

Many years ago while teaching a religious education class, a documentary film about a young boy who falls unconscious after stepping off a school bus, was viewed by the class. No one knew his name or where he lived. He was ignored, unknown, almost invisible. The boy died of a broken heart. "Cipher in the Snow," was meant to be a cautionary tale of being our brother's keeper. According to the dictionary, a cipher is a person or thing without value or meaning, a non-entity. The story left a strong imprint about how important it is to be integrated with our family and peers.

In our sixth of discussions on the ten **Spits, Spats & Spurts** of learning for growing preschool success, feeling connected and relating to those around you is of great importance in the life of a child, a skill to be developed in these early years. It is a primary element of self esteem, knowing that you have a place and are valued by those around you.

Children develop a sense of belonging if they are fed when they are hungry, if they are held and spend time with an adult who responds to their physical and emotional needs. Family is the very first experience of belonging and provides the stability that children need to grow into healthy adults. Children belong when adults pay attention to the way they grow and learn and continually provide the rich environment they need.

We can give lip service to "belonging" by buying things or giving things or even making children "child of the week", but we know that belonging is deeper than these superficial and ultimately meaningless acts. Belonging is an internal process. There are two things we absolutely must give our children: our love and our time. And you can't have one without the other. Love needs time and time leads to love and understanding.

As you so well know, your children make demands on your time and energy. Do this for me or buy this for me. Children believe that these things are what they want from you. The problem is when you believe the same way. What children really want is your heart, given in

vulnerable love. This is never given by doing and or buying. The more you do, the less gets done. The more you buy, the less you have. It is the gift of honest focused time that provides everything. It is the treasured moments of connection, of gentle conversation and honest sharing that will be the treasured moments. These moments are the ones in which you will truly come to know and understand one another and help your child develop that sense of belonging that we all yearn for.

There are other ways that parents can give a child a sense of acceptance and security. The wise parent is careful in all he does and says. He knows that each action, each word has its effect. The wise parent treats children with courtesy, like the stranger. The wise parent welcomes and accepts things as they are and doesn't fret about the future or the shortcomings that a child may be perceived to have. In turn we come to welcome and accept children as they are, and then children naturally develop that sense of belonging that once again we all yearn for.

When a child's full range of feelings and emotions, such as fear, anger, sadness, joy

and delight, are listened to, respected and paid attention to, the child belongs. There are easy times, and there are much more difficult times to experience. I am not taking about allowing disrespectful behavior, but rather allowing yourself to see beyond the surface emotions and respond appropriately.

Proudly, I tell you that each and every staff member at St. Edward the Confessor Preschool deeply respects the individual child, honoring each for her spirit, her curiosity, her explorations, her experimentation and her time to just be a child. This helps us to listen carefully and try to understand and love each child just exactly as we find them. We know each child by name and by heart. There will be no broken hearts here in this place.

One of my favorite songs that we sing here is “We’ve Been Waiting for You”:

We’ve been waiting for you to come to this place,
Waiting for you to come to this place,
Wherever you’re from,
We’re glad that you’ve come,
We’ve been waiting for you to come to this place.

When the child feels comfortable in their own skin, they can take the next step and reach out to others in friendship and companionship. This comes together in this important time of life – the life of the young child.



CLASSROOM CORNERS

Just as in any school, we are very busy with growing and changing children. They are so confident and excited about their learning experiences that it is hard to remember them otherwise. February brought a flurry of activity as we prepared for our Open House / Art Show. We were so pleased with the work of the children. The staff did their utmost to show you the many faces of preschool life and proudly displayed the work so far this year. The best is yet to come, and if we didn’t have so much going on, we would have our open house much later in the year to highlight all that is possible. You will have



Elaina (T-Th Dinosaurs) is overwhelmed with joy as she holds one of the baby guinea pigs.

to take our word for it and watch carefully as the year continues to roll along. We were pleased with all of the families who were able to come and take a peek. Thanks for coming.

The month was also filled with love, a special kind of love from the families that we are honored to serve. It shows with the Current Family Registration and the Returning Family Registration. We have had an overwhelming response. Many of you are waiting to hear about schedules for next year. We are in the middle of a transition since including our new program

LINK. As soon as budgetary issues are settled, you will receive a letter of confirmation regarding schedules. I appreciate your patience in this matter.

We also had the love emanating from Valentine cards and parties. We thank you so much for your diligence in helping your child write their name 30 times in some cases. What great fine motor practice on the child's part and great patience on the parent's part. Our parties were a great success because of the great parents that we have at St. Edward the Confessor Preschool.

We can't forget to mention the latest addition to the preschool – 2 orphaned



Elvis and Fergie with the two babies by **Natalie Baker** (T-Th Dinosaurs).

guinea pigs, **Fergie** and **Elvis**. **Ms. Milledge** has taken Fergie and **Mrs. VanderWende** has taken Elvis. Fergie came with an added surprise – she was pregnant and last week gave birth to two babies. We now have 4 guinea pigs, and the children couldn't be more thrilled.

Drama this month was the work of the children. A volunteer playwright was selected from each class. After composing their work, the playwright took charge of casting and directing. We had "Weird Story" by **Sean Crvarich**, "Brynnie's Story" by **Brynn Garcia**, "The Guardians" by **Asher Stuart**, "The Ship with Fire" by **Andreas Wale**, "The Friends" by **Emma Foote**, "Me and Daddy Going Fishing" by **Loren Perbix**, "Monkey" by **Addison Bastinelli**, "Indiana Jones" by **Dolan Oliveira**, "The Zoo Out of the Jungle" by **Matthew Mercier** and "Sledding Days" by **Cooper Murphy**. What fun to have all of your friends act out ideas from your imagination. We added some new songs to our repertoire in Music, "My Favorite Things" and "The Beaver Song". The latter was so much fun: "Beavers four and beavers five / Let's all do the beaver jive". And jive we did to Michael Jackson's "Beat

It", only we sang "just beaver, just beaver." Finally the month was rounded out with our own Puppet Theatre production of "The Lion and the Mouse," one of Aesop's Fables. Aesop had a wonderful way of bringing home important moral lessons, and your children get it.



THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

What kind of blarney do we have this month? The kids give us the best lines. After the Puppet Theatre, **Asher Stuart** said, "I wish we could do this everyday!" **Douglas Nilsen** was overheard to say, "When I grow up, I'm going to be a policeman and a mailman." **Eli Slattery** shared, "When I'm a teenager, I'm going to be a teacher like **Mrs. Abang**." When **Drew Buffington** saw the number two that Mrs. Abang wrote, he exclaimed, "That's a fancy two." In discussion about who would be driving for the field study,



Bakers **Ella**, **Ennika**, **Emma** and **Luke** (T-Th Dinosaurs) monkey around with Monkey Bread.

the children had ideas of their own. **Will Schattmaier** stated, "I have a better idea. We should go in a taxi." **Cameron Raab** added, "We can go in a limo; it holds twelve people." **Royce Rademaker** had an even better idea. "We can take a moving van. You can fit a lot of people in a moving van," he speculated. Referring to the field study paperwork stapled together, Will announced, "I brought back that paper with a 'stamp' in it." Before Fergie, the guinea pig, had her babies, the children examined her x-rays. **Mia Alcantara** said, "It looks like she has a dinosaur in her tummy." After their birth, Mia said, "The black one is a boy, and the white one is a girl because the boy ones



Luke, **Natalie** and **Ennika** are so proud of their Monkey Bread.

are always black." When told that because there were no monkeys in the Monkey Bread that it must mean monkeys make it, **Emma Foote** clarified, "No, we're not monkeys; we're bakers." When asked if she would like to play a game, **Sienna Joy** said, "No. My brain is full." While running, **Lucas Gabriel** nearly ran into a friend. "I turned my steering wheel," he said. Waiting in line, **Sierra Lenzen** told a friend, "We don't have patience for that." Reflecting on the gesture of the Offertory, **Paige Van Coutren** shared, "The wine turns into blood and the bread into skin."

Ava Kosor looked at the crucifix and asked, "Is Jesus wearing flip flops?" Looking at the crucifix, **Luke Dilger** asked, "Does Jesus live in San Diego?"



SOLOMON'S BAKERY FIELD STUDY

This month we will be taking our very first field study to Solomon's Bakery in Lake Forest on Thursday, March 3 at 8:00 am and 12:30 pm and Friday, March 4 at 8:00 am. Field studies are opportunities for children to have in-depth observations and experiences of the ordinary world around them. It requires a great deal of preparation on the part of the staff and the parents. The children have been reviewing photographs of Solomon's Bakery as well as exposure to vocabulary associated with the business. On the day of the event, they will have clipboards in hand to check off the various items to be seen. In addition, we are linking it to our second trip to the Santa Ana Zoo by making Monkey Bread in the classrooms.

We appreciate the help of parents in providing the transportation needed. Of course, all parents and chaperones must be fingerprinted and safe environment trained. In addition, parents must fill out the administrative agreement and provide proof of drivers' license and insurance.

All children must be in a car seat. Please bring labeled car seats to the classroom the morning or afternoon of the event. All children should bring a snack in a labeled paper bag. Chaperones should bring a backpack to transport the snacks of those children in their assigned groups. **Please send children in their uniforms.**



NEW FAMILY APPLICATIONS

New family applications will take place on Wednesday, March 2 after 12:00 midnight online. We have had an overwhelming response from current families and returning families for next year's registration.

Currently we are working to resolve space issues created by the inclusion of our new LINK program. After much consideration, the acceptance date for LINK for 2011-12 will be fall birthdays of 2006 – April 30, 2007. LINK will be a structured program focusing on prewriting, pre-reading and math skills for children needing a third year of preschool, families wanting more structure and/ or a 5 day a week program.

Letters indicating schedules for next year will be sent out by the end of March. Thank you for your patience and consideration at this time.



HAITI COLLECTION

You are all aware of the devastation and destruction that took place in Haiti a little over a year ago. Unfortunately, not much has changed to ease the misery that the people suffer from daily. The vast majority of the people still live in tent cities and the poor sanitation and lack of water has contributed to a cholera outbreak. These people are in need of the



Ricky (T-Th Teddy Bears) works with the gestures of the Offertory.

very basic of human services.

Our community is coming together to provide funds to buy enough food to fill a 40 foot shipping container and send food directly to the Missionaries of the Poor for humanitarian aide.

The preschool has been asked to be a part of this effort. Although our children cannot possibly understand the depth of the needs, they can understand the good feelings that arise from doing good things

for other people. Please have your children do small chores around the house that you can reward them for and allow them to bring this money to the preschool to be pooled with resources from the school and the parish to help those in need. The collection will end on Friday, March 11. May God continue to bless our lives so that we may continue to reach out to others in need.



GREEN EGGS & HAM

One of the most beloved events of the preschool year is our Green Eggs & Ham event where we are visited by the mischievous leprechauns. We'll be wearin' the green that day on Wednesday, March 16 at 8:40 am and 12:40 pm and Thursday, March 17 at 8:40 am. Make sure that your children arrive hungry because we will be serving up a plateful of green food, including green muffins from Solomon's Bakery. That is only the beginning of the fun when we discover we must contend with gold loving wee folk.

This is definitely a free dress day. We don't want anyone unnecessarily pinched. I am in need of a couple of parents to help me with behind the scenes planning. If you can help, please stop by the office.



PRINCIPAL OF THE DAY

On Friday, March 25, **Drew Buffington** will be seated in the chair of power as principal of the day. Drew has a strong interest in all things *Star Wars*. He has declared it *Star Wars* day. We have all kinds of fun things planned, including free dress. Please come dressed as your favorite *Star Wars* character. Drew purchased his duties at the 7th Annual Golf Tournament and Dinner Dance. We are looking forward to a fun day with Drew in charge. Please note that Birthday Celebrations for the Friday will be changed to Wednesday to accommodate this event. May the force be with you.



DATES TO REMEMBER

Please make note of the following dates in the March calendar:

1. Haiti Collection begins for preschool children on Monday, March 1 and ends Friday, March 11.
2. New Family Applications will take place on March 2 after 12:00 midnight.
3. The field study to Solomon's Bakery will take place on March 3 at 8:00 am and 12:30 pm and March 4 at 8:00 am. Children must wear uniforms.
4. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, March 9.
5. PREP Meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 9 at 1:00 pm in the church meeting room.
6. Green Eggs & Ham will take place on Wednesday, March 16 at 8:40 am and 12:40 and Thursday, March 17 at 8:40 am. This is a free dress day.

7. There will be no school on Friday, March 18. This is an inservice day for staff.

8. Because of a mandatory meeting that the whole staff must attend on March 23 from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm, all Afternoon classes will end at 2:00 pm on that day. Funsters and Resters will be dismissed at their normal time.

9. March Birthday Celebrations will take place on Wednesday, March 23 and Thursday, March 24 at snack time. Please note the change in the calendar.

10. Principal of the Day will take place on Friday, March 25. This is a free dress day with a Star Wars theme.