

Mrs. Wilson's Fourth Grade Newsletter

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Happy Advent, Happy New Year!

Sunday began the Church New Year – Advent. We will have our classroom advent wreath and take special time to pray as we prepare for celebrating Jesus' birth. The entire school gathers (virtually) each Monday morning to share scripture and light our advent candle. We gather again each Wednesday (via our morning zoom) with an eighth grade leader. Other days we will light our advent candle and read prayers, followed by silence. I will teach the fourth graders a hymn my mother taught me growing up. It is an English carol, one I've never heard in the states—except in my classroom or my home.

Here are the words: **They all were looking for a king, to slay their foes and lift them high;
There came a little Baby thing, who made a woman cry.** –Words by George McDonald, 1883

My family traditions include lighting our family advent candle while we sing “O Come O Come Emmanuel”, saying three Hail Marys and a Glory Be, having a ridiculously large tree at our mountain cabin, reading holiday picture books (we have a sizeable collection), replacing all our day-to-day mugs with Christmas mugs, starting each morning opening up a door in the advent calendar and finding ways to give to others (we love the shoeboxes tradition at OLG). The student council food drive for St. Vincent De Paul begins this week. Thank you to those who allow their children to raid the cupboards. The drive continues until break. Happy New Year, Happy Advent!

StoryPath, Early Northwest Coast People:

StoryPath is both a structure for organizing the social studies curriculum and an instructional strategy for teaching that uses elements of story, encourages active student participation and problem solving. The strategy is grounded in a belief that children learn best when they are active participants in their own learning. That means some elements are given (setting, some plot events) while others are student led (character and reaction to plot events). With our first StoryPath we stay close to home but head back in time. We start with Early Northwest Coast People. Later in the school year we'll experience a second StoryPath unit, Oregon Trail.

We begin this week creating a setting along the northwest coast. This will fit well with our growing understanding of climate and geography. We discuss basic needs. Let's watch our fourth graders apply what they learned last month about natural resources. In the weeks ahead we'll create families, a village with community roles and learn about northwest coast culture. There will be critical incidents along the way that prompt fourth graders to ask their own questions and think critically about what they know. They'll use their prior knowledge to make sense of new information and connect personally to history.

I supplement the StoryPath experience with additional resources: Student copies of the book Nations of the Northwest Coast by Bobbie Kalman and our classroom textbook, The Washington Adventure by Ruth Pelz. This allows a continued focus on active reading strategies and understanding nonfiction text. We'll continue to write, discuss and develop our thinking.... and know about the geography of our home state.

Christmas Party in a Bag!

Our Halloween zoom was such a hit. Let's do it again for Christmas! If you can, please contribute a holiday treat and drop off on December 4. This allows time to assemble bags and be ready for pick up the following week, then ready for our holiday zoom right before break.

Need ideas? I found some amazing things on pinterest but hesitate to list them here in case you are a parent like me who secretly bought Christmas cookies and wrapped them up to look home made for the Girl Scout cookie exchange. ☺ Anything at any level is most appreciated.

Friday, 12-4: Drop off, please drop off treats to be included in Christmas Party in a Bag.

Friday, 12-11: Pick up includes picking up Christmas in a Bag for Holiday Zoom

Friday, 12-18: Half Day, Merry Christmas!