

FAITH, FAMILY, FRIENDS: GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST



2011-2012 2ND GRADE PARENT INFORMATION PACKET

SECOND GRADE MOTTO:
"OUR CLASSROOM IS A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE FEELS SAFE,
RESPECTED AND ABLE TO LEARN."

2011-2012 THEME - BUILDING BLOCKS

SPECIAL CLASSES

	<u>MRS. VENDITTI</u>	<u>MRS. CANNAVAN</u>
Mon.	Music 12:50-1:20 P.E. 1:20-1:50 Spanish 2:20-2:50	P.E. 12:50-1:20 Music 1:20-1:50 Spanish 1:50-2:10
Tues.	Library 10:30-11	Library 1:30-2
Wed.	Music 12:50-1:20 P.E. 1:20-1:50	Art 9:30-10:20 P.E. 12:50-1:20 Music 1:20-1:50
Thurs.	Art 9:30-10:20 Computer 1:20-1:50	Computer 12:50-1:20
Fri.	Computer 1:20-1:50 Art 8-8:35 rotates every other week for both 2 nd grades Spanish rotates every other week after Mass for both 2 nd grades	Computer 12:50-1:20

Morning Recess 11:00-11:20 for 2nd and 3rd grades
Lunch M-F 11:30-11:55 for 2nd and 3rd grades
Smart Clubs 2:10-2:50 on most Fridays

BODYBRAIN CLASSROOM

A bodybrain classroom is the result of brain research being put into action. There are many elements that make up a bodybrain classroom with movement and emotions playing a large role. Emotion is the gatekeeper to learning. It drives attention, which then drives learning, memory and problem solving. Brain research also tells us that movement is important to the learning process. According to Susan Kovalik and Karen Olsen, authors of *Exceeding Expectations*, "Movement is fundamental to the very existence of a brain...Movement is crucial to every brain function including planning and executing plans, memory, emotion, language, and learning." Based on this information we make sure that purposeful movement is built into each day. As Dr. John Ratey points out, "What the brain communicates to the body depends largely on what messages the body is sending to the brain...our physical movements can directly influence our ability to learn, think and remember." Translated for a classroom, that means that the brain and body are always communicating and if one is shut down, told to sit and not move, the other is highly affected. In our classrooms we might be body mapping a key point, exercising the brain, or using sign language to help increase the level of learning.

Here at St. James we find these next few elements a crucial part of the learning process. Some of the elements we use in our classroom to enhance the bodybrain partnership are:

ABSENCE OF THREAT -

Classroom Strategies:

Using Lifelong Guidelines and LIFESKILLS

Learning Clubs, Community Circle, Inclusion Activities

Daily agendas, written procedures

ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT-

Classroom Strategies:

Immersion into the subject being taught through immersion walls, hands on, Being-There learning experiences (study trips), guest speakers, environment colors and purposeful floor plan.

COLLABORATION-

Classroom Strategies:

class meetings, clock partners, learning clubs, reflective thinking

MEANINGFUL CONTENT-

Classroom Strategies:

yearlong theme, being-there locations (study trips) key points, conceptual learning

MOVEMENT-

Classroom Strategies:

body mapping, role-playing, sign language, exercise, and oral presentations

CURRICULUM

Our yearlong theme, "Building Blocks", is a yearlong look at what we will be studying and how we will integrate skills into that learning. Listed below are areas of interest that are part of our curriculum.

LIFE GOALS, LIFELONG GUIDELINES AND LIFESKILLS

The Lifelong Guidelines are behavior guidelines for setting up a successful learning environment and the LIFESKILLS are the tools for all of us to use in order to succeed. The first 6 weeks of school we will be focusing on 2 Life Goals: Do the Right Thing and Treat Others Right which go along with our new Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Later in the year, we will then focus on the Guidelines. These Guidelines are also listed each month on the school's calendar.

READING/WRITING WORKSHOP

This is a literacy program where the children spend their time focused in activities related to reading, writing and spelling. During this time they will work in whole group, small group and individual activities based on their abilities. Each workshop period can have up to seven components working on many language arts skills.

Read Aloud - teacher reads literature to teach and support reading skills

Shared Reading - children reading aloud in a group with the teacher

Guided Reading - the teacher works with a small group on selected books

Independent Reading - Children read on their own or with partners. They have a book bag and a reading folder to help with their personal reading plan. At this time they will also be able to take AR tests which are required.

Shared Writing - teacher and children work together to compose stories

Guided Writing - teacher works with students guiding their writing process

Independent Writing - children writing their own pieces

MATH WORKSHOP & MATH FACTS IN A FLASH

Our series this year is the 2007 edition of Everyday Math which is used by K-5th. It is a spiral curriculum, which means that skills are continually taught and practiced. The children practice skills all through the year as opposed to learning a skill in the first chapter and never using that skill again during math class.

As a support to this series we also have the children working in computation skill folders, which allow the children plenty of practice with the basic computation skills at their level. Each child completes a page and then checks their work with the answer sheet. They may move on to the next page if they pass the criteria. We will work in these folders daily and sometimes they may come home for homework.

Students also have an opportunity to work on math facts on the computer.

This can be accessed by going to the Renaissance Home Connect link on the school website. Students use their AR user name and password to connect to Math Facts In A Flash.

SPELLING

We use the Rebecca Sitton Spelling Method. This method stresses the correct usage during their everyday writing. There is a list of Level Two Priority Words that we expect the children to spell correctly every time they write. (This list may be found at the end of this packet.) Then there are the Core Words that are a basis for teaching spelling patterns and increasing their spelling vocabulary. The children are encouraged to use a Quick Word book which is like a mini dictionary. This tool teaches them to look up and spell words correctly. We have spelling reviews where the children write sentences using their priority words, core words, and extra words. We check everyday writing throughout the week for correct spelling of Priority Words and Core Words. We usually preview the words on Monday and the Core Words are written each day in the Agenda Notebook.

PROJECT ESSENTIAL (school wide program)

Project Essential is a comprehensive classroom program designed to teach students how to earn and maintain a genuine sense of self-esteem and integrity. We will address issues that include empathy, ethical decision making, goal setting, human individuality, introspection, responsibility, respecting one's own rights and the rights of others, understanding human relationships, thinking and feeling. This program provides the children with the knowledge, skills and behaviors that are required for them to be productive, self-disciplined, responsible learners in the classroom. Corwin the dinosaur is our class mascot that will help us in our journey.

OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (school wide program)

Our entire school is now being trained and educated to use this program. This program is designed for all students and is preventive and responsive. Its focus is on changing norms and restructuring the school setting. It is not a curriculum. Please see attached sheets which state the definition of bullying and the rules that students will be learning.

ACCELERATED READER (school wide program)

This is a reading comprehension computer program. The children read books from our classroom, school, or public library and then they are able to take a comprehension test on that book. We are building in time during our Reader's and Writer's Workshop for the children to take tests each day. They may sign up to take one and can complete the test during any work time as well. The computer keeps a record of the tests taken and their scores. 80% is considered passing.

Most tests are either 5 questions or 10 questions. Each child will take the STAR test during the year. This is a supplement to the Accelerated Reader program where approximate reading levels are assessed and a ZPD or Zone Proximal Development is determined. This is the approximate reading level of books the children should be choosing. The children may read above or below this level but for reading improvement this zone is suggested. **In second grade we are expecting each child to take at least 1 AR test a week.** They may read these at home or school and then take the test. If taking 1 test a week is not feasible, the student may discuss with the teacher another option.

MICRO SOCIETY

Again this year we will be setting up a micro society in our classrooms.

In our classrooms we will be using play money to pay the children for being responsible second graders. For example, this entails completing work on time, being responsible with their class job, bringing homework back on time, following class procedures etc. Their weekly salary will be \$10.00 from which they will have taxes and insurance deducted. Our taxes cover daily trash pick-up, floor swept nightly, room maintenance, mail delivery and community supplies. Each child will also be responsible for paying rent and utilities (\$2.00 weekly) with this play money by writing a check each week. They will open a second grade play bank account and have a ledger to keep records of their balance. Thursday's homework will be making deposits and writing a rent check. This is an opportunity for you to work individually with your child teaching them how to maintain and manage a play bank account. During the year we will have opportunities for the children to spend some of their money on small items at school. They can write checks at school or home for cash when there is the need to make purchases. All money used in this program is PLAY MONEY. At the end of the year, we will set up a "Going To Town Day" where the children will be able to set up a business and sell goods or services and spend their money as well. Our goal is to give the children experiences with money in a meaningful way. We will have an Open House in Mrs. Venditti's room on Thursday, Jan. 19th from 3:30-5:00. Parents will have the opportunity to ask questions about Going to Town Day which is Wed., April 25th.

SERVICE PROJECT - OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

This year every grade has a service task around school to show our school pride. Second grade is responsible for the upkeep of the garden and feeders. We hope to have a fall work day this year to help get the garden ready for winter.

STUDY TRIPS

Study trips are an extension of what we are learning in the classroom. We hope to be going to Martha LaFite Thompson Nature Sanctuary.

We welcome parents on our study trips to help the children have the best learning experience. You would be responsible for overseeing a group of children and the tasks they need to complete. Due to this responsibility we must state that siblings are not allowed on the trips. If you would like to go on one of these trips, it is your responsibility to call the study trip coordinator. We are limited on the number of parents that can go on the Martha La Fite trip. Parents are asked to ride in cars to the trip so we have extra transportation back in case it is needed. *Make sure you have driver information on file in the office.* We will let you know our study trip dates asap. (Mrs. Barron has a study trip to the symphony planned for Oct. 20th for both 2nd grades.)

YOUR CHILD'S 2nd GRADE SCHOOL TOOLS

SCHOOL FOLDER

Your child is responsible for bringing their green school folder to and from school every day. These new folders were passed out. Please keep your child's Home Reading Log in there at all times. Their green folder is divided into two parts: *keep at school, keep at home.* (The Home Reading Log may also be found at the end of this packet.)

MATH TOOL BOX

Each child has their own Math Tool Box that is kept in their cubby. It has math tools in it that are needed to complete some math lessons and some math games. The tool kits are numbered for identification, as are the contents in case some things get lost. Each child needs real coins to work with. Your child should have come home with instructions to fill their film canister to keep in their math tool kit.

THEME FOLDER

As part of our yearlong theme, each child has a theme folder where they will keep information about the topics we are studying. This folder will be kept at school and you will be able to view it at conference times. At the end of the year they will bring home the folder.

AGENDA JOURNAL

Each day your child will be expected to copy the day's agenda in their Agenda Journal. From this point on the daily homework will be recorded on their agenda. Our expectation is to have good handwriting and correct spelling. Parents need to sign the agenda book each night and the children are responsible to bring it to school each day.

You may also use the agenda as another way to communicate with your child's teacher. Just jot a question, request or comment next to your signature on the agenda and we will get back with you.

BUDDIES

We have not been assigned a Buddy Group yet. We will let you know as soon as possible.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

ST. JAMES SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION -

Second grade children who have completed at least one year of Catholic religious education are eligible for this year. This is a parish program taught by the parents and reinforced at school. The chapters in our Religion book do not specifically teach those sacraments, but we do many activities that support what you are doing at home. You are the primary teacher of the sacraments. Cecilia Richardson is the Director of Religious Education for St. James and your contact for the program. Please refer all questions to her in the parish office. (781-4343 ext. 206) There are 2 meetings for each sacrament that parents are required to attend.

FAMILY SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION-a copy of your child's baptismal certificate is needed in order to receive the sacraments.

Pick one date:

Sept. 19th Parent meeting for First Reconciliation-6:00-8:30 in Social Hall

Sept. 28th Parent meeting for First Reconciliation-6:00-8:30 in Social Hall

Pick one date:

Nov. 7th Parent meeting for First Reconciliation-6:00-8:30 in Social Hall

Nov. 9th Parent meeting for First Reconciliation-6:00-8:30 in Social Hall

Nov. 28th First Penance Service in Church at 7 p.m.

Nov. 30th First Penance Service in Church at 6p.m.

Pick one date:

Jan. 9th Parent meeting for First Communion-6:00-8:30 in Social Hall

Jan. 11th Parent meeting for First Communion-6:00-8:30 in Social Hall

Feb. 25th Bread Baking Retreat for Children-9:00-noon in Social Hall

March 5th Parent meeting for First Communion-6:00-8:30 in Social Hall

First Communions: weekends of April 15th , April 22nd , April 29th , May 6th

(Mrs. Cannavan & Mrs. Venditti lead a First Communion retreat for all second graders on Holy Thursday during school hours.)

HOMWORK

We expect every child to read each night. There is no time, page or book limit set. This can be the child reading to you, you reading to the child, or reading together. Record the title of the book on the Home Reading Log each night and the number of pages read. If they are reading a chapter book you may write the name of each chapter read instead of the title of the book each night. Keep this in their school folder at all times on the school side. We will check these periodically and when you have filled one page we will send home a new one.

Written homework will be listed on the agenda each night. Thursdays will almost always be working on Banking (as soon as it begins) and Fridays will be Religion or reading. We are trying to set aside Mondays for Handwriting, Tuesdays for Math, and Wednesdays for Spelling homework. Any work not completed in the day will need to be finished at home as extra homework and returned the next day.

ATTENDANCE

In order to have the best learning environment, it is vital that the children are on time for school. Please make every effort to get your child to school on time.

- ❑ Our class starts at exactly 7:50 everyday. Help your child develop a great habit of promptness. If your child is tardy 5 times you will receive a reminder letter about our policy and after 10 tardies we will set up a conference with Mrs. Doherty to help your family make a plan to get here on time.
- ❑ If your child is absent please remember to call school on the day of the absence and send a note or e-mail us.
- ❑ Make up work from an absence will be sent home **the day they return to school**. We are finding that we do not have adequate time to get a day's work together on the day your child is sick. So we will gather any makeup work at the end of each day and give it to your child when they return to school. Your child will have a week to return any make up work so as to not add any stress to an already sick child. Work may also be sent home with a sibling with advance notice.

DISMISSAL

Second graders will be taken down the car dismissal line in between lane A and B along the sidewalk and then down between lane C and D to the end of the parking lot. If your youngest is in 1st or kindergarten we will send your child down Lane A and B.

We are trying to take the stress for all out of early dismissal. We know that there are those occasional times that you need to take your child out of school

early for a doctor or dentist appointment. To make this smooth and stress free for everyone involved we **highly recommend** that you have your child signed out before 2:45. On the occasion you need to pick your child up early, please send a note that day and we will have your child packed up and ready to be called to the office.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Contact your teacher if you are able to take time during the day to help in the classroom. We are looking for parents who can help manage part of the class while the teacher works with small groups in reading and math or listen to kids read.

RESPONSIBILITY Oops Shelf

Help your child to grow in responsibility. If your child forgets something remember there is an Oops Shelf that they may check during the day. As part of our enriched environment we are focusing on no interruptions in the classroom and the Oops shelf is one of the tools that help us accomplish that goal.

UNIFORM POLICY

Please check your handbook for the uniform policy. We will be checking uniforms starting next week. We know we won't have any problems with 2nd grade.

WATER AND SNACKS

In a bodybrain classroom we ask that every child have a water bottle **every day**. It is very important to the learning process. **Everyone is required to take their bottle home each night to clean, so as to avoid bacteria build up.** The children may refill their bottle at the water fountain during the day.

Make sure your child has a healthy substantial breakfast and send two healthy snacks for which we have built in time during our day. Healthy means that it is baked not fried, and sugar is not one of the first three ingredients. (keep in mind that sugar is hidden in names like corn syrup, fructose etc.) Some ideas: Fruits, veggies, cheese, pretzels, nuts, popcorn, beef sticks, crackers, peanut butter, etc. A great resource that explains how what you eat affects what you think and feel is "The Care and Feeding of the Brain" by Kenneth Giuffre. A list of healthy snacks is attached to this packet.

LUNCH

Our lunch time is 11:30 this year. We have recess first and lunch afterwards. If your child brings a cold lunch we do not allow soda pop to be included in the cold lunch.

MONEY SENT TO SCHOOL

Please make sure that any money you send to school is in an envelope marked with the child's name, grade, and the purpose of the money.

BOOK ORDERS

We would like to send home Scholastic Book Orders on a monthly basis. If there is a parent who would be interested in taking care of the organization of this for Mrs. Cannavan or Mrs. Venditti (meaning ordering, payment and record keeping), please let us know as soon as possible.

BIRTHDAYS

Again this year at St. James we are celebrating birthdays by letting the birthday boy or girl come dressed out of uniform on their birthday. They will announce your child's name during morning announcements on the day of or on the Monday after a weekend birthday. You may send treats if you wish - let us know either in a voice mail, note or email. If your child is a summer birthday please let us know when they will celebrate. Also, if your child's birthday falls on a weekend or vacation day let us know when you decide to celebrate. (We have paper towels, but if plates or a knife is needed, please send to school with the treats.)

CLASS PARTIES

In second grade we celebrate Halloween as All Hallows Eve or the Eve of All Saints Day. We do this by participating in Middle School's Penny Carnival. Our Christmas celebration is usually in conjunction with our Advent Service Project and we try to have an Advent theme or a birthday party for Jesus. We also celebrate Valentine's Day. If you are interested in helping with Halloween or Valentine's Day please contact your room parent.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

The second grade newsletter comes out at least once a month. We will be e-mailing the newsletters instead of sending home papers as soon as we get everyone's e-mail address. The newsletter will also be posted on our website as well. If you do not have computer access we will send home a paper copy of the newsletter. Our web page has lots of fun educational links as well. If you need to talk with your child's teacher you can either contact her through voice mail or preferably e-mail. Also, don't forget you can jot us a short note in the Agenda notebook! (We prefer e-mail!!!!!!)

1. Voice mail - Mrs. Venditti ext. 246 Mrs. Cannavan ext. 244
2. E-mail - chris.venditti@stjames-school.org ann.cannavan@stjames-school.org