

Reading Grades 2 and 3

Grades 2 and 3 have implemented the new reading series *Journeys*, published by Houghton Mifflin. Last year *Journeys* was introduced into the 4 and 5th grades and the current plan is to start *Journeys* in the Kindergarten and 1st grades in the fall of 2012. Several strengths of *Journeys series* are the excellent teacher resources designed for whole and small group instruction, differentiated instruction, critical reading skills, and extensive vocabulary. Over the summer, teachers attended a workshop with the language arts consultant from Houghton Mifflin and teachers from other schools using the same series. SmartBoards have been added to both second grade classrooms to accommodate the technology aspects of this new series. *Journeys* is a more advanced series than the *MacMillan Reading 2003* the students had been using; but our students are adjusting very well overall, and we are confident they are up to the challenge.

Studio Days

At Incarnate Word, we have considered offering something different in our specials department (art, computer, music, physical education and Spanish) for our older students. *Studio Days* started in the spring of 2011 and was originated out of the desire to generate more rehearsal time for the spring musical during time set aside for specials, thereby missing fewer core curriculum classes leading up to the performance. We found that we were able to meet our original goal and that we were able to offer students more choices in their learning. Additionally, it turned out that teachers were able to share more of their interests and expertise by offering a variety of curriculum options to their students.

As Curriculum Director I think *Studio Days* represents a good example of “Best Practices” because they provide:

- Student-Centered classes: where teaching and learning focus upon students’ real interests
- Authentic Learning activities: relevant to the students and challenging them to engage more deeply in their learning;
- Collaborative Learning: working with others as a collective intelligence, and problem solving as a group;
- Experiential Learning: actually doing what they are learning, not just reading about it.

Mrs. Julie Jacobsmeyer, Technology Coordinator and media teacher, said she found the students’ interest in and aptitude for their subject contributed to their active learning. The students were taking information and techniques learned in media class and developing more advanced projects on their own at home. **Mrs. Jenny Hardy** and her Spanish classes are going to present a small assembly for the seventh and eighth grades highlighting her “Show Me Your Talent” and “Be A Reporter” class. The second session of *Studio Days* will start on Wednesday, October 26.

Math Regional Conference

The National Council of Teachers of Math (NCTM) Regional Conference is coming to St. Louis on October 26-28. Incarnate Word will be sending: **Mrs. Peg Woodworth (6-8), Mrs. Carol Bitonti (5), Mrs. Sheila McBee, (4), Mrs. Peg Harbke (3), Mrs. Marie Parisot (2), and Mrs. Deb Fleming (1)**. The teachers have been meeting before school to discuss school-wide math goals and professional development in order to get the optimum resources from the conference. Topics of interest are: meeting the needs of all learners, integrating technology, assessment, mental math, and problem solving skills.

Co-curricular and Extra Curricular Activities

Safari Day (Grades K-3)

Students in grades K- 3 celebrated **Safari Day** on Friday, October 21, with a morning of fun activities. The students experienced Safari Grub, went on a Safari Hunt, learned some Safari Smarts, and Boogied. They prepared a special treat for their parents to take home as a souvenir of the day. Enjoy their hard work and Safari classrooms at Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Author Jon Scieska visits Incarnate Word (Grades 2-5)

Award-winning, best-selling author and former US Ambassador for Children's Literature, **JON SCIESZKA**, visited Incarnate Word on Thurs. Oct 6th. Mr. Scieska shared stories of growing up with four brothers and the effect this had on his ideas for writing. After his appearance, he signed books for any students who had purchased them. This author visit was made possible by Pudd'nHead Books, a full-service independent bookstore in Webster Groves and coordinated by school librarian, **Mrs. Blenda Librarian**.

Bellarmino Speech (Grades 6-8)

The Bellarmino Speech league is meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school to prepare for 4 speech meets throughout the school year. The speech league moderators are **Mrs. Kitty Harrison, Mrs. Theresa Karutz, Mrs. Julia Kressig, and Mrs. Christine Kurka (2A)**. The students will compete in regular Saturday speech meets in November, February, and March. The final speech meet will be Saturday, April 28, 2011. We would like to thank all of the volunteers for sharing their time and talent with us all year.

Math Club (Grades 6-8)

This year twenty-three sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students have formed an Incarnate Word Math Club sponsored by sixth through eighth math teacher **Mrs. Peggy Woodworth**. The Math Club is designed to strengthen minds and introduce students to the **mysteries and marvels of mathematics!** The club is meeting on the first and third Thursdays of each month from 7:30-8:10 am. Students in the Math Club will have a chance to compete in the regional math meets which are held four times a year in October, December, February, and April. Students in the Math Club may also have an opportunity to participate in special math competitions at Rosati Kain, Cor Jesu and St. Louis University High School.

Abra-Kid-Abra (Grades K-5)

Sixteen K-5 graders are meeting after school on Tuesdays from 3:15-4:15 for Abra-Kid-Abra's "Math-e-Magic!" Each week the students are learning math-based magic tricks to try on family and friends. Instructor, Howard Belsky stated he is impressed with the Incarnate Word students' ability to figure out his magic tricks before much explanation. "Thank you" to **Mrs. Ann Book** for bringing Abra-Kid-Abra to Incarnate Word and Mrs. Book and **Mrs. Cindy Resnikov** for chaperoning the weekly meetings. All parents are welcome to chaperone and enjoy the magic!

Academic Decathlon (Grades 7 and 8)

Ten 7th and 8th grade students represented Incarnate Word in the Fourth Annual St. John Vianney High School Academic Decathlon sponsored by The Gold Circle Chapter of the Vianney High School's National Honor Society. Participation in various academic competitions has always been a wonderful opportunity for students to challenge their minds and earn some team and individual academic awards and recognition. Each competing schools sent ten students to take a written test in one of five specific subject areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, or Technology. This test was used to determine the top three individual winners in each subject area. Each student recognized received a certificate, and each of the schools with the top three overall team scores were awarded a banner for their school

Student Council (Grades 6-8)

The Incarnate Word Student Council is up and running. Five students attended the Student Council workshop for students sponsored by the Catholic Education Office. **Mrs. Linda LaConte (7B), Ms. Theresa Kelley (6a), and Mrs. Marie Parisot (2B)** are serving as moderators. Student Council members worked in conjunction with the parish "Gardening Angels" to help beautify the parish grounds on Saturday, October 8, and they have sponsored two "Wear Red for the Cardinals" days . . . so far.

Book Fair (Grades K-8)

The Incarnate Word Book Fair will be from November 1-6, 2011. The theme is "**Reading is Out of This World.**" This year the Fair will be open during Parent-Teacher Conferences which will also be Grandparents Day at the Fair. Family Night is Thursday, November 3, 2011 from 6:00-8:00 pm.

"Reading is the single most important skill we can help students develop to ensure their success in school."