From the Desk of Ms. Miller:

Next week:
Monday - Minnie Vinnies
Tuesday - HASA Meeting 6:30pm, Mrs. Brianne Stanley is our teacher representative this month
Thursday - Red/Pink/Purple Spirit Day
Friday - School Mass & Valentine’s Day

Remember that you are all members of HASA (Home and School Association) meetings are held once a month. This month’s meeting is next Tuesday. We have plenty of events you could help out with before the end of the year. HASA meetings are not only a great place to learn about opportunities to earn your 20 service points each year, but a wonderful place to meet other parents and collaborate with QP staff.

As a friendly reminder, if the clock on your phone or in your car reads 3:00pm, even if you don’t see kids in the parking lot, please pull to the late line along Father’s lawn. This ensures the safety of our students and staff as we walk to the lines of cars for dismissal. When cars rush behind the lines to get to their assigned location, the safety of all of us is compromised.

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**I NEED TO STAY AT HOME IF....**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Temperature of 100.4 or higher</td>
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<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>Within the past 24 hours</td>
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<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>Within the past 24 hours</td>
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<td>Rash</td>
<td>Body rash with itching or fever</td>
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<td>Head Lice</td>
<td>Itchy head, active head lice</td>
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<td>Eye Infection</td>
<td>Redness, itching, and/or “crusty” drainage from eye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital stay/ER visit</td>
<td>Hospital stay and/or ER visit</td>
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**I AM READY TO GO BACK TO WORK OR SCHOOL WHEN I AM...**

- Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication (i.e., Tylenol, Motrin)
- Free from vomiting for at least 2 solid meals
- Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours
- Free from rash itching, or fever, I have been evaluated by my doctor if needed
- Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home and/ or nurse
- Evaluated by my doctor and have note to return to school
- Released by medical provider to return to work or school

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- 2/1-10  Order Lunches
- 2/10   Minnie Vinnie's
- 2/11   HASA Mtg. 6:30pm
- 2/13   Red/Pink & Purple Spirit Day
- 2/14   All School Mass
- 2/17   President’s Day - NO SCHOOL
- 2/18   First Communion  Parent Mtg. 6:30pm

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**PRAYER CORNER**

**Prayer When Things Seem Unfair**

Lord Jesus, how often we ask why: When illness or other adversity strikes—“Why me?”
In the rubble of natural disaster—“Why here?” When the answer to prayer isn’t what we had in mind—“Why not?”
Loving Savior, help me regard whatever comes my way this day as an opportunity: To give thanks for blessings undeserved; In offering forgiveness, to be undeterred; To look for ways to turn things around; In prayer, to be faithful that You won’t let me down. To remain hopeful in You, who know my every need; In a tumultuous world, to be a source of peace. Amen.
Greetings Queen of Peace families!

I guess winter isn’t quite over based on what’s going on outside! You’ve got to love Indiana weather!

Our skating party was a great success! We saw lots of rosy cheeked kids come in and grab some pizza and snacks! A huge Thank You to the Mishawaka Parks for their help in organizing our end of Catholic Schools week celebration! Thank you to all who participated as well!

A quick update on the Notre Dame apparel booth. Thanks to all of your hard work in both booths, we brought in $8259.48!!! We couldn’t have done it without you! I truly hope you see how this benefits our children and the school as a whole. Half goes toward the Washington DC trips every year and half stays in our budget to help supplement teacher classrooms, outdoor play equipment and so many other great advantages. Keep an eye out for information on how you can help this coming football season.

HASA upcoming events:
February 11: HASA meeting in the Commons at 6:30 pm.
February 21-28: Scholastic Book Fair.
February 22-23: Mardi Gras 50/50 raffle sales after each mass.
February 25: Mardi Gras 5:00 pm.

“Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and your vocation agree to serve. You don’t have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

Have a great week,
Carrie Crosbie, HASA President

Queen of Peace’s Annual Family Friendly Celebration will be Tuesday, February 25th

5:00 Dinner & Dessert - until 7:15
5:30 Games & Entertainment - until 7:15
7:30 Burning of Palms

Enjoy your favorite Cajun food catered by The Curve Café (hot dogs and macaroni & cheese will also be available), Dessert Pancake Bar, Face Painting, Balloon Twister, Cake Walk, and Unlimited Game Playing. We will also have the Silent Auction and 50/50 Raffle (raffle tickets will be available at the door or pre-sold in the church lobby after all masses the weekend before; need not be present to win).

No charge for admission, food, and games!

Volunteers will be needed for the night of the event. Be on the lookout for a Sign-up Genius and Sign-up Sheets in the church lobby. Please consider donating a little time to make this event a success! Please contact Mary Hektor, your HASA Treasurer, for additional information: mhhektor@gmail.com or (574) 360-5782 (call or text)

2020-2021 SCHOOL REGISTRATION

If you haven’t already done so, please take a moment to register your children for next school year. This is an easy online process that takes just a few minutes to complete and will guarantee your child a spot in their class for next year. The link is available on the homepage of our website, www.queenofpeace.cc. No registration fees are due at this time.

Help us market our school to our coworkers, friends and family! We have openings in our preschool and kindergarten programs as well as many of our 1-8th grade classes. Please contact the school office at 574-255-0392 if you would like us to reach out to anyone regarding the benefits of our school. We also have Queen of Peace School yard signs in the school office. If you are willing to put one in your yard, please contact the office and a sign will be sent home with your child.

FINANCIAL AID

All families are encouraged to apply for financial assistance to help afford Catholic education. The application process is free, and we are currently accepting applications for next year. The link can be accessed on the website, www.queenofpeace.cc under the school tuition tab. Simply click on the FACTS Grant and Aid icon on the right of the screen. If you would like to discuss financial aid options and/or have any questions, please contact Laurie Haverty at lhaverty@queenofpeace.cc or call 255-9674 x124.

YOU CAN LEND A HAND

*Reminder - PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN ANY MONEY FOR YOUR COUPON BOOKS. Keep the money that you collect when you sell the books. We will bill your FACTS account on March 15th for any books not turned in by the Wednesday, February 12th deadline. There is openings if your children would like to sell their books after Mass. Please contact the office if you would like additional books.

Please remember to order your children’s lunches for March at www.BOONLLI.com. Ordering is Now through the 10th.
To my family and friends at Queen of Peace Catholic School,

In the book of Jeremiah, Chapter 29, Verse 11, it states, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

I am retiring from the Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend after 24 years of teaching, 19 of them here at Queen of Peace. Thank you for sharing your children with me, I hope they have developed a positive attitude toward themselves as learners and toward school as a special place to grow and be challenged. I will treasure the relationships I have made with so many families through the years.

It was a special privilege to be a teacher in the Catholic schools and a personal joy to have the opportunity to touch so many young lives as they began their formal schooling. I am fortunate to have had a full career made even better because of the incredible friends and colleagues who helped create so many wonderful memories. Thank you all for your confidence and support through these many years.

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." Acts 20:24

Thank you and God Bless,

Mrs. Gina Hite
Scholastic Book Fair is Coming!
We need your help.
Friday, February 21st through Friday, February 28th

Please consider volunteering for a shift or two.
You can choose a shift on SignUp Genius OR circle the shift(s) available and return this form to the school office.
I will email/contact you to confirm your shift closer to the book fair.

If you have any questions call Carrie Crosbie at 574-360-6373 Thank you in advance for your help.

Circle your preference(s) and return.

Name ___________________________ Phone # ___________________________ Email ___________________________

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Mardi Gras 2020

& the Burying of Alleluias and Burning of Palms

Queen of Peace’s Annual Family Friendly Celebration
Tuesday, February 25th

5:00    Dinner & Dessert - until 7:15
5:30    Games & Entertainment - until
7:15    Burning of Palms
7:30    Burning of Palms

Enjoy your favorite Cajun food catered by The Curve Café (hot dogs and macaroni & cheese will also be available), Dessert Pancake Bar, Face Painting, Balloon Twister, Cake Walk, and Unlimited Game Playing!

There is NO CHARGE for admission, food, and games!

Free will donations will be accepted at the door if you would like to help defray the costs of the event.
Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Silent Auction is Back!

Items include baseball tickets for the Chicago White Sox and Cincinnati Reds, merchandise from the Chicago Bears and Indianapolis Colts, and admission passes to the Field Museum in Chicago, the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo, SkyZone, and Edge Adventure Park (Rum Village Aerial Adventure). We will also have gift certificates from some of your favorite local restaurants, a one-night getaway with dinner and a show at the Blue Gate Theatre, and much more!
50/50 Raffle – $2/Ticket and you could win CASH!
Pre-sale tickets will be available in the church lobby after all masses the weekend of February 22nd & 23rd!
Tickets will also be sold at the door the night of the event. Winner need not be present at the event to collect.

If you are able to donate your time to help make this year’s event a success, please add your name to the Sign-Up Genius Mardi Gras event or Sign Up Sheets in the Church Lobby – Available soon!

Contact Mary Hektor for more information:
574-360-5782 (call or text)
mhhektor@gmail.com
Help children reach for Heaven

Parents want the world for their children. Catholic parents want even more than that - we want Heaven, too. We know that teaching youngsters to know, love and follow Jesus is the only way to make that happen.

Know Jesus. Would you be satisfied making a new friend only by hearing others talk about him? Close friendships happen when people connect personally and share experiences. There is no better way for children to know Jesus than for us to introduce them to him in person - in the Eucharist, in Scripture, in prayer.

Love Jesus. Through Scripture, we learn that Jesus is strong and can do anything. He always keeps his promises. Remind children that God loves them even more than their parents and he proved it with his life, death, and Resurrection.

Follow Jesus. Jesus wants his love to shape our hearts which then leads into our actions. When we love him, we want what he wants - Heaven for all his children.

Lead them to Jesus. Children learn to love and follow Jesus, not from the Church, not from the priest, but from their parents. The better we come to know and love the Lord, the better we can share him with our children.

Pray and read Scripture daily, and don't miss a chance to meet Jesus at weekly Mass.

St. Blaise

St. Blaise was a bishop in fourth-century Turkey and was arrested during the persecution of the Emperor Licinius. What we know about this saint is that he was courageous, faithful, and generous. For a while, he lived in a cave and cared for the animals until he was discovered and arrested. He is best known for healing a boy choking on a fish bone. According to legend, the boy's mother gave him two candles in gratitude.

Lenten Obligations

Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday (February 26th) and Good Friday (April 10th). These are the only two days of obligatory fasting and abstinence.

The U.S. bishops define fasting as eating one full meal. Some food (not equaling another full meal) is permitted as necessary to maintain strength. In addition, all Catholics fourteen years old and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.

Why Do Catholics Do That?

In the early Church it was customary to give up rich foods as well as meat during the penitential season of Lent. This included milk, eggs, butter, cheese, and fat. On the Tuesday before Lent began, families would empty the pantry of the forbidden foods by enjoying a dinner of pancakes (or in some places, fried doughnuts!). In some countries, it is even called "Pancake Tuesday." It was meant to be one final celebration of feasting before the Lenten fast.
The way, the truth, and the life during Lent

To children, Lent can be a time for sacrifice - something they'd rather avoid. Instead, explain that experiencing Lent helps us to find "the way and the truth and the life" that will lead us to Heaven (John 14:6).

The way - Let children map out their own journey through Lent. Instead of giving up one thing for the season, choose several, short-term sacrifices. Include days of "fasting" from a favorite food or video game, days of "abstaining" from a bad habit like biting nails or fighting with siblings. Add days of performing good works.

The truth - Learn what it means to be a follower of Christ from those who dedicated their lives to him. Read stories about the saints or heroes in the Bible. Tell youngsters that God works through ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things.

The life - Lent is all about hope. On Easter, Jesus opened up heaven to give us new life. Ask children to commit to continuing habits acquired during Lent that will lead to new life in Christ.

Matthew 5:38-48, Forgive always

In ancient times, the concept of justice was "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." That was devised to limit the conflict between clans from getting out of hand (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20 and Deuteronomy 19:21). Later, the concept was misused to defend a brutal form of justice that easily escalated into blood feuds. Jesus' teaching changed all that.

Jesus' approach to justice turns our eyes, not to justice on Earth, but in Heaven. Loving our enemies or those who hurt us repeatedly means forgiving them over and over. That often seems an impossible task, but this extreme forgiveness is what Jesus offers us on the Cross. As Christians, we are called to be Christ to others - in words and deeds.

What can a parent do? The best way parents can pass on the faith in Christ is by example, especially when it is difficult. Explain that we can forgive someone without having to be best friends with them. Explain that whatever the hurt, we can pray for the person and forgive them in our hearts.

February 9 - St. Apollonia (249). A deaconess in Alexandria living during the Christian persecutions under Emperor Philip. She chose to suffer martyrdom at the hands of an angry mob rather than denounce God.

February 11 - Our Lady of Lourdes (1858). The Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in a small French village. Soon afterwards, a miraculous spring with healing waters emerged from a nearby cave. It is still a significant pilgrimage site today.

February 22 - St. Peter's Chair (1st century). We celebrate the establishment of the Holy See and pray for the preservation of God's Church. The "Chair of Peter" is a relic of St. Peter's actual chair and symbolizes the spiritual authority of the Church.

February 26 - Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. The ashes of old palms are placed on the forehead as a sign of penance. Today is a day of abstinence from meat and fasting as penance and in recognition of Jesus' time in the desert.

Parent Talk

When we got in the car after Mass, I was furious. My ten-year-old daughter, Tessa, had spent the hour not in prayer and quiet but in poking her sister and fighting over who got to hold the hymnal. She ignored my stern looks and her father's whispered scolding. "No screens for one week," I told her, and assigned a five-paragraph essay on appropriate behavior in church before she got the privilege back. I needed to send a solid message.

Church is the most important place we go and the best place to meet Jesus in person. Poor behavior is not only disrespectful but robs her of the chance to receive God's much-needed grace. Tessa realized that she had misused the opportunity Mass presents. To her credit, she wrote a wonderful essay. I told her God doesn't expect us to be perfect, but he does expect us to try our best.
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<td>Adopt a Lenten saint to be your family's patron. Learn about him or her and see how you can imitate him or her.</td>
<td>Place a crucifix or picture of Jesus in a central place to keep the focus on him.</td>
<td>Greet everyone you meet today with a smile, no matter how you're feeling.</td>
<td>Tonight, have everyone name two things for which they're thankful and one intention for which they want prayers.</td>
<td>Peace starts at home. Resolve to only say positive, kind things today.</td>
<td>Set out an empty jar. Put in a jellybean whenever a child does a good deed or makes a sacrifice. Enjoy at Easter.</td>
<td>Make up a box for a needy family or homeless shelter. Put canned goods, clothing, toiletries, and gently used toys in it.</td>
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<td>8 After Mass today, explain the Gospel and the homily in terms children can understand.</td>
<td>9 Spiritual Bouquet</td>
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<td>Have each person choose a prayer to offer daily for your parish priest(s). Send him a card or note of appreciation.</td>
<td>Do something kind for someone else today, with a humble and gracious heart. Remember it is Christ you're helping.</td>
<td>Talk about what you would say to Jesus if he came to your house to visit.</td>
<td>Ask the parish office to see how your family can help.</td>
<td>Enjoy pretzels, a traditional Lenten food. Originally, their shape evoked arms folded in prayer.</td>
<td>Encourage everyone to perform an extra chore around the house.</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>17 St. Patrick's Day</td>
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<td>19 St. Joseph's Day</td>
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<td>Light a candle in church today for someone who passed away or who needs special help.</td>
<td>Practice patience with each other. When it gets difficult, recall how patient God is with us.</td>
<td>In St. Patrick's honor, light a candle and pray for missionaries in foreign lands.</td>
<td>Take stock of how your Lenten sacrifices are going, and refresh your commitment to them.</td>
<td>St. Joseph protected the Holy Family from danger. Pray for the safety of families around the world.</td>
<td>Encourage everyone to do an examination of conscience.</td>
<td>Attend Confession as a family. Experience God's love and forgiveness. Have a treat to celebrate clean souls.</td>
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<td>22 Lector Sunday</td>
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<td>27 Family Fun Night</td>
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<td>Have a special meal at home or at a restaurant to celebrate the halfway point through Lent.</td>
<td>This week, try limiting screen time: no texting at the dinner table, during prayer time, and after 10:00pm.</td>
<td>Read today's Gospel (John 5:1-16). Have everyone detail one idea they found interesting.</td>
<td>Give up a toy or treat just for today, just for Jesus.</td>
<td>This evening, invite everyone to take a few minutes and silently turn their hearts and minds to God.</td>
<td>Instead of watching a movie, pull out a boardgame or make up your own game.</td>
<td>Make cookies and bring them to a nearby nursing home.</td>
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<td>After Mass, light a candle, and recite the Apostle's Creed as an affirmation of your faith.</td>
<td>Apologize to someone you hurt, even if it was an accident. Forgive someone who hurt you—even if it wasn't.</td>
<td>Pray for victims of violence and war in the world.</td>
<td>As a family, consider doing a screen fast today and read together instead.</td>
<td>Contact Catholic Relief Services (877-HELP-CRS, <a href="http://www.crs.org">www.crs.org</a>) and help with any of their ongoing projects.</td>
<td>Place any final donations in the box you set up on March 7. Make a family trip to deliver it to its destination.</td>
<td>Calculate the money your family saved not eating meat on Friday and put that in the poor box at church.</td>
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<td>9 Holy Thursday</td>
<td>10 Good Friday</td>
<td>11 Holy Saturday</td>
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<td>Have a Palm Sunday procession around the house and take turns playing Jesus.</td>
<td>Tonight and every night this week, pray for those who are preparing to enter the Church at Easter.</td>
<td>Take a walk outside and look for signs of new life.</td>
<td>Ask each family member to write a letter to Jesus thanking him for his sacrifice on the Cross.</td>
<td>Wash and dry each other's feet in commemoration of Jesus washing the feet of his Apostles.</td>
<td>Pray the Stations of the Cross. Meditate on each one. Find them here: <a href="http://www.usccb.org">www.usccb.org</a>.</td>
<td>Dress a doll in a white garment and talk about the Baptismal vows we renew each year.</td>
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- = a day of fasting and abstinence from meat
- = a day of abstinence from meat

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We respect each other

Being respectful is more than just using good manners—it means treating people the way you want to be treated. Keep these ideas in mind to help your whole family focus on respect.

Use peaceful tones
It's a fact that shouting often leads to more shouting. Ask your child to speak in a normal tone to show respect for the person he's talking to—and for everyone around him. If he starts yelling, speak to him in a whisper. He'll likely lower his voice to match your volume. Or if he shouts from another room, wait until he comes to you so he learns that you don't respond to yelling.

Avoid making assumptions
Your youngster can respect others' feelings by giving them the benefit of the doubt. For example, encourage him to rephrase an accusation like "Who took my water bottle?" Instead he could ask, "Has anyone seen my water bottle?"

That's more respectful because it won't make anyone feel accused or defensive.

Accept different opinions
With your child, role-play ways to respect opinions that are different from his own. He might start a sentence with "That's one way to look at it, but I think..." or "A lot of people would agree with you. In my opinion..." If a conversation is getting heated, he could simply say, "Let's agree to disagree and talk about something else."❤

My studying tool kit
Developing strong study skills now will help your youngster throughout elementary school and the rest of her school career. Suggest that she add these tools to her studying tool kit.

- **Color:** Let your child use highlighters to color-code her notes for easy reference. Perhaps she'll highlight dates in yellow, people's names in pink, and vocabulary terms in blue.

- **Recordings:** Encourage your youngster to record herself asking questions about the material. She can hit "play" to hear the questions and "pause" to give each answer.

- **Sticky notes:** Your child could write a one-sentence summary of each textbook section on a sticky note, then use the notes to bookmark the section.❤

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**Measure up**
Who can make the longest "inchworm"? Your child will practice measuring with this game. Take turns rolling a die. Using a ruler, measure a "worm" out of clay to match the number rolled (roll a 2, make a worm 2 inches long). Add to the worm on every turn. The player with the longest worm after five rolls wins.

**Make time for family meals**
Research shows that family meals can improve your youngster's well-being and help him do better in school. Look over your schedules each Sunday to find times when everyone can eat together. If one parent is working late on Wednesday and can't make dinner, for instance, plan to meet for a nice breakfast instead.

**Asthma is a leading cause of school absences.** If your child has asthma (or another chronic medical condition), talk to her doctor and the school nurse about ways to ensure good attendance—and good health. Examples might include avoiding triggers like dust and mold and taking medication as directed.

**Worth quoting**
"The most wasted of all days is one without laughter." e. e. cummings

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**Q:** How many letters are in the alphabet?
**A:** Eleven (t-h-e a-l-p-h-a-b-e-t).
Here’s how I use math!

Give your child real-world reasons to use math—she’ll see connections between what she’s learning in school and what she enjoys in everyday life.

**Do a craft.** Maybe your youngster would enjoy knitting or making friendship bracelets. In each case, she’ll count and work with patterns. Or she could explore shapes and symmetry with tissue-paper mosaics or origami. Let her tell you about the math in her project.

**Examples:** “The pattern for this hat is knit 2, purl 2, knit 2, purl 2.” “My mosaic has hexagons, right triangles, and trapezoids.”

**Plan an outing.** Whether you’re running errands or going to the zoo, your child can use math to plan your schedule. Say you have three hours for a zoo trip. Your youngster wants to see the parrots, and her brother wants to visit the meerkats. Ask her to calculate how long it will take to drive to and from the zoo, then figure out how long you can spend at each exhibit. Remind her to allow time for walking from one area to the next.

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**A vivid vocabulary**

“Draw a magenta bird with a plethora of polka dots and a quirky tail playing a harmonica.” Would your younger know what to draw if you gave him those instructions? Try this fun art project to help him learn new words.

1. **Together,** flip through a book or magazine and pick out words that you each think look interesting.

2. **Write the words** on separate slips of paper, and mix up the slips in a bowl.

3. **Take turns pulling three words from the bowl and using them to describe something for the other person to draw.** Note: Check a dictionary if you don’t know what a word means.

4. **Let your child describe his finished picture to you—he’ll practice using the new words.**

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**Parent to Parent**

**Good classroom behavior**

Yesterday I received an email from my son Simon’s teacher saying she had to move his seat because he talks too much in class. I replied to ask whether there should be a consequence at home, too.

Mrs. Roberts said she emailed me because she wanted Simon to know that she and I work together to help him succeed. She wasn’t asking me to punish him, but she suggested that I might speak to him.

Simon complained that his friends start the conversations. I pointed out that he didn’t have to respond, and I asked him what he could do next time. He said he will keep his eyes on the teacher or his work and talk to his friends at recess.

I’m glad his teacher told me what was happening. Now she and I will stay in touch to help Simon behave better in the future.

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**Q & A**

**Q:** I have a meeting next month to review my daughter’s Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Any tips on how to get ready for it?

**A:** The first step is knowing what’s in your child’s IEP. Ask for a copy if you don’t have one. There’s a lot of information in there, so before the meeting, try to read over her goals and her accommodations (tools and strategies to help her). Jot down questions about anything you don’t understand, and ask for explanations during the meeting.

Also, write down what you want to tell the IEP team about your daughter. Perhaps she struggles with certain subjects at homework time or sometimes has meltdowns.

Finally, plan to take notes during the meeting. That way, you can refer back to what you wrote and follow up with your child’s teachers.
Ways to manage stress

Anna, a typical middle grader, has a lot on her plate: schoolwork, yearbook committee, and sports. While she gets stressed from time to time, she uses strategies like these to cope—and your tween can, too.

Reduce triggers
Encourage your child to make a list of what stressed her out this week. Examples: “taking a pop quiz,” “preparing for the student council meeting.” Suggest that she identify what’s behind the stressors (being unprepared, leaving things until the last minute) and plan ways to overcome them. She could review her notes each evening or start getting ready for meetings sooner, for instance.

Offer ideas
Share ways you deal with stressors such as a train delay or a computer problem. Maybe you look at a photo of a loved one or picture a peaceful scene like falling snow. Then ask your tween to name ways she could work through her stress, like taking deep breaths or snuggling with her dog.

Turn to others
Let your middle grader know that she can come to you when she’s stressed. Also have her think of other people she could turn to, such as friends, her school counselor, or her coach. She can talk about what’s bothering her and learn strategies for dealing with it.

Note: If stress seems to be interfering with your child’s daily life, talk to her pediatrician.

A+ attendance

The first step toward doing well in school is to show up! As the school year continues, encourage your child to keep up good attendance with these tips.

- Set expectations. Weave comments into your conversations that make it clear how important you consider attendance. (“I scheduled your dentist appointment for 3:30 p.m. so you won’t miss anything in 7th-period science.”)

- Know school policy. If your middle grader misses school because he’s sick, use the policy to help you decide when he can return. For instance, if he has been fever-free for the required amount of time and feels better, he could go back to school.

Stay informed
Want to connect with your child’s school on social media? Make sure to select the official page so you’ll know the information is trustworthy. Click on social media icons on the school district’s website, or contact the office to ask for links.

Special siblings
A youngster with disabilities can require extra time and energy from parents. To help your other children feel important, too, try to give them some undivided attention each day. For example, you might play a board game in the evening or have a one-on-one talk before bed.

A taste of learning
Encourage your middle grader to “chew on” information he learns—just like he would a tasty snack! For instance, rather than simply memorizing the First Amendment to the Constitution, he could mull over ways he has used his right to free speech or to “peaceably assemble.” Perhaps he wrote a letter to the editor or went with you to a rally.

Worth quoting
“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.” Eleanor Roosevelt

Just for fun
Q: Where do books sleep? 
A: Under their covers.
Think critically about ads

Evaluating advertisements is an important part of being a critical thinker and a savvy consumer. Share this advice with your middle grader.

**Product placement.** When you and your child watch TV or movies, try to spot brand names. Maybe the judges on his favorite talent show always drink a certain brand of soda.

**Q & A**

**Q** My daughter seems to have a different best friend every week. Is that normal for this age?

A Friendships can change frequently in middle school. It’s typical for kids to outgrow relationships and to feel closer to one friend than to another as their interests and maturity levels change.

Let your daughter know that no matter who her “best” friend is, she can remain friends with many people. Mention the various social circles in your own life, such as your book club friends, work buddies, and college roommates.

Also, remind your child to treat everyone kindly, including classmates she may have grown apart from. Remaining friendly will leave the door open for spending more time together in the future.

Practical writing

Writing isn’t just something your tween does in school—it’s important in daily life, too. Encourage her to practice different types of writing at home with these activities.

**To inform**

Your child could interview relatives about their jobs. What does a typical day on the job look like? What do they like best about their work? She can write and share a “Who’s Who” to help family members learn more about each other. Example: “Aunt Cora is an optometric assistant, which means she works alongside eye doctors. Her favorite part of her job is helping patients pick out glasses.”

**To entertain**

Suggest that your middle grader write a script for a silly skit. She can include dialogue and stage directions (notes that tell actors what to do). Encourage her to consider her audience—if her skit is for younger siblings, what will they find funny? Then, she and her friends could practice the skit and perform it for their audience.

Take pride in your work

*This year, my son Aidan started rushing through his assignments and making careless mistakes. I wanted him to take pride in his work like he did when he was younger, so I had an idea.*

I pulled out a storage bin full of papers and projects we’d saved from Aidan’s elementary school years. We took a nice trip down memory lane as we admired stories he’d written, pictures he’d drawn, and tests he’d done well on. Seeing his old papers made Aidan realize how nice it feels to be proud of your work.

Now Aidan has started saving his middle school work, too. I’m not seeing as many careless errors—I can tell he’s trying harder. I know we’ll enjoy looking through his collection when he’s in high school.*