



St. Martin of Tours Academy
Third Grade Newsletter
January 2012

Dear Parents,

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday with your family and enjoyed spending time with each other. I would like to wish you a happy 2012 that is filled with many blessings.

We will spend the next few weeks getting back into our schedule, and then it will be conference time again. (Wow! How time flies!)

We have been working very hard with our understanding of the concept of concentration and self-control. Every day during "PACE" we practice this concept one minute at a time. Anything you can do at home to support this such as waiting for a turn, or waiting to talk to you when you are busy, can help the children see real world examples of when concentration, or patience, or self control are necessary.

Sincerely,

Diane Hartley

Upcoming Curriculum . . .

Religion:

This month in religion class the children will learn that we are all members of the Body of Christ, and that we profess our faith through the Apostle's Creed. This is one of the prayers third graders are required to learn, so we will be practicing this prayer all month. The children will also learn the five different kinds of prayer: intercession, praise, thanksgiving, blessing and petition. *SLE 1a, 2b*

In the Whole Life Curriculum the students will learn that God's desire is for us to protect the lives of others. The children will also be challenged to be involved in protecting other people.

Phonics/Language Arts:

Every morning we participate in the 5 steps of a phonics lesson. The repetition of the pink cards that contain all the sounds that letters and combination of letters make, allows the students to build a phonetic background that enables them to read words that are new to them. There are also many opportunities to risk knowledge through old risk or sound spelling, and this sameness of routine helps students feel comfortable in their learning. *SLE 3b*

As we move into the second half of the year, we will use the pink phonics cards less and bring in concept cards that contain information such as verb tenses, antonyms and synonyms, and contractions. We have also been adding more writing opportunities for the students. Currently, we are learning how to respond to a written prompt in a "Quick Write". Also this month the children will check out a biography from the library and, when the children are finished, they will write their first book report! (during schooltime) Be sure to keep reading with your child every night to encourage a love of reading, as well as enjoying some one-on-one time. *SLE 5a*

Math:

We are still reviewing the basic multiplication facts 0-6, but we have added the 7's flash cards to our daily practice. Our goal is to know all these basic facts by the end of third grade. We are getting better every week, but for fun you should quiz your child one day just to get an idea about where they are with multiplication. *SLE 2b, 3d*

We have also started on the beginning of division by using the fact families of multiplication. The students understand that multiplication and division are opposite operations. Therefore, if $4 \times 6 = 24$, then $6 \times 4 = 24$, so $24/6 = 4$ and $24/4 = 6$. We will continue to practice the multiplication and division skills of the facts 7-12.

Social Studies:

We are learning about the Kumeyaay people, the Native Americans who inhabited San Diego county and northern Baja before the Europeans arrived on our shores. This background knowledge gives the students an idea of what California was like in the early days. This is in preparation for next year when the fourth grade studies California history. This week, on Monday, we had a docent from the Heritage Museum of Old Town come to our classroom to present "Kumeyaay Kids". This was a good introduction for what we will study during the next few weeks. *SLE 2e, 3a*

Science:

In science classes, we have just started studying the Solar System. The children seem really interested in this topic. There are many cool things to look at on the NASA website (www.nasa.gov), and I showed the students many pictures taken from the Hubble telescope which are available on the Hubble website (www.hubblesite.org/gallery/). If you have time, take a walk outside tonight and check out the stars and the moon. We have talked about telescopes and if you are lucky enough to have one, look at the night sky through it. If you have binoculars, try those! This is a great way to tie what we are learning at school with some quality time at home.

SLE 2e, 3d