

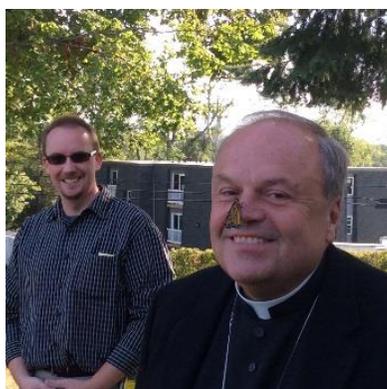


“HOLINESS CONSISTS SIMPLY IN DOING GOD’S WILL, AND BEING JUST WHAT GOD WANTS US TO BE.”

-Saint Therese de Lisieux

## St. Joseph School Kindergarten

**Waiting for Wings:** Children witnessed the transformation of the monarch from egg to butterfly. Our first investigation welcomed the children to kindergarten as teachers presented children with the inquiry of what would emerge from these tiny white eggs collected from



only milkweed leaves.

Environmental concerns surfaced as children learned the fate of the monarch butterfly rested on the availability of common milkweed. As these sources dwindle because of pesticides and loss of meadows, the monarch is vanishing from our RI landscape. Our scientific observation and documentation coupled with fiction and non-fiction stories carried this across all curriculum areas.

Children a-waited the emergence of eight butterflies. The excitement swelled as they announced the appearance of the first monarch from the pupa. On a beautiful Friday morning, Fr. Bob Perron and Mr.



Woodmansee joined kindergartners in their butterfly release. Father blessed the butterflies as they flitted off to Mexico; however not before the children sang their mariposa (butterfly) song and enjoyed the opportunity to have the butterflies perch on their hands or even their noses. We marvel at these majestic creatures—sending them off to winter in Mexico is bittersweet. We will await the next generation of monarchs next spring/summer.



**International Dot Day:** Mrs. LaPlume participated in a summer workshop series in conjunction with the Diocese of Providence and Roger Williams University. The topic of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) to STEAM (the addition of Arts) encourages educators to weave the arts across the curriculum; to collaborate with colleagues and to support children in creating bravely. The story, *The Dot*, was the catalyst for bringing the theme across all grade levels. International Dot Day was celebrated on September 15. Kindergartners combined math work with plane shapes and drew inspiration from the work of Kandinsky. Their panels of watercolor circles celebrate their creativity.



### Social Studies:

Children develop a sense of self in time and place. A mural depicting their homes; teacher affixed their addresses from dictation.



**Block Play:** Increasingly block play is vanishing from the landscape of kindergarten classrooms in favor of “more academic” pursuits. At what cost?



Children are missing the opportunity to engage in cooperative learning as they test their physical world with unit blocks. Children gain literacy, mathematical, social/emotional and concepts in physical science as they learn from block play. The work in the block center involves problem solving/critical thinking as children plan structures either individually or as part of a broader venture with peers. As they build they test and make predictions as their structures take shape and are modified. Children represent their work in a visual form referencing the concrete structure. Literacy is supported as children label their work. Consider

visiting *Community Playthings* and the article supporting block play with young children: <http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2013/building-character-through-block-play>.

### Mathematics:

Children investigate properties of pattern blocks while developing the concepts of sorting, classification and patterning. These are all important concepts to lay the foundation for early algebraic thinking. Hands-on experiences with concrete materials are age-appropriate for cognitive learning (Piaget). Children create with concrete materials and then interpret their designs onto a page to share. This investigation is extended as they use these representations in graphing the number of unique shapes used.





**A Royal Event:** What is the role of a Royal Reader? It is to lead by example in sharing a love of reading with our children. Mrs. Collins shares a story of chopsticks with the children. Children welcome their parent with great excitement and are anxious to share the story chosen from home. While Mrs. Collins opted not to wear the festive attire of cape and crown, she brought a great deal of enjoyment to the children. Josh and mom brought delicious watermelon cubes and individual chopsticks for children to eat with. What a great way to practice those fine motor, pincher grips for writing. Contact us if you would like to be a Royal Reader.



**Writing in Kindergarten:** Families participated in a writing process/journal making workshop. Their uniquely designed and handsewn journals are utilized in guided writing with our journal writing groups. These become a major



Fr. Bob reads a big book about butterflies to the children in Spanish.



assessment tool as it records each child's progression across the stages of writing in kindergarten.

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