



Middle School News



Saint Michael School

Volume 3, Issue 1
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Reminders and Announcements

- Hello from your Middle School English Language Arts teacher, Mrs. Rall. I have sincerely relished my first weeks here at St. Michael and look forward to continuing the enthusiasm while guiding the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders through an engaging ELA program. Already our eighth graders have been previewing their future by visiting local high school campuses. Visits to De La Salle, Carondelet, and Moreau have been planned and/or taken place already. On Wednesday, September 25th, the entire eighth grade class will enjoy a shuttled visit to the Moreau campus to explore their opportunities. On October 9th, representatives and students from both De La Salle and Carondelet will visit the St. Michael campus to meet with our students, as well.
- Friday, September 27, is a minimum day. School ends at 12:15 PM. Please make sure that you have made arrangements for early pick up or Eagle's Nest.
- This Friday's St. Vincent de Paul donations will be canned vegetables and rice. Thank you for your continued generosity.
- Please make sure to check the uniform policy. Socks, skirt lengths, and missing belts are common areas for infractions. Remember, socks cannot have logos on them and must be black, white, gray, or navy. In addition, please pay attention to the grooming portion especially nail polish and hair.

8th Grade

Religion—Mrs. Dayton

I wanted to take this time to introduce myself to those of you who don't know me well. My name is Mary Dayton and I have been a parishioner at St. Michael's for 42 years! I have taught religion through the faith formation program here for 36 years, including but not limited to: the Vacation Bible Camp, First Communion, Confirmation, Baptism and most grades K-12. I have also taught 5th grade religion here at St. Michael's School. Sharing our beautiful Faith is one of my greatest joys and I feel very privileged to have this opportunity to share it with your students. They are an amazing, faith filled class and I enjoy my time with them every day!

We started the year with a very comprehensive review of the parts of the Mass. Students took a written summative assessment on this material and now they have been challenged to do a project (individual or group) that summarizes their knowledge of the Mass. This will also be a summative assessment and is due on 9/25. Students were given a choice of three different formats for their project. Option 1. a Ted Talk live presentation or video on the importance of participation in Mass. Option 2. a poster sized graphic organizer that displays the major movements of the Mass. and finally Option 3. to create a small children's book that explains the Mass in simplified language. We will be gifting these to our St. Michael's second grade class to help them prepare for their First Communion. Many groups chose the third option, so second grade will receive several books :)

We have also begun our review and study of the Bible, including the history of how the Bible came to be, how to look up a passage in the Bible etc.. We will conclude this part of our study of the Bible at the end of September and start our curriculum of Family Life in October along with days dedicated to the rosary, St. Francis, etc.. Please take the time to read the parent handout that goes with the Family Life curriculum. If you have any questions or concerns about this material or anything we have discussed in class please contact me directly by email and if you want to set up a face-to-face appointment we can of course do that as well.

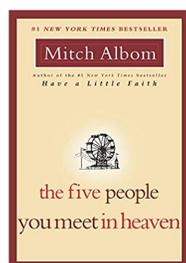
I am here to support your student in any way I can and I look forward to growing together in the knowledge of our wondrous Catholic Faith.

8th Grade—cont.

ELA—Mrs. Rall

In eighth grade, we have already begun reading our first novel, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. Through a dedicated reading schedule, we look forward to finishing the novel by October, allowing us to begin our first research project related to the novel's internal concept of heaven. We are currently utilizing our new Chromebooks to work on a mini-project to encapsulate the novel's vital details and lessons; the students are exercising their descriptive writing skills, close reading talents and technological capabilities. This novel has allowed us to look inward to our own faith and thoughts and feelings towards the afterlife, comparing it to and focalizing on the Catholic faith. Upon finishing reading and analyzing the novel, we will watch the film on which the movie is based, resulting in a comparison/contrast activity to finalize our time with Mitch Albom's momentous novel. Throughout this novel and those to come, the students will be practicing annotating their texts in pencil. This will be a strategy they will find crucial in both high school and college.

In addition to *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, the eighth grade class has been honing their vocabulary skills through the *Wordly Wise* program, earning high scores and a broadened lexicon. The class has also been taking lessons in grammar and punctuation so as to support their writing in and out of English class. Lastly, the students have been benefiting from a rotation-style class structure twice a week through which they are able to segment different areas of study and seek support through one-on-one time with myself. Each day begins with a bellringer, which is a short, self-guided activity (recorded in their composition notebooks) which will reference their novel or a relevant skill learned from class lessons or homework. Bellringers are checked each Friday and are recorded on Powerschool.



Math—Mrs. Miron

Math 8: We have started in on the real number system and how to recognize rational and irrational numbers. The students learned how to estimate the decimal form of an irrational number such as the square root of 14, how to find square roots of perfect squares and cube roots of perfect cubes, and how to convert repeating decimals to fractions. Their first assessment took place last week, and the students showed that they understand or have mastered the concepts.

Currently we are studying integer exponents. The students have taken detailed notes in their INBs (if you don't know what this is, please check with your son or daughter), and we will work on tech activities such as Freckle and Mathletics to strengthen the students' knowledge and comfort level with exponent properties. We are working toward our next standard which covers scientific notation with positive and negative exponents. This is a very useful concept because it allows for the students to discuss very large numbers and very small numbers.

Algebra I: We have just completed our "mega review" of basic or pre-algebra concepts. All of the material was covered last year in Pre-Algebra, so the students worked really hard to convince me that they remembered most of it. New topics covered, however, were square roots and cube roots, equations with absolute value, and how to estimate the decimal form of an irrational number such as the square root of 5. This review session was a sneak peek at what it might be like to take a cumulative final in high school.

We will be starting our study of a concept that is unfamiliar and new, but the hallmark of Algebra: polynomials. In Chapter 5, the students will review integer exponents and then apply this concept to adding, subtracting, and multiplying polynomials. They will also learn how to simplify expressions that have complex like terms.

8th Grade—cont.

Social Studies—Mr. Halter

We began the year by exploring the regions of the United States. We learned about the European explorers who braved the new world and are creating a project where the students are designing an explorer themed amusement park, complete with rides, restaurants, and souvenir

Shops. The students wrote paragraphs describing the connection between the cultural and physical geography as seen through the lens of the South and the *Show Boat* song “Ol’ Man River.”

Science—Mrs. Davis

The 7th and 8th graders have been working on reviewing the scientific method, especially focusing on how to write a testable hypothesis and how to identify the variables in experiments. Both classes were challenged to design and execute experiments in the classroom. Most of the 8 graders looked into how much sugar is in their bubble gum, whereas the 7th graders looked at melting points of candies, are double stuffed oreos really double stuffed, and are bounty paper towels really the most absorbent. Mini science posters are being created and presentations of experimental results by each group will be presented to the whole class.

Spanish—Sra. DiNino

¡Hola!

Eighth graders are reviewing the two verbs, Ser and Estar, both with the meaning "to be". Understanding of the verb is being used in a permanent or temporary context, will facilitate the determination of which verb to use.

All students will continue to review and increase their knowledge of Spanish vocabulary.

¡Gracias!

Sra. DiNino

7th Grade

Religion—Mr. Halter

In religion so far we are working from the Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth. This is a wonderful book that explores who we are as Catholics and what we believe. We are also learning about the Christianity and Catholic ideas infused in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*.

Spanish—Sra. DiNino

¡Hola!

Seventh graders are reviewing Personal Subject Pronouns. This is required to implement the conjugation of Spanish verbs

All students will continue to review and increase their knowledge of Spanish vocabulary.

¡Gracias!

Sra. DiNino

7th Grade—cont.

ELA—Mrs. Rall

In seventh grade, we have already delved into our first novel, the classic *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Through a measured reading schedule (one chapter per night), we are looking at finishing the novel by the first week of October. We are focusing strongly on the storyline, understanding the historical background of the novel as well as the implications of its overarching theme of faith. We are studying the characterization of the figures in the novel and using informed judgement to predict the characters' behaviors. We look forward to our first structured writing piece at the denouement of the novel, where we will look more closely at the Christian symbolism embedded in the characters and plot. Currently, we are letting our creative juices flow by designing a brochure for Narnia, featuring descriptive writing, evidence of attention to detail and the isolation of important quotations from the text. Throughout this novel and those to come, the students will be practicing annotating their texts in pencil. This will be a strategy they will find crucial in both high school and college.

In addition to *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the seventh grade class has been honing their vocabulary skills through the *Wordly Wise* program, developing a broadened lexicon. The class has also been taking lessons in grammar and punctuation so as to support their writing in and out of English class. Lastly, the students have been benefiting from a rotation-style class structure twice a week through which they are able to segment different areas of study and seek support through one-on-one time with myself. Each day begins with a bellringer, which is a short, self-guided activity (recorded in their composition notebooks) which will reference their novel or a relevant skill learned from class lessons or homework. Bellringers are checked each Friday and are recorded on Powerschool.

Math—Mrs. Miron

Math 7: The course has started off with the usually challenging concepts surrounding operations with integers. We have studied multiple methods for adding and subtracting positive and negative numbers including counters, number lines, and algorithm. The students have been introduced to each of these methods of modeling so that they could access the process that makes the most sense to them. Our first assessment was last week, and the students were able to demonstrate their understanding and/or mastery of these standards.

Our current area of study, Module 2, focuses on multiplying and dividing positive and negative numbers. The students have found that while the rules for multiplying and dividing integers are easily memorized, modeling them with the number line or counters is more challenging. We are also focusing on application of the concepts with the ever-dreaded word problems. The students will learn techniques for translating words to math operations. All students will be using math applications such as Freckle and Mathletics to strengthen foundational skills.

Pre-Algebra 7: Our first unit of study deals with Operations of Integers: Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities. In Chapter 1, the students focused on the operations associated with positive and negative numbers, and basic algebraic terms such as variables and evaluate versus solve. The students all did very well on their first assessment of these concepts.

Currently, the students are working on the algebraic properties such as the Commutative Properties of Addition and Multiplication, Associative Properties of Addition and Multiplication, Additive and Multiplicative Inverse Properties, and the Distributive Properties. Later in this chapter, they will learn to use these properties in order to solve simple variable equations.

7th Grade—cont.

Social Studies—Mr. Halter

I am enjoying working with the 7th graders this year. Please if you haven't, consider signing up to be a room parent. We could use one more this year. The 7th room parents are responsible for putting on the 8th grade graduation dance. Next year the 7th grade parents will put this on for your graduates. Please contact Mrs. Theresa Lobre, room parent coordinator.

Our first chapters focus on the split of the Roman Empire into the west and the eastern Byzantine Empire.

Science—Mrs. Davis

The 7th and 8th graders have been working on reviewing the scientific method, especially focusing on how to write a testable hypothesis and how to identify the variables in experiments. Both classes were challenged to design and execute experiments in the classroom. Most of the 8 graders looked into how much sugar is in their bubble gum, whereas the 7th graders looked at melting points of candies, are double stuffed oreos really double stuffed, and are bounty paper towels really the most absorbent. Mini science posters are being created and presentations of experimental results by each group will be presented to the whole class.

6th Grade

Religion—Mrs. Miron

We started the year by reviewing all the parts of the Mass by watching a very informative video “Draw Near: A Video Guide to the Catholic Mass.”

The focus in 6th grade religion is on the Bible, with a special emphasis on the Old Testament. The students received Bibles that they will use for all of middle school, and we have worked on how to decipher Bible citations. The students should be able to tell you that the Bible is a library of books with chapters and verses. In addition we started our curriculum by talking about who God is, and the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The students are in the midst of creating posters that are visual representations of the Trinity. Just a reminder: we will start our Family Life unit in October. Please review the Parent Guides that were sent home on Back to School Night.

Spanish—Sra. DiNino

¡Hola!

Sixth graders are reviewing the names and sounds of letters in the Spanish Alphabet.

Once this is mastered, students can begin to read and write in Spanish.

All students will continue to review and increase their knowledge of Spanish vocabulary.

¡Gracias!

Sra. DiNino

6th Grade—cont.

ELA—Mrs. Rall

In sixth grade, we have been enjoying a slow introduction to our first novel of the year, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. Through our measured reading schedule, we look forward to taking our time and finishing the novel in time to begin a short series of spooky Halloween stories and texts before the end of October. In *The Lightning Thief*, we have been supplementing our understanding with lessons on relevant mythological stories in order for us to grasp the focal concept of the unit, ‘The Hero’s Journey’. We have been paying careful attention to the series of events that have taken place and have been practicing the comprehension strategy of sequencing with these events. In addition, we have been developing our summarization skills through the daily game, Breakout, where students are challenged to summarize the previous night’s reading on a single post-it note. As we move forward, students will integrate their mythological background knowledge and their understanding of the text to piece together a evidenced-based series of mini-projects, utilizing both artistic and writing talents. Lastly, with *The Lightning Thief*, students are expected to annotate their books with pencil. This allows the students to locate important details and clarify misunderstandings in both class discussions and independent work, empowering them to become better readers and writers. This will be a strategy they will find crucial throughout their middle school career, as well as in both high school and college.

In addition to *The Lightning Thief*, the sixth grade class has been sharpening their vocabulary skills through the *Wordly Wise* program. The class has also been taking lessons in grammar and punctuation so as to support their writing in and out of English class. Lastly, the students have been benefiting from a rotation-style class structure twice a week through which they are able to segment different areas of study and seek support through one-on-one time with their classmates and with myself. Each day begins with a bellringer, which is a short, self-guided activity (recorded in their composition notebooks) which will reference their novel or a relevant skill learned from class lessons or homework. Bellringers are checked each Friday and are recorded on Powerschool.

Math—Mrs. Miron

We began our year in math by exploring concepts about integers. Our first module defined integers as the set of whole numbers and their opposites. The students discovered this through the extensive use of the number line, and the real-world applications of temperature, elevation, money, and gains and losses in sports. The students also learned that a number’s absolute value is its distance from zero on a number line, and that since distance is always positive, so is absolute value.

We have started our next module of study which will cover greatest common factor (GCF) and least common multiple (LCM). The students have discovered that these concepts are very challenging if they do not have fluency in their multiplication facts. You can support your student by making sure he or she practices his or her multiplication facts every night until the facts are automatic. There are many apps that act as flash cards, or your student can make his or her own flashcards by using index cards. We will also be strengthening our skills through the use of Freckle and Mathletics (two online math application sites which offer differentiated instruction).

Science—Mrs. Davis

The 6th graders learned about safety in the science classroom and each student designed a safety poster to help remind ourselves of the important rules to follow so we are safe. They are involved in lessons and activities that are teaching them how to measure properly using the metric system. They have been learning about metric sticks and metric rulers. They have learned how to use the Triple Beam Balance. How to find volumes and which lab equipment is most accurate when measuring the volume of liquids. They are also learning how to calculate the volume of irregular objects by the displacement method. Soon, they will be calculating the percent of edible fruit in bananas.



6th Grade—cont.

Social Studies—Mr. Halter

I am really enjoying getting to know and working with the 6th grade. They are mostly eager, enthusiastic and very cooperative. So far we have learned how people from the past were not all that different from the people we know today. We examine why cultures of the past created mythologies and that a culture is made up of attitudes, beliefs, customs, traditions, and art a group of people share. I am trying to make them all realize how important it is to listen, follow directions and to be active and involved learners.

In study skills so far we have been working on vocabulary, parts of speech and the connotation of words. Soon we will continue with synonyms, antonyms, and word origins. We will also be working on writing. I will also be able to assist the students with work from mine and other classes.

In December we will be going to the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose. This ties in nicely with our chapters on Egyptian history.
