



ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1940 S. 77TH ST, LINCOLN, NE 68506

PHONE: 402.489.0341 | FAX: 402.489.3260 | SCHOOL.STJOSEPHLNK.ORG

MONTHLY MESSENGER

November 2025

Knightly News from the Principal

Homework

Dear Parents,

Discussion has come up, as of late, surrounding our homework policy at St. Joseph School and wondering whether or not that might be examined by parents and teachers in light of research and best practices, in the spirit of Catholic, Christian charity and good will, of course. To that end, I thought I'd take this opportunity to outline what our handbook currently hits on in regard to homework and what the underlying philosophical stance is for the practice, as I understand it.



Homework

- Homework assignments reinforce concepts presented in class which need mastery, provide for completion of assignments and additional enrichment activities, and help students develop good habits of study and a sense of responsibility.
- Homework may include written/oral assignments, creative projects, book reports, memorization, study for quizzes/tests, reading for enjoyment, and further enrichment.
- Work must be completed neatly, with name on papers, and turned in on time to merit complete credit.
- Students in grades 4-8 should use pen and cursive for most notes and assignments. Exceptions include a pencil for math, manuscript for posters and projects can use manuscript, and other teacher exceptions.
- Homework grades may be recorded.
- All students may be assigned homework on Monday through Thursday evenings except on evenings when parents/guardians are expected to attend a school/class activity. Weekend work may be assigned for grades 4-8.
- Generally, homework should be able to be completed by the average student according to the following time allotments: **Grades K-2:** 10-20 minutes **Grades 3-4:** 30-45 minutes **Grades 5-6:** 45-60 minutes **Grades 7-8:** 60-80 minutes
- If your child consistently takes significantly longer than these guidelines, please discuss with the teacher to determine any needed adjustments.
- Teachers in grades 1-3 provide a weekly homework sheet for each student. Students in grades 4-8 record assignments in a special assignment book.
- Parents/guardians should sign below the daily assignment each night. Teacher discretion may be used in grades 4-8.

At this time, I will just touch on some key facets of our policy.

1. **First of all, what constitutes homework and/or why it is assigned to begin with?** Homework is just one of many habits we help students to develop for building responsibility, organization and to help solidify concepts. Lessons that are taught during the day, which then have a guided practice and independent practice element, aren't always able to be completed during that period. Therefore, independent practice, or formative assessment, if you will, may be assigned for that amount of practice that was unable to be completed during that period or subsequent study time throughout the day. At no point, should homework be comprised of new material that hasn't been covered or taught during the school day. (Missed work due to absences etc., would of course be outside of this metric.)
2. **In terms of duration, how are the time limits determined?** We follow the standard educational practice of the "10 minute rule," with homework generally set at 10 minutes per night, per grade level. So, a 1st grader could expect 10 minutes of homework on a given night, a 3rd grader, 30 minutes, and so on, with a cap at an hour or so for junior high students. Keep in mind several factors this involves. First, students may not actually have this amount of homework each night. Teachers don't usually assign homework in every subject each day, especially in lower grades. Second, this is considered the amount of time an "average" student may take to complete the work. Students all work at different paces, plus those with IEPs or 504 plans may have reduced assignments. It's also important for parents to monitor how focused their child is during the time for

homework. Some are very adept at finding distractions (restroom, snack, going to another room to find a pencil, etc.), so this is a factor to keep in mind. As the policy mentions, however, if your child “consistently takes significantly longer” then it’s crucial to reach out to teachers for a conversation about this.

3. **How do projects and “packets” of homework factor into this?** Another life skill for our students is learning how to manage time. When teachers assign a project or a packet (e.g. spelling), they encourage students to do a piece of it at a time (and often provide guidance on this or separate due dates), so that everything is not left for the night before it is due. This is where it is extremely helpful for parents to be checking in with their children to be aware of due dates and helping them to parcel out the work. This can also a way that teachers try to be considerate of other activities the children may have going on, such that a child might not be able to do much on a night they have dance, but can do more the next night.

4. **Where do extra-curricular activities come in?** St. Joseph’s School’s understanding is that, aside from family time and time given to our Lord in prayer and service, that academic studies should have pride of place over most extra-curricular activities. This is not to say that those don’t matter – far from it! However, our role as educators is to reinforce the academic learning necessary for our students. Sports and fine arts are also important in children’s lives, which is actually why we also have “specials” (art, computer, library, music, PE) during the school day. There are many wonderful opportunities for enrichment outside of school, but this is where parental discernment plays a huge role in limiting what individual children can handle (not only cognitively, but also stress level). It’s not surprising that students will likely enjoy the extra-curriculars more than their homework, but

this is where they need parental help in prioritizing.

Our policy and my comments given here suggest our current understanding of the concept of homework in partnership with you, our parents. Like any policy, it certainly is not without its flaws and may be less than ideal in some circumstances. This is where ongoing communication comes in. First and foremost, if you have a child struggling with homework, please reach out to the classroom teacher. In my years of experience, most issues of this matter can be solved by these conversations. If those discussions do not yield the results needed, then know that my door is always open. Sister Mary Angela and I are more than happy to also have these conversations with you.

With that said, we look forward to further collaborative efforts between parents and teachers as we work to understand the appropriate place of homework in the lives of our students. Its traditional role as one aspect of student application of concepts and the inherent self-discipline in its completion, go without saying. However, dialogue about the role of homework, and ensuring that in practice it is achieving what it hopes to accomplish, is also a hallmark of Catholic education, in the broadest sense. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in Christ,

Kevin Naumann

BIST Tip: 'Let the Adult Be in Charge'

A common question of BIST that we ask students when they are choosing not to follow directions or have a hard time with compliance is, “Can you let the adult be in charge?” At the beginning of the year, teachers go over many procedures and routines. All of these help the classroom and the learning environment to run smoothly for everyone. On occasion, there are times when a child simply doesn’t feel like doing what he/she is asked. (Does that ever happen at home?) When it is evident that a child is struggling to comply, we ask the question, “Can you let the adult be in charge?” Most of

Thanksgiving for God's mercy
 in all places of his dominion
 the LORD, O my soul.

PSALM 104

BLESS the LORD, O my soul,
 O my God, thou art clothed with
 majesty, and thy vestments
 are of glory.





St. Joseph Catholic School

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
 3 Chicken Nuggets Baked Beans, Sun Chips Fruit Choice Milk	 4 Pasta W/Meat Sauce Breadstick, Green Beans Fruit Choice Milk	 5 Chicken Nachos Corn Fruit Choice Milk	 6 Pepperoni Pizza Broccoli, Cookie Fruit Choice Milk	 7 Grilled Cheese Tomato Soup, Peas Goldfish Crackers Fruit Choice Milk
 10 Mac & Cheese Topped w/BBQ Pork Mixed Veggies Fruit Choice Milk	11 Walking Tacos Corn Fruit Choice Milk	12 Mini Corn Dogs Baked Beans, WG Roll Fruit Choice Milk	13 Orange Chicken Brown Rice, Broccoli Fortune Cookie Fruit Choice Milk	 14 1:00 DISMISSAL Cheese Pizza Green Beans, Cookie Fruit Choice Milk
 17 Chicken Tenders Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Corn, Roll Fruit Choice Milk	18 Pulled Pork Nachos Green Beans Fruit Choice Milk	19 Breaded Chicken Patty WG Bun, Smiley Fries Fruit Choice Milk	20 Taco Soup Fritos, Mixed Veggies Cinnamon Bread Fruit Choice Milk	 21 Soft Pretzel Bites Cheese Sauce, Broccoli Fruit Choice Milk
 24 Hot Dog WG Bun, Baked Beans Sun Chips Fruit Choice Milk	25 Turkey & Gravy Mashed Potatoes, Corn Roll, Cookie Fruit Choice Milk	26 NO SCHOOL	27 NO SCHOOL	 28 NO SCHOOL

*Student lunch \$3.50
*Adult lunch \$4.60

*Milk \$0.60
*Second entrée or sandwich \$1.75

*Turkey or ham sandwich as a choice Monday through Thursday
*Peanut butter sandwich as a choice Monday through Friday
*Garden veggie bar available daily

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Liturgy Singing Schedule - Fall Semester 2025

November 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 St. Martin de Porres (m) 5A	4 St. Charles Borromeo (M) 3B Class Mass	5 Weekday Quiet Mass	6 Weekday 5B	7 Weekday Mission Collection 4A
10 St. Leo the Great (M) 4B	11 St. Martin of Tours (M) Quiet Mass	12 St. Josaphat (M) Mission Club Class Mass	13 St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (M) Youth Choir Class Mass	14 Weekday Melodic Knights
17 St. Elizabeth of Hungary (M) 3A	18 St. Rose Philippine Duchesne (m) Quiet Mass	19 Weekday 3B	20 Weekday Melodic Knights	21 The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (M) 1A Class Mass
25 St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions (M) 6A	25 St. Catherine of Alexandria (m) Teacher Choir	26 NO SCHOOL Thanksgiving Break	27 NO SCHOOL Thanksgiving Day	28 NO SCHOOL Thanksgiving Break

Dismissal Safety

It has been brought to our attention that there is frequent congestion of cars along 77th St. at dismissal that are picking up on the church side. We are examining this issue and may be needing to move some families to the school side in order to facilitate a smoother and safer pick up. Please be extra careful of walkers and bikers as we examine this issue. We will keep you updated before implementing any changes.

School Drills

Just so you are aware, in addition to the typical fire drills done about once a month, we also have lockdown and evacuation drills. For children with anxiety issues, it can be important for you, as parents, to know this ahead of time to help them prepare. A great resource for lockdown drills is the children's book, "I'm Not Scared, I'm Prepared," by Julia Cook. You can also find online videos of this story. Our first lockdown drill for the year is scheduled for **Thursday, November 5**, in the morning. Our evacuation drill to Aldersgate Church will follow, weather permitting. This year, in collaboration with the staff of Aldersgate, we will

take the students inside the church to become familiar with the setting. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the school office.



1st Grade brought on the fall fun by visiting Roca Berry Farm! They also visited a local fire station!



SFA Thanks!

We had great turnout for our SFA parent meeting last Tuesday night with about 100 parents in attendance! Special thanks to the SFA board for the refreshments and for inviting our presenters, Fr. Matthew Rolling and Jacquie Winbolt, to come and share their insights on the formation of children from a spiritual and practical view. We are in process of editing the recording and hope to have it available in the near future. If you would like a copy of the handouts, you can find those [HERE](#). We hope the conversations continue in your homes!

A Note From Our Nurses

We are in need of several updated student immunization records, dental records, and physicals (for new students, Kindergarten students, and seventh grade students) before the annual state report is due. Please send vaccination records to the school office, send an email attachment to [JHEL-schoolnur](#), or fax records to 402-489-3260. **Individual email reminders will be sent out in the coming weeks if your child(ren) have missing records.** Thank you for your help in keeping our student health files up-to-date.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Dear Volunteers,

Field Trip season is upon us again and your help plays a big role in their success, whether it be chaperoning a group of students or providing transportation when it is needed. Thank you for signing up for the many activities occurring this fall. To help keep everyone safe, please take moment to log on to your CMG account and check your volunteer training status. Attached are [guidance pages](#) to help you do that. Check your trainings to determine if you are current by checking expiration dates. Then read through the Guidance page and follow the instructions by the number that describes your situation. If you have any questions please let me know.

If you are planning to drive for a field trip please make sure your SE and BGC are current. Then log onto your account and complete the Defensive Driver Training under Optional Trainings. You only need to do this once—one and done. Then complete and return the [Volunteer Driver Form](#), including a copy of front and back of your Driver's License, Vehicle Registration, and Insurance Liability Limits of \$100,000, \$300,000, \$100,000 found in your statement—not your insurance card. This information is kept on file for 3 years. Again if you have any questions let me know.

Thank you for volunteering your time and talents to assist our teachers and students with fun learning activities.

Lunch/Recess Volunteers!

If you are up to date on your Safe Environment training, please consider signing up to volunteer for lunchroom and/or recess duty! Links are provided below, and we appreciate any help!

Lunchroom: Lunchroom Helpers

K, 1, and 2 Playground Helpers: K, 1st, & 2nd Grade Playground Helpers

3rd & 4th Grade Playground Helpers: 3rd & 4th Grade Playground Helpers

5th & 6th Recess Helpers: 5th & 6th Grade Recess Helpers

7th & 8th Grade Playground Helpers: 7th & 8th Grade Playground Helpers



Every year Kindergarten does a 'pumpkin' book report! Here are a few that line our Kinder hallway this past week!



Play Dates with School Pets!

Our school Guinea Pigs, Leroy (brown) and Jasper (black) love to be held! They are available to be taken home Friday after school and brought back Monday morning. If your child(ren) would like to adopt Leroy and Jasper (together) for a weekend send in a letter with your child, email the office staff, or give us a call at 402-489-0341 and we will put you on our list!

Leroy and Jasper wish you a



HAPPY
HALLOWEEN

Free & Reduced Lunch-Does Your Family Qualify?

St. Joseph participates in Nebraska Nutrition Services. With that our school families have the ability to qualify for free and reduced lunch based on income. A regular lunch costs **\$3.50**, but a reduced price school lunch is **\$0.40**. If you are unsure if your family qualifies please feel free to fill out an application anyway. Applications can be found [HERE](#).

Monthly School Rosary

As a means of praying for the needs of our students and school families, St. Joseph School will be offering a monthly school rosary. Parents are welcome to join us as you are able. The dates and times are listed on the finalized [school calendar](#) posted on

School Spirit Wear

Family members can show their school spirit too! Visit **[LINK](#)** to shop now through the end of school! Purchasers have the option of shipping to their homes for a fee, or selecting a pickup location (i.e. the school) for free. Items delivered to the school with batch weekly.

St. Joseph Student Crochet Club

St. Joseph School's Crochet Club, for students in 4th grade and up, will meet **every Friday from 3:30-4:30 pm** in the library when school is in session. Beginners to experts welcome. Contact Myra Costello at **[stjoes.institc](#)** or 713-857-7868.

our website, with our next one being

November 21st! Most of the times will be at 2:50 pm so family members can join us. Classes will participate as they are available, so be aware that some classes may be absent on a given month. May our Blessed Mother intercede for us and lead us closer to her Son, Jesus!

Scratch Paper

We need scratch paper! If you have any paper already printed on one side and looking to get rid of please send it our way! God bless you for your generosity!

Back with SCRIP

Back by popular demand BURGER KING \$10\8%. Fill out an order form and send it to school with your child. We will fill your order the same day and send it home with your child. Simple! Text Kate with any questions: 402-314-1416.

[DOWNLOAD THE ORDER FORM!](#)



Earlier this month 2nd Grade made a visit to Arbor Day Farms in Nebraska City!



AROUND THE DIOCESE

Trick-or-Treating with the Sisters

Trick-or-Treaters are welcome to stop at the convent on Halloween, **Friday, October 31 between 6:30-8:00 pm**. You can get a sweet treat AND visit Jesus in our convent chapel! St. Teresa Convent is located at 3515 Laura Avenue, just behind St. Teresa Church off 36th and Randolph St. We'd love to see your costumes!

Pastor:

Fr. Michael G. McCabe

Assistant Pastor:

Principal:

Kevin Naumann

Assistant Principal:

Fr. Robert Froeschl

Sr. Mary Angela, C.K.

1940 S. 77th Street, Lincoln, NE 68506
Phone: 402-483-2288 stjosephlnk.org



Sent by Emily Klein

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