



# PARENTS 4PARENTS PRESS

JUNE, 2026

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## INSIDE NEWSLETTER

- Opening Message
- Faith Message
- Engage
- Advocate
- Enhance
- Parent Partner Spotlight
- Family & Faith Zone
- Book Nook
- Prayer
- Support OAPCE

## Year-End Reflection and Thank You to Parents in Catholic Education

As another school year draws to a close, OAPCE extends heartfelt gratitude to the parents, guardians, families, educators, clergy, and trustees who support Catholic education across Ontario. This has been a year filled with learning, growth, achievement, and faith. Together we have watched students develop their God given gifts and grow as disciples of Christ. As the first and most important educators of their children, parents shape the faith and character of the next generation. As summer begins, we pause to give thanks for these blessings and look ahead with hope. May your summer be a time of rest, renewal, and joyful moments with family and friends.

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**ENGAGE**



**ADVOCATE**



**ENHANCE**



## End of Year Reflection from the Liaison Bishop ✠ Yvan Mathieu, SM

Bishop Yvan Mathieu reflected on how, even after receiving the Holy Spirit, the disciples returned to hiding in fear until Jesus appeared once again and offered them peace rather than anger. His message reminded participants that moments of fear, discouragement, and uncertainty are a natural part of faith, and that we are called to invite Jesus into those moments for renewal and strength.

For Catholic parents and educators, Bishop Mathieu emphasized that nurturing and passing on the faith—especially to children—can often feel difficult and discouraging. He encouraged participants to remain spiritually “on fire” by relying not only on personal effort, but on the Holy Spirit, who works through us even when results are not immediately visible.

Using the image of a campfire, Bishop Mathieu described faith as something that can dim over time but can always be rekindled through prayer, Scripture, and openness to the Spirit. His reflection served as a meaningful reminder to persevere in faith, trust in the Holy Spirit, and remain confident that God continues to work through our everyday efforts.

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[VIDEO  
MESSAGE](#)



## GUEST SPEAKERS AT THE AGM: WONDERTREE

At this year's Annual General Meeting, WonderTree offered parents a warm, practical look at supporting children through emotional connection. Rooted in Emotion Focused Family Therapy, it introduced emotion coaching to help children regulate their feelings, build resilience, and strengthen relationships. When a child feels overwhelmed, logic rarely helps until they feel calm, safe, and understood. The most important step is validation, acknowledging a child's experience without dismissing it. These gentle tools strengthen relationships at home and at school.

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## OAPCE 2025/26 YEAR END REPORT

As another school year comes to a close, OAPCE extends sincere gratitude to families across the province for your ongoing support, partnership, and commitment to Catholic education. This year has been filled with opportunities for learning, growth, faith, and community, and your involvement continues to strengthen our Catholic school communities. Our Year End Report also shares the results of The Parent Voice survey, through which we engaged with parents across Ontario on the issues that matter most this year. As summer arrives, we encourage families to rest, reconnect, and enjoy meaningful time together. Thank you for being valued partners in Catholic education. We do what we do for you, the parents.

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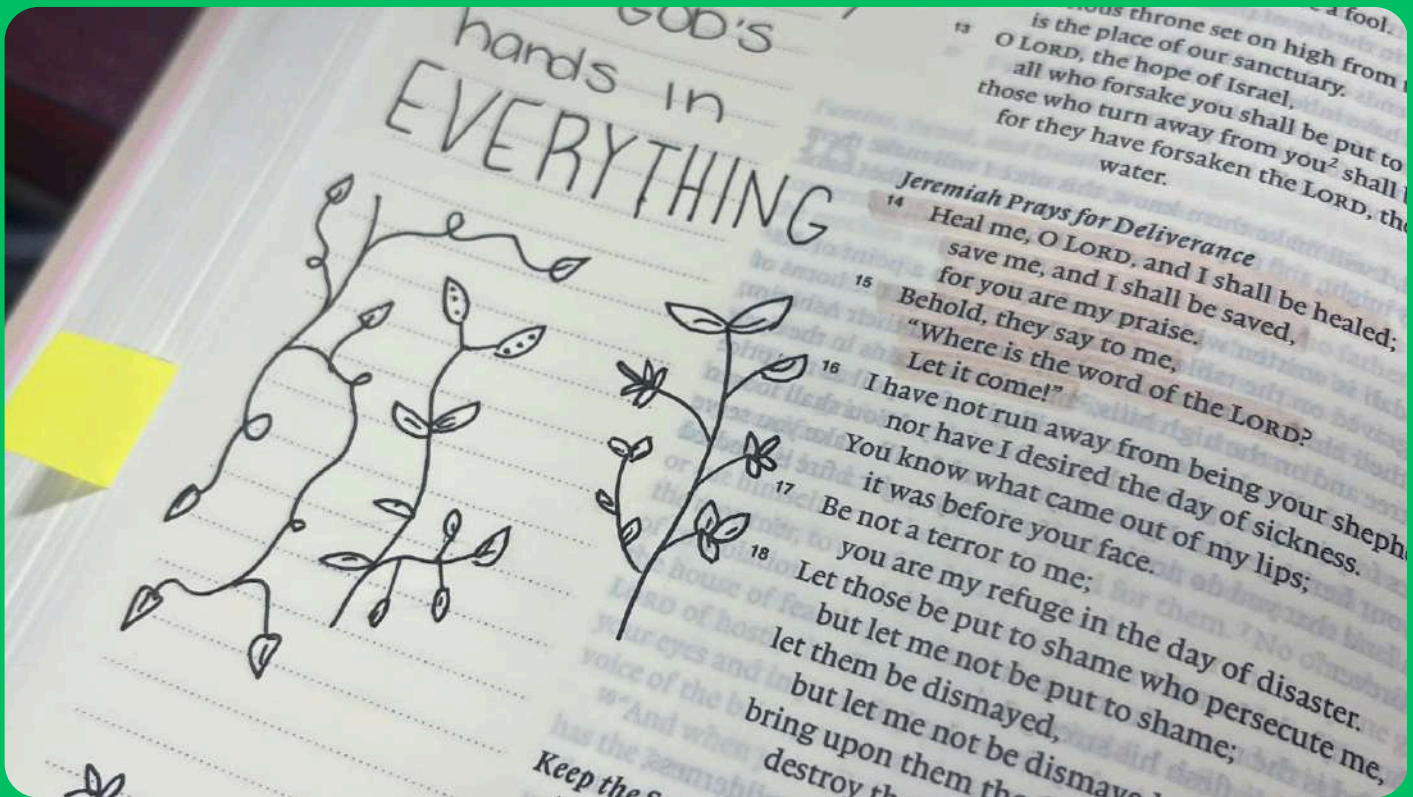
[YEAR END  
REPORT](#)



## A GIFT OF FAITH: HELPING CHILDREN DISCOVER GOD'S WORD

Across Ontario, many Catholic schools mark a special milestone during Catholic Education Week as Grade 4 students receive their own Bible or Gospel for the first time. What looks like a simple tradition often becomes the beginning of a lifelong relationship with God's Word. As one priest put it, when we pray we speak to God, and when we read the Gospel, God speaks to us. One of the greatest gifts adults can offer children is the habit of turning to God in every season of life. As the school year ends, families might nurture faith at home this summer by reading a Bible story together, praying as a family, or giving a child their first Bible. In a world of gifts quickly forgotten, a gift of faith can last a lifetime.

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# PARENT & PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

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## The ICE Novena to the Sacred Heart: One Step at a Time on the Path to Holiness

Many of us are familiar with daily prayer, whether grace before meals, a bedtime prayer, or Sunday Mass. A novena invites us to go a step deeper. The word comes from the Latin *novem*, meaning nine, and a novena is a devotion in which we pray for nine consecutive days, often for a particular intention or in preparation for a feast. Rooted in the example of the Apostles and Mary praying together while awaiting the Holy Spirit, novenas have been treasured in Catholic life for centuries.

This June, the Institute for Catholic Education invited families, educators, and parish communities to pray the Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with daily Scripture, reflections, and prayers centred on Christ's love and mercy. The novena aligns beautifully with this year's theme, *On the Path to Holiness*. Just as a path is travelled one step at a time, a novena is prayed one day at a time.





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## From Mother to Son: Journeying Through the Hearts of Mary and Jesus

The Church gives our families a spiritual rhythm that anchors us in love. Two beautiful seasons sit side by side: the Month of Mary in May and the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June. By weaving these holy months into your home, you give your children the gift of knowing they are held between a mother's care and a Saviour's love.

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### MAY MARIAN ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

MAY MARIAN ACTIVITY	HOW IT WORKS FOR FAMILIES
 <p><b>THE MAY CROWNING</b></p>	<p><b>PICK A DAY</b> to crown a statue of Mary with real flowers. Let the youngest child place the crown while singing a song.</p>
 <p><b>A BACKYARD SHRINE</b></p>	<p><b>CLEAR A SMALL SPACE</b> in the garden for a Mary statue. Plant marigolds or "Mary's Gold" around her base.</p>
 <p><b>THE DECADE ROSARY</b></p>	<p><b>A FULL ROSARY</b> can be tough for little ones. Commit to just <b>ONE DECADE</b> (10 Hail Marys) after dinner instead. </p>

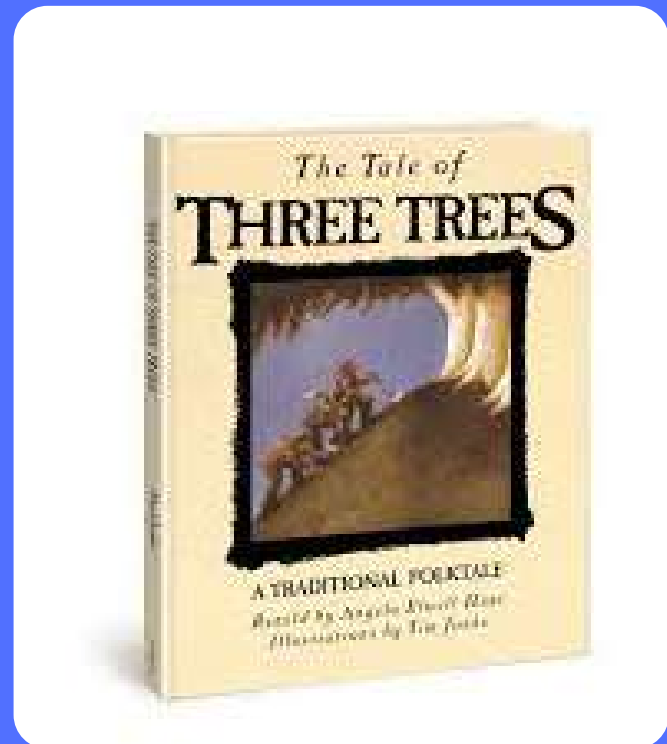
## The Tale of Three Trees

One beautiful book to add to your summer reading list is *The Tale of Three Trees* by Angela Elwell Hunt.

The story follows three trees, each with dreams for their future. As their lives unfold, none of those dreams come true in the way they expected. Yet each tree discovers that God's plan was far greater than anything it could have imagined.

This timeless story reminds us that while life doesn't always go according to our plans, God is always at work. It offers a wonderful opportunity to talk with children about faith, hope, and trusting God's purpose for our lives.

As summer begins, consider reading *The Tale of Three Trees* as a family and reflecting on this simple but powerful message: God's plans are often greater than our own.



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## A Summer Prayer for Families

Heavenly Father,  
As we begin the summer season,  
we thank You for the many blessings  
You have poured upon our families throughout  
the school year.  
Bless our homes with peace,  
our hearts with joy,  
and our days with moments of rest, laughter,  
and togetherness.  
Watch over our children as they learn, grow,  
play, and explore.  
Keep them safe in all their travels and activities,  
and help them continue to grow in kindness,  
wisdom, and faith.  
May this summer be a time to reconnect with  
one another,  
to appreciate the beauty of Your creation,  
and to remember Your presence in our  
everyday lives.  
Guide us to be patient with one another,  
grateful for each blessing,  
and open to opportunities to serve and care for  
others.  
When life feels busy or uncertain,  
remind us that You walk beside us always,  
offering peace, strength, and hope.  
We ask You to bless all families, educators,  
parish communities,  
and all who support Catholic education.  
May Mary, our Blessed Mother, continue to watch  
over us and keep us close to her Son.  
In Jesus' name we pray,  
Amen.



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## SUPPORT OAPCE

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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!

**SUPPORT US**



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