

# *An Action Plan for:*

St. Peter's Episcopal Elementary School

2008-2009

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5<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade art

## *About St. Peter's...*

St. Peter's School is an Episcopal school in Chattanooga, Tennessee that began as one of the city's first preschools. In the 1980's, parents proposed, and then actively supported a plan to extend through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, which St. Peter's did through 2001, hosting one class per grade of 16 students. As a feeder school to several middle schools, but predominantly the three competitive prep schools (Baylor, McCallie, and GPS), St. Peter's decided that the class of 2001 would be the final St. Peter's 6<sup>th</sup> grade because of the addition of 6<sup>th</sup> grade to those three schools. I add this detail because so much of the graduating class traditions, such as raising money for their end of year retreat and service to the school, was designed for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. When the 5<sup>th</sup> graders took over the top spot, they and the faculty at large were interested in maintaining the legacy begun for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders. There is much expected of these 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and much privilege given to them in return. St. Peter's now guides about 75 preschoolers and 150 kindergarten - 5<sup>th</sup> graders through a strong academic program with the Core Knowledge foundation and a reputation in integrated fine arts. With creative teachers, supportive parents, and an Episcopal inclusive philosophy, it is a natural setting to take a study of China and Japan to a full-school level.

## *Connecting to China and Japan...*

There are Core Knowledge expectations at the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade levels; these areas will carry the bulk of the academic expectations and are explained on the following pages, by grade level and discipline. I am suggesting the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter for all three Asian units, so that the school will be immersed in Asian studies simultaneously, creating a natural outlet for the weekly 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade enrichment classes, and culminating with the annual 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade play and 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade evening art fair. The following activities will enhance the Core Knowledge foundation on China and Japan on a school wide level:

St. Peter's joined the national Read-Aloud organization in 2002, and we actively support it within our walls and through outreach. A suggested read-aloud/independent list of Asian children's books available in our library has been created and will be distributed at August in-service.

Suggestions for the annual 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade spring play are related to China/Japan, and are in the selection process. Performance will be for the school, family, and guests.

The Enrichment Program (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> quarters for the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>) is taught weekly by the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. 4<sup>th</sup> quarter options: Dance/Cooking/Public Speaking/Theatre, all related to China/Japan. Samples will be integrated through the evening art fair for all.

Asian Art from my 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade classes will be displayed in the evening art fair for students and families.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** We are currently involved with both a China unit and a Japan unit in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade as part of our Core Knowledge. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers expose the students to this culture through hands-on activities and fine arts connections. The Core Knowledge suggested list for China includes the following topics: Buddhism, Confucianism, Great Wall of China, invention of paper, importance of silk, and the Chinese New Year. The geography skills include creating maps focusing on China, connecting countries and bodies of water, and important rivers and mountains. The book, The Magic Paintbrush, a Chinese folktale by Robin Muller, is used in conjunction with this unit, and the Core Knowledge selected artwork features *Flying Horse* from Wu-Wei. Art appreciation is a large part of all of our cultural studies, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers follow up appreciation with a production class that teaches them to create "in the style of the artist."

With a more extensive unit this year, I would like to expand the literature to include some additional works, such as the following: Ruby's Wish by Shirin Yim, the story of a Chinese woman's desire for an education like her husband, My Chinatown: One year in poems by Kam Mak, poetry of his first year in the U.S., and Cat and Rat: Legend of Chinese Zodiac by Ed Young, why cats and rats are enemies. We are fortunate to have a fairly large collection of Asia related books for children in our library, and with our designated school money from this seminar, I will definitely be adding to that collection. We presently have 42 books/dvd's/videos to complement the China unit. Other suggestions are the addition of paper-making study and art creations with silk.

The Core Knowledge connection to Japan at this level moves the students more into modern topics, including the Japanese flag, a study of the large modern cities, origami, and kimonos. The geography aspect involves maps with the islands, surrounding bodies of water, focus on the large cities, and mountains. The Japanese folktale suggested by Core Knowledge, The Tongue Cut-Sparrow by Katherine Paterson, complements the unit, and the following artworks are implemented: *The Great Wave at Kanagawa Nami-Ura* from *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* and *Himeji Castle*.

Suggested extensions this year will include the books: Drums of Noto Hanto by J. Alison James and Tsukushi, an original tale of ancient Japan, and Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say, a Japanese man's sojourn in America. We presently host 40 books/dvd's/videos on Japan, so we will be exploring our choices more carefully, with the expanded unit.

The most diverse addition to our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade studies of China and Japan will be the serious consideration of an Asia-related play. The annual 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade play is performed during school hours for the school, family, and guests, providing a perfect place to connect to our curriculum. What better time to connect to China or Japan? There is a high interest in connecting with drama, music, dance, and visual arts in background, clothing, and props. The following plays are being investigated and further websites will continue to be pursued: *A Thousand Cranes*, by Kathryn Schultz Miller, playwright

*Tricking the Tiger: Plays based on Asian Folk Tales*, [www.phoenixeduc.com](http://www.phoenixeduc.com)

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Our next connection with Asia is in the fourth grade with an intensive Core Knowledge study through the Pearson Learning Core Knowledge History & Geography, edited by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., 2002, Pearson Education Inc., Parsippany, NJ 07054. The book covers the following topics: Shihuangdi, Han Dynasty, Wu Zhao, Tang Dynasty, Song Dynasty, life in the town and country, Mongol invasion, Kublai Khan and Marco Polo, Yuanzhang, and the Qing Dynasty. With such a rich foundation of knowledge, there is much we can add through literature and fine arts. To the suggestion of The Magic Brocade by Aaron Shepard, a Chinese folktale, I would like to incorporate the following: A Suitcase of Seaweed, and Other Poems by Janet S. Wong, an anthology of multi-cultural poems, Dragonwings by Laurence Yep, the tale of a Chinese boy in San Francisco who creates a flying machine with his father, and Confucius: the Golden Rule, by Russell Freedman, a non-fiction connection. Again, the literature choices in the library have been researched, and we have 42 related to China.

Since I will be teaching art to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade this year, in addition to my 5<sup>th</sup> graders, I am excited to incorporate the following art appreciation and production: silk scrolls, calligraphy, porcelain study, and block printing. My separate lesson plan focuses on the appreciation of the Chinese choice to paint on their silk scrolls without the realism focus of their contemporaries in Western Europe. That study will enhance much of the given information in the Pearson textbook, while utilizing some critical thinking skills and taking them to a production level piece that should be memorable. The Asian art from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes will be displayed in the art fair discussed on the second page of this action plan, "Connecting."

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Our Core Knowledge Asian connection in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade concerns Feudal Japan. Students are richly exposed to the following topics in their Pearson book: Emperors, Samurai, Class system, Japanese isolationism, Buddhism, and Shinto. Geography expectations involve the lands, bodies of water, and mountains, and more specifically the involvement of typhoons and earthquakes. The Japanese legend, The Samurai's Daughter by Robert D. San Souci, is the Core Knowledge suggestion. I would also like to return to my teaching of The Master Puppeteer by Katherine Paterson as a challenging read-aloud; I have had success in the past with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders because of its uniqueness and intensity. The addition of the book, When My Name was Keoko by Linda Sue Park, a Korean girl's story during the Japanese occupation, would take the students to a different time and create a different dimension for the unit. With our 40 books/videos/dvd's related to Japan and 8 related to Korea in the library, we have a strong beginning. I look forward to a continuation. I would like to pursue Real Samurai by Stephen Turnbull with twenty true stories, to add a non-fiction aspect. This should connect for a strong written expression study.

The Core Knowledge art suggestions, *The Great Buddha/Kamakura Buddha* and Japanese landscape gardens, create many diverse opportunities. One of the suggestions I gave in my application for the China/Japan trip was a garden creation on each school's part. Should that come to fruition, it would certainly be a lasting and ongoing project.

***Faculty In-Service and SACS evidence...***

This action plan will be distributed to and discussed with the faculty during August in-service, 2008. The teachers of the three Core Knowledge units will have met in advance to coordinate their efforts; all other teachers, homeroom and specialty, will be invited to share in the literature, using the library resource list, and to create optional fine arts activities that can connect. A copy

of the action plan will be sent to the Executive Board and to SPPAT (St. Peter's Parents and Teachers), to keep them abreast, and to invite their support, involvement, and enthusiasm. St. Peter's is due for SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) 5-year re-evaluation in Fall, 2009. We update our files to show evidence of meeting our standards. Completion of this unit and communication of its planning and implementation will provide additional evidence of meeting the following standards:

- LEADERSHIP 2.5 Fosters a learning community
- LEADERSHIP 2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead
- LEADERSHIP 2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction
- TEACHING AND LEARNING 3.1 Develops and implements curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning
- TEACHING AND LEARNING 3.2 Promotes active involvement of students in the learning process, incorporating opportunities for them to experience application of higher order thinking skills and invites new approaches to applied learning
- TEACHING AND LEARNING 3.5 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity
- RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS 5.2 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications
- RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS 5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development
- COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT 7.5 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders