

**WELCOME TO
BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT
2009-2010**

Dear Third Grade Parents,

I am delighted to have your child in my class! I am anticipating an exciting, challenging and fun year.

The Student Learning Expectations are taught and experienced in all areas of the curriculum. The following is a brief summary of the third grade curriculum.

RELIGION

Faith First provides a foundation by which students understand and create their faith. It interweaves church doctrine, scripture, and the liturgical year. Each unit is divided into chapters that reflect the three areas of emphasis. Activities in each chapter provide both students and their families with a chance to reflect on what has been learned.

Family Life instruction will begin in September. We will be using the Growing in Love Program. The text leads to many interesting discussions in the classroom. A summary of each unit will be sent home for you to review with your child.

Our class Service Project will be to make delicious monthly and seasonal treats for the women and children at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room. Each month a small group of children will bake together with the room parent and other parent volunteers. A small group of students will deliver and serve the treats at the dining hall. Students will have time to share their reflections of the experience with the class. All students will participate at least once in the delivery and baking process during the year. Parents are needed for assisting in the kitchen and delivering.

Second Step and Steps to Respect are the programs that will be used to teach the students about respect, bullying, inclusion, as well as how to verbalize and identify emotions.

MATH

Our text is Scott Foresman, Addison Wesley. The primary skills stressed in third grade mathematics are place value to one hundred thousand, time and money, simple multiplication and division, addition and subtraction with regrouping, fractions and an introduction to geometry and decimals. Algebraic concepts are introduced. Problem solving will be taught as a life long skill.

Math manipulatives and small group instruction will be used frequently to help students move from the concrete to abstract concepts. Student will have many opportunities to apply concepts and skills through hands on investigations, math stations and games. Please encourage math in your everyday living situations!

LANGUAGE ARTS

We have an exciting literature, reading, writing, language arts program. We are using Houghton Mifflin's Invitations to Literacy. The text includes a wide variety of quality literature and "real world" resources that will increase their knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of themselves, other people, and the world in which they live. Additionally, two novels will be taught: Charlotte's Web, by E.B. White and Soft Rain by Cornelia Cornelissen. Students will participate in literature circles as a means to explore the novels and practice their reading comprehension skills.

Our goal is for students to become fluent, motivated, and confident readers and writers. Through the language arts program we will develop essential reading and writing strategies.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

Each week with 1/2 class there will be a Writer's Workshop. During this time, students will learn to work through the writing process of prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, editing and publishing.

There will be a variety of writing projects throughout the year with a focus on the 6+1 writing traits as a means of assessment: ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word choice, conventions and presentation.

DAILY ORAL LANGUAGE

Each morning two sentences will be assigned to the class for correction. This helps make young students aware of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization rules.

JOURNALS

We will be writing in journals daily. These personal journals will not be corrected for spelling (inventive spelling will be common), sentence structure or grammatical errors. The journals should encourage the children to become comfortable writing and putting their thoughts, feelings, and impressions on paper. I will collect and read the journals monthly to comment on quantity and quality of thought. The students will have the opportunity to share their stories aloud with each other.

INDEPENDENT READING

Every day the students will spend between 15 to 30 minutes reading silently and independently. Independent reading conferences will be held regularly so that student reading goals may be set and student progress monitored. Each student will be required to keep a Reading Log.

The student may use books from home, our class library, the school or public library.

SPELLING AND VOCABULARY

We are using Houghton Mifflin's Spelling and Vocabulary text. Each week a list of spelling words will be assigned. We will review book assignments during class. Through a combination of phonics and spelling strategies, we will focus on the high frequency words which will be reinforced through the use of a word wall. A weekly test will be given on each Friday with the current Units words. Two sentences from the lesson will be dictated for listening skill development.

Vocabulary will be taught in the context of the story we are reading.

HANDWRITING

The D'Nealian Cursive Alphabet is being taught. Attached is a copy of the alphabet for home use. Correct pencil grip will be emphasized. The pencil grip should be checked at home as well as at school. In the months of September through December, students are encouraged to use cursive for their written work. Starting with the month of January, it is mandatory that students use cursive for all writing projects.

READING - WEB LOG

Students are expected to read at least 20 minutes each night as a part of their homework assignment. A reading log will be collected each Friday. Parents are expected to sign off nightly reading. Reading fluency is the focus in third grade. It is important for the students to read each day.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Reflections, Our Communities by Harcourt School Publishers focuses on Geography, Native Americans, Community History, Government and Citizenship and Understanding Economics. Through a combination of textbooks, literature, maps, art and field trips, the students will explore history.

Current events will be reviewed weekly through class discussions about newspaper articles, and by an article brought in by our "Star of the Week".

SCIENCE

We will be using a hands on investigation focused program developed by The Lawrence Hall of Science called FOSS. Three different units of focus will be taught: Life Sciences, Matter and Energy and Sun, Moon and Stars.

HOMEWORK

Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday your child will have a homework assignment. The purpose of homework in 3rd grade is to build organization skills and provide practice for concepts learned in class. Each student will be responsible to write down homework assignments in his/her homework notebook. Your child will have a designated homework folder which will be used to carry assignments to and from home and is an important part of classroom management, student responsibility, and accountability. If homework is not turned in when due, it may be turned in the following day and it will be marked late.

INCOMPLETE OR MISSING WORK: Sometimes a student may not finish the assigned class work. If this occurs, the work will be sent home to be finished at home. A note will be attached in their homework planner as a means to remind students to finish their work as homework.

If a student forgets their homework or does not turn in an assignment, they will receive an Incomplete Assignment Form. This form will serve to alert the parents and the student. Incomplete work must be signed by a parent.

FRIDAY FOLDERS: On Friday, your child's weekly work will be sent home in their Friday folder. This folder will inform you of your child's progress for that week. This "Friday Folder" is to be returned with your signature and all the student work on Mondays. We will keep all the student work in a portfolio until the end of the quarter, at which time, it will be returned.

FIELD TRIPS

We will be going on a field trip a month to enhance our classroom learning. Please refer to the parent-student handbook for information regarding being a driver. All money for field trips must be handed in ahead of time with a signed permission slip. A child may not go on a field trip without a permission slip. Additionally, a field trip will be canceled if there are not enough drivers two days prior to the trip. The 3rd grade web site has a field trip page that lists dates and times of trips.

Lastly, do not forget to cancel hot lunch orders on the day of a field trip.

STAR OF THE WEEK

Each week one child will be honored as our "Star". As a class, we will express what we like about our "Star" and what s/he does well. These thoughts and feelings will be made into a poster for the student to take home. I will also be asking for photos of your child so we can get to know him/her better. Pictures of family, friends, favorite activities, special occasions, pets, etc. are all great! This will also be your child's week to share a pet. Only caged pets may be left for the school day.

ENRICHMENT

Your child is very fortunate to have several enrichment programs through the week. If your child is having a hard time in any of the following classes, please contact the appropriate teacher. Third graders will be enriched by:

CLASS

1. Spanish
2. Music
3. Physical Education
4. Capon (Motor Development)
5. Computer
6. Library
7. PEP

TEACHER

Ms. Ruiz
Ms. Miller
Mr. Shimabukuro
Mr. Shimabukuro
Mr. David Malone
Mrs. Alex Walton
Trained School Parents

CLASS RULES, REWARDS, and CONSEQUENCES

Please see attached paper for third grade rules, rewards, and consequences!

GRADES

Grades for report cards are based on a variety of assessments, both formal and informal.

*A grade of "E" indicates your child has exceeded any expectations set for third graders.

*A grade of "M" indicates satisfactory

*A grade of "I" indicates improvement needed.

Grades on papers:

"+" indicates that the student shows strong understanding.

"✓" indicates that the student is making good progress with minimal error.

"-" indicates that the student needs help, the work is not getting done, and/or there are many errors.

Again, I am looking forward to working with you and your child. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, concerns, comments and/or life changes. I can be reached via e-mail at jmurray@csdo.org or by phone 510-530-4056.

We are going to have a great year!

Sincerely,

Jessica Murray