



CFIS Newsletter

October &
November
2018

IPC THEME: LET'S PRETEND

A sense of pride and humility emerges

by Mr. Jesse

Although these days the years tend to fly by, whenever I pause for a moment and reflect on the years' progress I feel a sense of pride in our school.

From the way that the teachers engage the kids, to the relative freedom that the children have here to express themselves; at around this time of the year perhaps because of the weather too, I start thinking about how lucky we are. To be in a peaceful country, have all the food and shelter we need, have all the love and commitment of our families and then on top of all of that be part of a school whose commitment to its kids is unwavering.

Perhaps it's because I'm getting older but recently I've felt a lesser sense of urgency when it comes to

'doing' and rather let the veteran within take over. I am continually challenged to broaden my scope of empathy. Sometimes the inner veteran says 'act' and other times he says 'observe'. There is something very special about just holding a child's gaze in a neutral way. Just wait for a smile or a reaction. What happens if I wait for them to say or do something first?

On the one hand, I am a bit of a stickler for the rules and fairly particular about boundaries. I also have high expectations of children's behavior. I also however think that with all of the urgency in the world these days coupled with the expectation that kids should grow up quickly and become this or that, the least I can do especially at school is

to be the counterweight sometimes. I don't think I'm the only individual who experiences these kinds of internal contradictions.

A mentor of sorts once said "What's the worst thing that can happen" in regards to when things aren't going all your own way or when a situation makes you flustered. When you realize what your priorities are and go down the checklist quickly, you can often turn potentially frustrating moments into a kind of peaceful surrender to the will of the kids. So long as they are safe and make it back to you every day in one piece we have done our most important work.

Jesse

Preschool

by Ms. Jam, Ms. Aya & Ms. Shoko

Dear Parents,

What a busy last two months we've had. We had so much fun learning about different kinds of sports and we definitely improved our gross motor skills by participating in different games. We worked on the students' fitness, strength, hand and eye coordination and balance. The students participated in running races, obstacle courses, throwing, jumping, climbing, crawling, soccer, trampoline, pommel horse and bar. We ended the past two months with our own Mini-Olympic Games where the students participated in different events, had a picnic lunch in the playground and got a special medal for participating and trying their best. We also had horse riding in Sagamiyara park as a part of our exit point.

Our new theme for October and November is Let's Pretend. Pretend play is an essential activity for preschoolers. It opens the door to a world of limitless possibilities. That is

what pretend play is, but that isn't why it's so important. Children aren't just living in a fantasy world, instead most of their play has deep roots in reality, and it offers them a chance to practice social situations, adult roles and even play out fears and anxieties in a safe place.

In October, we will be celebrating Halloween. We will decorate the classroom with Halloween related crafts the students will be making during art lessons. Students will be learning Halloween vocabulary, songs and dances. We will also be busy practicing for our performance for the CFIS Halloween Party when students, teachers and some parents too will dress up in their favorite Halloween costume. We will also have our own class Halloween party where we will ask students to dress up in a Halloween costume for Fashion Show, go trick or treating, and enjoy some fun games.



During November we will also be celebrating autumn, one of the prettiest seasons in Japan where the leaves change colors. We will spend time outside to collect acorns, pinecones, leaves and sticks to use in our pretend play.

UPCOMING PRESCHOOL EVENTS

- October 19th – Gogo and Ann's birthday party
- October 23rd – Potato digging
- October 26th – CFIS Halloween Party
- October 31st – Class Halloween Party
- November 16th – Zach's birthday party

Some shots of last month in Preschool...

Enjoying this summer's last days splashing around at the playground



Giving soccer a go with our wonderful volunteer parents

Tummy time: coloring our letters



LAST MONTH IN K₃

Class puppets

Here's one of our special visitors!



Music

Ms. Lisa has been giving K₃ kids a chance to familiarize with keyboards



Gym

Working on our vaulting skills at the horizontal bar

UPCOMING K₃ EVENTS

- October 19th – Soto's birthday party
- October 23rd – Potato digging
- October 26th – Halloween Party
- November 16th – Asato and Ethan's birthday party

K₃

by Mr. Jesse & Ms. White

Looking back at Sports

A quick glance back at the sports theme showed that the K₃ kids learned the names of multiple sporting events. They also got to try some new sports activities in the gym and for our exit point we had the chance to go bowling at a real bowling alley. Thanks very much to our volunteers who kept the K₃ kids attention so they could know when it was their turn. Another highlight of the sports theme was the Sports Song whose lyrics were pretty tightly packed and kind of fast too.

Let's Pretend

This next theme coincides nicely with Halloween and also meets the children where they are at creatively. If you've ever just observed a child play either by themselves or with other kids, you know that there is a very fine line between imagination and reality. It's almost as if anything is possible when you are a child. During this theme we will experiment with puppets and storytelling. We will also introduce the Magic Box into the morning circle. We'll put all sorts of items in the Magic Box and try to sort them in many different ways. We will eventually try and make up stories about the items that come out of the Magic Box. During this theme we will make paper bag puppets and sock puppets and work our way up to putting on little plays. The teacher will also use language like "Let's pretend" and "Once upon a time" and "Imagine you were". There will also be a chance to inject some cultural aspects into puppet making and storytelling.

Play Costumes

We have a set of Community Helpers costumes that the kids will be able to freely use during the course of the next theme. We have doctors, nurses, mail carriers, a firefighter, a road worker, a police officer and a pilot. Characters like

these are enduring and even though the children only have three or four years of life experience, as soon as they put on a police officer's uniform they are transformed into that role. Kids love to have authority and pretend to be able to wield power. It's funny what a badge and a thin blue jacket can do.

Making it easy for them

Most of the work we do at school certainly at this age is dedicated to guiding the kids as they learn to socialize. Kids from different cultures have slightly different upbringings and sometimes values can differ as well. The onus is on the teachers to be able to find approaches that gel with our parents' values. I mentioned previously that we learned a few lessons years ago after attending an early years' workshop. One important lesson I learned was that you have a better chance of seeing positive changes in behavior if you make the changes in your approach first, or alter the environment.

Calm and Attentive (Puppets)

During the last few weeks, Ms. White and I have noticed how the children have started to be able to focus and listen with far less effort. When they join the circle in the morning, it takes far less time to harness their attention and start the morning activities. When things are especially calm and when we have built the circle dynamic nicely; one of our puppets will come to visit the class. The puppets are like little classroom talismans who are able to mirror the class' highest values. As well as being able to address every child in the room going around the circle, the puppet also brings out the most empathic and gentle side of their personality. If one child decides to punch the puppet instead of pat it before he goes though, the puppet's reaction is very important.

K4

by Ms. Kat & Ms. Aida

Hello everyone!

Summer is almost over but we look forward to the next wonderful season - autumn. In Japan, nature is really beautiful and there are many different ways we can enjoy it and have fun with our kids outside. K4 will definitely use as many opportunities as possible to go out and collect autumn leaves and acorns; analyze changes in weather and observe the lives of insects. We have also passed the first half of this school year, and we have six more months to go. Now it is the time to reflect on what we have been able to accomplish and to move a bit faster with our academic development.

Language Arts

We are proud to say that the children have made great progress in recognizing the alphabet and the sounds of letters. They have also greatly improved their writing skills. Now, they can hold the pencil properly and write letters in the correct order. Some of them still struggle with mirror writing but they are slowly getting there. We will continue with our routine of starting our day with a morning worksheet.

For the months of October and November we will be learning new sight words and trying to put them together to create simple sentences. We will continue reading small Sight Word Stories, but we also want to introduce new season-oriented stories for the children to read. In October, we will read some Halloween stories (ex. Go Away Big Green Monster) and for the month of

November we will read about leaves and autumn.

Math

For Math we will be turning our attention to patterns. We will start with simple patterns by using shapes, like A,B patterns but slowly introduce A,B,C/ A,B,B patterns and try even more difficult ones. This will help them improve on their concentration skills and thinking ability.

Being able to recognize patterns, duplicate and extend simple patterns using concrete objects sets a good basis for problem solving and algebraic thinking. We will be using a variety of hands on activities and worksheets in order to extend learning and make sure the children master basic patterns.

Science / Art

For Science we will be observing the seasons and the changes in them. As we go to the park we will be picking up leaves and acorns and use them for pattern crafts during Art lessons. We will also be playing with slime, carefully analyze each ingredient and take time to observe the changes as we mix them up.

Japanese

For Japanese lessons Ms. Mizuho is planning to introduce autumn related songs and activities. She will also teach hiragana: sa, shi su, se and so.

LAST MONTH IN K4



Sports volunteers

A big thank you to the parents who came in and introduce sports to the kids!



Phonics

Working on beginning and ending sounds



Art

We made our own Olympic ring toss game

UPCOMING K4 EVENTS

- October 4th – Bowling
- October 19th – Yuu and Ray's birthday party
- October 26th – CFIS Halloween Party
- October 30th – Potato digging
- October 31st – Class Halloween party
- November 16th – Izumo and Shusei's birthday party

LAST MONTH IN K5



Little Teachers

The children are having fun acting as teachers and teaching their own lessons!



Reading Report

The reading report is a good chance for the students to practice independent reading and speaking in front of the class



Looking back at Sports

We had many fun activities connected to our Sports theme, including making our own rugby balls and playing with them in the gym

UPCOMING K5 EVENTS

- October 4th – Bowling
- October 19th – Yuna and Sora's birthday party
- October 26th – Halloween Party
- October 30th – Potato digging
- October 31st – I Am Unique party
- November 16th – Ai and Aiko's birthday party

K5

by Ms. Norah & Ms. Mizuho

It's getting cooler. We are starting to feel the crisp autumn breeze. This new season is an opportunity for the class to go outside, explore and see the seasonal transition of plants around. Speaking of transition, the K5 students were able to accomplish many things during the first semester and have shown steady progress. They are now able to talk confidently and clearly. They also speak without any hesitation when it's time to talk in front of others. We are proud of what they have achieved and are happy to see them grow every day.

IPC Theme: Let's Pretend

The new IPC theme will guide the children's learning for the months of October and November. Our theme will be reflected in our group activities and crafts in all subject areas. We will talk about community helpers and give emphasis to their important role in the community. We are planning many practical and interactive activities for the students to learn more about different kinds of jobs; such as visiting places where they can see people helping other people or inviting someone to talk about their job i.e. a bus driver, teacher, nurse, pharmacist...

Little Teachers

We have started our Little Teacher activity. The goal of this activity is to help improve the students' speaking ability and boost their confidence in speaking in front of others. This will also enhance their English vocabulary. Being a Little Teacher will give the students the chance to teach their classmates anything they

want to or do lessons prepared by the teacher. We will select 2-3 students every week to lead the class and act as real teachers teaching other students. We still welcome parents to help and assist their child teaching other children.

Character Goal: Gratefulness

Autumn is the season of Thanksgiving, which gives us the opportunity to reflect about gratefulness. The students will be encouraged to talk every day and share with the class simple things they are grateful for, which sometimes we take for granted or forget. For the next two months we will focus on showing our appreciation for the things we already have. We will also try to pay more attention to what people around us do for us to sharpen our readiness in showing gratefulness.

Music

The class is now working on mastering their excerpt from Vivaldi's Autumn, which they will play at the upcoming Halloween presentation. Playing as a group can still be a challenge for the children, but we observed noticeable improvement in their confidence as they continue practicing the song.

Ballet

K5 kids have been working on memorizing the steps of their warm-ups and rhythmical activities. Ms. Aya has been individually checking each student's body position in response to changes in rhythm, and also started working with the children on their Christmas routine.