

**Mrs. Cantwell**  
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**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Homeroom, Math, English, Religion, Literature**  
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**Welcome**

Parents and students of the Class of 2013 welcome to 5<sup>th</sup> grade! I am thrilled to share this year with all of you. Though every level of a student's education is important, 5<sup>th</sup> grade is unique in that it serves as a transition to middle school. In partnership with you, I will guide your child's intellectual, emotional/social, and spiritual growth in the classroom. It is my hope that together we can help each student recognize and feel confident in his or her strengths and, likewise, feel confident in his or her ability to improve in areas where further development is needed. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have concerns about your son's or daughter's progress, or constructive suggestions for helping your child succeed (see e-mail address above).

This year we will work towards mastery of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade CA statewide standards, hone the skills necessary for successful and collaborative teamwork, and set individual academic and personal goals, regularly assessing progress and learning new strategies for achievement. We will also concentrate on organization, independence, and responsibility. Our priority in the classroom will be building a respectful and accepting environment where we are able to view our world through multiple perspectives, and live the teachings of God's word.

Students will continue their auxiliaries this year, with Mrs. Enos, Mrs. Nadsady, Mrs. Svolos, Coach Brandon, Mrs. Ludwig and Mrs. Serrano teaching music, art, computer, physical education, science, and Spanish respectively. New for your child this year will be a daily exploration of social studies with Mrs. Polonski. I will be instructing your son or daughter in math, English, religion, spelling, and reading.

**Educational Philosophy**

I believe that every student can achieve success. For this to occur pupils must engage in various modes of instruction, be allowed to learn from their mistakes, and be involved in designing their education. Therefore it is up to us together (parent, teacher, and child) to figure out the most effective way for individual students to learn.

I further believe that the only environment a person can flourish in is one in which they feel safe, appreciated, and respected. Our classroom will be a place where all students are welcome to share their thoughts and ideas. RESPECT is the most important aspect of this class. The following are guidelines for communication and learning in the classroom:

Learning Conversation Principles (The LCP's)

- † Assume and exhibit goodwill
- † Open your mind to new learning
- † Invite differences (Embrace AND, move away from either/or thinking)
- † Listen with the intent to understand rather than respond
- † Wonder in front of each other

Please get to know the LCP's, they are practiced here.

### **Homework Policy**

Students will only be assigned homework that reviews skills and concepts we have already gone over in class. Assigned homework will never be busy work. Its purpose is to extend the ideas learned in class or practice skills newly introduced. At times, homework will be in the form of workbook pages, work sheets, textbook pages, or student generated questions/equations. Other times, homework may consist of a series of steps in a long-term project. When necessary both forms of homework will be incorporated.

### **Math**

This year in math we will focus on the following concepts through direct instruction, independent work, manipulatives and group work.

#### Units of Study

Multiplication, Division, Number Theory,  
Adding/Subtracting/Multiplying/Dividing Fractions,  
Adding/Subtracting/Multiplying/Dividing Decimals  
Ratio, Percentages, Proportion, Geometry, Measurement,  
Probability and Statistics

#### Homework

Students will have one to two pages of math each day.

#### Grading

Tests	50%
Quizzes	15%
Homework	25%
Class work	10%

## **English**

I am very excited about the prospect of publishing our own literary magazine at the end of the year. The magazine will be created entirely by the students and will encompass a variety of student writing, artwork, and graphics. While maintaining a focus on grammar and its use creatively, students will also engage in writers workshops where they will learn to pre-write, structure a paper, self edit, peer edit, revise and create publishable documents.

### Units of Study

*Writing* – Personal Narratives, Book Reports, How to Articles, Business, Letters, Art/Media/Restaurant Critiques, Descriptive Prose, Persuasive Essays, Opinion Editorials, Research Reports

*Grammar* – Punctuation, Capitalization, Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions, Interjections, Sentence Diagramming

### Homework

Students will have one to two pages of English homework per evening

### Grading

Projects/papers (in-class work)	40%
Tests/Quizzes	35%
Homework	15%
Other Class work	10%

## **Spelling:**

Spelling homework will be assigned each Friday. Students may structure the completion of their spelling homework any way they wish, however, they must have their homework completed by the following Thursday. Tests will be given each Friday. Any student who is experiencing difficulty in passing weekly spelling tests will meet with the teacher to create an individual achievement plan and receive guidance on implementing strategies for success.

### Homework

Students will have three pages of spelling homework per week

### Grading

Tests	80%
Homework	20%

## **Reading:**

Students will be fusing a variety of texts (short stories, articles, poems, and novels) with technology, art, and cultural critique to gain a deeper understanding of the elements of literature. We will use Socratic seminar and work together in literature circles to analyze and evaluate what we have read. Independent reading of assigned literature, as well as self-selected works, is expected.

### Units of Study

*Texts* - The BFG, The Wise Old Woman, selected works of Roald Dahl, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, Wilma Unlimited, selected works of Janell Cannon, The Wreck of the Zephyr, Tornadoes, Bud Not Buddy, From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankenweiler, Island of the Blue Dolphin

*Focus* – pre-reading strategies, prediction, comprehension strategies, oral fluency, voice, tone, plot development, character analysis, genre study

### Homework

Students will have 20 minutes of reading each day (this reading may be from their science and/or social studies texts on certain days). All other reading homework will be connected to long-term projects and will be intermittent throughout the year.

### Grading

Tests/Quizzes	40%
Written/Oral projects & presentations	40%
Class work	20%

## **Religion**

In honor of our theme, "Attitude of Gratitude" we will show God our gratefulness for the gifts He has given us through respecting each other and respecting ourselves. At the heart of the religion curriculum is a focus on hope, faith and love. These topics will be taught concretely through a concentration on social justice, serving as instruments of peace, and living the teachings of Jesus in our daily lives.

### Units of Study

Making Christian Decisions, The Beatitudes, Living as Children of Light, Advent Season, The Ten Commandments, God is Love, The Saints, Lent, The Sacraments, Easter, Renewal, and Ascension/Pentecost

### Homework

Students will have one to two pages of religion homework a week. Long-term projects may replace weekly pages when assigned.

### Grading

Tests/Quizzes	35%
Projects/service learning	40%
Class work	15%
Homework	10%