best as long as it doesn’t sit behind or create glare on the monitor; nothing should shine into the eyes. Place a light source either above, next to your child at a distance or behind at an angle.

Speaking of a light source, warm light such as that of a sunrise or sunset is relaxing for the eyes, as well as the mood. However, bright white light, positioned as mentioned above, works well for productivity. Just know that research has shown that blue light before bed does affect sleep quality, so stick to warmer tones in the evening.

Another important aspect to a good study space is quiet. If it’s difficult to achieve at home, noise-canceling headphones may be in order. These can get very pricey, but there are ones normally used for activities such as range practice that protect hearing. You can find one for as low as \$15 online.

If you’re busy and need to keep your child in the loop, but s/he keeps forgetting, get a dry erase board and hang it where your child can easily see it. Update it daily so your child—and the whole family—will know what to expect throughout the day.

Have fun with it and involve your child to set up her/his study space with these simple ideas.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Kerry-Kierra Waiwaiole	3/3
Ms. Rayce	3/9
Maile'ailana Fukumoto	3/9
Mariah Dinong	3/11
Mrs. Lia	3/12
Bruce Bondurant	3/13
Phoenix Carter	3/18
Lazaro Heiderscheidt	3/19
Tykes Merrill-Fujishige	3/19
Genevieve DeSabio	3/21
Lola-Sofia Segundo	3/25
Mr. Ladao	3/31



UPCOMING CALENDAR

March 5:
3rd Quarter Ends

March 15-19:
NO SCHOOL (Spring Break)

March 22-25:
Terra Nova Testing (Grades 2-8)

March 26:
NO SCHOOL (Prince Kuhio Day)

April 1-5: NO SCHOOL
(Holy Week/Easter Break)

Holy Thursday (April 1):
School-sponsored Mass at 5pm

Good Friday (April 2):
Services at 3pm (St. Michael Church) & 7pm
(Sts. Peter & Paul Mission)

Easter Vigil (April 3):
Mass at 7pm

Easter Sunday Mass (April 4):
7am & 11am at St. Michael Church
9am at Sts. Peter & Paul Mission
5pm School-sponsored Mass with the
Sacraments of Initiation at St. Michael Church

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I ka lā i ka Mauiola...the sun at the source of life within



Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I grew up in Ewa Beach and I'm a proud James Campbell High School graduate! I've been a Catholic School Educator for the past 15 years. I began my teaching journey at St. Joseph Parish School. There I taught the second grade for eight years. Initially, becoming a teacher was not part of "my plan". Teaching was a way for me to save up some money and gain some work experience so that I could go back to school to get my Masters in School Counseling. However, after my first year of teaching, I immediately fell in love with the school community and found great joy in teaching.

In 2010, the Diocese of Honolulu was offering grants to Catholic School Educators to receive their Masters in Educational Leadership at Chaminade University. My principal at the time highly recommended that I apply and go for it. I got accepted into the Cohort and graduated with an amazing group of Catholic teachers and administrators in Dec. 2013. After graduating, I remember telling my principal that despite the valuable things I've learned through the program, that "Administration was not for me," at least at the time I thought it wasn't!

I moved on to teaching at Damien Memorial School in 2014. I began my journey at DMS teaching the sixth grade (English, Religion, and Social Studies). The following year, I moved up in grade levels and began teaching 12th grade Religion. It was a nice change from teaching at the elementary level. Some of my greatest teaching moments involved having my former second grade students become my students during their senior year in high school. It was always a joy being able to share my faith and journey with my seniors into "young adulthood". I still keep in touch with many of them today. My last two years at DMS I also taught one section of ninth graders. So I guess you can say I've had experiences across all grade levels before coming to St. Michael School as a VP.

Other than work, my family is my world. My husband, Derrick and I will celebrate our 7th wedding anniversary on Feb. 1st. We have two sons, Blaise - 6 years old, and Rocky - 2 years old. We are parishioners at Immaculate Conception Church in Ewa and are involved in the Couples for Christ Ministry. I also dance hula for Kumu Hula Mandi Scott of Na Maka O Pu'uwai Aloha. It's been

difficult to make it to my weekly practices since becoming VP, but I'm hoping that in 2021, I can go back to making it to practice every week. Dancing and being with my hula sisters (although virtually at the moment) definitely feeds my soul. My favorite food is sushi, especially from Sushi Bay and Kunios. Coffee is what helps me make it through the work day and chocolate is one of my "must-haves" in my pantry.

What has been one of your highlights so far this year?

One of the highlights this year is being able to share this St. Michael School experience with my Kindergarten son, Blaise. With Covid-19, like many parents this summer, having to discern where my son would go to school was a hot topic in our family. There was a lot of fear in having him go full-time on campus but my husband and I also knew that distance learning would be a great challenge since we both work full time. His teachers have created such a safe and fun learning environment for the students that he truly loves going to school everyday. He has grown so much academically and his faith is also nurtured. Our car rides home is often a retell of the books he read or the Bible stories he has learned about. He looks forward to seeing his friends, learning from his teachers, and "bubble time" everyday. My husband and I know that having him come to SMS was the right choice for our family.

What has been your greatest challenge?

Every employee here works so hard at SMS. Teaching at a small Catholic School like SMS is indeed a sacrifice that many of the faculty/staff take and it really is their dedication and love for the school that keeps them here. Aside from my own "growing pains" of being a first year Vice Principal and getting acclimated to a new school, the greatest challenge is also carrying the challenges, frustrations, and worries of the faculty, staff, parents, and students. As an administrator, I was hired to be a leader, to be in charge. I'm expected to know how to deal with the instructional, emotional, and social challenges that occur in the school day. Maybe it's an expectation I put on myself, but I often feel like as the leader, there is no room for error because everyone is counting on you to lead the way. I often take the concerns and frustrations of others, especially the faculty and staff to heart. For those that know me



well, they know I wear my emotion on my sleeve. So there are times I leave work heavy hearted from thinking about the challenges my colleagues are facing in and outside of the classroom. I often go home thinking about how I can provide more support, make things better, and constantly think of creative solutions until issues are resolved. It's hard for me to separate work from my personal life because being an educator is so much of who I am. I knew very well what I was getting myself into when I had accepted this position, and I am not complaining at all. While overwhelming and difficult at times, it has been very humbling and I consider it a privilege to take part in such an important role in a school community. When I visit the classrooms and I see the teachers and students at work, smiling and interacting with each other, I'm reminded of why God called me to SMS. There's a lot of work to be done moving forward, but everyone in this school community is what gives me the motivation to continue this journey.

What do you like to do for fun (outside of school)?

My idea of "fun" these days is spending quality time with my family. We enjoy family time by doing chalk art on our driveway, riding our bicycles, playing basketball or soccer, or going to the park. Recently, we've gotten really addicted to playing the video game, *Overcooked 2* on the Nintendo Switch. It's been our weekend family activity since Christmas! I also enjoy my "me time" doing home-video workouts while my kids have screen time, dancing hula, and probably my favorite fun activity is going to Target or Costco by myself so I can enjoy taking my time going into every aisle (some moms may be able to relate).

Favorite Scripture

"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." ~1 Timothy 4:12

I remember attending a Life Night at OLPH (Youth Ministry Night) when I was in high school and one of the youth leaders read this scripture and talked about it. This scripture spoke to the core of my heart that night and I remember just thinking, "I need to be better...I need to be an example for my family." I went home that night, got my Bible and highlighted that verse. As a teen and young adult, this scripture always served as a reminder to be an example of love and faith to my family and friends. Now as an educator, it's a scripture that I would often share with my students to let them know that they are never too young to serve God and to be an example for those around them - young and old.

Favorite Saint?

St. Therese of Lisieux. I learned about her as I was choosing a saint for confirmation. I was immediately drawn to her as I read about her. I love how she lived her life in childlike simplicity and how she lived each day with an unwavering confidence in God's love. There are many times I fall short of living my life the way St. Therese did, but she continues to be someone I strive to be more like. In a world where it is so hard to see goodness, I often reflect on one of my favorite quotes by St. Therese: "My vocation, at last I have found it, my vocation is love."





DEVELOPING GOOD READING HABITS

Developing good habits, especially good reading habits, is critical to ensure a happy, successful and productive human down the road. It will also help to instill self confidence and self esteem in your child; two critical aspects for healthy development.

Here are a few tips, most of which we've heard before, but are truly worth repeating.

Start by reading aloud to your child daily. Most parents read to their child just before sleep time. You can also make this a 20-30 minute lunchtime activity or maybe an hour after dinner. What's most important is consistency—reading at a specific time on a daily basis.

Let your child select the book. However, if you choose to read before bed, select one that's in keeping with relaxing and sleep. Then just read. Make it fun by using different voices for different characters and varying the tone or pace.

You can also choose to take turns reading aloud—you read one page and your child, the next. Hearing the way you pronounce words with your child following suit greatly assists with vocabulary, reading comprehension and decoding words.

The important element here is the reading, of course, but you're also building the bond between you and your child. It's "our" time for the both of you, a time to build trust that will become the foundation for meaningful communication as your child faces road bumps down the road and needs to share thoughts and feelings.

Surround your child with reading materials to quietly encourage them to read on their own—in his/her room, in the car or even at doctor's appointments.

Schedule 15-30 minutes of reading time as a family in the living room or a location that's comfortable. Seeing you read will inspire your child to read as well.

Remember the library? They still exist, and are the perfect environment to encourage reading and the delight of finding a fun and interesting book. Reading apps such as Kindle may be convenient, but there's something to be said for holding a solid book in your hands.

Speaking of Kindle, reading to your child is best, but if for whatever reason it's difficult, another option is to have her/him listen to a children's book on a reading app. To read is to get into a rhythm with the words, sentences and storyline, and even if your child isn't able to visually see it, listening is good alternative.

Lastly, ask your child to read aloud to you, say, while you're cleaning up after dinner or prepping lunch for the next day. In case s/he runs into difficulty with regard to pronunciation, meaning, etc. you'll be right there to chime in. Ask questions too, so you'll know if your child is comprehending what s/he is reading.

CARING FOR OUR MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Did you know that beginning January 1, 2021, Hawaii became one of the first places in the world to ban chemical-based sunscreens?

On July 3, 2018, Governor David Ige signed SB 2571, Act 104 that put marine resources first.

Residents and visitors must now use “reef-safe” sunscreens that contain titanium dioxide and/or zinc oxide. These two active ingredients are mineral-based, all natural and biodegradable.

Chemical-based sunscreens primarily include oxybenzone and octinoxate. Both have been scientifically proven to negatively impact coral reefs and marine life.

It may be difficult to track who's using what kind of sunscreen so it's really up to each of us to be good stewards of the ocean and do what we can to protect the environment.

Wearing UV shirts, rash guards and hats also help the effort. And remember, never stand on, kick or touch coral. At home, we can use environmentally friendly cleaners and cut down on plastic.

A note: Just as we read food label ingredients, we should read sunscreen labels as well. Sunscreens labeled “reef-safe” sometimes do include chemicals, so check the labels!



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