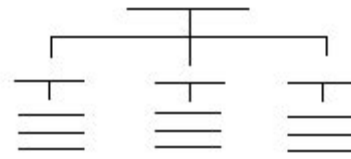




TREE MAP



Dear Parents,

This begins our second year of implementation of the Thinking Maps-Language for Learning program. The students are using them fluently across content areas and are now taking their ideas off the maps to create a variety of products... from stories to Power Point presentations. They are also a crucial component of our Study Skills Program for grades 5-8. Walking through the hallways you will see student examples of Thinking Maps everywhere. Our goal is to equip our students with the tools necessary to become successful thinkers, problem solvers, decision makers and, ultimately, lifelong learners.

We are also using the complementary program, Write from the Beginning...and Beyond for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Write from the Beginning is designed to be implemented only in those schools which have received training in Thinking Maps. The purpose of the program is to give both teachers and students the knowledge and skills necessary for age appropriate writing instruction and achievement. Our ultimate goal is to help students become more empowered and effective writers. Your child's teacher will be able to share some examples with you during conferences.

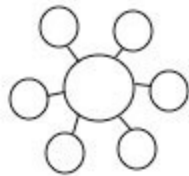
Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about any of our programs.

Many Blessings,

Jill Fallon



BUBBLE MAP



First grade students creating Thinking Maps

PK-3 Preschool— Mrs. Stubbs, Mrs. Hollingsworth, Mrs. Ibarra, Mrs. Lestage, Mrs. Linn



The first quarter of the school year is an exciting time for our 3 year old preschoolers. We enjoyed an exciting visit from the petting farm as we studied farm animals and also enjoyed a visit from the Dallas Fire Department.

We look forward to helping parents guide and nurture our preschoolers as they grow physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and spiritually during this school year.

PK3 Curriculum Highlights: The PK3 Curriculum includes a combination of Diocesan Standards, LEAP (Language Enrichment Activities Program), HWT (Handwriting without Tears) - develop prewriting skills (lines and curves, shape and letter building using wooden pieces and play dough) and Scholastic Clifford Magazine – monthly curriculum theme enrichment. The standards include age-appropriate curriculum goals for 3-year-old students with an early learning focus on Catholic Identity, Faith and Traditions. The LEAP Curriculum is child centered. The students will expand their imaginations through creative and hands-on counting, word games, nursery rhymes/songs, stories, movement and creative play experiences. The students gain basic alphabet knowledge and print awareness. They receive a solid foundation of colors, shapes, numbers, size and sequence.

The curriculum for September focused on friends and family. During October we learned about occupations.

The curriculum activities included name recognition/identification of the letters in their names as they begin to recognize the names and faces of teachers and school friends. Several home/school projects were completed and displayed throughout the preschool building to help the students learn more about themselves and their families. These activities included family trees and photos, "All About Me" circle maps, and "Me" paper dolls. Catholic identity and faith formation activities were incorporated into the daily classroom routines and supported by the weekly Prayer Services led by Deacon Ken Reisor. On-going curriculum activities that were introduced included recognition of colors, shapes, letters and numbers (recognizing lines and curves), sorting, matching, counting, nursery rhymes, rhyming stories/songs, tapping words and tapping to the words in a song or rhythm.



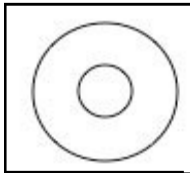
The occupations include Farmer (animals and foods), State Fair Worker, Construction Worker, Fire Fighter, Police Officer, and Priest/Deacon. The Petting Farm and Fire Fighters visit the PK3 classes. These special events are scheduled to support the curriculum themes by providing real, hands-on experiences for the students. Other on-going learning skills and activities planned for the month include listen to books with a purpose; practice identifying rhyming words in stories, nursery rhymes and songs; matching and classification; scoop, pour, squeeze or scrub (fine motor/eye-hand coordination skills development); identify (label); match; graph; count; identify sizes and positions; simple sequencing and patterning. Catholic Identity and Faith Formation building activities include - recite the Guardian Angel Prayer; discover the Noah's Ark Bible story and the St. Francis of Assisi story. This will help nurture the students understanding about the Blessing of the Animals tradition and God's love for all creatures.

The Life Skill (Character Builder) focus for October was Responsibility. Parent partners are encouraged to help the teachers support and reinforce the curriculum goals and Life Skills throughout the school year by modeling, practicing and reinforcing these character building concepts at home.



PK-4 Preschool — Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Fisketjon,
Mrs. Hayes, Mrs. Stock, Mrs. Wearden

The Full Day and Half Day Pre-Kindergarteners are responding to and enjoying the Language Enrichment Activities Program Curriculum (LEAP). The monthly thematic units explore "Language" with Stories, Words, Sounds, Letters, Ideas, Math, Science and Fine/Gross Motor Skills. The children have begun lessons in HAND-WRITING WITHOUT TEARS (HWT). This is a pre-writing curriculum designed to prepare the children for writing through songs, fine motor exercises and the practice of proper grip and supports letter/shape/number identification and phonemic awareness. All lessons are tied together with extensive use of Thinking Maps. By integrating Thinking Maps into the daily classroom routine, teachers are modeling map usage and a broad range of application possibilities to even the youngest of students.

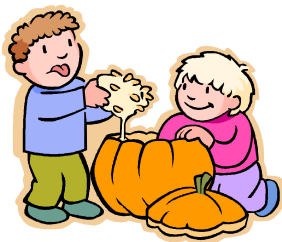


CIRCLE MAP

In the months of September and October, we explored the LEAP curriculum themes Self and Family and Occupations. The children are enjoying Spanish with Señora Maria Claudia Searle, Music with Mrs. Peggy Gray, Library with Mrs. Mary Packard, PE with Mrs. Jenny Perez and Computer time in the lab. The Full Day Pre-Kindergarten enjoys after noon Drama with Miss Donna from CAPERS FOR KIDS and they love it. Additionally, we meet as a large group once a week to sing and celebrate Jesus then go to Chapel to hear Deacon Ken discuss each Sunday's Gospel lesson. Our curriculum for Religion is called "SEEDS" and we look forward to a blessed year!

"Lifeskills" presented, modeled and practiced for the first quarter: Friendship, Responsibility/Active listening, Cooperation, Perseverance, Problem Solving and Flexibility.

We Love
Fall



Transitional Kindergarten — Mrs. McDaniel

This year we began a new and exciting program—Transitional Kindergarten (TK). Transitional Kindergarten is a special time for learning, growing and developing self-expression. In Transitional Kindergarten, we use Saxon Early Learning which is a fully integrated, comprehensive early childhood curriculum. It is carefully designed to support 36 weeks of teacher-guided, sequenced, classroom instruction and learning-center activities. Lessons integrate concepts in language and early literacy development, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, health and safety, personal and social development, physical development and technology. Themes that we have explored to date are "All About Me", "My School", "Making New Friends" and "Safety".

This year the group is progressing very well! They have been introduced to Thinking Maps and are reviewing letters and sounds, writing using capital and lower case letters and even composing their own stories in their journals!

We are truly traveling the road of learning and finding many unexplored paths! TK is a great opportunity for these children!



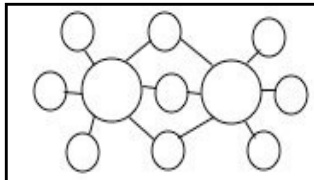
Kindergarten— Mrs. Abbott, Mrs. Freis,
Ms. Roe, Mrs. Scruggs

Kindergarten is celebrating the fall season and awaiting cooler weather! They have been very busy learning about the body in science lab. The students made skeletons and are studying bones. We will be making spooky bats, big green monsters, and fall chains! Our numbers in math keep going up, up, up! We will be learning about numbers eleven through 20 in the next few months. Even the kids get to be teachers! The ELM program provides "Kids Are Teachers" activities where they get to teach their friends what they have learned. The Kindergartners have been hard at work learning new letters, reading new words, and participating in their first reading groups. In November we'll be studying Native Americans, pilgrims, and the first Thanksgiving. They are especially looking forward to Grandparent's Day! In December, we will be learning about the season of Advent and the meaning of Christmas. We can't believe October is almost over! The time has flown by, probably because we're having so much fun!

First Grade — Mrs. Avery, Mrs. Hanifen, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Wendorf

Wow, have we been busy in first grade! We began the year studying ourselves, families, careers, and Fall in social studies. We memorized the poem, "The Squirrel" and made up actions to go with it. In reading we have been doing whole group and guided reading with many interesting books about the body, friendship, and cultures. First grade was extremely excited waiting for the book fair to read even more fun books! Math began with counting and ordering numbers and we are now finishing up addition. Subtraction and fact families are right around the corner. In language arts sentences and nouns have been the focus and we are now writing using all types of thinking maps including the circle map, tree map, bubble map, double bubble map, and flow map.

First grade has their writing benchmark soon so we will be ready! Science is definitely a favorite with first because we focus on the senses, body, and fire safety. Last but certainly not least is religion. We concentrate on God our Creator, mass participation, prayers, responses, and songs. We also incorporate our life skills into religion with town hall meetings and role playing. Stay tuned next quarter for many other exciting first grade happenings!



DOUBLE BUBBLE MAP

Second Grade — Ms. Alvarez, Mrs. Barr, Mrs. Petit, Ms. Ratcliffe

In the first quarter we reviewed the skills learned in all the core subjects, as well as gently diving into the cool waters of Second grade. In Social Studies we will be exploring neighborhood communities, Math has us identifying place value up to the thousands in preparation for addition & subtraction with regrouping and in Reading we will be learning more about ourselves and how we handle different situations. We have begun learning cursive handwriting, Religion has us learning about the sacraments of Baptism and Reconciliation, as well as learning various prayers in preparation for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Our amazing Science Lab teacher, Mrs. Galvin, has led us through the various states of matter and next we will be learning about rocks and minerals.



Third Grade — Mrs. Dolen, Mrs. Reeves, Ms. Reynolds, Mrs. Williams

Third Grade has been practicing our routines, procedures, and applying our LIFESKILLS in order to practice our LIFE-LONG GUIDELINES in all of our choices and actions. It is beneficial to the students if you are able to reinforce our verbiage at home as well.

We have begun to delve into our curriculum and are excited for the many opportunities your children will have to learn and grow this year. We are using our Treasures series for Language Arts which includes reading, phonics, spelling, grammar, and writing. In addition to our series, we will read chapter books, poetry, and non-fiction materials. We have adopted the Zaner Bloser handwriting program and the students will be working on improving the size, shape, space, and slant of their words in cursive.

In science, it all matters! Matter is all around us and the students expanded on the foundations from 2nd grade. In math we reviewed place values, manipulating numbers, and addition and subtraction. We will also continue to encourage your children to memorize those basic facts by utilizing timed tests. This rote memorization will assist them as they progress to higher level concepts.

With so many wonderful opportunities to learn, a few challenges in the process, and potential levels of achievement, we place God and our faith in every aspect of what we do each day. For without the grace of God, we simply learn. With His grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we become wise. God Bless you as parents, and thank you for entrusting us with your most precious child.

Fourth Grade—Mrs. Bigney, Mrs. Campagna, Mrs. Casner, Mrs. Kappes

In the 4th grade religion classes, we will continue to study the parts of the mass. As we study the meanings of how the mass fits into our lives, we want the children to experience Christ at mass. He is present everywhere including the assembly, scripture, and the Eucharist. Remembering our first communion is a wonderful way to have conversations with our children during the evening meal time.

During the first quarter we reviewed all parts of speech and sentence structure in our daily grammar program. Diagramming sentences is making sense since we know the difference between our complete subjects and complete predicates. It also helps to know if we are working with simple or compound sentences. Grammar lends itself into Thinking Maps! We have taken our Thinking Maps a step further in our writing across the curriculum into Write from the Beginning and Beyond. This is a great program to help us focus on all the narratives we will write this year. A new component to our writing is the WPP online computer program. We map out the work, and we type our stories in the media lab. Instant feedback is given and tutorials are suggested. As we continue working on story revisions, transition words and phrases, we will become great writers in the fourth grade!

Fourth grade science has been busy exploring the human body and all of its systems. We will study the muscles and bones, while exploring through dissections. This is a great opportunity for the students to see the function of our systems. Following the study of the body we will begin to learn about the kingdoms of life. We would like to thank Dr. Schmidt for sharing his vast knowledge of the digestive system with our classes. This opportunity gave our students a wonderful understanding of the system.

In math, we are wrapping up addition and subtraction and will be ready to move into multiplication. Please continue working on those basic facts in all operations.

During the first quarter in social studies we have been honing our geography skills. We've use location to find out exactly where Texas is on the earth, place to learn what life is like in Texas, human-environment interactions to discuss what changes, both bad and good, humans have made to the land, and how the land itself affects us, and we learned about the characteristics of the different regions of Texas. Now it's time to learn about movement...how people got here, and what life was like for the earliest Texans. We'll explore the cultures of our Native Americans and how their lives were changed by the arrival of the Spanish. (Who brought with them that first of our six flags!) We'll learn about the early explorers, both Spanish and French, (Flag #2!)and the Mission system set up by the Franciscan Friars. Finally, we'll learn about the arrival of the first Anglos, and how their coming changes everything...

Fifth Grade—Mrs. Campagna, Ms. Joachim, Ms. Schnurr, Mrs. Strandberg

Language Arts—We started off the year in English with a unit on capitalization, punctuation, and the four types of sentences. We've adopted a new writing program called Write from the Beginning. Students are learning how to set up the "Basic Structure" of an essay. There are also mini-lessons to help students fine tune their writing skills. Daily Grammar Practice is an essential part of our day to reinforce basic grammar concepts. In Literature we read stories from the series Treasures while focusing on story elements.

As we move forward, here's what 5th graders can look forward to coming up this Fall... If you had the chance to stay young forever, would you take it? Why or why not? This is the burning question 5th graders will explore as we begin our novel study with Tuck Everlasting, a fantasy written by Natalie Babbitt. With rich characters and

unusual happenings in the story, we will primarily focus on characterization and plot. Students will also be required to complete outside reading for pleasure and participate in the Accelerated Reading Program. In English we will learn about subjects/nouns, predicates/verbs, and simple and compound sentences while practicing these skills using Daily Grammar Practice. Using Write from the Beginning lessons, students will work on their writing skills and use the WPP writing program. This program allows students to receive instant feedback on areas of strength and weakness in their writing. We are fortunate to have so many great programs to help students in Language Arts become better readers and writers.

Math—The first quarter of fifth grade math was primarily review. We started with a review of place value, reading

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

and writing decimals, and comparing and ordering decimals. We have moved into adding, subtracting, and multiplying decimals and problem solving. Next we will begin dividing decimals. In the second quarter we will focus on divisibility, factoring, greatest common factor, least common multiple and least common denominator. Also in second quarter we will dive into working with fractions. We will add, subtract, multiply, and divide fractions. Moving into the second quarter, we need to stress the importance of the students practicing their math facts daily. A strong math fact foundation will be critical as we begin divisibility and working with fractions.

Science—This year in fifth grade science the students will focus on Earth science. We began the year with the study of matter. We covered mass, volume, and density. We studied atoms and their parts, molecules, and chemical and physical properties of matter. The students were introduced to the Periodic Table of Elements and used it to determine properties of different elements. In the second quarter we will be studying minerals and rocks and their properties. Next we will move into a study of the Earth starting with the Earth's layers. Science Fair participation is required of every fifth grade students. They will be working on individual projects. We will begin working on these projects soon. We will walk through the process step by step. The date for this year's Science Fair is April 3, 2012.

Social Studies—In the 1st Quarter 5th grade History students began with an overview of the course. They discussed the meaning of *E Pluribus Unum* and the reasons why it is a good motto for the USA. Immigration as a strength for our nation and the reasons diversity is an important part of our heritage. They also studied the *Pledge of Allegiance* and what the words to the *Pledge* actually are asking citizens to do. In Chapters 1 and 2 we explored various theories as to how the Americas were populated and studied some of the early cultures that arose from these early migratory people. America.

Religion—In Religion we began the year with a review of the Bible and its parts, how to locate Books of the Bible and to properly cite the readings. Then we studied the Book of Genesis and the story of the creation of humans in God's Divine Image. The themes of respect for all living creatures and our responsibility to be caretakers for our world were discussed. We have also been studying the Beatitudes and how they were given to us by Jesus as a way to guide us to be good people and to achieve real happiness. We also covered an overview of the seven Sacraments, each of which shall be studied more in-depth as the year progresses.

6th Gr. Language Arts — Mrs. Bowdich



I cannot believe that the first quarter is coming to an end. Where does the time go? We have certainly enjoyed getting to know all of the incoming sixth grade students, and we have made great strides in our academic pursuits. During the first quarter, we have read and analyzed several short stories, as well as a couple of informational texts which have served to extend and enrich. In the Honors class, we have jumped into Greek Mythology, and we are currently enjoying "The Odyssey". Along with literature, the students have entered the wonderful world of Daily Grammar Practice, and we have started the process of becoming more productive and efficient writers.

With the second quarter rapidly approaching, we will finish our short story unit and move on to our first in class novel. Daily Grammar Practice will continue throughout the second quarter. We will continue to place a strong emphasis on writing through weekly writing assignments, thinking journals, and WPP. We will also be enriching the children's vocabulary by constantly adding new and interesting words to their mental library.

6th Grade Math — Ms. Guillen

It will be an exciting year working with this energetic and inquisitive group of sixth graders. We began our journey in math with decimals and integers. We will continue with exponents, factors, fractions, operations with fractions, equations and inequalities, ratios, rates, proportions and percents. As we continue to build off prior knowledge, I hope the students will gain much confidence in their math skills and ability to problem solve. We will end the year with geometry and measurement. Throughout the year we will be working with real-world problems, analyzing data and graphing which will give us many opportunities to reinforce concepts taught. The study of Mathematics is an ongoing and sequential process, one in which I hope to develop curiosity and promote problem solving skills. This in turn will hopefully help your child effectively and naturally apply these skills to real-world situations. I look forward to our journey and hope this will be a wonderful experience for your child.



6th Grade Social Studies — Mr. Price

The year started with an examination of six branches of social studies: history, geography, economics, culture, citizenship, and government. The students then took a more in depth look at the five themes that make up the study of geography. Once we had a foundation in place, the classes started learning about the first civilizations that existed on Earth. We studied about the civilizations that came to power in Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent in what is now the Middle East. We have now shifted to the west to begin our study of the Egyptians. Students have learned about the importance of the Nile



River and how the inhabitants of river valley made their life. In our study of the Egyptians we will examine the history of region, famous pharaohs, cultural traditions, and what modern Egypt looks like today. After the class' study of Egypt comes to an end, we will shift our focus to the Far East and begin a unit on Ancient China. We will then head back west and

examine the great empires of Greece and Rome.

6th Grade Science — Ms. Watts

In 6th grade, students study Physical Science - this is the study of matter and energy. The year will start with a review and introduction of the general knowledge of science such as the scientific method, lab safety, science instruments, and the metric system for measuring. We will have the opportunity to complete a number of labs to get a "hands-on" idea of what is happening in the world of physical science and beyond. During 6th grade the students also participate in the Science Fair; completing their own science experiment at home. We have to start with the basic building block, so chemistry is introduced first. After that we study the laws governing the movement of matter, such as momentum, force, and Newton's Laws. I look forward to an exciting, positive, and academically challenging year for your children. I want them to think scientifically and love learning about the world around them.



6th Grade Religion — Ms. Guillen & Mrs. Todora

In 6th grade religion, we will journey with the Israelites through the Old Testament. The students will take an active part in discovering how God reveals Himself to His chosen people. This journey begins with learning how to locate scripture in the Bible, and becoming familiar with the organization of the Bible. By reading and studying the Book of Genesis, the children will learn about creation and how sin entered and spread throughout the world. We will then begin our study of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The students will gain an understanding of how God's plan for salvation unfolded in the lives of the patriarchs. We will then trace the events in the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob (Israel), and learn how God brings good out of situations that seem hopeless. Our hope is that the children will become more aware of God's goodness and deepen their trust in Him.

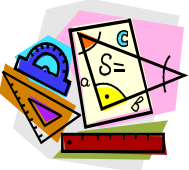


7th Grade Language Arts — Mrs. Todora

When this new school year began, the 7th grade Language Arts department increased to three teachers. Mr. Burns, Mr. Sullivan, and Mrs. Todora have joined forces to instruct our students in the technicalities and nuances of writing, literature, vocabulary, and grammar. This trio has spent countless hours plumbing the depths of pedagogy and discussing the finer points of comma splices. All kidding aside, we do spend time planning the curriculum so that we are consistent in our presentation of material and objectives for the students. Beginning with the summer reading assignments and continuing with our first literature unit, Facing Danger, we have given the students the opportunity to read and discuss good literature, including characters, conflicts and themes. Along with this, writing is a major priority for us. The students have written several essays and will continue to do so throughout the year. We are using our new vocabulary series, Vocabulary Workshop, to challenge our students and help them to develop their vocabularies. Finally, we are continuing to use Daily Grammar Practice, which we consider a highly effective tool for increasing our students' knowledge. We look forward to a productive year.



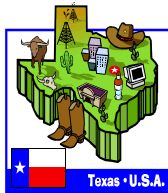
7th Grade Math – Mr. Burns




The 7th grade math students will be studying many new concepts this year. From percentages, geometry, area and volume of complex figures, multiple step equations to analyzing and interpreting various charts and graphs, they will be building their core knowledge required for further advancement in mathematics. We have already started to explore integers, order of operations and the coordinate plane. In addition to this, we are beginning to solve multiple step equations and inequalities. It is important for students in mathematics to maintain their skills throughout the year, so we will be having quizzes, tests, classwork, and homework on a regular basis. We are looking forward to a fun year with many new concepts in seventh grade math.

7th Grade Social Studies — Mrs. Prewitt

Our classes have just finished learning about the Explorers and Settlers of Texas. Their projects were great! In our 2nd quarter we will meet Stephen Austin, Sam Houston's Government, and travel to the Texas State Capitol in early November. The students will also study The Lone Star Republic, Battles of the Mexican-American War and finish the quarter with The Civil War. In some of the units the students will have an opportunity to take a hands-on approach with learning. We will be working on a unique timeline, role playing and creating a Smartboard lesson.



7th Grade Science — Mrs. Sowder & Ms. Watts



In the 7th grade students will begin with a general review of the scientific method, use of metrics, and lab equipment and safety. As you have noticed, science happens to be a HUGE subject full of many different areas of study. We will be concentrating on Life Science this year and studying 5 of the 6 Kingdoms of Living Things. The cell is the smallest unit capable of performing life functions so that is where we start. We are excited to have this opportunity to work with our students examining the wonderful world of science.

7th Grade Social Studies—Mr. Price



Everything is bigger in Texas! We are off to a running start in seventh grade social studies this year. Classes made the decision the first week that they wanted to say the Texas pledge at the beginning of every period, which makes the Texas History teacher very proud. Our study began with an examination of the identity of Texas. Students learned about the origins of Texas' name and other icons this great state owns. The focus then turned to the geography and the four regions of Texas. Students examined characteristics of each region and why some regions are more favorable than others. We then studied about ancient Texans, their origins, and how they lived. Students have learned about the notable Native American tribes that inhabited Texas prior to the arrival of the explorers from Europe. More recently we learned about the early explorers that found their way into Texas and what they were looking for. We have just finished a unit on the Spanish attempts to colonize Texas by using the missions and its successes and failures. Our next major unit will cover the Mexican Revolution and the colonization of Texas by Americans such as Stephen F. Austin. This will lead us on the path to the Texas Revolution and the birth of the Republic of Texas.

7th Grade Religion — Mrs. Lucas & Mrs. Todora

We started the year off with learning about and identifying our past discussing the over 60 year history of STA. We also explored the Liturgy- the parts, responses, how and why we should participate, and all the items used during the Mass. This helps us to look into our spiritual identity. Throughout the year we will explore who we are in a variety of ways. We are using thinking maps and our new study skills program as a way to organize our thoughts. 7th grade is beginning of a two year preparation for Confirmation. The life of Jesus is the main focus. We will study the New Testament and how to live in Christ's image as well as the life of Christ. We will look at the culture, geography, customs, and religion at the time of Jesus, **before delving** into the different literary forms in Scripture. The students will practice using some of these forms to teach their classmates lessons on various life skills. The students will research a saint and make banners for the 2nd graders to carry at the All Saints Mass. In conjunction with their Social Studies unit on the Texas missions, we will study the impact of the Catholic Church in early Texas by exploring the faith life in the missions. The students will build models of the missions to help them see the influence of the Church on the lives of the Indians and early settlers.

8th Grade Language Arts — Mr. Sullivan

With our summer novels and ISEE vocabulary assignment behind us, the eighth grade language arts teachers, Ms. Aikin and Mr. Sullivan, have been planning our eighth graders' curriculum with care. During this first quarter of the year in literature, we have focused on short stories and the literary terms our students will need when they reach high school next year. In writing, students have completed an assortment of essays, long and short, including an ISEE format essay to help them prepare for this most important test. We will also soon begin using the Writing Practiced Program which our students utilized with great success last year. In grammar, we are diligently using the Daily Grammar Practice program to boost our students' knowledge of grammar and correct syntax. Finally, in vocabulary, we have been utilizing our excellent new textbook, *Vocabulary Workshop*, to enrich our students' vocabularies and to prepare them for the vocabulary portion of the ISEE test.



8th Grade Math — Mr. Laffiteau

September and October have been quite busy. In addition to the Pep Rallies, Induction Ceremonies, Blessing of the pets, Sky Ranch, Raffles, The Carnival and the fund raising, we've been tackling lots of math concepts. 8th grade has progressed through multiple step equations, multiple term equations, and a large variety of problem solving strategies for complex word problems. In the near future, 8th grade will utilize some of these same skills and strategies to graph various inequalities, as well as taking proportional relationships to a higher level to solve percent word problems, and changes in percent.



The students have already taken part in many computer website activities, games and puzzles. Ask your children about some of their computer activities they've competed at to achieve the best scores at Battleship, Jeopardy, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" and various matching games to simplify expressions, add like terms, solve equations and much more. They're having fun and lots of success at the same time.

Remember, Tutoring is available on a sign up basis from 7:10 to 7:40 am for:

8th Grade on Wednesday at 7:10-7:25am (8-Silver, Blue, & White) and at 7:25-7:40 (8-Honors)

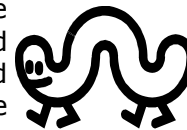
8th Grade Social Studies — Mrs. Prewitt

Not too long ago we were texting Early American Explorers and now we are waiting on the British! As first quarter winds down, the students will finish Colonial America and begin learning about the American Revolution and even get to be a participant in reenacting parts of it to the class. We will also work with the language arts classes as they read *An American Plague* by Jim Murphy. The remainder of the units we will study are *Creating a Nation*, *The New Republic* and *The Growing Nation*. In these foundation building units, the students will examine *The Declaration of Independence* and *The Constitution of the United States*.



8th Grade Science — Mrs. Sowder

After a brief review of measurement and the scientific method, the 8th grade science classes have been busy studying invertebrate animals. We began with the simplest of all invertebrates, our friends the sponges. We will study these groups in sequential order from simple to more complex, ending with the phylum Echinodermata – which, of course, includes the spiny-skinned animals such as sea stars, sand dollars, sea urchins and sea cucumbers. We have viewed live *Daphnia* (water fleas) and ordered hydra to feed but our hydra – unfortunately - arrived post mortem. We also had an opportunity to view live planaria (free-living flatworms) and are trying desperately to regenerate some of these cool worms. It has been eventful and interesting to say the least. Stay tuned for more exciting adventures in the wonderful world of 8th grade Science at STA.



8th Grade Religion — Mrs. Lucas & Mrs. Todora

The 8th grade returned from the Pines retreat knowing a little bit more about each other and themselves. They enjoyed many outdoor activities as well as activities to build their relationship with Christ and each other. They experienced several types of prayer formats. It was fun to see them interact outside the classroom in a more relaxed setting.

The first quarter was spent reviewing the Liturgy, the Rosary, and the history of our school. We explored the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Commandments. We also discussed the power of positive language and the importance of prayer. In the 2nd quarter we will be discussing the rest of the Commandments focusing on the 5th, 6th, and 9th Commandments. The students will also be participating in several more prayer experiences and meditations. Hopefully they will find one that best helps them to open their hearts and begin to listen as Jesus speaks to them. We will examine how precious life is and how we can be drawn into things that do not promote life but hurt others and ourselves. Next we will begin a unit on sexuality and morality. The students will be using different activities to discuss and learn the Church's teachings on this topic. In December, we will be completing our study of Morality. The students will work on a social justice project after they complete the book. After reading "It Takes A Village," they will research an issue (such as poverty) present in the US and how they can work to bring dignity and the five basic rights to all people of our country. We will also explore the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Please pray for the 8th grade as they continue their preparation for Confirmation by attending a retreat with the Religious Education students. We will also be discussing the life skills of initiative and integrity.



Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas

Heavenly Father, We praise You and thank You for Your great love. We lift up this day for Your blessing. With Your help, we will live as responsible, generous and honest students.

Like Jesus, we will try today to treat everyone we meet with dignity and respect. With Jesus' spirit alive in us, we will witness His love by thinking of others first and ourselves last.

Help us today, Father, to put into action what we have said in words. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS

Lower & Upper Schools

Lower School Art—Mrs. Luckey



Welcome back to Art! The year has begun with some exciting projects in the Element of Line. All classes are studying the 8 basic lines: curvy, straight, wavy, broken, dotted, zig zag, diagonal and loopy and doing numerous projects to coincide with them. Some projects include Accent on Line, Line Watercolor Houses, Sunburst Explosion, tube animals, Native American Necklaces, Whirly Curvy Snakes, 3D pencil holders, Community Sky scrapes and abstract line creations. We have used crayons, markers and watercolors and will begin to use scissor and glue in the upcoming weeks.

We will be moving on to the Element of Color where our projects will consist of a breakdown of the color wheel including primary, secondary and intermediate colors. We will be doing lots of painting and mixing colors. Each class is scheduled to do 2 units of clay this year, beginning early September and going through mid May. Volunteers are always welcome especially during our clay classes so if you are interested in volunteering with our clay unit, please let me know.

We are having fun making our Thinking Maps about the art room. We have made a giant circle map and a bubble map and double bubble map! Everyone loves to participate and share their ideas.

Upper School Art—Ms. Lewin

Welcome to the Upper School Art Room! We have had a marvelous beginning to the year, and I hope that all of you can visit the art room and school as work is displayed.

This semester we will be featuring the 7th and 8th grader's ceramic bowls in time for Grandparent's and Special Friends day so be sure to take time and see your student's work from mid October through November. These bowls will only be on display a short time before they are sold at the Meyerson Symphony Center to raise money for the North Texas Food Bank.

Also coming up quickly is our Art Enrichment Week October 3 – 6, so we will have an exciting group of amazing artists talking with your children. This will be followed by our big art show on Sunday January 29, 2012 directly after 9:00 Mass, so please mark your calendars now!

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Daily happenings in the art room are:

3rd graders will begin studying the Maori culture of New Zealand and the beautiful wood carvings done to honor a deceased member of the community. Students will learn how artists use "symmetry" to balance their artwork and how the Maori use this principle of design to create incredible works of art. Students will create their own symmetrical design based on the Maori culture. Students will also be introduced to the concept of "limited palette", and will work in oil pastels to create a beautiful and individual piece of art.

Next month we will begin learning about the artwork of the Australian Aboriginal culture. This includes the unique qualities of "x-ray" and "dot" paintings. Music of the Didgeridoo will spark their imagination as well as listening to the story The Singing Snake which is an authentic "why-so" aboriginal story. Students will make preliminary sketches of Australian wildlife, and will complete a final tempera painting in Australian Aboriginal style.

4th graders will begin their study of "Horror Vacui" or "the fear of empty spaces" and why many cultures throughout history and around the world use this design concept. The Mayans, Aztecs, Ancient Egyptians, Inuit, as well as many Eastern cultures use these ideas for strong visual design and symmetry. Students will then create their own "Horror Vacui" based on something of strong interest to them. Oil pastels will then be applied to create one of a kind vibrant colors.

Later in the month, we will begin studying the unique culture of the Kuna (Cuna) Indians of the San Blas Islands located off Panama. The Kuna culture creates beautiful cut fabric cloth called Moalas. It is a highly prized belonging passed down through generations.

Students will research Central American Rainforest creatures to abstract into an individual cut paper Moala. This process is difficult in that the student begins on the top layer and cuts downward – just the opposite of appliqué process. Students will use organic and geometric shapes to create pattern as well as positive and negative shape designs.

5th graders will begin studying the genre of folk art that is "deeply rooted in Spanish history and represents the heart and soul of traditional religious beliefs in 17th, 18th, and 19th century Mexican culture". Retablos are small devotional paintings on tin, copper, or wood that venerates Catholic Saints. Students will adapt this practice to give thanks to someone that has truly impacted their life in a positive way. Tooling techniques will be taught as students begin to design their personal Retablos in tin. Finally "Milagros" or small charms asking for miracles will be cut from tin and sewn onto the Retablos.

In Late September we will begin studying the art of Alexander Calder and his innovations to 20th century sculpture. Students will design a single balanced mobile incorporating wire and glass beads.

7th graders began the year by creating a ceramic bowl out of beautiful terra cotta clay. These bowls are currently drying and will soon be fired. Students will then glaze their bowls with designs and colors of their choice. Please be sure to come visit the hallways in mid October and November to see your student's bowls before they are sold at the Meyerson Symphony Center. 100% of the sale goes to the North Texas Food Bank!

Currently the 7th graders are well into the study of 2 point perspective with daily class notes and activities. Students will soon begin to create individually drawn perspective cities from their imagination. This project focuses on truly understanding the theory behind linear perspective, as well as the use of shading. Time management is a BIG portion of being successful on this project, so look for an extended homework weekend coming up soon!

8th graders began the year by creating a ceramic bowl out of beautiful terra cotta clay. These bowls are currently drying and will soon be fired. Students will then glaze their bowls with designs and colors of their choice. Please be sure to come visit the hallways in mid October and November to see your student's bowls before they are sold at the Meyerson Symphony Center. 100% of the sale goes to the North Texas Food Bank!

Students are currently working on their senior portrait. The project began by viewing many different styles and concepts of doing self portrait from a variety of artists throughout history and examined how and why portraits differ during an artist's life. 8B and 8S art classes will be doing self portraits in a Pop Art Style based on flat silk screen values by Andy Warhol. 8W and 8H art classes will be exploring a multi-medium approach with emphasis on drawing.

All students will be creating individual works. Photographic likeness is not the purpose of this assignment. Students are encouraged to create images that evoke feelings of who they are "now" at STA. This can be represented by colors, abstractions and distortions of human proportion.



K-5 Computer/Tech & 6th Gr. Study Skills

Mrs. Adams

Welcome to a new and exciting year at STA. By the time you read this, students will be off to a great start in computer classes! It seems that students show more aptitude and potential each year! At STA, the computer program for Kindergarten through 5th grade is a progressive introduction and reinforcement of basic computer skills with a focus on critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. One of our goals is to get across to the students that the computer is a learning tool that can help them in many areas of their academic endeavors. Much of what we will be doing is product-based. In addition to using educational and keyboarding software, students will be using a variety of programs to apply their knowledge to curriculum projects such as research papers, book reports, spreadsheets, illustrations, multimedia presentations, and web search activities. K-2 will focus on developing technology awareness, basic keyboarding, and using software to develop reading readiness, math, and writing skills. In 3rd through 5th grades, we build on those skills, and there is more emphasis on keyboarding skills, finger placement, speed, and accuracy. At this point, students also begin to become more independent as they apply their knowledge to special projects using presentation tools and graphics in conjunction with word processing, spreadsheets and multimedia. Along with these skills, students are becoming increasingly familiar with the importance of file management, terminology, and social and ethical standards.

Kindergarten and 1st grade are starting off with becoming familiar with procedures and acceptable use policies. They will be introduced to logging on and logging off of the computer network. Students will also be creating graphics and digital art using Paint, KidPix, and even MS Word. They are learning to access menus and tools (such as the fill tool, free-form drawing tools, and shape tools). Students will be able to open the program independently and create and modify graphics. The first project is to draw the basic parts of a compute: CPU, monitor, power buttons, mouse, keyboard, and drives. In creating their picture, students are becoming more familiar with mouse manipulation and use of menu options. Students will be learning about keyboarding and typing using relativity (Right and Left hand typing) during the 1st nine weeks. In learning the keyboard, Kindergarten will be reviewing upper case and lower case letters. Our 1st graders will go on to create sentences, stories, and descriptive writing. We will soon begin using software programs and games to practice typing, reading, and math skills.

The Second Graders are beginning the year with a review of parts of the computer, terminology, and related digital art activities using our graphics programs to create illustrations. They will also be using word processing and key-

boarding to create and format documents such as journals and acrostic poems. File management is an important element of focus this year so students will learn to open, edit and save files using specific storage devices and folders. Typing programs and other supplemental software will be used to reinforce keyboarding, writing, reading and math skills.

Third and Fourth graders will be reviewing word processing tools and menus to create and format a journal. Students will access our network at STA and will focus on the importance of internet safety, security and file management. Another project will be to create a PowerPoint slideshow which will include information on computer terminology and our Acceptable Use Policy. Students will incorporate thinking maps to illustrate their knowledge as we learn about the uses of each program. We will also be discussing social and ethical standards in relation to appropriate use of technology, networks, and the internet. The slideshow will be an ongoing Portfolio presentation of the information we cover in class as well as a link to some of their class projects throughout the year.

During the first nine weeks, all students will be reviewing procedures and acceptable use policies. Social and ethical standards are emphasized throughout the year along with ITI Life Skills, Guidelines, and concepts.

Focusing on the 4 P's: Patience...Perseverance...Pride...
Problem Solving



Computer Tech. & Study Skills

Mr. Fountain

The Fourth and Fifth Grade students are working on their multimedia portfolios and their keyboarding skills. The students have been creating portfolios in Power Point that will showcase all of their work for the year in the Technology classes! The students are working in a program called Keybo that enhances and supports their keyboarding accuracy.

The Sixth Grade students are doing some awesome work in Technology right now! We have been working on a newsletter that explores the life of a Saint. This crossover project with the Religion class is all about exploring the life of a lesser known Saint. The students have done a fantastic job researching and presenting

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

facts about the Saints they chose. We are also hard at work on enhancing our keyboarding skills. The students are about to begin an assignment involving the Periodic Table and elements!

The Seventh Grade students have been working on a crossover assignment with Social Studies involving information about several Explorers. They are currently working on a crossover project with Science involving the six kingdoms and classification systems. The students are creating a multimedia quiz for the other classes to take that explores the six kingdoms and classification systems. The students are finding some really unique and creative ways to quiz the other students.

In Study Skills, the students have been working with color coding, binder cards, organizing skills and strategies, as well as mnemonic devices and strategies for highlighting and taking notes.



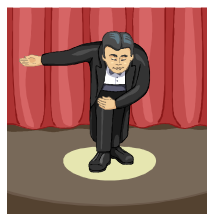
K-5 Drama — Mrs. Gray

Our Kindergarten class is busily preparing for their upcoming performances in their play, "We Were the First!"



First Grade is getting ready to perform "Alice in Wonderland" in March, and Second Grade is working hard to star in "Two-By-Two-Zoo Cruise" in February. Third Grade performed "Trial of the Big, Bad Wolf" on October 27. 4A will star in "Stacks of Wax" on November

2, and 4B will perform "Cinderella, A Spoof" on November 3. 5A Presented their play, "Fantastical Friends" on Wednesday, October 19, and 5C presented "Frumpled Fairy Tales" on October 20. They did a wonderful job entertaining their families. There are some stars among the group! After these performances we will finish the semester exploring and revisiting Reader's Theatre, Monologs, Storytelling and lots of other fun things!



3-8 Music — Mr. DeFayette

It's an exciting time for Music.

Third Grade has been singing and learning various concepts for their grade level. This month, we will cover the keyboard and its uses, music alphabet, the staff for treble and bass clef notes.



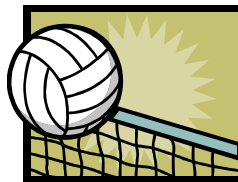
Students will also be introduced to the concept of Ear Training where students are asked to dictate or identify intervals and patterns of notes. Students are enjoying the new rhythmic counting called "Rockin Rhythm Raps."

Fourth – Sixth Grade is working on identifying rhythmic notes and their rests, use of the treble and bass clefs through several lessons. They are also constructing a word bank for different musical terms and symbols. Students are also enjoying the new rhythmic counting called "Rockin Rhythm Raps."

7-1 Boys Handchimes are preparing four songs. Through rehearsals, this performing group plays different rhythmic notes and key signatures. Songs are selected from various music genres and different composers.

7-1 Girls Choir (Madrigals) is the second performing group. The choir is also in preparations for their 1st performance. They are learning how to sing with other voice parts with and without music. They are also learning the concept of unison and voice part singing of independent musical lines that are sung at the same time. Vocal warm-ups, sight-singing and peer reflections are implemented throughout the rehearsal.

Physical Education — Mr. Storey



For the beginning of the year, the students have focused on volleyball as their main unit. They have also participated in general activity games that promote overall fitness and coordination, such as tag type games, Hand-Ball, soccer, kickball and Dr. Dodge. In addition, the students have taken part in core conditioning, such as yoga positions and interval training. The students will begin their basketball and soccer units soon, as well as continue their volleyball unit. We will also start our mile runs once the weather is consistently cooler, so please make sure they have proper athletic shoes for P.E. if at all possible.

Physical Education — Mrs. Perez

Never Better in 2011! Welcome back!

This year the children will learn fundamental movement skills that provide the foundation for enjoyment, continued social development through physical activity. Students will become aware of how physical activity leads to a healthy lifestyle. Students will be engaged in activities that will develop basic levels of strength, endurance, and flexibility. In addition, students will learn to work safely in a group and individual settings. A major objective is to present activities that complement their natural inclination to view physical activity as a challenge and for pure enjoyment.

The theme for this year is "Make It A Star Performance!" Each class will be earning stars that will end in a handsome reward...choosing items from the Treasure Chest. The following actions will be taken in order to earn stars:



S= Stay on task

T= Try our best

A= Active Listening

R= Respect self, others, and equipment

S= Sportsmanship and Responsibility

Coming Up: Marathon Kids

Our students will have a unique opportunity to participate in a program called Marathon Kids. This is the 9th year for the program to be in the Dallas area. Children run or walk the distance of a full marathon (26.2 miles) over the course of their school year. This will be done in increments of $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

On Saturday, October 22nd, Marathon Kids provided us with a free community wide kick-off celebration where kids officially started their journey to 26.2 miles by running their first laps together with family and friends.

More information will follow. Please check out Marathon Kids website: www.MarathonKids.org

K-5 Science Lab — Mrs. Galvin

2011-2012 will find us exploring a variety of topics in the K-5 Science Labs on the two Saint Thomas Aquinas campuses. Kindergarten through Second Grade students at the Lower School come to the Science lab each week for "hands-on" experiences that enhance their classroom instruction. At the Upper School, 3rd grade teachers bring their students to the Science Lab one time each week and the 4th and 5th grade classes each have two sessions per week. Science Lab is not a "special", but rather an extension of the basic science curriculum that the teachers are covering in their classrooms. Classroom teachers introduce concepts and evaluate mastery of the science objectives. Science lab activities reinforce these objectives by using a multi-sensory approach to scientific inquiry. The following is a brief overview:

Kindergarten students begin the year by using their 5 senses to explore their world. Then they learn about their "Wonderful Body Machines" as they focus on the major systems of their bodies and how all systems work together. They have pumped balloon "hearts", squeezed sponge "lungs" and soon will combine bones into fabulous skeletons to hang in the hallways. They will make and taste butter as they learn about food and how it gives us energy. They will complete their study of major organs with an investigation into their control center- the brain.

First grade has begun the year by studying the "stuff" from which everything in our world is made (matter). They are using their Five Senses to carry out scientific investigations involving predictions, observations, discussion of results and then drawing conclusions. They have compared and contrasted living and nonliving things, used micro-slide viewers to observe cells and now they are combining cells into tissues and organs as they learn about the systems of the human body. They will complete their study of the major systems by creating "anatomy vests" and "brain hats" to proudly display all major organs. Next they will travel into the microscopic world of water microorganisms and study fresh and salt-water ecosystems. Their Animal unit will cover all classes of vertebrate animals and the characteristics that make each group special.

Second grade science focuses on the Earth Sciences. A foundation in the basics of matter and how it changes will allow students to better understand the Earth, its waters and its atmosphere. As our chemists turn into geologists they will apply physical science principles to their discovery of the wonders of our solid Earth. They will observe crystal formation when they allow solutions to evaporate in order to closely examine some crystal

(Continued on page 15)

structures of common minerals. Igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rock samples will be scrutinized as they study the formation of rocks. They will learn that fossils are clues to ancient life on Earth and they will even create a few fossils of their own!

Third grade science begins with a study of matter- states of matter, atoms and changes to matter. Then they take Physical Science beyond mere matter to include the forces of energy that impact our daily lives. The students will explore the ways in which heat energy affects matter and relate that back to their study of atoms and molecular movement. They will use thermometers to measure heat energy and how it makes matter expand and contract. Heat conductors and insulators will be investigated using lab experiments and fantastic explorelearning.com "Gizmos". Next they will explore the world of sound and how it needs matter in order to travel!

Fourth grade science returns to the study of "Life" and allows students to delve more deeply into the Kingdoms of all living things. They begin by studying the basic unit of life: the cell. As they continue to explore cells, they learn that cells form tissues, organs and systems. They learn how these systems allow the complex human body to successfully grow and function. They will ponder the mysteries of the brain, spinal cord and entire nervous system, and then see the incredible protective layer surrounding the spinal cord in a Turkey Neck Dissection. For their final project in the science lab, they will replicate the main body organs out of modeling clay and compose them into the major systems of the human body.

Fifth Grade begins the year by reviewing the steps in the scientific method in preparation for their first "mandatory" Science Fair experience. Their Science teacher, Mrs. Kammie Campagna, will guide them through this process from purpose through final Project Board! Science Fair this year will be held at St. Thomas on April 3, 2012. In the science lab, our studies have built up from the tiniest bits of matter-atoms- to elements, compounds and crystal formation in minerals. Students will discover how these minerals form the rocks on Earth. They will make igneous rock toffee, sedimentary rock layers in jars and fossiliferous limestone rocks. They will learn about fossils, fossil fuels and create flow maps for the process of coal formation. They will realize that our Earth is the ultimate recycler as rocks and minerals travel through the Rock Cycle.

Note: St. Thomas is a member of the Weather Bug network. We have instruments on site at the Upper School and send reports to Weather Bug. Families may go to www.weatherbug.com, click on local weather and then choose your local St. Thomas weather camera to get updates on weather conditions here on campus. The classrooms have live direct feed from our camera, but the internet site only updates periodically. Watch Channel 8

¡Mucho, mucho Español!

All of our pequeños y grandes amigos have been working non-stop in Español this year. We continue to develop our understanding of both the Spanish language and culture through a variety of activities and units, while making a concerted effort to become more orally engaged in everything we do! Lower school students continue to master the fundamentals of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (the "h" is by far the most popular – and soothing – sound of all!), through the classroom, farm animals, and greeting units. We have also "expanded" our prayers to include a special "thank you" message for our families and friends, and we will soon be taking it yet a step further, when we learn a meal-time blessing song, courtesy of our friends Alex (2C) and Christian Breazeale (KB), who have been excited to share their Spanish words with us all: they are excellent maestros; gracias!!

In the Upper School, our third graders continue to work on the noun and adjective agreement of our "boy" and "girl" words. We will continue to expand on this theme, building phrases and sentences that we are also saying with greater proficiency each class. They have also completed their first individual recitations, praying the "Glory Be" – and already asking for their next challenge... ifenomenal! Fourth graders have diligently worked on their calendario vocabulary, practicing how to write and say la fecha at the beginning of each class. We have also learned about the Spanish-speaking countries in our Hispanic Heritage Month-FAQ's unit, and we have started to 'formally' learn the "Hail Mary" – exciting times! In the 5th grade, we have been reviewing last year's units and building our vocabulary; the bender cards have proven to be a very useful tool! As we head into the second quarter, we will be incrementing our oral practice, and our Christmas-related lessons and activities will tie-in directly to these efforts.

Our amigos más grandes, the sixth, seventh and eighth graders, have also had a busy 1st quarter. Reviewing fundamentals and describing their "cosas favoritas" have prepared the sixth graders for the upcoming units, which will focus on researching and presenting the traditions and celebrations of Hispanic America and Spain. Seventh graders will continue to develop their descriptive vocabulary as they use adjectives to tell about themselves and others; this will also allow them to practice using the (irregular) verb "ser", with other verbs ending in "AR" to follow.

Lastly, the eighth grade students have focused on their conversational skills, practicing their greetings and intro-

(Continued on page 16)

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ductions. They are now able to identify the subjects and the verbs in a Spanish sentence! As always, we will continue to review and practice essential concepts, such as the use of the verb "ser," noun and adjective agreement, and punctuation marks (just to name a few). Their vocabulary will further expand as they learn to describe themselves and others through the use of antonyms: they will tell if they are cómicos (funny), or serios (serious); altos (tall) or bajos (short), extrovertidos (extroverted) or introvertidos (introverted); áuticos (athletic) or artísticos (artistic)... or.... ambos! (both!)

Lower School Library — Mrs. Packard

The Scholastic Book Fair was held October 17-20th at both the upper and lower schools. Online purchases will be available through November 4th, 2011. See the school website for a link to the book fair.

Preschool, kindergarten, TK, first and second graders are all coming to the library "upstairs" once a week. The children are learning library procedures, checking-out books and listening to stories that reinforce and enhance each grade level themes as well as the curriculum.

In keeping with the fall season and holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas, the following books will be read to many of the classes:

I Know It's Autumn by Eileen Spinelli

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf by Lois Ehlert

The Very First Thanksgiving Day by Rhonda Gowler Greene

The Elf on the Shelf by Carol V. Aebersold & Chanda A. Bell

What Can I Give Jesus? by Cheryl Kirking

The Very First Thanksgiving Day and *What Can I Give Jesus?* will be featured in the next two months. *The Thanksgiving Day* book is a story told in cumulative rhyme. It introduces our young readers to America's most beloved national tradition, which began with a shared feast to rejoice in the bounty of the land, new beginnings, and peace between two societies. From *What Can I Give Jesus*, author, Cheryl Kirking asks, "Did you ever think about the gifts God has given you?" In 1 Peter 4:10, God has blessed each of us with our own unique gifts, and we are to use them to bless others. As an activity from this story, your son/daughter will write a

couple of words and/or illustrate on a star what they will give Jesus this Christmas. All of these beautiful stars (gifts) will be displayed around a nativity backdrop in the lower school Library! Over 300 stars!!!!

May God bless you and your family this holiday season. Maybe friends & family will share a good Christmas book, or even a poem! Near Christmas of 1832, Clement Clarke Moore helped spread Santa's fame by a poem which appeared in the newspaper. It began with the lines:

"Twas the night before Christmas,
When all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a mouse:
The stockings were hung
By the Chimney with care,

In hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there."

Happy reading!

