

Prince Albert Catholic School Division: A Family of Faith...a Family of Families

This year, the Prince Albert Catholic School Division will focus on our new spiritual theme, “A Family of Faith”.

This spiritual theme follows four years of focusing on what our Catholic faith brings to us. Our spiritual theme during those four years included hope, God’s graces, love, and how Jesus is the light of the world. This year, we will focus on where love, hope, graces, and the light of Christ is first encountered, and that is within the family.

The spiritual theme, a Family of Faith, is also fitting as Pope Francis dedicated 2021 to St. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. In addition, Pope Francis’ writing, “*Amoris Laetitia*” is all about the very rich and complex reality of family life. Pope Francis would like us to review this writing on the fifth anniversary of its release as the Church gets ready for the World Meeting of Families planned for June 2022. Considering all these elements, our spiritual theme, “A Family of Faith”, is fitting.

There are three items that will have special focus during this spiritual theme. Each one of these items helps us to enter deeply into what it really means to be a family of faith.

The first item is responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. As a family of faith, we remember the words of St. Paul who tells us in 1st Corinthians 12: 26-27 (NRSV)... *“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”* As a family of faith, our plan to respond to the calls to action will include:

- All Prince Albert Catholic Board of Trustees, Senior Admin, and teachers completed the First Nation’s University Four Seasons training. This training provided a background of understanding Indigenous culture and ways to embrace reconciliation.
- In addition to this excellent training, we have a short presentation on residential schools, and accompanying prayers, to help our school division commemorate National Truth and Reconciliation day on September 30th.
- Future activities include exploring the calls to action, listening to a presentation by an Elder, and others.

The second item of special focus to embrace during our new spiritual theme is supporting positive Mental Health strategies in our staff and students. As a family of faith, we want to care



for each other and support each other, especially as we learn more about the importance of Mental Health. As a family of faith, our plan to respond to supporting mental health include:

- Staff in the division started the year by listening to Kevin Cameron, Executive Director of the North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response Inc. His engaging presentation reminds all of us of the power of hope.
- In addition to Kevin Cameron, staff also engaged in professional development using the “Rebound” resource. Rebound is a set of books written to help teachers explore how to accelerate learning recovery that might have occurred due to covid lockdowns. The material gives many useful tips on how teachers can help their students achieve learning leaps.
- In addition to these initiatives, we also working on classroom lessons the help our students learn more about their own mental health wellness through lessons.

The third item of special focus during our new spiritual theme centers around the permeation of faith. As a family of faith, we want to focus on how as the body of Christ, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. As a family of faith, our plan to respond to supporting faith permeation include:

- Ensuring staff have access to the General and Specific permeation documents that were created recently by the Religious Coordinators of Saskatchewan. These documents give suggestions for staff as they look for ways to infuse faith into their lessons.
- In addition to these documents, we are working on including our clergy in creative ways to ensure they still feel connected during these uncertain times. We are recording messages from our parish priests that cause be viewed within the class.
- In addition to those initiatives, we have purchased an excellent Catholic resource for our staff. Formed.org is an media subscription with many excellent Catholic videos, books, films, and podcasts. We are able to use these in our classroom and this media helps our teachers with infusing faith into our classrooms.

As we embrace the spiritual theme, A Family of Faith, we want to express all the beauty of the many diverse families we have in our community, as well as the comfort and support we get from a faith family. By focusing on the Calls to Action, Mental Health, and our Catholic faith, our division is well posed to take on the challenges of educating in these uncertain times. With love and support, we will be a family of faith...a family of families.

Written by Deacon Harrold Salahub