

## All Saints Academy – Our Catholic School Community

Praise Jesus!

This week, I hand over my weekly bulletin article to ASA Principal TJ Verzillo, who shares with us the good news of Catholic education during Catholic Schools week. I want to stress the importance of receiving an education from All Saints Academy and encourage parents with children to consider sending their kids to ASA. Students not only learn skills from academic subjects but put into practice every minute the principles of the Catholic faith. It is an amazing environment that we are truly blessed with. Please pray for us with the many activities we have going on during Catholic schools week!

In Christ,  
Fr. Jones

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Dear Friends,

As Catholic Schools week begins, the staff at All Saints Academy and Parish take time to reflect on what makes ASA different from other schools, both public and private. Certainly class size, tuition and uniforms are the easiest answer but the real answer is the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in all that we do at All Saints. Our students are given the opportunity to express their faith both inside and outside of the classroom. This is the very base of Catholic Identity in all Catholic Schools and most especially All Saints Academy. This week, we at ASA, celebrate our school and continue to promote our Catholic Identity.

For many people, the Catholic Identity of our school remains a mystery until you have had the pleasure of spending time at the school. The newest members of our ASA building community, the Parish staff and volunteers have witnessed firsthand, how ASA students are special and how their welcoming attitude has eased the transition to one campus. There have been many occasions when someone has been a little down and just the happy laugh of a preschooler or the warm “good morning” of a middle school student has turned their day around. This is the most obvious sign of Catholic Identity in our school community.

The sense of community that has been built between parish and school is part of our Catholic Identity. Children often see “church” as a pretty building where they go to pray. They often are unaware that the Church is first and foremost a community of people. Living in a community demands stewardship, solidarity, and hospitality. We cannot form and deepen relationships with others when we are focused on ourselves and our own needs. Instead we discern the gifts and passions which God has given to us and how God is calling us to use those gifts to serve the community through our time, talent, and treasure. The students at All Saints from preschoolers to eighth graders, understand that the church is more than a pretty building, it a community. That community consists of all of us, not just the people inside our school or inside our church. Our community is everywhere.

As we work to nourish our Catholic identity at ASA, we pass on this sense of community. No one is Catholic alone. Here are some ways that we demonstrate a commitment to community with our students:

- Realize when participating in service projects, why we serve others, exactly who they are serving, and how they are part of the same community.
- Invite members of parish organizations to speak to the children about how they serve the community and how they discerned their involvement.
- Help students discern their own gifts and talents, recognize gifts and talents they see in one another, and consider ways to help others by using those gifts.
- Use puzzle pieces as a visual aid to show how each person has something unique that is necessary for the community to be whole.
- Invite individuals from a variety of vocations to share their stories with the children, including how they use their gifts in their current vocations to serve the community.
- Guide children in researching patron saints who share their name, birthday, or a common interest.
- Invite Confirmation candidates to share with younger children their saint names and why they chose them.
- Guide children to pray for the intercession of those they know and love who have died. Remind the children that we are still connected to these people through the Communion of Saints.

For the parishioners who have not had the chance to either attend All Saints Academy as child, send their own children or had the opportunity to work with our students, I would extend an invitation to visit our school, maybe as a lunch volunteer or to adopt a class and read a book, so that we can show you the community that we have built here at All Saints Academy.

TJ Verzillo  
Principal, All Saints Academy

