

SOCIAL STUDIES GRADE ONE

1. The Whole Person -- Child development literature reminds us that primary grade children have yet to decenter. Their bodies and families are of primary importance to them. Thus our curriculum has a strong concentration on areas of personal development. We also know that children are more process oriented at this stage of their young lives and thus the curriculum will reflect this approach.

(a) Personal safety and responsibility – areas of study include fire protection, railroad track safety, trick-or-treat safety, bicycle safety, hygiene, personal protection and stranger danger. We use McGruff, Bike Safety and Operation Lifesaver coloring books among others.

There are field Trips to the local firehouse, farm, water center, parks and the two railroad stations.

(b) Our Bodies / Ourselves – Where Do We Come From? --providing children with introductory information about how they were born and where they come from including basic information on their bodies and the proper vocabulary for body parts. At this age children are chiefly concerned about the digestive system. Basic information about the digestive system and how it works is provided.

Nutrition and hygiene are related.

Books used include: "What's Inside? Body," "What's Inside? Baby," "Bellybuttons Are Navels," "The Children's Atlas Of The Human Body," "The Human Body," "See How You Grow" and "Where Do Babies Come From." All of these books are age appropriate and selected for our curriculum by physician advisors to the school.

(c) Children will begin to identify the differences between their wants and needs. Math activities are related.

(d) Children will identify their street addresses, towns where they live and phone numbers. We will relate the information to one another thus becoming aware of the towns and our region. Our train trip through area communities as well as our field trips are geared toward this goal.

2. Citizenship

Social responsibilities

Ethical values--respecting others, sharing, tolerance, etc....

My country and its democratic beliefs; some introductory history as it relates to these beliefs. The children are encouraged to work together as members of a community with shared responsibilities. Rules, especially related to safety, are important.

Historical role models such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ruby Bridges are studied.

Social interdependence-- How our behaviors affect the lives of others around us will be an important part of our discussions.

Our collective impact on our environment including our local ecology including recycling.

3. Holidays and Seasonal Themes

Columbus Day as it relates to map skills;

Halloween, as a child centered American cultural holiday, including a recitation of the Halloween poem "Hiss Whist" by E. E. Cummings in chapel;

Thanksgiving--as it relates to maps, history, Pilgrims, Wampanoags; including recitation of Robert Frost poem "Stopping By Woods" in chapel, reading aloud the books "And Still the Turtle Watched" and "The Land of Gray Wolf."

Winter holidays including a recitation of a Christmas poem by Langston Hughes "Christmas Eve: Nearing Midnight In New York"

Reflecting the family traditions of people in our community

Martin Luther King Day including poetry recitation in chapel

Seasons and changes in nature as they relate to holidays and farmers; (including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Ground Hog Day)

Historical holidays and important American historical figures are included ... George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr. among others.

4. Multicultural contributions in arts, literature, poetry and sciences including biographies and history.

"Jazz In The Classroom: An Interdisciplinary Approach" - an exposure to America's classical musical art form and some of the seminal musicians who have shaped it including: Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Nina Simone, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington and many more.

The curriculum focuses as much on the "culture of jazz" as on the many luminaries who shaped it. There is a direct integration with the arts especially through works of Harlem Renaissance artists, in particular Romare Bearden and Langston Hughes. Children study the art and engage in creating works of their own. They memorize and then publicly recite a Hughes poem during our Christmas Chapel.

First graders learn of the civil rights contributions of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. as values to emulate. Together with the second grade they learn of Dr. King's life as a child through the video "The Boy King." As a means of context for our study of the life of Dr. King the children learn about the "Jim Crow" laws and democratic efforts to change them.

5. Geography

Basic map skills and hands on mapping activities; the children, along with their fifth grade buddies, explore a map of "Oceanside" and make their own community map. Introduction to maps of the USA, the world and parts of the world. Introductory use of the globe. Vocabulary such as, but not limited to, "continent," "country," "state," "ocean," "island", "river," and "lake" are used and explained. Sandbox play is related to rivers, lakes, islands and land formations. Animal habitats as related to geography and science form a part of an integrated curriculum.

Field Trips

The first grade takes field trips in conjunction with this course of study. Field

trips include community institutions such as the firehouse, the water center, railroad stations, museums as well as neighborhood nature walks. The children write about their field trip experiences with their fifth grade writing partners. Photographs document our trips. A "Memory Book" of their field trips and special activities with their writing, pictures and photos is assembled by year's end.

Program Integration

Many children's books, both fiction and non-fiction, relating to the above mentioned themes and topics are read aloud to the class. Examples include biographies of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., Langston Hughes, Helen Keller, Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, Louis Armstrong, Ruby Bridges and others as well as story books such as "The First Thanksgiving", "The Land of Gray Wolf", "And Still The Turtle Watched" and holiday poetry such as limericks. The children are also engaged in a variety of artwork to represent these themes. Our class play usually reflects a multicultural theme. Graphs and charts for collecting data are integrally related to math. Our math work on money is related to the historical figures represented on the coins.

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