

February 12, 2018

Dear Friends and Families,

We have been enjoying stories about the life and music of Johann Sebastian Bach recently. We have listened to his music on piano, organ, cello, and guitar. Students seemed especially fond of "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" on guitar. Bach taught all his children to play instruments. We learned that he was an attentive and playful father to his twenty children.

Our work with prepositional phrases continues. (They are not easy!) Some students revisited the preposition grammar boxes and especially had fun with the command boxes, which give children instructions to carry out, such as "Place a chair beside another chair, bring a a box of counters, etc." Others made lists of prepositional phrases to modify a particular verb.

Active reading continued with students reading an article on Sargon, the leader who unified the Sumerians to create one country, Akkadia. This was complex work, reading the paragraphs, underlining key words, and then summarizing. We went from a bit of frustration to smiles of accomplishment in a couple of days. Students will continue this work, gaining more autonomy over the next few weeks.

We had a busy group of young children who became interested in hamsters and gerbils, organizing themselves to take on certain parts of the study. Some of them learned to make their own sentences from the books they had read. They were quite a studious and industrious team!

A group of older students have been studying how student governments work, pondering ways to organize themselves to take on a more organized role in some of the running of our class. They are busily reading and making notes of their thoughts as they proceed.

In math we have learned more about prime factorization, breaking larger numbers into their prime factors. Order of operations has continued with students using PEMDAS to complete problems. They have been helping each other through the process and finding what a difference using this established order can make in one's final answer. Students of all ages have been mastering their 7s facts in multiplication, timing themselves again and again to get faster at recall.

In geometry some of the younger students have been learning to draw circles with a compass while others have practiced the parts of the circle: radius, diameter, circumference, sector, etc. Another group learned the parts of a right angle, including the fascinating word "hypotenuse."

We had an introductory lesson on birds, talking about the various kinds of beaks, their body structure, etc. We learned some interesting information about the birds in our area. This work is being continued with children learning to draw birds by recognizing the basic shapes and fine-tuning their drawing from these shapes. After getting a group started, I left to give another lesson and returned later to find a beautiful roadrunner and warbler that 7- and 8-year-olds had completed.

The video of our Alumni Panel Discussion is now available on our new website. It is well worth the time to listen to these young people and parents who have been with Mountain Laurel long enough to understand the lifelong benefits of a Montessori education.

Sincerely,

Mona