

# A WORD ABOUT THIRD



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2007

VOLUME 3 NO. 1

## FOCUS ON:

### **WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Our school theme is *We Can Make a Difference*. In our discussions and projects, the Third Graders are focusing on the uniqueness and individuality of each student and exploring ways that we can each use our God-given gifts to serve God's people. As a part of this focus, each student has begun creating an All-About-Me Booklet which gives glimpses into the gift from God that he or she is.

In addition, as a school, we featuring two virtues each quarter. This quarter, we are looking at the friendship and loyalty. The Intermediate students worked in groups to brainstorm the qualities of true friends. Interestingly, none of the qualities the children named were in any way related to physical appearance or talents, ethnicity, or economic status. This realization generated an opportunity for yet another level of discussion.

The qualities of true friends were recorded on pictures of people the students drew. Through our display, we hope to inspire ourselves and others to practice the virtues of friendship and loyalty.



## **SPEAKING OF SUBJECTS**

We have been busy getting settled in and learning lots of new procedures. Practicing procedures helps to ensure success in implementing them.

Much of the focus of Third Grade is on communities. In **Religion** we are looking at the community of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In **Social Studies** we are studying the three types of communities: rural, urban, and suburban. In **Science** the students are studying animal life cycles and communities of living things.

**Phonics** and **Spelling** are providing a review of vowel sounds and their spellings. In **Penmanship** we have just completed a review of the manuscript letters and their formations and will now begin our review of cursive lower case letters. Many students are successfully practicing correct formations, sizing, slants, and spacing. However, some need to work on neatness and correctness. When your student brings home work in the Completed

Work Folders, please oversee the process of correcting mistakes. Part of this would entail practicing letters which are formed incorrectly. Brain research indicates that multiple practices are needed to help the brain learn something new or change something that needs relearning.

In **Grammar** the focus is on sentence structure. We are working hard to remember to capitalize and punctuate sentences correctly. We are also practicing a skill I call **SURE START**. This consists of copying part of the question to begin the answer. Doing this will help students be **SURE** that they **START** a complete sentence that will provide a quality answer to the question.

In addition, we have learned that when writing titles, we need to **capitalize the first, the last, and all important words in between**, as well as, **underline the entire title**. Please have your child go back and correct these things, if you see mistakes, so that they are practicing correctly.

Last week we began a Language Arts project which links with our reading discussions that every story needs a beginning, a middle, and an end. Students will write a Rebus Story in which some of the nouns are replaced with a picture of the person, place, or thing. When reading the story, the reader replaces the picture with its name. We will also use our technology skills to word process and cut and paste graphics into it.

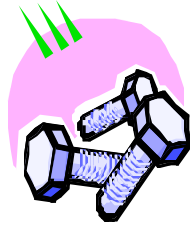
Students meet with me in small groups during our **Reading/Literature** time and then do projects

while I meet with other groups. We are focusing on previewing skills, such as doing picture walks which use the pictures to predict what the story might be about. This improves the child's engagement while he or she reads. We are also working on strategies used by successful readers to unlock unknown words within the text. Additionally, we are studying elements of literature such as character, plot, and setting, as well as answering comprehension questions and summarizing what we have read.

Soon, we'll tackle the more complex skill of making inferences based on clues when not everything is told in a straightforward way.

Reading also encompasses many other activities. For example, in Religion, Science, and Social Studies, we now read to learn. In their everyday lives, students will read many different kinds of materials to get information. Therefore, students read the "Scholastic Newspaper," charts, graphs, and maps weekly.

**Math** has provided a review of Place Value though one thousands and then introduced ten thousands and hundred thousands. Many students have a well established understanding of the meaning of place value and can write the value of digits in each place. Students are also writing numbers in their expanded form ( $325 = 300 + 20 + 5$ ) as well as word form. Your continued reinforcement of these concepts throughout the entire year will benefit your child.



## **NUTS AND BOLTS**

You may have heard from your child that a field student from Mount Mary joins us several times a week during our math time. Ms. Ioula Theoharis has a bachelor's degree and has returned to college to get her teaching license. She will spend a total of 30 hours with us between now and Christmas.

We are just about half way through the first quarter. As I calculate the grades for each student, I will contact you by phone to let you know how your child is doing at the mid quarter.



## **LET'S CELEBRATE**

Many thanks to all of you who sent the required supplies! Everyone has what he or she needs to function successfully!! Just a friendly reminder that, for optimal functioning, supplies, such as pencils, red pencils, and erasers may need to be replenished periodically throughout the year.

Congratulations and thanks to all--students and parents alike--for completing the "Homework Without Tears" Program. Hopefully, you all benefitted from the extensive suggestions offered to help students (and parents) successfully navigate the waters of homework in the Intermediate Grades.

Kudos to the entire class! Students have successfully made the pot boil by reaching 212 points and have earned their first class award! In fact, they are well on their way to earning a second whole class award.

## **JUST THE FACTS**

We are working very hard on mastering our addition facts. As you know, your child brought home a packet of fact study helps. Please work regularly with your child to improve his or her mastery of these addition facts.

## **FOCUS ON OUR FAITH**



One of the prayers that 3rd graders learn is The Apostles' Creed. Over the next weeks, we'll be learning it line-by-line as we discuss its meaning.

October is full of special liturgical celebrations which are dear to children. It is Mary's Month. Children have a special love for Mother Mary, so we'll spend some time studying and praying the rosary.

In October the Church celebrates the feast of the Guardian Angels, so we'll pray the Guardian Angel Prayer. The Church also remembers Saint Francis of Assisi, whom children love because he had a special relationship with animals.



### **QUOTE TO GROW BY**

"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it.

Autograph your work with excellence."

**Author Unknown**



### **COMING ATTRACTIONS**

Beginning this week, the Third Graders will benefit from the services of Mrs. Faye Bernardo. Mrs. Bernardo, a reading specialist, will come into our classroom for 30 minutes three times weekly. She will support and assist students while I am working with small reading groups.

October brings the beginning of the Pizza Hut Book-It Program. We'll use this as our launching pad for writing book reports and presenting them orally. Look for a separate communication about the Book-It Program and book reports.

In October children will have the opportunity to bring home a beautiful statue of Mary for a night so that each family may join in special devotions to Mary. Because October is the month of Mary, students will culminate their study the rosary by making rosaries for the missions. We will be looking for parents to join us for an afternoon of enjoyable service in late October.

The rosary-making project will also provide an opportunity to learn a little about specialization and an assembly line, which we study later in Social Studies.



### **SUM IT UP**

Students are off to a wonderful start! I am enjoying getting to know each one of them and discovering their many gifts!

The students love to have fun, and are practicing settling into a task and staying focused to accomplish it, as well as, settling down after a game or fun activity and transitioning quickly to the next activity.

Earlier this quarter, students completed self-assessments of their classroom and learning behaviors. From these, each student set 2 or 3 behavior goals and 2 or 3 learner goals. We look at these daily and are working together to accomplish them and help each other learn.

We're well on our way on our 3rd Grade Journey!

