

Immaculate Heart of Mary School students build, play guitars

By Elizabeth Lowe

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BAYNESVILLE – Enter Libbie Kendall’s classroom and the eye is immediately drawn to the pop of color where more than two dozen florescent-colored guitars fill wooden racks in the rear of her classroom.

The nearly 60 Immaculate Heart of Mary School eighth-graders in Kendall’s two music classes constructed the four-string guitars.

This is the second year students made guitars, said Kendall, the school’s music teacher and director of the Performing Arts and Center for Communication Arts.

“It’s a way to teach something that can normally be dry,” said Kendall, whose classroom lessons cover liturgical music. “It crossed over so many different areas. They have a sense of creativity with it.”

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Students devoted 10 weeks last fall to making the guitars, since music classes convene once a week, said Kendall, who spray painted the cardboard bodies of the guitars in the color of the students’ choosing.

The necks are wooden and the frets are toothpicks. Students hammered in the tuning knobs and strung the guitars.

The assembly required precision and concentration, but playing the finished product has been relatively easy, Kendall said.

Eighth-grader Nathan Porter thought learning the guitar would be challenging. He has gotten the hang of it.

“It is a lot of fun,” said Nathan, 13.

During a Feb. 26 class, the budding musicians were focused on their finger positions, rhythm and hitting the correct notes. In trios, they played the hymn “We Are Marching” as Kendall looked on.

“Nicely done,” Kendall told the class. “Getting from “c” to “d” is hard. I’m impressed.”

Eighth-grader Carly Maytas has been looking forward to making and playing a guitar since she was in seventh grade.

“It’s fun to make something and have it actually work,” said Carly, 14, who is particularly excited about the project because of its duration. “It’s not a one unit thing and it takes you through the rest of the year.”

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