

Thursday, September 3rd, 2009

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our new school year. I am happy to be given the opportunity to educate your child. I am looking forward to a fun and educational year. The following information may answer many of your questions.

A) Recess/Snack Time: Everyday at 10:10 the children will have a 20 minute recess which begins with the students sitting at the tables to eat their snack brought from home. Often the children will just take something from their lunch box.

B) Birthdays: Birthday snacks (cupcakes, cookies, fruit, etc.) may be sent to school the morning of his/her birthday. Weekend birthdays will be celebrated the Friday prior to the date. All vacation birthdays will be changed to another date. These dates may be decided by you. Please let me know. We celebrate birthdays at 10:00.

C) Holiday Parties: Throughout the year there will be 6 classroom celebrations. At this time, parents are asked to provide certain items (paper goods and juice or baked goods, fruit, ice cream, etc.)

D) Take Home Reading: Each Thursday (Beginning in October), books, ditto booklets, or dittos will be sent home. This will continue for 35 weeks. This reading will reinforce our classroom reading. Please read to, or let your child read to you. Please return books, stories, or dittos when your child has mastered the words. A bookbag will be sent home each Monday, and needs to be returned by Friday. This is "fun reading" and words in books do not need to be mastered.

E) Spelling Exams: Formal Spelling Exams begin in February. Although creative spelling is encouraged, proper spelling will be modeled.

F) Prayer Corners: Each child needs a prayer corner in his/her bedroom. This may be a shelf, small section of a bookcase or wall. I will provide religious items to help your child remember to pray.

G) Homework: First Graders will have an average of twenty minutes of homework Monday-Thursday beginning September 8th. The homework is designed to reinforce classroom lessons. **Homework is not mandatory.** If your child forgets his/her homework, or loses it, don't worry. They have time to learn responsibility. If your child has difficulty learning sight words or math facts, an additional 10 minutes of practice may be needed to ensure your child's academic success.

H) Back-To-School-Night: On September 3rd we will have our Back-To-School-Night. This is a good time to come with questions. This is also the time that I will post the sign-

up sheets for all classroom activities.

I) Mass: Our First grade class is responsible for one Mass. All family members are encouraged to attend. Our Mass date will be on Grandparents/Special Person Day. Our class attends Mass every Friday at 8:30. All are invited.

J) Concerns: If for any reason your child comes home upset, sad or worried, please try to communicate with him/her. If the problem is unresolved, please try to see me the next morning between 7:40 and 8:00. If that is impossible, send me a note, give me a call, or E-mail me. Problems and hurt feelings need to be solved quickly.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding anything, and you think we'll need to talk more than 15 minutes, call our secretary, and set up an appointment for Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday after school.

K) Student Partners: Each 1st grader will have an assigned Fourth Grade study partner. The 4th grader will assist your child with reading, writing, art projects and math games. They will meet on Wednesdays from 2:00 to 2:40. We will meet twice monthly.

Each 1st grader will also be given one 2nd grade prayer partner. We pray for the 2nd graders to become closer and closer to Jesus as they prepare for their two Sacraments.

L) Sign-Up Lists: The sign-up sheets will be posted in the first grade room the evening of Back-To-School-Night. The sign-up sheets will include:

1. Snacks, etc. for classroom celebrations - I ask that **all parents** share in this responsibility by signing up for at least one: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's, St. Patrick's Day, and end of the year party. At these celebrations we practice our social skills and manners. Three are mainly for play, and the other three are prayer services. Each of the six celebrations will include a small meal.

2. Santa's Gingerbread Workshop with 4th Grade Partners - Wednesday, December 17th - About 10 parents are needed to prepare graham crackers on milk cartons, and set up 6 tables with all the frosting and goodies needed to make wonderful gingerbread houses.

3. Valentines Workshop: About 8 parents are needed to make Valentine mail boxes. This involves putting paper on shoe boxes, and cutting a slot on the top. (All material will be provided)

4. Busy Work like typing or book making to be done at home: This is a great way for you to earn your hours.

5. 100th Day - About 6-10 parents are needed to set up games and activities (in the gym). We will celebrate this day on Monday, Feb. 8th - (10:00-12:00)

6. Arts and Crafts: Please sign up with Mrs. Barsi for "Art in Action".

7. Field Trips: About 8 drivers will be needed for our four field trips. These dates will be given at a later date.

*Lemos Farm *Play- No Date yet *Coyote Point *Palo Alto Jr. Museum

8. Guest Speaker/Story Teller

9. Sports or Lead up games - usually this is working with groups of 6-18 children on Thursday and/or Friday afternoons from 1 to 2. This usually begins in the Spring.

Thank you for the privilege of teaching your child. I know we are going to have a wonderful year. Teaching God's children is my vocation. Your children become my family for the next nine months. I will grow to care and love each and every one of them.

The following is a poem written by Kahlil Gibran.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies, but not their souls.
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation, time and effort. All of us are here for the "good" of the children. I will strive to make this year a wonderful learning experience for each and every first grader.

Sincerely,
Sister Sharon

First Grade Teacher

