

# St Mary School Curriculum Newsletter



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James T. Ferdella, Assistant Principal

## WINTER 2012

### Links:

[Kindergarten](#)

[Grade 1](#)

[Grade 2](#)

[Religion](#)

[Grade 3](#)

[Grade 4](#)

[Grade 5](#)

[Grade 6](#)

[Grade 7](#)

[Grade 8](#)

[Spanish](#)

[Phys Ed](#)

[Art](#)

[Music](#)

[Media Center](#)



## St Mary School

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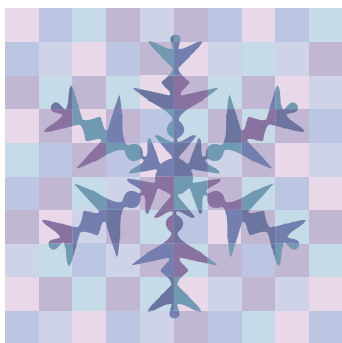
*The goal of this curriculum newsletter is to inform our parents of their child's curriculum.*

*We publish the curriculum newsletter electronically in an effort to save ink and paper.*

*Please consider this effort before printing.*

## Kindergarten News

January is an exciting time in Kindergarten! The children have developed many skills and are ready to make even more progress! Throughout the month of January, the students will be engaged in our new Language Arts theme "Whatever the Weather." Since our Language Arts curriculum emphasizes the integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, the children will be given many opportunities to develop these areas through fictional and non-fictional literature.



We plan to capture the children's enthusiasm about "winter" by developing learning activities around this theme. We will be learning about winter weather, animals, and holidays. Special days will include Snow Day and Groundhog Day in February.

Extending **reading** activities to writing activities serves to further expand language development. The children will continue combining sounds to encode words. The developmental process unfolds as words then get put together to form sentences. Typically once this begins, children want to write and write. Please supply your child with a variety of writing tools and encourage their attempts, even though correct spelling is not expected initially.

Each winter we launch a Family Reading Program specifically designed for Kindergarten children. The goal of this program is to develop both literature enjoyment and phonemic awareness. By providing expanded literacy opportunities at home and in school, we can work together to enhance the language development of the children. We will be launching this program soon and additional information will be sent home.



In **Math** this month, we will present new concepts and develop ones introduced earlier in the year. The Calendar will be a primary focus as the children learn a song, "Months of the Year," work on recognizing numbers 1 - 31, and number words one through ten. We will continue to work on the concept of addition. The children are already familiar with counting by 10's and are working on counting by 5's. The children will continue to create more complex patterns, explore measurement, and organize and count greater numbers.



Our unit in **Religion** is "Jesus Shows Us God's Love." This is a nice progression following our celebration of Christmas. Our focus will be to help the children realize that God gives them Jesus. Much of the unit is devoted to learning about the early life of Jesus, his family, and how he treated others with kindness and care. The unit culminates with a lesson that helps them understand that Jesus wants them to treat others in the same loving way.

The observance of Catholic Schools Week (January 28 - February 4) serves to increase community understanding, appreciation and support of our nation's Catholic Schools. This year's theme is "Catholic Schools - Faith, Academics, Service." Your decision to enroll your child at St. Mary's demonstrates your dedication to Catholic education. Thank you for your cooperation and support as we continue to work together for the benefit of your child.

*Susan Zybert      Erin McLoughlin*

## Grade One News



**Language Arts** will allow the children to use their imagination and creativity to look at things in new ways. The children will use questioning, sequencing, and graphic organizers to help them better understand what they have read. When we discuss the selections our focus will be on comparing and contrasting, plot, setting, main idea, details, the author's purpose and point of view and sequence of events. Blending and segmentation of sounds in words continues to be practiced each day. We will learn more letter combinations (ch, qu, wh, ar, ow, oa, ed, ing) and add to our list of high frequency words. The children are encouraged to review these words at home. You will see improvement in the fluency of your child's oral reading with the increased mastery of high frequency words.



During January the children will investigate **mathematical** concepts such as patterning, spatial sense, equal parts, unequal parts, and symmetry using fun hands-on activities. They will learn how to identify, name, and represent fractions such as  $1/2$ ,  $1/3$ , and  $1/4$ . The concept of fractional parts will extend to a brief introduction to probability. Your first grader will come to understand the language of probability using terms such as *more likely*, *less likely*, *equally likely*, *certain*, and *impossible*. Find opportunities to help your child discover ways that they can predict and determine the probability of events in their daily life. (For example: "How likely is it that you will choose a red candy from the candy dish?") The children should also continue to reinforce addition and subtraction math facts at home using games, flashcards, workbook pages, computer software, and educational websites.



Our **religion** activities have helped us understand Jesus in a more personal way by appreciating the fact that he grew and learned right here on Earth. We will learn how our church began and the importance of the Holy Spirit in the growth of the church and in our own lives. Prayer can bring us closer to God, and we will understand that we can pray anywhere and anytime about anything.



In **Social Studies** our focus continues to be Geography and Citizenship. We will learn that as citizens we live in communities, states, countries and continents and discuss how our lives compare to people living in different areas of the world. In Social Studies and Science we will explore different regions of the world. As we study the fascinating world of animals we will share literature, activities and projects about animal homes, characteristics, classification and hibernation.

Through the example of Martin Luther King, the children will use their imaginations to share their wishes and dreams for a better world. This concept will be extended as we discuss what makes a good citizen. The children will try to recognize the characteristics of good citizenship, such as belief in justice, truth, equality and responsibility.



Happy New Year!

*Mrs. Hudson and Mrs. Dolan*

## Grade Two News



**Reading :** The children arrived back to school to greet the New Year with the study of the author Jan Brett. From trolls to tomtens to hedgehogs, the students are learning of her painstaking effort to capture a child's interest and imagination. The children will search Ms Brett's web site for information and activities, and learn of the difficult and time-consuming work it takes to be both an author and illustrator. We encourage the use of the Jan Brett web site at home for more in depth study of this author. (<http://www.janbrett.com>) This year we have also incorporated fairy tales into our winter unit. We have compared and contrasted many versions of Cinderella and The Three Little Pigs. Using this as a base, the children are now writing their own fairy tales.

**Math:** We continue to reinforce the need for mastery of addition and subtraction facts. To master the facts eliminates the use of fingers or number lines. At home we ask your help in having your children continue to learn addition and especially subtraction facts through 18.

Our focus continues on regrouping ones and tens for the addition of 2-digit numbers. In addition we regroup ones into tens. In subtraction, we rename a set of tens into ones. An example we give to the class is that there are times you need a ten dollar bill, and times when you need ten one dollar bills. In addition we take all the ones we have and trade them into tens. In subtraction, we need more ones, so we trade a ten into ten ones instead.

We model activities as we go along so that the children understand the reasoning behind the concepts. As always the students will learn a variety of strategies such as drawing it out, counting up or down, or finding doubles to help them learn a few tricks.

**Social Studies / Science:** The class has begun a unit on work, and why we work. Many new and challenging vocabulary words help us to know the types of workers, what are our needs and wants, and what exactly are goods and services.

The class has worked on identifying forces, both pushes and pulls. Magnets and simple machines round out this topic.

**Religion:** One of the most important sacraments for the children to study this year is that of the Eucharist. In preparing for this sacrament the children will learn that the sacrament of Eucharist calls us to unity and peace. As this special time draws nearer, the children will be more active participants in the Mass. We ask that during Sunday Mass your child actively participate in the responses, songs, and actions.

This month the children will celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. As adults seek forgiveness for hurts we have caused friends and family, so too the children now come of age to seek forgiveness from God.

*Mrs. O'Brien and Mrs. Lukach*

## Grade Three News - Mrs. Johnson and Sister Rosemarie



As we finish the Theme, "Together We Can," in **Language Arts**, the students continue to discover that all of God's creation is connected. Our last story, *Stone Soup*, shows that when we work together, we can accomplish so much. It also helps the students realize that each one of us has an important role to play.

Students have been writing various creative works from animal poems to fictional stories to persuasive speeches. We have even typed some of our works on programs like Microsoft Word and BrainPop, Jr. Our focus will continue to be writing and identifying main ideas and details in paragraphs.

Handwriting becomes more exciting for the children as they continue to learn the cursive alphabet. At the completion of this task, the Third Graders will be allowed to write in cursive.



Welcome to a New Year of learning more about multiplication in **Math**. The children are having fun singing along with our musical multiplication tape. They have drawn pictures that correlate with multiplication sentences that help the children to understand the concept of repeated addition. The students will soon be using technology to assist them in memorizing their multiplication facts. They will play games that will enhance their Math skills. Learning can be fun!



We have recently finished our **Physical Science** Unit on matter. We will soon be studying sound. The students will do hands-on experiments to explore vibrations, pitch, volume, and the ways sound moves through matter. Slide shows will bring the chapters to life with images and videos from Discovery Education, BrainPop, and BrainPop, Jr.



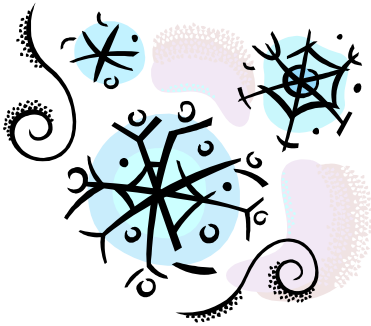
In **Social Studies**, third Graders have been working very hard to create artwork to represent the song, "America the Beautiful." These pictures will be used to lead the sing-along during our Nation Day celebration. We will soon be studying more about our beautiful America by looking at the geography of communities and how we can use and protect our resources.

In **Religion** The Third Graders have been discussing the growth of the Church at the time of the Apostles and the early Christians. They are learning the Four Marks of the Church—One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. The children will be able to recite these characteristics and explain the meaning of each. They will illustrate the Marks as a way of helping the children to develop a greater understanding of the qualities of our living Church. Then the students will engage in memorizing the Apostles' Creed. This prayer is quite important because it concretizes the beliefs of our faith.

*To see what else is happening in Grade 3, click on the links below:*

[Art](#) ~ [Media Center](#) ~ [Music](#) ~ [Phys Ed](#) ~ [Spanish](#) ~ [Table of Contents](#)

## Grade Four News - Mrs. Bigda



Happy New Year 2012!

I hope everyone had a wonderful, restful Christmas vacation. We are ready for the New Year and all new and exciting activities.

**Language Arts** Natural Changes is the next theme (3) we will be reading. Students will read about how nature is constantly changing the face of the Earth. Some changes occur slowly while others happen in a matter of days. They will discover how these changes affect the world around them. Some of the skills we will be studying are cause/effect, drawing conclusion, predicting outcomes, references, possessive nouns, pronouns and antecedents. Our theme-long writing piece will be a cause/effect paragraph.

**Social Studies** We are currently studying the 12 southeastern states that stretch from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. Rivers, farms and coal mines are important natural resources of the region. We will read about how the Cherokee and then the English settled in the area, the Civil War, the Underground Railroad and how civil rights affected not only the southeast but the entire United States.

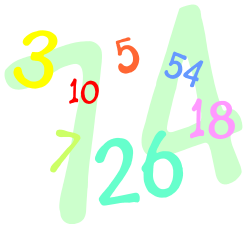


**Science** We have started our study of the human body. We will learn about several of the systems including the digestive, circulatory, respiratory and the nervous system. Children are naturally curious about their bodies - they know they are growing, losing teeth and changing and they want to know why. The models, manipulatives, videos and books will teach them what these body parts look like, what they do and where they are located. Many fun and engaging activities are planned.

**Classroom News** Grades close on Thursday January 19th and report cards will go home on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Catholic Schools Week is Saturday January 28th - Saturday February 4<sup>th</sup>. Please make sure that your child is dressed for a 20-minute outdoor recess. They can use the "No Homework for a Night" pass for any homework assigned by me.

## Grade Four News continued

**Math** Fourth grade students are working in Unit 4, Division of Whole Numbers which includes 1 digit divisors and up to 5 digit quotients. Students are using the long division algorithm to solve these problems and use multiplication to check their work. We encourage the use of graph paper for students to keep their work aligned properly. Problem solving activities occur in each chapter as well as opportunities for giving written explanations of the strategies used in solving the problems. Students should continue to study the basic facts, especially the multiplication facts.



**After School Math Help** Extra help in math is available every Monday after school from 2:45-3:30. Mrs. Ethier and I alternate weeks, a calendar can be sent home if your child needs/wants to attend.

**Religion with Sr. Rosemarie:** The Fourth Graders aced their written test dealing with the First Commandment. They are now involved in learning the Second Commandment. The children will be taught the sacredness of God's name. It should be used with utter respect—never in anger or surprise. The LCD projector provides a fun way of reviewing essential concepts in preparing the children for test-taking. The Fourth Graders also enjoy playing the “Luck of the Draw”. This game presents the class with relevant questions as their names are randomly pulled out of a cup. Scores are kept, and they delight in beating the teacher. These Commandments are the basis of their moral journey to God and play a major role in their entire lives.

## Grade Five News

### Homeroom with Mrs. Ethier:

For the second year in a row many students worked with plastic canvas to create needlepoint Christmas tree ornaments, hand sewn paper-pierced quilted mats created, and custom designed note cards that were sold at the St. Mary Holly Fair. Students helped sell these items at the fair. We exceeded our goal of a profit of \$600 which will be used to aid rural Colombian students striving to obtain a high school diploma.



### Literature with Mrs. Curley:

Our newest theme in Literature is “Dare to be Great.” In this theme, the characters in the selections use their creativity in different ways. Each character is different, yet they all have one thing in common: they will not settle for less than the best in themselves. The stories include realistic fiction from noted authors Andrew Clements and Linda Sue Park, a photobiography of Thomas Edison, a letter that Thomas Edison sent to Henry Ford, and a folktale about Anansi the Spider.

Skills that we will work with in this theme include main idea and details, making inferences, cause and effect, and general story structure, including characters, setting, conflict, plot, turning point, and resolution.

### English with Mrs. Curley:

In English, we have been focusing on sentence structure, and parts of speech. All of these grammar skills are helping us with our writing! Students are using their writing skills daily, in a variety of ways including responding to literature and writing in the content areas. In Spelling, we continue to study with weekly lists and are continuing to work with some very challenging words as part of our weekly spelling work.

## Grade Five News - continued

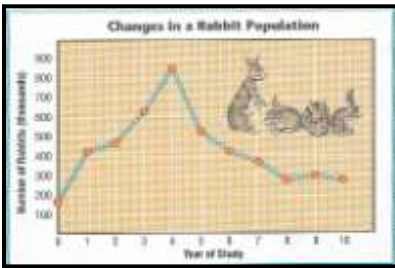


### Math with Mrs. Ethier & Mrs. MacDonough:

Soon our math groups will be changing teachers, my students to Mrs. MacDonough in the math room and Mrs. MacDonough's students to me in the grade 5 classroom. Students are currently working in Unit 3 Measurement, Data and Graphing. Students have learned how to collect, organize, and interpret data and how to choose the appropriate graph, line, bar, histogram, or circle, for a set of data. We used line plots and stem-and-leaf plots to find the mean, median, and mode of a set of data. Problem solving activities as well as opportunities for writing explanations occur in each chapter. Students should continue to practice basic facts as they work toward mastery of all the facts. Our next unit is Adding and Subtracting Fractions and Decimals. Extra help in math is offered Tuesdays after school.

### Science with Mr. Moakley:

Grade Five is continuing their study of Environmental Science this quarter with Ecosystems and Biomes. This includes how energy enters the system and moves its way through the various organisms. They also learned about the matter and how it also works its way through the various biotic and abiotic factors of the ecosystem. They know understand the reasons that organisms live where they live, why some thrive and others do not. They also learned how organisms move around the ecosystem and that there are barriers as well to prevent movement. In the lab they continue work on the basics skills.



### Social Studies with Mrs. Ethier:

Students have just completed the chapter on early explorations of North America. They learned about explorers from Spain, France, England, and Holland. Students created a timeline detailing reasons for an exploration and the accomplishments of the explorer. We are now learning about the early settlements of Roanoke, Jamestown, Plymouth, and Boston. Using Discovery Education videos offers a recreated look at these early settlements. Students are encouraged to apply critical thinking skills as they answer questions on material presented.

### Religion with Sister Rosemarie:

The Fifth Graders have learned the three Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. At this time they are delving into the Sacrament of the Eucharist and becoming aware of its importance in our lives. The students are discussing that the Mass is a memorial, a meal, and a sacrifice. Jesus wants to be remembered, and therefore, has blessed us with His own Body and Blood in the Eucharist. May God be praised and thanked for His goodness to us! The children will continue to use the LCD projector and create illustrations as a means of processing these wondrous concepts.

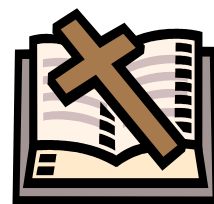
*To see what else is happening in Grade 5, click on the links below:*

[Art](#) ~ [Media Center](#) ~ [Music](#) ~ [Phys Ed](#) ~ [Spanish](#) ~ [Table of Contents](#)

## Grade Six

### Religion with Mrs. Sullivan

In Chapter six and seven, sixth grade students studied the liturgical year: Advent, the Christmas season, Lent the Easter Triduum, the Easter season, and Ordinary Time. They learned some of the signs and actions that help us to celebrate each season such as readings from Scripture, songs, liturgical colors, and ways of worshipping in each season. At the Mass, we praise and thank God for his many gifts; listen to God's word; remember Jesus' life, death and resurrection; celebrate Jesus' gift of himself in the Eucharist; receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion; and are sent forth to share Jesus' love, serve others, and work for justice and peace. We looked at why and how the Mass texts have been revised and practiced the responses



In chapter eight, sixth graders learned how Egypt became the home of the Israelites; God chose Moses to lead his people; God helped his people; and God guided his people to freedom. Chapter nine teaches that Moses led God's people through the wilderness; God gave his people the law; the people built God a dwelling place and God led his people toward the promised land. Next, God's people conquered Canaan and settled there. Samson was the most famous judge. Ruth lived a life of self-sacrifice. God called Samuel to serve him. Saul became Israel's first king. God chose David to lead Israel. David was declared the king of Israel.

We will look at the First Book of Kings and the Second Book of Chronicles which contain the story of Solomon's reign. Solomon's reign was a time of peace and prosperity. Students will identify ways that we can work for peace. Solomon received the gift of wisdom from God. Students will see how wisdom is the ability to recognize and follow God's will in our lives.

## Grade Seven



We are completing Unit 2. Chapter five helped the students offer ways to work toward a just and peaceful society. They explored the meaning of God's kingdom as presented in parables found in Matthew's Gospel.

Chapter six presented the call to Christian service. Students learned that each person responds to this call differently, according to his or her own vocation. A vocation is more than a job. A job is what we do. A vocation, in contrast, is how we live. A vocation is how we serve others and God. God calls everyone to love as Jesus loves.

In Chapter seven students learned that all people - regardless of race, nationality, gender, religion, culture, or social status - have dignity because they reflect God's image and likeness. Jesus' parable about the Good Samaritan teaches us that all people, especially those suffering from injustice, are the neighbors we are to love.

Chapter eight states through the words of Jesus "The kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17:21). God's kingdom becomes present whenever we love others and live in peace. Students explore the Beatitudes as a guide to the values of God's kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount consists of teachings that Jesus gave his followers, including the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. The Beatitudes tell us that we will find true happiness in the kingdom of God by loving God, loving each other, seeking justice, and spreading peace.

We looked at the revised Mass texts and practiced the responses. Among the benefits of the changes is the opportunity that it has given the students to look more deeply into what we are praying at Mass. In Unit 3, we will learn about Christian discipleship and the need to have a personal relationship with Christ and the Catholic community.

Grade Eight

Religion with Mrs. Sullivan - continued



In Chapter five, students learned about the gathering together of different cultures within the universal Catholic Church; the universal Church consists of Eastern Rite Catholics and Western Rite Catholics; the Roman Catholic Church is part of the Western Rite; and twenty-two different church traditions make up the universal Catholic Church. Chapter five explained some

of the historical conflicts that led to division between Catholics with different traditions. What the twenty-two Catholic Churches have in common is that they all profess the Nicene Creed, celebrate the seven sacraments, and recognize the Bishop of Rome as the head of the universal Church.

Chapter 6 presented ways the Church's liturgy has changed. At first, Christians met in houses on Saturday (the Sabbath) to celebrate the Eucharist. Later, they celebrated the Eucharist on Sunday because it was the day of Christ's resurrection. In the fourth century, when Constantine legalized the Christian religion, church members began to meet openly. They built churches for liturgy which gradually became more elaborate.

Chapter 7 covered the sixth to ninth centuries. When barbarians attacked the former Roman Empire, the Church established leadership. Pope Gregory the Great negotiated peace with the invaders. The Church adopted a set of laws, called canon law, based on the laws enacted by Byzantine emperor, Justinian. Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor, and Charlemagne strengthened the bond between Church authority and government. The followers of Islam attacked Constantinople and conquered churches in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Spain.

Chapter 8 covered the ninth through eleventh centuries. The anointing of Charlemagne as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire politically divided the Western Church and Eastern Church. Differences in language and liturgy contributed to the division between the churches. The two churches became physically separated- by German invasions in the West and Islamic conquests in the East. The influence of Islam and disagreements over the papacy and the doctrine of the Trinity contributed to the division in the Church.

In Unit 3, we will learn how medieval society in Europe produced traditions that define much of Catholicism today. We will also see how the Church was a part of everyday life and how society revolved around the Church.

We have looked at the revised Mass texts and practiced the responses. Among the benefits of the changes is the opportunity that it has given to the students to look more deeply into what we are praying at Mass.

*Links:*

[Table of Contents](#) ~ [Kindergarten](#) ~ [Grade 1](#) ~ [Grade 2](#) ~ [Grade 3](#) ~ [Grade 4](#) ~ [Grade 5](#) ~ [Grade 6](#) ~ [Grade 7](#) ~ [Grade 8](#)

## Grade Six News



*“The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer, the very top of the live long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning...”*

### Literature with Mrs. Curley:

Our drama unit began in November when we began learning about some of the many aspects of drama, including characters, setting, stage directions, dialogue, acting and directing. As a unit assessment, the students chose simple Christmas-themed stories, and turned them into Reader’s Theater scripts, complete with all the elements they had learned about during the unit, including stage directions. These were performed for the class, the week before Christmas.

We are now reading Tuck Everlasting, by Natalie Babbitt. This is the story of 10-year-old Winnie Foster, a young girl living in the 1880’s, who discovers a most unusual family and must make some very difficult decisions about her future, and, indirectly, the future of humanity. Students are working in groups, exploring life in the fictional town of Treenap, as they begin to uncover and explore the secret that the Tuck family has kept for 87 years.

### English with Mrs. Curley:

In English, we have been reviewing parts of speech and punctuation. We will be doing a general “grammar review” during January and February.

The spelling words we are using are challenging, but students are rising to the occasion. Our spelling words are some of the hardest of the challenging words in our language. In fact, they include a number of words that most adults spell incorrectly!

### Math with Ms. Lordan:

At the start of term two, SIXTH GRADERS used the divisibility rules to name the factors of a given number in order to classify whole numbers as composite, prime, or unity. Our study of number theory included two methods of naming the GCF and LCM of numbers. Students discovered that prime factorization was more efficient than the tedious task of listing all factors and multiples. Our knowledge of number theory assisted us with our next two units: fractions and decimals. We discovered relationships among fractions, mixed numbers, and decimals as we ordered and compared them. We performed the four operations with fractions and explored a little bit of algebra when we simplified variable expressions. Our problem solving techniques now include multi-step problems, interpreting remainders, justifying solutions, and solving a simpler problem. I wish this group of sixth graders well as they continue the study of mathematics with Mrs. MacDonough during the next semester. I shall miss their energy and enthusiasm and look forward to their return next year as we venture into the field of pre-algebra.



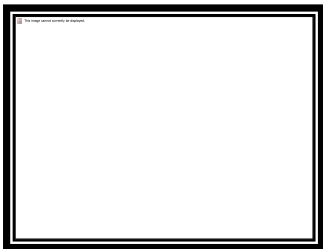
*By words we learn thoughts, and by thoughts we learn life.  
- Jean Baptiste Girard*

## Grade Six News - continued



### Math with Mrs. MacDonough:

As the second quarter draws to a close, the sixth grade has made great strides in their Math curriculum. We are completing a chapter on measurement where we have been working with both customary and metric units. We converted and computed measures, and found the area and perimeter of closed figures such as a rectangle and a square. We will continue to add to our problem solving strategies by analyzing when not enough information is given to solve the problem. When the classes switch at the end of the month, this group will continue on with Ms. Lordan; the next portion of their curriculum will involve data collection and analysis. They have been a pleasure to teach, and while I am looking forward to having the other half of the class, I will miss teaching this group!



### Science with Mr. Moakley:

Grade 6 began the quarter in space with the study of comets, asteroids, and meteors. They followed this with the ever popular question of “is there life beyond Earth?” they soon discovered that science has a very broad definition of life, and rarely does it involve advanced intelligence. From there we moved on to bigger things such as stars, and galaxies and finished the section with a brief history of the universe. From there they have moved on to the study of the weather and climate of our home planet. Currently they are focusing on the basics of our atmosphere such as composition, properties, and layers. From here they will be moving on to the more complex dynamics such as energy transfer and precipitation.



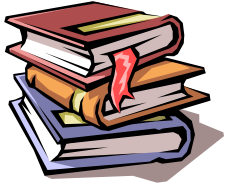
### Social Studies with Mrs. Curley:

We have recently concluded our study of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Nubia, and have embarked on our study of the ancient civilizations of India and China. Soon thereafter, we will explore ancient African civilizations before moving on to the wonders of ancient Greece and Rome.

*To see what else is happening in Grade 6, click on the links below:*

[Religion](#) ~ [Art](#) ~ [Media Center](#) ~ [Music](#) ~ [Phys Ed](#) ~ [Spanish](#) ~ [Table of Contents](#)

## Grade Seven News

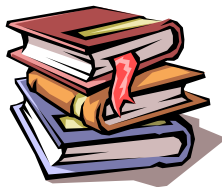


*“ In a good play, each detail falls into a useful place. And you know the shortest line, the smallest stage movement, has an end in view . . .*

*Lillian Hellman*

### Literature with Mrs. Seraichick:

- December - Students read the screen version of Charles Dickens' *The Christmas Carol* in our Holt anthology, *Elements of Literature*. Each student took a part and read dramatically. Students also attended a special matinee performance of the play at the Hanover Theater in Worcester.
- January - Students are currently reading the mystery, *Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This mystery contains high adventure, many red herrings, and a wonderful vocabulary.
- February - In the unit, “Myths, Folk Tales and Legends”, students will learn the characteristics of myths and folktales. To finish the unit, students will create a composite art and writing project on a god or goddess. They will present their project orally in front of their class.



*“ Every time we work on our writing it has more meaning. And it becomes something more beautiful.*

*Denise Chávez*

### English with Mrs. Seraichick:

- December - Students were assigned Book Check III where the focus is close reading, identifying significant passages in their chosen books. Book Check III is due on Friday, February 10th.
- January - In grammar, the class has just completed a unit on Complements including Predicate Nouns, Predicate Adjectives and Direct Objects.
- January through February - Students will study all types of phrases - Adjective, Adverb, Participial, Infinitive, and Gerund phrases.
- Several written essays will be assigned reflecting different types of writing: expository, narrative and persuasive.

### Spelling with Mrs. Seraichick:

- Each week students are given a new list of spelling and vocabulary words. These words are culled from SAT word lists.
  - Vocabulary lists are taken from Holt's *Elements of Literature* anthology as well as SAT preparation books.
- Weekly spelling and vocabulary tests insure that students' vocabulary is not only passive but also actively used in writing and oral expression.



## Grade Seven News - continued

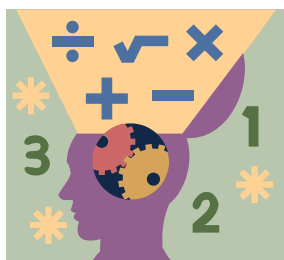
### Pre-Algebra with Ms. Lordan:

SEVENTH GRADERS explored number patterns by finding the GCF and LCM of two or more numbers in a variety of ways. Factor trees assisted us in writing the prime factorization of real numbers. Converting among fractions, decimals, mixed numbers, and percents followed. The skills of ordering and comparing numbers have been mastered. Students demonstrated their knowledge of fractions through applications of measurement in customary units. The development of number sense found us classifying numbers as real, rational or irrational, integer, whole, and natural. We performed the four operations with each set of numbers. During the last weeks of the term, students are writing and simplifying variable expressions. Throughout the first and second terms, It has been my pleasure to teach this spirited group of seventh graders who were always willing to accept the challenge of working hard. I wish them well as they continue the study of pre-algebra with Mrs. MacDonough during the third and fourth terms.



### Pre-Algebra with Mrs. MacDonough:

The seventh graders are in the midst of their second chapter that dealing with true PreAlgebra concepts. They have worked through integer operations, the distributive property, and graphing on the coordinate plane and have moved onto simplifying variable expressions. This is the seventh graders' first introduction to PreAlgebra topics, and the students are excited to be learning something so new and different to them. Now that they know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide integers, they will take this knowledge to Ms. Lordan's class and begin to investigate solving one and two step equations and inequalities. They have worked tremendously hard this first half of the year, and I am thrilled with their progress. I will miss having them all in class each day!



### Science with Mr. Moakley:

Grade seven began the quarter with a continuation of the study of genetics. This was followed by evolution. They are now the beginning of their study of human anatomy and physiology. This began with a basic overview of the organization of the body from organ systems down to cells. This also included a study of homeostasis (how the body stabilizes itself) and stress management. Currently they are covering the skeletal system and techniques to used to diagnose problems affecting this body system.



### Social Studies with Mr. Moakley:

Grade 7 has covered the original 13 colonies to include the cultural, political, and religious identities of each distinct region. They recently completed a study of the French and Indian war and are now moving into the American Revolution, the causes and effects. This will be followed by an in-depth study of the constitutional process and how our government works.

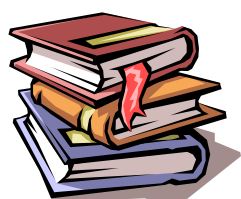
*To see what else is happening in Grade 7, click on the links below:*

[Religion](#) ~ [Art](#) ~ [Media Center](#) ~ [Music](#) ~ [Phys Ed](#) ~ [Spanish](#) ~ [Table of Contents](#)

## Grade Eight News



Shakespeare "All the world's a stage..."  
William Shakespeare



"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view."

Harper Lee



"We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain . . ."

Gettysburg Address  
Abraham Lincoln

### Literature with Mrs. Seraichick:

- December - The eighth grade read and analyzed Charles Dickens', *The Christmas Carol*. We also watched the movie 1984 movie version starring George C. Scott.
- January - Students are reading *Romeo & Juliet* by William Shakespeare. Prior to reading, students learned about Shakespeare's life, London's theatrical scene during the Elizabethan period, literary devices that Shakespeare used. They also learned about Shakespearean sonnets, their rhyme scheme and rhythm. Many of these are incorporated into the play itself, beginning with the Prologue to Act I.

### English with Mrs. Seraichick:

- December - Students were assigned Book Check III where the focus is close reading, identifying significant passages in their chosen books. Book Check III is due on Friday, February 10th. In grammar, the class has just completed a unit on Participial, Gerund and Infinitive Phrases.
- January - The class is now studying Adjective and Adverb Clauses as well as the structure of sentences.
- February - Students are presently writing a formal essay describing what their responsibility is when someone is being bullied. All parts of the formal essay will be critiqued and a final copy will be submitted to the Worcester Bar Association for their Law Day Contest.

### Spelling with Mrs. Seraichick:

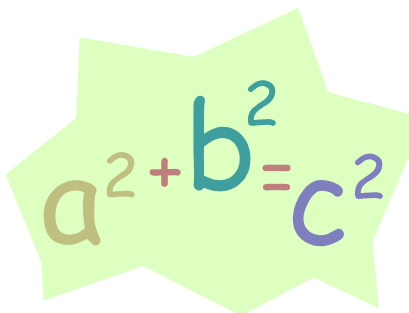
- Each week students are given a new list of spelling and vocabulary words. These words are culled from SAT word lists.
- Vocabulary lists are taken from Holt's *Elements of Literature* anthology as well as SAT preparation books.

Weekly spelling and vocabulary tests insure that students' vocabulary is not only passive but also actively used in writing and oral expression.

### Social Studies with Mrs. Seraichick:

- December - Students studies the Civil War in *The American Nation*. They learned how different, economic, military and political factors affected the outcome of the war. They also learned how the issue of slavery caused a deep division in attitudes between the North and South. Students read about the long and bloody turmoil that ended with the North's victory.
- January - Presently, eighth graders are studying Reconstruction and the rebuilding of the South. We will supplement our textbook reading with videos from *The American Experience*, a PBS series. These videos provide photographs and commentary from noted historians. We will also begin our joint Social Studies/Technology project creating a WWI newspaper.

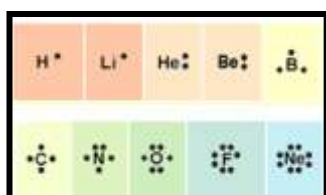
## Grade Eight News - continued



**Algebra with Ms. Lordan and Mrs. Ethier:** Mrs. Ethier and I are pleased with the progress that our EIGHTH GRADE ALGEBRA STUDENTS are making with modeling linear equations. They have been working diligently to solve linear equations that involve multiple steps, variables on two sides, decimals, fractions, ratios, rates, and percents. Students are becoming adept at selecting the most appropriate form to use when faced with the challenge of writing linear equations based on given information. The names of the form provide a great clue: slope-intercept and point-slope. As always, all are encouraged to speak and write the language of mathematics correctly. Students discuss function notation, domain, range, inverse operations, and properties of equality with proficiency. As we advance through the course, our goal is to use the Cartesian coordinate system to link the concepts of algebra and geometry in order to gain insights that are essential to the study of higher mathematics. We continue to encourage our students to show detailed work and correct assignments accurately. We look forward to continuing the study of algebra with this delightful group of math stars.



**Algebra with Mrs. MacDonough:** The Advanced Algebra class continues to push on and master new and challenging material. Much of the second quarter has been spent investigating linear equations. They have successfully learned how to graph and write linear equations in slope intercept form, point slope form, and standard form. We have also used the graphing calculators to look at the graphs of parallel and perpendicular lines. We are in the midst of a unit on inequalities - solving and graphing inequalities and compound inequalities. This led us into a lesson on linear inequalities and graphing absolute value equations. As the third quarter goes on, we will begin to investigate systems of linear equations and inequalities, exponential equations and polynomials. Each of the students in this class works extremely hard each day and should be very proud of his or her accomplishments in math so far this year!



**Science with Mr. Moakley:** Grade eight has finished their chemistry section this quarter and have now moved on to physics. They began with the study of chemical reactions and how chemical bonds change. From there they covered a block of acids, bases, and solutions. They finished the chemistry section with a brief overview of organic chemistry. This includes carbons unique properties and the special compounds that form from it. They are presently working their way through the physics section. This includes a understanding of how science views motion, defines acceleration, and ties it into force. From here they will cover transmitting force, energy, and power.

*To see what else is happening in Grade 8, click on the links below:*

[Religion](#) ~ [Art](#) ~ [Media Center](#) ~ [Music](#) ~ [Phys Ed](#) ~ [Spanish](#) ~ [Table of Contents](#)

## EL ESPAÑOL CON SRA. CORAZZINI

### El tercer grado

**El tercer grado** is enjoying their twice a week Spanish class. Over the last quarter they have learned a variety of new vocabulary and dabbled a bit informally with grammar. Most recently, they have been working with clothing, seasons, months. This vocabulary has been woven together to help them learn how to identify what they would wear depending on the season or the weather. To help introduce and practice vocabulary they have made their first set of flashcards. These cards are used in different ways in the classroom to help them develop auditory and visual recognition of the words. They have also learned how to play a favorite listening game..*Sientate Si.* where they must listen to verbal prompts and respond accordingly to win the game. As they move forward they will review and expand their family vocabulary and practice answering the questions about their family as well as animals which will allow for the introduction of basic adjectives and additional practice with adjective agreement. Please keep an eye out for homework: the children typically receive homework on Tuesday and Friday nights. These assignments not only reinforce vocabulary, but they are a way to introduce long term assignments and the organization skills required.

### El cuarto grado

**El cuarto grado** has been reviewing and expanding upon the concepts introduced last year in Third Grade. This year , however less emphasis is placed on expanding their vocabulary and more time is spent on using the vocabulary to enhance retention. Prayer continues to be how we start our classes along with an array of questions which should be familiar to them designed to build confidence.. The questions revolve around the day, date, weather and time. The questions are repeated as a means of developing their auditory skills. In regard to content, the children began the year with a review of math concepts including numbers, time and the calendar. The four seasons branched out into weather and clothing in December. The last few weeks the focus has been on their auditory skills as they practice responding to questions about weather and clothing. Homework has begun to include sentence reading and writing to begin strengthening their reading and writing skills in preparation for next year. Please encourage them to take their time so they are practicing correct spelling. As January comes to a close the class will move forward and review and expand upon body parts as they learn to identify “what” hurts along with prepositions and classroom objects.

### El quinto grado

**El quinto grado** has been building their vocabulary preparing for next year. They have been working on their listening, speaking and writing skills while interweaving the concepts of weather, seasons, clothing and colors. Most recently they have been working on time, schedules and classroom objects. There is much auditory practice with word associations and verbal practice as they respond to questions about school. It is critical the children attend to what is happening in class as homework will often replicate what has been done in class.

In upcoming weeks work will revolve around what happens in school as well as where. They will also be introduced to first person verbs and be given a list of activities they typically do in class and adjectives so they can begin to write short paragraphs.

## EL ESPAÑOL CON SRA. CORAZZINI – CONT

### El sexta grado

**El sexto grado** has begun working on Unidad 2 Etapa 1 where the topic has shifted from family and friends to school including: classroom objects, subject names and locations and school schedules.

In Unit One the children learned what it means to conjugate a verb and the formation of two irregular verbs. (tener and Ser). In Unit two they will review the formation of these two verbs as it pertains to their classes and what they “have” to do to succeed in school. They will also learn how to conjugate regular verbs, the first ones which end in *-ar*.

They will then be able to state what they do in school and after school as they review time and learn how to incorporate adverbs of frequency to state how often they do certain things. Also as they prepare for Catholic Schools Week they will have an opportunity to work with a partner to discuss what “one must” do to be a good student at St. Mary School. Moving into February they will review how to state the time as well as how to form and respond to questions with the introduction of interrogative words.

### El séptimo grado

**El septimo grado** is moving along at an excellent pace and is presently working towards mastering the concepts in Unit 3 Etapa 2. They have learned a few facts about Puerto Rico and have since their return from Christmas vacation have been working with sports vocabulary, including sport equipment and locations as well as, comparative adjectives and “stem changing” verbs.

As January winds down they will be move into the final section of Unit 3 where they will visit to “El Yunque”, Puerto Rico’s tropical rain forest and learn how to describe weather. They will review “clothing” vocabulary as they learn how to identify more succinctly what clothing they would wear depending on the weather. They will continue practicing how to respond to the question, “¿Cómo estás?” as they are introduced to several idioms to convey specific states of being including hunger, thirst and fear. In this third lesson they will also learn how to form the present progressive which will allow them to identify what is happening at the present moment. They will also review “direct objects” and learn how to incorporate direct object pronouns into their verbal and written work.

### El octavo grado

**El octavo grado** is currently working on *Unidad 4 Etapa 3* where the topic is food. To solidify their new vocabulary they have created “food pyramids” and this new knowledge will help them as they prepare to order a meal in a restaurant. In Unit Four they have reviewed direct and indirect object pronouns, stem changing verbs and affirmative *tú* commands. Much of the material they have been working on has been a review, however this past week they were introduced to *affirmative and negative* words and the formation of extremes. After this final vocabulary and grammar they will incorporate everything together to create restaurant skits which they will present to the class.

At the beginning of February, they will begin Unidad 5, which will transport them from southern Mexico to Barcelona, Spain where they will be introduced to a variety of new vocabulary including household chores, furniture and reflexive verbs. They will also learn how to form “negative” informal commands. After which they will be introduced to the *preterite* and learn how to phrase things in the past.

*Links:*

[Table of Contents](#) ~ [Kindergarten](#) ~ [Grade 1](#) ~ [Grade 2](#) ~ [Grade 3](#) ~ [Grade 4](#) ~ [Grade 5](#) ~ [Grade 6](#) ~ [Grade 7](#) ~ [Grade 8](#)

## Phys Ed News



### Kindergarten - Grade 4 with Mrs. MacDonough



We have been so fortunate to still be able to go outside for the majority of our Physical Education classes. The students are excited to get all bundled up and to run around in the fresh air as much as possible. This term the students have played some of their favorite games, like Stuck in the Mud and Capture the Flag, and are also learning how to play some new games as well. A few of the classes have also done some workout videos in the Church Hall on days when the weather has kept us inside. Many of the games the children play are designed to keep them moving at all times and to focus on the concept of teamwork. The children really start to understand the importance of sportsmanship as they play some of the games, and we are always trying to instill in them that these games are meant to be fun, taking the focus away from winning and losing.

We are hopeful that we will continue to have a mild winter!



### Grades 5 - 8 with Mr. Ferdella

We certainly have been blessed through the first term and one-half of this school year. With the unusually warm temperatures throughout the Fall and early Winter, we were able to enjoy outdoor classes, for the most part. The children were able to participate in team games, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Having said that, the recent storms and the onset of the really cold weather will cause us to stay in, for a while at least.

The good news is that we will now direct our attention to the President's Council on Physical Fitness Program. The children will participate in six different events and record their scores in their individual folders. They will attempt to achieve their personal best for each event in each class, and be responsible for recording their scores and comparing them to the national percentiles, which are posted in the Hall.

Oh, I almost forgot, since we have the ability to project a DVD on to our screen in the Hall, we will participate in various group exercises such as Tai Chi, Yoga, and other flexibility and cardio exercises, specifically designed for children. It should be fun!!

*Links:*

[Table of Contents](#) ~ [Kindergarten](#) ~ [Grade 1](#) ~ [Grade 2](#) ~ [Grade 3](#) ~ [Grade 4](#) ~ [Grade 5](#) ~ [Grade 6](#) ~ [Grade 7](#) ~ [Grade 8](#)

## Art with Mrs. Wiseman



Happy New Year to all! I hope you enjoyed the Christmas Nativities, ornaments, Santas, and cards that your children made with such love and care.

**Kindergarten** is working on self portraits in colored pencils. They will be using winter themes in their next few projects.

**Grade One** created winter sports fingerprint designs. They are now working on colored paper castles.

**Grade Two** is working on a crayon resist project called “crazy quilt”.

**Grade Three** students are creating 3- D pictures using markers and 3-D ' os.

**Grade Four** is working on a stained glass picture using watercolor paints and black glue. They just finished using words as art.

**Grade Five** students are using their cursive names to create alien designs.

**Grade Six** just finished creating pictures of beautiful places of worship in colored pencil. They are now using recycled paper to create a design.

**Grade Seven and Eight** continue to keep a weekly sketchbook. They have just used recycled bottle caps to create a sculpture. Next they will draw a self portrait using colored pencils.

Thanks to all my volunteers!!  
Mrs. Wiseman



*Links:*

[Table of Contents](#) ~ [Kindergarten](#) ~ [Grade 1](#) ~ [Grade 2](#) ~ [Grade 3](#) ~ [Grade 4](#) ~ [Grade 5](#) ~ [Grade 6](#) ~ [Grade 7](#) ~ [Grade 8](#)

## Music News

Kindergarten - Grade 4 - Elizabeth "Beth" Johnson



In Music, the Kindergarten is learning patterns in music through song, dance and instruments. We expand the study of patterns with poetry, art, and math. This Winter we will also learn some Spanish songs to reinforce early Spanish vocabulary, counting and colors.

**Grade One** is using music to bring stories to life. Prior to Christmas, this class read Follow That Star and created a song to retell the story. Main characters, setting, problem, and solution, as well as beginning, middle and end, were analyzed in depth in order to create the class song. A favorite song this winter is the 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School Song.

**Grade Two** has been learning music notation and is ready to begin note reading, and manuscript skills as a precursor to grade three pre-instrument classes on the recorder. In addition, this class is learning many songs that focus on seasons, feelings, and history.

**Grade Three** continues to master the recorder. The children know the C Major Scale and are learning several new compositions each week. The grade three children are enjoying their new skill and they will be well prepared for future instrument study as a result of their class work this year. Grade Three will also be preparing for a performance during Catholic Schools Week, on Tuesday, January 31, 2012.

**Grade Four**, our monthly Mass song leaders, are very busy learning the repertoire of the liturgical seasons. Each week they learn a new hymn and review others. It is a lot of work and practice and we are pleased with their growth in music reading, performance, and general musicality.



*Links:*

[Table of Contents](#) ~ [Kindergarten](#) ~ [Grade 1](#) ~ [Grade 2](#) ~ [Grade 3](#) ~ [Grade 4](#) ~ [Grade 5](#) ~ [Grade 6](#) ~ [Grade 7](#) ~ [Grade 8](#)

## Media Center News



### Kindergarten - Grade 4

We are celebrating SNOW in the Media Center! Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 have been encouraging snowfall by enjoying winter books of all types and genres. Their attention was especially focused on author/illustrator Barbara Reid's innovative plasticine modeling clay illustrations in *Perfect Snow*. Listening to the snowy story, enjoying a Discovery Education video presentation of Karla Kuskin's poem *Snow*, and watching Barbara Reid demonstrate her plasticine technique via her website creates quite a multimedia experience.

Grade 4 students continue to gain experience in maintaining their individual library accounts and are developing a better understanding of the ins and out of our automated library software, Alexandria. They confidently approach the Researcher feature and employ their search skills to identify the items they are interested in. A number of 4th graders voluntarily devote a portion of their weekly visit to "shelf-walking," in which they quality check the correct arrangement of books on a specific length of shelving. Performing duties such as shelf walking and book reshelving, students are reinforcing their library skills while having fun.

### Grades 5-8

Grade 5 students continue with *Exploring the Library* lessons to develop a solid understanding of the Dewey Decimal System. This knowledge enables them to independently locate whatever resources they need. Grades 6 through 8 library classes regularly go beyond print media to focus on digital media. While a lesson may be centered on domain names, external links, or web 2.0 tools, attention is always paid to reinforcing the habit and skill of *Considering the Source*.

January is an exciting month in the world of books as the major children's book awards are announced on the 23rd. This week, students in Grades 5 through 8 are turning to the [eño](#) to explore the American Library Association/Association for Library Services to Children website and various publishers' websites to determine the strengths of the 2012 winning books and authors.

Thank you to the many families who donated new picture books, novels, biographies, nonfiction works and poetry to the Media Center through the Gift of Reading Program. Mrs. Susan Lynch does a wonderful job administering this program!

Think SNOW!

Cecile Coté

[Links:](#)

[Table of Contents](#) ~ [Kindergarten](#) ~ [Grade 1](#) ~ [Grade 2](#) ~ [Grade 3](#) ~ [Grade 4](#) ~ [Grade 5](#) ~ [Grade 6](#) ~ [Grade 7](#) ~ [Grade 8](#)