

First Quarter Newsletter
First Grade
September 15, 2009

Dear Parents,

The following is a summary of what is planned for the first quarter in first grade.

Religion: The lessons in our Religion series, Blest Are We, emphasize the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This structure assures that students learn the content of our Catholic faith; celebrate it in worship; connect it to their everyday life; and learn to pray. This first quarter, we will discuss the Church as a community and students will be introduced to the part of the Mass called the Liturgy of the Word. We'll learn about God the Father who created us to be good, loving and holy. The sacrament of Baptism will be introduced. The Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Angel of God, and the Before and After Meal prayers will be practiced. Each first grade class will get the opportunity to host two Masses this school year.

Reading: We will be using the Macmillan-McGraw Hill series. We are very excited about this reading program because it is based so strongly on phonics. We feel this will give our students a solid foundation in reading. Level 1, *Day by Day*, features stories with the theme that each day brings new experiences. In Level 2, *Together Is Better*, the stories remind us that it's fun to share ideas and experiences with others. Your child will bring these books home to share with you for a couple of weeks after each book is completed. The vocabulary for each story will come home with our *First Grade Fun* newsletter each week. Putting these vocabulary words onto flashcards and practicing them daily will benefit your child, enhancing his/her reading skills. The skills we will be introducing this quarter include identifying main ideas, using illustrations to understand parts of a story, sequencing events, adding -s to verbs, introducing the sounds of *sh*, *th*, -*ck*, and reviewing short *a* and *i*. We will also introduce the parts of a book, focusing on the cover, title page, table of contents and glossary.

Phonics: In Unit 1, your child will identify words whose beginning sounds are the same, discriminate between words that do or do not rhyme, and discriminate initial and rhyming sounds in context. In Unit 2, we will practice associating consonants with their sounds, and identify initial, medial and final consonants to complete words.

Handwriting: We will practice basic letter formation, letter size, and appropriate spacing. Proper posture and grip will be stressed.

Physical Education: Mr. Steven Schumacher is the P.E. teacher for first grade. Children meet with him twice a week for 30 minutes per session. The classes will cover these topics:

- throwing and catching
- locomotor movement
- movement awareness
- body awareness
- simple, cooperative games
- parachute activities
- fitness stations

Health: This first quarter we will discuss playground safety and stranger danger. We will talk about personal hygiene issues dealing with cleanliness and general appearance such as keeping our hair cleaned and combed, washing our hands, and brushing our teeth. During the second half of the quarter we will discuss the importance of fire safety.

Math: Our Math series is published by Harcourt. We plan to complete the first 7 chapters this quarter. Concepts presented include various ways to make numbers (fact families), writing number sentences, and using strategies such as counting on and counting back. We'll practice addition and subtraction facts to 10, and learn how to solve simple word problems. Math manipulatives will be incorporated to enhance the learning process. At home, please use flashcards to practice addition and subtraction facts.

Science: We will be discussing animals, how they move and what they eat. In October, we'll study spiders. A field trip to Hitchcock Nature Center in Iowa is planned for this quarter.

Social Studies: The study of families will be the focus of the first unit in Social Studies. We will discuss ways in which families change, the necessity for family rules, and working and playing together as a family. We will explore family life in other cultures. To introduce map skills, we will begin finding and locating basic map parts such as a map key and the direction finder.

Art: Our art teacher is Becky Morine. First grade will come to art class every other week for 50 minutes. The main theme in art for 1st grade is how art can tell us about our lives, other cultures and past experiences. The first quarter we will be learning how to read a picture/painting like you can read a book. Then the students will learn how to make an artwork that people can read. This work will contain clues and details that show character, setting and action. Students will also learn the elements of line, color, shape and texture.

Music: Our Music teacher is Mrs. Rosemary Lubbers. Students meet for two 30 minute classes each week. The text used is Silver Burdette/Ginn *The Music Connection*. Below are the skills students will practice this first quarter:

- demonstrate the basic beat
- distinguish between basic beat and strong beat
- distinguish between fast and slow, high and low, quiet and loud sounds
- differentiate between speaking and singing
- sing alone and with others a varied repertoire of music
- sight sing using sol and mi sol-fege syllables and hand signs
- demonstrate an understanding of beginning note-reading (quarter notes, quarter rests
eighth notes and half notes)

Spanish: Ms. Nicole Keller is the Spanish teacher for first grade. The class meets for 20 minutes each week. The children review Spanish color words learned in kindergarten and learn new Spanish words for gray, pink, purple, brown, and orange. They will continue to practice *Como te llamas* and *Me llamo*. They will begin learning the numbers 11-20 in Spanish.

Computer: The first graders will go to computer class every week for 30 minutes. Mrs. Jeri Piechoski is the instructor. Also, students will be using the computers in the classroom on a daily basis. We have many wonderful programs to enrich all subject areas.

Library: The students will review the care of books, develop listening and discussion skills, identify the title, author, and illustrator of a book, select books of interest, and practice how to keep the library books in order. Our librarian is Mrs. Mary Stratman and the children will meet with her once a week for 30 minutes.

Discipline with a Purpose: We will be working on the hidden powers of listening and following instructions.

We look forward to working with your children. It's going to be a great year!

Sincerely,
Mary Jo Brinkman, Nancy Snyder, and Patrice Wiegand