



Welcome to 1st Grade at St. Mary's School!

We're so glad you're here! Following is a quick overview of our 1st grade program's daily routine, key events, resources, and dates to remember. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at sfletcher@smsmn.org or 320-256-4257.

OUR DAILY ROUTINE: Benchmark Workshop reading/writing program, specialists, read aloud, snack, working in a group or individually at centers, calendar and weather, math centers, religion, social studies or science.

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
"All About Me" Board	Every student will receive a poster to complete about themselves. I will send a letter with more information and a poster home with your child when it is their turn.	Annually
AR (Accelerated Reader) Program	AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Students pick a book at his or her own level and read it at his or her own pace. When finished, the student takes a short quiz on the computer. Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read. AR gives both students and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice. Students should read each book 3 times and test on at least 1 book a week.	Weekly
Birthdays & Half-Birthdays	We celebrate birthdays on the day or the Friday/Monday if it falls on a weekend; for summer birthdays we celebrate your child's half-birthday. Your child may bring a treat to share with the class if they wish.	Annually
BLUE Wednesday Folders	Watch for the BLUE folders that come home on Wednesdays. This is where you can expect to find some important school communications and information about school. Return the folder on Thursday each week.	Weekly on Wednesdays
Book Orders	Book orders are sent home 4 times/year in the BLUE Wednesday folders.	Quarterly
Chromebooks	Students will be taught how to use Google Classroom in class and in Media. They will use their Chromebook at school for a variety of learning purposes such as math skill practice, reading practice through the Benchmark reading site, etc.	Ongoing
Class Mass/Liturgy	Children attend Mass each week on Fridays. Each week a different class is assigned to the Mass. The kids from the assigned class do/act out readings, serve as greeters, bring up gifts, etc. The 1st grade class is assigned 2 or 3 masses per year. See the calendar on SchoolSpeak for class assignments.	Fridays, 8:30 AM
Curriculum	Here's a quick review of our curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Benchmark Workshop • Math: Guided Math • Religion: Alive in Christ • Science: Scott Foresman Series • Title I services for extra help in reading and math • Social Studies: Macmillan/McGraw-Hill • Handwriting • Top 20 Social skills 	Ongoing
Daily Take-Home Folders	Daily take-home folders are sent home with daily work, including sight words, spelling homework, monthly calendar, and behavior chart. Please check these nightly.	Daily
Family Volunteers & Helpers	Volunteers (parents, grandparents, and other family members) are all welcome to help in our classroom, but will be limited this year. If there is a special time that you would like to come in, please contact me.	Ongoing
Field Trips	We take a variety of field trips. Sometimes parent volunteers are needed to attend these events. There will always be permission slips sent home before each trip. Trips include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-town: public library and bowling. • Out-of-town: a play, a farm, or a zoo 	Ongoing, Throughout the School Year MORE ⇒

First Grade Update	Each Friday I'll post a classroom update on SchoolSpeak; this will include happenings from the past week as well as information for upcoming events.	Weekly on Fridays
FUN-Raising	To keep tuition expenses manageable, SMS hosts a few fundraisers throughout the school year; our major fundraisers include the Marathon/Prayer-a-thon, Catholic United Financial Raffle, Auction4Education, and School Breakfasts. Please watch for details on these important events throughout the school year.	Ongoing
Holidays	Each holiday is scheduled and snacks are assigned for students to bring. Celebrated holidays include: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Parent helpers may attend if they wish; helpers will be limited this year.	As scheduled
Homework	I will indicate on the work or in the weekly newsletter if there is homework. Examples of homework are reading AR books, sight words, and spelling words.	Weekly
Lunch with Kids	You are welcome to come to eat lunch with your child. Please call Ms. Jenn in the office by 10 AM with your lunch choice so that there is enough food for all; visitors will be limited this year also due to COVID-19.	Anytime
Monthly Calendars	Our class calendar is on SchoolSpeak; I will post each month to keep you informed about field trip dates, birthday celebrations, and other important happenings. The calendar will also be in the student's take-home folder.	Monthly
New Parent Pal	New Parent Pals help a new parent learn the ropes, and feel welcome and part of the SMS family. Please feel free to reach out to me with questions or if you're interested in getting a New Parent Pal. Parent Pals will be assigned to new families UPON REQUEST.	Ongoing
Sight Word Cards	Students will have sight word cards in a pouch in their take-home folder to practice with at home. Please leave the cards in the pouch after practicing as the students use them at school also. Students will get new words to practice as they master the words. (5 times correct in a row=mastered word)	Ongoing
SM\$4Kids	SM\$4Kids is a gift card program that allows schools to buy gift cards from businesses at a reduced rate, which is how the program makes money. Card purchasers buy the cards at face value. SMS parents can use profits from the cards to help reduce tuition commitments too. You'll receive info about this program in the fall.	Ongoing
SMS SPIRIT-PBIS School-Wide Behavior Plan	At St. Mary's, we focus on teaching our students what behaviors are acceptable, praising and rewarding them when they "get it," and helping them learn from their mistakes when they don't. This system is called Positive Behavioral Intention & Supports, or PBIS for short. At St. Mary's, we call it SMS Spirit—a school-wide, positive behavior intervention system that teaches and re-teaches students how to demonstrate SMS Spirit in all school settings. The end goal: a nurturing, and respectful learning community where academic achievement is the focal point and all students feel connected and valued. Talk to your children about SMS Spirit; you can find more info about SMS Spirit on our website and SchoolSpeak.	Ongoing



The school parent portal, **SchoolSpeak**, is your one stop for everything at St. Mary's. There, you'll find the latest happenings/school events, updates on curriculum, weekly and monthly newsletters, and critical information, including the following:

- Class Field Trip List
- Parent-Student Handbook
- SMS\$4Kids Info
- Liturgy/Mass Schedule
- School Calendar
- SMS SPIRIT-PBIS School-Wide Behavior Plan & Matrix
- Lunch Menu
- SMS Strategic Plan

I'm so very, very happy you've joined the St. Mary's Catholic School family!!!