

Baynesville school celebrates Year of Faith

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BAYNESVILLE - Paige Pisano and Jacqui Taff enthusiastically delivered a special news report Jan. 9 from an anchor desk, but it wasn't about the first day of the 2013 Maryland legislative session.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary School seventh-graders challenged their peers and teachers to think about their faith and the importance of building a relationship with God during a newscast on WIHM-TV, which broadcasts from the school's tiny TV studio in the media center.

The closed-circuit broadcast was another Year of Faith activity at the school, which in October prayed the Angelus to kick off the year-long period of prayer, reflection and renewal called by Pope Benedict XVI.

IHM students are learning "how to create a closer relationship with God by just taking time out of your day to think about him and go to Mass," Paige said.

Jacqui values "quiet time, finding time to pray."

Libbie Kendall, the school's music teacher and director of the Center for Leadership in Communication Arts, facilitates the broadcasts. She said they are another way for the school community to grow spiritually.

"We really do use it as an opportunity to form a faith community," Kendall said.

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This wasn't the first Year of Faith activity at the pre-kindergarten through eighth grade school, where bulletin boards in hallways and classroom doors feature large, colorful posters - "doors of faith" - in the shape of open church doors.

Each class selected a saint or blessed person to feature on its two doors of faith, including Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Kateri Tekakwitha and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Students created decorative posters, which serve as visual reminders of the Year of Faith throughout the building.

They explain how the saints and venerable people "lived Christ-like virtues in their life," said Deborah Thomas, the school's principal, noting that faculty continuously teach students about their Catholic identity and faith, not only during the Year of Faith, and "how they can live it daily in their lives."

Religious Sister of Mercy Bernadette Gregorek, the school's assistant principal, said "it's a blessing the pope has announced this as the Year of Faith. It's a celebration of our faith, and how we can renew our faith."

Additional Year of Faith activities are expected at the school.

The Year of Faith began on the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Catholics are encouraged to study and reflect on Vatican II documents and the catechism to deepen their knowledge of the faith. It concludes Nov. 24.

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