

Catholic Education Week April 25th, 2023

April 30th to May 5th, 2023, is Catholic Education Week for Catholic School Boards across Ontario. The theme this year is *We Are One, We Are Many*: “We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members, one of another” (Romans 12:5)

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board is proud of its commitment to the Catholic Faith. Schools across the county continue to engage in faith-building activities in the classroom every day.

In March 2023, the Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Corporation (EOCCC) Icon Cross toured the schools with Religious Education and Family Life Special Assignment Teacher David Afelskie. The Icon Cross traveled to the Madawaska family of schools, including St. Andrew’s in Killaloe, St. John Bosco in Barry’s Bay, George Vanier in Combermere, and St. Joseph’s, Calabogie. Mr. Afelskie coordinated a short prayer Liturgy explaining the significance and importance of the cross at each of the schools. Students learned about the history, symbolism and meanings behind the images, colours, shapes and materials used to create them. Many students had questions about the cross and were captivated by the idea of iconography. After the presentation, each school displayed the icon cross in a prominent location that allowed classrooms or visitors to encounter and pray with the Icon Cross. Activities such as these are great for building faith as a school community and understanding the importance of prayer.

In April, students had the opportunity to pray through the Stations of the Cross, as schools across the county learned more about the importance of Holy Week. Students also had the opportunity to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday. At RCCDSB, gathering as a school community and guiding students on their faith journeys is important.

Another way the Catholic faith has been integrated into education is through monthly assemblies, such as the JOY assemblies at Cathedral in Pembroke. At the end of each month, the school community will gather to recognize students from each class who have demonstrated their care for others by speaking up for them, being honest, showing respect, as well as students who spoke, wrote, and listened as Jesus calls us to. These students will receive the monthly JOY award, which stands for Jesus-Others-Yourself (JOY). The focus for April is to be a Discerning Believer, helping students reflect on their faith through their actions towards classmates, family, friends, and community. The JOY assembly will occur on Monday, May 1st, during Catholic Education Week. Students will also engage in a Living Rosary on Thursday, May 4th, to commemorate Catholic Education.

Additionally, students at Our Lady of Sorrows in Petawawa will be participating in both a primary school liturgy and a junior intermediate liturgy on May 2nd. Students will also have the

opportunity to engage in a Living Rosary on May 5th. Various schools across RCCDSB will take part in similar celebrations as a school community.

At St. Joseph's in Calabogie, the students will be participating in various classroom activities. They will be kicking off the week with "Anything but a Backpack" spirit day on Monday, and wrap it up with a Junior Jag Talent Show and Gallery Walk, along with this season's first SJC Family and Community Picnic on Friday, May 5th. Students have been preparing to share their unique gifts and talents as a way to celebrate Catholic Education Week!

At Lourdes, School Council will be hosting the "Family Spring Fling Dance" for all families during the week! This is a wonderful opportunity where families can come together for hospitality, music, and dancing. This event builds community within the school, aligning with the theme of Catholic Education Week 2023.

As celebrations begin on April 30th, Holy Name Catholic School in Pembroke will be hosting their 100th Anniversary Open House starting at 10 a.m., with Mass being held at The Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish at 9 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend and learn more about the history of Catholic Education in Pembroke! A wonderful way to begin a week of celebrating the Catholic faith as a school community.

Finally, the Board's annual Christian Community Day will be held on May 19th, 2023. This is an important day at RCCDSB as the entire school community will gather for mass and motivational presentations surrounding the Catholic faith. The Board looks forward to this day each year and will be sharing highlights from the day across their social media platforms.



EOCCC Icon Cross at St. Joseph's, Calabogie



Stations of the Cross at Our Lady of Lourdes, Pembroke