



**Kindness 101 - "Blessing Cake" - Boy celebrates his birthday for the first time** - <https://youtu.be/-zAFoeSr7hQ>

**Classroom Discussion Prompts:**

- What emotions did you experience when viewing the video?
- How did Abraham react when the "blessing cake" was presented to him on his birthday?
- What lesson does Abraham teach us about gratitude?
- Why is expressing gratitude so important?
- What are different ways we can show gratitude towards others?

**Family Discussion Prompts: Use these questions to start meaningful conversations about gratitude.**

- Abraham and James are grateful to have a family and to celebrate their birthdays. What are some things that we are thankful for as a family?
- How can we be better at showing gratitude as a family?
- What are some of the *little things* that you are grateful for?

**Family Activity**

- Create a gratitude collage: Gather items or pictures from online to print or magazines that you can cut out that show the things you and your family are grateful for. Create a collage to hang up as a reminder of what your family is grateful for.

**From the Principal's Desk**

In the newsletter and on the calendar, you may have noticed a mandatory parent meeting for parents of students in third through eighth grades, scheduled for February 9, 2026. One parent or guardian from each family must attend. By attending, you may also count two volunteer hours towards your Time and Talent Hours for the 2026-2027 school year. Going forward this sort of meeting will be scheduled yearly. The reason for this meeting is due the increased incidents of misuse of technology by MBS Students, though we are not alone. Assistive Technology (AI), social media, chat rooms, websites, Youtube and gaming have put children at risk or sexual exploitation,

pornography, trafficking, bullying, isolation, language, unkindness, and discrimination and a host of other things. All of which are in direct opposition to our Catholic Social Teachings.

The meeting will feature, Father Todd, MBS Administration, and Homeland Security and will focus on the acceptable use of technology as a Catholic and within our Catholic school. It will also feature a program called Know2Protect. Know2Protect is a national public awareness campaign developed by the Department of Homeland Security to educate and empower children, teens, parents, trusted adults and policymakers to prevent and combat online [child sexual exploitation and abuse \(CSEA\)](#); explain how to report online enticement and victimization; and offer response and support resources for victims and survivors of online child sexual exploitation and their supporters.

To read more about Know2Protect, check out the [Campaign Overview document](#).

#### **Know2Protect's objectives are:**

- **Education:** Raise awareness of online CSEA and encourage communities to educate themselves and others about this crime.
- **Prevention:** Provide resources and tools to help prevent children and teens from becoming victims of online CSEA.
- **Intervention:** Empower communities to act, report abuse, and support victims and survivors of online CSEA.

#### **"Technology And Its Place in the Catholic Faith – Condensed from an Ascension Press Blog by: Jackie Morgan"**

Pope St. John Paul II said we care called: *"To use science and technology in a full and constructive way, while recognizing that the findings of science always have to be evaluated in the light of the centrality of the human person, of the common good and of the inner purpose of creation"* ("Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics", 10 June 2002).

Ninety-five percent of Americans own a mobile phone of some kind, making it the most prevalent technological gadget in the country. Technology is neither prodigiously good nor is it inherently evil. It is how we use it that matters. By familiarizing ourselves with different perceptions of technology within a Catholic context we can largely ensure that we do not allow it to gain power over our morals and beliefs.

- **Guard Against the Over-Reliance on Technology** In his last encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI said: *"Technology enables us to exercise dominion over matter, to reduce risks, to save labor, to improve our conditions of life. It touches the heart of the vocation of human labor: in technology, seen as the product of his genius, man recognizes himself and forges his own humanity"* (CV, 69). What the Church does warn against is the over-reliance on technology which can lead to a number of adverse occurrences such as exposure to inappropriate content, increased stress levels due to a lack of sleep, laziness, and a faltering relationship with God. If used for good, and in moderation, there is no reason why technology cannot form part of an honorable Catholic lifestyle.
- **Good Technology vs. Bad Technology** - The Catholic Church does not necessarily view technology as evil but will not tolerate the use of technological know-how for adulterated purposes. As far as the internet is concerned, social media, blogs, and podcasts can be used as powerful instruments to preach the gospel. Unfortunately, it can also be utilized to voice prejudices and to engage in illicit affairs. The same internet that can trigger a gambling addiction can also be used to promote charitable work, depending on the motives of the individual user. At home, technology can make life easier. Robotic vacuum cleaners can help us keep our homes clean while the latest in home audio technology can take our

personal praise and worship to the next level. Unfortunately, by relying on these technologies too much, we may slouch into laziness which is a deadly sin.

- **Pope Francis and Technology** - Did you know that Pope Francis had more than 17.2 million followers on Twitter? Despite his rather unexpected social media presence which included him posing for selfies in St. Peter's Square, the pontiff was still quoted as saying that technology "can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously." While many consider the pope's thoughts on modern-day technology to be somewhat contradicting, his viewpoints merely reflect what it entails to be a modern-day man of God. While he continues to voice his concerns regarding the over-reliance on technology, referring to it as a cause of mental pollution, he has no choice but to embrace it as well, especially as the internet has broadened his reach so significantly.

If utilized in moderation and wisdom, technology can be of great benefit to our lives by enabling us to better ourselves, helping those in need and even allowing us to spread the word of God farther than before.

## [January 8 Pelican Express Newsletter Link](#)

### Announcements

- Last day to re-enroll for the 2026-2027 school year is Friday, January 16. Those registering after Friday will incur a \$100 late fee.
- Current families must complete 20 time and talent hours to receive the Catholic, In Parish tuition rate. Families new to MBS must complete 10 time and talent hours to receive the Catholic, In Parish tuition rate. Families who have not met the time and talent hour requirement will be charged either Catholic Out of Parish or Non Catholic tuition rates for the 2026-2027 school year.
- February 9 - **Mandatory** Parent Meeting for Parents of Students in Grades 3 -8 - Homeland Security will be presenting a program called Know3Protect, which focuses on technology and exploitation of children - 6pm - St. Ursula Hall. At least one parent from each family Must attend. This is a parent only meeting, please do not bring children.
- Women's ACTS Retreat is scheduled for March 5-8 - Registration is open - <https://mbsparish.org/acts-womens-retreat-information>

### Save the Date

- Homeland Security - Know2Protect - **Mandatory** Parent Meeting - Grades 3-8 - February 9 - 6pm - St. Ursula. Parents may count 2 time and talent hours for attending this meeting.
- MBS Gala - February 28 - Country Club of Louisiana
- Women's ACTS Retreat - March 5-8
- Men's ACTS Retreat - April 9
- MBS Fair - October 23-25