



SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

850 Washington Street • Braintree, MA 02184
Phone: (781) 848-0842 • Fax: (781) 356-5309 • www.sfab.org



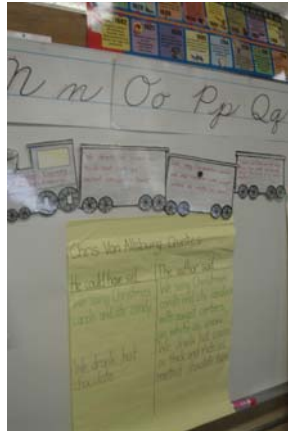
Saint Francis of Assisi Mission Statement: We are a Catholic community of faith striving to follow Jesus, pledging each day to do our best by imitating Saint Francis of Assisi as "instruments of peace." Our goal is to maintain a safe and healthy environment and to be academically prepared for this technological age.

Dear Parents,

Happy 2010! I hope everyone enjoyed spending Christmas with loved ones and had a safe and happy holiday season. Throughout the upcoming month, 3rd grade will be extremely busy. The last week is Catholic Schools Week, which is a very exciting time at St. Francis. The following is a brief review of our December studies and a look ahead to the upcoming month.

Language Arts

Throughout December we worked diligently on writing skills. We practiced writing paragraph summaries using the hamburger chart to organize our ideas. We also used our vivid imaginations to create exciting, descriptive stories. After reading The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg, we decided to take *our* readers on a magical train ride just like Van Allsburg took his readers on a magical train ride to the North Pole. We learned to use our senses to help describe our surroundings and also used *similes* to help our reader imagine they are going on the journey with us.



I encourage students to continue reading pleasure books each night. In December, students exemplified their ability to identify characters, problems and solutions within a story and the comprehension skills; also compare and contrast and cause and effect. As we began our third Open Court unit, Imagination, 3rd graders not only find themselves more knowledgeable about the world around them but also more proficient in utilizing reading strategies. We will use this magical theme to incorporate what we learn from our reading to our writing. Please have your child start thinking about their favorite fairy tale. We will be writing our own variations of our favorite fairy tale within the next month.

Reading and writing go naturally together. Each helps to reinforce the other and establish the importance of good communication for your child. By helping your child practice writing skills, you are also helping your child develop sound reading skills. Children of any age can become involved in writing activities. The possibilities are endless. By making writing a fun and exciting part of your



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sharing time, you will be helping to ensure that your child gains a valuable communication skill. The following are some ideas to practice together.

- Encourage your child to write a brief description of a TV program you have recently seen. Ask your child to compare his or her descriptions to the one on the TV schedule.
- Work with your child to put together a list of new words heard during the week. These could be words heard in school, on television, or at meals. Ask your child to create sentences using some of these words.
- Encourage your child to create a monthly family newspaper. Using the daily paper for format, help your child to interview family members and write up fashion, sports, front page, comics, or other "newsworthy" sections. Photos can be used for added effect.
- After you and your child have read a story together, ask your child to make up a list of words in the story that describe taste, smell, hearing, touch, or sight. Encourage your children to use their senses to help them imagine and describe when they are writing.

Math

The students are really enjoying multiplication. To coincide with our Sadlier-Oxford multiplication unit students are; learning multiplication poetry from *The Best of Times* by Greg Tang to go along with each multiplication table, using manipulatives to discover new multiplication concepts, and are exploring multiplication through the use of technology; our classroom SMARTBoard and the student computers. There are many websites that aid students in not only developing an understanding for multiplication but also help students recite their math facts quickly. 3rd grade will also be coming home with flashcards each night. **Please make sure your child practices these facts every night to make these problems more automatic.** We will begin timed multiplication quizzes to ensure that the students are studying and can quickly recite their facts. One especially helpful website to help foster automaticity is Oswego's "Are you a math magician?" <http://www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/games/Mathmagician/mathsmulti.html> On this website, students must complete math facts within 1 minute. We are soaring through our multiplication tables and will soon explore the relationship between multiplication and division.

Science and Social Studies

Students will be enjoying geology: landforms, the layers of the earth, volcanoes, earthquakes, and rocks and minerals. In addition to hands-on learning, we will use the computer lab to take a look at some rocks and minerals and exciting diagrams on the internet. We will learn about the Revolutionary War and the many historical events that took place right in the state of Massachusetts.

Religion

Throughout January we will be reviewing the seven sacraments. Students will understand more about the Sacraments of Initiation, Sacraments of Healing, and Sacraments of Service. We will also take a look at parables and scripture stories from the Bible.

We will also begin an "Act of Kindness" project in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. and Catholic Schools Week. Be on the lookout for further information.



S A I N T F R A N C I S O F A S S I S I S C H O O L

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With the team's **cooperation and good listening**, we will have a very exciting month! As always, feel free to contact me via e-mail if you have any questions or concerns. I wish everyone a safe, happy, and healthy New Year!

Miss Giroux
AGiroux@sfab.org



T ogether
E veryone
A chieves
M ore