

August 30, 2012

Dear Kindergarten Parents,

First I'd like to thank all of you who were able to join me on Monday evening for Meet Your Teacher Night. I hope the evening was informative and helpful to you. It was a pleasure to meet with you and discuss some important highlights of this foundational year in kindergarten. Please remember that I am here to serve you this year and I want kindergarten to be a positive and successful experience for your child. Feel free to contact me at any time with questions or concerns. I'll be glad to have a phone conference or meet with you in person after school.

We now have six days of school under our belts! Continue to stress to your child the importance of being a good listener, especially when Mrs. Tropf is talking or teaching. I am training the children to raise their hands when they want to talk and then wait patiently to be called upon—a tall order for kindergarten in the early weeks, but certainly a reachable goal. Thank you for reinforcing my discipline at home if your child loses his/her green slip. Firmness and consistency pay off, so hang in there for the benefit of your child!

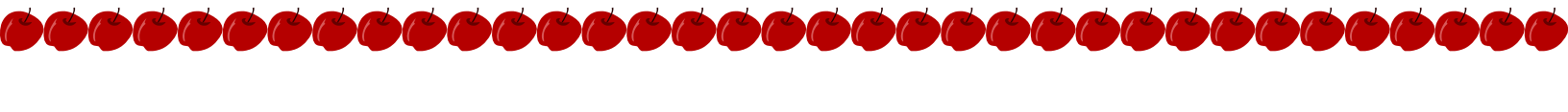
Let's talk for a moment about TALKING... The first day jitters have worn off and the children are very comfortable with their classmates. Many of the children think they can talk whenever they want to; however, that is not allowed. My rule is "One person talks at a time. If Mrs. Tropf is talking, you are listening." The children should not be talking when I am talking, teaching, or giving directions/instructions. They should not be talking when another child has a turn to talk. Remember, one of my goals is to develop good listeners and I start doing that the first day of school. We continue to practice "Zip and Grip!" and "Give me five!" Ask your child to show you that one. It's my way of quieting the class and I need you to remind your child how important it is to obey this command the first time it is given. I appreciate your help at home reinforcing my classroom rules and procedures.

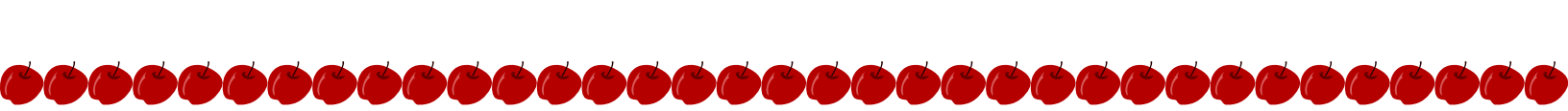
We started our new Bible curriculum this week and the children learned their first memory verse, Hebrews 11:3. We studied days 1 and 2 of creation week and learned that God created day and night, the sky, air, and clouds. The children are learning songs and doing craft projects that reinforce concepts from our daily lessons. To introduce our unit on Monday, I gave the children a ball of play clay and asked them to create something. This simple hands-on activity helped them grasp the idea that God is a Creator who designed the whole universe according to His wise plan. He created the entire universe out of nothing!! Next week we will continue learning about God's beautiful creation, the wonders of nature, the creation of water, dry land, and vegetation on day 3, and the importance of seeds on the earth—another part of God's wise plan in creation. The memory verse for next week is Psalm 66: 1 "Shout with joy to God, all the earth!" Please help your child practice this verse at home so he can say it for me on Thursday. Verses will usually be due on Thursday, our chapel day, each week.

In our Open Court language arts curriculum this week we've had fun listening to and discussing the fun story Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready For Kindergarten by Joseph Slate. Then we made our class booklet entitled Mrs. Tropf's Class Gets Ready For Kindergarten. The children drew pictures of ways they prepared for the first day of school. We've done finger plays and rhymes, labeled objects in the classroom, and learned rules for our eyes, ears, hands, and mouths when listening to stories or listening to someone who is speaking. Good listening skills will be taught and practiced all year long. Next week in language arts the children will learn more about rhyming words, hear the story Fox Makes Friends, and continue their introduction to the capitals and lowercase letters Cc, Dd, Ee, and Ff.

In math this week we have focused on the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Counting and reading them is easy, but writing the numbers is difficult for many of us. We'll continue to work on the basics of how to sit correctly and hold a pencil correctly. The skills will come with time and practice. Next week we will finish our work on this chapter and take a test on Friday to assess mastery of the concepts.

Handwriting is a challenge for most of us. When fine motor skills develop sufficiently, handwriting will become an easier task. Time and practice will help, but readiness and motor development can't be hurried. Pencil grip is very important as we get started in handwriting. The pencil should be held between the thumb and middle finger, with the index finger resting on top of the pencil. I am stressing correct pencil grip each time we write so that bad habits don't start and become ingrained.





This week we began a fun-filled unit on colors. Each day I feature a certain color and celebrate it with stories, snacks, activity sheets, art projects, songs, or games. It is a great way to review colors and a fun way to begin our school year. Watch for crafts or activity sheets to come home during the next few weeks of our color unit. This week we celebrated the colors orange, black, and blue. Our featured colors next week will be purple and brown.

I like to celebrate birthdays in kindergarten and make each child feel special. Feel free to send in a treat for the class if you'd like and we will enjoy it at lunch time. Please make me aware of any food allergies or food restrictions your child may have. We start by celebrating the August birthdays but wait until late May to celebrate the June and July birthdays.

In closing let me share a few important reminders:

1. Please do not send your daughter to school wearing any scented body lotions, perfumes, or fragrances. Perfume triggers nasty migraine headaches for me. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. (This also applies to moms who come to help in the classroom.)
2. I need a wallet size photo of your child if you have not already sent one to me.
3. Starting next week you may use the hot lunch program for your kindergartner if you so choose. Just write me a note stating what you want to order each day. Thanks for all those lunches, drinks, and love notes the first two weeks! The children proudly showed me those notes from Mom and Dad.
4. Next Friday, September 7, is picture day. The children may either wear TCS uniforms or their "Sunday Best" outfits.
5. Please begin saving your Box Tops at home for our fall contest. It would be fun for our class to win. More information will be coming out in the near future.
6. Remember to turn in the questionnaire for your child on learning modalities by TOMORROW.
7. Please fill out the Driver Application Form online ASAP since our first field trip is Sept. 14. If you signed up to help drive for field trips, please do this now and it will cover you for all other field trips the rest of the year.
8. ***Additional ways to earn service hours this year: Help organize, set up, or clean up for our graduation reception in May. I'll give you details if you are interested.***

Ms. Seiler has volunteered to serve as room mother for our class and Mrs. Schoen is serving as co-room mother. I appreciate their willingness to serve our class in this capacity this year. If any of you are willing to serve as chairmen for our class parties or special events, please notify me ASAP. Thanks so much.

Attached to this newsletter is a permission slip for our first field trip to Erie Orchard on Friday, September 14. More information will be sent home in next week's newsletter, but please sign and return the permission slip so your child can go on the trip. If you would like to be a driver for this year's field trips, you must go online and complete a screening process.

Don't forget to spend 15 minutes each evening reading to your child. Take advantage of this precious time of life to cuddle with your child and enjoy great children's literature together. It will create warm, happy memories for your child, as well as a love for books and reading.

I am enjoying getting to know your child. Please continue to pray daily that I will have God's wisdom, love, and compassion for each of His special creations. With God's help, this can be a wonderful year of learning and growth in the life of every boy and girl. Pray for God's hand of blessing upon our class.

In the Master's service,
Mrs. Tropf

P.S. I've decided to ask each family to buy one book cover for your child to use in our language arts program. Please look at WalMart for the blue and silver package that says, "Premium Edition Jumbo Book Cover". It fits books up to 10" x 15" and fits perfectly over the back of our chairs. They only cost \$1.99. If each family buys one I can have enough for our "good fit books". Remember to donate your gently used books to our class for our reading program also. They will be getting a good workout this year!!!

