

Grade Five Syllabus for Mrs. Holland - 2011-12 School Year

Welcome to fifth grade! We are embarking on an exciting and challenging school year. Our small class size will provide us with some unique opportunities of learning and experiences.

Expectations and Procedures- Students are expected to be examples of respect and responsibility for the younger students at the school. We expect exceptional behavior from students as you model the values taught to us in the Gospel. Our class rules are attached. We will follow the St. Nicholas Catholic School Family Handbook in matters of homework, attendance, discipline and uniforms. The fifth graders are models for the younger students at our school and they are expected to be models of respect and responsibility at all times.

Curriculum- We follow the curriculum standards as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Seattle and the State of Washington through the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALR's) and the Grade Level Expectations (GLE's). In math and science we are also beginning to incorporate the Common Core.

Religion- Our faith is the central theme that binds us together as a community and is what makes us unique in our education. Religion will be the thread that is interwoven through all the other subject areas and through our daily life. Prayer is an important part of our day and we begin the school year discussing why we pray. For religion class we will be focusing on the Sacraments this year and will utilize our textbook and outside resources to do so. We will also be learning and working with the required grade level prayers and scripture passages as prescribed by the Archdiocese of Seattle and we will have discussions of weekly readings. An additional focus will be on Catholic Social Teaching. Students will be expected to have a basic understanding of the major themes of Catholic Social Teaching by the end of 5th grade.

Homework- We follow the guidelines for homework time as outlined in the family handbook and recommended by the Archdiocese. The recommended time for grades 5-6 is 65-75 minutes per night. Please let me know if your child is consistently spending more or less time on his or her homework. Our homework will typically consist of vocabulary/spelling and math with other subjects and projects occurring on a less consistent basis. See the homework/grading policies for more information.

Binder- In fifth grade we are introduced to the middle school binder system. Please help your student keep his or her binder organized. We will be having regular binder checks. The important thing to remember about the binder is that there should be no loose papers. Everything has its place, and the students know where each paper goes. **Parents- please look each night in the pouch inside the front cover of the binder. This pouch is called "Rush Hour" and it is for important information for parents including notes, permission slips, progress reports, etc.**

Planner- Planners should be filled out daily and assignments crossed off when completed.

Math- We will follow the Common Core State Standards and the Archdiocesan curriculum for math. This will be done through the use of Holt Mathematics: Course 1 and supplemental materials. I believe strongly that all students must know their times tables through the 12's by the time they leave fifth grade. We will be doing math multiplication at school during the week. I recommend that students spend ten minutes per evening working on memorization. I have flash card websites, games, and activities to help students memorize their times tables.

Spelling/Grammar/Vocabulary- We will have a spelling/vocabulary quiz every other week. The quizzes are on Fridays. Our vocabulary will, whenever possible, come from our literature/reading, social studies, or religion. It is my goal not to just have students memorize the spelling of words to be forgotten the next day, but to actually introduce new vocabulary into their lexicon to be used in discussion and writing. Grammar and English will be taught in the context of writing and the vocabulary homework and will also be addressed as an individual skill. Vocabulary homework is assigned on Mondays and is due on Fridays unless otherwise specified.

Reading- In fifth grade we focus on comprehension monitoring strategies and literary analysis. I will work individually with students on fluency if needed. We will focus on strategies of making connections to the text, asking questions, making inferences and summarizing. We will also emphasize the students' ability to form opinions and theses from reading and support their opinions with evidence from the text. One of my primary goals for the school year is that students enjoy reading and want to choose reading as a leisure time activity. Reading logs are due every other Friday.

Book Reports- We will be having two book reports per trimester this year. The reports will be genre based and will each involve a unique project. Students will be given expectations and guidelines for each report as well as a scoring guide. More information for each report will come as the due dates approach.

Writing- One of my primary goals for writing is that by the time my students leave fifth grade they have developed a love of writing. I employ the use of the Six + 1 Traits of Quality Writing. I begin the school year with a "cold" piece of writing. This allows me to establish a baseline and allows students to become aware of the growth they make over the course of the year. We will be working in each of the modes of writing: Narrative, expository, imaginative, with an introduction to persuasive and technical writing. We will also work on research papers, with an introduction to the research process, including the use of in-text citation and a works cited. A writing program would not be complete without some exposure to poetry and students will be writing poetry in a variety of styles. Most initial writing will take place in a writing composition notebook, with some pieces being rewritten and taken to final, published drafts.

Science- For science we will be focusing on the Scientific Method. Students will design experiments and analyze the results. We will utilize our science textbook as well as supplemental labs and experiments. Students will first learn about Life Science, then Physical Science, and finally Earth Science with investigations into the Human Body woven in throughout the year. Students will use a composition notebook for science in order to keep all labs and notes in one easily portable place.

Social Studies- We begin the year with the study of geography. Fifth graders will have a basic knowledge of the planet including the continents, oceans, and major cities. They will also develop a strong understanding of the geography of the United States and will be accountable for knowing the fifty states and capitals. Our focus for fifth grade history is the history of the United States from the First People through the Civil War. We will focus in particular on Native American Tribes, the Original Thirteen Colonies, the Revolutionary War and the Founding Documents, Westward Expansion, the Industrial Revolution, and the Civil War. I believe that students get the most out of history when they feel connected to it. Therefore I employ the use of hands-on, thematic units and projects in conjunction with the textbook.

Art- Art will be incorporated into all of the others subject throughout the year and I will address Washington State Standards for Art when appropriate. If you have any expertise, or know someone who does, in any form of art and would be willing to provide some lessons to the class please contact me.

Progress Reports- Updates on student academic progress will be coming home bi-weekly. Grades can reflect a variety of factors including, but not limited to, completion of work in a timely manner, effort, understanding, and adherence to guidelines. Subject grades in the 90s reflect above average work, 80s shows average, and 70s and lower in a subject area may indicate a need for closer monitoring of student understanding or work completion. Individual assignment grades can vary greatly due to varied points possible. Honor Roll starts in 5th grade and is reserved only for students who show extremely high levels of performance. My focus is to make sure all students understand the material presented to them and grow towards their potential. Please feel free to contact me if you ever have any questions or concerns.

Field Trips/Special Projects- There is an overnight camp planned in May at Nature Bridge (previously OPI) in the Olympic Park. I will be working with parents to determine payment options. Other day trips are also planned. Please feel free to approach me with additional field trip ideas at any time. I am very interested in involving the class in service projects. 5th grade students rotate crossing guard duty as a service to the school. When on duty students must arrive to the classroom at 8:10am.

Book Orders- I encourage you to order books through Scholastic online at <https://orders.scholastic.com/L7BZB>. The activation code for our class is: **L7BZB**. I will only be doing orders online. This method can be a great way for you to earn bonus points. You must create your own account with your e-mail and password, but don't forget the classroom-specific activation code. All book orders are due on the 28th of each month. The classroom has a very meek library, so if you wish to purchase a book for the class it is greatly appreciated. All book donations are very welcomed!

Altar Servers- Fifth graders can, for the first time, be trained as altar servers. Please discuss as a family if you would like your fifth grader trained and let me know a.s.a.p.

Please feel free to contact me via phone or email. We are going to have a fantastic year as we use the gifts that God gave us to learn and to serve and as we look for the gifts in others, in particular in our children.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Amber Holland
Phone: 253-858-7632
Email: aholland@sncsgh.org

Also check out the school website: <http://www.sncsgh.org/>
And my classroom website: <http://mrshollandscsclass.yolasite.com/>

Please sign and date in acknowledgment that you have read through this syllabus.

Parent Signature(s) _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

I offer you this prayer to reflect on as we begin our journey:

Father, I have knowledge,
so I pray you'll show me now
How to use it wisely
and find a way somehow
To make the world I live in
a little better place,
And make life, with its problems,
a bit easier to face...
Grant me faith and courage
and put purpose in my days,
And show me how to serve Thee
in the most effective ways
So all my education,
my knowledge and my skill,
May find their true fulfillment
as I learn to do Thy will...
And may I ever be aware
in everything I do
That knowledge comes from learning -
And wisdom comes from You.

- Helen Steiner Rice