

December Newsletter

Dear Parents,

As we revel in these waning days of fall and the unseasonably warm weather, I wish to welcome families into the season of Advent. Our fall has been a wild one here in Beverly what with October's gifts of both a monsoon and the mini blizzard visited upon us. One can only wonder what meteorological wonders await us this winter...

Our Veteran's Day prayer service was both moving and inspirational. Students from our 5th and 6th grade did a wonderful job of reminding our students the true meaning of both the day and why we have it off. I want to thank Mrs. Theresa Broderick for the incredible job she did putting together the Veteran's Day slideshow. We had more than a few students who were deeply moved by the images. I also want to thank all of our community members who submitted pictures of their or their parent's time in the military. We showed the same slideshow at our Auction and coupled with our own serving veterans bringing in the 'colors' was most impressive. Thanks to Mrs. Anna Bertini and her minions for all they have accomplished over the last six months to make the auction so successful.

A long overdue "thank you" is given to Mr. Jamie Silvestri for his years of managing our school webpage. Jamie, you took a rookie and helped him through a series of transitions and re-births with nary a complaint nor discouraging word. Your kindness and expertise have truly been appreciated! I also want to welcome and thank Mrs. Michelle Payne for her willingness to take over as well as redesign our webpage. I suspect the new page will be up and running by Christmas.

Finally, a HUGE thank-you to Mrs. Melissa Wilson and all her 'elves' who masterfully constructed yet another first place winner in Beverly's Holiday Parade this last Sunday. SMS's theme was "One Nation under God" with a silhouette of a serviceman returning home featured proudly.

Three Year Old Class ~ Mrs. Eze

October was truly a turned their dramatic play made two jack-o-lanterns and each. The pumpkins were big, and cold and slimy inside. We grew in our garden this fall.



spooky month as the 3-year-olds area into a haunted house. We observed the inside and outside of round, and bumpy on the outside also had 5 little pumpkins that We observed them each day during our recess time, watered them, and eventually picked them.

We had a great time with Ms. Velluto and the 4th grade class during our two meetings. During the first meeting, the 3-year-olds went to the big school, and the 4th graders read to us. After we were done reading, all of the children made book marks together and magnets to take home. During our second meeting, we had a Halloween celebration at the preschool. We played games like ring toss, clothespin We also made masks, donut spiders It was a great time! During the month also completed letters D, E, and F.



dobbed dogs and made diamond/dinosaur patterns for letter D, used eye droppers to paint elephant cut outs and decorated giant E's with Easter stickers, and finger painted for letter F, made paper Frankensteins, and hand printed flamingos.

The month of November has been less silly and spooky and has become more serious as we have ended talking about costumes and have begun talking about the meaning of Thanksgiving and for what we are all thankful. All the preschoolers agree that we are thankful for our

Sadie is especially thankful for her dad dude is my world." We have also been Native Americans and the Pilgrims. We Early Reader Biographies of Squanto



Pocahontas. Our dramatic play area has also transformed into a Native American Village with a tee pee, fire pit, wood with which to build, Native American clothing, and fake fur. To go along with our learning experience, the 4-year-old classroom has made their dramatic play area into the Mayflower. We have completed letter

families. because "that talking about have read the and

G, and H so far. Each child has cut green paper for grass and bingo dobbed green grapes for letter G, and made hand prints and houses for letter H. We glued our pictures to our house and covered them with a door. We now play the game, "Who lives at...?" This is how the 3-year-olds learn their addresses. To see if a child is right, we open the door and if his or her picture is there, we know that is his or her house.

A big thank you to all of our Pre-K families, who have constantly gone above and beyond by remembering snack, signing up for our school events, and donating to all of our recycling needs. We are truly thankful for you. Please remember to continue checking the door outside of the coat room weekly for updated sign-up sheets, newsletters, and events. We are pleased to announce we are on adoptaclassroom.com for anyone who is interested to contributing to the classroom but cannot be 'hands-on' at school events.

Have a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving!

4 Year Old Class ~ Mrs. Costa

The four year old class has been very busy. Each Monday morning we go to the "Big School" and join one of the four upper classes for reading in the library and then the computer room. We now incorporate our letter of the week with our computer time. The four year old tells his/her partner the letter we are working on and they find three things that start with that letter and then type the word. They print out their work and it goes into their ABC book. This is great for word recognition and pre- reading skills.

Wednesday mornings we go to music. They all have been working very hard on learning the songs they will be singing for our Christmas concert in December. Mrs Oleson also made us a tape of the songs so we could listen and sing while we work in the classroom.

During the month of October we practiced fire safety; Stop, Drop & Roll. We went over to the big school and saw Fireman Pete. Fireman Pete talked and showed the children what to do in case of a fire. He explained his fire equipment and showed them what a fireman would look like in full gear. In the classroom we made a fire

hose out of paper towel tubes and practice putting out fires. We also did a unit about fall and the changing colors of the leaves. We worked on letters C D E and F. We celebrated Halloween with a spook haunted house and parade at the big school watched as we went into project was an illusion piece of paper attached enough to see the



Halloween with a spook Halloween puppets. We had a in our costumes while parents each classroom. Our science trick. A spider and a web on a to pencil. Spin the pencil fast spider jump onto the web.

In November we centered our learning on why we celebrate Thanksgiving and for what we are thankful. The children painted a huge box and made the Mayflower ship out of it. We bubble wrapped corn shape piece and made a cornfield and scarecrows. We worked on letters F, G and H. Our science was observing a whirly bird. Drop the whirly bird from a high distance. Does it spin? Why? Why not?

Next month we will be looking forward to learning about Christmas, our new letters, our concert and meeting with the 3rd grade.

Kindergarten - Mrs. Catizone

The past month seemed to fly by with so many exciting things happening! In our phonics program, we have gotten more than half way through the alphabet. We know all our vowels and are beginning to sound out words and spell them. With only a few consonants left, reading is right around the corner for everyone!

Math began this month with a solid understanding of one-to-one correspondence from numbers 1-10. We spend a lot of time on understanding what numbers represent and different groupings to demonstrate them. We will continue doing the same as we increase our learning to numbers 11 - 20. In the past few weeks, we spent a great deal of time on identifying and recreating patterns. Children should be able to identify an AB, AAB, and ABB pattern, along with a pattern unit. We took a walk around the school and copied patterns that we see in our daily lives. If you are in the building, check out our beautiful Fruit Loop patterns that we created. They are hanging outside the office. The children have also gained experience at collecting and analyzing data from graphs. This will help them with word problem examination and solving.

In Science, we spent much of our first months learning about our 5 senses! We taste tested apples, analyzed the differences in sounds, smelled a variety of things, and looked at and touched all kinds of colors, shapes, and textures. The children learned that God gave us senses as a means of Protection. Each sense protects us in a different way and it was all part of God's great plan.

Our books this month were particular to season of fall. Through literature, we learned about farms, fall, and animals. children especially liked Three Billy Goats

We acted this story out in our classroom everyone had their own part. Although the was scary, it was not as frightening as of our Halloween costumes! The children put on a wonderful Halloween Parade for the school and parents this month, and we finished the day with a classroom celebration. Thank you to all who helped make our party so festive.



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Our field trip to the Wenham Museum gave the students an amazing look into Colonial times. It was a great introduction to our unit on Pilgrims and Native Americans. We had baked bread, spice cake, and even made butter. Speaking of Americans, did you know that we learned the words to the Star Spangled Banner, The Pledge of Allegiance, and the meaning of all the Armed Forces? We are now spending our time leaning about how our country got started, the first settlers, and what their lives entailed. We understand the meaning of 'Freedom of Prayer' and are practicing that celebration daily. The Kindergarten class wishes you all a Blessed and Thankful Thanksgiving.

First Grade ~ Ms. LeBlanc

First graders have been hard at work this fall, and are making great progress in all areas of our curriculum. Our classroom has been buzzing with activity this month, and will continue to do so until our winter break.

We are continuing to use our FUNdations program as the main focus in our Language Arts curriculum. Students have moved on from reviewing letter sounds, and blending three letter words, and are now focusing on digraphs, "glued" sounds,

words that have "bonus letters" in them, and adding suffixes to the end of base words. Now that we have learned these new sounds, we can read longer and more complex words on our own! We are also continuing to work on our spelling and "trick" words. First graders have learned our first four units of both, and will continue to work on them through the month of December. We are still working on reading short books, as well as some chapter books daily in class. Students are working hard to strengthen their comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency skills while reading.

In writing, each student has published their first book, titled "All About Me". Each child got to write about their hobbies, favorite things, and also wrote about a special time that they experienced. We are in the middle of sharing these books with the class. This helps us work on our public speaking skills. We also just finished a non-fiction writing piece, where students had to write about the significance of Veteran's Day.

First graders have become addition experts over the last several weeks! We started by practicing and now know our facts have been using counters, pictures to add two digit problems using addition students are now able to problems on their own, and sentence to solve the problem. Our focus for December will move onto subtraction using manipulatives.



addition facts to 8, through 12. We cubes, coins, and problems. Word sentences have month, and read through math write a number

In science, we have minerals, and soil. made from minerals, difference between many different kinds



been learning about rocks, We now know that rocks are and how we can tell the the two. Students got to use of minerals, and observe their

characteristics. We are now in the middle of sifting through soil to see what we find.

Students are still working on their map skills in social studies. We are using directional phrases to mark places on maps. We have also been learning about important holidays and traditions. First graders learned about why we celebrate Veterans Day and Thanksgiving in the month of November. Throughout December, we will be learning about the holidays of Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas.

We have learned much through our religion studies this fall! We learned about how Mary is a sign of faith and trust in God, and how we can say yes to God like she did. We then learned about the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. We are now learning about the different parts of the bible, and different bible stories, such as the story of the Good Samaritan.

Thank you to all of the parents who planned our Halloween party! First graders had a wonderful time playing games, making pumpkins, and having a special snack. We are looking forward to our holiday party!

Happy Birthday to: Kathleen Guinivan- October 8th

Cameron Pisano- November 1st

Mia Occhino- November 10th

Catherine Wilson- December 16th

Conor Boudreault- December 28th

Our classroom is looking forward to spending a busy holiday season together!

Second Grade ~ Mrs. Cunningham



In preparation for Thanksgiving and to conclude the Colonial/Wampanoag unit, second graders had the opportunity to make colonial foods including homemade



butter, cornbread, and cranberry sauce. We completed the reading aloud of many books including: Thanksgiving on Thursday, The Pilgrim's First Year, Molly's Pilgrim, and Tapenum's Day. Our trip to the Wenham Museum on November 4th was a fantastic opportunity to experience life as a colonial child. Students used a quill pen, went to 1640 school, made candles, and played with colonial toys. Students also made long houses to represent the homes the Wampanoag used over the winter.



This past month in writing, students worked on learning how to write a friendly letter. Students wrote to Nurse Mary, Mrs. Bertini, or Mr. Cushman. Another letter was written to the Sisters of Notre Dame in Ipswich with a Thanksgiving card. These were delivered by Joseph and his mother. Thank you! Students jumped, ran, and sorted their verbs this month as they learned about these action words in the past, present, and future. We will be continuing with phonics & spelling (long vowels), parts of speech (nouns, verbs, & adjectives), as well as daily journal writing. We plan to write poems and cards to the Sisters of Notre Dame in preparation for Christmas. In reading, students have been developing their comprehension as they learn to answer questions with detailed answers, take Accelerated Reader quizzes, and complete their first two book reports. Students enjoyed sharing their reports and having a "puppet parade" of the main characters from the books they read. Second graders have had some wonderful visits from our fifth grade reading buddies. Fifth graders are helping with fluency and poetry reading. Second graders read poems the fifth graders wrote using rhyming words. They were awesome!



Math has been fun this past month as students counted up money (play of course), made purchases, and solved money word problems. Students have been hard at work completing units on the TenMarks computer program. They are able to complete lessons on counting change, adding coins, and comparing money amounts. These lessons are differentiated for the needs of the individual student. The

focus will shift to addition of double digit numbers, place value, and basic facts. Students will learn multiple approaches to adding larger numbers from hands-on, to number decomposing, (expanded form) to traditional regrouping. Manipulatives will be sent home with students as they experience the meaning of "moving a ten" or trading for a ten.

In Science, we recently had a special lab using eggs. Students used non-standard and standard measures to weigh their "lab buddy." 'Thank You' to Mrs. Van Kirk for leading us in this fun lab. The final labs for the Balancing and Weighing Kit involved weighing four different foods, comparing their weights, and recording the data. Next students progressed



to the Forces, Motion, and Simple Machines unit. The initial labs involved concepts of gravity, force, work, and friction. Second graders dropped balls and other objects to see what landed first. Students are looking forward to seeing how fast their cars go down a ramp and what will speed them up or slow them down. Experiments in this unit will allow experiences with pulleys, levers, ramps, friction, and wheels.

In Religion the second graders learned that Jesus is with us in good and bad times. We made "Footprints in the Sand" to remember this lesson. This was just one of many lessons which teach that GOD LOVES US. Students applied God's message of caring as they helped coordinate the Autumn Food Drive for Beverly Bootstraps. Second graders made posters, helped put feathers on Tom Turkey, and assisted in carrying the food to load the cars. Next, we are focusing on the Trinity and Creation as we move through the Faith First text. The website is www.FaithFirst.com . We look forward to reading the Nativity play in December. During the Advent season students will be encouraged to find ways to make gifts and give to others.

Third Grade ~ Ms. Alboth

October and November have been very busy months in Third Grade. We have been working very hard in all subjects, and learning new things every day.

In Language Arts we focused on synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and wrapped up our noun unit. We have been working on mastering these through learning games, computer practice, and making picture dictionaries to illustrate the different words. In writing we have focused on what we are thankful for, our favorite holidays and writing pen pal letters. We are working on our paragraph formats, and getting more details into our writing so that our writers can visualize what we are writing about.

During Reading we have been working very hard in our groups. We read and completed work on the spooky book Bunnicula during October, and are now working on a variety of books to help us with our comprehension, both basic and higher levels. We are reading both fiction and nonfiction books, and enjoying them all. We look forward to reading different books throughout the rest of the year, and opening our minds to different genres of books that we may not have tried otherwise.

Math has been a challenge this month, with our focus on subtraction and multi-step word problems. We have been working on borrowing in subtraction, subtracting across zero, and subtracting large numbers, up to 100,000. We have become very confident with our word problem solving, now being able to solve problems with up to 4 steps. It has been a challenge, but we are becoming great at thinking outside of the box.

Science has been filled with watching chemical reactions, while mixing household items to see chemical versus physical changes. We used sugar, talc (baby powder), alum, baking soda and cornstarch, as well as water, vinegar, cabbage indicator (to determine base or alkaline) and iodine to see the different reactions. We also made mini lava lamps with water, vegetable oil and Alka-Seltzer tablets to see the



reaction of the Alka-Seltzer in the water and oil mixture. We are excited to wrap up this unit, and move into learning about rocks and minerals.

Our social studies focus has been on maps and globes, learning the continents and oceans, hemispheres, and directions on a compass. We have also reviewed the first Thanksgiving, and went on a virtual field trip with the second grade to Plymouth Plantation on the SmartBoard. We are going to begin focusing our studies on our great state of Massachusetts, learning about our history and completing a computer project with Mrs. O'Donnell.

In Religion we have been extremely busy, helping making posters for the canned food prayer the grade. making



religion

the life of Jesus, his work, and his death and resurrection. What an amazing model is he!

drive and working on the Thanksgiving service with the fourth grade, as well as Advent prayer service with the second We are also working with the pre-school, arts and crafts for Thanksgiving and Christmas with both classes. In our book we have been learning more about

We have also celebrated many birthdays this year, including: Kylie, Caroline and Erin in September, Katie and Shannon in October, Ariane in November, and Sal in December. We look forward to celebrating everyone's birthdays as we gain knowledge about the world around us this year.

Fourth Grade ~ Ms. Velluto

As time continually 'flies' by, the fourth graders have been tackling many difficult computation skills including elapsed hours and minutes. Hand held Judy Clocks traveled back and forth to school to assist in this task. As we embark upon the unit of "Data, Statistics and Graphing", the children are learning to create line plots as well as various graphing techniques. This is a nice change before starting the multiplication unit, in which the boys and girls will be competing in fact races.

Fall is a wonderful time in the school year to develop expressive writing skills, which are rich in figurative language, as well as literary techniques. Whether describing traditional, as well as bizarre Halloween costumes, or writing beautiful poetry about the 'Senses of Fall,' the children did a magnificent job. They are quite proud of the poems hanging in the hall that Mrs. O'Donnell helped them to copy and decorate during computer class, and what fun was had by all, when the 'ever so mature' fourth graders spent time reading fall stories and assisting at Halloween centers with the preschoolers!

Science and social studies have been somewhat combined this past month. As the children have been working on the social studies chapter, a "Land of Many Lands" (in which they are creating a portfolio of maps) in science they have also been studying the water cycle's part in our weather. These two areas of the curriculum will be combined, as we learn about the movements of our Earth in space, their affect on the seasons, topographical climate changes, and the directionality of winds across our country. To further comprehend these difficult concepts, we have a large transparent globe of the universe that virtually demonstrates the rotation and revolution of the Earth around the sun, and the moon around the Earth.



The fifth grade social studies class continues to be quite enjoyable. To introduce the Exploration unit, the children chose an explorer in whom they were interested to research, and then presented oral reports with wonderful visuals. Upon completion, they then created study guides with information on all fifteen men and women presented. The results were very comprehensive!

Accompanied by Ms. Alboth's third grade, the fourth graders culminated the month of November by presenting the Thanksgiving prayer service. Through prayer, song, and beautifully depicted acrostics, the boys and girls presented many of the concepts they have been learning about in their Faith classes, as they've been studying readings from Deuteronomy and Genesis



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regarding the creation of our bountiful Earth. It all tied in quite well with the food drive, in which the children were instrumental in helping less fortunate families at this time of the year.

Fifth Grade ~ Mrs. Capobianco

It's hard to believe we are fast approaching the holidays! As the weeks fly by, the fifth grade has been hard at work.

In reading we have moved on to Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls. We are exploring new vocabulary as we study similes, metaphors and various language expressions taken directly from the text. The students are diligent as they meet with their literature circles to share reactions to the story, discuss details of story events, make predictions, and pose questions relevant to the text.

I am very impressed with the wonderful Pizza Box Biographies the fifth grade



created. We had opportunities to share them with our classmates as well as the fourth grade. The pizzas have been so creative! Their visual 3D rendition of their



famous person was both interesting and fun to read and look at. As we think ahead to our next book report, students have selected a book of their choice for which they will write a detailed report based on an outline we have discussed in class. For the visual piece, students will design a paper quilt square. The square will be a reflection of the book with four distinct parts. Once we have everyone's squares together it will be our fifth grade story quilt. It will be interesting to see how students depict their books.

In science we continue the study of our human systems. Students worked with partners to research an organ of their choice. Students worked with a partner researching a selected organ on our classroom computers. Once data was collected, students typed up their research in the computer lab and added a graphic to coordinate with their research. While in science lab students have finished making their paper patients detailing organs, skeletal frames, and circulatory system. This week we are moving ahead as we begin the study of food chemistry.

Our new subject matter in math is dividing by decimals. In order to prepare students for this we have spent many lessons working with manipulatives practicing dividing numbers and demonstrating how to identify remainders. As with any skill, repeated practice and reinforcement has been a key component to our learning. We have also incorporated some math games into our practice of these skills as well. The class seems to enjoy them, and it helps them feel more comfortable with learning new concepts. The math games include small group multiplication games, whole class division games, and computer multiplication and division practice. The class has found it most helpful to have rules and 'math tips' that they can refer to in their math notebooks.

In religion the fifth grade has teamed up with the Pre-K on the first Monday of each month. During that time the fifth graders have assisted the Pre-K in the computer lab and have also read stories with them. It has been such a pleasure observing how kind, gentle, and mature the class has been towards the little ones. For Veteran's Day we worked with the sixth grade to present the Veteran's Day Prayer Service. The fifth grade was eager to participate and did a wonderful job! Within our religion lessons, we have had opportunities to do some reflective writing

in our religion journals as we discuss how Jesus' presence in our lives helps us feel stronger to face the storms that may come our way.

With the fourth grade we have completed the book Be a Perfect Person in Just Three Days by Stephen Manes. The students created posters as a culminating activity to our reading. The posters included a summary of the book, two story related responses, a favorite scene illustration, a themed border, and a caption related to the book. I am pleased with how well the fourth grade has been working together in their literature circles. They take a genuine interest in the topics at hand, and offer wonderful feedback in our story discussions. We have begun our new book Twenty and Ten. I am looking forward to hearing their thoughts and input as we progress through the story.

Grade 6-8 ELA/Literature ~Mrs. Boudreault

If a middle school child was asked, "Are you working hard, or hardly working?" he/she would definitely answer, "Working hard!" So much learning, exploring, writing, and expression have been occurring in their E.L.A. classes each day. All three classes continue in their exploration of grammar through "Caught 'Ya Grammar" and the adventures of the students who attend Horribly Hard Middle School. Each day they learn about capitalization, punctuation, and grammar through an engaging story and real-life examples. As you walk by the classroom, you might hear shouts of "Yesssss!!!" or "Nooooo!" when a child is not-caught or caught by Mrs. Boudreault. In conjunction with this the students have weekly writing assignments where they must apply what they have learned. The 7th and 8th graders will have bi-weekly writing assignments now that they have finished the outlining phase of Culturama and have started the rough drafts. Each child has really grasped the research process and is becoming an expert on his/her chosen topic.

The sixth graders have been continuing their communication skills by leading the school in prayer and working with younger grades. The sixth grade led the school in the celebration of the Mass on the First Friday of November. Then they worked with the fifth grade to lead the school in the honoring all of our country's veterans with the



Veterans' Day Prayer Service. It was a great service and the students were able to view the great slideshow that was played during the auction. After that they worked with the four-year-olds in the computer lab to help them learn and practice their letters and to teach them how to use the computer. The next activity was to create "Native American Vests" with their Kindergarten buddies to help them learn about and celebrate Thanksgiving. Then a week later they worked with Kindergarten again to create Advent chains to help the students prepare for the birth of the Lord. The sixth graders have really enjoyed spreading the Lord's message and working with other classes.

The sixth-graders read *Nothing but the Truth* by Avi. This is an engaging documentary-novel that teaches children how words can spread and be altered. In order to help them understand how words are spread and cannot be taken back they took part in the "Toothpaste Experiment." They were given toothpicks and had to attempt to put toothpaste back into a tube. They worked in groups, and had a limited amount of time. Through this experiment and the tale of Philip Malloy, they learned that words are powerful, and that they are easily altered and hard to take back. This led to the next novel, about the possibility of eternal life, *Tuck Everlasting*. In order to prepare for this literary endeavor the students read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and listened to Joni Mitchell's "The Circle Game" to help them learn about the cycle of life and how, for every purpose, there is a time in life. The students have loved discussing this concept and are enthralled with the story-line of the book. Their next book will be *Number the Stars* to help begin an intensive literary voyage through the Holocaust.



The seventh-graders have been delving into the questions of moral intentions through the reading of the fast-paced spy novel *Alex Rider: Stormbreaker*. They really enjoyed the story-line and had many heated discussions about whether-or-not a character is a "good guy" or a "bad guy". They completed the book by creating board games for the book that also had to include figurative language elements. The next novel will be a mystery and the students will learn what makes a book a mystery while they try to solve *The Westing Game*.

In eighth grade the students have been discussing the difference between "good" and "evil". They have been questioning whether someone is born good/evil or if it is learned behavior. Many have decided to go with the ying/yang theory that we all have a little of both but it is what we choose to do that makes us truly good or evil. They have been discussing this through the novel *H.I.V.E. (Higher Institute of Villainous Education)* and through the reading of several of Mark Twain's short stories. The eighth graders are beginning to become nostalgic about their time at Saint Mary School and each day talk about how they should savor these moments.

Grade 6-8 Mathematics & Science ~ Mrs. Griffin

It is hard to believe that the school year is already 1/3 complete! Time is flying by and our middle scholars are working hard to master skills in math and science.

As you graders could favorite but you need maybe you to cut the



prepare your holiday meals, our 6th help you make adjustments to your recipes. Maybe the recipe can serve 6, to make adjustments to serve 18. Or want to make a smaller serving and need recipe in half. We are investigating

strategies to multiply and divide fractions. This skill should come in handy over the holidays.

You and two friends are playing basketball. You make 7 out of 15 shots. Your first friend makes 6 out of 10 shots and your second friend makes 5 out of 12 shots. Who is the better shooter?

This is the kind of problem that the 7th grade has been investigating. Working with rational numbers has occupied the 7th grade for the past several weeks. All of the skills they have learned involving fractions, decimals, positive and negative numbers are being used to solve problems. It is challenging, but they are persevering.

Our 8th grade class has been working on individual skill needs. Thanks to the dedication and commitment of Mr. and Mrs. Cushman, we have been able to break the class into three groups to focus on individual needs. All of the work has

focused on ensuring that our students are able to tackle one and two-step equations. Soon we will come back together as one group to work on solving and graphing linear equations.

The science classes have been actively engaged in rocks. Ask your student to you. Each student has presented their findings to built volcanoes, and



been singing! Grade 6 has learning about minerals and sing DaRock Cycle song for researched a mineral and the class. In lab, they have sedimentary rocks.

Grade 7 continues their cell. Diffusion and osmosis were hot Students were able to witness they experimented with corn starch learned about hypertonic and



investigation of the topics in the lab. osmosis in action when and iodine. They hypotonic solutions.

They have looked at many slides and have become quite proficient in the use of the microscope.

Our eighth graders have been enjoying the world of chemistry. Many of you might be tired of hearing the First Ten Elements song. Thank you for your patience. The students enjoyed learning the song and it is a great way to begin our study of the Periodic Table.

Grade 8 Religion & Social Studies ~ Mr. D'Agnese

Grade 8 history students began the month of October by concluding their study of Roman history by examining the long-lasting achievements of Roman civilization while also completing their mastery of Roman numerals. Unfortunately, this brought us to a point in time where we would analyze the factors which brought the Roman Empire in the West to an end by the fifth century A.D. Students created booklets with visuals (many hand-drawn) reflecting the social, economic, political, and military factors which led to the ultimate demise of Roman civilization. Following the paths of several barbarian tribes on our maps clearly illustrated the division of the Mediterranean world into eastern and western sectors. By the end of the month we were ready to begin our discovery of the

Eastern Roman Empire better known as Byzantium. Each student was assigned a topic to research (from rise and fall to entertainment and education) and prepare a poster for presentation to the class. Our goal is to complete this challenge before Thanksgiving break.

Grade 7 ancient history students 'discovered' the Fertile Crescent in October and began the journey to Mesopotamia by learning about the role of geography in the development of early civilizations. After gathering information about food production and the local food supply, students worked in groups creating 'Mesopotamian menus' and then attached them to posters inviting the public to dine in appropriately named Mesopotamian restaurants. It was difficult to resist the offerings of the Tigris Tavern and the Euphrates Eatery !

Further examination of the region allowed us to design a Sumerian ziggurat (seven-story temple), write a 20th century version of the Code of Hammurabi, and study Assyrian sculpture and reflect on the war-like nature of the mighty monarch Assurbanpal.

We are currently concluding our travel in time through the Fertile Crescent by discovering the all-important role of the most unique people who emerged from this part of the world - the ancient Hebrews. Through an in-depth look at the lives of Abraham, Moses, and King Solomon, we are appraising the contributions of these giant historical (and religious) figures.

Grade 6 geography students gained a clear awareness of local geography as we explored the world beyond Beverly, Massachusetts, and traveled south to our state capital, Boston. Each student was assigned a neighborhood to research in computer class and write a paper which would include information about the history, physical features, and local landmarks of the area. Cut-outs of each neighborhood were made and pasted on a mural of the city and each student composed a poem to accompany their neighborhood. Our mural can be viewed in the accompanying photo as well as in the first floor corridor at school.



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During November each student has chosen a country to demonstrate three types of maps: physical, political, and thematic. As students present information, their classmates are required to take notes and then take a quiz which the presenters have created themselves. So far, high quiz grades indicate intense attention to each presentation.

RELIGION

'Being Catholic' was the title of a booklet the 6th and 7th grade classes used during the month of September. It reviewed a number of characteristics we identify as being especially 'Catholic' such as universality, history, and a commitment to justice. To experience a closer personal connection to the Faith, in October we 'traveled' to St. Mary Star of the Sea Church to gain deeper understanding of the physical features of this beautiful structure. Why the floor plan of a church resembles an ancient Roman law court, why the Stations of the Cross were introduced in the Middle Ages, and why did elaborate altars become part of Catholic ritual were some of the questions answered during our visits. The role of stained glass windows was not overlooked on our tours as well.

Grade 6 began the 'official' religion curriculum by mid-October which will focus on the **Blessed Trinity**. We created booklets which visualized a central concept of our faith: how do we understand **Revelation** through **Sacred Scripture** and **Sacred Tradition**. Once completed, we wrote our ideas in paragraphs to demonstrate our understanding of this initial step to grasp the challenging concept of a triune God. We will proceed in the coming months to closely investigate the mystery of God the Father and His abundant love for each of His children.

Grade 7 students began the 'official' curriculum by also examining several important concepts of our faith. They followed the footsteps of the 6th grade class by creating the booklets which focused on understanding **Revelation** through **Sacred Scripture** and **Sacred Tradition**. The 7th grade class, however, will proceed to a close examination of the **Liturgy** and the **Sacraments**. It is coincidental (and perfect timing) that the introduction of the new language for the Roman Missal will be introduced at the end of November on the first Sunday of Advent. It allows us time to prepare in class for the change in the Liturgy. All classes, (6th, 7th, and 8th)

have been highlighting the new responses on their individual sheets in order to fully participate in the Liturgy.

Grade 8 in early October continued their study of Hebrew history following the Diaspora by the Romans in the second century A.D. The division of Jews into Ashkenazic (European) and Sephardic (North Africa and the Middle East) branches was closely examined regarding cultural and linguistic differences and culminated with a brief look at the evolution of modern Zionism and the establishment of the modern state of Israel. November was devoted to the Hebrew scriptures and synagogue worship. In class we produced our own mini version of the Tenakh (Hebrew Bible): a Torah scroll, a book of the Prophets, and a book of the Writings. This project was followed with our version of the Talmud- a necessary guide to understand the contents of the Tenakh. Eighth grade students are now familiar with terms such as the Ark, *bimah*, *yad*, *tallit*, and *yarmulke*. Feel free to question them and inquire in order to learn the purpose each plays in Jewish worship. We look forward to the final segment our study of Judaism next month as we explore Jewish holidays and customs.

Grade 8

In October the following birthdays were celebrated: Nicole Smith (5th), Anne Kostrubanic (7th), and Mia Ciavola (9th). Congratulations to all! The drama club began the 2011-2012 season with strong eighth grade support. The Halloween Dance was held at St. John's on October 28 with a number of SMS students in attendance. While not nearly as enjoyable as a dance, several grade eight students have begun taking high school placement tests this month. Good luck to all!

November finds us involved with the Autumn Food Drive and Operation Troop Support. Many students enjoyed Family Fun Night on November 8th. The start of basketball practice this month has brought smiles to the faces of our athletes. Birthday observances this month include Julia Afflitto (11th), Colleen Corcoran and Megan Pobiedzinski (28th). Best wishes to all!

NOTES FROM THE MUSIC TEACHER ~ Mrs. Oleson

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord" Psalm 100

Mark your calendars as the whole school, from Pre-K to 8th grade present the annual Christmas concert:

"Dona Nobis Pacem"

Christmas Carol Concert

Saint Mary's Church - 6:30 pm

December 15th - Thursday

Plan to arrive after 6:00 pm with your student in their Sunday best clothes, no tennis shoes please.

The children have been working diligently on their selections of Christmas carols. This will be a wonderful and memorable evening for your whole family.

Computer Lab ~ Mrs. O'Donnell

Pre-K four year olds come to the Monday. The children are scheduled to grade each week. Grades 5, 6, 7, or 8 it to the children, discuss it, and draw a on TuxPaint. The children are enjoying TuxPaint.



library/lab on work with a different choose a book, read picture on paper or all the tools on

Kindergarten continues to learn the many aspects of TuxPaint. They have created a number of pictures, some of which are hanging in the first floor hall. The children are becoming very adept at using the software. A few of the children have even shown me a few tricks they have discovered. The children love to use TuxPaint because of its simplicity and its ability to create a picture from scratch very quickly. It comes complete with a wide range of different stamps and backgrounds that the children can start creating with. It is an open source (free) software that can be downloaded from <http://www.tuxpaint.org/>. This month the Kindergarten will begin working with the "Reader Rabbit" software. This software helps the children learn simple reading and math skills. The Kindergarten will work through this software for the next few months.

First grade has been working with MS Word. They are learning to access their folders on the network. Next they open and use a template to key in simple poems. They recently learned how to insert a picture in to the document. This exercise is beneficial to learn the network and Word in small steps. Keying the poems has helped with the location of the letters on the keyboard as well. Next, they will learn how to change the font, the size, and add color.

In October, Grades 6th, 7th and 8th worked with Google earth. Grade 6 created a tour of Boston. The project was aligned with Mr. D'Agnese's lesson on Boston neighborhoods. The assignment in 7 & 8 was to find the state capital buildings in the New England States. Each building was marked with a bookmark and a description was added.

Many of the classes are using their keyboarding skills to produce a final draft of stories written in class. We are using MS Word 2007 in Grades 1 - 5 and Open Office in Grades 6-8. We are using Open Office because the schools in Beverly use this open source software. Open office is free software which can be found at OpenOffice.org. The children change fonts, add pictures, and borders. The stories are usually written in the classroom and publishing occurs in the lab.

Focus on MS Word will finish up in November and will be used throughout the year as needed by the teachers for various projects or lessons. Grades three through eight will begin a project on MS Publisher. This is a program that can be used for creating all types of newsletters, brochures, flyers, menus, banners, etc. Students enjoy the simplicity of the program while being able to showcase their individual creativity.

Nurse's Notes ~Mrs. DiVincenzo

I would like to thank the following parents for assisting me in October with the Vision/Hearing: **Dorothy Gillan, Tara Nally, Brenda Nygren and Elizabeth Drillis.**

I would also like to thank the parents that put aside time to attend the **Virtus** classes that were held last month. I would like to remind parents that I will be conducting another class during school hours on **Wednesday, Dec. 7th 9a.m. - 11a.m.** in the school library. (Call to register)

In grade 2, I reviewed the food pyramid with the students. They learned about grains, vegetables, fruits, proteins, dairy and fats and oils. We celebrated at the end of the class with "Fruit Kabobs". In grades K & 1 we are talking about how to keep warm in winter. Grade 3 learned how to cope with common childhood illnesses like cold sores, warts and eczema.

Marketing ~ Mrs. Cushman

The fall brings about many activities here at Saint Mary School. There is nothing more heartwarming than watching our children stop everything, look at the remembrance list on the cafeteria wall and say a prayer for all of our family



members and friends that have died. We have listed all the names that were sent in and at lunch time, we stop and remember them in prayer. It is a powerful moment.

The \$1,000 incentive for enlisting a new family to come to Saint Mary School is a great way to reduce your own family tuition in these difficult

economic times. **Parents are our best marketers!** Please do not hesitate to let people know about the wonderful education that happens here on a daily basis. Encourage family and friends to take a personal tour of the school with Mr. Cushman. Remember, we have plenty of brochures in the office for you to pass out. Please call if we can be of any help.

We are always looking for testimonial comments to add to our web page. Please send your comments to hcushman@smsbeverly.com

Development ~ Mrs. Bertini



STARS & STRIPES FOREVER! Many, many thanks to everyone who participated in our very successful 2011 Auction, the major fundraiser for Saint Mary School. Whether you donated an item, were a sponsor, an advertiser, attended our event, or helped in any way, **WE THANK YOU!** Kudos to our Auction

Chairs (L-R) **Mary Agnes Trainor, Amy Totman, Anna Bertini, Kim Dunham, Laurie Curtin.**

And entire Auction TEAM: **Julie Archibald, Eileen Bonner, Theresa Broderick, Laura Carnevale, Jai Chanda, Janice Chouinard, Julie Corcoran, Ruth Costa, Kerry Crichton, Mary DiVincenzo, Vangie Egizi, Angela Eze, Linda Fortini, Susan Frick, Sarah Judge, Rosamond Martin, Maureen McCarthy, Nicole McKenzie, Eileen Mulligan, Paula Occhino, Paula Pobiedzinski, Sally & Tim Reinwald, Pam Ryan, Paul & Kathy Speidel, Katy VanKirk, Melissa Wilson.** Thanks also to the **Silvestri family, and SMS Young Alums** for all their help.



Stars & Stripes Auction this year honored America's Veterans. Many of our SMS family members who are Veterans were recognized at the auction and in the DVD (for sale for \$10 - thanks to **Theresa Broderick & Sarah Judge** for composing the inspirational DVD). Posting of the Colors at Stars & Stripes Auction by

Saint Mary School Parents: (L-R) Ryan Kowalske, Melissa Wilson, Steve Crowley, Paul Judge.

OPERATION TROOP SUPPORT: As Auction program, we will be sending personal items to our soldiers in Iraq. collecting these supplies for another still like to contribute. (L-R) Tobey David Broderick, Liam Crichton, McKenzie, Pre-K Teacher Angela Eze, Anne Martin.



part of our much needed We will be week, if you'd Archibald, Courtney



Army Specialist Melissa Wilson visited SMS and spoke to students in every class room about the importance of Veteran's Day. She taught them the trick of remembering 11-11-11.

ANNUAL FUND - As you know, tuition does not cover the cost of your student's education, and we rely on the collective contributions of our Annual Fund to help do so. If you are a St. Mary's Parish member, you are asked to increase your Grand Annual donation to the church. If not, you are asked to support the Saint Mary School Annual Fund drive, which ends June 30th. Make your contribution before the end of this year for your 2011 year-end tax break!

DID YOU KNOW? There are many ways to support Saint Mary School:

- www.goodsearch.com thanks to a partnership with Yahoo!, each time you search the web using www.goodsearch.com, Saint Mary School will receive a contribution.
- www.carshelpingamerica.com to donate a tax-deductible used car with proceeds to go to Saint Mary School (brochures also in Development Office)
- Tribute Cards, in memory of a loved one, are for sale in the Development Office for a contribution in any amount. A special tribute card is sent to the family notifying them that a gift to Saint Mary School has been made in the name of the deceased, or in honor of them.

- Embroidered SMS blue fleece blankets and zip jackets for sale in the Development Office
- Engraved bricks in the school walkway are still for sale.

YOUNG ALUMNI - Do you have any news to share with your Alma Mater?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE!**