

January 29, 2009

Dear Families,

It's been an extremely busy month! I wanted to send you an update on all of our activities.

Reader's Workshop:

The children and I have spent some time exploring story structure and story mapping. We discussed characters, setting, problems and resolutions. During our unit, we read The Other Side, Uncle Jed's Barber Shop, and Ming Lo Moves the Mountain. After reading Ming Lo Moves the Mountain, the kids rewrote the ending and came up with some very amusing stories!

This week, we concentrated on learning that readers know to infer when the answers to their questions are not explicitly stated in the text. First, we shared a wonderful book called, Where Are You Going, Manyoni? By Catherine Stock. Together we inferred some interesting vocabulary words such as forage and tree pan. We also came up with a list of strategies good readers use to figure out questions in the story:

- Rereading
- Paying attention to the words
- Looking closely at the pictures
- Using their schema or background knowledge
- Taking their time when reading the text
- Thinking really hard

We have also posted our "think marks" into our Reading Response Journals. I am so proud of your children. They have come such a long way since the beginning of the year, as they are making, recording, and sharing very thoughtful connections and predictions on a daily basis.

## Writer's Workshop:

We are coming to the end of our Small Moments Unit. Since I last touched base with you, we have concentrated on writing details and story structure (beginning, middle, and end). We have also had mini-lessons focusing on the most important part of their story; helping children include their "inside story" (thoughts and feelings); and good story endings. I have told the children that we will soon start revising our stories for publication next week. They are very excited!

## Math:

In math class, we have been working on addition and subtraction and working with 5's, 10's, 20's, and 25's as well as ways to make 100. We have also been working on solving story problems and deciding what operation to use to solve a problem. Your student will be bringing home some of the games that we are playing during class. Take some time to play these games with your child. In addition, look for subtraction situations at home and share them with your child. For example, if you bake a batch of cookies and you set some aside for school lunches, how many cookies will be left for the family to eat. Or if you have 26 cents in your pocket and you want to buy a snack that costs 55 cents, how much more money do you need?

## Mark your calendars:

Report cards go home on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Open House will be Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. I hope to see everyone there! We will celebrate Valentines Day on Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. Please send in valentines (one for each child).  
Thanks.

Some questions to ask your children:

Why is Mrs. Wolfe giving us a purple marker for Writer's Workshop?

Tell me about Uncle Jed's Barber Shop.

Tell me about the letter you wrote to President Obama.

How did Ming Lo move the mountain?

How did Ming Lo move the mountain in your story?

What addition strategy do you use to solve word problems?

What subtraction strategy do you use to solve word problems?

Tell me about your Writer's Workshop story.

Do you know which story you want to publish?

What is the name of your "Just Right" book?

More books we read this week:

Riptide

Things that are Most in the World by Judi Barrett

How Many Days to America? By Eve Bunting