

Weekly Digest

Week 18 January 23-25, 2024



Celebrating Cycle 2: Medieval Times Presentations!

As always, we were so impressed and delighted with our students' presentations! Such a breadth of creativity and learning was on display Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. We could see how students, in consultation with parents, had figured out how to choose a topic of interest, approach it on an age-appropriate level, and present information they had gathered creatively, effectively, and frequently with an interactive component that appealed to their diverse audience. We also noticed that this audience has also grown amazingly in its attention, respect, and focus skills! As a group of individuals, Elderberry learners gathered a wide range of information about the Middle Ages and shared it for everyone's benefit, making this entire presentation event the "deliverable" of a shared group project. We all get more out of this repeated process every time we do it, and the guides came away from this week energized and excited about the next presentation cycle: Early Modern times!

We also want to give a huge THANK YOU to Z's mom R, for organizing an amazing printing press activity for our students! The kids thoroughly enjoyed learning about the history of the printing press and making their designs. Many were already asking if we could do this activity again! It also served as a wonderful preview of what's to come in Early Modern times.

Guides' Offerings/Students' Agendas

For the eighteenth week we learned about, discussed, played with:

History/Social Studies: So many nuggets of knowledge shared and learned this week about the Middle Ages from student presentations! Discussion about how to be a good audience member. Lots of conflict resolution happening as a natural result of many multi-aged kids playing in the snow together, group discussions about outdoor school safety, learning about the printing press as a sneak peek into our next cycle theme (Early Modern).

Science/Technology: Learning about and using a printing press! Making purple dye by brewing Butterfly Pea Flower tea (deep blue) and adding lemon juice (citric acid), experimenting with snow in water ("the snow turns gray, and then it melts!"), testing their weight on the shallow frozen water in the pasture and determining which areas were sturdier and why, building a snow bridge. Discussion of middle school's chemistry-themed book *The Disappearing Spoon* by Sam Kean.

Language Arts: Morning meeting poetry, *A Visit to William Blake's Inn* by Nancy Willard, and Bananagrams! Vocabulary discussions of words that came up in conversation.

Arts/ Music/ Crafting: Making Lego Dot creations to be used in the printing press activity, creating prints, spray painting the snow with colored water, collaging, drawing in Closing Circle journals

Math: Lego Dot patterns, engineering snow forts with ice windows, snow "drive thrus" complete with a drive-thru window and couch for employees inside, and very large snow people.

Health/Social-emotional: Closing circle journaling for reflections on the day, negotiating consent and safety regarding snowball throwing/fights, discussion and reminders about the importance of staying warm and hydrated in cold weather, developing an understanding of what clothing/gear needs to be worn in order to keep dry/warm, and reminders to always be aware and mindful of the changing environment around us as we learn and explore in order to make safe decisions.

P.E.: Sledding, snowball fights, building snow forts and snow people

Announcements

Parent Conferences: Parent conferences will be next week! **January 30 and February 1st, 1-3 PM.** If you haven't already, you can sign up for a 20-min slot here, and if you have signed up, please double check your date & time since they had to be shuffled around due to the snow.

Thank you and enjoy your weekend!

Jennifer, Julia, and Stephanie