



PARENTS 4PARENTS PRESS

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SHARING THE LIGHT

As we prepare to enter the holy season of Advent, we are invited into a time of hopeful waiting, joyful expectation, and spiritual renewal. Advent reminds us that God is always drawing near—bringing light where there is darkness, peace where there is worry, and love that transforms our hearts. In this beautiful season, your continued involvement in your children's Catholic schools becomes an important way to share that light and hope within our community. By staying active and engaged, you help create school environments where faith is nourished, where Gospel values are lived, and where children can encounter the true meaning of Advent: preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. Your presence—whether through participation in events, support for learning, or collaboration with teachers and fellow parents—strengthens the bond between home, school, and parish, and enriches the spiritual journey of every child.

As we begin this season of preparation, may God bless your families with peace, anticipation, and a renewed sense of purpose. Together, let us walk in faith, guiding our children toward the hope, joy, and wonder of Christmas.

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Advent: A Season of Hope and Preparation

Advent is a sacred time in the Catholic Church that marks the beginning of the liturgical year. It is a season of hope, reflection, and joyful anticipation as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus Christ. Through prayer, Scripture, and meaningful traditions, families are invited to slow down and focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

In 2025, the Advent Sundays are as follows:

- First Sunday of Advent – November 30
- Second Sunday of Advent – December 7
- Third Sunday of Advent – December 14
- Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 21

Each Sunday marks a step in the spiritual journey toward Christmas, with themes of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Advent Activities for Families

Here are some simple and faith-filled ways families can celebrate Advent together:

1. Create an Advent Wreath: Light one candle each Sunday and say a short prayer or read a Scripture passage as a family.
2. Daily Advent Devotions: Use a family-friendly devotional or online resource to reflect together each evening.
3. Kindness Calendar: Make an Advent calendar with daily acts of kindness like "Help a sibling," "Donate a toy," or "Say a prayer for someone."
4. Attend Parish Events: Participate in Advent Masses, reconciliation services, or parish missions to grow spiritually as a family.
5. Jesse Tree: Create ornaments representing biblical figures and stories leading to Jesus' birth. Hang one each day and read the Scripture together.
6. Advent Music Night: Sing or listen to hymns like O Come, O Come, Emmanuel and reflect on their meaning.
7. Set Up a Prayer Corner: Designate a small space with candles, a Bible, and Advent symbols for quiet prayer time.
8. Send Faith-Filled Cards: Write Christmas cards with Scripture verses or Advent messages to share the joy of the season.
9. Bake & Share: Make treats together and deliver them to someone in need, teaching generosity and compassion.
10. Nativity Crafts: Create a nativity scene using paper, clay, or recycled materials and retell the story of Jesus' birth.



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Regional Meetings

OAPCE regional meetings bring together parents from across the province to collaborate, share insights, and strengthen their role in supporting Catholic education. These gatherings provide a welcoming space for parents to learn about key initiatives, discuss local and provincial issues affecting students, and exchange ideas that help enhance school communities. Through open dialogue with OAPCE representatives and fellow parent leaders, participants gain valuable information, build connections, and contribute to a unified voice that advocates for the well-being and success of all students in Ontario's Catholic schools.



This year's meetings featured a special presentation from Lucy Colangelo on *The Digital Reset*, offering parents meaningful insights and practical strategies to help children develop healthier, more mindful relationships with technology. Her session encourages families to reflect on digital habits, reconnect with purposeful use of devices, and support student well-being in an increasingly digital world.

LUCY COLANGELO WOULD LOVE the opportunity to bring the **Digital Parenting Workshop** to your school community. There's also an option to pair it with the **Total Digital Reset** for students during the day, followed by the evening workshop for families – a powerful combination that unites the whole community in creating healthier digital habits. To start planning your school's **Digital Reset**, visit shineonmethod.com to book a free discovery call with LUCY today.

We also welcomed all our OAPCE Liaison Representatives with our Commissioning Ceremony including new reps from Durham CDSB and Brant Haldimand CDSB. OAPCE Provincial and Regional Updates were provided to all in attendance.

With rich discussions, expert guidance, and collaborative learning, OAPCE regional meetings empower parents and representatives to strengthen their voice, reinforce partnerships between home and school, and contribute to the ongoing success of Catholic education across Ontario.

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ADVOCATE

How Parents Can Contact Their MPP to Advocate for Catholic Education

Parents play a vital role in protecting and strengthening publicly funded Catholic Education in Ontario by making their voices heard with their local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP).

You can find your MPP using the “Find My MPP” tool on the Ontario Legislative Assembly website, then reach out by email, phone, in person, or at community events. students.



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You can find your MPP using the “Find My MPP” tool on the Ontario Legislative Assembly website, then reach out by email, phone, in person, or at community events. When you contact your MPP, briefly:

- Introduce yourself as a parent and constituent
- Share why Catholic Education matters to your family
- Highlight the benefits you see in your Catholic school community
- Name any specific concerns (such as funding, staffing, or facilities)
- Politely ask for their support and a response

Respectful, consistent messages from parents and caregivers make a real difference. Working together through school councils, board committees, and parent groups helps amplify our shared commitment to strong, faith-filled Catholic schools for all students.

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ENHANCE

Bridging connections between faith and learning this month

November opened with All Saints Day, a celebration of the holy men and women who lived their lives in faith, courage, and love of God. When we discuss this with our children, it's important to remind them that Catholics do not pray to the saints for things—we ask them to pray for us, just as we ask friends to remember us in prayer. The saints remind us that holiness is found in ordinary people who live with extraordinary love. Take some time to name some saints that your family knows – their school or parish may be named after a saint!



This month, students in our Catholic schools will also learn about Treaty Recognition Week, reflecting on promises, respect, and living in friendship with others. As parents, you can extend these lessons at home by connecting them to our faith—seeing how living respectfully, caring for creation, and keeping our word all reflect the Gospel message of love and stewardship.

A beautiful example of this connection is St. Kateri Tekakwitha, known as the Lily of the Mohawks. Born in 1656 near Auriesville, New York, she was the daughter of an Algonquin mother and a Mohawk chief. After surviving a smallpox epidemic that left her with scars and partial blindness, Kateri was baptized at age 20 and dedicated her life to Christ through prayer, charity, and simplicity. Facing persecution for her faith, she fled north to Canada, finding refuge in Kahnawake, near Montreal, where she lived a life of devotion and service.

In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI canonized St. Kateri, making her the first Indigenous woman of North America to be declared a saint. Her life bridges faith and culture, showing that holiness blooms when we live with gratitude, peace, and respect for all God's creation.

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PARENT & PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Supporting Students Through Ontario's Menstrual Equity Initiative

Did you know that Ontario students have free access to menstrual products at school? Through the Ministry of Education's Menstrual Equity Initiative, in partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart, schools across the province receive pads and tampons at no cost. This three-year agreement (2024–27) will provide over 23 million products to school boards based on student enrolment data. The initiative ensures that all students can fully participate in school life without barriers, while helping create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.



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Cyberbullying Presentation

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that takes place through digital devices such as phones, computers, and tablets. It occurs on platforms like social media, messaging apps, online forums, gaming communities, or any space where people interact online. Cyberbullying can include sending hurtful messages, spreading rumors, posting embarrassing photos or videos, impersonating someone, or intentionally excluding someone online.



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Saint Carlo Acutis: A Modern Saint

St. Carlo Acutis shows that holiness isn't only for the past—it's possible today, even for young people living in a digital world. Born in 1991, Carlo loved computers and coding but used his talents to share his faith by creating a website that documented Eucharistic miracles around the world. His deep devotion to the Eucharist and his joyful acceptance of suffering continue to inspire youth everywhere. Canonized in September 2025, Carlo reminds us that technology can be a tool for goodness and faith.



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Does Your Church Offer the ALPHA Program?

The Alpha program offers an open, welcoming space to explore the foundations of the Christian faith through conversation, reflection, and community. Each session includes food, a short talk, and small group discussion—encouraging honest dialogue about life and faith. Used by Catholic parishes worldwide, Alpha helps participants deepen their understanding of Jesus, prayer, and purpose.

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Family & Marriage Tips for the Christmas Season

As we approach Christmas, Teresa Hartnett, Director of the Family Ministry Office for the Diocese of Hamilton, reminds us to keep Christ at the center of our celebrations. Amid the joy of family gatherings and gift giving, take time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Christ and the gift of salvation. Teresa also offers a beautiful marriage insight: lasting relationships grow from friendship. Spend intentional time together, share moments of laughter and conversation, and nurture patience and understanding. Strong marriages, like strong faith, are built through daily acts of love and friendship.

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Girl Takes Drastic Step!

A picture book biography of Molly Lamb Bobak, Canada's first official woman war artist. It highlights her determination and creativity, offering a unique perspective on women's roles in wartime.

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In Memoriam

Teens & Young Adults (Ages 13+)

A WWI novel following two schoolboys who enlist and face the brutal realities of war. Through fictional school magazines and poetic prose, the story explores love, grief, and the cost of conflict.

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Book and Dagger

Teens & Young Adults (Ages 13+)

A contemporary novel that blends historical memory with personal grief, exploring how the past continues to shape identity and relationships.

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OAPCE ADVENT RETREAT!

Join us on Monday December 8 for our Virtual Advent Retreat led by Bishop Yvan Mathieu! Registration is now open to all - let us come together in Faith to celebrate the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ!

Register on our website:

OAPCE is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: My Meeting

Time: Dec 8, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)



Advent Prayer for Families

Loving God,

As we begin this season of Advent, help us to open our hearts to You.

May we prepare with hope, wait with patience, and love with joy.

Guide our family to grow in faith, kindness, and peace as we journey toward the birth of Jesus.

Let each candle we light remind us of Your light in our lives.
Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell in our hearts this holy season.
Amen.

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SUPPORT OAPCE

Your generous donations help us continue our mission to advocate for Catholic education and support parents in Ontario. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference in enriching the educational experience for our children. Join us in making a positive impact!

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