

Catholic Schools Week marked in St. Mary's County

Posted by [JeroldMassie](#) On 01/30/2019

Back row, from left: Lilly Bull, Margaret Sullivan, Ethan Redding, Lydia Bowman and Tyara Nguyen
Front row, from left: Choral Director Mrs. Kim Norris, Alyssa Salud-Benipayo, Laura Papp, Katrina Brillantes, Leilani Friday, Raina Mari De La Cruz, Catherine Nguyen, Sarah Skane and Samantha Young

Lexington Park, MD – The St. Mary's County Catholic schools gathered last week for their "all schools mass" to kick-off this year's Catholic School's Week, celebrating Catholic schools throughout the nation.

The [National Catholic Education Association](#) (NCEA) states that the celebration started in 1974 and has been an annual occurrence since. Running from the last Sunday in January through the whole week, school's "typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members." The theme for 2019 is "Catholic Schools: Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed."

St. John's School in Hollywood approaches the week in a way that is representative of spirit week in public schools -- having a "football team gear/SuperBowl fave" day where the students were encouraged to bring in canned goods to donate, a day where they "celebrate the nation" and write letters to deployed soldiers, a vocational day, and even a day where the school rented out a theatre at RC Theatres for the whole school to view the new Mary Poppins movie.

St. Mary's Ryken (SMR) Principal Dr. Rick Wood stated that Catholic Schools Week gives his school the opportunity to "join other schools in the nation in celebrating the honor and joy of being a Catholic school." Ryken will host the choir from the Mother Catherine Academy in Mechanicsville during their school's mass on Thursday, afterward presenting their "faculty and staff with years of service awards." Friday will cap off the week for Ryken when the students get a "free tag day for students (nonuniform day)" and the National Honor Society will prepare and host a breakfast for the school's faculty and staff.

Since 2008, Catholic schools' popularity has been on a decline with 1,026 (13.9 percent) schools closing and enrollment dropping by 435, 537 (19.2 percent) students from 2008-2018 according to the NCEA. Catholic Schools Week gives the nation's schools a chance to get their community excited about the schools, often incorporating open houses according to the [NCEA website](#).

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