



**St. Martin of Tours Academy**  
**Fourth Grade Newsletter**  
**January 2012**

*Dear Parents,*

*I want to wish each of you a Happy New Year! As we begin 2012 we will continue to work on many new concepts and ideas. The children, as always, are eager to delve into these new topics. I continue to be elated with the risk-taking that the students show on a daily basis! I am looking forward to meeting with each of you at our second quarter conferences which will take place February 1-3.*

*Once again, Happy New Year!*

*Kimberly Murray*

### **Upcoming Curriculum. . .**

#### **Religion:**

As we enter the new year we will be discussing the liturgical season of Christmas and stressing the importance that, as Catholic teaching tells us, Christmas does not end on December 25 but rather on the celebration of The Baptism of Our Lord. (*SLE 1a*) As we finish out the month we will begin to discuss each of the Ten Commandments and their meaning in our lives as fourth graders.

Our Life Perspectives Curriculum, which is taught in conjunction with our daily religion class, will focus on the topic "God invites us to enjoy adventures with Him".

#### **Language Arts:**

As always this is a busy area for us! As we work to be effective communicators who can express thoughts clearly and confidently (*SLE 5a*), we will continue to develop our writing skills. The children will be learning how to write "How-to Reports" as well as continually developing their own individual "author's voice". Throughout the month we will be reading the following stories from our textbook, *Imagine It!*: "Who Eats What", "Food Chains and Food Webs" and "The First Californians".

An integral part of our language arts curriculum is our Workshop Way phonics lessons. Within these lessons we will be discussing proof reading symbols, helping verbs, and reviewing the understood (or implied) "you".

#### **Mathematics:**

Throughout January we will continue to build upon our basic math skills (*SLE 2b*). As we do so we will discuss the order of operations (PEMDAS) and apply this to solving larger numerical equations. As the month continues we will discuss fractions, adding and subtracting fractions with like and unlike denominators. Help your student by showing them everyday examples of fractions (such as a  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a cup)! As always, continual practice of the basic facts (for all four operations) is vital to your student's success in math!

**Science:**

We are continuing our unit on food chains and food webs. With this area of study we are building upon our previous knowledge of animal adaptations and various ecosystems. As we strive to create lifelong learners who retain an enthusiasm for learning (*SLE 3b*) we will include a few science experiments and demonstrations related to the subject material. Our main experiment in learning about food webs will be the dissection of owl pellets!

**Social Studies:**

This is an exciting time in our studies of California history! We are continuing to learn about the mission system as a whole and the direct impact this system had on the growth of California. As we build upon our prior knowledge (*SLE 2b*) of native Californians and the changes that the missions brought about we will discuss how the economy of California shifted from a hunter-gather economy into a farming economy.

***Recommended Reading:***

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr

The Dark Is Rising by Susan Cooper

The Shakespeare Stealer by Gary Blackwood

***Useful Websites:***

[www.solomonstick.com](http://www.solomonstick.com) for free online, standards-based math videos

[http://www.softschools.com/language\\_arts/](http://www.softschools.com/language_arts/) Language Arts games

[www.funbrain.com](http://www.funbrain.com) for various games across the curriculum