

Welcome to Middle School with Mrs. Denney!

Dear Parents and Students,

I am looking forward to this next year at St. Margaret School. There are several new and exciting things happening in our class this year, especially for the 7th and 8th graders. Below is list of just a few things we have to look forward too.

Google Classroom

This year the 7th and 8th graders will complete a large part of their Reading and ELA work in Google Classroom. This is an online classroom that allows me to send and receive work to and from students electronically which will help me to engage the students more, we will use less paper, and we will be able to communicate in terms of work and grades much faster. With this, students will be given a school email account. Students are NOT to use this email for personal communication with friends or each other. This account is strictly for communicating back and forth with me. I will send home each child's email address and password so parents can access it and check in any time. Students are NOT to share their password with anyone except parents.

Class Blog

Together as a class, we will create a class blog so students will have the ability to help each other throughout the year. This will allow them to ask /answer questions, seek advice, and share their ideas when they are not in school.

Field Trips

This year, 7th and 8th grade will be taking several, short, field trips to help students grow in their knowledge of a subject, concept, or skill. Most often we will utilize the Otsego Public Library, and will eventually visit the Otsego Historical Museum. Not all of our trips are planned now but I will email you in advance so you can look for a permission slip. For every trip, I will need a Virtus trained adult to travel with us. It is my plan to get information to you with enough advance notice that you can let me know if you are available to attend.

Study Skills

I am going to focus on Study Skills throughout the entire year and integrate these skills into all the subject areas. We will break skills up into the following categories:

Preferences and Priorities – Students will get a better understanding of the kind of learner they are, the best type of environment to help them stay productive and effective, and the strategies that work best for them to learn.

Organization/Time Management – Students will learn strategies to get and stay organized within their binders, desks, planners, and at home. They will also learn how to manage their time

outside of school with their busy schedules to ensure they have time to complete all their projects, assignments, and study for assessments by using their monthly and weekly calendars.

Reading Strategies – Students will learn different strategies for reading different types of texts/passages depending on their purpose.

Note-Taking Strategies – There are several different ways to take notes, but this year students will learn what strategies are best used in different situations/purposes, and which strategies work best for each of them individually as each student has their own preferred method that works best for them.

Study Strategies – Students will learn different ways to study for different subject areas along with identifying which strategies they connect with the most.

Test-Taking Strategies – There are different strategies for completing tests depending on the type of questions being asked such as multiple choice, true/false, and short answer. Students will not only learn these different strategies, but also how to reduce test anxiety.

Monthly Book Reports

Each month, the 7th and 8th graders will be assigned a different genre. They will have to choose a book at the appropriate reading level, have it approved by a parent and by me, will have to read the book, and then complete the report. There will be deadlines for each of these steps and will count as a part of their overall grade. The best part is that they will complete traditional book reports as well as electronic, audio, video, and interactive reports. Students will have all the creative control and will present their reports to the class.

As new information, projects, or classroom strategies come up, I will contact you right away. Please let me know if you ever have any questions or concerns.

This Week in Middle School

5th/8th Grade Theology:

This week we attended Mass on Tuesday and Thursday, prayed the Rosary on Thursday for our Blessed Mother's Birthday, and learned about our Virtue for this month, Prayerfulness.

7th/8th Grade Reading:

This week we began our first unit in Vocabulary. Through Google Classroom, they have created dictionary entries and started making their flash cards. We also started our book groups. We are reading Number the Stars and Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry. On Wednesday, we went to the Otsego library and choose books for the September Book Report which is a on the genre, Fantasy.

5th – 8th Grade Social Studies:

This week I started all classes on the same unit however the depth in which we work is dependent on the grade. All grades are learning/reviewing the Five Themes of Geography.

7th/8th Grade ELA:

We learned about point of view/perspective and read children's fairy tales. The students chose their own book and will write The True Story, by writing another version of the story from the antagonist perspective. We also started our first grammar unit which looks at complete vs. fragment sentences and different types of sentences.

Math:

5th Grade: This week we started Rocket Math for both multiplication and division. In our first unit, we are working on place value through the hundredths place. They boys are also working on changing fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions.

6th Grade: This week we started Rocket Math for both multiplication and division. In our first unit, we have learned about the order of operations and key words that tell us when to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. The class took notes on all of this in their Learning Log. They also worked on solving algebraic expressions when there is a variable.

7th/8th Grade Study Skills:

As a class we worked on Active Listening Skills by tracking the speaker and making eye contact. We reviewed filling out planners where students check off completed work and highlight homework/important notes. Lastly, we looked at using the monthly calendars by filling in due dates for reports, assessments, and even sports/extracurricular activities so they can learn to manage their time.

5th – 8th Grade Computer Technology:

Beginning next week, I will teach CT once a week. We are really going to call this class "Genius Time." We are going to CT skills and the concept of Genius Hour, and will blend them together to have a student-centered, student-directed, student-paced class that allows each person to take their interest and skills to create and explore individualized topics through the use of multi-media. This is going to be a ton of fun and I can't wait to start!

Thank you and many blessings,

Mrs. Dennany



In the name of Jesus, St. Margaret School will provide a firm educational foundation of religious values and academic knowledge for each student in a Catholic, nurturing environment.