

Dear Parents,

My name is Colleen Paiz, your child's Music teacher, and I am writing to introduce myself. I have been teaching in some capacity for the last 18 years. I graduated from U of M in 1992 with a Music Education Degree. I went on to Grand Valley and received an Elem. Ed. Endorsement which allowed me to teach classroom K-5. My first three years I taught 2nd and 5th grades. When I became a mom, I scaled back to teaching part-time Music. I was at St. Paul in 1998-1999 and have been able to reconnect with some of the staff here. I teach in three schools, including St. Patrick's. Some of my past teaching assignments have been Holy Name of Jesus, SS. Peter and Paul and St. Francis Xavier. My home parish is St. Francis Xavier where I have been the pianist/organist for over 11 years. I love to meet parents, so please stop me in the hall and say hello. Teaching for me has never felt like work. I love what I do and being with the kids. Thanks for sharing them with me.

As a public school employee let me assure you that religious music is allowed to be used and studied in the Music classroom. "Religious music within an educational context is a vital and appropriate part of a comprehensive music education. The omission of sacred music from the school curriculum would result in an incomplete educational experience (taken from MENC, Music Educators Nation Conference)."

Highlights for each grade are:

K-1 By the end of 1st grade students will have a song repertoire of over fifty songs. Along with learning Music concepts students will identify instruments by sight and sound. Great works for this age are Carnival of the Animals by Saint Sean, The Peer Gynt Suite by Edvard Grieg, and Hansel and Gretel by Humperdinck. Students will play classroom instruments, sing/play circle songs which practice social skills, develop ear training, allow for creativity, and foster teamwork.

2nd Grade Music grade builds on the 50 or so songs learned in the earlier grades. At this age students are developmentally able to add accompaniments using Orff instruments to their singing. Second graders read rhythms and expand on music terminology. Students are exposed to Peter and the Wolf and Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker.

3rd Grade Music focuses on songs around the world. We discuss the value of differences between peoples. Within this realm, students add musical instruments to many of the songs they sing.

4th Grade Music is the year of the Songfest. Songfest generally happens in February and the 4th graders from the Catholic Schools gather to put on a wonderful concert. Students also begin recorder. Recorder is a great way to learn notes and rhythms to prepare for band.

5th Grade Music literature focuses on songs which coincide with US history. We sing many songs from US. History. 5th graders also prepare for a trip to the Symphony, which generally takes place early March.

6th Grade Music explores the forms of Music i.e. Theme and Variation. Student song literature includes Broadway songs and we have a unit on American Composers: Gershwin, Woody Guthrie, Stephen Foster, Scott Joplin, Aaron Copland.

7th and 8th Grade Music has the goal of reading music and performing music. We have found a set of hand chimes (similar to playing hand bells). Chimes are a great way to get the students reading music and working as a musical team. At this age, students are exposed to more complex rhythms and terminology. 7th graders will do a poster/listening example/verbal report on a performer from the list or of their choice. 8th graders will do a poster/listening example/verbal report on a composer from a chosen list. In the Spring, both grades are to share a personal favorite, appropriate, song using musical terminology in their presentations. Reports will have guidelines to follow for student's success.

It should be noted that each May is a review for all grades of patriotic songs (just before Memorial Day). Songs and verses are added as students progress through the grade levels. We always end the year with a week of absolute silly camp songs. My students have added to my collections over the years.

The Christmas program this year will be Handel's oratorio, Messiah for Young Voices. This scaled down version will include grades 2-8 (K-1 will sing prior). It is a super way to expose the students to a great work. All Christmas performances are under an hour. Our date for the Christmas program is Thursday, December 16th at 6:30.

Hope this note gives you some ideas of where we are going. I want to conclude with some informational facts I recently found regarding the ARTS in education. Pray we have a great year.

Sincerely,
Colleen Paiz

- Three countries near the top ranking of Math and Science (Japan, Hungary, and the Netherlands) all **have intensive Music and Art training** into their elementary curriculums.
- One of the most powerful benefits of an arts curriculum is the development and **sharing of cross-cultural heritage**. Early educational research showed thinking in Art was followed by improved thinking in other disciplines (Dewey, 1934)
- According to the George W. Bush presidential study, for every classroom of 30 students, 10 will be employed in **art related careers** as adults.
- Fine arts programs are known for **fostering commitment to task and social skill development**. In addition, many students who participate in arts programs report **gains in self-discipline, work ethic, and teamwork**.

This information was gathered from a GREA conferences session called: "Art: Today's Brain Food" given by Prof. Cindy Todd. She is often quoting Teaching with the Brain in Mind and Arts with the Brain in Mind, both written by Eric Jensen.