



**St. Martin of Tours Academy**  
**Seventh Grade Newsletter**  
**June 2015**

*"Each day comes bearing its own gifts, untie the ribbons." - Ruth Ann Schabacker*



Dear Parents,

What a fun year this has been. Your children have grown so much and have shown us all they are ready to be the leaders of the school next year. I am very proud of them for how they have grown as a class. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to work so closely with them.

There are many summer activities that will help them maintain their newly learned skills and discover new ones. Playing board games and card games with siblings and friends is a great way to use higher level thinking skills and problem solving. The rewards of baking are two-fold: 1) the obvious results in the joy of eating what you created, and 2) using the skills of measuring, estimating, and creating. When students work on puzzles, there are physical, emotional, and cognitive skills involved. They are using hand-eye coordination and fine-motor skills to fit pieces together, learning the rewards of patience, and solving the problem the puzzle places before them. I highly encourage jigsaw as well as crossword and math puzzles during their down time. Visiting museums and summer camps are also excellent ways to keep learning and interacting with academic subjects. One more thing to do during summer is Khan Academy. It has excellent opportunities for reinforcing old skills and learning new ones.

David Woltz

**Math:**

We will be spending the end of the year working with graphing linear and quadratic equations, as well as some inequalities. Students will be expected to graph linear equations using slope-intercept form and  $x$  and  $y$  intercepts. When graphing quadratics, the students will learn to find the axis of symmetry and the shape of the parabola it creates.

*SLE 2a, 2b, 2c*

**Science:**

The end of the year has us investigating the history of life on Earth. We will be learning about the Geologic Time scale and how scientists have divided Earth's history. We will be investigating when and where life came into existence. Each period of Earth's history will be examined to include the plants and animals of that time and the transitions between eras. This will lead us to look at the possible future for life on Earth. *SLE 2d, 3c*

**Social Studies** (with Mr. Mains):

The students have been exploring a variety of topics throughout Medieval Europe. They have examined, compared and contrasted the accuracy and impact of the Robin Hood folktale upon Medieval society. We have also looked at a variety of deep undertones and themes of the Victor Hugo classic *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Some of these themes include the influence of the Church, scapegoating, witchcraft, architecture and medieval torture devices. It has been a pleasure teaching your children. Hope you have a great summer! *SLE: 3c, 4b*

Useful Websites: • [http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle\\_ages\\_timeline.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/middle_ages_timeline.php)  
• <http://www.historyforkids.net/middle-ages.html>

**Religion** (with Mrs. Pippin):

In the past several weeks, the students have been working on a number of small group projects with the theme: “What does God call me to do with my life?” Discussions and activities revolved around how to plan for the future while staying close to God, what can we do to serve others, and how do we show God’s mercy to those who need forgiveness. Textbook chapter readings and activities included lessons on the papacy and Pope Francis, as well as prayer and devotion to Mary, including the Rosary and Memorare. Father Jim visited the class this past Wednesday to answer students’ questions about the church, our faith, and his years in the priesthood. It was a wonderful visit! *SLE: 1a, 3c, 4e* Have a great summer!

**English** (with Mrs. Mosel):

This year has flown by, but we will be ending the school year with continuous, purposeful work. I am proud to see the growth in your child, especially in terms of their diligence and initiative, as these are two important skills they will need in eighth grade. The students finished reading *Prince Caspian* and concluded their analysis of this fantastical book from the *Narnia* series by C.S Lewis with a reflection on the most important themes embedded in the story. As preparation for their last novel of the year, *The Old Man and the Sea*, they have watched a brief biopic about Ernest Hemingway in order to better understand the many significant influences his distinguished life and experiences had on his writing. Although this novel is short, concise, and remarkably simple in diction, its meaning is quite multi-layered and will challenge them to be more thoughtful, insightful readers.

In their literature books, the students have been reflecting on the question, “Do others see us more clearly than we see ourselves?” by studying works of drama. Some of the plays they have read thus far include *The Monsters are Due on Maple Street*, a play written during the Cold War and touching on the themes of suspicion and anxiety, and *Dragonwings*, an adaptation of Laurence Yep’s novel about a Chinese American aviator. Throughout this process, the students have also learned how to readily identify specific characteristics of dramatic writing such as the use of hyperbole, allusions and metaphors, allowing them a much richer reading experience and deeper appreciation of the meaning and scope of such narrative texts.

Students will continue to study and test on a new vocabulary unit every week and will end the year with a Mastery Test. Vocabulary acquisition is crucial in terms of enriched reading comprehension, cultivated writing, and effective communication so I encourage you to challenge them on a daily basis to use the words they have been so earnestly studying and learning throughout the year. *SLE: 2a, 3a, 3d*

Lastly, let’s pray that God will bless our families and us during the wonderful months of summer. I hope you all have an amazing yet relaxing summer!!

**Spanish** (with Mrs. Mosel):

The students have learned and demonstrated the difference between the verb ESTAR and SER, a difficult but important distinction, through proper conjugation and various contextual and categorical exercises. They have also learned about the discrepancy between using Tocar and Jugar, and have been practicing conversational Spanish by learning and applying vocabulary that refers to different people and institutions within the community. They will be ending the year with a fun and rather challenging presentation of a short story, written in Spanish, to the sixth graders.