

Beginning of School Information for Fifth Graders

August, 2011

Dear Parents,

We hope you have all had a safe and enjoyable summer. We are looking forward to an exciting year and are anxious to get to know you and your child. As school begins, there is some information we would like to share with you. Since we are departmentalized, your child will have all three fifth grade teachers the same amount of time each day.

Snacks: Students may eat snacks during morning break. Please pack nutritious snacks such as fruits, vegetables, cheese sticks, granola bars, or trail mixes. We do ask students **NOT** to bring pop as a snack at recess and/or lunch.

Recess: Students do go out for all recesses (unless there is inclement weather) so proper clothing needs to be worn. If your child is unable to go outside for recess, he/she needs to bring a note from home.

Book Orders: Each month your child will bring home book club orders. This is completely optional. If your child orders books, please return the form in a marked envelope with the exact change or a check made out to the book club.

Homework: Fifth graders will be expected to spend approximately 45-90 minutes an evening doing homework, as suggested in the school handbook. **IF A CHILD HAS NO ASSIGNED HOMEWORK OR HAS COMPLETED ALL ASSIGNMENTS AT SCHOOL, HE/SHE SHOULD STILL SPEND THE TIME READING, PRACTICING MATH FACTS OR REVIEWING NOTES.**

According to the school handbook, fifth grade students may receive reduced credit for late assignments. If late homework begins to be a problem, we will send a note home or contact you via e-mail or phone. Please don't let your child use the excuse, "I couldn't get my work done because of sports" or "I left my work at school, etc." All assignments and test dates are posted in the classrooms, and **each child should use the assignment notebook daily.** Parents please look at the assignment notebook each day and ask your child questions about the assignments.

Legibility and neatness are extremely important in both writing and math assignments. It would be helpful if parents would look over any work to encourage your child in these areas.

Please keep any unused school supplies at home until needed.

Home Folders: Each child will be asked to take home graded and/or completed work. We encourage you to go through the contents with your child.

Major tests or packets of work are to be returned to school with a parent signature to insure that you are kept up to date on your child's progress.

****Backpacks:** Be sure to have your child **empty the backpack each day** and leave what is **not needed for school at home.**

Supplies Needed at Home: Students need the following supplies **AT HOME** where he/she does homework: **pencils, pens, erasers, supply of loose leaf paper, dictionary, scissors, markers and a ruler.** This alleviates your child having to carry home a pencil bag each day. It would also help if your child has a quiet place to study.

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Changes for Fifth Graders

1. Students will move to three different teachers every day. They will have the opportunity to experience different teaching styles.
2. The students will receive a letter grade for the special classes (music, art, PE, health and computer).
3. Books, supplies, etc. must be carried from class to class.
4. Students will have a personal cubby in the hallway for books.
5. Textbooks have more content and thought-provoking material. Students are expected to be able to read, understand, and discuss the materials. There is not as much drill work during class time.
6. Students will be expected to be responsible and organized when dealing with class changes.
7. Students will need to copy down all assignments from the teachers and know what books and materials are needed to take home each day.
8. Students will need to study for tests at home in addition to the preparation given in class.
9. Students must be responsible when walking to classes such as art, music, PE, or health, when an adult supervisor might not be able to accompany them.

Daily Conversation Starters to Use with Your Fifth Grader

1. What do you have for homework? If homework was completed in school may I see it? May I see your daily planner!
2. Are there any special projects you should be working on?
3. Do you have any upcoming tests you should study for?
4. Have you completed your independent reading requirements for this month?
5. Do you have any graded papers and/or tests for me to sign?
6. If your child's answer to all the above is "NO," you might want to contact the teacher ASAP.

Grade 5 School Year

Religion & Social Studies—Sister Kathleen Marie Henscheid skm@stpeterskc.org/327

Religion

Religion is a very important part of our curriculum here at St. Peters. Our text, *We Believe*, is a spiral approach to learning our Catholic faith. Each chapter presents the truths found in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and in accordance with the Magisterium of the Church. The four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church—Creed, Sacrament, Morality, and Prayer are taught and developed. The text provides chapters on Doctrine, Scripture, and Liturgical Season lessons. Online resources for children, teachers, and parents can be found on the Web site under www.WeBelieveweb.com.

Social Studies

Our American history is the focus of the fifth grade social studies program, using the Harcourt text series, *The United States: Making a New Nation*. The text places emphasis on the importance of studying history and the process historians use to do it. Social studies is an ideal area in which to introduce and reinforce study and research skills such as note taking, locating information and writing reports, and to develop higher level thinking skills. Throughout the year various map skills will also be practiced. We will also use *Time for Kids*. Fifth graders participate in the National Geography Bee.

Reading and Writing—Charlotte Jett
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Reading

The fifth grade students will enjoy a mixture of classic children's literature and more contemporary award-winning fiction in our literature based classroom. Research, inquiry, discussion, imagination, and writing responses accompany our class readings. Activities are designed to allow for individual interpretation and comprehension assessment. Music, meter, and movement are welcome additions to any novel, unit, or theme study. Students keep a reading log for independent reading. Points are earned either through Accelerated Reader quizzes or short written reports. Reading Log points are calculated as a percentage of the student's goal, and that percent is averaged as a test grade at the end of each quarter.

Poetry is an integral part of Language Arts class, and although students are guided in the majority of their poetry writing, they are always free to explore the inner poet in free verse. Recognizing the imagery, rhythm, and sound of poetry enriches our reading experiences as well as our learning experiences. It is toward that end that we share poems aloud, and even put a couple to memory.

Writing

Writing is a separate grade on the report card and indicates the student's progress in all written expression, including spelling and grammar. Throughout the year we will work with varied sentence structures, colorful and specific vocabulary, correct word usage, punctuation, and grammar specific rules. Student writing will focus on writing good paragraphs, with topic sentence and supporting details. These good paragraphs are in effect **good essay question answers**, and combined with an outline will progress toward short reports, essays, and stories. Students will do letter writing and persuasive writing as assessed pieces. The *6-Trait* writing format will be included for writing instruction and assessment. Students will have a Sadlier-Oxford *Vocabulary Workshop* text book, and will do some work with parts of speech, sentence structure, diagramming, and punctuation review.

Science & Math—Rosemarie Schneider
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Science

Students in fifth grade examine three broad areas of science: Life Science, Earth Science and Physical Science. The science series for fifth grade is Macmillan's *Science: A Closer Look*. Every effort is made to provide as many hands-on experiences as possible in order to reinforce the scientific process. In the Life Science sections students will examine the diversity of life on Earth. Earth Science sections will examine resources, weather and space. Topics in Physical Science include force and energy, light and sound.

Math

Fifth grade students continue in the math series *Math Trailblazers*. The basic principle behind this series is that math is best learned in real-world contexts that make sense to children. Students are guided through explorations that lead to a deeper understanding of math concepts, not just a memorization of rules. There is a strong math/science correlation in the text, with lots of hands-on activities and use of manipulatives. The fifth grade focal points focus on division, fractions, problem solving and critical thinking. **Students are expected to be fluent in basic math facts by fifth grade.** If students do need some remedial work on math facts they will be given activities to practice at home to help strengthen their understanding of the basic facts. Students who struggle with basic facts can become very frustrated when they are also trying to master other math concepts at the same time.

We are so delighted to have your child in class this year, and we are dedicated to helping each child grow spiritually, scholastically, socially, and emotionally as much as possible. We will keep you informed about classroom happenings through our teachers' newsletter every other week, so be sure to read that newsletter. Please feel free to contact any of us if you have a question or concern. You may leave messages on our voice mail or e-mail if you wish, and we will contact you later.

Sincerely,

Rosemarie Schneider (Math/Science)
Charlotte Jett (Language Arts)
Sister Kathleen Marie (Religion/Social Studies)

