



**St. Martin of Tours Academy  
Sixth Grade Newsletter  
December 2009**

*Dear Parents,*

*I cannot believe how quickly this year has flown by! We have been very busy this month and are trying to wrap everything up in time for Christmas. Thank you to all the parents who contributed to the successful bake sale, and to those who have been working hard on bingo nights. The dedication to your child and St. Martin Academy is very much appreciated.*

*The class continues to grow in responsibility, and the students are working hard to focus on organization. We will continue working on these qualities in the new year.*

*As we enter this Christmas season let us be thankful for the loved ones we have and grateful for the gifts of the Lord. I wish you and your family a joyous and very Merry Christmas.*

*See you in the New Year,*

*Janene Palafox*



**Upcoming Curriculum. . .**

**Social Studies**

As we continue our journey throughout Ancient Civilization, the sixth graders completed their Country Reports and shared them with the class. Many were also excited to share what they learned with the rest of the school by presenting their boards to other grade levels. Prior to our Thanksgiving break we finished our unit on Egypt where we learned about pyramids, pharaohs and the Nile River. We are currently learning about Mesopotamia, which includes the Sumer and Babylonian Empires, and Judaism. At the beginning of each unit, I pass out a worksheet that covers all the topics and vocabulary that will be covered and tested. This is the best study guide for your child.

**Science**

We are currently in Chapter 4 entitled, "Mountains, Earthquakes, and Volcanoes." The students created their own volcano and city using clay, and we had them erupt during class. We made predictions on where the lava would flow and what part of the town would be destroyed. They are learning how mountains form from plate motions, that earthquakes are caused by sudden motions along faults, and about the damage that occurs, as well as how volcanoes form where magma reaches Earth's surface.  
*SLE: 3D 5B*

**Math**

Sixth grade is finishing the calendar year solving one-step equations. When we come back from Christmas, we will jump right in to ratios, rates and proportions. The students will learn to find equivalent ratios and form proportions. They will use unit rates to solve proportions. We will work with scale drawings and measurements. Please try to point out to them where we use proportions and ratios in everyday life.

## **Math** (continued)

A website you and your children might enjoy playing on together is <http://www.memory-improvement-tips.com/brain-games.html>. The game “Math Attack” is particularly good for speeding up their basic skills.

*SLE 2d,f, 3a, 4d, 5a,b*

## **Literature**

We have been circulating from our literature text to a novel we are reading together called The Revealers. This book examines bullying in a modern way, showing characters using the Internet, instant messaging, and old fashion fists to fit in. It empowers children and shows them that they need to stand up for themselves and others if bullying or teasing is taking place. This topic fits perfectly with our bullying unit in religion and continues to keep the class thinking about their responsibility to stop bullying from happening in our school. We have had wonderful discussions about characterizations, foreshadowing, plot development, and the importance of sensory details.

*SLE: 5B, 5A, 2D, 2B*

Your child recently received a pen pal from Dana Middle School. They have successfully exchanged their first set of letters. If they have not already shared the information with you, please ask them all about it.

## **Book Report #3: Due February 12th**

Genre: Award Winner

## **Language Arts/Writing:**

The students just finished a descriptive essay on a special place they enjoy to visit. Some chose a camping location, while others were most comfortable in their own bedroom. They used many adjectives to describe this fun place. The papers turned out very nicely, and I can already see the improvement in their writing. They have just completed a narrative paper on their best and worst present ever received. We also continue to journal daily.

*SLE: 2E*

- Spelling tests every Friday
- Vocabulary tests every Friday

## **Religion**

We are preparing the way for the coming of the Lord by lighting candles on our Advent wreath. We made four beautiful Jesse trees in the back of the class and have decorated our classroom with a manger and the color purple. Much of December has been dedicated to the Advent program. We have sung our hearts out and learned sign language to “Hark the Harold Angels Sing”. We have spoken about the importance of the Advent season and have participated in the sacrament of penance. The class has been very receptive to the idea that the Christmas season is about giving and not just receiving. Check out [www.comingtofaith.com](http://www.comingtofaith.com) for activities and information for you and your child.

*SLE: 1A, 1C*

**Reminder:** Please remind your student to write their homework in their assignment books each night.