Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends of Saint Matthias School Students,

As we move ahead totally conscious of the need to safeguard the health and well-being of our students and the community, I offer some ideas for your review. The Department of Health is the decision-making agency to direct schools/school districts to close in light of the Coronavirus. I have worked closely with the Franklin Township leadership team comprised of Superintendent, Dr. Ravally and the principals and supervisors of Franklin to design a plan of action approved by the Department of Education in the event of possible closure. St. Matthias School’s plan for continued learning at home is aligned with the approved plan prepared with Franklin Township Schools. As is our procedure in early dismissal closures, delayed openings and school closures in the event of inclement weather, we will continue to use Franklin’s plan for closure in light of the Coronavirus.

Students in our early learning grades will be guided in their at-home learning plan as directed on the Teacher’s Pages on our website. The students in grades four through eight will receive their communication using the Google Classroom platform. It is expected that students spend at least one hour a day engaged in the learning experience outlined on the Teacher’s Page and/or Google Classroom.

I have offered some extended activities that may enhance learning in the home. The learning experiences I have outlined below are not required but rather a way to enhance the learning already planned by individual teachers.

My suggestions to enhance learning includes but are not limited to:

Using books such as Katherine Applegate’s Wishtree as a family read-aloud. Another suggestion for a family read-aloud would be R.J. Palacio’s book, Wonder. These particular books are terrific reads for any person from 7 to 70. Just a few chapters a day followed by some rich discussion is tremendously valuable to any age person. At the same time, we are strengthening our comprehension strategies of character development, vocabulary, visualization, impact of setting and solutions to challenges in life. All of these strategies strengthen a students’ ability to comprehend text. Visit Storylineonline.com for some great reads from members of the Screen Actors’ Guild.

In the area of Religious Development, reference to the following Lenten gospel messages would initiate very rich conversation. Take time to read, reflect and respond.

- Tuesday 3/17  Matthew 18:21-35
- Wednesday 3/18  Matthew 5: 17-19
- Friday 3/20  Mark 12:28-34
In the area of math, it is beneficial for all students to have practice time with their math facts. The students need a general understanding of the four basic operations, but drill will bring efficiency to their more sophisticated tasks in math as they progress. I would strongly suggest that the students go to [www.firstinmath.com](http://www.firstinmath.com) every day and use the 4 numbers in the four operations to come up with the sum/product of 24. The mental gymnastics are worthwhile for all students, grades 3-8. Students in 3-8 are also encouraged to do the problem of the week at [mathcounts.org](http://mathcounts.org). This particular problem could be solved as a family team.

During the month of April, we will be celebrating Poetry Month. I would like to celebrate a Poem in My Pocket during the lunch periods in April. Students are invited to come to the microphone during lunch period and share a poem they had researched or a poem that they crafted themselves. This learning at home time would be a great jumpstart for this project.

The Scholastic Publishing Company has designed some terrific at-home learning modules for this particular time. Visit [www.scholastic.com/learnathome](http://www.scholastic.com/learnathome) to find most appropriate materials for all grade levels.

Thank you so much for partnering with us for best practices for our students.

Eileen Brett
Principal
Saint Matthias School