



St. Martin of Tours Academy
Seventh Grade Newsletter
January 2012

Dear Parents,

A new year brings new beginnings, new hopes, and new goals. As we finish our second quarter and look forward to conferences, now is a good time to talk to your child about using their planner. Please make sure they have their planner every day.

Rosie Beck

Upcoming Curriculum. . .

Science: We have been working on an Independent Lesson Plan where the students get to choose parts of their projects. They are doing lesson reviews, copying note cards, and writing a report on Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. They can choose some other parts of the assignments. For example, they can either make a creature or pretend they are a member of Darwin's crew and create a log. Through the chapter on the process of evolution, the class is learning that Charles Darwin spent five years on the HMS Beagle as a surveyor where he observed a variety of human cultures, animals, plants, geological features, and fossils. Darwin's idea of natural selection states that organisms with the best traits will survive and reproduce, passing on those traits. Over time, this can lead to new species. Extinction is a common event in history, but the biggest threat to a species is the loss of habitat due to human expansion. *SLEs: 1c, e, 2c, e, 3d*

Math: We will be finishing our work with exponents and scientific notation and then moving into fractions. We will be using fractions to solve equations and higher level word problems. We will also be constantly reviewing decimals and their operations for continued support. A fun website to help reinforce math skills is <http://www.math-play.com>. Choose "middle school games" and then "7th grade math games". *SLEs: 2b, 3a, 4c*

Religion: We have had some wonderful conversations this past month on almost every topic. Your children have great ideas and enjoy expressing them. They researched some hot topics in the Catholic Church today. We all learned a lot. Thank you for your help and support.

In our Whole Life Curriculum, we will talk about the special people God puts in our lives and then move into the value of human life, including prenatal development. We will watch a video on the miracle of life.

Spelling (from Mr. Mains): The seventh graders have continued to become more proficient in spelling words of different orientations. Some of these include unusual plurals, vowel changes and Latin and Greek root words. Please encourage your child to complete their homework AND turn it in on time. Students will be given a pre-test to assess the words for the following week. As of the third quarter, all students who do not complete their spelling sheet and/or creative writing assignment will be required to finish the assignment(s) during lunch with a point deduction. *SLE: 2e, 3d*

Assignments: Spelling Sheet and Creative Writing assigned on Tuesday and due the following Tuesday

Test: Spelling tests are given every Tuesday.

Social Studies (from Mrs. Galvan): We are studying Medieval China. This chapter's topics cover the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties. The golden age of art and writing during the Tang and Song Dynasties succumbed to the ruthless control of the Mongols, led by Genghis and Kublai Khan. After we finish our studies of China, we will begin studying the Middle Ages of Japan. We will investigate early Japan and how Japan's geography shaped its history. We will also learn how "Shoguns and Samurai" took over the control of Japan and how the religions of Shinto and Buddhism shaped Japan's culture. *SLEs: 2a, b, e; 3a, d; 4a, b, d; 5a, b*

Spanish (from Mrs. Galvan): We are studying terms of weather and the seasons. Even though students may not have an assignment each night, they still should practice writing and spelling their new Spanish phrases, a few every night. Using flash cards or studying with a parent or sibling can be very helpful.

SLEs: 1c, e; 3a, b; 4c, d; 5b

Literature (from Mrs. Palafox): On January 30th we will begin a new unit theme entitled "What should we learn?" where students will read and analyze short stories on different types of nonfiction. Each selection presents students with a reading strategy, a literary analysis concept, and vocabulary building opportunities. Students will also learn about the many types of nonfiction writing such as letters, journals, articles, and biographies.

At the beginning of February we will begin reading *Prince Caspian* from *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. Throughout the story students are learning vocabulary used in earlier history. During this month we will be discussing literary devices such as author's purpose, voice, and alliteration. They will have vocabulary tests each week on the new words from *Prince Caspian*. *SLEs: 5a, b; 2b, d*

- Book Report #3: Due March 15th
- Genre: Autobiography/Biography-Famous Woman in History

English/Language Arts (from Mrs. Palafox): After watching the famous "I have a dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, students began taking notes on the five key factors of writing a great speech. They are beginning a unit on persuasion, and what it takes to persuade an audience. They will be researching topics (already chosen) that will be debated in front of the class. After anecdotal notes are taken, students will write a five-paragraph paper on the pros and cons of their topic. (Can't wait to see the passion they have in persuading their classmates.)

At this point in the school year, it is very easy for your child to lose motivation with their schoolwork. Please encourage your child to stay on top of their studies, and to remain organized so they can begin the 2012 school year strong.