



Welcome to Sixth Grade!

From the desk of Mr. McD:

My name is Mr. McDonough. I will be your Homeroom, English and Language Arts, Math and Religion teacher for the 2018-2019 school year. It is with sincere excitement that I welcome you all to the 6th grade. Whether you are moving up in the St. Peter ranks or entering the 6th grade from another school, I look forward to working with each and every one of you.

As I start to reflect on my first year at St. Peter School I am reminded just how special this place really is. Without your questions, your imagination, your creativity and your collaboration there would be no room for academic and spiritual growth. Just as you inspire me I will do my part to inspire you. With that said, you will be pushed outside of your comfort zone. In learning groups and individually you will face new challenges and it is important to do so with an open mind and a positive attitude. If you can do that, you will find your next year in the 6th grade interesting, exciting and rewarding.

Please use the following as a brief overview of what to expect in the 6th grade. There will be a more comprehensive outline of the academic and extra-curricular school year in the first two weeks of September. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not think twice about contacting me via email at dmcdonough@saint-peter-school.org. Until then, enjoy the summer with friends and family. May your extended break be filled with laughter, peace and lots of ice cream! See you in the fall...as 6th graders!

Best,
Mr. McD

Communication:

At the end of the week I will send home a newsletter covering highlights, positive shares, and other pertinent information to both students and guardians. If there is ever a question regarding what was covered, noteworthy information or changes to a student's schedule please email me at dmcdonough@saint-peter-school.org. I am also available before and after school to meet by appointment only.

Students will be encouraged to submit some assignments via Google classroom. I will post homework and announcements on Google classroom daily. Homework will be reviewed and written down in their assignment planners as well.

As students enter the upper grades their schedules become more complex with after school opportunities and the like. Prior to the start of the school year please contact me about drop off and pick routines. It can be hectic at the end of the day so the more I know about any last minute changes the better it is for all.

Health:

Allergies- Please help prevent any allergic reactions in the classroom by keeping nuts out of the room. There are more and more sensitivities to certain foods nowadays and we must be in unison when it comes to the safety of the children.

Water Bottles- Something we do not do enough...drink lots of water. It is recommended that you purchase a water bottle for your child to keep at school.. Ideally ones that seal completely closed to avoid spills with the straw open top bottles.

Birthdays- I understand that there is a long standing tradition of bringing in cupcakes and other B-day sweets on your child's special day but there are dozens of other ways to celebrate than with sweets. We can talk about this more during back to school night but please refrain from bringing any baked items into school to share.

Chromebooks

In the 6th grade students will be given a chromebook to keep with them for their middle school years until they graduate. There might be some changes before September regarding distribution and use but as of now each incoming 6th grade student will receive their own chromebook that they can bring to and from school.

The support from home is crucial to the continuity here at school. Although certain sites are blocked, the internet is vast. Please be sure to have a conversation with your child about appropriately handling their device, surfing the internet and sharing comments in public forums.

School Supplies:

Student Supply List (Required)

- 5 Durable Folders with two pockets in: green(1), blue(1), purple(1), red(1), and black(1)
- 6 black and white marble notebooks
- Pencils
- Small handheld pencil sharpener
- Blue pens or red pens (correcting purposes)
- 1 Pencil pouch
- 1 Package of lined paper
- Highlighters
- Index Cards
- Pack of sticky notes

Classroom Supply List (optional but much appreciated)

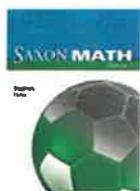
- Plastic/Paper cups
- Napkins
- Tissues (the one item we can never have enough of)
- Paper Towels
- Lysol Wipes
- Expo markers
- Snacks (pretzels, goldfish, crackers etc)
- AA and AAA batteries

- Extra pencils and erasers for communal use
- Band Aids
- Scotch Tape
- Childrens board games (indoor recess/choice time)

Curriculum:

Religion - St. Peter uses the religion program *Sadlier's We Believe*. The book will be used to enrich class discussions and build a more meaningful relationship with God through text and content based activities.

* *The website for the book can be found at www.webelieveweb.com



Math - Students will continue to use the Saxon Math program in the 6th grade. The program is designed to introduce new skills and concepts one lesson at a time and then build from those lessons in 30 problem assignments. The setup of the book blends distributed practice to ensure that retention and acquisition of both old and new concepts are reached.

*You can find a used copy on Amazon for \$40.00 if you would like to keep a copy at home. Saxon Math, Course 1 (Hardcover)

English Language Arts - Students will use the *Voyages in English* program to become more confident writers, readers, and speakers. The program is aligned with Common Core State standards and provides excellent content to ensure understanding and develop young critical thinkers. There will be grammar and written components woven into each lesson from this text

Reading: Students should expect a lot of reading in the 6th grade. From class novels to independent reading logs, it is my goal to share the joys and adventures of reading with everyone. The literary works this year will include short stories, essays, nonfiction and fiction writing as well as poetry.

Writing: Every student can write! Every student will appreciate the development of their writing through stages of self and peer edits, critical feedback and read alouds. Students will master argumentative, persuasive and narrative writing with an overall understanding of the writing process in the 6th grade.

Vocabulary/Spelling: Building off of the sound habits developed in the 5th grade, students will continue to use the *Vocabulary in Action* program to develop their vocabulary skills. The program offers several different strategies to understand and retain high utility vocab words. This will help them add substance and quality to their writing, and will increase their reading abilities.

Summer Reading

Students and families, please do not underestimate the power of summer reading. For many it may feel like a blunder to an otherwise relaxing and “work free” break but there is substantial evidence supporting academic growth, retention of information learned and development of critical thinking skills. I strongly encourage you to take notes while reading; use the tools you’ve gained in 5th grade and start to develop them here. I will also attach a reading log to help monitor and keep track of your progress.

The three books I have selected for summer reading include:

1. *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli
2. *Absolutely Normal Chaos* by Sharon Creech
3. *The River* by Gary Paulsen

Please choose two of the three books to read and complete the following corresponding assignments. They will be due the first week of school.

Maniac Magee

(Pick one option below and run with it)

1. Draw a six to ten frame **cartoon strip** that shows one of Maniac's amazing feats. Write short descriptions at the bottom of each frame to tell the story. Add dialog balloons for each character's words. When you have finished you will have a mounted 6 - 10 frame color cartoon, with a title, captions, and dialog balloons. Look at the Sunday funnies see how other cartoonists create a scene and story.
2. Create a **board game**. Your game needs to include a game board, pieces, rules, and a fair chance of winning. Your game might use chance card or trivia cards or the board might be made up of places Maniac has been. The goal of the players might be to reach "home". It is up to you. Your final product will be an original game that is playable.
3. Create a **diorama** of your favorite scene from Maniac Magee. Your final project should be well crafted and include a written description of the scene and how it fits in to the whole book. You must use the text of the book to verify the accurate details.
4. **Newspaper**. Create the front page of the Two Mills Times newspaper. You will need to have a feature story—the main story, and three smaller stories that are all somehow connected to life in Two Mills. Check out the example that I have for further guidance.

Absolutely Normal Chaos

(Pick one option below and run with it)

1. Imagine you are Mary Lou Finney and one year has passed since the end of the story. Create a new entry for your journal. What is happening in your life? Have you heard from Carl Ray? Is Alex still calling you? What book are you reading now?

The activity is designed to test whether you recognize patterns in Mary Lou's journal well enough to create a new entry. Entries can focus on one topic or discuss a variety of topics but should indicate that you understand Mary Lou's thought process, value system, and general interests.

2. Reread Mary Lou's list of characters from the *Odyssey* on page 63 and choose one character from the list. Use reference books to learn more about the character you have chosen. Write a short biography of this character including one important thing he or she is said to have done in Greek mythology.

The activity encourages you to choose a favorite character from Greek mythology to study in more detail. Look for biographies which describe the character's role in mythology and his or her relationship to other characters from mythology.

3. Create a collage of important objects from Mary Lou's diary. Cut out images from magazines that remind you of these objects and arrange them with glue on a piece of paper. Leave space near each image to briefly explain why the object shown is important in the story.

Possible objects to include range from common household items in the Finney home such as the bed from the attic, the dinner table, and the telephone to items more specific to the story such as the ring Mr. Furtz gives Carl Ray, Carl Ray's car, and Mary Lou's copy of the *Odyssey*.

The River

(Pick one option below and run with it)

1. See attached book report form.

2. Create a **diorama** of your favorite scene from The River. Your final project should be well crafted and include a written description of the scene and how it fits in to the whole book. You must use the text of the book to verify the accurate details

Name _____ Date _____

The River by Gary Paulsen

Author _____

of pages _____

Main Character _____

Setting _____

Introduction - How does the book begin?

Point of View - From whose point of view is this story told? Explain why you think this point of view is best for this story.

List the main character and briefly describe him.

Conflict - What were some of the problems that Brian had to deal with throughout the novel?

Rising Action -How did Brian go about solving his problems? How did he change in the process?

Climax - What was the turning point in the story?

Resolution -How did the novel end?

What was your favorite part in the novel?

Identify the novel's theme.

Would you recommend this book for others to read? Why or why not?
