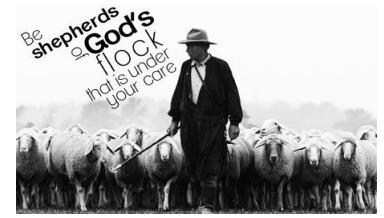
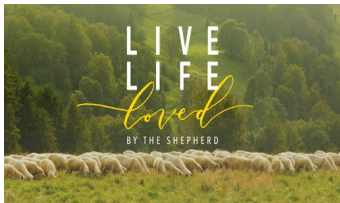


## Grade Three Newsletter - September 2019 Information Package & Classroom Routines

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new school year! My name is Jessica Miniaci and I am happy and excited to be your child's new teacher! We are also very fortunate to have Mrs. Cathy Crane joining us for the year! A special welcome to the children and parents who will share with us the rich and meaningful experiences of the grade three year! We hope your child is ready for a fantastic year in grade three full of discovery and growth. Together we can make this important year a brilliant one! We have faith in our students and are happy to have five grade three classes this year (three grade three English groups, one grade three French Immersion group and one combined grade two/three French Immersion group). We are dedicated to collaborating together and creating a meaningful learning experience for your child! Your child will get to know all of us!!

Our school theme for the year will be 'Living Like Jesus - We Are Shepherds!' We look forward to many special projects in our class and with the whole school in exploring this theme.



### Calendar and Newsletter

Each month you will receive a newsletter and calendar informing you of what we are learning about, celebration days and some special events. The monthly newsletters and calendars will be available for you to download and view on our classroom website.

To access our website, go to <http://www.nd.gsacrd.ab.ca> - click on the Quick Links at the top of the page, click Teachers & Staff, scroll down to find Jessica Miniaci, then click on the Grade 3M English link and you will have entered our classroom website. Use the links in the menu on the top of the page to navigate through the webpage. Here you will find the monthly newsletters link, as well as, other useful information about the school, class, spelling, math, academic outcomes and much more! Please check it regularly to stay informed about what is happening in our classroom.



### Phys. Ed and Library

We have daily Phys. Ed, three times each week with the Phys. Ed teacher and twice with the classroom teacher. Phys. Ed is on **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays**. Library will happen once a week with two books being sent home if there are no overdue books. Library is on **Thursdays** (books must be returned first thing in the morning, so please send them with your child on or before library day). Students, who do not have their books first thing in the morning when they are checked back into the library, will not be able to sign out books until the following week.

### Agenda-Home Reading Bags

Agenda-Home Reading Bags are used as a means of communication between home and school. There are a few parts to this Agenda-Home Reading Bag! Information from school and our reading program will appear in this bag. Your child will print important notes in his/her planner, as well as, insert notes in the clear pocket at the front of the agenda. Please check your child's Agenda-Home Reading Bag **each evening** for any notes, permission forms or homework. Agendas, Home Reading Duotangs, Books and Focus Words will all be stored in this bag. **Please sign or initial** beside the date in the agenda and on the home reading log **nightly** to let me know that you have read and checked the planner that evening. Students are being asked to place bags in their backpacks at the end of each day. It is **crucial** that the review, reading and sending back of this bag and its contents quickly become a **nightly routine**. **We will need it back at school every day!** You may also send us notes, money and permission forms through the agenda-home reading bags, as we also look at them each day. They are an invaluable means of communication!

### Home Reading Program

Students are being asked to read **for at least 15 minutes every night**. This could be fiction/non-fiction text, a few chapters from a chapter book, magazines, etc. They can read from a book they have at home or readers they have in their bags from school. Please help your child record the book/story title on the home reading log sheet, which is kept at the front of the Home Reading Duotang, and please initial beside it. As students come into class in the morning, we review what they have read and count how many entries they have on their home reading log. Once we have reached our classroom reading goal for the month, students will be rewarded with a special classroom party day of their choosing.

It is important **before, during and after reading** to encourage your child to make predictions about what they believe will happen in their book, to ask them a variety of questions about what is happening in the story, about the setting, characters, the problem and the solution. You should also have them retell/summarize what they have read to enhance and reinforce comprehension skills. Furthermore, encourage your child to use strategies to figure out unknown words, to read with expression and to attend to punctuation when reading to increase their reading fluency. As well, focus on expanding vocabulary and have your child use the context to help figure out the meaning of unknown words and/or use a dictionary and thesaurus to aid them in defining the

meanings of new words they encounter. Your cooperation with this is greatly appreciated, as it is a great way to develop and enrich your child's reading abilities!



**\*Information about Home Reading Bags and Books\***

A) If your child has leveled books in their home reading bags from school, these books are at their just right reading level.

B) Please take care of these books and keep them in your child's home reading bag when they are not in use.

C) Once you see that your child has mastered reading each book, you can write me a note in their agenda or send me a quick email and I will exchange these books with new books. As I track the student's progress in class, I might also add extra books and/or exchange their books from week to week.

D) You may keep the books for as long as you need to, until your child has mastered them. Having children reread stories helps them to make personal connections, improve their reading strategies and also helps them with their fluency and comprehension skills.

E) Some of the students will choose not to take out any of our just right reading books, as they have mentioned that they have books at home that they can read. If at any time, you do need some leveled books from school, do not hesitate to write me a note and I can add these to your child's home reading bag.

**\*I will begin to send home readers and books in your child's home reading bag towards the middle of September. Until then, please have your child read each night, any stories and books they have at home.\***

**RAZ Kids**

This year we will also use the online reading program, RAZ Kids. I will implement all students into the RAZ Kids online reading program. Students will then have access to hundreds of eBooks using the school's subscription to [www.raz-kids.com](http://www.raz-kids.com). Children can read and listen to books on Raz Kids and even record themselves reading. Afterwards they can take a quiz to check for comprehension. Each student will be given login information so that they will have access to this site at home. Please look in the front of your child's agenda for this login information.



### Homework & Free Choice Fridays

From time to time, I will send home some extra practice activities that the students are expected to complete at home. These are activities and tasks that will help enhance and reinforce the learning outcomes that students are learning in the classroom in various subjects. **It is important that you take the time to complete all homework activities and tasks to help develop, build and improve your child's skills and abilities.**

The **students generally do not need to send homework tasks that are completed back to school**, as my intention is not to mark these and use them as any type of assessment. The goal is to complete homework activities at home in order to expand and strengthen your child's abilities.

**If I do require any homework tasks to be sent back to school, I will put a Sign & Return stamp or sticker at the top of the assignment.** If you do not see this stamp/sticker, you should keep the homework at home. Thanks for your cooperation with this!

**Free Choice Fridays** - To encourage and motivate the students to complete all of their tasks and activities in a timely manner during class, this year, we will be celebrating our work habits and achievements by having Free Choice Fridays. This means that if students have completed all of their work throughout the week they will be able to choose a free choice activity to do. This includes using various technologies. So, **on Fridays, students are allowed to bring in their devices, such as a chrome book, iPad, iPhone, iPod, etc. They can also bring in various board games, cards, etc.** If you choose to allow your child to bring in a device, **please label the piece of technology with your child's name on it**, so that at the end of the day, each device can be returned safely to their home! I will be keeping all electronics in my filing cabinet when they are not in use, so that they will be safe throughout the school day. If you do not feel comfortable sending your child to school with a device, then please just send them with some type of game. Thanks for your cooperation with this!

**Note:** If we are not at school on a Friday, then students will not need to bring in their device or game for that week, unless otherwise written in their agenda. **We will begin Free Choice Fridays on Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>.**

### Spelling/Phonics

English is not a simple language to learn how to decode and spell. Many of the consonants and vowels have a variety of sounds, depending on the surrounding letters. Hence, this year to aid students in learning how to spell and decode words we will focus on looking for patterns of letters and sounds, rather than individual letters. The brain is a, "pattern detector," and unknown words are separated by the brain into two patterns. These patterns are **onsets (all the letters up to the vowel) and rimes (the vowel and letters following it)**. In order for children to be good decoders and spellers, they need to learn to quickly separate words into these parts, think of sounds associated with the patterns and recombine them. Therefore, our spelling and phonics instruction will be one

that teaches students to look for patterns from words they know and then use these patterns to read and spell unknown words.

**Each week we will have a set of focus words that the students will review and practice through a variety of different activities.** For example, we will chant words, perform word wall tasks, use words we know how to spell in order to spell new words (word families), guess the covered word, play phonics tic tac toe and bingo games, write our words in sentences, make word ladders, etc. **Our spelling/phonics program will be focused on practicing our focus words throughout the week using different activities that will help our brain spell words with automaticity.**

**The students will not be given a spelling test on their focus words each week,** as I have found in the past, that this only shows if students can spell the words when they are concentrating on them, not if they are using their word knowledge when they need it in reading and writing. **The students will work with and practice their focus words for the week, which will be integrated in our literacy activities.** **Instead of spelling tests, at times, I may send home different word work activities that you can have your child perform to help them practice their focus words so that they become automatic at spelling these.**



I will also be looking at student's writing and **in addition to our general classroom focus words, if I see that there are some high frequency words in particular that each individual child needs to work on, then these will also be added to their list for the week, to review and practice.**

We want to help each student become fluent with reading and spelling words. The goal is to have "Perfect Practice," where the students get enough practice spelling these words the right way to get any wrong spellings out of the brain's automatic compartment and replace them with the right spellings.

If you have any questions and/or concerns about our spelling/phonics program, please do not hesitate to ask, I am here to help! **We will begin our spelling program towards the end of September!**



### **Classroom Expectations**

Our school is really focusing on Positive Behavior Supports that help us all be successful! These are posted in class and around the school.

### **OUR CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

- **Be Safe**  
**Hands And Feet To Ourselves**  
**I Eat My Own Lunch**

- **Be Respectful**
  - I Raise My hand
  - I Listen Carefully
  - I Help Others
- **Be Responsible**
  - I Am On Time
  - I Am Ready To Learn
  - I Try My Best

**To achieve a positive classroom environment, some students will require:**

1. Verbal and Visual Reminders
2. Hand over hand assistance to follow expectations
3. Short break from desired activity
4. Call to parents to discuss future behavioral expectations

**To reinforce positive behaviors, we will give lots of:**

1. Praise/Thank yous!
2. Happy Notes, treats, etc. for on task behaviors
3. Plus Points System, where each student works together to earn points for the class in a variety of different ways. After earning a set number of points, the class will be rewarded with special treats, prizes, parties and classroom events.

### **Dojo Class**

We will be using a positive behavior system in our classroom known as the Dojo Class. Each student has been given an avatar where they can earn positive reward points for following the school wide expectations (Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful) and for following the classroom rules and expectations. After receiving a set amount of points, the students may be rewarded individually or as a class, depending on the goals that are set each week. The Dojo Class is an online positive behavior system and so the students will be receiving a special code that will allow them to set up a login and password, where they will be able to change their avatars and review their progress weekly. The Dojo Class also allows parents to stay informed about their child's progress and you will also receive a link and parent code that you can use to login in and review how your child is doing weekly. **Please look in your child's agenda for this login information, it will be sent home shortly.**

We are a family in Grade Three and we encourage everyone to be kind and gentle with each other, to follow the rules and expectations of the classroom and the school and to be respectful of each individual's needs. This will foster a safe, caring and positive learning environment!



## New Classroom Design (Flexible Seating)

When you walk into our classroom, you will find students engaged in active learning. Flexible seating is a concept rooted in educational research that encourages students to choose their type of seating based on their learning preferences. Research shows that students are able to focus and do their best work when they are comfortable. With flexible seating, teachers create a less traditionally structured and more student centered active learning environment. Students will be able to choose a spot that is best suited for their learning. There is a variety of seating and learning areas including rugs, mats, tables, bean bags, desks, hokki stools, standing table and kneeling at coffee tables. Students are not required to stay in the same spot. They have the ability to make a different seating choice when we switch activities throughout the day, as their academic needs dictate. For example, some students may want to use a traditional type of seat during math, but then use a yoga mat while reading a favourite novel. The choice and freedom is theirs as long as they're exercising a responsible choice that helps them be academically successful. We are excited to explore this new classroom design!



### Flexible Seating RULES

- 1. Choose a WORKING spot that helps you do your BEST!**
- 2. Use each seat the RIGHT WAY!**
- 3. If a spot is NOT WORKING for you, MOVE so you can do your BEST!**
- 4. Miss Miniaci can move anyone at ANYTIME if they don't follow the rules!**

### Snack Time

Students will be having a snack in the morning either right before or after morning recess. Please send a substantial snack even if your child does not stay for lunch. Students are usually very hungry at this time. Lunch is not until 11:50 a.m. We will encourage students to store their dessert or treat items, juice boxes and sandwiches until lunchtime. \*We would also like your child to have a water bottle at school, so I encourage everyone to send one in. Water bottles will be returned home daily to be cleaned or replaced.\*

It's good for your child's brain to be hydrated and reduces the number of trips to the water fountain!



### Lunch

If your child stays for lunch, please ensure that first of all they have enough lunch and that there are nutritious foods in their lunch. It might be helpful if they took an active role in making their lunches.

### School Lunch Time Rules:

1. Sit at your spot and eat your own lunch
2. Use an inside voice; talk quietly
3. First bell, throw out your garbage/recycling and put your lunch kit away
4. Second bell, get ready for the afternoon recess

If your child has repeated problems following these rules, he/she will be asked to eat lunch on his/her own at one of the tables or in the office. The school hires lunchroom supervisors to check in with students to make certain everyone is safe and happy!

### Religion/Health

Depending on how you have registered your child, he/she will take part in Health or Religion/Health two times a week (**Tuesday and Thursday**). He/she may need to move to another grade three class for this block. Religion/Health will begin in the middle of September.

### Special Classroom Days & Parties

Once the class reads 500 stories/books cumulatively, we'll celebrate! The students will choose the themes for these fun days. Pajama Day, Teddy Bear Day and Hat Day have been favorites in the past. Four times a year (Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Year End Picnic), we will be having a classroom party. Each family will be asked to send a potluck food item to school for one of the celebrations. Please refer to these lists that will be provided in future newsletters.



### Birthdays

Celebrating birthdays in class is another way of making the children feel special. If you would like to have your child bring cupcakes or cookies to school on the day of his/her birthday, you are encouraged to do so. However, it is not mandatory. If a child's birthday does not fall on a school day we will still have a special day for them. Please send **25** treats so there will be enough for everyone! **You can find your child's special birthday on the monthly calendars that go home with each newsletter.**



### Scholastic Book Orders

Books in the home can make a big difference in your child's life. The child who is read to at home can broaden his/her vocabulary, expand his/her imagination and ideas, and develop a love of reading. Several times during the school year, your child will have the opportunity to choose books from a wide variety of titles from the Scholastic Book Club Flyers. Each month brings a great variety of new and exciting books. The flyer will usually come at the beginning of the month and I will try to give you a couple of weeks to





go through it and decide if you want to place an order. Encourage your child to select his/her own books and return the coupon and money to school before the due date that is stamped on the order form. **Cheques are payable to (Scholastic Canada LTD.). They DO NOT accept cash. You can now also order and pay online.** Your order should arrive within 3 weeks. Please note that you are not under any obligation to order. September book orders will be sent home in the next couple of days and the order forms are due back on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Parent Helpers

Parent helpers are **ALWAYS** welcome in our class. Please just let us know if you think you might have the time to volunteer in class and/or on field trips. We would love to have parents come in to listen to students read and help out with some prep work. We will try to accommodate whatever your preference is. Please note that whatever you learn when you come in regards to other children is confidential. Please respect that all our students have different learning needs and personalities.

**REMINDER:** Only volunteers who have their Criminal Record Check and Child Welfare Check completed and handed in to the office will be allowed to volunteer both in and out of the classroom. Please hand in your forms, check your calendars and join us!



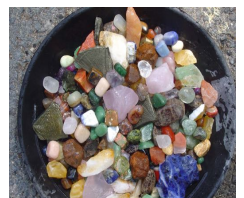
### Collection of Money:

Any time that the school or I request money for different activities (fieldtrips, hot lunches, fundraising, etc.), please send your money in a **zip lock baggie** or **envelope**, **sealed** and **clearly marked** with your **child's name** and **what the money is for**. This is greatly appreciated!

### What will we be learning in September?

During the month of September, we will get to know each other and begin celebrating our strengths and talents. We will review book knowledge, as well as, reading and comprehension strategies; write sentences and paragraphs using proper punctuation and grammar and also focus on vocabulary development. In Math, we will complete a short review and then begin our unit on Patterning. Our Science and Social Studies units will be integrated into Language Arts, as well as, rotated from time to time. We will begin with Science this month and learn all about Rocks and Minerals. Then, Social Studies will be introduced where we will focus on Mapping and Geography.

**\*\*For this Science unit, each student will need to collect 12 rocks from around their neighborhood and bring them to school in an egg carton labeled with their name, on Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Please encourage your child to select rocks that are different and unique from each other, as we will use these collections to study the different varieties of rocks and minerals. Thank you for your participation with this!**



I'm sure you are feeling a bit overwhelmed after reading this, so I'll end it here! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the school (780-939-4020) or email me at [jminiaci@gsacrd.ab.ca](mailto:jminiaci@gsacrd.ab.ca). I have an open-door policy and I am always willing and available to discuss any concerns and questions that you might have. Thank you for your cooperation! I look forward to a fantastic school year!

### Important Dates to Remember

Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> - **No School** - Labour Day  
Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> - **First Day of Classes** - **WELCOME BACK!**  
Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> - Opening Celebration at 1:00 p.m. in the gym  
Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> - **BOOK ORDERS DUE**  
Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> - Terry Fox Run  
Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> - **Bring in 12 rocks in an egg carton**  
Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> - **PICTURE DAY!**  
Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> - **No School** - PD Day  
Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> - Opening Mass for Religion students at SJB Church (1:15 p.m.)  
Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> - **Orange Shirt Day** - please come to school wearing an orange shirt to support the campaign "Every Child Matters"



- Please take a look at the Grade Three September calendar for any upcoming events. You may want to put it up on your fridge for easy and quick reference.

Welcome back everyone! I hope you all have a wonderful September!

Sincerely,  
Miss J. Miniaci  
([jminiaci@gsacrd.ab.ca](mailto:jminiaci@gsacrd.ab.ca))





# September

## 2019



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 <b>NO SCHOOL</b> Labour Day 	3 <b>First Day of Classes</b> 	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 <i>Opening Celebration</i> 1:00 p.m. 	12	13 <b>*BOOK ORDERS DUE*</b> 	14
15	16 <b>Terry Fox Run</b> 	17 <b>*Bring in 12 rocks in an egg carton*</b> 	18 <b>Nevaeh's Unbirthday!</b> 	19 <b>*PICTURE DAY!*</b> 	20 <b>NO SCHOOL</b> PD Day 	21
22	23	24 <b>Ally's Unbirthday!</b> 	25 <b>Opening Mass at Church for Religion Students</b> 1:15 p.m. 	26	27	28
29	30 <b>Orange Shirt Day!</b> 					