



Sending our kids to the Center of the Universe

By: Nicole Mullis, BCACS parent

St. Joseph elementary & preschool

Preschool through Grade 5
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Battle Creek, MI 49015
269.965.7749

St. Joseph catholic middle school

Grades 6 through 8
44 North 25th Street
Battle Creek, MI 49015
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St. Philip catholic central high school

Grades 9 through 12
20 Cherry Street
Battle Creek, MI 49017
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I knew nothing about Battle Creek when Denso offered my husband a job, except Google told me there was a Catholic school.

We weren't so sure about moving, but we were sure about giving our kids a Catholic education.

Enrolling the kids at St. Joseph Elementary School was easy. Finding a house in Battle Creek was not. We set a conservative price range, hoping to offset tuition. Unfortunately the houses in our price range were either too small, too far, or required too many repairs. Whenever our real estate agent sent us another listing, I would ask the same question.

"How far is it from St. Joe?"

As the fruitless weeks dragged on, we started referring to St. Joe as the Center of the Universe.

The new semester approached and we were still without a house. Our agent suggested looking at houses without the school in the equation.

"You and Ben seem like good people. Your kids will learn about God from you."

I smiled.

Yes, Ben and I tried to be good people and we had faith, but we were just people. We had our bad days. Sometimes we had a whole string of bad days at the same time. If my kids had a shot of knowing God in this secular world, they would need a village of believers.

Three weeks to deadline, a modest house popped up, just inside our price range and 15 minutes from Center of the Universe. It has been our home for the last 12 years.

During that time, my three children have prepared for their sacraments and learned their letters at the Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools. They have become altar servers and athletes, musicians and scholars. When we went to Canada for two years, the BCACS community kept in touch. When we returned to Battle Creek, knowing our kids were behind academically, BCACS teachers tutored them after school and during lunch. And when their beloved principal passed away two years ago, the entire community grieved with them in the church on their knees.

I'm not going to lie. The tuition has been and continues to be a struggle, but I can't argue with the results.

How powerful is it to see your teachers pray? How immeasurable and indelible is it to bow your head everyday with every single one of your classmates in prayer? How important is the routine of crossing yourself before the day begins, before the game begins, before the concert begins? This is what my kids saw throughout their formative years, and they saw it so consistently they didn't even know they were seeing it.

But I saw it.

Our babies have become young adults – ones who serve and pray, ones who are kind and responsible, ones who know the Lord. Was this because my husband and I are "good people"? A little. But mostly it is because they have a village full of "good people". And when one of us stumbled, the others were still standing. We had herd immunity.

*Last May, my oldest child graduated from St. Philip High School. She received \$40,000 in scholarships. She knows what she wants to do and where she wants to go. More importantly, she knows how to persevere in prayer, that the **Lord is the Center of the Universe.***