

Mandala School News

25 February 2016

Literature

After a long and fate-filled journey, we have finished *The Odyssey* with most of the older students. Poor Odysseus was gone from home for 20 years, first fighting at Troy then being tormented by the gods. Upon returning home, he dispatched the suitors in a very satisfying fashion. The Greeks were not subtle in revenge.

This was followed by a reading of *Ulysses* by Tennyson describing Odysseus as an old man who still wants “to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”.

Other students have read two books: *The Watsons go to Birmingham* and *House of Dies Drear*. Both books are historically based. Each student takes turns reading, a scary task for some. The children are very supportive and help each other become better oral readers.

Social Studies

The younger students are studying the westward movement. Today they used books to help them design and build their own covered wagons.



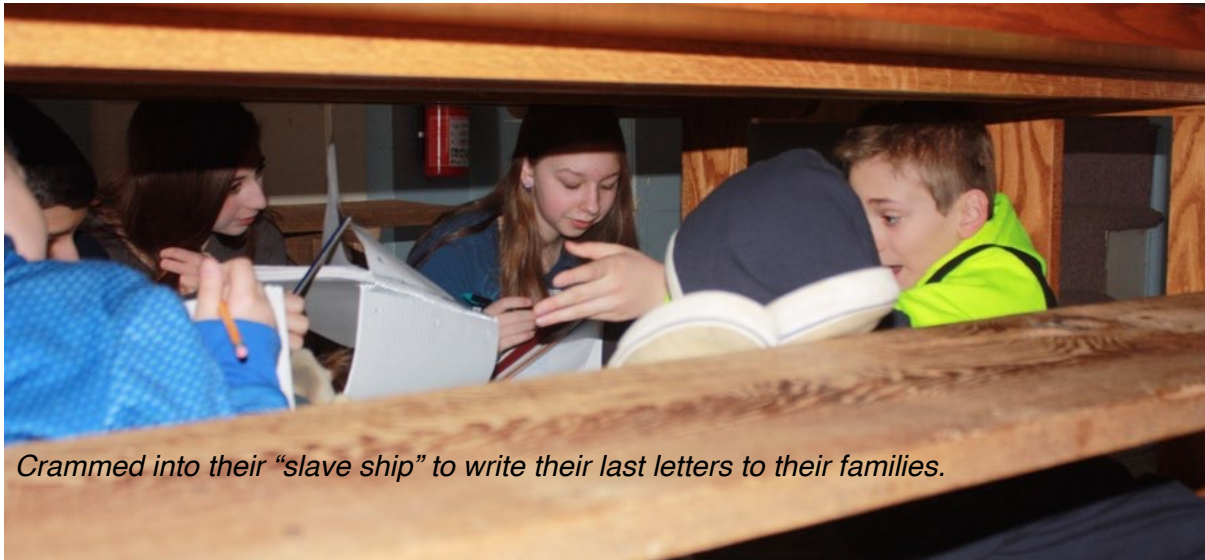
Photo by Merrick

At least it's been a good winter for the park.

The oldest 14 students began a study of “Slavery and its Consequences”. Beginning on Monday, we discussed ancient slavery and the spectrum of treatment. Some slaves owned businesses, moved about freely, and only had to pay their masters a modest fee. Others were tortured and treated like machines. The average life of a slave on a Caribbean sugar plantation was five years.

Morgan's day

I wrote all the numbers to 111. I made a covered wagon. Pioneers made them for traveling across the prairie. I shoveled outside with Dr. John.



Crammed into their “slave ship” to write their last letters to their families.

Math

We have three groups now. The youngest ones are learning more about number awareness, combinations, writing numerals, and trading. (“borrowing”)

The next group has practiced fractions, decimals, percents, and scientific notation. They are currently exploring Fibonacci numbers.

The upper group is practicing algebra concepts such as combining like terms, factoring, and multiplying binomials. Some are solving systems of equations and simplifying radicals.



Presentations can be fun!

Group Problem Solving

Once a week we have created groups and given them open-ended problems or situations to promote creative thinking. These included:

- write a myth based on a strange object that arrived in their tribe
- create a factory with labor issues

- research & present about ocean acidification
- create a skit interpreting Simon & Garfunkel's *I am a Rock*
- use puppets to tell a fairy tale

Charlie's day

We were under a table simulating a slave ship. My leg was hurt and they probably had injuries, too. We had to write a letter to our families, some more serious than others.

Dear Family,

I have been kidnapped on a slave ship. This is the last you will hear from me.

You were a happy family before I was kidnapped but I want you to stay happy. I will miss you all. Even though you will never see me again, you will always have me in your hearts. I am being taken to the Americas. Hopefully, I will be freed later in my slavery, if not, escape.

I love you all dearly and I will always have you in my heart.

*Lots of Love,
Kolbe*

Dear Mom and Dad,

I have been locked in a very small part of a slave boat. I probably won't make it. There is not a lot of food or water. I'm surrounded by people who are slowly dying. I'm afraid I'll be next. If I make it I will be in America and sold as a slave meaning that I probably won't see any of you again.

If I get freed I will try to come back home so don't give up hope,

Love, Jessie