



BYRON CENTER
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

**EXCELLENT.
ROOTED.
PREPARED.**



PERSPECTIVE FALL 2023

New Year, Same Story



This year our school storyline is “See the Story, Live the Story.” This is our theme for the year as we plan everything from classroom lessons and activities to projects and chapels. The supporting verse chosen by our 8th graders is James 1:22a, which reads from the NLT version, “But don’t just listen to God’s Word. You must do what it says.” It’s a perfect fit for our theme! At BCCS, we want students to explore and learn, then use their acquired understanding to bring renewal to God’s world and His people. This verse is a call for Christian action, a call to LIVE the Story.



SEE THE STORY

Live the Story



This theme supports the BCCS mission of providing an excellent education that is rooted in God’s Word so that our students are prepared for lifelong service in God’s Kingdom. It also serves as an umbrella that links to each classroom storyline so students can see how learning and applying is seeing and living the story!



God created each of us with unique passions, abilities, and experiences, which means we have a special and specific part to play in His story. Some students love order discovery in math, and others seek justice in social studies. Some are drawn to creating beauty in art, while others consider image reflecting in Bible class. No matter what the topic is, we want each student to use what they learn as a means to do what God’s Word says!



It is with thankfulness that we have been able to celebrate an incredible start to the new school year at Byron Center Christian School (BCCS).

We started the 2023-2024 academic year with our focus on a shared mission of providing an excellent education which is rooted in God’s Word in order to prepare our children for lifelong service to Him. It is a blessing to lead our children to both See the Story and Live the Story through our storyline for this year. We are also guided by the words from James 1:22a, where we are called to actively live out what we read in God’s Word:

But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says.

James 1:22a



Our students and staff, both returning and new, have embraced each day with enthusiasm, curiosity, and a passion for learning that is inspiring. Students’ eagerness to see the story grow both academically and spiritually is a testament to the nurturing environment cultivated by our staff. Our exceptional team has continued to seek the high academic standards and faith formation that we strive for at BCCS. Their unwavering commitment to our children is a cornerstone of our success and a great blessing.

I must express my heartfelt appreciation to our supportive parents and community as well. Your trust in our school and your active involvement in your children’s education make a significant impact on their growth and success. Your partnership and support are invaluable. Our united commitment to faith and service is evident in the numerous activities and initiatives that have already taken place this year.

As we look ahead, we anticipate many more exciting opportunities for growth. We will see growth academically and spiritually through our existing and new programs. We will also see growth in enrollment again next year, and our need for additional space is becoming urgent. Our commitment to Christian education at BCCS and our belief in the potential of every student will continue to guide us in our commitment to serving the children and families in Byron Center and beyond as we live the story together.

Here at BCCS, we are excited about the journey that lies before us and the positive impact that we will make as a school community. We will carry this momentum forward with the knowledge that God’s grace is with us every step of the way as we follow His lead. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to Byron Center Christian School!

SERVING HIM,
James Onderlinde, *Administrator*

Welcome NEW STAFF



Kim Averill
3rd Grade



Heidi Brouwer
Administrative Assistant



Shelley Bruinsma
Paraprofessional



Kyndra Dykstra
Paraprofessional



Lynnelle Funk
Middle School Math



Laura Greenwood
Paraprofessional



Annika Johnson
Preschool Assistant



Kaitlin Peterson
Middle School Principal



Maureen Polderman
Paraprofessional



Emily Rutgers
Preschool Assistant



Ellie Schrier
Middle School English Language Arts



Hayley Smit
Kindergarten



Gabby Timmer
Physical Education/Tech



Lanae Wolf
Media Center Assistant

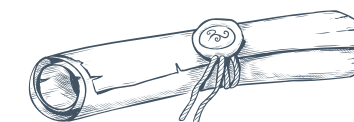
6TH GRADE



Our sixth grade Bible curriculum includes a unit on Paul's letter to the church in Colossae. In the letter, Paul thanks the Colossians, encourages them, and prays for them. After studying Paul's words to the Colossians, the students were invited to select a person from their own life who exemplifies the character of Christ and with whom they have a personal relationship. They were challenged by teachers to "search their hearts for the right words to encourage a saint." Each student identified a saint and courageously designed a letter that imitated Paul's words to the people in Colossae. The letters included elements of thanksgiving and encouragement. Each letter concluded with a personalized prayer. Students were invited to step into God's Word to encourage others. They examined scripture, searched their hearts, and found the words to acknowledge and uplift a saint in their life. This fall they mailed their final drafts with the expectation



ONE STUDENT REFLECTED, "It was challenging to use 'Godly words' and phrases, but I was proud of how my letter sounded."



that God would bless their efforts and, in turn, bless the faithful saints. Rather than teachers grading the letters, the students used a rubric to self-evaluate their work for Biblical content and high-quality writing. One student reflected, "It was challenging to use 'Godly words' and phrases, but I was proud of how my letter sounded." Another student said, "God's words are powerful to me because I know that God only speaks the truth." Studying the book of Colossians led the sixth graders to *See the Story*. Using the acquired knowledge and understanding allowed the students to *Live the Story*. Our theme verse, James 1:22, reads, "Do not merely listen to the word...Do what it says." This project provided an opportunity for our students to do just that - listen and do!

DEEP HOPE

Every staff member at BCCS has a **GOD-GIVEN CALL TO SERVE HIM AND OTHERS**, and that calling relates to their teaching each day.

Therefore, each teacher has crafted a deep hope which guides their daily work as educators. We also know each student has been called to serve God and others, so they too are invited to consider and articulate personal hopes. The following stories explain how fifth graders and eighth graders walked through the process of writing their own deep hopes this fall.

5TH GRADE

In fifth grade, teachers printed their own deep hopes, examples of student deep hopes, and some business mission statements. Students compared hopes for a heart journey with business-related mission statements. The fifth graders then took the opportunity to revise their deep hope from fourth grade or create a new hope since they've had a year's growth in maturity. Finally, teachers met with students one on one to talk through what their hopes mean for their personal walk with God. Students practiced curious thinking and were excited to make changes. They will revisit their deep hopes throughout the year to both reflect on progress and set goals.



8TH GRADE



Our eighth graders spent time at an overnight retreat in September. Students puzzled through team-building challenges and outdoor adventures, but also spent time reflecting on their identity in Christ. Because middle school is a crucial time for forming identity, students explored what the world says and contrasted that message to how God defines us. Students considered spiritual disciplines and the fruits of the Spirit. Finally, the eighth graders revamped or rewrote their deep hopes, their guiding statement about how they desire to grow as a Christian.



Creating a deep hope is a rich process for our students, and articulating personal hopes for a faith walk reflects an ongoing journey rather than a destination. **DEEP HOPES CHALLENGE US TO LIVE THE STORY!**

THROUGHLINES IN SCIENCE

1ST GRADE

At BCCS, learning is more than mastery of the curriculum. Learning has the power to shape who we are within God's story. Teachers weave Throughlines into lessons, projects, and activities. Throughlines are discipleship habits and practices that both form the learners and transform God's world around them. Throughlines help students, teachers, and parents imagine what it means to be a disciple within God's story.

Throughlines help students, teachers, and parents imagine what it means to **BE A DISCIPLE WITHIN GOD'S STORY.**

To help our families better understand each Throughline, a first-grade teacher designed a variety of at-home activities to support learning in the classroom. For example, the first graders were studying creation as told in Genesis, so she created a list of ways to enjoy creation outside of school. Their list included, "have a picnic outside," "create a scavenger hunt of outdoor creation objects," and "spend time outdoors drawing pictures of God's creation." As families completed the creation enjoying activities, students enthusiastically shared their experiences with classmates.



While studying the phases of the moon, the first grade "sky watchers" practiced order discovering. They noticed the orderly pattern that God designed. Next, the teacher prepared a new list of activities for families which circled around the idea of order discovering. The teacher came up with possibilities such as "compare your fingerprint to someone else" and "sing 'All Heaven Declares'."



THROUGHLINES

God Worshiper	Idolatry Discerner
Earth Keeper	Servant Worker
Beauty Creator	Community Builder
Justice Seeker	Image Reflector
Creation Enjoyer	Order Discoverer

The students loved engaging in the activities with their families and coming up with their own ideas for various Throughlines! By using Throughlines and inviting parents and caregivers into the process, we hope students are growing in their understanding and passion for these discipleship habits.





On October 2, 2023, BCCS hosted its First Annual Golf Scramble to support the *With Faith* Capital Campaign. We were blessed with a beautiful day (80° and sunshine) as 113 golfers took to the StoneWater Country Club links. It was a great day of landing in the fairways, sinking birdies, and enjoying fellowship. **Thank you to the 20 businesses that chose to sponsor this first-time event, especially Advantage Commercial Real Estate and Van Dellen Steel, our two Title Sponsors.**

Congratulations to our men's, women's, and mixed team's winners, as well as to our contest winners. Well done!

After the golf scramble, BCCS hosted a banquet, sponsored by Kent Companies, to update our community about BCCS as well as the capital campaign. James Onderlinde, our lead administrator, updated our community on the unprecedented growth we have experienced in the last five years and outlined a plan to utilize the limited remaining space on campus for our children. Kaitlin Peterson, our new 5th-8th grade principal, introduced herself and the plans for new programming and learning experiences for our

students. Then Ron Fles, our director of development, provided an update on the capital campaign, saying we are near the \$3,000,000 plateau in fundraising for the addition to the West Campus. Ron continued by saying we plan on beginning construction when we have \$7,000,000 raised or pledged and have targeted spring of 2024 or 2025 for groundbreaking.



We praise God for the faithful support of BCCS and for His provisions as we raise funds for this campaign.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
please call Ron in the BCCS office.

Foundations FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Our preschool classrooms at BCCS are learning environments which are designed to be spaces where children can develop positive habits of learning. Students are practicing habits of learning such as gracious communicating, joy-filled collaborating, curious thinking, and courageous designing as they grow in all academic areas. We are laying the foundation of faith and lifelong learning.



Our classrooms are designed to convey **six positive messages** that our littlest learners are able to embrace as they enter their first learning environments. As teachers, through our interactions, classroom structure, curriculum, and arrangement of the learning spaces, we are intentional to ensure that every learner receives these messages:

REASSURANCE: "This is a good place to be"

Every student needs to feel safe in their environment. Learning is exciting! Our materials are age appropriate, interesting, engaging, and stimulate engagement in higher order thinking. We ensure that students are able to make choices and decisions about when they will engage in activities and have plenty of time to become deeply involved in sustained learning through play. We want our learners to want to come to school each day and to want to learn more!

ACCEPTANCE: "You belong here"

Every student is a child of the King and has an important role to fulfill in our classroom community. We need every member in our learning community, and we value every member's contributions to our learning. Each learner comes from a family and is adopted into our classroom family. We celebrate each person's unique story as part of our story and part of God's story.

RELIABILITY: "This is a place you can trust"

Our learning environment will be predictable. The way teachers interact will be kind, helpful, and encouraging. We will expect all students to be learning and interacting in kind, helpful, and encouraging ways to be joy-filled collaborators. We will follow a consistent schedule and have clear expectations. If you take a risk in your learning to try something that is new or difficult, it is all right if it doesn't work out perfectly the first time. Mistakes are learning opportunities. We will always support your growth!



RESPECT: "There are places you can be by yourself"

Just as we are part of a community and we respect each other, each of us is also a unique individual. There are places to be learning by yourself in our classroom even as we are learning to work together.

INDEPENDENCE: "You can do many things on your own here"

We strive for a balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. Low-risk decision making builds risk-tolerance resilience as a learner. We provide many opportunities for children to safely work out their thoughts, ideas, emotions, and developmental needs through unstructured, imaginative play.

CONFIDENCE: "This is a safe place to explore"

We all have many feelings and emotions. It is acceptable to feel the way we are feeling. There are safe ways to process our feelings and the teachers here can help you to sort through emotions in positive ways. At this age, students are just becoming aware of others and that they have feelings and responses too. As we work through learning more about ourselves, we also learn how to treat others as children of the King.



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The team at WMWG is committed to serving you, providing counseling services in the West Michigan area.

WITH **faith** BCCS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We have entered into an exciting next chapter in our campus planning! Through consistent growth in the surrounding community and focused energies toward promoting the school's preschool and kindergarten programs, enrollment has increased by over 150 students over the last 5 years. Therefore, we are renovating and expanding our preschool and kindergarten campus!

Visit us online at www.bccs.org/withfaith to learn all about this exciting project!

FEEL FREE TO EMAIL RON FLES AT FLES@BCCS.ORG TO LEARN MORE.



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The mission of Byron Center Christian School is to provide for children of the Christian community
AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION, ROOTED IN GOD'S WORD, preparing them FOR LIFELONG SERVICE in God's Kingdom.

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