

2016-2017: A BIG YEAR FOR STEWARDSHIP!

What a busy year for the school Stewardship Program! Students, parents, teachers and staff shared their time, talents and treasures to help those in need. Each grade participated in at least three stewardship activities, ranging from field trips, guest speakers, crafts and even visits from live animals! An all-school mass and rally in April wrapped up the program for the year. At the rally, each grade presented a donation check to the organization(s) of their choice. These funds came from proceeds raised at the Mission Carnival in February.

Because our children are blessed with good homes and families, some stewardship themes can be challenging to understand. This program exposes kids to these issues in an age-appropriate, educational and compassionate way. Hopefully we're creating experiences they'll remember for a lifetime!



Highlights

- ♥ Exposed students to the many facets of stewardship and how they tie in to the virtues
- ♥ Earned \$3,000 at the Mission Carnival and donated the funds to 11 local nonprofits
- ♥ Raised \$1,269 for *Charity Water* through the Middle School Penny Wars and a Pajama Day
- ♥ Collected more than 1,000 canned goods for *St. Vincent de Paul* through a Canned Food Challenge
- ♥ Raised \$360 for *Bridge Bread* by selling their brownies on two stewardship activity days
- ♥ Hosted donation drives throughout the year to collect items for various nonprofits, including: PJs and diapers for *Fostering Faithful Families*; school supplies, hygiene items, socks and books for the *Little Bit Foundation*; hygiene items for *Shower for the People*; Target gift cards, juice boxes and party supplies for *Sweet Celebrations*; and non-perishable food for *Webster-Rock Hill Ministries*
- ♥ Provided each student with a journal to record their stewardship experiences

A huge THANK YOU to the parent volunteers!
This program wouldn't be possible without you!

The Year at a Glance

Preschool – Loving All of God’s Creatures

Preschoolers might be little, but they aren’t too young to start learning about stewardship! They were introduced to the concept through something all children can relate to — animals! In October, students learned all about caring for animals and made birdfeeders using pinecones. For the second activity, the Animal Protection Agency (APA) visited and taught kids how to take care of pets. The class made dog and cat toys for the APA to take back to the animals. In March, a guest speaker from the Zoo came and talked about how animals adapt to changes in the seasons. They even brought a live owl, bunny and turtle for the kids to pet! *Donation: \$150 to the APA and \$150 to the MQP Sandwich Program*

Kindergarten – Caring for God’s Children

The kindergarteners learned there are many ways to take care of God’s children. They started off the year by making birthday cards and collecting donations for Sweet Celebrations, a ministry that throws birthday parties for homeless children living in shelters. In January, a guest speaker from St. Louis Children’s Hospital taught students about children with cerebral palsy. The speaker helps run a camp that makes it possible for all kids to play sports, regardless of their abilities. For the spring activity, parishioner Katie Wedding, founder of Wicki’s Wings, talked to the class about how to comfort those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. They then walked to Annie’s Hope and learned how that agency helps children who are experiencing grief. Before the field trip, each student planted a seed in a cup and took home a “memory plant.” *Donation: \$300 to Sweet Celebrations*

First Grade – Protecting God’s Creation

First graders learned how to respect and love God’s creation in all forms, both the earth and its creatures. In the fall, kids decorated garden stones to take home as a reminder that God has blessed us with a beautiful earth. For the second activity, the class enjoyed a visit from the World Bird Sanctuary. The presenter brought live animals, including eagles, owls and falcons. Students learned about what is done to help birds right here in our community, including nursing injured birds back to health and keeping the environment safe for them. They loved seeing live animals in the gym! In March, a guest from the Botanical Gardens talked about the importance of recycling. The kids put these lessons into action by playing a relay game where they sorted trash and recycling. *Donation: \$300 to the World Bird Sanctuary*

Second Grade – Cherishing Our Elders

Second graders started off the year by listening to a guest speaker, Mrs. Godar, talk about what life was like when she was in second grade and how she spends her time now that she is older and retired. During the second stewardship activity, they listened to the story "Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch," which is about an elderly man who emerges from his normal and somewhat unfriendly routine when he receives a special package in the mail. Afterward, students made paper flowers with uplifting messages written on the petals. Their mission was to take their "bouquet" home and give it to an unsuspecting elderly neighbor! In March, kids made cards for residents in a local nursing home. As a special bonus activity, the class visited Our Lady of Life senior living center in April, where they sang a First Communion song, recited poems, and handed out prayer crosses and cookies. It was an impactful way to show how they can make a difference with the elderly and brighten their spirits. *Donation: \$300 to Our Lady of Life*

Third Grade – Feeding God's People

Students began the year with a visit from a very poignant guest speaker, Ms. Nellie, who grew up in poverty and didn't often know where her next meal would come from. She shared childhood stories and explained what it was like to grow up hungry. Afterward, kids made chicken and rice casseroles to donate to St. Patrick's Center. In January, the class walked over to Kirk Care Food Pantry and heard about the services they offer. This visit inspired them to hold a Canned Food Challenge between the two third grade classrooms. In total, the kids collected more than 1,000 canned goods, which were donated to St. Vincent de Paul! In the final activity, students participated in a "hunger banquet" using cookie cake. They learned how some countries in the world have very little food to feed a large population, while other countries – like ours – have a lot of food for not as many people. It was an impactful way to illustrate the relationship between poverty and hunger throughout the world. *Donation: \$300 to the MQP Sandwich Program*

Fourth Grade – Celebrating Our Differences

Fourth graders learned we are often more alike than different from people who are disabled, and that it's important to include and respect people of all different abilities. A visit from C.H.A.M.P. Assistance Dogs kicked off the year. Miss Dianne and her dog, Rusty, showed how Rusty helps people with disabilities get dressed, take medicine, and get around their homes and neighborhoods. In January, the class took a field trip to the Midwestern Braille Volunteers Center, where they learned how textbooks and other printed material are turned into braille. They were exposed to the braille alphabet and even got to type their names in braille on a special typewriter! In March, students participated in a "disabilities lab." They helped peers get around the classroom while blindfolded, walked the hallway with crutches, and tried to read sentences out loud with a mouth full of marshmallows! *Donation: \$300 to Midwestern Braille Volunteers*

Fifth Grade – Honoring the Armed Forces

Fifth graders gained a better understanding of how important is to respect and honor our servicemen and women. In the fall, Dr. Tom Albus, grandfather of classmate Billy Albus, visited and explained how he served as a Navy pilot. Students watched a video about "A Million Thanks," which collects letters of thanks and encouragement for military personnel. The kids each wrote a note that was sent to this organization. In January, students heard from classmate Shawn Soriano's dad about the work of the Joshua Chamberlain Society, an organization that supports injured marines from the St. Louis area. Corporal Justin McCloud and his wife shared how the JCS helped their family after he suffered injuries serving in the Middle East. For the last activity, the class took a trip to Jefferson Barracks, where they learned about what it was like to be a World War II soldier, including the clothing and weapons used. *Donation: \$300 to the Joshua Chamberlain Society*

Sixth Grade – Sheltering God's People

Sixth graders started off the year with a presentation by Cora Taylor from Good Shepherd Fostering Faithful Families, which educates parishes on the needs of foster children. Students heard about Ms. Taylor's own experience adopting a child through the foster care system, and they collected pajamas and diapers for the children served in the program. In January, the class enjoyed a visit from Bridge Bread, a bakery that provides jobs for the homeless and teaches them life skills to help find long-term employment. In support of this ministry, sixth graders sold brownies (one of the products made at Bridge Bread) on two stewardship activity days. In March, students heard from Jake Austin, founder of Shower to the People. This organization provides hygiene services and hot showers to the homeless using an old truck that's been converted into a portable showering unit, which the kids got to tour. The class wrapped up the year with a "bonus" field trip to St. Patrick's Center, where they toured the facilities, made cards and participated in a budget exercise. *Donation: \$150 to Bridge Bread and \$150 to Good Shepherd Children & Family Services*

Seventh Grade – Respecting Human Life

Seventh graders started off the year learning about The Little Bit Foundation, an organization that partners with local schools to serve the needs of children living in poverty. Kids collected school supplies, personal hygiene items, socks and books to donate. They also took a trip to the foundation's warehouse, where they helped sort and package these items. In January, students learned about Our Lady's Inn and how the organization provides a loving home and array of services to pregnant women and their children who are homeless. In March, a guest speaker from Webster-Rock Hill Ministries visited and explained how they serve our local community, right here in the neighborhoods surrounding MQP! They heard about how "expensive" life is and how easy it is to fall into poverty. The class brought in food items to donate to the organization. *Donation: \$300 to The Little Bit Foundation*

Eighth Grade – Working for Social Justice

Eighth graders had a full year of activities that taught them how they can really make a difference in people's lives. They started out in the fall with a day of service, where they split into groups and visited four organizations. At Webster-Rock Hill Ministries, students cleaned and organized a newly renovated area of the center. At Join Hands East St. Louis, students assisted with the "bed sheet quarter sale" by organizing bedding donations and assisting clients with their purchases. At Equine Assisted Therapy, a place where developmentally disabled children receive therapy through horseback riding, students helped clean out the barn. Finally, a group went to DePaul USA, a center that assists the homeless, and helped clean out an apartment building being renovated for the center and beautify the green space around the building. And this was just the start! In January, the class enjoyed a visit from two attorneys (a public defender and a prosecutor) who discussed the death penalty and how it ties into our social justice responsibility. The class wrapped up their stewardship experience in March by discussing the refugee situation and exploring our role as Catholics in supporting these displaced and vulnerable people. *Donation: \$300 to parishioner Nikki Weston for her work with local Syrian refugees*