

Smack Dab in the Middle

St. Croix Catholic Middle School Newsletter

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Curriculum Highlights

Religion: Mrs. Lynch

GRADE 6 – THE OLD TESTAMENT: The sixth graders are completing the lessons on Abraham, “Our Father in Faith.” This title refers to Abraham because he responded to God’s call choosing to be a faithful believer in God’s Word.

Next, we will study the stories of Isaac and Jacob. The inheritance of the covenant given first to Abraham is passed on to Isaac, and then to his son, Jacob. God’s merciful love gives Jacob the opportunity to renew his faith in Him and act as an Image of God.

GRADE 7 – THE NEW TESTAMENT: In the Communion of Persons unit, students learned the family and the workplace are a communion of persons based on love. As God’s images, we should imitate His characteristics of love: permanent, faithful and life-giving. Students created colorful bumper stickers on the theme, “Work exists for people, people do NOT exist for work!”

In December, we will study John the Baptist and his importance during the Advent Season.

GRADE 8 – CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS: Students continue the study of the Catholic Social Teachings with “Call to Family and Rights/Responsibilities.” They learned ALL are called to participate responsibly in society. They enjoyed the “family table” activity that provided the opportunity to reflect on their family relationships.

Students also read the Declaration of Human Rights Document adopted by the UN in 1948. They learned that this document sets the international standard for human rights. Next month we will cover Dignity of Work and Solidarity.

We begin the beautiful season of Advent soon. **All students** will participate in Advent activities including weekly prayer services, mass and reconciliation.



Student Council:

Patty Dierberger

Food Shelf Collection

This year the food shelf organization had to turn away many families in need because there wasn’t enough food.

Our school helped many families by donating items in time for the holidays. During November each of the classrooms collected food and gave it to the food shelf. Here is a list of some things in particular that were requested.

1. Variety of crackers
2. Canned meals
3. Box items (like cereal or stuffing for Thanksgiving)
4. Grocery gift cards
5. Turkeys
6. Fresh produce
7. Canned soup

Thank you to all that supported this effort and helped those in need this holiday season!



Upcoming Attractions:

Wednesday, December 2:
9:15 a.m. Mass

Thursday, December 3:
Parent's Drive in a.m.

Tuesday, December 8:
12:15 p.m. Mass for MS

Thursday, December 10:
6th grade District Orchestra
Concert at Oak Park

Friday, December 11:
Report Cards sent home

Wednesday, December 16:
9:15 a.m. Mass

Monday, December 21:
No Uniform Day if wearing red
and/or green

Tuesday, December 22:
9:15 a.m. Mass

Wednesday, December 23 –
Friday, January 1:
Christmas Break!

341 9th graders at Stillwater
24 are SCCS grads
(7% of the population)
65 9th grade students are
members of the National
Junior Honor Society
9 are SCCS grads
14% of the NJHS members
are SCCS grads!

English: Ms. Lass

6th grade: The focus on grammar is: recognizing and identifying the eight parts of speech, concrete and abstract nouns, as well as identifying nouns used as subjects, subject compliments, direct objects, indirect objects, object compliments, and objects of the prepositions.

The heart-warming story of friendship, trust, and sacrifice is explored in the novel The Cay. Writing summaries, large and small group discussions, vocabulary exercises, and periodic quizzes are a few of the classroom activities that engage students in the literary experience.

7th grade: Along with a pretest of the eight parts of speech, the 7th grade looks at the noun challenges in the textbook and revs up for the adjective challenge.

After finishing Johnny Tremain, the 7th grade will read the Newberry Medal winning author Scott O'Dell's Sarah Bishop. Students gain insight to what the main character and her family endures as they counter the majority's political stance during the revolutionary war. Some creative pieces of writing will allow students to use the written language for an authentic audience and focus on practicing the grammar skills taught in class.

8th grade: We begin our heroic quest with Bilbo Baggins in JR Tolkien's The Hobbit. This delightful story is a necessary beginning to the War of the Rings which Tolkien completes his epic fantasy trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*.

We will review the eight parts of speech as well as continue to recognize and distinguish the differences amongst comparative and superlative adjectives, interrogative, demonstrative and indefinite adjectives, and adjective clauses and phrases.

Did you know?

Look for the next
Middle School Newsletter
December 22, 2009.

Science: Mrs. Glaser

6th grade: We have moved into the textbook and have been studying motion. We have been looking at how speed changes depending on the steepness of a hill and also looked at how the stopping distance affects how some things are constructed. We will continue to look at motion and how it affects the position of the continents as well as look at acceleration.

7th grade: We just finished studying about some environmental issues and how some of those issues impact the world around us. We also looked at the some fishing and logging methods to discuss which ways might work better. We will be moving onto a different textbook to look how scientists classify living organisms and begin discussing the six kingdoms of all living things.

8th grade: We just finished making our own volcanoes. In the upcoming weeks we will be using different liquids to look at how the consistency of those liquids might affect how the lava flows from a volcano. We will be studying the three different types of volcanoes and what characteristics those volcanoes have. We will also study the relationship between volcanoes and earthquakes.

Art: Mrs. Fioritto

As the first trimester comes to a close, the seventh graders are preparing to take their end of the trimester test to see just how much they have learned in these past few months. Both classes have been very productive and creative as you can see by their projects that have been displayed by the science room and outside the art room. They recently completed a fun project in which they drew their classmates in "action poses" using contour lines. They learned about both positive and negative space along with primary and secondary color as they painted the overlapping shapes in tempera. We've received many positive comments about our display - be sure to check it out!

We participated in the Art Adventure program in which eight reproductions from the Minneapolis Institute of Art's permanent collection were shown and discussed. This year's theme was "Sources of Strength" and the students seemed to enjoy relating these works to their own lives as they drew and wrote about them.

Seventh grade will not have Art during the second trimester as they will go to Communications. Students should be thinking about their artist/self-portrait project in the spring (ask them about it!) and can be collecting items for mosaic stepping-stones. Please keep saving your egg cartons and ice cream pails with lids - I need more for third trimester when the students are back in Art! Keep drawing!

PE/Health: Mr. Slaikeu

Wow! Where has the time gone? These past few months have just flown by. This month I welcome the 6th graders to their first trimester in physical education and health in Middle School. It's going to be filled with many different activities and sports with a focus on individual improvement and fitness. A reminder for the 6th grade students and parents that a physical education uniform is needed to participate. This includes:

- White shirt with no writing (or some writing related to SCCS)
- Dark blue/black shorts or running pants
- Gym shoes; these can be the same ones you wear to school; however, make sure they are clean before you come into the gym, and they are non-marking shoes; **also, they must be able to be tied;** no slippers or boots can be worn in the gym

During the month of December, we will be focusing on basketball skills and how to improve. Throughout the month we will also be incorporating teambuilding activities that promote cooperation and teamwork. Without these two skills, physical education wouldn't be very exciting/fun for many people. In order to be successful in P.E., you need to cooperate and work as a team.

Communications: Mrs. McCarron

Bravo, Sixth Graders!

On November 10th and 12th, the 6th graders did an excellent job performing their one-act plays, *Cupid's Website* and *Half a King is Better Than None*. The audience, including relatives of the 6th graders and SCCS students, were amused by the actors' funny lines and antics throughout the two plays.

It was obvious the students worked very hard learning their lines and preparing great sets, costumes, publicity, and props. Besides good acting, the students who worked behind the scenes - sound managers, stage managers, curtain pullers - helped to make both plays successful.

Thanks go out to the following parents who helped on production days in class when the students were painting sets, finding costumes, preparing posters, and choosing props:

Mrs. Crea – Mrs. Kiolbasa
Mrs. Krsiean – Mrs. Ogren
Mr. De Meuse

Also, thanks to the parents who helped the students get ready on the performance days:

Mrs. Crea – Mrs. Bradley
Mrs. LeRoux – Mrs. Speltz

The students are continuing to work on their newsletter articles for the *MidKnight Express*, which will be distributed the week after Thanksgiving.



Spanish: Sra. Bates

With three weeks in school for the month of December, the **eighth graders** will continue their learning of the Spanish language. As the next theme of study is sports and leisure activities, the students will continue conjugating verbs, extend their Spanish vocabulary, and further develop their writing as well as their speaking in Spanish. In support of the cultural objective in the upcoming chapter, the eighth graders will focus on comparing parks and leisure-time activities in Spanish-speaking countries with those in the United States.



Mathematics: Mrs. Novack and Mrs. Bates

Course 2 As the students begin chapter five, they will learn to add and subtract fractions and mixed numbers. They also multiply and divide fractions and mixed numbers and learn about customary units.

Pre Algebra students are finishing their work with factors, fractions and will be moving into learning about exponents, scientific notation and rational numbers.

Algebra students are solving and graphing linear equations and inequalities.

Geometry students are investigating rules and properties for triangles.

History: Ms. Lass, Mrs. Lynch, Mrs. Donlon, & Mr. Slaikeu

Grade 6 World History: This past month we have been investigating the wonders of the “cradle of civilization” – Ancient Mesopotamia. This “land between two waters” is the birthplace of many amazing achievements and inventions, such as the wheel. The students will see connections to what we have learned about in the Pentateuch as we discuss the early developments of Judaism.

Our next two chapters will focus upon two other ancient River Valley Civilizations – Ancient India, along the Indus River and Ancient China, by the banks of the Huang. The students will continue to make comparisons and distinctions between all of these early civilizations that serve as precursors to our Western Civilization.

Grade 7 American History (Pre-history – 1850): The students are completing a unit on life in the colonies. They have explored how geography, agriculture trade, religion and government differed by region and established the roots of self-government in the colonies. After Thanksgiving, we will examine the turmoil that marked the years before the Revolutionary War such as the French and Indian War, Boston Tea Party and the passage of the Intolerable Acts, which eventually led to the outbreak of fighting.

Grade 8 American History (1850 – Present): The past few weeks the 8th graders have been busy studying “The New West”. The New West is a time period in our history after the Civil War where the nation needed to bridge the gap between the eastern states and California. To do this, the Transcontinental Railroad was built. This railroad brought hope and promise of new lands to many people but many problems arose for the Indian people and all people of this time frame.

As November closes, the students will be performing a 5-10 minute play that will teach us about the lives of a specific group of people during the New West. I’m sure they will be great! Ask the 8th graders about their plays, and come see Mr. Slaikeu for a little treat if you can tell me something specific about their play!

In December, we will dive into Chapter 20: Industrial Growth and how our country changed from a farming country to “Big Business”!

Computers: Mrs. Donlon

6th grade computer classes are working hard on their three column newsletters. They have completed their notes using fact fragments and completed their work-cited pages that documented their print, Internet and image sources. They are now learning to correctly format their newsletters and combining graphics and drawing tools to produce a professional looking document. We will next be moving into Power Point presentations.