



# December 2018 Newsletter



**St. Leo Catholic School**  
**233 Memorial Drive**  
**Brantford, ON**  
**N3R 5T2**  
**Phone:**  
**519-753-3314**  
**Website:**  
[www.bleo.bhncdsb.ca](http://www.bleo.bhncdsb.ca)

**Twitter: @stleocatholic**

**Principal:**  
**Jennifer McLaren Gibbons**

### General Information

We are a dual track school offering instruction in English for JK-8 and in French Immersion for JK-Grade 3 (expanding by one grade each year)

Current Enrolment is 325 students

We have 15 Homeroom Teachers, 3 Early Childhood Educators, 8 Educational Assistants, 2 French-as-a-Second-Language teachers, 2 Special Education Resource Teachers, 3 Prep Teachers, 1 Library Tech, 2 Custodians, 1 Secretary, 1 STEM Teacher and an active School Council.

Next Meeting of School Council is  
*January 14, 2019 at 6:30 pm.*

*All are welcome!*

**SCHOOL START: 8:45 am**  
**SCHOOL DISMISSAL: 3:05**

The season of Advent is a season to prepare for the birth of Jesus our savior. Advent is celebrated over the four Sundays leading to Christmas. It is a time to slow down this busy season and enjoy the reason for the season.

Traditionally Advent can be marked by an Advent wreath or an Advent calendar. Advent wreaths are constructed of a circle of evergreen branches into which four candles are inserted representing the four weeks of Advent. Ideally, three candles are purple and one is rose.

The **purple** candles in particular symbolizes the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and goods works undertaken at this time.

The **rose** candle is lit on the third Sunday, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas.



The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's birth. Our hope is that you will take time with your family to reflect on the real meaning of Christmas. Happiness is knowing the love of Jesus and sharing that love in your home, with kindness, helpfulness, encouragement and time spent together.

We wish you joy and peace during this Advent season.

God Bless,  
Mrs. McLaren Gibbons

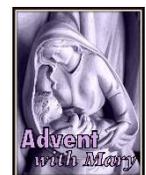
### CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

This year we are looking forward to celebrating the spirit of Christmas with all our families on Wednesday December 19<sup>th</sup> at our Christmas Social being held at school from 6-8pm. Come and join in a Christmas craft, Christmas caroling, a visit with Santa and much more fun for everyone. We look forward to seeing all our families on the 19<sup>th</sup>.



### ADVENT MARIAN CELEBRATION

On Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 – 9:30 am for K-2 students and from 9:30 – 10:00 am for gr. 3-8 students, our school community will join in the gym for our Advent Marian Celebration. Family and friends are welcome to join us.



## PARISH NEWS



### ST PIUS X CATHOLIC CHURCH

9 Waverly Street,  
Brantford, ON N3R 2K2  
Ph: 519-753-8439

[www.stpius.ca](http://www.stpius.ca)

**Father John Redmond, Pastor**  
**Father Andrew Czarny, Pastor**  
**Andrew Beach, Pastoral Associate**

#### Christmas Schedule

Parish Reconciliation Celebration: Wednesday, December 19th @ 7:00pm

Christmas Eve Masses - 5:00pm; 6:30pm; 8:00pm; 10:00pm

Christmas Day Masses - 9:00am; 11:00am

New Years' Eve: The Feast of Mary, Mother of God - 5:00pm

New Years' Day: The Feast of Mary, Mother of God - 9:00am; 11:00am

\*Please note that there are no afternoon or evening masses on Christmas Day or New Years' Day\*

#### December Youth Ministry

The St Pius X Youth Ministry program is hosting two exciting events in the month of December. On **Saturday, December 8th** all youth of the parish in grades 6 to 12 are invited to join us as we put together care packages for the sick, elderly, and otherwise shut-in within our parish. This event will run from 6pm to 9pm and includes dinner.

On **Saturday, December 15th** we will be hosting our annual Advent Party from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. All young people in grades 6 to 12 are invited to join us as we prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas. The night will include a number of games and prayer as well as dinner.

#### First Communion & First Reconciliation

A reminder that our initial meeting for First Reconciliation and First Communion preparation takes place in the church on **Wednesday, December 5th** starting at 6:30pm. This meeting will include information on timelines, registration, and next steps. We ask all children preparing to receive the sacraments, and one or more parents or guardians, to join us. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the Parish Office as soon as possible and we will make alternate arrangements.



The next School Council meeting will be held on **January 14, 2019 at 6:30 pm**. Everyone is welcome to attend.

#### A NOTE FROM YOUR SCHOOL'S PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE...

##### Holiday Tips for Keeping Your Family Safe

The holiday season may be the most wonderful time of the year. It is also a time of year where mishaps and visits to the emergency room may increase, especially for children. Protect your little ones from common holiday dangers by following some of these holiday safety tips:

- Make sure your Christmas tree is sturdy. Trees that are not secured properly can fall onto children.
- Keep trees away from sources of heat such as electrical outlets, radiators and portable space heaters.
- Practice fire safety and have a family emergency plan in the event of a fire.
- Hang smaller decorations higher up on the tree. Small decorations may look pretty but can pose a choking hazard for young children.
- When buying toys, look for ones that are well made and age appropriate. Remember to check the Government of Canada's Recalls and Safety Alerts database to see whether any toy has been recalled.
- Keep holiday plants out of children's reach. Mistletoe and holly are poisonous and can cause an upset stomach.
- Be aware of food safety guidelines to avoid accidental food poisoning over the holiday season.

For more holiday safety tips, visit the injury topics section of Parachute Canada at:

[www.parachutecanada.org](http://www.parachutecanada.org).



## **CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON:**

We are very excited to hold a special Christmas Lunch with the whole school on Friday December 14, 2018 at 12:45. Notes went home last week informing parents. The cost is \$6 which can be paid through school cash online. We look forward to celebrating the season as a school community.

## **CHRISTMAS VACATION**

Just a reminder that **Friday December 21<sup>st</sup>** is our last day of classes before our Christmas break. This means that Christmas vacation for our students is from Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup> until Friday, January 4<sup>th</sup>. The first day back in the New Year is **Monday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

## **ST. LEO SOCIAL AVENGERS AND CHARITABLE DONATIONS**



A thank you to the St. Leo social justice group – the *Avengers of Social Justice* - for the outstanding job they did in the *We Scare Hunger Food Drive* in the month of November. Thanks to their efforts, and your generosity, our school was able to donate more than 300 food items to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. These children are demonstrating the difference that the actions of a small group of people can make in our community.

Our *Avengers of Social Justice* are asking our families to consider supporting theme days on the Thursdays of this month and sending in any donation to participate. All dollars raised will be sent to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to support families in our communities.

These charitable collections go hand-in-hand with our annual **Tree of Warmth** collection. Again this year, the staff and students of St. Leo School continue our Christmas Charity collection by collecting mittens, hats, scarves and other warm items for those in need in our community. Donated winter wear may be placed under the Christmas tree in our foyer by students, or can be dropped off during one of our Christmas Social on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>. We will distribute these items to charity right after the Christmas Social so please, if possible, send in your donations by then.



## **AVENGERS PLANNED SPIRIT DAYS**

In the spirit of Christmas fun, the Avengers would like to invite our students to participate in Christmas Theme Days:

**Thursday December 6, 2018-** Christmas Sweater/ t-shirt day

**Thursday December 13, 2018-** Christmas PJ Day

**Thursday December 20, 2018-** Christmas Character Dress up Day (eg. Santa hat, elf hat, etc)

\*The cost to participate in the theme days will be a \$2.00 donation which will go towards supporting families in our community.



## **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2019**

New Junior and Senior Kindergarten registrations for the 2018-2019 school year will be held during the month of January. ***This is for BOTH the English and French Immersion streams.*** **NEW this year is ONLINE registration** at CatholicEducation.ca Check out our Board Website for more information as well at <http://www.bhncdsb.ca/page/new-online-kindergarten-registration> or contact Mrs.

Gardner, School Secretary, for details on applying online at school: **519-759-3314.**

While families have the opportunity to register at any time during the year, we ask that you register during the month of January so that we can provide you with the information you need. Early registration also assists us in preparing staffing for the upcoming year.

If you are aware of any young students in our area who are eligible to attend one of our Catholic elementary schools beginning September 2019, we ask that you please let them know about our upcoming registration. Children of Roman Catholic Separate School Supporters have the right to attend a Catholic School within the system in accordance with the following age requirements:

- (A) JK: age **four (4) years** on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2019. (Born in 2015)
- (B) SK: age **five (5) years** on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2019. (Born in 2014)

Parents should have the following to register:

- Birth Certificate or Baptismal Certificate
- Identification with current address

**Children currently enrolled in JK at St. Leo do not have to re-register for SK. They will be automatically moved up to SK for September 2019.**

If you have any questions about your eligibility, or any other question related to registration, please contact the school as soon as possible at: **519-759-3314**

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER . . . AND BUSSING**

**#1.** The cold wet weather has arrived. Please ensure your child is dressed for this weather. We recommend, boots, hats, mitts and a warm jacket.

If your child is in primary, we also recommend an extra pair of mitts and socks!

**#2.** Now that winter has arrived, please check the Board transportation website for any bus cancellations and delays.

**#3.** Snow is fun to play with, but at the same time can be dangerous. Please remind your child/children that snowballs are **never** permitted at school.

With snowy weather on the way, we have had a few questions about how and when the decision to delay or cancel bus transportation is made. Our students' safety comes first. Please know that all transportation decisions are made for individual areas and routes across Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk counties. Decisions are not made from a Brantford office, but rather by the Manager of Transportation Services Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk, with input from the individual bus operators and others located in your immediate area. Those observations, together with your municipal information and weather forecast help make the decision to run, delay or cancel individual routes and/or zones across the district. We understand that weather and road conditions are different across our large geographic area and Student Transportation Services does everything possible to make timely decisions that are in the interest of safety for all. Please remember to always rely on [www.stsbhn.ca](http://www.stsbhn.ca) and your local radio station for transportation information throughout the school year.



In the event of weather that may affect school transportation, parents are asked to keep in mind the following information. St. Leo School is a **Zone 4** school with City of Brantford schools. ***If bus transportation is cancelled in Zone 4 (as announced by local radio stations), St. Leo School will be closed for students and staff.*** Decisions to cancel or delay transportation will be made prior to 6:30 a.m. and be announced prior to 6:45 a.m. Parents can access this information through the Board's website (under the Parents tab) or use the website [www.stsbhn.ca](http://www.stsbhn.ca). Parents can click on the "Cancellations – Closures or Morning Fog delays" icon. The website page also contains information on other sources of cancellation/delay information such as radio stations and television channels.



When St. Leo School requires an emergency closing due to weather conditions, each child or family of children will only be dismissed when the parent/ guardian has been contacted by school personnel.

**LIBRARY BOOKS:** All St. Leo School library books are due back to our library by **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21**. Please take a look around your home – and other “hiding places” – and send the hope to have all our books back and support.



including backpacks, under beds, behind furniture books back. When students return in January, we available to sign out again. Thank you for your

### **JANUARY PA DAY**

The first PA Day of the new year, for ELEMENTARY schools only, will be on **Monday, January 21, 2019**.

### **MINDFUL EATING FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

**Brought to you by Lunchbox Orders:** Healthy school meals are just one click away. Place your lunch order at [www.lunchboxorders.com](http://www.lunchboxorders.com)

The holiday season can be a tricky time to keep healthy eating habits in check. There are plenty of opportunities to indulge and get sidetracked! Here are a few tips to keep in mind during the holidays.

**Start the day right.** A good breakfast that contains some protein (egg, peanut butter, Greek yogurt) with some fruit and a whole grain is a great way to keep yourself from “snacking” on less nutritious items through the day.



**Have a nibble.** Before heading to a gathering have a healthy snack that contains some fibre, this will help reduce the craving to eat everything on the food table!

**Drink a glass of water.** Before heading out to a party, drink a glass of water. This helps reduce your desire to snack, and will hydrate you!

**Nutrient-rich snacking.** In between meals, snack on fruits and vegetables. You'll be more likely to meet your nutrient recommendations, and deter munching on those higher calorie, nutrient-poor choices you may have lurking around the house.

Sources: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Holidays-Celebrations/Holiday-Eating-For-a-Healthy-Waist.aspx>  
<http://www.dietitians.ca/Nutrition-Resources-A-Z/Factsheets/Weight-Loss-and-Control/How-Can-I-Survive-Holiday-Eating-.aspx>



**BRANT FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

We are excited to announce that the Brant Food for Thought Program will begin at St. Leo School in January 2019. We are thrilled to have received grant funding to support this nutrition program in our school. More information will follow, however we will need parent volunteers for this program. If interested, please contact Mrs. Mulrain at 519-759-3314.

Please also see information on the following page on healthy eating and kitchen skills for all ages.

**Grade 8 Student & Parent  
Info Night**

ASSUMPTION COLLEGE SCHOOL  
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 16, 5:45 PM

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE  
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 16, 6:00 PM

**ALL FAMILIES WELCOME!**

assumptionlions.com | sjconline.ca

# Holiday Food Festivities

By: Kimberly Doyle,  
Registered Dietitian and a  
St Leo's Parent



December marks the beginning of a wonderful time full of holiday festivities that bring the family together. A family favourite of mine was baking hundreds of cookies with my mother and sister to share at Christmas time with family and friends. This was one of many early childhood memories in the kitchen that kindled my love of food and passion for family nutrition!

Involving your children in the kitchen with age appropriate activities is a fantastic way to teach them cooking skills,

nutrition concepts and food safety lessons.

It has been shown that a person who eats more home cooked meals is less likely to develop chronic health issues like heart disease, have a better intake of fruits and vegetables and lower intake of added fats and sugar.<sup>1</sup> Teaching your children how to cook is a life skill that could improve their overall health.

When you are having fun in the kitchen it is also the perfect time to educate them about the food they are playing with! Questions for preschooler or Kindergartener may be more sensory oriented like "what colour is the carrot?" or "Is the carrot hard or soft... wet or dry?" or "What does the carrot taste like, sweet or salty?" The categorization of foods into different food groups is also a good idea. The older child could be challenged on functional qualities of foods. Examples include "Why should you eat meat and alternatives?" or "Oranges are rich in Vitamin C, what does vitamin C do for our bodies?" You might be

thinking there's no way your child will know the answers or care to learn about food in this way but when you are in the middle of using the foods you will be pleasantly surprised.

In this environment where bacteria are everywhere, take the very important opportunity to teach your children about food safety by handwashing, tying hair back, using gloves and putting food in the fridge to prevent the spread and growth of harmful bacteria. Make sure you explain why you do these things each time you do them to nail the message home! Safety first!

Whether it's a food-based craft, cooking or washing hands, there is a possible teachable moment! Slow down over the Holiday Season to involve your children in the process to give them loving memories and life skills they will never forget. See the following Handout on age appropriate kitchen tasks.

*Happy Holidays!*

1) Susanna Mills,<sup>1</sup> Heather Brown,<sup>1</sup> et al. "Frequency of eating home cooked meals and potential benefits for diet and health: cross-sectional analysis of a population-based cohort study." *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act* 14 (2017): 109. Published online 2017 Aug 17.

# Kitchen Skills for the Ages

## *Ages 3-5: Pint-Size Helpers*

At this age, they'll need plenty of supervision! Make sure to choose things that don't need to be precise. At this age their best tool is their hands. Here are some ideas to get started:

- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Tear lettuce salads
- Mash ingredients, like overripe bananas
- Wrap potatoes in foil to bake
- Knead dough (you'll want to get it started for them)
- Smash graham crackers for crust
- Pouring measured ingredients into the bowl

## *Ages 5-7: Grade-school Sous Chefs*

By now, you can introduce kid-friendly knives (rigid enough to cut through fruits and vegetables but have a dull edge). Also, they're just starting to read and write, so introduce them to recipes. Have them read along. Here are some other ideas for children's kitchen duties:

- Mix dry and whisk wet ingredients
- Measure and count items
- Set the table
- Crack eggs (watch out for shells!)
- Roll cookie dough or meat into balls
- Chop softer fruits and veggies
- Read aloud (or sound out) recipe steps

## *Ages 8-12: Budding Cooks*

Preteens are becoming more independent. Lay out ingredients for simple recipes like PB&J. They won't need as much supervision, but they'll greatly appreciate any positive affirmations. Here are some more things they can do on their own:

- Peel veggies
- Toast bread
- Make sandwiches
- Wash and put away dishes
- Make their school lunch
- Unload groceries
- Mix up a simple batter on their own

## *Ages 13 & Up: Young Chefs*

Teens will be ready to take on the challenge of mastering different equipment in the kitchen. But make sure they know proper safety skills before starting. Tips like which dishes are safe to use in the oven are helpful. Here are some skills they'll be able to handle:

- Make recipes on the stove top
- Bake on their own
- Use sharp knives
- Learn to use various kitchen gadgets
- Have full reign over the microwave
- Master class: If they're up to the challenge, designate one dinner a week as their night to be "lead cook"

## December message from your Brantford Trustees...

The Advent Season and a new Liturgical Year have arrived, and our Catholic community is busy with preparations to rejoice in the birth of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Our schools, offices and parishes gather in prayer, reflection and celebration. This is truly a joyful time of year during which we are reminded of the sanctity of life and the importance of faith and family in our day-to-day routines.

In the month of December, celebrations of our faith are all around us; there are school concerts, liturgies and other gatherings taking place across our school district. We congratulate and thank staff for their dedication and enthusiasm in planning these celebrations for our communities.

In the midst of all of the joy and celebration, we must remind ourselves that Christmas is not just a time for festivities. Christmas is more than that. It is a time for the contemplation of eternal things and reflection that this season can be a very difficult one for many, particularly those who are need.

Our Catholic traditions help us focus on the true meaning of the Advent Season. We display this by the virtue of charity and by selflessly giving to those who are less fortunate than us. We must always remember that the true spirit of Christmas is one of giving and forgiving.

As your Trustees for the City of Brantford, we wish you and your loved ones the peace of Christ at this very special time of year. May you experience the gift of faith and the blessing of hope during this holiday season.

A heartfelt Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you and thank you, once again, for your commitment and service to Catholic education.



**Rick Petrella**  
Chair of the Board, Trustee – City of Brantford



**Bill Chopp**  
Trustee – City of Brantford