

# Primary Circle!

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Dear Families!

It's finally gotten cooler, and our year is in full swing. We are excited to share what we've been doing and what's coming up, and we hope you'll enjoy reading it.

Here are some dates to remember:

- Wednesday, November 21, 11:45 dismissal, no lunch, no afternoons
- Thursday & Friday, November 22-23, no school
- Friday, November 30, 11:10 Jane's Group hosts assembly
- Friday, December 7, 11:10 Sara's Group hosts assembly
- Friday, December 14 10:45 AM, Special Assembly (more below)
- Wednesday, December 19- Wednesday, January 2, Winter Break

## More About Our Social Studies~

As you know, Primary Circle has been studying FOOD through the questions, Why do we need food?, How do we get our food?, How has farming changed over time?, What are similarities and differences between what we eat and what other people eat?, and How do we choose our food?

A thrilling part of this study will begin next week when we begin work with the Dunya Performing Arts Company. Jeannine Osayande, an expert teacher, African Dancer, and woman of inspiring, joyful presence, will be working with first and second graders to learn Kakilambe, a harvest dance from Guinea, West Africa. Through the discussions and dance lessons children will be examining each of the questions above, with emphasis on farming and similarities and differences between cultures. For example, as children discover the meaning behind the traditional movements they learn, they'll also be discussing what people grow and eat in West Africa and why it is similar and different. We hope by the end of our residency children will have figured out that all people need a variety of foods from different groups and what people eat varies based on geography. Another piece of learning will come through comparing and contrasting Kakilambe and Apple Day, since they are both celebrations of harvest.

Like the rest of the FOOD study, the African Dance component will address National Council of Social Studies themes: Culture, Time-Continuity-Change, People-Places-Environments, Individual Development and Identity, Individuals-Groups-Institutions, Production-Distribution-Consumption, and Science-Technology-Society.

**On Friday, December 14 at 10:45, please join Primary Circle and Main Circle (who are studying the culture of Ghana) for an exciting assembly showing what we've learned!**

### Social Skills

Here are some things our groups have talked about or will talk about soon:

- What rules we need as a group
- Gratitude, thank you notes
- Perseverance
- Standing up for yourself
- Concert etiquette

Please send in extra clothes for fall including pants, long-sleeved shirt, socks, undies and shoes.

## Music

Following a wonderful excursion to see *Peter and the Wolf* at the Kimmel Center, Primary Circle children have returned to activities involving Saint Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*. Listening with an ear for the instrumentation used in each selection and how it affects the representation of the animal, the children are using their imaginations to figure out how those animals move. After completing another round of listening to *Carnival*, music class will feature a game (the children have only been told what animal they should think about and that they'll need to be able to do a portrayal with movement) that involves spontaneously responding to the music with no other clues being given. The level of enthusiasm for this "unit" is extremely high, with frequently heard cries of "Play it again!"

You could certainly ask your child about the instrumentation used in *Carnival* and perhaps even what some of the specific instrumentation is for individual animals. Another topic for inquiry would be around "Seventeen Come Sunday." Without any further information from me, you might want to ask your child why she/he knows this piece of music.

I feel compelled to share this brief anecdote to help explain my personal beliefs about the importance of children being exposed to classical/orchestral music: A long-time private piano student of mine (about 10 years now) who's currently junior in high school shared his most recent original composition with me this week. As he was playing it, he mentioned how he had "stolen" from Saint Saens' "The Swan" a figure that he used in his piano accompaniment. This young man's composition is something that would definitely fall into the "popular music" category, but he was able to draw from his classical exposure to greatly enrich his own music. I couldn't have asked for a better example of the value of that genre of music as a perfect foundation for ALL other musical endeavors a person might choose to pursue. Although your children might never become serious classical musicians or even patrons of the same, having these 'sound files' available to them in their memories will inform their musical lives in other ways.

Solo singing will work its way into music classes for a time before *Music Sharing Day* to help encourage the children to perform and to feel comfortable doing so. As always, please listen to music, sing and dance with your children as these activities will greatly enhance their musical lives.

Orchestra Study Curriculum At A Glance: November 2007	
Music	Language Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The symphony orchestra: What is it? Can it play many styles of music? What is the instrumentation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Careful listening</li> <li>Speaking: explaining reaction to listening</li> <li>Using effective and expressive vocabulary</li> <li>Identifying plot, characters, setting, problem, solution</li> </ul>

Food Study Curriculum At A Glance: November 2007		
Social Studies	Language Arts & Library	Technology
<p>Change Over Time How and why it got to be that way over time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How have eating and food production changed over time?</li> </ul> <p>Similarities and Differences across Cultures How and why it varies across locations and cultures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is what we eat similar to and different from what other people eat?</li> <li>How are harvest celebrations in Guinea and SRV similar and different?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing information in own words</li> <li>Writing in a range of nonfiction forms</li> <li>Using conventions of non-fiction writing</li> <li>Writing with a sense of audience for nonfiction (i.e. Helping readers learn)</li> <li>Writing process: planning each part, e.g. Table of Contents, Sections, How-To, Diagrams</li> <li>Reading and making sense of the structures typical of nonfiction books</li> <li>Listening to learn information in nonfiction read-alouds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated work with classroom math curriculum using <i>The Graph Club</i>.</li> <li>Integrated work with classroom language arts curriculum using word processing and graphic arts programs (e.g., <i>Paint</i> and/or <i>KidPix</i>) in creation non-fiction books.</li> </ul>

### Suggestions for Parents:

- We recently wrote to families of Jane's math group and included our expectation that second grade SRV mathematicians know sums to 15 and differences to 10. A parent asked in reply, "How does that expectation stack up against other area schools' expectations?" Thanks for the question. The answer is, "Very well." SRV's curriculum is based on national and state standards and our progressive pedagogy. If you also are curious, take a few minutes to google area schools' curricula (many are posted online) and do some comparing. Also look at standards written by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.
- Agriculture/Food articles: [http://www.yesmagazine.org/article\\_list.asp?Type=2&ID=1](http://www.yesmagazine.org/article_list.asp?Type=2&ID=1)
- Check your local library for books on tape and recordings of orchestral music such as *Peter and the Wolf* and *Carnival of the Animals*.

Below is an example of Language Arts and Music work we've done in the Orchestra Study. Children chose a character and thought about what instrument would represent it well and why (like Prokofiev and Saint-Saens!). In doing this lesson children practiced analyzing character, using descriptive language, and of course writing and drawing.

Date 10/55/07

My character/person is:

Lion

The instrument/s should be:

Drum

This instrument fits my character/person because:

Cause it is shakey

This is a picture I imagine about my character/person:

