

Main Line Classical Academy  
Newsletter  
April, 2018

**English, Kindergarten, 1st, & 2nd Grade - Frank Chilbert**

As we draw near to the end of a school year, the students have begun enjoying the fruit of their hard work. Their confidence with spoken language and their comfort with written words are made apparent during English class. Phonics is hard work, and yet each grade has continued taking the challenge as an opportunity to approach mastery. The 1st graders are on to their second volume of "A is for Apple" textbook and well into their penmanship workbook. The 2nd graders have continued working through the complex readings, activities, and lessons in the "B is for Bear" textbook. As of last week, the seconds graders have added two new parts of speech to their grammar repertoire: adverbs and prepositions. Soon they will be able to grammatically categorize every word they encounter.

We closed the month beautifully with Poetry Night as the students recited the poems they had been learning since February. The evening was dedicated to the works of Stevenson, Rossetti, Blake, Dickinson, Frost, Poe, and Tennyson. As we recite these masterpieces, the beautiful images live on in our minds and hearts. We discuss them in order to discover the truthfulness of their claims on reality. We remember them that we might be shaped by the goodness that they offer.

*Kindergarten:*

Most Recent Poem:

"Escape at Bedtime" by Robert Louis Stevenson

Stories:

Greek Myths

*1st Grade*

Most Recent Poem:

"Going Downhill on a Bicycle" by Henry Charles Beeching

Stories:

"Stuart Little" by E.B. White

*2nd Grade:*

Most Recent Poem:

"The Bells" by Edgar Allan Poe

Stories:

"Charlotte's Web" by E.B. White

## English, 5th & 6th Grade - William Walter

Can parents recognize what is wrong with the following sentence? *Joy was informed, polite, eager, and she was also efficient.* The sentence is definitely awkward, and a few parents might be able to tell why—it lacks parallel structure. What is parallel structure (sometimes called isocolon)? To introduce this grammatical concept I talked about the man whom my children call Uncle Bob. Years ago, when my first four children (all sons) were small, we went to a school concert, and after the concert, we went to the school's playground to talk a bit. My boys excitedly tried out the seesaw, with an unusual seating arrangement. My four sons (ages 6 to 12) went on the one side of the seesaw, while their Uncle Bob got on the other side. The seesaw was humorously uneven in favor of one side: the boys were high up in the air laughing, while Uncle Bob was firmly planted on the ground. We took a picture of the occasion.

Parallel structure, then, is the grammatical balancing of parallel parts of a sentence and is needed with correlative conjunctions, with a series of words, phrases or clauses, and with comparisons. The above example sentence has a series of adjectives, but ends with a clause that should be balanced with the rest of the adjectives in the sentence: *Joy was informed, polite, eager, and efficient.* Now when I refer to a sentence that lacks parallel structure, I merely have to say “That is an Uncle Bob sentence” and the students immediately know what I am talking about.

## English, 4th Grade - William Walter

I was so happy to introduce Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* in an excerpt this month to the 4th graders. So often I hear that classic novels are outdated and that students are just not interested in reading them. I think it was on the previous poetry night that I cited a recent Wall Street Journal article, in which maverick publisher Tomas Spence remarked that many teachers and librarians believe that to get children interested in the classroom literature, they must “meet them where they are.” Spence cites an AP article that reports one school librarian treating her pupils to “grossology” parties. “Just get ‘em reading,” she counsels cheerily. “Worry about what they’re reading later.” Spence then goes on to mention that even Penguin publishers, which has had a long tradition in publishing the finest classics, is now willing to stoop very low in publishing such works with tell-tale titles as, “Sir Fartsalot Hunts the Booger.” I wish the librarian could have seen the fourth grade class as we read together a chapter in Dickens' novel in which little Oliver strikes out against Noah Claypole—a classic passage in which Dickens satirizes the assumptions of the well-to-do about the poor.

There are reasons that many teachers and psychologists are apprehensive about teaching the classics. The advent of technological devices has definitely taken a toll on student's attention spans. But we are not living in a unique era. Take the Industrial Revolution, for example. Writing

during that period, the Romantic poet William Wordsworth describes *our* situation when he says in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads: A multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor*. Who can combat such forces as these? Wordsworth, however, writes of his hope in the midst of a very distressing situation: *I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it which are equally inherent and indestructible*. Thank you, Wordsworth. Yes, as long, as children are children and people are people, the classics will always appeal to our inherent sensibilities.

### **English, 3rd - William Walter**

Our literary selection prompted a discussion of the terms *protagonist* and *antagonist*, which only one of the students in the third grade class knew. After I explained the terms, one of the students asked whether or not a protagonist was always a “good guy.” Before I could answer, one student emphatically claimed yes, protagonists are *always* heroes. (If that were only true—that the driving forces in this world were none other than good!) He stated his opinion so strongly, I got a secret pleasure out of saying, no, protagonists are *not* always heroes (I like to surprise the students with interesting ironies), and I gave the character Macbeth of Shakespeare’s play as an example. A protagonist, I said, was a main character that, according to the root of the word, goes through some kind of struggle or conflict, which most describe in the following terms: man against man, man against nature, man against society and man against himself. Macbeth, one of the most sinister of literary characters, struggles against his conscience, his fate, and later on in the drama, several characters, most notably Macduff.

### **History, Kindergarten & 1st Grade, Early American History - Frank Chilbert**

The kindergartners and 1st graders have been on the edges of their seats ever since the Revolutionary War began, and that is not about end. As I mentioned in last month’s newsletter, the American Continental Army was in much need of refreshment at the end of the year 1776. After the British took control of the Hudson River, hope seemed lost for some time. We have now turned to study the petition made to France at the darkest hour of the war. And so, we have placed our attention on a Philadelphian entrepreneur by the name of Benjamin Franklin. We have studied his early struggles and triumphs, his inventions and his writings, and now we have come to learn about his political participation during the war. Soon, we will begin to see how this man, though too old to be a soldier, was able to do his part to help save his country.

### **2nd, 3rd, & 4th Grade, Ancient Greek History - Frank Chilbert**

The Persian Wars are finally over and the Ancient Greek historians are celebrating! And yet, as we take comfort in the finality of the last wars against the Persians, we must remember that the Athenians did not have the same luxury of historical confidence. As historians, we know that when Xerxes was the last Persian Emperor to ever enter Greece, but no one in Greece dared to ask, "Are they gone for good?" To the Athenians, it was never a questions of *if* the Persians would return, but of *when* they would return. This is why they began an alliance of city-states that would swear to protect one another at first sight of the Persian flag.

During the month of May, we will be keep a close watch on the effects (both good and bad) this empire-like alliance has on the small polis of Athens. Is it possible for Athens to maintain their culture of simplicity while receiving annual tributes from their neighbors, or will this new luxury make them soft of heart like too many empires before them?

### **History, 5th & 6th Grade - Graham Gormley**

As our study of the Persian Wars and readings in the *Iliad* have made evident, the Greeks had notable potential to unite with one another. As Achilles saw the humanity in his arch foe and as Spartans joined with Athenians to expel the Persians, one might think that somehow the Greek city states could have overcome their differences and found a way to become one. Yet, even in the course of their alliances, we saw how the distrust the Spartans held for the Athenians led to confusion and near disaster at the battle of Plataea. The rivalry between the two cities was discernible well before they broke into war with one another. It wouldn't be until Alexander that Greece saw something like unity and, at that, it was not exactly voluntary. So why couldn't the Greeks manage to work it out for themselves? Did it have to come to war with one another? Should one side or the other have made more concessions or done something different? These are the questions that have been guiding our inquiry as we begin studying the Peloponnesian Wars.

I was pleased with the papers on the Spartan notion of virtue. Hopefully, it helped to bridge the gap between the fantastical aspect of history, that can seem so disconnected from our lives, and the practical, everyday experiences lived by those we study. A notable theme that seemed to emerge was whether or not laws are always the answer to developing a desired character in a people as a whole. If a people are to govern themselves, maybe they have to be brought about to want to do it on their own, perhaps by following an example, rather than have it thrust upon them by force of law.

As the year comes to a close, I find myself lamenting that we don't have even more time to study ancient Greece, as there is so much to learn. The boys are so interested, it makes each class feel like it's only fifteen minutes long. If all goes as it should, that exuberance will carry over into their own personal pursuit of history, even outside of class.

## Math, Kindergarten - Yulia Shpilman



Here is a brief look into what we did in April in Kindergarten math:

1. **Counting routine** - in counting, our focus has been recognizing, naming and comparing three-digit numbers. The students are now able to confidently name all three-digit numbers and comfortably compare sets of numbers such as 137, 317 and 370. We have also been talking about the importance of zero and what role it plays in our number system.
2. **Arithmetic practice** - We are continuing our arithmetic practice on a daily basis, using manipulatives and games such as Tiny Polka Dots, 1-2-3 peek and see, Splat and others. The students are gaining confidence and speed in addition and subtraction within 20. We will continue to work towards fluency in this regard, as well as sanity checking answers (e.g., recognizing that if you add 2 to 7, you cannot get 6).
3. **Special topics** -
  - a. One special topic this month has been time - we have started to learn how to tell time on a clock, as well as some basic facts about time, such as how many hours

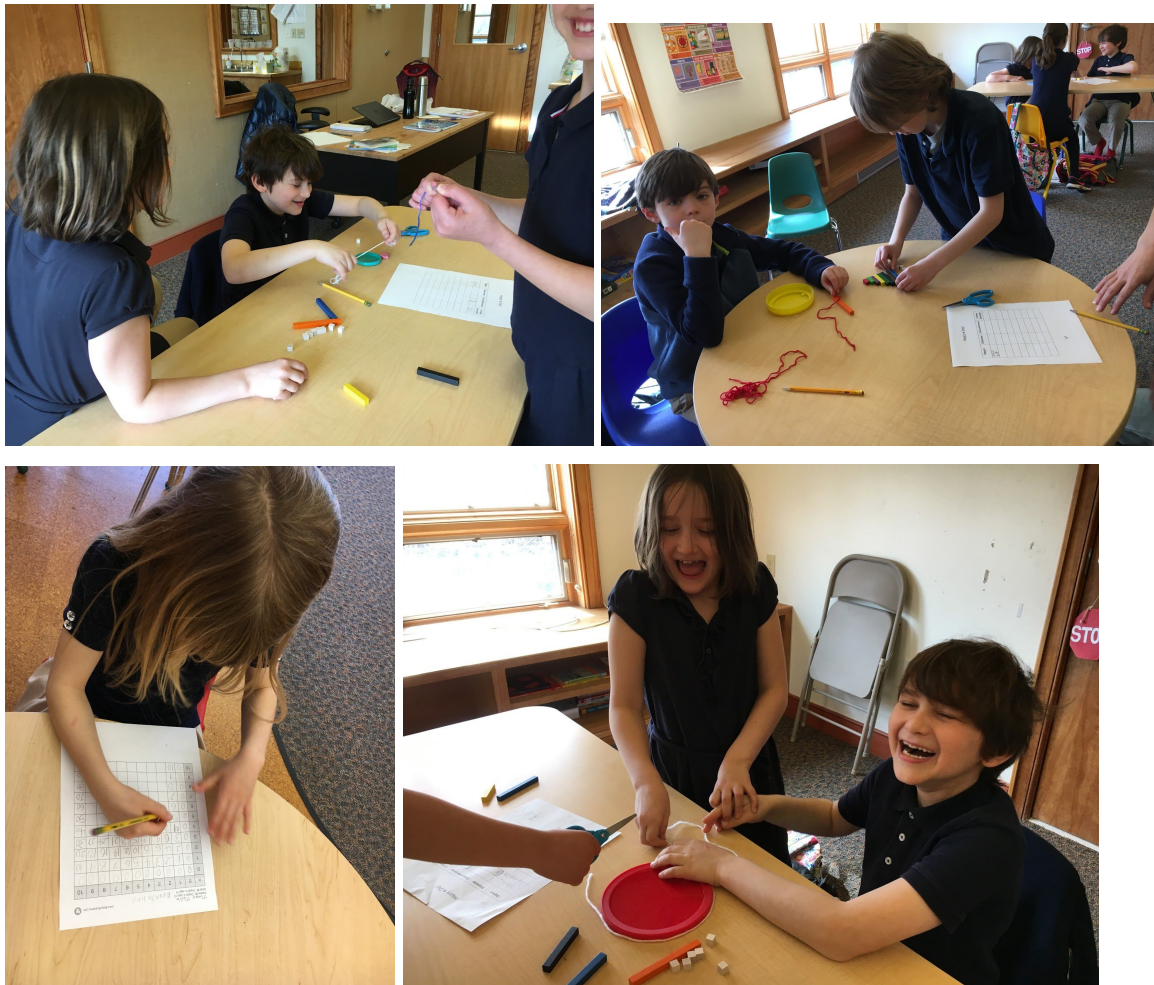


are in the day, how many minutes in one hour, etc. This is a difficult topic that we'll continue to explore and that will be repeated in greater depth in the next several years. We are also continuing our work with the calendar, reviewing basic calendar facts and doing some basic problems (e.g., if today is Monday, what day will it be in six days?)

- b. Our other special topic this month is logic. We have been working on a variety of logic puzzles throughout the month, and playing logic games such as Set.

In May, we will continue working on number fluency with addition and subtraction within 20; we will continue to discuss our number system and do a little bit of math history; finally, we will continue working with the calendar and the clock.

### Math, 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Grade - Sasha Fradkin



The first grade class spent the month of April revisiting the concept of place value. Their understanding of it has made a huge leap since we first encountered the concept earlier in the year. They can now easily solve problems like  $230+50$  or  $530-200$  by using place value considerations. They also worked on some tricky puzzles that require both logic and a good understanding of place value.

The second grade class spent the month of April exploring the concept of subtraction. Whereas the basic concept was familiar to all of them, they discovered that subtraction problems can be quite tricky and that there are many strategies for approaching them. They learned and practiced the strategies like subtracting by place value, subtracting a bit less or a bit more to simplify the problem and then adjusting (eg,  $546-97$  is the same as  $546-100+3$ ), and shifting the difference (eg,  $106-56$  is the same as  $100-50$ ). We also solved many problems together on the board where the students had a chance to come up with strategies of their own.

The third grade class spent the month of April exploring the concept of division. They played games and solved puzzles to become comfortable with the concept of remainders. They also learned and practiced a simplified and more intuitive version of long division. As with all previous concepts that we covered this year, they solved a number of word problems that tested their understanding of the concept.

After finishing a chapter on division, the fourth grade class moved on to exploring the related concept of factors. They learned about prime numbers and used the Sieve of Eratosthenes to figure out all of them less than 100. They also learned about prime factorization and the importance of primes as the building blocks for all other numbers. They factored many numbers, solved tricky problems and puzzles involving prime factorization and learned how to use the factorization of a number to determine what it is divisible by.

### **Math, 5th & 6th Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov**

By spring break we were almost done with the topic of statistics. From review of basic definitions of average, median and mean, the students proceeded to quite advanced word problems involving these concepts.

Next we moved on working on some elements of number theory. Students reviewed prime factorization. Prime factorization was used to find GCF (greatest prime factor), and now we are practicing a quite advanced method of Euclid's algorithm. We have some more work to do on that chapter yet, and we'll review operations with fractions to wrap up the year.

### **Science, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd & 3rd Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov**

Students in K-1st and 2nd-3rd grades were working on the following vocabulary of landforms: island, lake, archipelago, system of lakes, cape, bay, peninsular, gulf, isthmus, straight. While we were looking for various examples of those landforms all over the world, we also reviewed the names of all continents.

Next, K-1 students worked on how Earth move around the Sun, and recognizing the change of seasons, and difference of seasons between hemispheres.

2nd-3rd grade students studied Earth coordinates. I think the favorite part was using cabbage heads to represent Earth, and drawing some meridians on the equator on it. Students also did an excellent job on exploring the time differences around the globe.

After the spring break, the students moved on to reviewing to the properties of sound, and now we started the exciting topic of optics.

### **Science, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Tatiana Ter-Saakov**

Students in 4th-6th grades studied circular motion, both by looking into theory and by experimenting with some Hot Wheels cars and a track with a loop. We talked about kinetic and potential energy, with car performing the loop as one of the examples. The concept of potential energy is not easy, so we'll be coming back to it in the future.

After the spring break, the students moved on to reviewing to the properties of sound, and now we started the exciting topic of optics.

### **Robotics, Computer Programing - Tatiana Ter-Saakov**

The students continue their work on programming the robot, in pairs or individually. Each mission requires the robot to move around pre-set field to specific destination point, accomplish a certain task, and return to the base. In March, students kept working on incorporating sensors in their program. We have cases of successful following the wall with the ultrasonic sensor, successful use of gyro sensor for turns. One group is working on using two color sensors to straighten the robot against the white and black line on the mat. In April, groups were implementing the newly created functions, called "my blocks" in EV3 software, in solving their missions.

### **French - Betty d'Herve**



## French - Kindergarten

This month, we continued our routine with the date, numbers and weather. We counted between 100 and 200. We continued to play more games in order to practice French vocabulary and we read every day individually to the teacher. We continued to learn “traditional” French songs:

- Il court, il court, le furet : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbGDY0Zs3Ss>
- Il était une fermière : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33QTRbGPlll>
- Je mets la main devant...
- Ah les crocodiles : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YI08sRToU0>
- Y’a une pie dans l’poirier : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83QlhQXZzZw>

We learned the vocabulary of the “table setting” and set table the “French” way. We talked about manners at dinner time. We also discovered two “special” adjectives placed in front of the noun. We finished our book “Mes copains et moi.” We reviewed all the vocabulary of this book and made sentences individually.

Vocabulary:

travaille (works)

dessine (draws)

boit (drinks)

une assiette (a plate)

un verre (a glass)

une fourchette (a fork)

un couteau (a knife)

une cuillère (a spoon)

une serviette (a napkin)

de l’eau (some water)

de la limonade (some lemonade)

du chocolat (some chocolate milk)

du lait (some milk)

petit/petite (small, little)

un petit verre (a small cup)

une petite cuillère (a small spoon)

grand/grande (big/tall)

un grand chien (a big dog)

une grande cuillère (a tablespoon)

## French, 1st Grade & 2nd Grade - Betty d’Herve

This month, we continued to learn “traditional” French songs:

- Le bon roi Dagobert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqKjdSjNgRU>
- Il était un petit navire : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNIpMO5q\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNIpMO5q_s)
- Dansons la Carmagnole : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7zxoJbCFYQ>
- Le fermier dans son pré : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2UXqfi7Rqg>

We just finished our French book “Mon monde.” We conjugated the auxiliary verb “avoir” and the regular verb “travailler.” We studied how to write the numbers from one to twenty. We worked a lot on the spelling of the new vocabulary, as well as on writing sentences on our individual white boards.

Vocabulary:

avoir (to have)

j'ai (I have )

tu as (you have, singular)

il/elle a (he/she has)

nous avons (we have)

vous avez (you have , plural)

ils/elles ont (they have)

travailler (to work)

je travaille(I work)

tu travailles (you work, singular)

il/elle travaille (he/she works)

nous travaillons (we work)

vous travaillez (you work, plural)

ils/elles travaillent (they work)

coûte (it costs)

coûtent (they cost)

une gomme (an eraser)

un stylo ( a pen)

un euro (one euro)

des euros (euros)

1- un

2 - deux

3 - trois

4 - quatre

5 - cinq

6 - six

7 - sept

8 - huit

9 - neuf

10 - dix

11 - onze

12 - douze

13 - treize  
14 - quatorze  
15 - quinze  
16 - seize  
17 - dix-sept  
18 - dix-huit  
19 - dix-neuf  
20 - vingt  
à la boulangerie (at the bakery)  
le boulanger (the baker)  
à l'épicerie (at the grocery store)  
l'épicier (the grocer)  
le gâteau (the cake)  
le croissant  
une banane  
une salade  
du raisin (some grape)  
une tomate  
un café au lait (coffee and milk)  
un chocolat chaud (hot chocolate)  
le père (the father)  
la mère (the mother)

### **French, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Betty d'Herve**

This month, we continued to learn "traditional" French songs:

- Le bon roi Dagobert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqKjdSjNgRU>
- Il était un petit navire : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNIpMO5q\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNIpMO5q_s)
- Dansons la Carmagnole : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7zxoJbcFYQ>
- Le fermier dans son pré : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2UXqfi7Rqg>

This month, we studied up to Lesson 13 in our fifth French book (Le français en image, book E). We had quizzes on the vocabulary of "la famille" (family members), "les vêtements" (clothes), and "le matériel de classe" (class supplies). We studied the conjugation of "-DRE" verbs : "prendre" (to take), "apprendre" (to learn), "comprendre" (to understand), and "attendre" (to wait for). We also studied the irregular verbs "pouvoir" (to be able to), and "vouloir" (to want to), as well as their special construction following with infinitive form of verbs. We reviewed "complex sounds" like "en/an, in/ain/ein/un, on, oi, ou, aill, eur, eu..."

Vocabulary:

Cf. homework vocabulary papers

## Latin, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Asya Sigelman

This month, in addition to continuing to build our knowledge of Latin vocabulary, we have delved into the following grammatical subjects:

- **The indirect object.** We reviewed the forms and function of the indirect object in English and discussed that English often prefers to use the alternative—object of preposition (“The teacher read **them** a book” vs. “The teacher read a book **to them**”). We then learned the dative case in Latin and discovered that the indirect object in Latin is always put in the dative case.
- **Interrogative Pronouns and Adverbs:** We noted that the term “interrogative” comes from the Latin verb “rogo, -are” (“to ask”) and refers to words and phrases which we use when we wish to ask a question. We then reviewed interrogative pronouns in English (who, whom, and what) before learning how to say them in Latin (quis, quem, and quid). Then we learned the interrogative adverbs ubī (where), quāndō (when), and cūr (why).
- **Imperative Mood:** We had our first brush with the notion of mood, noting that all the Latin expressions we have learned so far have been in the *indicative* mood—i.e., they were factual statements. To make a command we have to use a different mood—the imperative. We learned how to make commands in Latin based on all the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation verbs we have learned thus far.
- **Third declension nouns and adjectives:** This is the third and final declension which we will study this year (we will learn 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> declensions next year). We observed the differences and similarities between the 3<sup>rd</sup> declension on the one hand and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> on the other. We also observed that the third declension often “hides” its full stem in its default, nominative singular form and that the full stem is often familiar to us from English derivatives. For example, “rus” (countryside) looks strange and unfamiliar, but once we decline the same noun into the genitive, it reveals that the letter “r” is part of its stem: **rusis**. This form is familiar to us from the English adjective “rural” (having to do with the countryside).

Here are some famous quotes the children have been memorizing:

- ❖ Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis.
- ❖ Homo homini lupus est.
- ❖ Tempus fugit.

Our reading of the *Aeneid* is nearing its end: young Trojans Nisus and Euryalus have perished, as has the beautiful Amazon Camilla. Aeneas is about to engage in a one-on-one duel with his arch-enemy Turnus, and we know that the gods have already decided the battle in favor of Aeneas. Yet, this decree notwithstanding, Vergil still manages to keep us in suspense!

## **Music, Kindergarten - Karina Butterworth**



The kindergartners are busy preparing for the final musical evening! During every lesson, the children are assigned a task for the next day, for example they are asked to connect 4-8-16 measures without mistakes, or make their left hand softer, or check the fingers that they use. They have also made great strides on the violin and are very enthusiastic about their progress. They are now able to play a few songs with all four fingers. They have improved their violin and bow holding techniques, as well as their intonation. Their position is more natural and comfortable, so they can play 20 minutes. Next week, I will start recording a video of all their violin songs for parents, both individually and as a group. During the group lessons we continue working on writing dictation, singing solfeggio and playing card game.

## **Music, 1st Grade - Karina Butterworth**

The 1st Graders are busy preparing for the final musical evening! During every lesson, the children are assigned a task for the next day, for example connect 4-8-16 measures without mistakes, or make left hand softer, or add pedal, or check fingers that they use. This group is strong and even violin ensemble, they learn minor pattern and play "March" with low and high second finger. Next week, I will start recording a video of all their violin songs for parents, both individually and as a group. During the group lessons we continue to work on writing dictation.

## **Music, 2nd & 3rd Grade - Karina Butterworth**

The students are busy preparing for the final musical evening! They spend one class during the week performing their music, and sometimes have a chance to perform during the other

lessons. After the performances, the students are assigned a specific task for next time, for example to connect 4-8-16 measures without mistakes, or make left hand softer, or add pedal, or check the fingers that they use. During the violin ensemble we worked on a few Suzuki songs and “Duet” by Dancla. In the duet they have low and high second finger and slurs. Next week, I will start recording a video of all their violin songs for parents, both individually and as a group. During the group lessons we continue to work on writing dictation.

### **Music, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Karina Butterworth**

The students are busy preparing for the final musical evening! They spend one class during the week performing their music, and sometimes have a chance to perform during the other lessons. During the violin ensemble we worked on a few Suzuki songs and “Duet” by Dancla. Next week, I will start recording a video of all their violin songs for parents, both individually and as a group. The children did reports on composers from the Romantic Period, such as Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. I am planning on having the students write five final dictations during next month. It will not be too difficult, but they have to take it seriously and open their minds.

### **Art, Kindergarten & 1st Grade - Karina Butterworth**



In April, the children were working mostly with watercolor. We did the same drawing spread over several lessons to make it more accurately. The students drew “Violin,” and a copy of “Prince Baltasar Carlos in Hunting Dress” by Diego Velazquez. They had two lessons of free drawing which is very important in this age. They also worked on self portraits.



## Art, 2nd and 3rd Grade - Karina Butterworth



In April, we were working on a lot on sketches. The children drew pencil still life “Bicycle equipment”, “Chessboard”, “Left hand with small object”, “School entrance” and “Mrs. Butterworth with guitar”. Also they drew still life “Peppers” with watercolor.

## Art, 4th, 5th & 6th Grade - Karina Butterworth



During April we were working a lot on sketches. Kids drew pencil still life “Bicycle equipment”, “Chessboard”, “Left hand with small object”, “School entrance” and “Izzie with guitar”. Also they drew still life “Peppers” with watercolor.

## Art History, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Asya Sigelman

This month, we travelled still further back in time, to learn a little bit about the Byzantine Empire, which had a profound influence on art in Medieval Europe as well as on the European



Renaissance. We studied the origins of the Byzantine Empire, from its humble beginnings as a tiny ancient Greek city, to Emperor Constantine's decision to make it a "New Rome" in AD 330, to its fall to the Ottoman Turks in AD 1453. We studied the geography of the surrounding region, familiarizing ourselves with the Aegean Sea, Hellespont (= Dardanelles), Propontis (= Sea of Marmara), Bosphorus, and the Black (= Euxine) Sea. We learned the three names of the city which became the center of the Eastern Roman Empire: Byzantium, Constantinople, and Istanbul, and discussed why Constantine the Great came to be known as Saint Constantine (hint: he was the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity). We have been tying our map-work and discussions into our ongoing reading of Shulevitz' *Travels of Benjamin of Tudela*, which charts the adventures of a traveler across the medieval Mediterranean. Next month, we will examine Byzantine iconography and discuss how it influenced European art.

### **Art History, 4th & 5th Grade - Jessica Todd Harper**

We are continuing to spend time with the life and art of Michelangelo, who as a young boy of 13 was plucked from his home to be raised in the Medici household alongside future princes and two future popes. Exposed to the best of classical education of the time, Michelangelo's later work exemplified the Renaissance blend of Greek and Christian philosophies. The students have copied his Pieta sculpture in their blue books and discovered classical influences in the triangle composition of the intertwined figures. They know by now that perfect geometrical shapes in Renaissance art are not coincidental. "Wait, wait, " one student exclaimed as his mind clicked together the pieces, "Pythagoras had stuff to say about perfect shapes! And Plato too! Renaissance people read about Pythagoras and Euclid and Plato and they thought that math reflected the harmony and perfection of the mind of God! This triangle is about the mind of God!" And keeping in that theme of geometry, the divine, and neo-classical formalism, this week we are studying that paragon of Renaissance architecture in which the Pieta is housed, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

To help keep track of what happened when, every child in Art History was given a new book called a "Book of Centuries". This "time line in a book" will be for the children to use in Art History but also in History. They will live at school. The students fill in important dates on the time line to help them understand what came first, what was contemporaneous, and how it all fits together in the big picture. This way they can easily see where Columbus was compared to da Vinci (contemporaries!) and that Martin Luther and the Reformation are happening in the middle of Michelangelo's career and that classical Greek thought was a really really long time before all of that. They will keep their "Book of Centuries" for the rest of their academic career.

### **Hands-On Skills - Adam Darer**



This month in Hands-On-Skills, we began our outdoor survival skills unit. The students learned how to find a good spot in the woods to build a survival shelter and how Lean-To and A-frame survival shelters are constructed. The students put this knowledge into practice by building their own survival shelters using sticks, trees, leaves, and rope. We learned how to tie and use the square knot, figure eight knot, clove hitch, square lashing, sheet bend, and the bowline. We will continue to review these knots in the upcoming weeks and add more to our repertoire. We also began using a compass to find North, South, East, and West, and started learning about compass bearings. We will continue to practice our compass skills in the upcoming weeks as we learn how to navigate an orienteering course using a compass.

## Hebrew - Tal Gutman

**3rd grade:** April was a busy month in Hebrew class. Our topics this month were clothing and the seasons: the students studied about 20 new words of clothing, jewelry and accessories (such as pants, dress, sandals, belt, legging, tie, ring...) with the verb "wear" and which clothes fit which season. The students are now able to describe a variety of outfits and their colors and length, in agreement to the gender and the number of the noun. Ask your kids to tell you in Hebrew what they / you/ anyone else is wearing now, which type of shoes they have and what is the color of each item.

We made progress in grammar, especially regarding the infinitive form (to run, to learn, to play...) and the combination of helping verbs and infinitives: love / want / need / able + to travel / to do / to sleep / to be and much more. We built sentences such as "I need to do homework, but I don't want to" / I want to be in Peru now, but I can't" / "My father needs to make dinner today" and the most popular within the student: " I want to fly to ..."

We also dedicated time to practicing the correct use of question words and to asking questions. Each student wrote sentences from our vocabulary and then wrote 2-3 questions about the sentences.

Another topic this month was flavors of food – sweet, sour, salty, spicy and bitter with emphasis on the agreement of these adjectives to the gender and number of the food item. Additionally,

we made progress in our new book which focuses on a group of friends of the students' age and combines our grammar topics and new vocabulary.

In our conversations routine, it's a pleasure to speak with the students full conversations in Hebrew and to hear them express themselves while implementing their knowledge.

**K-1<sup>st</sup> grade:** This class is working intensively on reading and writing skills. In the first part of each lesson the students read one on one with me - words, sentences and short stories according to their level. Then, we work on handwriting and on writing words from our vocabulary (kindergarten) and creating nominal and verbal sentences (1<sup>st</sup> grade).

Our topic this month was clothing and the seasons: the students studied new words of clothing, accessories (pants, dress, sandals, glasses, hat...) and matched each item to the season we wear it, winter or summer. We also dedicated time to practice opposites we studied in a sentence. For example – "dad is tall, but I'm short", "the table is clean / dirty" / "it is raining outside, but we are inside." Additionally, we continued with counting and progressed to counting to 100. Our daily conversation routine each class is now dedicated to clothing (what am I wearing today?), mood (happy? sad?), the day of the week, food and family, in order to review the vocabulary, practice the structure of sentences and the usage of prepositions and partials (in/at, to, on, with, only, but) and the distinction between feminine and masculine forms of the verbs according to the student's gender.

## **Christian Studies - Betsy Bashore**

After spring break, the students and I reviewed our latest section where we discussed Jesus feeding the 5,00 and ended the story of Abraham with the binding of Isaac. This pivotal point in Abraham's story is when God reveals to his people that child sacrifice is not something He desires, an animal (and later Christ) shall be given instead to atone for sins. Our review game and assessment were followed by Mr. Chilbert's post-Easter lesson on Jesus' resurrection and a questions day on dinosaurs in the bible! Is there mention of them? Why would dinosaurs not be a large part of the biblical stories? Ask your kids, they know! Lastly, we are spending the rest of the year finishing up the Gospel of John. By acting out John 7-8, the students gained a deeper understanding as to why the Pharisees and Jesus are fighting. Jesus is making Himself equal with God! Is He a blasphemer or is He the real deal? We will see!