



October 2010

Mariners Log

Love You Forever

I recently finished rereading *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl. I first read this fanciful story for upper elementary children when my own children were of that age. The theme of the story is about good triumphing over evil. Looking at the book again, I'm amazed at the wealth of descriptive language that would be so helpful as an example for developing writers. At school we encourage our children to not only read great literature but to use it for other purposes, so this book is a good example of such a book.

Reading to younger children also is a multi-purpose activity. Recently the *Houston Chronicle* published an interview with Rosemary Wells, a well-known author of books for younger children. Here's what she had to say about why reading to children is so important. "A lot of communication with children these days is so hurried and peremptory and short. We don't make time to talk to them and listen. Hearing a story in a parent's voice has a soothing effect on a child. Talking about how the story is like your life, listening to how the child reacts to the story and talking about the story as you read it are all important. It's a little kit of communication." She also has this to say about that important snuggle time, bedtime stories. "The point of reading [at bedtime] is not to put them to sleep but to engage their minds and create a book-friendly child." Her point is that reading to children an enjoyable way to spend time with your children and engage their minds.

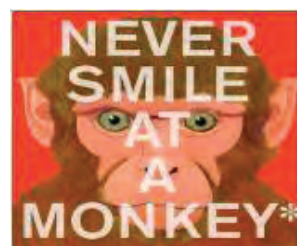
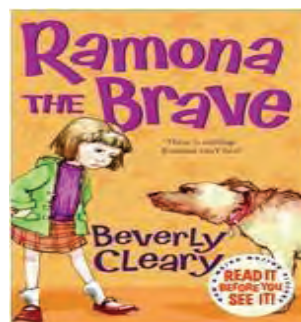
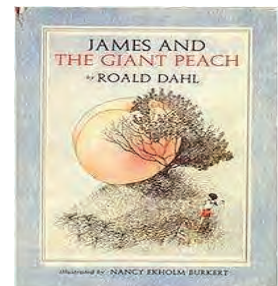
One thing that often happens as children learn to read is that parents stop reading to them because they want to hear the developing readers read. What is easily forgotten are the values of reading aloud listed above, along with providing an example of a good reader who reads with expression.

Take some time to introduce your children to great literature appropriate for their ages. Some great authors to choose for younger children include Jan Brett, Tomie de Paola, Eric Carle, Kevin Henkes, Mo Willems, Arnold Lobel, David Shannon, Laura Numeroff, Bill Martin, Dr. Seuss, Audrey Wood, and Mercer Meyer, along with Ms. Wells. Older readers can find great choices from Mary Pope Osborne, Avi, Beverly Cleary, Kate Dicamillo, Phyllis Naylor, Laurence Yep, Gertrude Chandler Warren, Gary Paulson, Andrew Clements, Graced Lin, Linda Sue Park, Rick Riordan, John Erickson, and of course, Roald Dahl. While all of these authors write mostly fiction, some great nonfiction writers include Seymour Simon, Don Lessom, Steve Jenkins, and Gail Gibbons. (The last two are personal favorites of mine!)

So pull up a chair – or couch or bed – and share some great reading (and talking) time with your children.

God Bless You,

Helen Jackson
Head of School



Fall Festival

Come join the fun at Southminster's Fall Festival on Saturday, October 16, from 1-4 pm. It is a time of fellowship for school families, church families, and the community. The festival is full of fun and games for children from preschool through elementary school and includes the popular cake walk, moonwalks, and face painting. Concessions will be available and we will have visitors from the Police and Fire Departments. The Autumn Bazaar and raffle are back again. The Bazaar will feature products and services from parents and the community. New this year will be the opportunity for families to have their photo taken in front of a fall pumpkin scene for \$15.

Southminster School's Parent Auxiliary Board (PAB) works hard to organize the event each year. Tickets are \$10 for the first child and \$5 for each additional child for an all-day play pass. Ticket order forms are available on the school website so you can order in advance. Advance ticket orders are due by October 11. Tickets will also be available the day of the event.

Back by popular demand are the Fall Festival t-shirts. Students will have the opportunity to wear them to school before the festival.

The school is in need of baked goods for the popular cakewalk. If you can donate either home-baked or store-bought baked goods, please contact Susan Castano. Thanks so much for helping to make the Fall Festival a fun family event. If you would like to volunteer to help with this event, please contact Nichole Thalji at (281) 804-6965 or Nichole.Thalji@gmail.com.



Southminster Thanks Its Donors!

Southminster would like to thank the following donors for their contribution to Southminster School's 2010-11 Annual Fund. Their generosity enables the school to enhance the learning environment and educational experience of students at Southminster School by sustaining the school and funding ongoing and new enrichment programs in many areas including Fine Arts, technology, and advanced specialized training for teachers.

Platinum Donors (\$2000) - Texas Auto Direct, The Williams Family

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Important Dates

- **October 11-13**

Picture Days

- **October 16**

Fall Festival

- **October 21 & 21**

Dads and Donuts

- **October 28 & 29**

Preschool Community
Helpers Days

Preschool Tips

All Bites Are Not Created Equal

Biting is perceived as one of the most common behavior problems in the infant and toddler classroom. The National Association for the Education of Young Children estimates that 1 out of 10 toddlers engage in biting behaviors. Helping children who bite gain control over the behavior and replacing the impulse to bite with a more appropriate strategy is part of good teaching.

Very young children are always learning and when they exhibit behaviors we wish they wouldn't, such as biting, we want to teach them appropriate coping strategies. Our job is to view biting through a developmental and programmatic lens and to help children who are biting and their families gain a greater understanding of what is involved. We are also responsible for teaching young children how to cope with the situation that make them want to bite, help them to control the impulses that lead to biting, and provide support in using a variety of strategies that are more successful in accomplishing the desired result.

Understanding why children bite is the first step to handling it. Biting does not mean the child is "bad" or "cruel". Instead, it is a sign of the developmental age of the child. Children bite to explore, to get reactions, and because they lack language and social skills. When they learn to tell their peers to leave them alone, can move away from children who get too close, and learn to negotiate turns, the frequency of such behavior diminishes.

Very young children rarely hold on to behaviors such as biting when they master more useful skills. Biting typically peaks somewhere between 24-30 months as children perfect additional language and social skills. But these skills are not acquired magically. They are learned in the context and supportive environment of positive and reciprocal relationships with caring adults. Creating that context by building positive and reciprocal relationships with each child in the classroom will insure that the foundation for learning new skills is in place.

Children bite for different reasons at different times during the infant and toddler period. Three kinds of biting are most common. Each is age and stage related and requires different supportive teaching strategies.

- **Exploratory Biting:** This is the earliest stage of biting where the child is mouthing the things that are in the near environment to learn more about them rather than intending to hurt someone.
- **Action/Reaction Biting (12-24 months):** As children become more mobile, they gain the ability to see something and hold it in their minds without the concrete object. When this connection is made, children explore putting together interesting combinations of actions to see if the responses to them differ. When biting occurs, the result is a big, loud reaction from the other child and the adults in the classroom. The ruckus that is created is interesting, different, scary, and even exciting.
- **Purposeful Biting:** This is the most difficult type of biting to manage in the classroom as it seems so inappropriate and malicious to adults. When evidence of the bite is left for all to see, it creates problems for the child, other children in the classroom, the teachers and families. This form of biting seems intentional on the part of the child whether he or she intended to bite to make something happen, to get a toy, to get the teacher's attention, or to get a particular chair at the table. Most often, the precise purpose of the bite is less clear, it just happens and often too quickly for anyone to prevent it.

When biting is viewed as part of the normal developmental progression, it is much less scary. Although we may not be able to anticipate when a particular child will bite, many infants and toddlers use biting behavior at some point. Preschool teachers are trained in several teaching strategies to use when dealing with whatever type of biting may be experienced in the classroom and can be valuable resources to parents when dealing with biting behaviors in the home.



Prayer Around the Flagpole

On Wednesday, November 10 from 9:30-10:00, Southminster School students will honor our veterans in a special ceremony called, "Prayer Around the Flagpole – Southminster School Thanks our Veterans!" The students have been collecting names of veterans from their own families, school staff families, and Southminster church families. These names will be read in a cadence by our upper elementary students. They are learning that freedom should not be taken for granted and that in a democracy we have the privilege to be able to stand up for our beliefs. All veterans attending will be given a special patriotic pin to wear so the children will be able to thank them for their service to our country and for preserving our right to be free. The ceremony will include the Pledge of Allegiance led by Southminster parent and City Councilman Robin Elackatt and a speech by Will Reed. Mr. Reed is a Southminster parent, motivational speaker and former military leader. The program will conclude with the playing of Taps. Please join us for this very special tribute to the men and women of our military.



Preschool Pet Days

Southminster preschool students enjoyed a wonderful hands-on experience during our recent Pet Day. Several parents volunteered to bring their family pets to school. During this time the preschoolers learned about the differences and likenesses between the different animals and how important it is to treat animals with special care. They got the opportunity to get up close and personal with each animal to pet and talk to them. Both the pets and the children reaped positive rewards from the experience. Many students even received licks and kisses from the pets. We would like to express our gratitude to all our parents and friends who shared their pets with our students and to our teachers, Janice Hodge and Sonya Kennedy, for planning and coordinating the event.



Shining Stars

If you notice your child coming home one day and excitedly saying "I'm the Shining Star!", you might feel compelled to say, "Yes honey, you are always my shining star!" Shining Stars are students who put their best foot forward and work hard to exhibit honesty, community, and perseverance during the course of the school day. The classroom teacher selects students to receive this honor based on their excellent display of good character for the previous month. Each child who is selected receives a Shining Star Award Certificate, a sticker to wear proudly, and last but not least, a small goody bag as a reward for working hard.

Here at Southminster we strive to teach students to do their best, to have a great attitude, to be faithful in their daily lives, and to be proud of what they can and have accomplished. The Shining Star award is just one of the ways children can be acknowledged for their accomplishments.

Shining Stars for the month of September are: Kindergarten - Josie Condrey, Oswin Zetino, and Macy Mihalick; 1st Grade - Connor Aga and Erika Michlewicz; 2nd Grade - Laney Chang; 3rd Grade - Ryan Michlewicz and Sheryl Cherukara; 4th Grade - Stone Simmons; 5th Grade - Sadie Jenkins and Ashely Jacob



2010
Fall Book Fair
and
Elementary
Lunch
with
Someone
You Love!



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