

September 7, 2018

Dear Parents,

“Now and then we had a hope that if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates.”

Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi

“Life’s pretty good, and why wouldn’t it be? I’m a pirate, after all.”

Johnny Depp

Some of you may have heard about our school’s pirate theme from the beginning days of school. I know I’ve already heard an earful about pirates not being the role models we want for our children. Bear with me. Perhaps with the following clarification, we can all get on board and sail into a successful year.

Every summer, teachers attend workshops and seminars to earn professional development credit hours and stay abreast of the best practices in education. This summer I added to their homework by requiring everyone on staff to read the book “Teach Like a Pirate” by Dave Burgess. I have the book, “Lead Like a Pirate” and I also purchased copies of “Learn Like a Pirate” to use later this year. The term pirate is actually an acronym for the following concepts that outstanding teachers employ in their classrooms.

P—Passion

I—Immersion

R—Rapport

A—Ask & Analyze

T—Transformation

E—Enthusiasm

We are blessed with a dedicated, caring faculty but every group of teachers needs to be refreshed from time to time. In this book, Burgess shares his own teaching adventures, struggles, and ideas in the hopes of rejuvenating classrooms around the country. The last section of the book is a compilation of his “hooks” for planning successful lessons. The faculty summer reading was our jumping in point during meetings prior to the start of school. We are also incorporating these practices to help strengthen overall student engagement which was a recommendation from our AdvancEd Accreditation. Finally, we know a fun theme when we see one! Teachers ran with it in a variety of ways. Mrs. Shain’s bulletin board outside the library asks, “What Treasure Will You Share With Jesus Today?” Students who are caught being good will have their name added to a gold coin on the board. Kindergarten pirates went searching for treasure the first week of school as they toured the school to find places like the library, Spanish room, and main office. Another class tackled map reading skills to find where X marked the spot. I’ve greeted scallywags at the door. It’s all in good fun and for good practice.

If you hear more references to the world of pirates, now you know. We will continue to answer our call to holiness with a myriad of Catholic connections. That doesn't mean it has to be a dry, boring, or uninteresting chore. Can you name the patron saint of pirates? Yes, there is one! How did St. Patrick get to Ireland? He was captured by pirates! Outside of classroom applications, if we attack our faith with passion and enthusiasm we can only hope for the transformation of our spirit and heart. You can join us on the voyage or walk the plank, the choice is yours. Have a good weekend, matey.

Mrs. Hayslip