

FINE ARTS/MUSIC

St. Mary's Parish School from its earliest days have had a Fine Arts/ Music Program for its students. Why? Dr. Jean Houston of the Foundation for Mind Research says well why we have had this program. She wrote that children *without* access to an arts program are damaging their brain. They are not being exposed to non-verbal modalities which help them learn skills like reading, writing and math much more easily (Roehmann, 1988). Music lessons appear to strengthen the links between brain neurons and build new spatial reasoning, says psychologist Frances Rauscher of University of California-Irvine. Further, Dr. Rauscher said: "Music instruction can improve a child's spatial intelligence for long periods of time - perhaps permanently, "

Music education with lifelong knowledge and skills are vital to the students education because music:

- contributes to the school and community quality of life
- promotes use of higher-order thinking skills
- is a way to understand our cultural heritage as well as other past and present cultures
- contributes to sensitivity ("feeling intelligence").
- promotes motor development.
- encourages teamwork and cohesiveness.
- fosters creativity and individuality.
- fosters discipline and commitment.
- is a therapeutic outlet for human beings.
- is a predictor of success in life.

Our students starting with Preschool are blessed to have a very rich music curriculum.

Starting at Grade 3 each student learns an instrument. There are many benefits for band education such as: discipline, teamwork, coordination, development of skills, pride, lifetime skills, accomplishment, cooperation, self-confidence, sense of belonging, responsibility, self-expression, creativity, performance, companionship, builds character and personality, improves self-esteem, social development, and enjoyment.

Over the years our students have been recognized for their musical abilities (singing and band) at Disneyland in California (twice); at the Jazz Festival at the University of Idaho where they have numerous awards yearly, performing in Boise, Idaho at the Religious Education Congress (twice) and performing at a level beyond elementary school in their yearly Christmas and Spring Concerts.