

*Who are you? This was the question asked during a prayer reflection on a website I have*

made a New Year's resolution to listen to each day. Each day includes a reading from the Bible, and it just happened to be from 1 John 3: 1-2 this past Monday. Who are you? Sometimes I think I know the answer, but I am like a chameleon.

I am not the same as the youngster growing up in Denver, Colorado or the young woman who moved to California so many years ago. I am not the same woman who gave birth to 3 children or said yes to the man I love so much. I am not the same as I was when I began this job at the preschool so many years ago. I have been shaped and formed by many changes, challenges and people who have come and gone throughout my life. But the core of who I am remains the same.

What mother or father doesn't gaze into the eyes of a newborn infant and ask the same question about the mysterious gift of life that rests in their hands? Who are you? We ponder the miracle of life and speculate about a future. What will he be

like? What will be his passions? What will he find to love? Who will he be as a man?

Like all good parents we are often swept away by thoughts of the future, and the part we can play in shaping it. New preschool parents are among the most cautious and concerned group. After all, they are embarking on a juncture that will set the stage for the educational development of their children. We simply want the very best for our children.

As teachers, we are focused on providing experiences that will develop skills and understanding and arrange the classroom experience accordingly. Every good preschool classroom contains dramatic play, blocks, music and movement, art, listening, writing, manipulatives and science. These areas can change according to the various topics that are explored, but the goal is to promote what a good preschool does best. Quality preschools are interested in helping children explore and grow socially, emotionally, cognitively, physically and spiritually.

The teacher looks carefully and observes and discerns what interests children have

because we know instinctively that what children are passionate about they learn readily. It becomes easier to teach other skills once a teacher understands what children respond to naturally.

This is based on the theory of learning through multiple intelligences developed by Howard Gardner. Gardner posits that people learn in unique and individual ways and groups them into eight ways of knowing the world. These include verbal, linguistic, logical mathematical, visual spatial, bodily kinesthetic, musical rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist. This theory recognizes and places equal importance on each way of knowing the world, despite the fact that in our culture some are more highly valued than others. But that is not the point.

What comes naturally to an individual is a talent or gift if you please. These innate qualities drive an individual to explore and learn in one way over another. Synthesizing behavioral genetics into one chapter in *Selfish Reasons to Have More Children*, Brian Caplan comes to the conclusion that heredity is overwhelmingly more powerful than the environment. Heredity is very dominant in learning

styles. For example, in a sorting activity with animals, Mary may be naturally inclined to take the animals and create families of groupings with assigned roles, while Matthew sorts in groupings of neat rows according to size. Mary is a visual spatial learner while Matthew is a naturalist learner.

*What kind of intelligence does my child possess?*

1. **Verbal linguistic:** the child listens and speaks to others and writes precharacters and letters and numbers
2. **Logical mathematical:** the child counts, measures and problem solves through reasoning
3. **Visual spatial:** the child is highly imaginative and uses symbols and structures easily
4. **Bodily kinesthetic:** the child uses fine and gross motor skills for direct hands-on learning
5. **Naturalist:** the child forms relationships by matching, sorting and classifying and gathers information through observation
6. **Interpersonal:** the child uses social skills to work with peers toward a common goals
7. **Intrapersonal:** the child sees the world through a sense of self knowledge, abilities and mastery
8. **Musical rhythmic:** the child responds to songs, rhyming and chants

Using Gardner's multiple intelligence theory fits so perfectly with teaching preschoolers. Each teacher carefully observes her students, notes their strengths and interests and makes adjustments to help children develop new strengths and a love of learning.

We just experienced the joys and expectations of Christmas with all of the gift giving that makes us feel better as the giver than the receiver. We hoped our children would be a little less focused on self and learn a bit about sharing and caring, but this is the time when it is all about them. And it's okay. Realizing it is all about them, as adults we need to take a long loving look at this child who despite his best efforts manifests the gifts given to him at birth. When we let go and we accept, we see things more clearly. Each child has her gifts. Our job is to discover and cultivate and encourage.

I recently stumbled upon a wonderful story, an end of year reflection by Peggy Noonan. She writes about the most powerful words of 2011: OH WOW. OH WOW. OH WOW. These were the last words Steve Jobs spoke on his death bed.



*Samantha and Joclyn (M-W-F Teddy Bears) work on a gift for Fr. Mario's birthday.*

Apparently shortly before dying, he spent some time looking intently at his sister, his children and their mother without saying a word. His breathing was labored, as if he were climbing. Suddenly looking up past them, he uttered his final words: OH WOW. OH WOW. OH WOW. His sister provided the caps when she eulogized him. We can only speculate what he was looking at that made him gasp in appreciation. We are told that eye has not seen; ear has not heard.

Ms. Noonan goes on to share a story of her own. A friend's grown son had died in hospice at home. Just as he took his last breath, an infant in the room began

laughing as if seeing something veiled from the rest in the room.

I believe children are so much closer to God. We do well to look at things through their eyes and ponder and appreciate the gift of the moment. There is a plan to be unfolded and revealed in the richness of time. We are called to nothing greater than to love and protect and accept. Steve Jobs once said, "Life is too short to live someone else's life. Be authentic."

Reviewing, I notice my writing is filled with questions. Questions always infer a need to understand and know. We just don't know, do we? Life is a mystery. What a wondrous gift we have been given, the gift of life. Let's help our children value as much of life as we can.

**See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed.**

1 John 3: 1-2

♥ *clp*



The M-W-F Teddy Bears proudly share their gift with Fr. Mario.



## CLASSROOM CORNERS

Filled with all of the hope, excitement and busyness of the Christmas season, December soon melted into January 2012. It is the one month that I always look back at with a sigh and an 'oh my gosh how did we do it all' reflection.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Preschool and School Golf Tournament finally took place with terrific weather. Because of the postponement, we had some unfortunate cancellations but were able to add some new families.

Despite the lower numbers, the event was a success. I will have definite numbers for you next month. **Anjie and Nick Viscount** were the fortunate winners of the \$1000 prize awarded to the Ball Drop winner. Attendees generously bid on the many items offered in the silent auction, including the 2 parking spots purchased by **Drew and Loren Bordages** and **Manny and Jessica Garcia**. I thank all of the families who helped make this event a success by playing, donating, working and participating. I am especially grateful to **Kathy and Robert Hancock** for their talents and time spent in co-chairing this special event.

The bulk of the month was spent in preparation for the celebration of Christmas with gifts, wrapping, cards and pageant rehearsals. Given the limited time our T-Th classes have prior to Christmas, I am quite certain the staff felt they were running a sweat shop. With every spare moment, the children were working to show their families the love they feel, inspired by the careful direction of teachers. And of course, there was the practice, practice, practice that comes with trying to help 150+ preschoolers

retell the Christmas story. Every year with the surprise of the pianist, our very own **Rick Dellefield**, and a church filled with prying eyes, the children’s voices typically fall silent, with the exception of “pah – rum – pa –pa -pum”. It’s something to do with that primitive rhythm of a drum beat. Of course, that is the reason we decided that the only way is the sing-a-long way. I am always heartened by stories of children who belt out the traditional carols when heard on car radios or at home. These songs are now part of their memories and repertoire.

Our Christmas Pageant was a wonderful success with all of the delightful spontaneous surprises that only children can get away with – such as switching roles moments before going on. Most delivered their lines and had a good time, the toys frolicked, the angels were diving and dancing and Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem on time. And they all got to hear that promised thunderous applause at the end.

The month and year ended with our terrific interactive production of *The Nutcracker* with **Sharon Kinney** of the Capistrano Ballet Academy. All of the



The “snowflakes” listen carefully for their instructions in *The Nutcracker*.

children were invited to participate in the story of Clara and her nutcracker, which included the battle of mice and soldiers, a favorite for even the most skeptical of boys. Girls swirled and twirled as snowflakes and flowers in tutus. It is an endearing way to learn a centuries old story that still enchants audiences each Christmas.

Finally came the Christmas parties that included a birthday cake for Jesus. We are so grateful to our families for their generosity in making these parties such fun. The visitor from the North Pole arrived just in time to have all children share their fondest desires for Christmas day. We are so thankful to **Chris**

**Anastasio** and his friend **Dee Dee** who help us with the magic of Santa and Mrs. Claus. They both love this annual task, and the chance to interact in this fun way with the children. Chris is often moved to tears when he shares some of the requests that children make. I have never witnessed children so engrossed in talking and sharing. They know that Santa is carefully listening.

The staff and I hope that the joys of Christmas were yours this year and that the promise of 2012 is something you look forward to with great relish.



*THROUGH THE  
GRAPEVINE*

The month of December went by in such a blinding blur that we have few offerings this month, but always just as cute. Looking up at the sky, **Mia Arra** could see the moon. “Hey, the moon followed us,” she said. **Franklin Heilig** knows how old **Mrs. Holbrook** is. “I think you’re a 101,” he speculated. Franklin also

shared with **Alec Bognar** that he didn't want to see or talk to Santa. "Well, did he just drop it down the chimney?" Alec inquired. **Ashton Liberto** shared, "My grandma makes my mommy's car go really fast!" Ashton also asked his mom, "**Miss Saine** has a driver's license???" When asked if she was a Player, **Emma Huerta** announced, "No! I belong to **Mrs. Leach**." Playing in the housekeeping area, **Elizabeth Hatton** called to her friends, "Sweethearts, I have some jewelry to show you! Come see." **Michael Tysler** practiced his Christmas carols at home. "We wish you a berry Christmas, and a happy New York," he sang. Seeing a Kitty Kat boy dressed in his angel costume, **Oliver Frericks** wanted to know, "Why is he wearing a sheet?" The day of the pageant dressed as a lamb, **Ava Kosor** announced, "I'm not going to sing because animals don't sing. They just say "maa, maa, maa."



*VISION, HEARING & SPEECH SCREENING*

On Wednesday, January 11 and Thursday, January 12, **Feline Grant** of California Sensory Screening will be evaluating all of the children in the preschool with vision, hearing and speech assessments. This is a service included in your Activity Fee paid at the beginning of the year. Afternoon and LINK PM will be assessed on Wednesday.

This assessment is vital to your child's future success in school. If a child has trouble seeing, hearing and / or speaking it will affect his ability to learn easily, especially with reading. Mrs. Grant returns these assessments very quickly and has been helpful in finding undiagnosed color blindness and lazy eye issues. She also provides remedies for speech issues that can be used at home, as well as recommending further evaluations if she feels it necessary.

This is so important that if your child is not here the day of the assessment, we will make arrangements for you to meet Mrs. Grant at other locations.



*PARENT & TEACHER CONFERENCING*

It is actually the return from Christmas break that all teachers begin to see great growth in their students. It is the most beneficial time to meet with parents to assess a child's progress so far. On Thursday, January 26 and Friday, January 27, we will be holding Parent / Teacher Conferences in order for parents to meet with their child's teacher and discuss their child's progress.

Sign-up sheets will be posted outside the classroom. It will be first come, first served, but teachers will make themselves available before school begins and after school for those families who find it impossible to schedule on the aforementioned days.

There will be no school for the children on those dates. Babysitting during your conference time will be available in the Activity Room. A sign-up sheet for babysitting will be available in the office.



**CHRISTMAS PAGEANT  
DVD'S**

If you were unable to purchase a DVD of the preschool Christmas pageant, "A Birthday Celebration," it's not too late. Please come to the office by Friday, January 13 with a check made out to **Ron Adams** or cash of \$15. We will be placing that order on the 13<sup>th</sup>. I guarantee that this will become a new Christmas tradition.



"A Christmas Party" by **Jake Tomlinson** (M-W-F Dinosaur). If only you could see the color.



**FUNDRAISING 2012**

We are so grateful for the continued support of the preschool program. Despite the troubles in the economy, our families have managed to make every effort to participate in our fundraising efforts. As much as I would like to say that the fundraising is specifically targeted for specific items, it is not. Our two fundraisers are an integral part of our budget, supporting school costs. The bulk of any budget is always staff salaries and compensation. I can only tell you that we have the finest staff available.

In past years, we have experimented with different avenues of fundraising: holiday craft boutiques, cookie dough and Christmas wreaths to name a few. We have refined the process, most recently settling on the Precious Memories Photo Fundraiser and the Golf Tournament & Dinner Dance. I have had many fine people who have given time and talent into making these successful events. It is a huge undertaking and very much appreciated.

Here is the dilemma. Both of these fundraisers this year were not without some glitches. **Hilary Heilig** is seeking input from all families that participated in the photo offering, so that we can determine what direction to take for next year. Mrs. Heilig has generously offered to take on the Precious Memories Photo Fundraiser for next year, and I have no doubt it will just get better and better.

The Golf Tournament is actually an 8 year labor of love that was chosen as a way for dad's to connect early in the year. I am always astounded by the generosity of our families who contribute to the silent auction and participate in the raffle. This year we decided to include the school's participation, thinking that the preschool alone could not continue to support this fundraiser. The turnout for golf participants and dinner attendees was the lowest yet. And most troubling was the lack of support with volunteers, which are essential to the success of an event. All of the committee this year was comprised of the same core people from last year, without a single new member. Most importantly, all of the committee will be leaving the preschool next year as their

children move into kindergarten programs. Without someone to step forward who can manage, inspire and follow through with this event, it will end.

This means that our budget will take a significant hit for the 2012-13 school year. This loss of income will have to be passed on to our families. It has always been my intention to make preschool affordable to as many families as possible. I would appreciate input from our current families, and of course, I am looking for that special someone who will step forward and help make preschool reasonable for all.



### *OPEN HOUSE*

We want all of our families to consider continuing their child's holistic educational experience in the St. Edward community. On Sunday, January 29 from 1:30 – 3:00 pm St. Edward the Confessor Parish School will be holding a school wide Open House where you can visit classrooms and talk with staff. The

school invites you to come and spend the afternoon exploring their program.

The preschool's Open House & Art Show will be held separately on Sunday, February 12 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon. Please mark your calendars now. We hold a separate open house because frankly, the children and the staff work very hard, and we want our children to be able to show off their efforts for their families. It will be a morning to focus on the preschool alone. Unfortunately, we are all too often absorbed in the future instead of appreciating the present. This is a reminder that today counts.



### *KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT*

Please be aware that now is the time to apply for kindergarten at St. Edward the Confessor Parish School for the 2011-12 school year. Your child must be 5 before August 31, 2012. You may pick up an application in the school office. The cost is \$65 and includes a Chancy

Bruce assessment to help determine readiness.



### *DATES TO REMEMBER*

Please make note of the following dates for the January calendar:

1. School resumes on Tuesday, January 3.
2. Vision, Hearing & Speech assessments will take place on Wednesday, January 11 and Thursday, January 12. Afternoon and LINK PM will be assessed on Wednesday.
3. PREP Meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 11 at 1:00 pm in the church meeting room.
4. There will be no school on Monday, January 16 because of Martin Luther King Day.
5. January Birthday Celebrations will take place on Thursday, January 19 and Friday, January 20 at snack time.

6. There will be no school on Thursday, January 26 and Friday, January 27 because of Parent / Teacher Conferences.

**Re- Registration for fall 2012 will take place on Wednesday, February 8 and Thursday, February 9 at 8:00 am in the school office.**

