



# St. Alexander – Newsletter



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Fonthill,  
ON, L0S 1E0  
905-892-3841

Principal: Mr. M. Venzon  
Vice Principal: Mrs. C. Pozzobon  
Superintendent: Ms. Kim Kinney  
Parish Priest: Fr. Paul MacNeil

*St. Alexander Catholic Elementary is proud to be part  
of the Notre Dame Catholic Family of Schools*

## **MAY 2024**

### **FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK**

#### **Called by Name: "Hear My Voice"**

God loves to involve us in His plans to lead people to heaven. He often uses the weakest to lead the strong. Sometimes God speaks to us through other people. But, have you considered that God could use you to bring His message to others? What have you done today to share the love of God with those around you? Spend some time with God today asking Him to help you share His love to those in most need of it.

Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools will be participating in Catholic Education Week (CEW) with the theme of "We are Called to Love", in conjunction with Mental Health Week (MHW), from Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup> to Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This is an opportunity to highlight the connection between our Catholic faith and mental health with our students.

Family members are welcome to join us as to shop at our Book Fair until Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, or to visit during any the Open House times listed on the CEW Calendar below on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Catholic Education Week Prayer**

Loving God,

We thank you for our Catholic school community where we can journey in faith together. Help us to accompany each other in our learning as we grow, living as joyful disciples of Jesus and bringing good news to the world.

May your love speak to our hearts, helping us to bring hope to others and a commitment to justice in all we do.

We make this prayer through Jesus, our Lord and teacher.

Amen.

Sincerely,

Mr. M. Venzon



NIAGARA CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Niagara Catholic District School Board  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION & MENTAL HEALTH  
WEEK PLANNER 2024

Theme: *We Are Called to Love*



**NAME OF SCHOOL:**

	Catholic Education Week	Mental Health Week
<b>Sunday May 5th</b>	<b>First Holy Communion</b>	
<b>Monday May 6th</b>  <i>As people of hope</i>	CEW prayers and announcements with Father Paul. Read story: I HOPE and activities to follow Rosary Visit from the St. Alexander Youth Minister Music Monday-students playing instruments and singing.	Write Positive and Inspiring Messages with chalk on the school black top
<b>Tuesday May 7th</b>  <i>As people of faith</i>	CEW prayers and announcements with Father Paul. Read story: FLASHLIGHT NIGHT and activities to follow	Grade 4 Dodgeball at Notre Dame HS Practice mindfulness or guided meditation, prayer and/or breathing.
<b>Wednesday May 8th</b>  <i>As people of mercy</i>	CEW prayers and announcements with Father Paul. Read story: YOU HOLD ME UP and activities to follow Gr. 8 Mass and Confirmation Retreat at St. Alexander Church with Father Paul. Celebrating Excellence: Catch the Spirit. Lights Out Wednesday-ECO Team Initiative	Classroom decorations with positive and inspiring messages about our Faith
<b>Thursday May 9th</b>  <i>As people of justice</i>	CEW prayers and announcements with Father Paul. Read story: WE FOLLOW JESUS and activities to follow Faith Day Play Day activities in all classes. Parent Observations and Visit -times below Kindergarten-9-10 am Junior/Interm (4-8)-10:20-11:20am Primary (1-3) 12:30-1:30 pm	Make a gratitude list.
<b>Friday May 9th</b>  <i>As people of joy</i>	CEW prayers and announcements with Father Paul. Read story: LITTLE BOOK OF JOY and activities to follow Rosary visits from St. Alexander Youth Minister Waste-free lunches-ECO team initiative Grade 8 Confirmation Night	Make a list of things you are good at and things you love about yourself

As a Catholic Community, we see the link between our faith and mental health. This year's Catholic Education Week and Mental Health Week theme is, "*We are called to love.*"

The theme for Catholic Education Week 2024 was inspired by the following considerations:

- With joyful anticipation of the Jubilee Year of 2025, we are inspired by Pope Francis announcing the theme of "*Pilgrims of Hope.*" With open hearts of love, we can continue to "*fan the flame of hope*" for a bright future.
- On the fifth anniversary of Renewing the Promise, we celebrate that Catholic Education is centred on our Christian call to love. This love permeates how we live in the world and as we act with love, we build a better future. As Pope Francis stated in 2023, "*He wants us to be artisans of a new history, weavers of hope, builders of the future, peacemakers.*"
- The theme of the synod, "*Enlarge the Space of Your Tent,*" invites us to listen in love, to be a healing presence to one another and to strengthen relationships.
- In his visit to Canada last summer, Pope Francis gave us hope for our continued work for Truth and Reconciliation. Through prayer and a commitment to love, stronger bonds are forming and a new way forward is emerging.
- Catholic Education Week comes at the same time as Mental Health Awareness Week. Through love and compassion, we continue to support each other's wellbeing. God is love and we are always called to live out this love.
- In our continued work for Equity and Inclusion in Catholic schools, a focus on love reminds us that all God's children are loved unconditionally.

There are five sub-themes for each day of Catholic Education Week and Mental Health Week:

Day 1:	As people of hope / Dans l'espérance
Day 2:	As people of faith / Dans la foi
Day 3:	As people of mercy / Avec compassion
Day 4:	As people of justice / Dans la justice
Day 5:	As people of joy / Dans la joie

Every year, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) provides our Catholic schools with a resource kit to help schools prepare for Catholic Education Week. Using these resources, as well as School Mental Health Ontario's website and resources, we have prepared a series of activities, which will highlight how the students and staff at our school are being *Called to love* together.

We hope to see during our Open House activities as follows:

### Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> - Parent Observations and Visits to classes at St. Alexander

Kindergarten- 9-10am

Junior/Intermediate (Grades 4-8)-10:20-11:20am

Primary (Grades 1-3) 12:30-1:30 pm

### *A Prayer for Mother's Day*

Heavenly Father, we thank You for our mothers through whom Your gift of life begins and through whom we are nurtured into great human beings.

We lift up [all mothers to Your love and care](#). We pray for them, for their needs of strength and support to continue to nurture a family of love, in honor and love for You, our God.

Amen

### **CATCH THE SPIRIT AWARD**

Every year across the Niagara Catholic District School Board each school awards a student with the "Catch the Spirit" award. The award is designed to celebrate a student who demonstrates outstanding qualities in the following areas: Catholic Leadership Qualities, Catholic Faith and Catholic School Philosophy, Family Commitment, School Community Relations (rapport with teachers and other students), Involvement in School Affairs and Activities, Involvement in Community Activities, Commitment to a Difficult Situation or Task, and a High Degree of Academic Excellence. **This year we are very proud to present the Catch the Spirit Award to Cassandra Corera.** We are all very proud of you Cassandra!



## May is the Month of Mary

The month of May is the "month which the piety of the faithful has especially dedicated to Our Blessed Lady," and it is the occasion for a "moving tribute of faith and love which Catholics in every part of the world pay to the Queen of Heaven. During this month Christians, both in church and in the privacy of the home, offer up to Mary from their hearts an especially fervent and loving homage of prayer and veneration. In this month, too, the benefits of God's mercy come down to us from her throne in greater abundance."

### **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

We encourage all families to register as soon as possible. This helps to ensure proper staffing is in place for the new school year. Please share this information with any friends, family and/or neighbours who have a child that is ready to start school in September 2024.

We are very excited to have more students join our St. Alexander Family and the extended Family of Niagara Catholic.

We will be having a Kindergarten Orientation Night on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 from 6-7pm. During this time, families will visit the Kindergarten classrooms and get a feel for what a day looks like in Kindergarten!

At 6:45pm the new students will be able to ride the bus with their families to experience what September will be like. We hope to see all newly registered students there!

### **EQAO BEGINS IN JUNE**

From May 27 – June 6<sup>th</sup> our Grade Three and Six students will begin to write the provincial EQAO test. Our students here at St. Alexander have been preparing for the test and are looking forward to showing all that they have learned. We appreciate all of the support from parents and staff. We continue to ask that you make every attempt to ensure that your child is at school on time, especially from May 27 – June 6<sup>th</sup>, and that you do not schedule appointments or vacations during this time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school. Thank you for your support.

### **END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR COMMUNITY BBQ GATHERING**

Our St. Alexander Catholic School Council will be hosting a year-end family get together and BBQ here at St. Alexander School on Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 - 7:00pm. We will have burgers, hotdogs and refreshments for everyone, and cooking will be done by the Knights of Columbus. Pricing details for the food and drinks will be sent as we approach the BBQ, and there will be options to purchase in advance on School Cash.

Our hope is that families and staff members will gather, and kids can play and have fun together. We hope to see everyone there!!!

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION**

Many of our prepared students celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion at St. Alexander Parish on Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. The other half of our students will receive the Sacraments this coming weekend, with the First Holy Communion taking place once again at St. Alexander Parish at 2:00pm on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. The students have worked very diligently with their teachers to ensure they are ready for this important Sacrament. A huge thank you to Mrs. Bellantino, Miss Principi, Miss. Ricci and Ms. Carter for preparing the students so well, and to Fr. Paul MacNeil for what is always a beautiful First Communion Mass!

## Vision Health Month

Visual health is an important part of a child's overall health and well-being. Proper vision is important for a child's movement and coordination, independence, play and learning. If left untreated, vision problems may become serious and prevent a child from reaching their full potential.

A yearly eye exam is **FREE** – the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) covers the cost of an eye exam every 12 months for children up to the age of 19 with a valid OHIP card. [Find an eye doctor near you.](#)

Also, contact an eye doctor if you see **ANY** of these signs:

- |                                                  |                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| • Squinting or holding objects close to the eyes | • One eye that turns out or in              |
| • Blinking often                                 | • Rubbing, tearing, itchy or burning eyes   |
| • Turning or tilting the head to the side often  | • Reporting blurry or double vision         |
| • Covering or closing one eye                    | • Reporting headaches, nausea or eye strain |



For more information on vision screening, please visit <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/schools/vision-screening.aspx>.

## Mental Health Week 2024: A Call to be Kind

Showing compassion toward others can have a huge impact on someone's life. Mental Health Week in Canada runs from May 6 to 12, and this year's theme is focussed on the healing power of compassion. One of the most important ways that we can demonstrate compassion is through active listening without judgment. Actively listening can create a safe space for people to share their thoughts and feelings. You can do this by avoiding interrupting or dismissing their experiences.

Let's all learn to be more present, attentive, and empathetic.

- [Explore how compassion connects us all](#)
- [Learn to safely support someone struggling with their mental health](#)

**#CompassionConnects #MentalHealthWeek**



## Dangerous Nicotine Product Accessible to Children and Youth: Nicotine Pouches

Local health experts are warning of the dangers posed to young people about new flavoured nicotine pouches. There are multiple brands (Zonnic, Zyn etc.) and concentrations of nicotine pouches currently available for purchase in Canada.

Although this product is not intended for those under 18, youth are becoming their main market. These products come in flavours such as berry frost and tropical breeze. Health Canada approved Zonnic last as a quit smoking aid under the country's natural health product regulations, with no restrictions on how it's advertised, where it's sold, or at what age someone can buy it. This means that these products are being sold in local

convenience stores and gas stations to youth without any age verification and are found to be stored next to candy and gum.

**What's the danger?**

Nicotine is a highly toxic and powerfully addictive substance. Children and teenagers are at a higher risk due to the addictive properties of nicotine as brain develops into adulthood. Even using small amounts of nicotine may increase the risk of developing a dependence on nicotine in the future.

Please talk to your children about nicotine pouches and other nicotine products to discuss the risks associated with their use.

For more information about these products, visit: [Dangers of Nicotine Pouches - Canada.ca](https://www2.gov.gc.ca/eng/11335/info/11335.html)

**Educational**



**Resources**



## ParticipACTION Community Challenge

Partake in [ParticipACTION Community Challenge June 1 – 30, 2024!](https://www.participaction.com/programs/community-challenge/) Participate in the challenge this June to get moving, connect with others and help students within the Niagara community get crowned Canada's Most Active Community!

**What is the Community Challenge?**

The ParticipACTION Community Challenge is a national [physical activity](#) and sport initiative that encourages everyone in Canada to get active throughout June in search of Canada's Most Active Community.

For more information visit <https://www.participaction.com/programs/community-challenge/>

