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Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. ~ Isaiah 7:14 NIV ~

RJA News Corner

by Lee Stahl, Principal

Field Trip to Lake Tobias

On October 28, Reading Junior Academy students in grades 7-10 went to Lake Tobias Wildlife Park near Halifax, PA. While there, we were able to enjoy a safari ride and get up close to many animals—such as the elk seen in the picture below, emu, rhea, various types of cattle, deer, antelope, etc. Students also were able to see a variety of other animals including lions, a tiger, and black bear to name a few of the larger species. We also enjoyed a walk in the petting zoo to feed the animals, and a reptile show. Overall, it was a fun and enjoyable day!



After School Clubs at RJA

Did you know that besides a full day of school, Reading Junior Academy also provides after school clubs for students to participate in? On Tuesdays, students can join drama club, get tutoring in math for grades 7 and 8, and once a month have sports activities for grades 1-4. On Wednesdays, we have robotics club, in which students work on a project and learn how to build and program a Lego robot to perform set tasks. Each year in March, they participate in the FLL Robotic Challenge at Blue Mountain Academy. Thursdays is intramural day for students in grades 5-10, where a variety of sports activities occur. Also, students in grades 3-6 can get tutoring help as well. Coming soon, Mondays will be our Bible study club. Additionally, the lower grades help from time to time on a Helping Hands club to assist in small service projects in the community. As you can see a lot more occurs during the week, even after school is over!

Reading Junior Academy...Educating Today and for Eternity!

Grace's Outpost by Ashley Richards

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NASB)

It could have gone down in the history books as one of the most pristinely perfect and peaceful nights in the history of the world. Excepting one thing. (We'll get to that later.)

(Also depending on where you could be found. We'll take the vantage point of the hills slightly removed from the chaos of the night. At least, for now.)

From this vantage point, the night was crystallized in peacefulness. For a spring night, the weather had plunged into frigid temperatures. If we wait long enough, we could see puffs from our breath in the cold night air. From our vantage point on this hill, all of heaven is on full display around us. (Have you seen a cloudless night sky far removed from city light pollution? A sky with so many stars you can't pick out the constellations?) The splendor of the stars, today, would take our breath away. Today, when floodlights i paths in the night sky and cityscapes blind out the skies, when all the blaring noise of everything all around us blots out the simpler, more peaceful things.

I'm sure, if you ventured into Bethlehem, you might see the same results. A Roman census was going on. There were no rooms at the inns for the dozens (if not hundreds) of families flocking to the cities to be counted and taxed. They had priorities. Get food. Find a bed. Register for the census. Wash their feet. Get off their feet. *Sleep.*

Surely, they weren't focused on the peacefulness of the sky.

Surely, they weren't focused on anything but themselves that night.

But forget the people going to be counted and taxed. Forget the shepherds tending their sheep. Forget the Magi about to discover the star.

One moment there is quiet and peace, and there are people conditioned by the daily hum-drum of life not to appreciate it. The next moment, a brilliant light exploded across the sky. One second—nothing. The next second—you couldn't find darkness if you tried. Angels, come to announce the arrival of our King.

But imagine with me, for a moment, if that light weren't so literal. Imagine with me, for a moment, the symbolism behind the Light that was missing from our lives. We were stumbling around blindly, without hope, without life, without *anything*, really. We were empty. We were hopeless. We were miserable, empty beings waiting for a promise, but really having nothing.

We had a dream of hope. Of

freedom. But as anyone can tell you, a dream is merely an apparition, a pathetic mirage compared to the real thing.

And then—and *then!*—the Light of the World illuminates *the whole world*. In a second, hope transforms from a mirage into flesh and bones. Our hope turned into Emmanuel. God. With. Us.

And so He was. And so He is.

It only took a baby being born to turn the world on its head. We'll never be the same.

I heard this Christmas song today (*Shining Light*, by Rend Collective), which sort of prompted this whole article, but I especially love these four lines: "...You are a shining light / You lit a torch in the infinite / Yeah, you are a shining light / Yeah, you light up my life."

I can just see the brilliant light of Jesus' influence beginning as nothing—not even a mustard seed—and exploding to set the world aflame with His hope. In a millisecond. It's infectious. It spreads like wildfire. *Jesus* spreads like wildfire.

No matter what you get out of the holiday of Christmas—heartbreak and loneliness, a day with family, visits to Santa Claus and countless trips to the mall (or is it Amazon, these days?), a magical season of joy, giving, and selflessness, or anything in between—take this with you today:

In the split second it took Jesus to transform this world from darkness to light, Jesus can so easily transform your heart from darkness to light.

If Jesus came to this world for a reason, you are it. Don't let another moment pass you by. Don't be fooled—Christmas, at its core, isn't about Santa Claus, a Christmas tree, presents, family, or even joy. Christmas is about the King of the Universe abdicating His throne so He could be born to die. For you. Christmas is about saving your soul. Don't let another moment waste.

Accept Jesus' Christmas gift for you.

Health Ministries by Arleen Johns

I was browsing my saved health ministry information and came across myplate.gov, which is a valuable source of information. The old pyramided food chart is replaced with the round plate divided into 4 sections including fruits, grains, vegetables, proteins and off to the side of the plate is a dairy section in a smaller plate.

There are quizzes in each section that one can take, and I thought it would be fun to include a sampling here. See how you do on the quiz. Check out the web site for more information.

1. Which of these nutrients can you get from eating whole fruit that is not usually found in juice? A. Vitamins, B. Minerals, C. Fiber, D. Sugar

2. Potassium is a nutrient that many Americans don't get enough of. Which of the following is a good fruit source of this mineral known to help regulate blood pressure? A. Dried apricots, B. Bananas, C. Orange juice, D. All of the above.

3. Fiber found in fruit is associated with which of the following health outcomes? A. Strengthening bones, B. Maintaining proper bowel function, C. Building muscle, D. Making new blood cells

4. Fruits are sources of which of the following? A. Folate, B. Vitamin D, C. Calcium, D. Protein.

5. How much of your plate should be fruits and vegetables? A. 1/4 B. 1/3 C. 1/2 D. 3/4

6. Which vitamin gives carrots and sweet potatoes their orange color? A. Vitamin D, B. Folate, C. Vitamin A, D. Vitamin O.

7. Which sub-group of vegetables is most important? A. Dark-green vegetables, B. Red and orange vegetables, C. Beans and peas, D. Starchy vegetables. E. All of the above.

8. Which food group are beans and peas counted in? A. Vegetable group, B. Protein group, C. Both, D. Neither.

9. Essay question for extra credit! What is the best way to know if the bread you are buying is whole-grain bread?

ANSWERS

1. C. Fiber is found in the pulp of the fruit. Juicing removes the pulp/fiber.

2. D. Potassium is found in a wide variety of foods like those listed, plus white beans, soy beans, spinach, and potatoes.

3. B. Fiber foods include fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and in addition to maintaining proper bowel function, may also reduce the

risk of heart disease and protect against certain types of cancer.

4. A. Folate is one of the B vitamins and is needed by all of our cells for growth.

5. C. 1/2

6. C. Beta-carotene, a form of Vitamin A, gives these foods their orange color and is also good for eye health and the immune system.

7. E. It is important to get a variety of vegetables from these subgroups because different subgroups have different types and amounts of vitamins and minerals.

8. If you said C, you are correct. Beans contain nutrients that are similar to foods in the vegetable group (fiber, potassium, and folate) and the protein foods group (protein, iron and zinc).

9. Any ingredient that includes the word "whole." Whole grain examples include brown rice, oatmeal, popcorn, quinoa, rolled oats, whole-grain barley, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, and wild rice. We cannot rely on color or texture of a bread to show that it is a whole grain. Breads labeled with the words "multigrain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain or bran" are usually not whole-grain products.

Bottom line—we are what we eat.

Genesis 1:29 says that at creation, God told Adam and Eve what to eat. Since He created us, He knows what is best for His creation.

Choose the best sources of fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Wayne and I sincerely hope you have enjoyed the Health Ministries articles for the past two years.

May God continue to bless each of His followers!

The Medicine Chest by John Manubay, M.D.

Most colds are caused by rhinoviruses, one of more than 200 viruses, which spread through the air when someone with an infection coughs or sneezes. Kids are notorious for spreading the virus, especially in school. Some kids don't close their mouth when they cough, some have little knowledge on cleanliness, so they're very contagious. Aside from inhaling the virus, you can also get them when you handle a contaminated object. Telephones, computers, toilets and doorknobs can harbor germs. In addition, the cold virus can live up to 48 hours on these objects. Studies show that you really need to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds after touching something contaminated.

To prevent transmission of a cold virus:

1. Avoid kissing, and no holding hands.
2. Avoid sharing of spoons, dishes, glasses, and towels.
3. Cover your mouth when coughing.
4. Call in sick and stay at home to avoid infecting others.
5. Regularly clean your desk, phone and computer with alcohol.
6. Wash your hands frequently.

Tips to shorten the duration of a cold include taking in enough water and juice to prevent dehydration. Avoid alcohol, coffee, and soft drinks, which make dehydration worse.

Over the counter cold medications may offer some symptom relief, but they won't prevent a cold or shorten its duration. Those with high blood pressure and heart disease should be careful in taking them.

Get plenty of rest, as this boosts your immune system and helps your body recover.

Vitamin C does not prevent a cold, but may shorten a cold's duration. A dose of 500 mg for 3 to 5 days or longer appears to be enough.

Chicken soup can help clear the mucous, and helps the immune system.

Milk products may cause increased production of phlegm, and should be avoided.

Warm salt water gargles can relieve symptoms of sore and itchy throat.

Steam inhalation helps a dry cough by increasing the humidity and loosening the phlegm.

Cough lozenges can help a dry tickling cough, but should not be given to kids under 3 because of choking hazard.

Seek medical attention if you have difficulty breathing, change in alertness, severe sore throat, cough with a lot of yellow or green mucus, pain in the face, and if symptoms haven't resolved in more than a week.

Recipe of the Month by Elizabeth Hill

My daughter loves peanut butter anything, and always asks for peanut butter cake for her birthday. No chocolate, just peanut butter.

This one fills the bill. Although I like it paired with chocolate icing, she likes the peanut butter frosting.

Peanut Butter Cake

- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup butter
- 4 eggs
- 1 (18.25 ounce) butter cake mix

1/2 box vanilla instant pudding

1 cup water

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans.

Combine peanut butter and butter. Cream until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after each one. Add cake mix and pudding mix alternately with water. Stir until just combined. Pour batter into prepared pans.

Bake at 325 degrees F for 25 minutes or until cake tests done. Allow cakes to cool in pan for 10 minutes, and then turn out onto cooling rack to cool completely.

Assemble and frost with Peanut Butter Frosting once cool.

Peanut Butter Frosting

- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 4 cups confectioner's sugar
- 1/3 cup heavy cream

Combine peanut butter and butter until light and fluffy. Add confectioner's sugar.

Mix in enough cream to make frosting a spreading consistency.

Notable Quotes selected by Bob Kondracki

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.~

Be not afraid of growing slowly; be afraid only of standing still.
~Chinese proverb~

At my back I often hear Time's winged chariot changing gear.
~Eric Linklater~

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
~Jesus Christ~

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by things you didn't do than by the things you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.
~Mark Twain~

The only nice thing about being imperfect is the joy it brings to others.
~Doug Larson~

Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence.
~Vince Lombardi~

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt.
~Abraham Lincoln~

Caution: Cape does not enable user to fly.
~Batman costume warning label~

It's always easier to defeat an opponent when he's already started the job for you.
~Randy Cross~

The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But...the good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"
~Martin Luther King, Jr.~

It is better to be a has-been than a never was.
~Cecil Parkinson~

Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God.
~Leo Buscaglia~

Maybe Christmas, the Grinch thought, doesn't come from a store after all.
~Dr. Seuss~

A diamond with a flaw is worth more than a pebble without imperfections.
~Chinese proverb~

'Twas the Night Before Jesus Came author unknown

'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

In the Book of Life which He held in His Hand
Was written the name of every saved man.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;
When He said "It's not here" my head hung in shame!

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

The people whose names had been written with love
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without a sound
While all the rest were left standing around.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

I fell to my knees, but it was too late;
I had waited too long and this sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There's only one life and when comes the last call
We'll find that the Bible was true after ALL!

The light of His face made me cover my head
It was Jesus! Returning just like He had said.
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

