

What's the Buzz in Third Grade



October/November 2011



A note from Mrs. Van Becelaere

A very big thank you to everyone for remembering my birthday. I really enjoyed the Happy Birthday songs! The beautiful yellow mums and kind leaf notes from all my students made it a very special day for me!!

A super big thank you to all our moms and dads who volunteered their time to make the Third Grade Retreat so meaningful for our children. The children had so much fun discovering their gifts and talents through the many exciting and motivating activities. They are ready for their mission to serve others and praise God.

Fall is finally here, and I am looking forward to some cool fall days! During fall and winter please remind your children to dress warmly with jackets, coats, hats and gloves when needed. We go out for recess on cool/cold days for fresh air and exercise, and we want to be warm and comfortable too.

For this newsletter I thought I would cover some information about spelling, reading, online resources, grades, and our bee-havior plan. If you ever need help or have questions, check out our class web page at www.mrsvb.com where you will find lots of helpful information about third grade. Please feel free to email me too, and I will do the same. Let's work together to have a great year!

UPCOMING . . .

- October 7: The Living Rosary—2 P.M. in the church
- October 10: Parent/Teacher Conference signup sheets will be posted by the school office.
- October 14: Early Release Day/Spirit Day and End of first quarter
- October 17: Book Fair—Our class day to preview books
- October 18: Book Fair—Our class day to buy books
- October 19: Early Dismissal and Parent/Teacher Conferences 1-4 P.M.
- October 20: Early Dismissal and Parent/Teacher Conferences 1:30-7 P.M.

- October 21: No School - Trunk or Treat
- October 31: Orange/black STUCO dress down day and Halloween Party 2:00 to 2:45
- November 5: Spirit Day, Kohl's Cares Pep Rally/Reception, and Early Dismissal
- November 14: Sack Mass
- November 18: STUCO Dress Down Day
- November 23: Spirit Day and Early Dismissal
- November 24 and Nov. 25: Thanksgiving Break
- November 27: First Sunday of Advent

SPELLING

A reading *Home Connection* page is sent home every Friday. Along with an optional reading activity, the spelling and vocabulary words (with meanings) for the next week's spelling test are included. If your child wants or needs a head start over the weekend he/she can get started practicing the spelling and vocabulary words. Please keep this list in the red home folder on the return to school side to use for practice throughout the week at home and at school. You can help your child by looking over his/her homework to make sure it is correct and complete. **All of our spelling work is done in our red notebooks and spelling and vocabulary books.**

Our spelling week generally goes like this:

Monday: At school -- Take spelling pretest.

Homework -- Check and correct mistakes three times each.

Tuesday: At School -- Go over meanings of vocabulary words together.

Homework - Do the Vocabulary on the back of the spelling pretest, and use the vocabulary words in sentences - due by Friday.

Wednesday: Homework -- Finish spelling workbook pages or super speller pages.

Thursday: Finish vocabulary sentences and proofread.

Friday: Take the spelling test at school or if your child is absent, at home.

Every day: Homework - Practice your words. You can go to www.spellingcity.com for a fun place to practice your words at home. You will need to enter the words on your own that you need to practice.

On a four day school week, we will not have vocabulary sentence homework--look for the other spelling homework assignments to be on a different day too. The spelling test is always on the

last day of the school week. On a three day school week, we usually do not have a spelling list.

SUPER SPELLERS: Starting in second quarter all children who have a 100 on the pretest need to have their pretests checked and signed by a parent and returned to school on Tuesday. They will receive a 'Super Speller' spelling list and activity pages to do for that week and to practice for a "Super Speller" test on Friday.

READING

Accelerated Reading and Pizza Hut BOOK IT! programs

To improve our students' reading skills and ability, we participate in the Accelerated Reader (AR) Reading Program. Every Tuesday on our library day, each child checks out three AR books to read at his/her independent reading level. In third grade our AR reading goal is to earn 10 points or more per quarter at or above 85 percent reading comprehension accuracy. Your child earns points by reading AR books and passing AR quizzes. Look for AR Practice Quiz Reports to come home every week for each AR book your child reads. This will make it easy for you to check how well your child is meeting the goal. Your child's total AR points and percent correct are a part of his/her reading grade.

We will use our AR points to participate in the Pizza Hut's BOOK IT! Reading Incentive Program this year. If your child earns five points by mid quarter, he/she will earn a Reading Award Certificate; and if he/she earns ten points by the end of the quarter, another Reading Award Certificate can be earned. The children can use their certificates to get a free personal pan pizza at Pizza Hut.

We have AR reading and test time at school every day. To keep up with their AR reading goal (a little over one point or more a week), the children need to do AR reading at home too! The children need to read and test over only one book at a time.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR MATH, SCIENCE, AND SOCIAL STUDIES

We use the Math Connects Program by Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Publishers. Our science and social studies programs are by the same publisher too. You can access their home pages by going to www.mhschool.com or by visiting the Cool Links on our class webpage at www.mrsvb.com. Please take time to visit these pages. They offer a variety of online resources to help your child succeed. In math there's a personal tutor to help explain how to do the main skill in every lesson, and in science and social studies there is a summary and a quiz for every lesson. In addition, there are interesting and challenging activities to do too.

Just a reminder--if you have the Internet at home, your child can access the math book online. From the third grade Math Connects homepage, you can click on StudentWorks Plus Online to access the online edition of our math book. Once there you can enter our access code: **D6CE9B95B9** to be able to use the math book online at home. It's a great resource for reviewing lessons too. Just click on the little headphones and a teacher voice will read the lesson again to your child.

How well does your child know his/her addition and subtraction facts? Since addition and subtraction facts should be memorized by third grade, you may want to check out Fact Dash on the math site for a fun fact game to help improve your child's mastery of the basic facts. Check out the other fun math sites on the Cool Links too. This is a good way for the **children to practice their facts at home every day for speed and accuracy.**

GRADES

Our focus is on doing our best work by practicing the 4Cs. This means doing correct, complete, careful and creative work.

During the first quarter all assignments and projects earn pluses, Ss, or checks. A plus means excellent and outstanding work. An S means good or satisfactory work. A check means that the work is not satisfactory and improvement or more practice is needed. This method is used as a transition from first to second quarter.

Starting in second quarter, the students will earn percents and A, B and C letter grades. We will talk about percents and letter grades at school and send home and post a copy of the grade scale for the children to use. The scale is also posted on the Assessment link on our class web page.

I am very pleased with the work your children are doing. Every now and then you might see 'Try Again', 'Make Corrections', 'Finish and Return' or something similar at the top of papers that need more work. In order to allow your children the opportunity to bring up their grades, it is important that they correct and return these papers promptly and place them in the "missing work basket" at school.

Bee—havior Plan

We have three simple rules: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe. In the front of the room we have a Bee-havior Chart with a bee for each child. There are three levels—green, yellow, and red. Our bee-havior goal is to keep our bees in the green level, which means good behavior—keep going. The yellow level means careful—time to think and do a thinking lap(s) and

talk to a teacher at recess about how to follow the rules. The red level means stop—time to write mom and dad a note to let them know about my problem and how I plan to do better. Children can move back up the levels by showing significant improvement in their behavior. Everyone returns to the green level at the beginning of each day ready to “Be the best you can be”. Most children stay in the green level all week!

You can check your child's planner every day to find out his/her bee-havior level. It will be indicated by a green, yellow, or red dot that your child makes in the comment box at the bottom of each day.

You are wonderful . . .

Your children are wonderful workers. We have filled our red notebooks with lots of good work this quarter so please remember that your child needs to bring a new red spiral notebook to school for second quarter.

Thank you to Mrs. Notestine for donating an electric pencil sharpener to our classroom. We really needed one. I think the children would like a few rubber play ground balls and maybe some long jump ropes for recess time. If you care to send them to school with your child, that would be nice.

Your children are adjusting quite nicely to third grade, and I am really enjoying them. Thank you for all your help and support at home going over homework, signing planners, and getting your children to bed early. It really makes a difference, and we really appreciate it.

I have been asked to remind everyone to keep bringing in Hy-Vee receipts and Box Tops for Kids. I know this really helps out a lot when everyone participates.

I am looking forward to meeting with everyone at parent/teacher conference time!

