

September 1, 2010

## **First Grade News**

**Gear Up, St. Dennis Day:** It was so nice to meet so many of you last Wednesday! I was glad we started school in this way which allowed teachers to talk to parents as well as to children. Thank you for bringing all your child's supplies with names on them. This will make it much easier for us to return dropped articles to their owners. At the end of that day all the supplies had been put away and the classroom was ready for the first day of school!

Thanks to the parents who sent in crackers for the daily morning recess snack. The children are always hungry about ten o'clock and this daily snack helps them "hang on" until lunch. (Each week I will send home a few requests for morning snacks to various First Grade parents.)

**Welcome Sister Sabrina:** Many of you had a chance to meet Sister Sabrina last Wednesday when you came to school with your child. Sister Sabrina is a Dominican Sister from Sinsinawa just as Sister Alfonso, Sister Mary Therese, Sister Fran, and I am. She lived all her life in Trinidad. She has never seen autumn leaves or snow! These will be new, exciting experiences for her! Sister Sabrina will be working with the Kindergarteners, First Graders, and Second Graders during the morning, just as Sister Marie did.

**First Days of School:** The children are learning what is expected of them in First Grade. They are working on being quiet workers at their desks. Soon they will learn how to use the learning activities around the room. Since they sometimes are working with a partner, a six inch whisper will be needed. They are also trying to become better listeners.

The children learned about the monthly "First Grade Caught Being Good" contest and are watching the number of colored glass stones "grow" in the "Caught Being Good" jar on the shelf.

The class discussed important ways of acting in school so that everyone can learn well. They came up with many rules. I took all their ideas and put them into this more concise form. These are the First Grade Class rules:

1. Listen well to your teacher and other first graders during class lessons.
2. Raise your hand when you want to talk. Do not interrupt others but wait your turn.
3. Sit quietly with your hands to yourself during class lessons.

4. Use a six inch whisper when doing Activities so as not to disturb others who are doing assigned written work at their desks.
5. Work quietly at your desk on your daily written papers. Complete your papers on time.
6. Do neat and careful daily written work.
7. Walk quietly in the hall from class to class so as not to disturb other classrooms.
8. Come into the classroom from recess in a quiet way so that you will be ready for the next class.
9. Be kind to others.

**“Caught Being Good”:** You have probably heard your child talking about the “Caught Being Good” jar and how many gems the class earned for the day. “Caught Being Good” emphasizes positive behavior, and reinforces it. It helps the children practice the social and independent skills needed for a good classroom environment. Currently we are working on listening skills and working quietly at the desks. We are also trying to walk quietly in the hall to and from Music, Science, Library, Gym, etc.

Throughout the day I look for many opportunities to emphasize positive learning behaviors in the whole class. When the whole class is caught, I put a +1 on the board to remind us that I caught them. At the end of the day I put a colored glass gem in the jar for each time they were caught. I wonder how many stones will be in the jar at the end of September?

At the end of this month we will celebrate the September “Caught Being Good ” with a treat. A few names will be picked each month as the Lucky Winners. These children will receive a prize. All the colored gems will be counted and removed from the jar. We will start October with an empty jar!

**Daily Papers:** The daily papers will be stapled and sent home on Fridays. Papers stamped “Incomplete” or “Please finish and return” should be returned to me on Monday mornings. Please do not send back the whole set of papers, but only those that had to be finished.

The children will have sufficient time each day to complete their written work. If you see many unfinished papers, please remind your child to finish the work on time. I expect them to write their names carefully on the papers and to do neat and careful work!

**Snacks:** The First Graders are learning about good nutrition and the importance of not eating too many sweets. When it is your turn to send the snack, please send in a healthy snack that can be dispensed quickly and easily. Here are some suggestions for you: animal crackers, various kinds of Teddy Grahams and graham crackers, Ritz crackers, Cheese Nips, Ritz Bits or crackers with cheese or peanut butter, pretzels, granola bars, etc. If you want to send trail mix or

another snack with many pieces, please put it in bags so it can be passed out easily.

I will send a note when it is your turn to provide a healthy morning snack. Be sure to provide enough for the whole class. There are twenty-eight students in First Grade. The children look forward to this morning snack.

**Schedule of special classes:** These are the afternoons that the children will be having special classes.

**Computer and Library:** Thursday (9:00-10:00) and Computer Art (12:40-1:20)

Music: Tuesday (1:20-1:50) and Friday (2:10-2:40)

**Physical Education and Health:** Monday - Gym(1:30-2:00), Thursday -Health (12:50-1:20), and Friday -Gym (1:40-2:10)

**Science:** Wednesday (2:10-3:10)

**Volunteer Helpers:** If you are interested in helping in various ways in First Grade this year, please fill out the form and return it in the family envelope ASAP. The Room Parent calls parents to remind them to send in the treats and snacks for the monthly "Caught Being Good" Celebration.

**"Caught Being Good Treats":** If you could provide a healthy "Caught Being Good" treat for one of the months, please fill in the Volunteer Helpers' form and return it ASAP. The volunteer form will come home with your child. Please look for it. I will send home a paper indicating the two families who will be providing the fruit drink and the treat for each month.

**Old Sock in a Plastic Bag:** If you haven't sent in an old sock to be used as an eraser on individual chalkboards for Math, please send it in ASAP.

Thank you!  
Sister Eileen