

Back to School

WELCOME TO THE 4TH GRADE CLASSROOM!

Communication

I can be reached by confidential notes sent in to the class in an envelope, or general notes, written in the planner. Just make sure that students alert me to the note's presence. Emails at teachmeLord@yahoo.com are the best. I can also be contacted by phone at 973-519-1039, if this becomes very necessary. Please be sure to talk to me about problems, and don't involve other parents (Mt. 18).

Special Subjects:

Gym: Fridays with Mrs. Como--girls and Mr. Zazopoulos--boys (come in gym uniform, including sneakers, or it hurts the grade)

Art: Thursdays with Katie Picciottoli (every week)

Music: Mondays with Lisa Cunningham

Latin: Monday/Thursday/Friday with Madai Soca

Chorus: Thursdays with Kristen Galardi

ACSI Bible Contest

This year's Bible passage to study is Genesis 26-50. You may wish to help your child read, study and review this book in order to prepare over the next few months in preparation for the early January test to help determine our representatives who would then go to the Bible Contest at Hawthorne Christian School in February (there are various criteria for who is chosen, but the test is one of the main issues). Some families use family worship time to read and study the Bible passages. The Christmas break is a great time to focus on these Scriptures, as well, since it is right before the test.

Hot Lunches and Other Notes Home

Please respond to communiques by signing them electronically or graphically in a timely manner.

Homework

I am shooting for students to have an hour of homework each night. How it really works out, though, is that fast students often have less than an hour, average speed students have an hour, and slower students can easily go well over an hour if they don't move along or if they have trouble. Let me know about any concerns if there is a pattern of days that concerns you, though, because I sometimes need feedback☺.

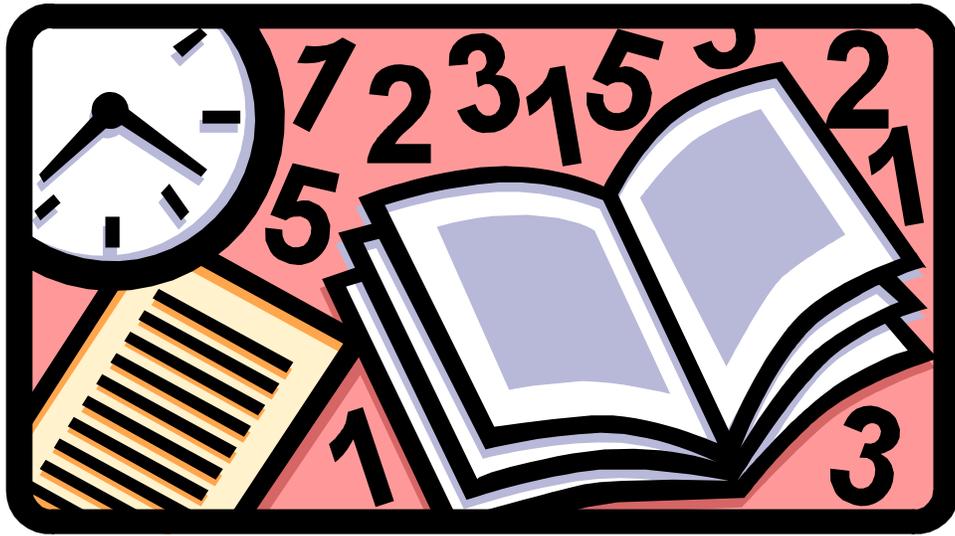
Class Moms

I don't ask class moms for very much, but you would be called upon to coordinate parties and feasts, esp.

ACCELERATED READERS

Accelerated reader books have corresponding quizzes on our class computer that are taken to assess comprehension. I am requiring that students garner at least seven points a quarter (let's look at the chart). Ten points will add extra credit to the reading grade.

*At the end of the year, a special reward will be given for those students who get 100 points!



Curriculum Overview

Bible:

We study the Old Testament in the fourth grade. The main focus is knowing the themes of all thirty-nine books. We plan to read a good deal of the Old Testament in class together, and I hope to open up all kinds of interesting passages, some which are well-known and some which are more obscure. I want students to learn new things every day, not just the same old lessons they know already from more basic Bible lessons when they have been younger. I will seek to have students see Christ in the Old Testament, since "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of (O.T.) prophecy." As well, I will have the students attempt to apply the teachings of the O.T. to their daily lives, whenever there appear to be good life applications on which to focus. Bible grades come from approximately 70% Bible test grades and 30% memory quiz grades. **It is important that students recite memory verses five to ten times every night, which should take about two to four minutes (let me give an example of Heb. 11:1-3).** It doesn't matter whether they get A's without studying much. They should be practiced each day Monday through Thursday nights so that the verses stay in their minds long after the quiz.

History:

The first part of the year is an overview of history from ancient history, medieval times, and early American history. After that first month and a half, or so, we settle into our main job of learning the rest of American history, from about 1800-present. I love history and will be exposing your students to a great deal of information. They will not have to know all of it. In general, students will need to learn only what we highlight in our notes, though I will sometimes throw a couple questions on a test that deals with things we discussed in class more than once, which might not be found in the notes. Skits, songs, videos, and museum exhibits help history come alive in class.

Math:

We use the *A Beka Book: Arithmetic, grade 4*. The fourth grade book takes us deeper into the basic processes of math (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division). It also takes us into fractions, measuring, graphs, decimals and basic geometry. This curriculum involves a comprehensive teaching methodology, including oral equations, concept cards, speed drills, and reviews, through daily worksheets and periodic tests. In class we will take time to drill math facts. It is important that they be done at home sometimes, too, and especially quite a bit for those students who need to catch up. We will soon have another addition facts test (on speed, as well as accuracy). If students are not learning their math facts well, then every math paper they do will take more time, and more problems will be wrong. Students are often required to fix mistakes in math papers and demonstrate that they now know how to do the problems correctly. Toward the end of the year, supplemental pages from SRA Math will be used to make sure our teaching accomplishes all of the California Curricular Standards for Math. These standards represent the most complete and ambitious major program in the U.S.

We are also going to be completing word problems from another source in class to augment the word problem attack skills of our students.

English:

Shurley Grammar serves as the beginning of English, with its great strength in rules, definitions, and identifying parts of speech. Then we move on to Bob Jones English, which gives us not only strong grammar, but a very strong writing emphasis. We utilize various writing strategies to help the students become proficient writers, including worksheets that help students write strong paragraphs and ones which have them take the ideas of others and compose their own pieces from them. We practice using dress-ups, including strong verbs, quality adjectives, and descriptive adverbs to make our writing more excellent. When graded papers come back to you, I ask that you look over the papers and especially talk to your children about anything you can reinforce in their minds concerning avoiding mistakes.

Science:

We have an excellent textbook from Bob Jones, especially regarding the activity manual. This provides many useful exercises which will take students beyond the textbook, labeling colorful pictures and diagrams, employing the scientific method, and describing and measuring what they see. We will be covering topics this year, such as insects and spiders, plants, forces and machines, electricity and magnetism, light, the moon, water and oceans, weathering and erosion, the earth's resources, digestion, and bones and muscles. There will be a science fair during the first quarter (spilling into the second quarter), and the project will be a large grade for the second marking period (this final grade is composed of several grades concerning the project). When you see the report card grade for the quarter dealing with the science fair project, don't react too quickly. Some students do very well on their tests and get good grades all three other quarters, but then their projects don't merit the same grade. The opposite can be true (and this is a little more often the case), that students may get lower grades on

tests, bringing down their report card grades, but then their science fair projects might make that one quarter shoot up many percentage points. Some secondary teachers will be helping with hands-on activities to give me a little break in the week to focus on administrative duties.

Reading:

We have a mixture between a basal and a literature based reading program. The Bob Jones fourth grade reader forms the backbone of the curriculum, with many interesting stories that have wonderful follow-up questions which require students to think about the stories and make both concrete and inferential connections in their thinking. There are also many skill pages that teach students how to interact with all kinds of data and demonstrate an ability to use that data in an understanding way. There are several novels that augment the fourth grade reading curriculum, and we generally read at least four of the selections below:

Matchlock Gun *Ink on His Fingers* *Twenty and Ten* *Trumpet of the Swan*

Twenty-One Balloons *Little House on the Prairie* *Rabbit Hill* *Homer Price*

We will read each book, chapter by chapter, and complete vocabulary and comprehension pages for some of the chapters. Comprehension pages will also include study skills and the examination of literary terms and styles employed. **Vocabulary quizzes, along with spelling and Bible memory quizzes, are generally on Friday (VBS).** I give all week for them to be studied, and at least **three minutes a night should be spent on each of them**, with Thursday receiving more time, since the quizzes are the next day. **Thursday would be an important time to test your child's readiness for the quizzes.**

Spelling:

Our Spelling Curriculum is *Spelling Workout*. This text is proving to be quite comprehensive and creative in its exercises for effective student learning. The book is laid out in a methodical way, by spelling and phonics rules. There are weekly spelling tests (Friday), which examine a list, usually twenty words, as well as the spelling rule for that list. Students are required to learn the bonus words, as well. During the first

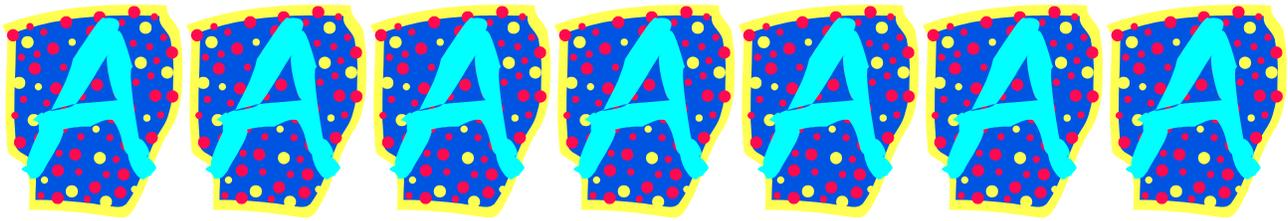
quarter, there will be an emphasis on six major spelling rules. Most weeks in the first marking period, students will be required to also reproduce the spelling rule(s) of the week. After we have learned them all, we will review them, and occasionally we will reference them throughout the year, so they stay fresh. In addition I expect students to spell and punctuate well in every written submission (I take into consideration the differing abilities of the students). When students study their notes, they should also pay attention to how to spell new terms. Students will often be docked a small amount for each word misspelled, and sometimes it makes an answer half wrong, if all the student has to do is copy the word correctly from a word bank or from a book. I sometimes have mercy and am not seeking to be severe, but if students do not see consequences for not being careful, they will not be learning valuable life lessons on the value of doing all things to the glory of God with all their might. I am just trying to have students (perhaps for the first time) pay very close attention to being correct in what they write. If your child has to work hours just to learn information, don't stress too much over how to spell a word like "hieroglyphics" (and there are many easier words which might be key words on study notes), but most students can be reasonably expected to at least spend a few seconds looking at each hard word and giving a shot at learning its spelling. If they still don't spell them right on the test, one-tenth of a point is not a big penalty, but I am hoping this policy will help more students spell correctly, and those who are a little more hopeless when it comes to spelling will at least be closer to the correct spellings of words. To help practice misspelled words, students are often required in class to write misspelled words three to five times each. Tests provide 50% of the grade; gradebook work, 25%; real world spelling, 25%.

Latin:

Fourth Grade Latin is a continuation of the curriculum started in third grade, Latin for Children, finishing Book A and starting book B. Mrs. Madai Soca teaches the students three days a week.

Handwriting:

TCS uses a traditional cursive program (Zaner-Bloser), which is probably very similar to the kind of cursive you remember learning as a child. It is portrayed over the whiteboard. Most of the handwriting worksheets will involve tracing and copying the spelling words in print and cursive, since this seems to be an ideal exercise to kill two birds with one stone (practicing handwriting and committing spelling words to memory). Please check these papers and require them to write their very neatest in both tracing and writing on these sheets and in general. **I will be passing out packets with several pages stapled, and when students complete the packets, I collect them and grade them; they generally get two main grades a quarter; the average of those grades determines half of the handwriting grade. The other half of the handwriting grade will be taken from the standard student writing on various assignments.** What good is it if students submit nice handwriting papers, but their general writing on all other papers is sloppy? Please sometimes have your child write something over which is not acceptable, and expect neat assignments when you check them each night. Handwriting pages are worth 50% of the grade, and 50% comes from various papers in a quarter that are chosen randomly and judged for relative neatness and penmanship.



Other Matters:

Report Cards:

The academic side of the report card is reported as percentages, compiled from tests, quizzes, and daily work. Special, like art, music, and gym have grades that are influenced more heavily by attitude, preparedness and effort.

Late Work / Homework:

It is the policy of the school that all **late class work and homework be marked down 10%** the first day. Failure to produce completed work the second day will result in a **(0%)**. The policy also is that whenever a student has been given four green slips indicating missing homework assignments or other important omissions, then the student will serve a detention after school according to school policy. These slips are pasted in the assignment book and should be signed by you. This is repeated for each four green slips. Student homework demerit slates are wiped clean after each quarter and are not related to behavioral demerits. It is a great burden for a teacher when any one student becomes a habitual late assignment offender, and it is hoped that if parents are diligent to expect and check for completed homework and placement in the correct folder each night, that this should not happen.

Behavioral Notification:

This green-colored notice will be pasted into the planner, as well, to indicate any concern with behavioral issues. It should be signed by a parent, and parents are requested to treat these especially seriously. Students should then show the signed green sheet to me the next day.

Birthdays:

Birthday goodies are always welcome. If your child has a summer birthday, you may want to have us celebrate a half-year birthday instead, or at the end of the school year. **There is no need to ask me if it is okay to bring goodies in on such and such a day. Just send them in, and your child can notify me of the fact.** We usually distribute these goodies at the beginning of first recess.

Money Matters:

Please put ALL monies in an envelope labeled with your child's name, and what the money is for! Please make all checks for Book Club, Gym Wear, Hot Lunches, etc. payable to: TCS. **Checks are preferable for all purchases.**

Day Planners:

Day planners are filled out daily with a student's homework and special information, or I type something to be pasted in. It is school policy that these planners be initialed by a parent, to signify that your child has completed his homework. This would require you to see that whatever is written in the planner to be accomplished is completed (scan the homework pages for completeness), and also that they are in the right folders and ready to go. This is especially important for those students who are not organized and who easily slip through the cracks if they are not supervised. When you communicate, please write directly into the planner and remind your child to see me about reading your note. If communications are confidential or involve some type of complaint, I ask that these notes be in a sealed envelope, or even better, email me! I also ask that you refrain from airing your opinions about a negative matter to your children. Let's have a united front in front of the children, with an open communication between us as adults alone so we can iron out any issues of disagreement.

Tardiness:

Children are required to be in the classroom at 8:10 a.m., totally ready with materials prepared and ready. Children will generally be marked tardy if they are not in the classroom at this time. If your child comes to school late, please leave him off as usual and do not accompany him up to the classroom, but make sure to check in with the office (as is requested by the office). I encourage you to have your children at school by 8:00 at the latest, if at all possible, because it is disruptive for students to be scurrying around when I have begun teaching, which is often right at 8:10. The school office will cancel tardiness if they determine that there is a reason to do so, such as major traffic or inclement weather. Some families might be shocked to find that their children have **different numbers of tardies**, and this may happen because some children are quicker than others to get their materials unpacked and get into class.

Gym:

Full TCS gymwear is required. T-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, sweat pants, and wind pants are available through the school store. Please see the office if you need to purchase any of these items throughout the year. When gym attire is forgotten, or inaccessible, your student will not participate in gym class and will be docked considerably. Students are expected to be dressed for gym and they will be docked points if they do not have their uniforms, including proper athletic shoes, or if their effort in gym is lacking.

Uniforms:

Uniform expectations are posted in other places, but please make sure **boys are wearing a belt** and are wearing crew socks, which are at least a few inches above the ankle. Please make sure shoes are one of the allowable colors.

DAILY SCHEDULE

(subject to change!)

	MONDAY HANDWRITING	TUESDAY HANDWRITING	WEDNESDAY HANDWRITING	THURSDAY HANDWRITING	FRIDAY HANDWRITING
8:35- 9:15	BIBLE	BIBLE	BIBLE	BIBLE	BIBLE
9:30- 10:05	ENGLISH	ENGLISH	CHAPEL (9:30-10:10)	ENGLISH	LATIN
10:05- 10:20	RECESS	RECESS	BREAK	RECESS	RECESS
10:25- 11:00	MATH	MATH	MATH	MATH	MATH
11:00- 11:35	HERITAGE	HERITAGE	HERITAGE	HERITAGE	ENGLISH
11:35- 12:10	READING	READING	READING	READING	READING
12:10- 12:30	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS
12:30- 12:50	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
12:50- 1:10	STORYTIME with Mrs. Cunningham	STORYTIME	STORYTIME	STORYTIME	STORYTIME
1:10- 1:45	LATIN	LATIN	SCIENCE	SCIENCE	MUSIC
1:45- 2:20	GIRLS GYM BOYS - AR	SCIENCE	SPELLING CLASSWORK	BOYS GYM GIRLS - AR	SCIENCE
2:20- 3:05	SPELLING CLASSWORK	SPELLING CLASSWORK	CHORUS	SPELLING CLASSWORK	SPELLING TEST CLEAN-UP