

GRACE NOTES

The Newsletter of
Grace Covenant Community School

Holiday Edition
December 2009

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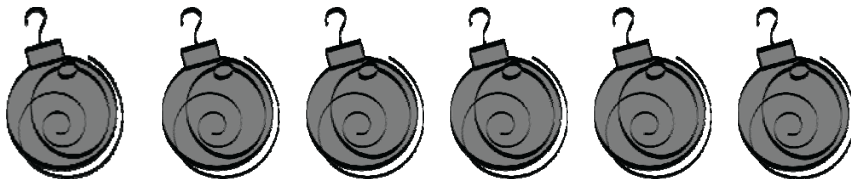
Preschool Christmas Program and Reception



This year, Grace Covenant Community School's preschoolers will be participating in First Mennonite Church's Christmas program, on Sunday, December 13 at 6 PM. Your preschooler will receive information to be sent home about dress for the program and other details. Please join us and feel free to invite relatives and friends! This will be a wonderful evening, including Christmas caroling and a reception following the program.

Christmas Gifts

In lieu of sending Christmas gifts to your child's preschool or afterschool teachers, please consider gifting Grace Covenant Community School with a donation to the riding toy fund (for preschool parents) or donating a board game (for afterschool parents). We desperately need to obtain new riding toys and board games for the preschool and afterschool kids to use while they're with us. Thanks in advance!



Practicing for the Christmas Program



Our preschoolers are currently learning a number of songs to sing for parents, relatives and friends at the Christmas program. We'll be working with your child(ren) in their preschool class, and you may want to ask your child about the songs we'll be singing to give them the opportunity to practice

singing for you. Please encourage your child(ren) to practice singing their Christmas program songs whenever they have a chance.

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Preschool Tidbits

Preschool Volunteers

We need volunteers who can work in our Preschool classrooms. You could work from one morning per week or one morning per month or more. Days: Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon. If you're interested, please let Ms. Willis or Ms. Griner know.

Late Arrivals

Please remember – if you arrive after 9:10 a.m., it is very disrupting to the class for the teacher to stop group time to answer the front door. And it is not the responsibility of the Church staff to open the door for late arrivals. If you arrive after 9:10, please do not ring the doorbell or knock on the door – go home and get a fresh start the next day.

The Mountain Road Corridor Holiday Celebration

For all ages. The Division of Recreation and Parks and The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen cordially invite you to attend a holiday celebration on Mountain Road. Take a tour down Mountain Road, starting with historic Courtney Road Service Station. Proceed down the corridor to the early 19th-century Forest Lodge Cupola. Enjoy an open house at Walkerton Tavern and attend the annual tree lighting ceremony at The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen. Finish the day with lantern tours at Meadow Farm Museum. All events are free! Information: Jeannie Murray, 501-5121.

Sat, Dec 5.

- * Noon-2 p.m. Courtney Road Service Station: Open for Tours
- * 1-6 pm Walkerton Tavern Open House
- * 4:30-5:45 pm The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen Tree Lighting
- * 6-8 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum: Lantern Tours

Preschool Storytime

On Friday, Dec. 19 at 10:30 AM, our preschool classes will be attending storytime at North Park Library. If you can help us in transporting children, please contact Ms. Willis or Ms. Griner.

Preschool Tuition

Preschool tuition for December is now due. Please make payments, via check or money order, out to "Grace Covenant Community Ministries" and drop off to Ms. Willis or Ms. Griner. You may also mail your payment to: Grace Covenant Community Ministries, P.O. Box 9617, Richmond, VA 23227

Preschool Winter Break

The Preschool program will follow the same winter break closure as Henrico County Schools. We'll be closed Mon., Dec. 21, 2009 through Friday, Jan. 1, 2010 and we'll reopen Monday, Jan. 4, 2010.

Foreign Language Curriculum

Our Preschoolers are currently learning French, including words for greetings, colors, body parts and animals. In the Spring, they'll start learning some Spanish also.

Afterschool Info

Don't Forget:

Henrico County Public Schools will be closed Monday, Dec. 21, 2009 through Friday, Jan. 1, 2010. School and the afterschool program will reopen Monday, Jan. 4, 2010.

School Attendance Info

If your child stays at home due to illness or is picked up early from school, please call us to let us know so that we are aware and don't wait for him/her at school pickup.



Free Week of Afterschool Care

We would like to add a few more children to our afterschool program. If you recommend a child or children to our program and they enroll and attend, you will receive one free week of afterschool care (limit one free week per family).

Homework

All children are given the time, space and help to complete their homework. If your child does not have homework or if you prefer they complete it at home, please make sure they have a book or magazine to read during our homework/quiet time.

Fun Holiday Cookie Recipes



Christmas Balls

1 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup powdered sugar
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup pecans, chopped
red and green sprinkles

Cream butter adding sugar and vanilla. Then add flour and mix well. Add pecans. Refrigerate for an hour until firm. Roll into small balls. Bake in a 350F degree oven for 20 to 30 minutes until light brown. Remove from oven and roll in sprinkles while still hot.

Molasses Sugar Cookies

3/4 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup molasses
2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon cloves
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Cream shortening gradually adding sugar. Beat at medium speed until light and fluffy. Add egg and molasses and mix well. In a separate bowl combine dry ingredients and mix well. Add about 1/4 cup of dry mixture at a time to creamed mixture. Mix well each time before adding more dry ingredients.

Chill for one hour until firm. Roll into 1 inch balls. Place on cookie sheet and bake at 375F degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. (Don't worry if tops crack). Cool on wire racks.

Makes 4 dozen.

Holiday Wreaths

1/2 cup butter
1 package marshmallows
6 cups Corn flakes cereal
Green food color
Red cinnamon candies

Melt butter in a saucepan over low heat. Then add marshmallows, stirring constantly, until the marshmallows melt. The mixture should get nice and gooey. Remove from stove and add corn flakes. Add a few drops of food coloring and stir until well mixed.

Very quickly make into round wreath shapes on wax paper. If it's too sticky rub hands with butter. Place red cinnamon candies around the wreaths.

Holiday Parenting in a Rough Economy

From the Norfolk Examiner (www.examiner.com)

What did you get for Christmas when you were 5 years old? Can you even remember? When you were 8 years old, what did Santa leave in your stocking? If you are like most people you probably have absolutely no clue.

Now think back to your childhood. What was your favorite Christmas tree ornament – do you still have it? What kind of cookies did you leave out for Santa? What is your favorite Christmas carol? These questions are much easier to answer. Why is that?

Christmas and the holidays conjure up some of the warmest and fondest memories for many of us. The reason is not because of material gifts we have given or received. Typically most families have holiday traditions and rituals they repeat yearly and pass on to future generations. Your family could have a special time designated to decorate the Christmas tree or yard, maybe you bring the kids into the kitchen with you to help bake cookies or treats as you did with your mother and grandmother, it could even be a special carol you listen to every

year. Whatever your special tradition or memory is, chances are when you think of the holiday season, this is what first comes to mind.

Our children crave the same thing. Yes when you are a kid, the presents are awesome – and let's face it, sometimes even as adults we get pretty excited about them too. But what is most exciting is the anticipation of the entire day. The sights, sounds and even smells of the season can quickly send us back to the memories in our mind like nothing else.

This year in a tough economy as many people face foreclosure, unemployment and an overall shortage of funds, these rituals are more important than ever. Get excited about the little things this year and your kids will follow your lead.

If your family has not established holiday traditions, it is not too late to start. Get your kids involved in the process. Maybe you pull out the photo albums and look at family pictures of past holidays. Crafts are always a fun way to get the family together

for an evening of fun and bonding. Make your own Christmas ornaments or decorations and you will have them for years. Maybe you and the kids would rather try your hand at baking or candy making. It will not matter if your goodies look like something Martha Stewart could have made herself or if they are not even edible, the memories you create in the kitchen will be priceless.

Of course, everyone wants to do presents. If you are feeling the squeeze this year, do not go crazy purchasing expensive gifts. You could ask your kids for a suggestion or two and concentrate on a couple of meaningful gifts rather than buying the entire toy store. Many of us have been guilty of overbuying in previous years and truthfully, it does not bring any more joy to Christmas and can serve to stress our finances further. If you are constantly worried about the post-Christmas bills that will be rolling in, chances are you will not enjoy your holidays as much as you could and your family may be able to pick up on your stress too.

The Newsletter of
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We're on the web! Visit
www.gracecovenantcommunityschool.org
for pictures, information and email access.

Fun Christmas and Holiday Activities for Kids

The holiday season is a time for children to discover the joy of family and religious traditions along with all the gift-giving hoopla. You can access some great activity ideas and other useful information on the holidays online via the links below:

<http://holidays.kaboose.com/christmas>

<http://www.northpole.com>

<http://www.marthastewart.com/christmas-kids-activities>

<http://holidays.kaboose.com/xmas-around.html>



<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Stories/PeoplePlaces/Winter-celebrations>

<http://www.preschoolerstoday.com/articles/holiday-winter/cultural-traditions-1541>

http://www.first-school.ws/THEME/h_wholidays.htm

Enjoy this holiday season!