

Welcome to Fifth Grade!

Welcome 5th graders and parents. I am very much looking forward to our time together this year. Fifth Grade is an exciting and challenging year as you prepare for Junior High. I wish to provide you with as much information as I can regarding class curriculum, class expectations, and some of the highlights of the academic year ahead. In this way I hope to help you settle easily into Fifth Grade, and have a successful year.

Helping us along the way is Mrs. Gomes, our wonderful classroom aide. I feel very blessed to have such a thoughtful caring person working with us every day.

Curriculum

Social Studies includes: Geography (Daily Geography, memorizing states and capitals), Early Colonization, American Revolution and Current Events. Fifth Grade Social Studies follows a wonderful period of American History. There will be many opportunities for role-play, hands-on projects, and the use of technology to enhance student understanding.

Language Arts includes: Reading (literature textbooks, novels, book reports, SSR time), Writing, Grammar (Daily Oral Language [DOL]) spelling, handwriting, speaking and listening. We will continue to use the Rebecca Sitton Spelling Program that you began in fourth grade. We will also begin the Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary Workshop this year, which you will continue through Junior High. This program provides students with a very robust vocabulary bank.

Book reports will be due most months beginning in September, with some consideration given to other ongoing projects and school vacation time. There will be a variety of books and book report formats. Books must always be at least 120 pages in length and a book should be in your student's desk at all times.

Math will include: Multiplication and Division of Large Numbers, Fractions, Decimals and Geometry. If your child is not proficient with his/her math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division), now is the time to practice. Flash cards are a great tool.

In **Religion** we will be using our religion book, *Blest Are We*. The major focus in 5th grade is sacraments. We also work on many prayers throughout the school year, this year with a particular emphasis on the new Roman Missal that will be introduced diocese-wide in Advent. Religion will also include Safe Environment throughout the year and Family Life, which begins approximately in April. You will receive the Family Life book before that time to review with your child.

In **Science** we will study: Systems of Living Things, The Solar System, The Nature of Matter, Water on Earth, and Weather.

Students will also study **Music** (Monday) with Mrs. Hopwood, and **Computers** with Mrs. Curran, and **Spanish** (Tuesday & Thursday) with Senora Morley.

PE – Fifth grade will be participating in PE on **Tuesday and Friday**. Students will wear their PE clothes to school on these days. Only the uniform specified in the Student Handbook will be allowed on these days.

Discipline Plan for Fifth Grade

As is the policy in all classrooms Fifth Grade has rules that need to be followed to allow all the students to reach their potential. It is important for the fifth grade students to learn to work well independently, and therefore I will be placing a strong emphasis on working diligently during independent classroom assignments.

Procedures - A student who is being disruptive either through chatting or not following procedures in a timely manner, will be given a verbal warning. If the behavior continues, the student's name will be placed on the board. If the behavior still continues, a check will be placed by that student's name. At the end of the day each student whose name is on the board will receive a tally on our class chart and an extra tally for each check. A student whose name is on the board five times in one week will receive a detention slip. A student who receives three checks in a day will receive a written warning. The student's conduct grade will be based on the number of tallies received. (See the attached grading scale.) All students start over each trimester with a clean slate.

Bathroom Use – Students may use the restroom before school, at recess, lunch, or after school. They will not be allowed to leave the class to use the restroom. If it is an emergency, they can come to me and tell me and they will be allowed to go, however, it will cost them five minutes of their next recess, lunch or at the end of the day. If your son or daughter has a medical condition that requires him/her to use the restroom more frequently, please speak with me.

Homework

Homework is an extension of what is being learned in class and will be posted daily. There will be homework every night Monday – Thursday and very occasionally on the weekends. Homework is posted on our white board and includes all unfinished daily work as well as specific homework assignments. It will also be posted on our class webpage. Any assignment turned in one day late will be counted as late, but will still receive full credit. An assignment turned in 2 days late will not be accepted and will receive a zero. The students will be responsible for writing the assignments in their homework planners, completing the work and having it ready to turn in at **8:00 AM**. It will be considered late after that time. If parents drop off homework in the office, it will be considered late and will not be delivered to the classroom. Diocesan guidelines call for 45 – 60 minutes of homework per night. This does not include long-term projects or studying for tests. At least 90% of our homework is a continuation of work begun in class. If your student is consistently spending longer than 45 – 60 minutes per night on daily work after the first three weeks, please let me know.

Missing Assignments

Fifth grade is your student's first experience with the Missing Assignment (MA) system. At the beginning of each subject period, all homework and classwork will be checked for completion. If a student has not completed the work or forgot it at home, he/she will receive an MA slip. This MA must be signed by a parent that night and returned the next morning at 8:00 AM along with the completed assignment. If it is not returned another MA will be issued. If the 2nd MA is not returned, parents will be contacted. The MA system will determine your child's homework grade. Each missing assignment will drop the homework grade by 1%. Please do not sign the MA if your student cannot show you the completed homework. All students start over with a clean slate each trimester.

Additional Programs

1. **Science Camp** – Fifth graders have a wonderful time experiencing an extension to the curriculum by attending Science Camp in the Marin Headlands. It is an exceptional program and we will be attending **March 28 – March 30**. Please reserve those dates now because all students are required to go for the entire three days, as it is part of the curriculum. A 5th Grade parent meeting will be scheduled early in the first trimester to discuss the program, fees, and potential fundraising.
2. **Safety Patrol** – Fifth grade is responsible for Safety Patrol. There is a separate letter for sign-ups for Safety Patrol. If possible, I would like to see everyone sign-up for Safety Patrol. This is a great service to our school community.
3. **After School Sports** – St. Catherine's offers an after school sports program beginning in fifth grade. The sports available are: Boys – Football, Basketball, Volleyball. Girls – Volleyball, Basketball, Softball
Sign-ups will occur very soon.
4. **Altar Serving** – Fifth graders have the opportunity to be trained in Altar Serving this year. Sign-ups will be soon. The students must attend one of two training sessions, before being ready to serve. Mrs. Smith will advise me of the training dates as soon as they have been scheduled. I urge every fifth grader to sign-up. This is an important service to our Parish Community, and I arrange our day so that the students really do not miss much if they are assigned to a morning mass.

Standardized Testing

The Iowa Achievement test will be given September 12-16. Please arrange any appointments around that time. Fifth grade also takes the ACRE test in the winter. It is an assessment of their understanding of their Catholic Faith and a survey of their Moral Values. The test is used by the diocese to assess the effectiveness of our religion program.

Tests

There will be weekly tests in spelling dictation, vocabulary, and DOL usually on Friday. In Social Studies, and possibly Science, there will be frequent quizzes and a chapter test at the end of each chapter. This is a lot, but keeps the students from being overwhelmed by the vast amount of material in these subjects. There will be mini-math quizzes sometimes daily, a larger quiz midway through each chapter and a test at the end of each chapter, as well as timed math facts tests in the beginning of the year. A parent's signature is required on all major tests.

Assessment

Student grades can be viewed on our online grading program. Your child should receive a username and password shortly after school begins. I work hard to keep grades current online. Progress Reports will be given out in early October and Conference Week will be the next week, but if you have any concerns before that please do not hesitate to come in and ask. Report cards for the first trimester will go home in late November.

Student Absence

If your student is absent please come in after school and receive that day's assignments. A REMINDER: If your child is absent, you must call the office on the morning of the absence.

Class Web Page

Homework will be posted on the class website, as well as ongoing assignments such as book reports. The fifth grade core words are also listed. I will hopefully be able to upload all necessary forms under the "useful files" section.

Teacher Availability

I am available before school if I'm not on yard duty and most days after school. Please stop in with quick questions. However, it is always best to email me to make an appointment if you have any concerns. My email address is mhannon@stcatherinemh.org. I check email daily.

Please detach and return the signature sheet by Tuesday, August 23

Welcome Letter Signature Sheet

I have read and understand the 2011 Welcome Letter which gives an overlay of 5th grade curriculum, policies and procedures

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

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