

THE CAIRN COMPASS

Inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.

Summer 2023

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Transforming

by Kevin Huinink, Executive Director

Inviting, Nurturing, Empowering - this has been the rhythm of our year from a teaching perspective. Students have been invited into learning, subject material, field studies, and to look at the world around them, beauty, problems, and all. We know that the earth, the cosmos, are the LORD's, and they have been made wonderfully, beautifully, giving us pause for awe and wonder. The world is also filled with pain, with brokenness, and hurt. Through the journey of learning, students have been nurtured in their learning, discovering and unpacking their experiences in a caring community that seeks God's intent and love for the world, for them, and for each other.

Finally, students have been empowered to make a difference - doing real work that meets a real need for real people. This rhythm of inviting, nurturing, and empowering is intended to inspire our students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world. By engaging in this way, it's impossible NOT to be transformed by the experience.

I've always firmly believed that education that is honestly engaged in by its students will always change them as a result. At Cairn Christian School, it is our deep hope that our students will be transformed by the renewing of their minds, not conforming to the patterns of the world. (Romans 12)

Engage with us in these pages, celebrating the ways in which our students have been transformed by their Christian Education. (all the way to Graduation!!!)



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Journeying Together

By Linda Geerts with Kristina Braun - Grade 5, Smithville

When I was in high school, Mr. DeVries was my Bible instructor. During one unit, he focused on Paul's words from Romans 12:2, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."* He dwelt upon the word transformed. To be changed. Made new. Renewed. He said, "Not the refusal of your mind! The renewal of your mind!" Mr. DeVries, I remember.

Over the past two years, Cairn Christian School staff have been studying the framework of Teaching for Transformation, which is creating a school and classroom culture of growing in faith and wisdom. In our Grade 5 room this year, Mrs. Braun and I developed and unfolded our storyline which calls us back to the theme: **"Journey Together."**

- We began with the "You are Special" story: each

of us is deeply loved and valued by our Creator.

- In social studies lessons we learned and reflected on our own history and family stories which we then shared with each other in a booklet, as well as our Canadian story of immigration, first nations, or Canadian by birth. Learning about each other helped to build our empathy for others.
- We learned about Iqbal's story, who was sold into slavery to pay for his family's debt of \$26. Iqbal led others in fighting against child slavery. We hosted a fundraiser and bought chickens, rabbits, goats, and other supplies from the World Renew gift catalogue to assist other families facing poverty.
- In studying the science of the human body systems, we also learned about those who live

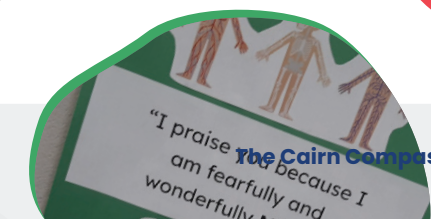
Our deep hope is that you UNDERSTAND your own story, SHARE in your neighbour's story, and EXPLORE how we are connected in the community of GOD'S BIG STORY



with health challenges such as cerebral palsy, diabetes, and heart disease.

- In our Bible studies we looked at God's big story of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Reconciliation, and the stories and lessons of Jesus and how they apply to our faith walk.
- In the spring we enjoyed sharing the story of "Newsies", another story of seeking justice for the disadvantaged.
- And over the last few months of our "Journey Together" we took a closer look at prayer, and chose someone specific to pray for over a number of weeks.

We hope and pray that this year's journey together will leave the students with a deeper understanding of empathy and compassion, the joy in journeying together, and the faith to see that Jesus walks with us through life's whole journey.





A Posture of Belonging:

by Maria Tamming - Grade 3, Stoney Creek

Imago Dei. This is Latin for “Image of God.” At Cairn, we believe and know that all children are Imago Dei. Created in God’s likeness. All children reflect the image and glory of God. Isn’t that a beautiful thought? In fact, we are ALL Imago Dei. We are all image-bearers.

This phrase comes up often in our class. We talk about Imago Dei when we discuss our differences, our similarities, and the ways in which we are created. It is truly an amazing thing to serve a God who delights in diversity while we are all unified in the body of Christ.

Our Deep Hope in Grade 3 is that we grow in knowing God’s love for us and delight in sharing His love with others while being His hands and feet. We talk a lot about what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus and how the Holy Spirit has been given to us to help us do His work. When we deeply know God’s love for us and love Him with our whole hearts, we cannot help but be transformed and share that love with others! Recently, this conversation has led to an exciting transformation for our third-grade class.

A few weeks ago, some students noticed that our Gaga ball pit was not accessible to all students at Cairn. In particular, they noticed that one of their classmates, Jack, could not play Gaga ball because he could not get in and out of the pit by hopping over the boards. Jack was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at birth, and moving around can be tricky for him at times. Moving around also looks different for Jack as he uses a walker and a wheelchair.

As a class, we spent some time talking about accessibility and advocacy. We explored what these words mean, especially for us as Christians. We asked: How can we advocate for others? How does Christ desire us to advocate for others? Does our voice matter even when we are 8 and 9 years old? What does accessible mean? Why is accessibility important?

Together, we decided to do some research and write a letter requesting that our Gaga ball pit be made accessible for ALL students at Cairn because every child is crafted in the image of God and reflects His glory. Every single child is Imago Dei.



Transforming Hearts, Minds, and Gaga Ball Pits

As a class, we worked together to research different solutions to make the Gaga ball pit accessible. Eventually, we decided that adding a gate would probably be the easiest solution. We spent some time researching the parts we would need and how much they would cost. We also spent some time brainstorming ideas and solutions to different problems that may arise. We invited Mrs. Desjardins into our classroom to talk with us about how we could make this happen and answer any questions we had. We carefully crafted and signed our letter and sent it off to the admin team, who forwarded it to our B&G team as well.

Within a few days of sending off our letter, we received an email from Mr. Mike Nywening, who is on our B&G committee. That email included pictures of a brand new gate to our Gaga ball pit that he had installed himself!

Although the transformation they advocated for was a physical one, their posture of inclusion and belonging through advocacy is a testimony to the Holy Spirit at work, transforming their minds and hearts as well! Coming from a place of love and care, their young voices created real change for real people in their school. Way to go, Grade 3!



Transforming into Graduates!

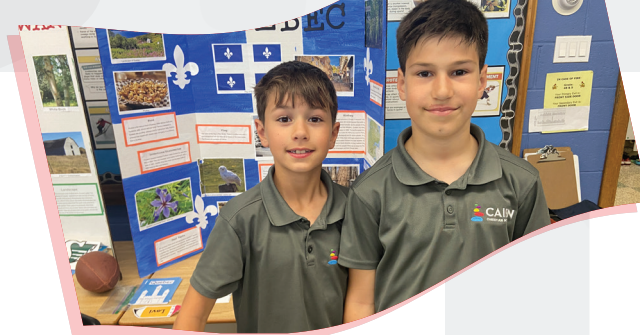
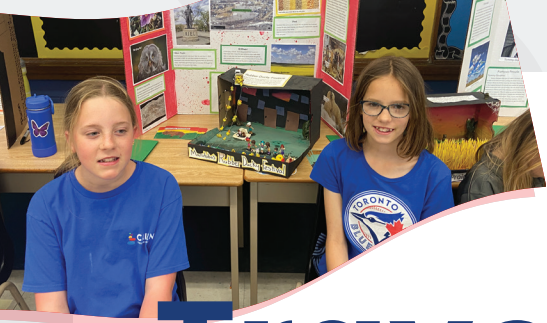


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Travelling Across Canada: Beautiful Work

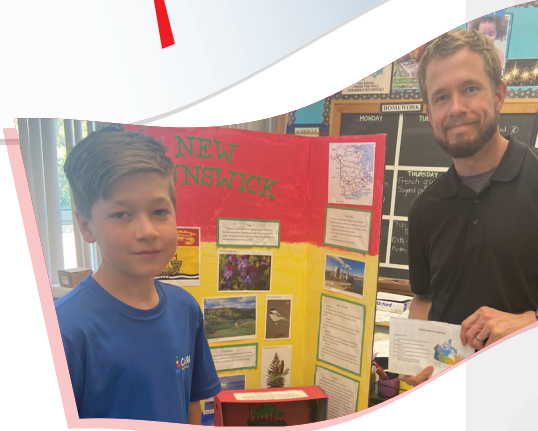
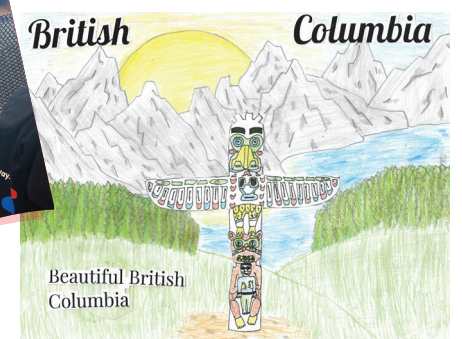
By Karen Verbruggen, Grade 4/5a, Stoney Creek

My deep hope is for us to live each day with grateful hearts filled with joy and wonder as we explore, discover and steward God's world. Our class storyline was "Explore, Discover, Steward God's World"

The junior curriculum contains expectations that students learn about our country, Canada, which aligns beautifully with our class theme. As grade 4/5a, we were able to 'virtually' explore and discover Canada in all of its diversity and beauty. We saw the majesty of God in the northern lights and the rugged mountains, the vast prairies, the neverending shorelines, and the beauty of the people.

As students dug deeper into the province or territory they were assigned to research, they demonstrated much joy and curiosity. (Yes, some of them did have to learn that Alberta and Quebec are not countries!)

One student, upon learning that Canada has one of the largest oil reserves in the world, became appalled at our gas prices. He felt that the high prices are just wrong. Another student, while putting the final touches on his display board for our school's Celebration of Learning, exclaimed, "This looks so good!"



After our display boards were done, the class designed postcards for our province or territory. Students were very excited to learn that we would send the postcards to actual tourism/visitor centres across the country. They wanted to make a postcard that they would be proud to have on display. The process involved many rough copies and lots of teacher and peer feedback on the way to a final draft that was something they could be proud to have on display to the public. One student, whose postcard I, as a teacher, thought was wonderful, felt it wasn't quite good enough and proceeded to make another one. He was very pleased with the final result.

Students did some Internet research for the

address of a visitor/tourist centre in their province. They wrote a letter to the centre stating who they were, how much they enjoyed exploring the province or territory, and what they learned. We took a picture of the display board and mailed it with 5 postcards and the letter they wrote.

As their teacher, it was amazing to watch the students' motivation to present God's world in a light that matched their awe for His creation. 'Good enough' was not the standard they were working toward. Through a cross-country excursion and reaching out to experts in tourism, the students' drive and passion for making this their most beautiful work is something that I saw change in them throughout the year.





From the Board

Summer greetings from the Cairn Christian School Board of Directors! We are thankful for another year of God's faithfulness to our schools as we pursue our vision and mission. So much has changed over the past year in the physical space at each campus, and we so appreciate the work of our dedicated volunteer community! We look forward to inviting you to an open house to celebrate our new facilities in Smithville and later to celebrate and dedicate our outdoor learning spaces in Stoney Creek!

In support of our strategic plan and initiatives to 'Build Clarity,' we are also thankful for the role our community played in sharing their thoughts and convictions on the topics of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and how those intersect with the work of our schools. The SOGI Ad Hoc Committee worked diligently through the year resulting in a consensus set of recommendations for the Board, which were adopted this June. If you are interested in a closer look at those recommendations, [you can find those here.](#)

As our schools work to prepare for another year, know that you, our supporting community, are an important part of our story and of God's story. Together we are living out our mission; inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world! Blessings to you this summer.



Annual Swing for Students Golf Tournament

Save the Date!

The 2023 edition of Swing for Students will be **Saturday, September 16, 2023** at Whisky Run Golf Course.

Register as a golfer now and guarantee your spot. Renew your sponsorship or join our amazing group of sponsors. See last year's sponsors at bit.ly/2022SwingForStudentsSponsors

Do you want to be part of the team that organizes all the fun? Email Kevin Huinink at khuinink@cairnchristianschool.ca

Renew or register to be a sponsor
bit.ly/2023SwingForStudentsSponsorRegistration



Sponsor Registration

Save your spot golfer registration
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Golfer Registration

The Cairn Compass is a quarterly newsletter distributed to the Cairn Christian School supporting community.

Our Mission

Inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.

Our Vision

To be the leaders in education by inspiring a diverse and unified student body to love, learn, and lead with God's grace, bringing Christ's love to the world.



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