

# Middle School News Brief

September 30, 2011

## Parent Night Highlights

The middle school staff appreciates the great turnout for the Parent Information Open House on September 20. We were asked by several of you to write down the important information we shared that night. Here is a summary of what each of us wants parents to know about our classes.

## Mr. Groenendyk's Classes

6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bible

7<sup>th</sup> Grade History

**Sixth Grade Bible** will explore CREATION through the reign of SOLOMON. We will be reading from the books of GENESIS through I Kings as well as PSALMS and PROVERBS. BIBLE MEMORY is every two weeks. There will be a few projects throughout the year (Battle Project in January).

**Seventh Grade Bible** will explore the DIVIDED KINGDOM through the SILENT YEARS. We will be reading from the books of I KINGS through MALACHI. The kings and prophets of Israel and Judah will be studied. There will be a few projects throughout the year (Sect Mobile, Isaiah Booklet, Puppets). BIBLE MEMORY is every two weeks.

**Eighth Grade Bible** takes a quick look back at the Old Testament (Covenant) and then dives into the New Testament. We will delve into all 27 books. There will be a few projects along the way (Journey in a Bottle, Music and You, Crosses at Christmas). BIBLE MEMORY is every two weeks.

**Seventh Grade History** begins with a study of the early EXPLORERS and continues through the CIVIL WAR. We use the Living Through History program so some of you met KING G., LORD BELLOWS, and SEED SELLER SID the other night. The students will literally build colonies that will become a nation. Lots of emotion! Lots of drama! Lots of fun. Tons of learning!!!!

*Curriculum Maps, Bible Memory Schedule and a whole lot of other information is available on my website.*

## Mr. Annema's Classes

6th, 7th and 8th Grade Math

6th Social Studies

**6th Grade Math** Sixth grade math is a culmination of elementary math classes. We study different types of graphs, reading and writing numbers, ratios, proportions, and some probability. A majority of the school year is spent on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. At the end of the year students are also introduced to the beginning of algebra.

**7th Grade Math** (Pre-Algebra) In seventh grade students dive into the wonderful world of algebra, we spend time on expressions, equations, graphing, area, surface area, volume, and even special right triangles (beginning trigonometry). We review sixth grade concepts like decimals and fractions, but also

look at how we use them to solve equations. At the end of seventh grade students can solve equations with a single step, two-steps, multi-steps, and with variables on both sides - with their eyes closed! ☺

**8th Grade Math** (Algebra I) Eighth graders at GHCS all take Algebra I. This serves as a great tune-up for math at the high school level. In the first half of the year we review order of operations, solving equations and inequalities, ratios and proportions, and graphing functions using slope intercept form, standard form, and point-slope form. In the second half of the year students are introduced to systems of equations, exponent rules, polynomials, the quadratic equation, and radicals. At the end of the year (sometime in May) students take a test called the Explore Test, this test gives us a good idea of which math class your student should take as a freshmen. Students at GHCS usually end up taking Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II depending upon the high school.

**6th Grade Social Studies** In 6th grade Social Studies we primarily focus on Ancient History. Throughout the school year we will look at Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Mayas, Incas, Aztecs, Roman Empire, and Ancient Greece. We also focus on reading maps, geography of the world, and how the cultures of those before us have impacted our own culture. Finally, we do lots of hands on activities, from creating our own countries with different types of landforms to classroom Olympics and a Roman museum.

## **Mrs. Geertsma's Classes**

### **6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies**

I'm very excited that our school is working hard to create a writing program that is top-notch because each grade level is on board with common goals and is using a common writing vocabulary. I'm also excited about some changes I've made in my own teaching plans. Following is a highlight of the most important things I want you to know about language arts classes this year.

#### **READING FOR ALL GRADES**

- *Students should be reading for at least thirty minutes every day, outside of English class.* This includes Monday through Thursday, plus, I expect some reading to be done on the three nights of the weekend. They should choose books they enjoy, and abandon a book if they try but can't get into it. Reading means to be engaged in the story – constantly predicting what is coming and adjusting predictions as they read. It's more than just turning pages. Real reading grows reading skills, general knowledge, and the ability to learn more. It helps spelling, grammar and writing skills, too. Reading is the most important learning skill your child has, so please support your child's efforts. How great it would be if they can see you value the skill of reading, too!
- Each Friday, all students will be evaluating their own reading done for the week and will write the grade they think they have earned. They will also include comments on the reason for choosing that grade.
- Students are encouraged to occasionally try reading a book in one of the genres that we will focus on during in-class units.  
**6<sup>th</sup> grade genres:** *action, adventure, fantasy, folktale, poetry, classics, essays, how-to-articles and research reports*

**7<sup>th</sup> grade genres:** *drama, legend, memoir, mystery, myth, poetry, autobiography, biography, classics*, personal correspondence and persuasive essays, and research reports

**8<sup>th</sup> grade genres:** *historical fiction, realistic fiction, science fiction*, persuasive and comparative essays, newspapers, technical writing and research reports

#### **SPELLING**

We will not study spelling as a separate skill this year. Correct spelling is expected on finished pieces, not on works-in-progress.

#### **WRITING AND GRAMMAR**

- During class time we will look at mentor texts to see what real authors do to write well. It will include poetry, short stories, articles, snippets of author's works, and occasionally a whole novel. We'll look at the elements of various genres of writing, author's craft techniques, we'll notice grammar and word usage, and we'll practice what authors do in our own writings.
- Students will be using the website, [www.englishgrammar101.com](http://www.englishgrammar101.com) to practice grammar on line.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies** Mr. Annema and I each teach a section of sixth grade social studies, coordinating our units and lessons. Most days, our classes meet at the same time, so we will be combining classes for some projects. In sixth grade we study the four disciplines of social studies: history, geography, government and economics. We do that through a study of ancient civilizations.

Our first study is of geography. We have already done map work and a project on the 5 Themes of Geography. This week we begin a very fun project that we call The Country Project. We learn about landforms and many aspects of culture. Afterward, small groups of students work to create their own country. We'll let you know when you can come in to view the results!

## **Mr. Brondyke**

**6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade History**

**6<sup>TH</sup> Grade Science** The sixth grade will study four units from the Battle Creek Area Math & Science Center. The first quarter we will cover rocks: sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous. We also look at sediments and soil. During the second quarter, we will focus on energy and the different types of energy, but the focus will be potential and kinetic energies. The third quarter focuses on the Earth's history, volcanoes, earthquakes and fossils. We also look at the theory of plate tectonics. We end the year by studying ecosystems in Michigan and how energy passes through the ecosystems. This unit also includes endangered species and invasive species. These units are taught with an emphasis on in- class activities, which means most of the work will be done in class. There should be very little daily homework; however, there will be some projects to do at home.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science** In seventh grade we also use the Battle Creek units of study. During the first quarter we focus on the energy of light and sound. We look at how these are similar and how they are different. The second quarter is all about weather and the atmosphere. We will look also at the climate of the Great Lakes. In this unit students will learn how to use weather observations to predict weather. The third unit

covers chemical reactions and the chemical properties of compounds. The last quarter we cover genetics and heredity.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science** This year 8<sup>th</sup> grade science is covering four different units. We begin the year by looking at motion and forces. We will study Newton's laws of motion. From there we move into electricity and magnetism. We then cover atomic structure and properties of substances and matter. We will also cover water and the water on the Earth. Come and look at our new curriculum!

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade History** In History, the number one idea I want to convey is that God is in control of history and he has used events in history to put you right where you are right now. God has a plan for each of us and we are not outside of history. We do not travel parallel paths but rather events that shape history also direct our family situations. In doing this we begin the year studying the westward movement after the Civil War and end the year right after World War II. Students will be doing simulations and projects as they "live through history". The first project will be to a trace their family history.

## **Mrs. Laurie King**

### **Educational Support**

The Middle School is off to a wonderful start as we welcome thirty-four students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and eight students new to the Grand Haven Christian School family.

If your 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade student needs assistance with organization, study skills, or test taking I would love to spend some time with them. I am available to team with all the middle school teachers in the classroom as well as to work one-on-one or in small groups with students in my own classroom. We are very much a team in our Middle School and want to help students grow and succeed academically, spiritually and emotionally. It is a great group of kids and we are looking forward to a wonderful year. Don't hesitate to contact me, or have your student do so, if I can help in any way.