

Mother of Good Counsel Middle School Newsletter January 2012

READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS



REMINDERS!

- The final AR deadline is **January 20th**. Please encourage your child to participate in reading practice for twenty minutes or more per day.

6th GRADE

- In reading class, students are finishing up their study on “The Legend of King Arthur” this month and will be beginning an in-depth study on famous Greek myths. Students will learn about how the gods influenced people’s lives, and furthermore the Grecian influence on western civilization. Sixth graders will continue to work on literary analysis writing in Language Arts and on honing in their paragraphing skills. Furthermore, students will complete a study on verbs and understand how to use vivid verbs to spruce up their own writing.



7th GRADE:

- In reading, students will continue to study Karen Hesse’s book *Witness*. They will explore the many different perspectives of several characters living in a world of prejudice and injustice within a small town in Vermont in the 1920’s. Students will work together and discuss historical connections and themes of courage and pride. Seventh graders are further exploring the theme of courage in Language Arts through journal writing and literary analysis. In addition, students will be studying a large unit on various types of punctuation in order to begin preparing for those IOWA tests in March.



8th GRADE:

- In reading class, students are finishing the novel, *Out of the Dust*. They will study and analyze themes of true generosity and hope in the face of adversity as well as methods of characterization and symbolism. Students will also recognize these similar themes in other pieces of literature and art during the Great Depression. In Language Arts, students will complete some journal writing and research on their future careers. Students will also learn how to assess media such as internet sites for research and how to follow the steps needed to complete research.



Middle School Social Studies

Sixth Grade Social Studies

It's All Greek! Our Social Studies class continues its study of the ancient world with a stop in ancient Greece. - home of the Olympics, mythology and the Parthenon. Greece is more than the Olympics. Your child will also learn about the religion, philosophy and literature of the ancient Greeks as well as their daily lives. Drama was also important to the ancient Greeks. Students will read about Greek plays and Greek mythology in their reading classes as well. The middle of January we celebrate Martin Luther King Day with Scholastic Magazine articles and videos related to his contributions to our lives.



Seventh Grade Social Studies

The students in seventh grade did their research on the Exploration Period and gave their presentations to their classmates. The Exploration Period gave students an opportunity to learn more about the Spanish culture within their own country. Special emphasis will be placed on the development of the English colonies. Students will learn about the colonies through diaries and videos. After a detailed study of the colonies, they will write journal entries explaining which colony would be their first choice and which would be their last choice. Our map and atlas work continues with comparing and categorizing information on maps, in particular North America.



Eighth Grade Social Studies

Having completed their excellent work on the Constitution, eighth graders move on to a study of the Civil War and the Age of Expansion in the United States with activities involving detailed map work. Making decisions and evaluating their decisions will become part of the study of settlement of the West. Students will also be working on outlines of this period of history in preparation for their high school

years with increased text material. Study skills will be emphasized with skimming for information and using reference materials in writing reports. An increase in geography this second semester will provide students with more knowledge of the world in which they live.



Middle School Science

Grade 6 Science

The sixth grade students and I will begin a new Earth Science unit focused on the three main classes of rock and the processes that form them. We will simultaneously examine the structure of Earth as well as its tectonic plates, and we will begin to look at mathematical representations of force (a primary component of rock-forming processes and tectonic plate theory). Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2012. Ms. Rothstein.



Grade 7 Science

The seventh grade students and I continue our unit on the kinetic molecule theory of the three most common phases of matter and the changes among these phases. In the process of our study, we will learn about the corollary concepts of energy transfer and temperature. As well, we will strengthen our ability to read and gain understanding from graphic representations of data (heating/phase change curves). Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2012. Ms. Rothstein.



Grade 8 Science

The eighth grade students and I continue our study of living organisms by completing our study of biochemistry and turning our focus to the basic unit of functional life, the cell. We will discuss the fundamental differences between unicellular and multi-cellular organisms, and we will research, study, view, and apply our knowledge of the inter-related structures and functions of all cells (especially plant and animal cells). In the process, we will learn the basic principles and tools of microscopy and optics. Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2012. Ms. Rothstein.

Top $\ln(e^{10})$ reasons why e is better than π :

- 10) e is easier to spell than π .
- 9) $\pi \sim 3.14$ while $e \sim 2.718281828459045$.
- 8) The character for e can be found on a keyboard, but π sure can't.
- 7) Everybody fights for their piece of the pie.
- 6) $\ln(\pi^1)$ is a really nasty number, but $\ln(e^1) = 1$.
- 5) e is used in calculus while π is used in baby geometry.
- 4) 'e' is the most commonly picked vowel in Wheel of Fortune.
- 3) e stands for Euler's Number, π doesn't stand for squat.
- 2) You don't need to know Greek to be able to use e .
- 1) You can't confuse e with a food product.

Math!

Ms. Jen Vega, vega@mgcparish.org

Algebra

The eighth grade is cruising through Algebra I. I would advise all families and students to take some time to re-focus on the hard work and effort it takes to be successful in math and life. We are continuing to factor our way through algebraic fractions, which can often be difficult. We are learning how to transition from numeric fractions to algebraic fractions and apply all operations to the fractions. After this, we will explore ratios and proportions in more depth before we begin our linearity and function unit.

Pre Algebra

The two seventh grade classes are at distinct places in the curriculum. One class is transitioning to monomials and the rules of exponents governing monomials, including the product and quotient rules. The other class is spending some time mastering fractional operations before diving into monomials. Both classes, however, are working on their foundation for success in Algebra. It is fun for me teaching both Algebra and Pre Algebra because I get to see the progression from one to the other and have the opportunity to point this out to the students.

Sixth Grade

If your child came home asking some difficult and personal questions regarding life insurance and wills, it is because they learned what these were in the Financial Fitness for Life curriculum. We have completed all that we will do with the FFL curriculum and hope that the students came away with the most important message of what the Opportunity Cost is for all the choices they make. I am looking forward to resuming sixth grade math and pushing them further with their math skills!

Middle School Spanish

6th grade: We will next be studying an important group of verb expressions using the irregular verb “tener.” This important verb is used in many idiomatic expressions such as to be hungry, thirsty, cold, hot, late, in a hurry, etc.



7th grade: Our next unit presents school vocabulary (school personnel and places in the school). We will also be studying the verb “saber” (to know). In addition, the students will learn how to form the comparative and superlative in Spanish.

8th Grade: We will be spending time filling possible gaps in our knowledge before moving on to new verb tenses. Topics will include usage of “ser” versus “estar,”

along with pertinent vocabulary such as descriptive adjectives, family nouns, etc.; idiomatic expressions using the verb “tener;” and food vocabulary.

Important Reminders:

1. Please don't forget about the regularly scheduled Spanish tutoring sessions for middle school:

Monday 3:25-4:00 -- 7th grade

Tuesday 3:25-4:00 -- 8th grade

Friday 3:15- 3:45 – 6th grade



Help is also available on Mon. and Tues. during lunch recess, provided that the student has made arrangements with me ahead of time.

2. Spanish students are allowed to re-take tests and quizzes for a higher score. Please check Power School to see whether your child should avail him/herself of this opportunity. Don't wait till the last minute! The quarter will be ending before you know it!

Middle School Religion

Grade 8 Religion

We will be wrapping up our study of Church History this month. We will be exploring the effects on the Church of World War II and its aftermath along with examining the growth of the Church in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We will also be studying the story of art and the Church. We will look at the architecture, religious art, and music and how it relates to the Church's story. Students will be taking an end of the book test on chapters 8-14 this month.



Grade 7 Religion

Grade 7 will be wrapping up their study of Morality this month. We will be looking at the moral decision-making process and learning the six steps to the process. We will also look at how these decisions affect our identity. The roles of priest and other religious and their ministries will be investigated as we discuss vocations. Students will be taking an end of the book test on chapters 8-14 this month.



Grade 6 Religion

We will be looking at the most important work of the church—proclaiming the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. We will compare the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to see how they differ yet complement one another. We will learn how the Holy Spirit works through the teachings and actions of the Church and how the Spirit first came to the disciples on the Feast of Pentecost. We will also study the Acts of the Apostles as the story of the early Church.