

ELEMENTARY FOCUS FOR PARENTS

October 16, 2009

FROM LISA BROCK, THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

www.mtscougars.org 

Elementary Happenings

Visual Lesson Bags

Joyce Wright did a terrific job integrating **Bible, language arts, and math** in a PK-4 lesson recently. She had the students pull items and word cards from a bag and then guessed which Bible story it went with and why, such as the angel went with the story of Jacob's ladder because he saw angels in his dream. After grouping the objects and words into the stories they belonged, they identified the beginning sounds of many of the objects. Then, they counted the number of objects in each story group and placed a number card beside them. The students remembered so many details about the stories and are obviously learning those letters and numbers, too!

Melanie Speck did a similar activity with her kindergarten students as she introduced our **Tennessee** state symbols and other facts about our state. Students reached in and pulled an object, often a symbol of TN, out of a bag as the teacher began to tell about it. They felt a coon-skin cap, examined the state flag, looked at a walking horse, talked about the music for which we are known and many other things. She read parts the ABC book, V is for Volunteer, throughout the discussion, sharing interesting background information about Tennessee. Identifying the three sections of the state, they found where the Smokey Mountains are and where we are located on a map. They listened and sang along with "Rocky Top" and then listened to Elvis music while they colored their own Tennessee booklet.



Fall Field Trips

Since school started, our students have been on a variety of field trips, expanding their educational experiences and strengthening their relationships with their peers and teachers. Here are some of the places they have been:

PK-4: Kroger - watch meat ground, visit the big freezer, scanning items at the check-out ;
Walden Farm - Fall, harvest



TK: Little Caesars - how pizza is made

K: Discovery Center - many uses of wheel;
TPAC - The Hungry Caterpillar play
Walden Farm - Fall, harvest

1st: Discover Center - Murfree Springs Wetlands;
Walden Pumpkin Farm - Fall, harvest

2nd: The Sam Davis Home Heritage Days;
Ridley 4-H - animals
Great Harvest Bread Co. - bread making process & tasting, healthy foods (2-K only)

3rd: Nashville Zoo - animal habitats

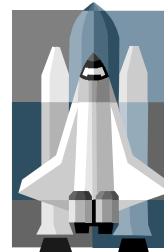


4th: Carnton Plantation, Oaklands Mansion - Civil War History and early American life

5th: Land Between the Lakes (LBL) - three days of hiking, canoeing, campfire, nature study, Planetarium visit, conquering a challenge course, and animal viewing between the Kentucky and Barkley Lakes



6th: Huntsville/Chattanooga - space & rocket center, Chattanooga Zoo, Tennessee Aquarium, Ruby Falls, and two IMAX educational presentations on space and the ocean



Hall of Famers

9/8 1 - Jennings
9/14 5 - Cooper
9/21 3 - Oxley
9/28 4 - Pruitt

Lunch Bunch

9/8 5th Grade
9/14 2nd Grade
9/21 4th Grade
9/28 1st Grade

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ◆ OCT 19-23—FALL BREAK
- ◆ OCT 30—Fall Parties
- ◆ NOV 2—NO SCHOOL, CHR SCHOOL IN-SERVICE
- ◆ NOV 5—STEAK DINNER

This month, I have included an article on reading which is age-specific for your child. On the back of this Focus, I included an article on encouraging pre-reading skills for the PK parents, tips on reading aloud for the TK-3rd grade parents, or an article on reading comprehension for the 4th - 6th grade parents. We will post all three articles on the website with this month's Parent Focus if you are interested in reading all three, and I encourage you to do so! Reading is by far the most important subject for which success is vital in their educational process.

In Christ,
Lisa Brock

OVER



Dear 4th – 6th grade MTCS Parents,

The following article is provided courtesy of Scholastic Inc. The article has some helpful hints to help your child remember what he has read. Enjoy!

Happy Reading!

Lisa Brock

Six Ways to Improve Reading Comprehension

Help your child retain what he reads — a crucial skill, especially as he gets older and needs to glean important information from textbooks.

1. **Have him read aloud.** This forces him to go slower, which gives him more time to process what he reads. Plus, he's not only seeing the words, he's hearing them, too. You can also take turns reading aloud.
2. **Provide the right kinds of books.** Make sure your child gets lots of practice reading books that aren't too hard. She should recognize at least 90 percent of the words without any help. Stopping any more often than that to figure out a word makes it tough for her to focus on the overall meaning of the story.
3. **Reread to build fluency.** To gain meaning from text, your child needs to read quickly and smoothly - a skill known as fluency. By the end of 2nd grade, for example, your child should be able to read 90 words a minute. Rereading familiar, simple books gives your child practice at decoding words quickly, so she'll become more fluent.
4. **Talk to the teacher.** If your child is struggling mightily with comprehension, he may need more help with his reading — for example, building his vocabulary or practicing phonics skills.
5. **Supplement class reading.** If your child's class is studying a particular theme, look for easy-to-read books or magazines on the topic. Some prior knowledge will help her make her way through tougher classroom texts.
6. **Talk about what he's reading.** This "verbal processing" helps him remember and think through the themes of the book. Ask questions before, during, and after a reading session. For example: *Before*: "What are you interested in about this book? What doesn't interest you?" *During*: "What's going on in the book? Is it turning out the way you thought it would? What do you think will happen next?" *After*: "Can you summarize the book? What did you like about it? What other books does it remind you of?"

(over)