



St. Martin of Tours Academy
Fifth Grade Newsletter
January 2012

Dear Parents,

I sincerely hope that all of you had a wonderful holiday break. Hopefully you had some time to relax and enjoy your family. Now that we have returned, we have resumed our daily routine.

We have been discussing the fact that there is only about a week left in the second quarter. If you could help your child with any organizational skills that would help them to stay on track, it would be beneficial. We also seem to have many students that are out of either notebook paper, grid paper for math, vocabulary cards, or pencils. Please check with your child to see if he/she is in need of any supplies.

Sincerely,

Nan Soto, M.Ed.

Upcoming Curriculum . . .

Religion:

During the month of January we have been revisiting the Kindness and Justice Pledge we have been using in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. We will be discussing these challenges in religion class, with the added dimension of how we, as fifth-graders, can actually implement these actions in our lives. *(SLE 1a, 1e)*

This month, in our Whole Life religion curriculum, the message we heard was about how God has given each of us very special gifts. We discussed how to honor these gifts as we build our relationship with God and each other. Additionally, through journaling, the students have acknowledged these gifts in themselves and practiced gratitude as they recognize their uniqueness. *(SLE 1e)*

The prayer we are studying for the month is the "Prayer of Saint Francis". The students have a printed copy that they are working towards memorizing. Concurrently, we consistently study and prepare for the weekly Sunday Liturgy by reading the gospel in the "Ventures" magazine. The students delight in making the connection between what they have read in class and the Liturgy of the Word in Mass.

Language Arts:

We have just begun the research and note-taking phase of our state reports. The students are required to have 2-3 books from the public library about the state they have chosen. We have some resources in class, but if they want to do Internet research, that would be better done at home. The students are also applying their computer skills in Computer Lab to design a brochure about their state. We will be doing the bulk of the work in school, but the final draft will need to be typed at home. Furthermore, if the students choose to add enhancements to their report presentation board, they will need to bring materials to class or complete them at home. *(SLE 2b, 5c)*

Math:

Thank you for the support with the daily homework! The students have impressively advanced through this demanding section of math due to their consistent practice at home. I realize your child may get frustrated or fatigued with the homework, but it is critical that they attempt the assignment each night. They are taught directly from the textbook in class so if they need to review at home they have a resource. This unit of math develops the skill set of working with fractions, which includes the following: adding, subtracting, mixed numbers and renaming. It is a progressive set of techniques that starts out with simple adding and subtracting fractions and then builds on the previously learned skill. It is critical that each phase of the process be understood before moving forward, so the homework is a key component to your student's success. *(SLE 3c)*

Reading:

We have finished up the theme "Our Corner of the Universe," with the last two stories ("Apollo 11", and "Ellen Ochoa") very pertinent to our upcoming *Mission to Mars* at Challenger Learning Center at Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in Balboa Park. *(SLE 2d, 4a)* We have begun reading selections from the theme, "Going West." We have enjoyed listening to the recent selections on the accompanying CD in class. Although this is another form of "reading" it does not take place of thorough comprehension. Please continue to support your student at home as you ask questions about the story at dinner, or have a discussion on Thursday night. These interactions will enhance the very important skill of comprehension.

Social Studies:

We have been reading and studying about what life was like in the early English colonies in this country. We will continue to study these early English colonies, as well as learn about the Spanish and French colonies. We will also study the French and Indian War, the conflicts in the colonies, and the conditions that led to the War of Independence. As we study this time in history, we are always aware of the relationship between the Native Americans and the colonists who settled on their lands. *(SLE 1e)*

Science:

We have completed our earth science unit about *Water on Earth*. The students learned from several science labs and research about the significance of water as a resource. We are now beginning the preparation for our Challenger Mission scheduled for Thursday, March 1. During this field trip, the students will simulate a NASA mission to Mars. The students will engage in roles and activities aboard a spacecraft and while working in mission control. This is a great interactive experience because each student astronaut has to do their best thinking, problem solving, risk taking and decision-making. *(SLE 4a, 5a, 5b)*

Some pertinent websites:

The website www.nasa.gov is a great resource to spark some interest in space study, learn what astronauts do, etc. There are some great videos about different launches and missions flown in the past.

Our math book's website, www.sadlier-oxford.com, has tutorials and problem solving help as well as practice for basic facts.

A BIG THANK YOU to our room parents, Donna, Nikki, and Tannette for making the
5th Grade Bake Sale so successful!
Also THANK YOU to the parent and student volunteers who baked goodies and served the
parishioners!
Your continued support has made a difference!!