

5th Grade
Mrs. Speer's, Miss Boler's, and Miss Stepanek's Classroom News
1st Quarter Newsletter
2009-2010

Dear Parents and Students,

Here is a preview of some of the skills and topics we will be covering during the first part of the year.

D.A.R.E - For the next eleven weeks, the 5th grade students will be participating in the DARE program. Deputy Christiansen will teach the DARE decision making model – define, assess, respond, and evaluate – so our children will be able to make wise decisions in regards to saying NO to illegal drugs, smoking, and alcohol. The program will conclude with a DARE graduation ceremony in early December, where they will share what they have learned.

Religion - We are reviewing our DWP and Bible usage skills. In addition, our classes will be studying the signs and symbols of our faith. These prepare us for studying the seven sacraments throughout the year. The fifth graders will be learning the Prayer of St. Francis. Please pray this prayer together as a family at home. Also, please encourage your child to participate fully in Masses you attend as a family.

This year we will be using the Religion book titled, Blest Are We. This series emphasizes the four pillar 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
- Learn to pray

We invite you to explore your child's book to further inform yourself of its scope and sequence. Our basic theme throughout the year will be the Sacraments.

Language Arts - Fifth grade language arts skills are integrated throughout our curriculum. Sentence structure, including capitalization and punctuation, are stressed. Vocabulary is a large part of our program, including tests on a regular basis. Spelling lists go home at the beginning of the week with our weekly spelling tests being on the last day of the week. Each quarter we will read a class novel. Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh will be read by all of 5th grade during the 1st quarter.

Your child will always need a DEAR book with him/her because we tie reading skills, English, and spelling in with what they are reading. Please encourage your child to read 20-30 minutes at home each night.

We also would like to ask that each child read aloud to a parent for 5 minutes four or five times each week. When your child is reading to you, don't correct, but help with

troublesome spots. It helps to ask him/her to retell you what s/he has read when s/he is done. This assures you that s/he understands what was read. The time spent reading orally may be added to the reading record.

Reading records are due Tuesday morning by 8:15. Please help your child by providing your signature indicating that the number of minutes read is approximately accurate.

Social Studies - During this quarter, we will focus on the first people to come to the Americas. Every lesson will have a number of key terms which the students will need to learn and understand. The students will also be working on many skills which we will develop throughout the year. We will work on globe and map skills, picking out important information, outlining, and note taking. Picking out important information and keeping clear and organized notes are difficult tasks. We will practice together in class and work very hard on this skill.

Math - The main goal of 5th grade math is to help students make sense of mathematics in meaningful ways.

The first quarter will be developing graphs in order to easily compare information. Many everyday problems and examples will be discussed and graphed.

Our class will also be exploring greater numbers that have place values into the billions and beyond. Decimal place values will include hundredths, thousandths, etc. The study of great numbers will be further developed as the students learn to multiply with decimals.

Throughout the year students will be using their problem solving skills. These skills will enable the students to:

Understand - What do they need to find out?

Plan - What operation will be used?

Solve - What is the answer?

Look Back - Is the answer reasonable?

Science - Our fifth grade scientists have been busy this quarter using their five senses and DWP skills in experiments and hands on activities. This quarter we will be focusing on the major body systems. We will be developing our textbook reading skills and our note taking skills as we record what we are learning in our science notebooks. As we study these new areas, the students will be expanding their vocabulary to include new scientific words. To help reinforce the new terminology, we will be having vocabulary quizzes. I encourage the students to enjoy science and to read science related books.

Music – The music teacher is Mrs. Rosemary Lubbers. Students meet for a 35-minute music class twice each week. Text used is the 2000 copyright edition of Silver Burdette/Ginn's The Music Connection.

During first quarter students will:

- Sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music including rounds and part-singing
- Explore the meter signatures “2/4”, “3/4”, “4/4”, and “6/8”

- Use a numerical system to count rhythm
- Play choir chimes, recorders and boomwhackers following a musical score
- Demonstrate proper mallet technique on barred instruments
- Explore major/minor harmonies, ostinato patterns, I-V chords and rondo form

Spanish - We begin the year with some review of material worked on in previous years. We talk about how much Spanish you can find on things in Omaha, which leads into discussion of our big 5th grade Spanish observation project. (A letter will be coming home in a few weeks further explaining the project to parents.) We discuss observations they bring in periodically to help all students get more ideas about where they can find Spanish. During 1st quarter we also learn the Spanish alphabet. This year we may also try to do some work on the computer with the Spanish alphabet, listening, and pronunciation. The alphabet unit is completed by working on a unique "Aztec" design using the students' Spanish names (letters of the alphabet).

Computer - Our Computer Skills Teacher is Mrs. Piechoski. Students meet in the computer lab once a week for 40 minutes. Quarter 1 will focus on:
 Computer Basics: Students will review the names and parts of the computer, technology history, computer care/dos and don'ts (such as keeping magnets, food and drinks away from the computer).

Students will practice mouse skills by using Arrow keys and the Scroll Bar to place the cursor in a document, open and close files and programs and navigate within a document.

Keyboarding: Students are practicing the correct posture, finger position for the Home keys (A,S,D,F,J,K,L, and ;) while typing short paragraphs. Please encourage your child to always use good keyboarding techniques whenever they work at the computer.

P.E. –In physical education, students are beginning a unit on Flag Football and Lacrosse which will run through September. The last week of September and into early October, the 5th grade students will perform their physical fitness testing for their **first** time. The Pudential Fitnessgram is designed to promote interest in physical fitness and healthy life styles and a follow up fitness test will be taken again in the spring.

Art – During the first quarter in art, the students will be learning about how artists express themselves with abstract lines shapes and colors rather than realistic representations. The main theme for art in 5th grade is how a culture's or artist's artwork is affected by the influences their lives have brought upon them. The 5th graders will be learning about different styles of art. They will also be using the elements of art and principles of design to create artwork.

The parents and staff at St. Wenceslaus are partners in your child's education. We encourage you to come to us with your questions and concerns. Your child's education is important to all of us, and that will best be accomplished by all of us working together. You can view daily assignments at this location whatsthehomework.com.

We are looking forward to a very successful 5th grade year.