

Dear family and friends of our Antioch participants,

One of the most powerful parts of Antioch is one that I need your help with. On Saturday afternoon during our retreat, each of the kids will receive a packet of letters that we call Palancas. Palanca is a Spanish word that means lever, and these letters serve as a way to lift your children up and help them grow closer to God. They are letters of affirmation expressing your love for them and pointing out ways they have been a blessing to you. Please also let them know that you will be praying for them throughout the weekend.

Antioch Palancas typically employ some type of reminder that we use to help us remember to pray. Many times these reminders are simple, like wearing your watch on the other wrist and praying every time you notice the change. Sometimes these reminders are silly or creative: in college I dyed my hair blonde and every time somebody commented, I said a prayer for a friend. Regardless of how you remind yourself, feel free to share with your child how you will remember.

These letters are a very powerful and emotional part of the retreat. Our goal is to get every parent to write a letter to their children. We would also like to include siblings, friends, family, teachers, coaches, and any other people that are important in the life of your children. The more, the merrier. To make this goal a reality, please spread the word to anybody your child might appreciate a letter from. Visit our Antioch webpage at www.incarnationparish.org/youth/antioch to print this letter or to see an updated list of retreat participants. Feel free to write to as many of the attendees as you'd like.

When we present the Palancas, we will be reading an excerpt from one letter for each participant. However it is important that we respect everybody's privacy and confidentiality. Some people write very personal letters that are meant only for the recipient. Other people write letters that they would very much like to be read aloud. We will follow your lead on this, so please do the following when sealing your Palanca: (1) if your letter is meant to be private, please write "Private" on the back of the envelope and it will not be looked at by anybody but the recipient; (2) if you would prefer your letter to be read aloud, please write "Read Aloud" on the back of the envelope; (3) if you have no preference, leave the back of the envelope blank.

Please bring all palancas with you when you drop your child off on Friday for the retreat. It is also possible to come by CCS any time through lunch on Saturday to turn in letters. Please be sure that the envelopes you deliver are clearly marked on the front with your child's full name. We try to keep Palancas a surprise as much as possible, so please do your best not to let your child know about these letters.

If you have any questions, please let me know. Thank you so much for helping in this way!

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