



Holy Trinity Catholic School Faculty

Who we are & why we teach 2011-12

Classroom Teachers

Laura Kiley, *Preschool Teacher*

Mrs. Kiley earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education from Eastern Illinois University. She has taught for 10 years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School. She began her teaching experience in Kindergarten and two years later established the Pre-school Program at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“As a teacher of young children, I hope to reach all of my students and help them to develop a love of learning that they can carry with them throughout their academic journey. I hope to help them learn to try their best and to feel successful and sure of themselves. In addition to learning, I want to help my students strengthen their social skills and their Christian attitudes. I teach my students to always follow the Golden Rule, to treat others the way they would like to be treated.”

Jaci Hoeniges, *Kindergarten Teacher*

Mrs. Hoeniges earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Illinois State University. She has taught for nine years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“As a graduate of Illinois State University, I abide by the ‘Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach’ motto. Teachers need to embrace both learning and teaching. I want my students to achieve the richest educational experience possible. As a teacher, I want to reach out to each and every one of my students. I am so happy to be teaching in a Catholic School because not only do I get to teach my students the core classes, we get to learn about and explore our faith together in so many ways.”

Stefanie Nelson, *Kindergarten Teacher*

Mrs. Nelson earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Illinois Wesleyan University. She has been teaching for 22 years, teaching at Holy

Trinity Catholic School for 16 years.

“My teaching philosophy is to create a positive and nurturing environment that promotes the growth of the whole child. I believe that children should be actively involved in their learning and should be given opportunities to make choices, share, express ideas and discover. I feel blessed that my teaching is rooted in the Catholic faith and that we are able to explore the wonder of God's creation. I have wonderful memories of attending Holy Trinity as a child and hope that I play a positive role in creating lifelong memories for my students.”

Peg Kuntz, *First Grade Teacher*

Mrs. Kuntz earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education at the University of South Florida. She has taught for six years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I love teaching at Holy Trinity! It is such a joy to be able to teach the Catholic faith to children who are so eager to learn. I not only teach about our faith during religion class, but the beauty of teaching at our school is we learn our faith throughout the day. It is so easy to incorporate a religion lesson during science or any other subject. Teaching at Holy Trinity is truly a blessing!”

Natalie Perry, *First Grade Teacher*

Mrs. Perry earned her Bachelor of Art degree in Elementary Education with endorsements in reading and early childhood from Central College, Pella, IA. She also earned a Master of Art degree in Teaching, Special Education, at Morningside College, Sioux City, IA. She has taught for seven years in Kindergarten and First grade. This marks her third year teaching full-time at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“My passion for teaching has given me the opportunity to share my enthusiasm for learning with others and stress the importance of education in all its capacities. I believe education is not only a place for children to learn academically, but also as a whole person. I feel an important part of this development comes from a child's

growth in their faith and how this faith relates to their everyday life. Teaching in a Catholic school, with a faith-based education, provides me the opportunity to help children in their moral and spiritual growth. I look forward to teaching and guiding children to develop good spiritual and academic foundations.”

Dana Kessinger, *Second Grade Teacher*

Mrs. Kessinger earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Illinois State University. She has taught for 21 years, 19 of those years teaching second grade at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I believe learning is a lifelong adventure and that it is my job to inspire a desire to explore and imagine, to wonder, and to ask questions about the world around us. I believe that teaching in a Catholic school is more of a mission or a calling rather than a job and that I need to provide opportunities and experiences, centered around the Catholic faith, where each child can strive to reach their potential and be proud of their effort. Finally, I believe that the sense of community and belonging offered at a Catholic school and developed during Religion classes is an integral part of each child's success.”

Deb Rettig, *Second Grade Teacher*

Mrs. Rettig earned two Bachelor of Science degrees from Illinois State University – one in Visually Impaired Education and another in Elementary Education. She has taught for 30 years, 26 of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School, teaching both third and second grades.

“I want my students to enjoy school as much as I did when I was in elementary school! I come from a strong Catholic family and have gained an even deeper appreciation for my faith as I've gotten older and gone through the ups and downs life throws at you. I want to share this love of my faith with my students each and every day. I love watching their eyes light up as they discover a new truth of our faith for themselves!”

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Deborah Blue, Third Grade Teacher

Mrs. Blue earned her M.Ed. in Language Arts from the University of Illinois. She has been teaching for 28 years and has been at Holy Trinity Catholic School for 20 years.

“Twelve years of my youth were spent in Catholic schools. When I was offered a job Holy Trinity, I felt that I had come home. God has provided opportunities for me to grow in faith and witness for Him. I have been blessed to spend all these adult years right back where I began. Here I can teach children math, reading and religion all through example, example, example.”

Erin Craig, Third Grade Teacher

Mrs. Craig earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Illinois State University. She has taught for 12 years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“Growing up in a Catholic School I saw firsthand the importance of faith in my education. I believe that leading by example is the best way to illustrate our faith in the lives of my students. I try to create an environment where each child is able to express his or her own ideas. I want them to feel how important they are as individuals in a warm and inviting atmosphere.”

Allison Duff, Fourth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Duff earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Eastern Illinois University. She has been teaching for 11 years, nine of those at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“As a teacher, my role is to encourage students to be the best student they can be. I believe in creating a warm and welcoming classroom where opinions are encouraged and mistakes are part of the learning process. I believe that religion is a very important part of our curriculum. Through daily prayer and classroom discussions, I aim to help students grow in their relationship with God.”

Becky Hester, Fourth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Hester earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Eastern Illinois University. She has taught for 25 years, 14 of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I encourage all students to reach their full potential. Incorporating our faith into everyday life is essential to living a full life. Virtues and values are important tools to being the best person we can be here on earth; there is good in all of us.”

Vianne Kirchner, Fifth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Kirchner earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Illinois State University. She has taught for 20 years — 15 years at Holy Trinity Catholic School and five years at other schools.

“I love teaching in a Catholic school because we can pray daily, and I can include God in my lessons each day. I want my students to know and understand that God is everywhere, always with them, and is ready to help them at any time. I teach my students to ‘always do your best, and God will do the rest!’ ”

Linda McClure, Fifth Grade Teacher

Mrs. McClure earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Truman State University. She has taught for 12 years, ten of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I believe that each child has unique characteristics, backgrounds and talents. It is important to not only nurture each child's intelligence, but also their social, emotional and spiritual growth. Teaching in a Catholic school allows me to include all of these areas in my lessons across the curriculum.”

Regina Stenger, Fifth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Stenger earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Western Illinois University. She has been teaching for 11 years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“The world that we are living in is constantly changing. As a teacher I believe that we are responsible for shaping the minds and talents of all children. I choose to teach in a Catholic school because my faith is a part of who I am. If we are teaching the ‘whole child’ then what they believe in is a big part of their education.”

Joe Neitz, Sixth Grade Teacher

Mr. Neitz earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Junior High Education from Illinois State University. He has 34 years of teaching experience. This is his seventh year teaching at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I try to assist my students to be strong fundamentally in math and science. I like them to think independently yet be unafraid to ask questions. I strongly feel that learning should be fun! By example, I try to show students that we are happiest when we put God first in our lives and try our best to love one another.”

Kelly Sims, Sixth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Sims earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Illinois State University. She also earned a Master in Educational Administration from Illinois State University. She has been teaching for 30 years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I teach at a Catholic school because I enjoy sharing my faith with young believers. I like helping to share in the faith journeys of our young people. I am able to see these young men and women find and accept the faith they have been taught all of their lives, and in junior high, really accept this faith and take ownership of it.

I love the fact that Holy Trinity is steeped in traditions. This school is a family school and many generations of these children's families have attended either Holy Trinity or another Catholic school. I love that I have been part of that tradition for nearly 30 years, and am thrilled when I see that students I taught when I first began teaching are now sending their own children to Holy Trinity.”

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Sabrina Power, Sixth/Seventh Grade Science Teacher

Mrs. Power earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education at Illinois State University.

She has taught for eleven years, all at Holy Trinity.

“A Catholic school offers the unique opportunity for students to grow in their faith as they grow in their academic areas. I feel blessed to be a part of the Catholic school system! I believe that students learn best in an environment that they feel that they are respected and cared for and Catholic schools do this in a special way.”

Barb Metroff, Seventh Grade Teacher

Mrs. Metroff earned her Bachelor and Master of Science degrees from Illinois State University. She has been teaching for 32 years, 23 of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“My teaching philosophy is to teach the ‘whole’ child, and to teach the way I would want someone to teach my children. To be able to incorporate a child’s faith life into their academic life helps to accomplish this. There are so many teachable moments in a Catholic school when you are able to address morals, values, and discussing ‘what would Jesus do?’”

Rick Sims, Seventh Grade Teacher

Mr. Sims earned his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Education from Illinois State University. He has 38 years experience in education, 32 of them teaching at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I believe in helping each student reach his/her potential, academically, physically, emotionally and most importantly spiritually. Each student has different abilities and I hope to encourage each student to use their God-given talents to his/her fullest to promote the work of God. I encourage students to develop the skills and talents necessary to become successful members of society. I believe it is important to teach not only through words, but hopefully through example.”

Jan Francois, Eighth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Francois earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Augustana College. She has taught for 16 years, 15 of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I am proud to say I teach at a Catholic school! The freedom to pray and speak each and every day about my faith and instill that in my students is why I am here. Watching junior high students develop academically, as well as spiritually, into young individuals with good Christian morals and values is quite rewarding!”

Kelly Schanaberger, Eighth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Schanaberger earned her Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Illinois State University. She has been teaching for 15 years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“My teaching philosophy is that students learn best when they are actively involved in their education. I try to foster this in my classroom by having my students participate in class activities and discussions on a regular basis.”

“I teach in a Catholic school because I like having the freedom to discuss my faith during my lessons. I am often able to incorporate discussions about our Church’s stance on topics in the news when we are learning about current events.”

John Sherpinkas, Eighth Grade Teacher

Mr. Sherpinkas earned his bachelor of science in History Education from Illinois State University. He has been teaching for four years, having just completed his first year of teaching at Holy Trinity Junior High in 2010-11.

“I feel blessed to be able to teach in an atmosphere that allows me to share my Catholic faith with my students.”

Enrichment Teachers

Brooke Boyd, Junior High Art Teacher

Mrs. Boyd earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Art Education from Illinois State University with an emphasis on painting and art history. She has been teaching for 35 years, 34 of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School. Mrs. Boyd started out as an aide and then started the art program at the elementary building, later adding art classes at the junior high building as well.

“My philosophy is that being artistic and having creative ideas are gifts to us from God. Every time a student creates an original piece of art, they are showing their appreciation to God for this gift. All of the students at Holy Trinity use this gift to create their wonderful, surprising and original artworks.”

Kathy Huberman, Band Teacher

Mrs. Huberman earned her Bachelor of Art degree in Music Education, specializing in Instrumental, from Illinois State University. She has taught for 12 years, 11 of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I teach at a Catholic School to help make better people.”

Tricia Hozie, 8th Grade Science/ Computer Lab Teacher, HTJH

Mrs. Hozie earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Illinois State University and is currently pursuing a degree in Master of Science Education from Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, PA. She has four years of full-time teaching experience at Holy Trinity Catholic School, having been a substitute teacher for two years prior to that.

“Learning is an environment of life to which we all participate from birth till God calls us home. As a Catholic educator, I design, engage and assist learning so that students can explore and begin to understand their environment and themselves in light of God’s plan for them. I believe in engaging students with hands-on, coupled

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with 'minds-on,' activities that will broaden perceptions, instill enthusiasm for learning and provide a solid foundation of knowledge. Technology is demanding because it is so pervasive and ever-changing. With all these new modes of communication, it is sometimes challenging for students to maintain their Catholic identity. I want to help students be spiritual as well as responsible cyber-citizens."

Jane McConnell, Librarian

Mrs. McConnell earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Illinois State University. She previously taught first grade for three years at another Catholic school and later was named Librarian at Holy Trinity Catholic School. She has been at Holy Trinity Catholic School for eight years.

"I enjoy teaching, because I enjoy sharing what I know with students. My favorite part of my job is helping students to find the books which they will really enjoy reading. I believe that the most important part of my job is to make our school libraries a welcoming place and encouraging students to read."

Heather Mikesell, Spanish Teacher

Mrs. Mikesell earned her Bachelor of the Arts degree in Geography with a minor in Spanish from Illinois State University in May 2011. This is her first teaching assignment. Previously she student taught seventh grade Geography at Bloomington Junior High School and served as a Teacher Assistant in Physical Geography, Physical Geology, and Spanish 2 classes.

"I think it is important to instill a sense of faith and values in our children and students. What better place to do that than in a school where these form the basis of our mission and way of teaching. I am looking forward to working with the students and teachers in such a close-knit environment."

Julie Rhoades, Music & Computer Teacher

Mrs. Rhoades earned her Bachelor of Art degree in Music Education from Illinois State University. She has taught for 14 years, 12 of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

"I choose to teach at a Catholic school because I feel we have a true ability to educate the whole child. We are able to meet their educational needs, but are also able to explore and learn about our faith and spirituality."

Cathy Naleway, Physical Education Teacher and Athletic Director

Mrs. Naleway earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Education from Illinois State University. She has 26 years teaching experience, and has taught at Holy Trinity Catholic School for 14 years.

"I grew up in Chillicothe and attended St. Mary's of Peoria, St. Edward's of Chillicothe and Bergan High School, now Notre Dame High School of Peoria. Catholic education has always been a very important part of my life and always part of my teaching philosophy. I was very thankful that my parents sacrificed a lot to send our family to Catholic schools."

"I prayed and hoped that God would give me an opportunity to give back to the excellent Catholic education that I received. My prayers were answered. Now, I find myself teaching in a Catholic school and I hope I can teach and serve the children at Holy Trinity School in the same, excellent Catholic tradition that I was fortunate to receive. I am also lucky enough to teach third and fourth grade Religious Education classes at St. Patrick Catholic Church of Merna. Go Saints!"

Sue Nevius, Physical Education Teacher, Junior High

Mrs. Nevius earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education from Western Illinois University. She has taught for 17 years, all at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

"I believe that physical education contributes to the overall development and well being of every student. Physical education in a Catholic school enables a student to develop spiritually as well as physically and mentally."

Kelly Swanson, Reading Intervention Teacher

Mrs. Swanson earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Eastern Illinois University. She also earned her Master of Science degree in Reading from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. She has eight years teaching experience and has been at Holy Trinity Catholic School for five years.

"My interest in teaching at Holy Trinity is based upon my belief in the relationship between the school, the home and the church. Our Catholic School teaches values to our children based upon our religious beliefs and shows them the need to integrate these values into their personal lives. These religious teachings help create an environment for children to understand the importance of keeping their faith 'alive' and present in their daily lives. In the Catholic School setting, parents and teachers work together to role model the importance of daily spiritual growth. I believe this greatly benefits our children and prepares them for the future by providing them a secure Christian foundation from which to make decisions in the years to come. Every child is a creation of God and each day our children should be allowed to learn, grow and celebrate in our Catholic faith."

Kirsten Larson, Special Education Teacher

Mrs. Larson earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Education, majoring in Special Education, at Western Illinois University. She has eight years of teaching experience, and has taught for four years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

"I believe that God has blessed every person with the ability to learn. I believe as an educator that my calling is to see that each student has the opportunity to learn and realize his highest potential. I teach at a Catholic school because Catholic schools aim to educate in more ways

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than one, being 'committed to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social growth of each child.' ”

Terriann Bauer, *Special Services Teacher/Elementary Art Teacher*

Mrs. Bauer earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Illinois State University in Education, specializing in Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, Social/Emotional Disorders and Early Childhood Special Education. She has been teaching for ten years and has been at Holy Trinity Catholic School for four years.

“I believe that each child is a unique individual who needs a safe, nurturing, inspiring environment where they can grow socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually. It is my goal as a teacher to instill a love of learning, encourage each child to do their best, promote respect for self and others, and to cultivate responsibility. I will encourage each child to cherish their faith by loving God, others and themselves.”

Carol Hajek, *Speech and Language Teacher*

Mrs. Hajek earned her Master's degree in Speech Pathology from Illinois State University. She has worked in Speech Pathology for 18 ½ years, nine of those years at Holy Trinity Catholic School.

“I teach at Holy Trinity because I want to be of service to the children attending our school. It is a privilege for me to help students with speech and language needs.”

Our Administration

Kay O'Brien, Principal

Mrs. O'Brien earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Education and a Master of Art degree in Administration and Mathematics from Illinois State University. She has 13 years of teaching experience and 17 years experience

as an administrator. She has worked at Holy Trinity Catholic School for 24 years.

“I believe that Holy Trinity Catholic School is integral to the Church's evangelizing mission. Our school involves parents, the primary educators of their children, as partners in the total education of their children including the religious, academic, social, emotional and physical aspects. Our school culture reflects the Church's social justice teachings where children are treated with respect and dignity.”

Gayla Moore, Assistant Principal, Holy Trinity Elementary School

Mrs. Moore earned her Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Science degree in Education from Illinois State University. She has 20 years of teaching and administrative experience. Mrs. Moore has been at Holy Trinity Catholic School for 16 years.

““I believe Catholic Schools have the responsibility of merging Catholic values with an excellence in education. I believe Catholic Schools should prepare youth to respect the sacred dignity of the person as an individual and as a responsible member of a community. Catholic Schools must enable students to translate the Good News into action within the environment provided. I believe faculty, together with parents, must strive to meet the spiritual, emotional, academic, physical and social needs of each student. Holy Trinity strives to encourage and guide the talents inherent in each child to serve, foster, and enhance a life-long relationship with our Heavenly Father.”

Christina Ellis, Assistant Principal, Holy Trinity Junior High

Mrs. Ellis earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication, Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Educational Administration degree. She has eight years teaching experience, and has six years experience as an Assistant Principal. She has been an administrator at Holy Trinity Catholic School for six years.

“The educational process is a responsibility that is to be shared among parents, educators, students and community. Education is the pursuit of lifelong learning and a commitment to nurturing high self-esteem and respect for others. The teachings of the Catholic Church as well as the dignity, self-worth and individual abilities of each child are to be recognized.”

*** Please note, dates taught reflect the 2011-12 school year.*