**ARTSMART ARCHITECTURAL CHURCH TOUR FOR GRADE 2**

**OBJECTIVE**:  Small group, student-centered, short-blast presentation of eight primary architectural elements of SFX Church.

**GENERAL APPROACH**:  We will all go to the Church at the same time and divide into 8 groups or about 6 to 7 students.

Volunteers to meet at 9:30 in front of classrooms.

Walk students over to the church.

8 5-6 minute stations/presentations.

Popsicle treat outside.

**PROCEDURE IN CHURCH**

Assign each small group a starting station:

1. History (outside on front steps/lobby) – Volunteer 1
2. Nave – Volunteer 2
3. Ambry / SFX relic – Volunteer 3
4. East Transept – Volunteer 4
5. Time capsule – Volunteer 5
6. West transept – Volunteer 6
7. Alter area / Dome / baldechino – Volunteer 7
8. Unity Hall Windows – Volunteer 8

Overseer/Timekeeper – Volunteer 9

Children move to one of the starting stations. Parent guides a 5-6 minute presentation/question session of station. Bells chime at 6 minute mark. Children move to next station, moving around the Church until they have experienced all stations.

**RISK/OPPORTUNITY**:  Volunteers needs to ensure that all students rotate at same time. Also, close proximity of stations will require that students use their “Library voices” during the presentations.

**OPENING CHALLENGE IN CHURCH:**

Thank students for joining us. Explain that we will be divided into small groups and moving around Church. Explain importance of “library voices” during group time. Issue challenge: There used to be a marble fence (the Communion Rail) surrounding the altar. After 1993, this marble fence was removed and relocated elsewhere in the Church. As you move around, see if you can find the marble fence!

**Station 1 : HISTORY**

* In 1890, Archbishop of Chicago Patrick Feehan asked Rev. James Hagan to form a congregation in LaGrange. It took Hagan 2 weeks to travel the 45 miles to get here.
* There were 94 Catholic families in LaGrange at the time. The first mass was celebrated on November 1, 1890 at the home of Dr. George Fox at what is now the parking lot of Horton's Home Lighting on La Grange Road.
* The SFX parish was then formed. We celebrated our 125 year anniversary in 2015.
* In 1891 a man named Franklin Cossitt (the founder of the village of LaGrange) donated the land for our church and rectory (and he wasn’t even Catholic). Until the church was built, parishioners continued to have mass in homes.
* SFX church didn’t always look like it does now.
* It took a year to build the first church, which was a wood frame, Gothic style building on the Southwest corner of Ogden and Spring. It included a 100 foot high bell tower that was rung every day.
* The first SFX church was dedicated on June 5, 1892 and was the first Catholic church in La Grange. A special train coming from Union Station carried Archbishop Feehan to say the mass. There was a procession from the train station in La Grange and people marched from there to the new church.
* Since many people traveled by train to get to church, the times of the masses were determined by the train schedule. Others came by horse and buggy.
* In 1917, the parish built a school on the corner of Ogden and Waiola. [This was the first school building; the current school building was constructed in 1949 ]
* Soon, SFX outgrew its church facilities (by 1920 there were 925 parishioners) and they decided to build a new church.
* The current church building was completed on October 17, 1930.
* The church was dedicated on June 14, 1931 and cost $400,000. Calculated with inflation, that $400,000 would be nearly $6 million today!
* The parish was named after the 16th century Spanish Jesuit, Francis Xavier, who is the patron saint of missions.

**Style of the church**

* The church was built to resemble the 4th century Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople / Istanbul, which is considered to be the finest example of Byzantine architecture in the world.
* It is made of Indiana limestone with Italian marble throughout.
* The footprint is rectangular with a barrel roof and an *apse,* or semicircular area, behind the main altar.
* Wide, central area of the church is called the *nave*.
* The side areas are called the *trancepts*.
* This style mimics the *form of a cross* and is also meant to accommodate large numbers of people.

**Changes**

* In 1993, the present church was renovated.
* The church was cleaned and repainted (the murals on the dome were painted over).
* The pews and doors were repaired.
* New floor tile was installed.
* The altar was moved forward and recarpeted.
* The Mary and Joseph shrines were upgraded and repaired.
* A ramp was installed along the altar.
* The choir loft was extended and part of the original alter was installed.
* The Mary Garden is on the East side of the church, near the Spring Avenue exit. Sister Mary Southard, CSJ, created the sculpture and gave it to the church in memory of loved ones.
* The Peace Post was placed near the Ogden entrance after 9/11. The following phrase is written in four languages (English, Korean, Arabic & Spanish): “May Peace Prevail on Earth.”

**STATION 2: THE NAVE**

*Leader: Position station so that the north wall of Church is easily observed.*

Script: Students, please look at the north wall. There is a large, beautiful round window called a Rose Window hidden somewhere on that wall. Does anyone see it? (take answers) You can actually only see it from outside. When the Church was renovated and we purchased the amazing pipe organ, we had to sacrifice the view of the window.

Students, please turn around and look at the wide, central area of the Church. This is called the nave. On the **West side of nave,**

* These stained glass windows depict the major events in Christ’s life:  
  The Annunciation  
  Christ’s birth  
  The Sermon on the Mount
* The smaller windows depict Moses, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah.

On the **East side of nave**

* These stained glass windows present the three divine powers given by Christ to the church:  
  To offer mass  
  To forgive sins  
  To preach in His name
* The smaller windows depict David and the prophets Daniel and Isaiah.

When looking at the stained glass windows, what colors do you see? What are the black outlines of the glass made of?

Look at the **Stations of the cross.**

* The stations of the cross are found throughout the trancepts and nave and are composed of mosaic tiles.

One thing you could talk about is that they are mosaics. Each station was created from hundreds (thousands?) of tiny pieces of glass and ceramic. Ask the kids how the artist chose the colors; how they got the pieces of ceramic so small; how they pieced them together, do they think this was hard work, etc.

**STATION 3: AMBRY / RELIC**

*Leader: Position station so that the alcove is easily observed.*

Script: Students, please look at the alcove.

* In the alcove is the ambry, which it stores the holy oils of the sick and catechumens. Ask students what these are (they just studied the sacraments)
* The window above the ambry shows Jesus offering communion to children while angels look on. (You can ask students to describe what they see happening versus telling them. Very appropriate window considering proximate timing of First Communion, especially relevant to them).
* The alcove also contains a relic of St. Francis Xavier. What is a relic? Some part of the body of that saint. We believe ours is a piece of his clothing.

What colors do you observe in the stained glass?

How did the artist convey Jesus offering Communion? Why do you think the artist chose children?

Why was the Ambry placed here versus elsewhere in the Church?

**STATION 4: EAST TRANSEPT**

*Leader: Position station near the Baptismal Font, as far from the Ambry as possible, but still close enough to observe the statue of Blessed Mother.*

Script: Students, this area is called the East Transept. There are three elements we want to review, as well as the window. This area is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

1. Look at the statue of the woman. Who is it? (Statue of Blessed Mother). How do you know?   
   [To the bottom left is a snake circling the globe, a symbol of the fall of man. To the right there is also a heart pierced by a sword, symbolizing Mary’s heartache.]

What is the statue made of?

Is it painted? Why or why not? (answers vary)

Is it larger than an adult human? Why did they make it this size?

1. Look up at the round window. The circular stained glass window depicts blossoms of the Mystical Rose, a symbol of Mary. Why do you think they put this window on the east wall? (to be with state of Mary) What colors do you see?
2. Point to the statue over the door: who is it? (take 3 guesses if time) How do you know (if they know). Statue of St. Francis Xavier above the door; pointing to heaven; holding a cross. What is St Francis most known for? (missionary work – go set the world on fire!!)
3. Point to the Baptismal font. What is that? What happens here? What is it made of? What’s inside? Share some Baptism stories.

**STATION 5: TIME CAPSULE**

*Leader: Wait near Baptismal font and walk students back around to time capsule. Watch footing for lights, stored items, etc.*

Script: Students, this area is the Baldechino, the canopy over the altar. Church related items were gathered during our 100th Jubilee and placed in a time capsule behind the altar. (Show them where it is). There is a ladder and some other things behind there, so maybe let your group take a peek one at a time. It’s kind of cool to see though. You could discuss what a time capsule is and what items might be in there. I’m not sure what’ in there or when it’ll be opened.

After discussing the timecapsule, ask students: what we are standing behind? (the Tabernacle, what is this?) If time remains, walk around to front of Tabernacle and make observations.

Ask students to look up and observe the **baldachino** from close up**.** It should look like a crown, being held up to Christ the King. Can you tell this from up close or jut in the pew area? Ask students if they are familiar with the mosaics (the ship, Our Lady of Guadalupe) in the corners. Ask them to review their knowledge of mosaics.

**STATION 6: WEST TRANSEPT**

*Leader: Position your station in front of Joseph but far enough back to be able to observe the west rose window.*

Script: Students, this area is called the West Transept. There are two elements we want to review, as well as the window. This area is dedicated to Joseph (remind students the East side is dedicated to Mary)

Ask students to observe the large statue of the man. Who is it? (**Joseph)** How do you know?

* To the left of the statue of Joseph are a hammer and carpenter’s square. Why?
* Lilies are the symbol of St. Joseph. Their white color symbolize his holiness, innocence, and obedience to God.
* Can you find two images of Lilies in this area?

The circular **window** above Joseph is of 3 lilies, which are a symbol of St. Joseph and Joseph is holding lilies in his right hand.

Ask students to observe the statue above the South door (**statue of St. Therese of Liseux)**. She is also called The Little Flower.

* St. Therese became a nun at age 15 and died when she was only 24. During that time she had a simple faith in God and is now considered, along with St. Francis, to be the patron saint of missions.

**STATION 7: ALTER AREA**

*Leader: Position your station about three row back in the center section of nave so students can observe both dome and baldechino.*

Script: Students, you know this area is called the alter and above us is the dome. In front of us is a smaller dome called the baldechino.

**Central dome**

* In the dome areas above the altar are words spoken at the church’s dedication in 1931.
* Can anyone guess what language it is written in? Latin. Why?

Latin is the official language of the Catholic Church. All Catholic masses used to be in Latin, one reason for this was a sign of unity – all Catholics all over the world were hearing the same Mass and language being used.­­­

* Translations (they might be able to pick out the Latin word for Lord, ask them)
  + “Bless Lord this house which is built in your name. Come into this place.”
  + My house shall be called a house of prayer, says the Lord, in which all who ask will be heard.”
  + “Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house and the place where your glory dwells.”

The area over the altar is called a **baldachino (bal-da’-kin oh**). Baldachins are like a canopy over an altar, or something sacred. They are usually made out of stone, fabric or metal.

* How is the baldachin painted and decorated so that we know it’s covering something special?
* Each corner of the canopy is topped by an angel; it is gold; it is topped with a cross.
* Under the canopy is the tabernacle, which contains the blessed Eucharist.
* There are two mosaics at the base of the canopy’s columns.  
    
  East Mosaic:  
  Depicts Our Lady of the Rosary with St. Dominic receiving the rosary.  
    
  West Mosaic:  
  Depicts Our Lady of Guadalupe, who is the patroness of North and South America.