

# **MRS. MACDONALD'S** **INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOM**

## **Our Solar System**



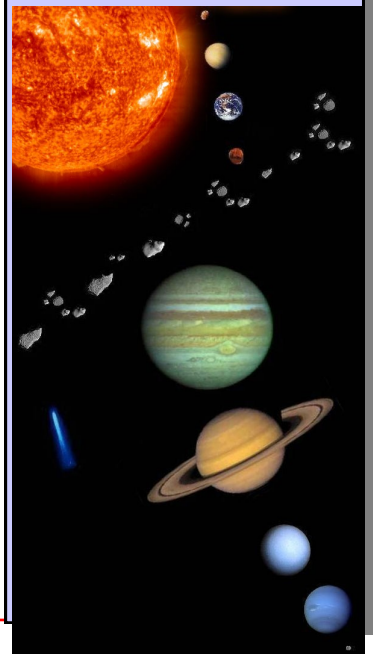
- We began our unit of study on the Solar System as we begin most units of study...I ask the class what they already know. This is about activating prior knowledge and building upon it. Interestingly, many told me that they didn't really know much about the solar system at all. This was great news for me! Plenty to teach.
- We began by discussing the solar system. Children asked about where it all came from and how did it begin. We discussed that there are scientist that believe in the BIG BANG theory and people of religion that believe that God created it all. I am going to leave this to you to discuss with your child and handle in regards to your personal beliefs.
- We discussed the Sun, the Inner Planets, the Asteroid Belt, the Outer Planets, the Space Shuttle, the Space Race, the Moon and Constellations. We are working on lapbooks containing information about each of the planets and information about the solar system. We have discussed the fact that many websites, textbooks, and informational books have not been updated and still list Pluto as a planet. We discussed what made Pluto different from the other outer planets and why it was recently demoted to a dwarf planet.
- This class is so enthusiastic about learning. They listen and absorb information so readily. They make teaching very enjoyable. This week they asked if they could eat lunch in the classroom so that they wouldn't have to stop learning about the planets. A couple of weeks ago they asked the same thing when we were learning about caves.
- I am working on scheduling a field trip to the Air Force Museum for Thursday, December 13th.
- Wednesday, December 19th I will have a movie night at the Academy. I will also be bringing my telescope for students to view the stars and moon.
- Students have been assigned moon watching as part of their homework. Unfortunately, most of the viewing of the moon will have to be at school since the MOONRISE has been 10, 11 and midnight. Luckily, this means that the MOONSET isn't until about noon, so our observations can happen at school. *Moon Observation Books* can come back to school, or we will make a new one if they have already been misplaced. Observing the phases of the moon is a state standard. We will have a New Moon on Dec. 9th, then observe a waxing moon.

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### **Important Items**

- Winter Wonderland at MIM building 11-3 on December 1st
- Field trip to Air Force Museum December 13th
- Parent Night Out/ Viewing of the Stars at the Academy December 19th from 6-8
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### In Math

- This week in math we worked on measurement, regrouping, graphing and some students began work on long division with a remainder. Math facts must be practiced at home. We work at skill building at school, please practice math drills at home. Simply practicing with flashcards helps build a strong foundation to math by memorization of the basic facts. Without this foundation, every other math skill becomes less successful and more difficult.
- This week in our exploration of space we used compasses to make circles on paper to indicate the orbit of the planets around the sun. The introduction of this tool was quite successful. The class did a great job of creating eight orbits around the sun and then placing sequins of appropriate sizes on the orbits to represent the planets. The sequins needed to be ordered by size and then applied to the appropriate orbit...for example the largest would have represented Jupiter and needed to be placed on the fifth orbital ring around the sun. Everyone did a great job on this activity and many skills were used in the process.
- Many students were perplexed with this week's homework with the number line. When the number line first jumps from zero to 7 then counts on for the next four numbers...the number sentence that would accompany this would be  $7+4=11$

### Spelling

Spelling words came home on Monday and spelling worksheets were due on Friday. Please help your child remember to complete these sheets and return them to school on Friday. Some students said that their words were not hard enough. The goal is not to assign the most difficult words the child can handle, but to assign words within a spelling pattern. Learning the spelling pattern helps identify and apply this spelling pattern to other words. If you know n-i-g-h-t-spells night and l-i-g-h-t spells light, then applying this skill would mean you would spell fright correctly instead of frite. Of course, our language has so many words that do NOT follow the pattern that this won't always work, but having a background knowledge on familiar word patterns in spelling is setting the foundation for spelling success. Therefore, assigned words may not always be difficult words to master, but will be necessary patterns to master.

### Language Arts

I believe we now have all the addresses and names necessary to complete our Legacy letters. I intended for students to write a letter to their Legacy Project Person in November, but we were waiting on several addresses. We will complete that project this week. December is the time that students should be conducting their interviews with their chosen person. Tape record or video tape the interview if possible. This will help students to put together their stories in the next stage of the project. Try to collect a few photos as well. 5 or more photos are recommended. If you can get them to me digitally, that saves time for me...if that is not possible, we do have a scanner at school. Good luck with the interviews and enjoy them.

Report Cards came home in Friday folders.

## Homework for the Week:

**Monday:** Read assigned story. Spelling words are brought home, look over the spelling pattern.

**Tuesday:** Math Practice

**Wednesday:** Write about a holiday tradition in your house. Make your writing at least one good paragraph. Remember to start with an opening statement. (EG. In our house over the holidays we always decorate cookies. ) Then have supporting details about your opening statement. Finally, tell me how you feel about this holiday tradition.

We will share these in class on Thursday.

**Thursday** Practice spelling words for the test. Finish activity sheet to hand in.

We will keep watching the moon.

