

January News for 5th Grade

Happy New Year! I hope that your Christmas was filled with the love and joy of family and friends celebrating God's greatest gift of all! I am looking forward to a wonderful new year with these amazing students.

We are off to an exciting start! Our new unit in **Science** is on weather and we started by investigating an endothermic chemical reaction as we made artificial snow this week. I hope your child came home excited about how the snow they made was colder than the water they put into it! This worked beautifully with our theme of water for this week in our reading anthology and our mock Baptism in our religion class. We are learning about water in all its forms and life-giving uses.

In celebration of our publishing of our first class book, we will be having an **Authors' Hour** this coming Tuesday, January 10th, from 1-2pm. During this time, parents, grandparents, and friends are invited to come in and hear the students read their own stories. Afterwards we will have an author signing and light refreshments. I hope that you will be able to come and celebrate our wonderful authors!

In **Writing** this quarter, we are starting off with an essay contest for the American Legion Auxiliary. This year's theme is "How Can I Show My Patriotism in My Community?" The essay must be between 250-300 words long. Now that they are authors, this should be a piece of cake! Once their essay is completed, they will begin Writers' Workshop again, this time writing their own individual books to be published by the end of this year.

In **Reading**, our next theme will be Folktales. I have a call in to a friend of mine who wrote a book on the local legend of Moll Dyer. Once I get her booked as a guest speaker, I will be working on a walking fieldtrip to downtown Leonardtown, to the actual setting of the story, and the rock that is a main part of it. I was told that the rock was originally on one of our own fifth grade students' family property! These are great text-to-self connections!

In **Math**, we are finishing up our 50th lesson and test in my math group. We have moved into more and more new concepts that the students are building upon as well as continually practicing the basics. This will ensure a solid mathematical foundation for their entire future! I am proud of their hard work and progress.

In **Social Studies**, we are studying several cultures around the world just prior to the European colonization of America, in order to better understand how they have influenced the history of our own country. We will be moving on to the arrival of the Mayflower after that. We completed a historical fiction book which was a diary of a young girl crossing the Atlantic on the Mayflower and settling in America. This laid a foundation in a very real way for our upcoming study.

In **Religion**, we are focusing on the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Confirmation. We began with an enactment of a Baptism, complete with my own christening gown, my son's Baptism candle, water, and pretend chrism oil. Our "parents", "priest", and "godparents" did an excellent job!