

October 2011

Dear Parents,

THE VERY BEST PUMPKIN

By, Mark Kimball Moulton

A story recently shared these early October days is, “The Very Best Pumpkin”. At first I found it to be a great story about how pumpkins start, grow, and become harvested... until I read it a few times and of course found God in its’ pages!

The story begins with a boy named Peter.
(Of course Peters and Pumpkins go hand in hand!)

Peter works and lives with his grandparents who own a Pumpkin Farm. The farm does produce other “**crops**” (A vocabulary word for this month), throughout the Spring and Summer as well, but obviously pumpkins are its thing!

The little farm does very well for itself... and Peter discovers during the early summer months that a vine from the main patch has grown out past the boundaries of the pumpkin field into a meadow. As any good steward or shepherd he follows that one stray vine ... stepping over pumpkins “**cautiously**”. (Another vocab word). He finds himself looking down at this little vine and its sweet curlicues. They have nestled into a solemn place on a hill in the meadow. Tucked away from the rest with best intentions of survival.

He leans down and notices that there is growth there! A few stray curlicues, and some weeds pushed aside give away to a small underdeveloped pumpkin. Small but surviving. It has been choked off from growth by the surrounding weeds and accumulating leaves around the small orange sphere.

Peter is thrilled when he spots this little neglected pumpkin trying so hard on its own to survive. He feels it a farmer’s stewardship to help it, and raise it to the level of love and acceptance it will need to become worthy of a family in the Fall!

In many ways Peter represents God in our story. He recognizes that “one got away”. Much like the sheep leaving the pen parable. Surely God would never allow one sheep out of 100 to be let go for the sake of the other 99! And so Peter feels the same way!

I love pumpkin stories because they tell us so much about God’s love for us. They teach about all of us growing from one vine, yet we are all different. They teach us how we are Christians because of this process, and then the process’ to come.

Peter recognizes that this very special pumpkin adrift from the rest is till part of the great fold that he helped to grow and nurture. Some how, some way... it made its way out of

the patch and into a meadow. Sometimes, human beings just don't grow the way the regular, normal ones do. They oft take different paths and need to find their own ways to survive. What I love about this very best pumpkin is that it is still attached to the ONE VINE.

Peter secretly spends the summer cleaning the pumpkin's new spot. Cautiously tending to its needs. He weeds away the bad ... giving it room for growth and sunlight and water. He even builds a special sign to warn others... "Hey... Caution... This ONE needs more than the rest!" Clearly Peter sees this as a "special and unique" pumpkin. He gives it his TLC, and... Voila... Guess what happens??? The pumpkin thrives!

Peter, however is not alone. A new neighbor has moved in next to the farm...Meg. Meg is a lonely girl. She is new, hasn't any friends.. and I feel is somewhat introverted. She resorts to her books under trees to pass the time. It is ALWAYS difficult being the new kid on the block! One day... she spies Peter going to the meadow, and with curiosity she cautiously follows him. Thus beginning weeks of weeks of studying from afar his nurturing ways and sensitivity to this one remote pumpkin. (Kinda of like her!)

As Summer turned to Autumn and people were choosing their pumpkins at the farm, Peter was selling the perfect pumpkins to their rightful owners.... except for the Very Best Pumpkin. Until, Meg came a pumpkin picking. This whole month... no one had shown the dedication to the pumpkin in the meadow like someone as wonderful as Meg. Peter secretly had been watching her day by day. HE knew her timid, and yet he knew she cared. He knew her to be the right one!

Meg glazed and gawked over each and every pumpkin available for sale, but alas... none were meeting her expectation. She had seen them all... fat, skinny, tall, wide... very orange, and not so much... she knew none of the pumpkins measured up to her expectations of the very best pumpkin. She gave up and began to walk away.

It was then Peter..."I have another pumpkin, you may really want..." and with that that tripped and crashed over many ... and cautiously approached the meadow. Peter offered the very best pumpkin to Meg, because she was there each and every day with him. The fact Meg was so invested in watching his care daily, actually caused him to treat the pumpkin so special! And because someone found that quality in him, in turn, he found that quality in someone else!

She found the pumpkin perfect, and the two shared seasons afterwards learning and growing as big as the very best pumpkin they each designed for one another out in the meadow.

I nearly cry each time I read this story... I wonder about how often we've allowed something to die under our care when in fact; it was an opportunity to grow us more into relationship with God. Peter saw that this one was different, it actually deserved MORE! Please remember that some of us need more than others, and the reality is we all need more at various times in our lives. Peter and Meg's friendship is one in which the ASAP

tries very hard to foster each and every day with all of its students. Please look more closely this Fall as to the lessons that the Pumpkin can offer each of us. Bringing us into a better meadow, or growing spot with one another, and with God.

Happy Autumn,
Miss Dawn

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Snacks:

Please continue to bring your monthly snack donations to your respective classrooms. That is a large pretzel, goldfish, fruit snack, (preferably real...ex bananas, applesauce cups, etc). Cheese dipping crackers, cheez-its (just plain), Go-gurts or yogurt cups, Birthday snacks, etc. I have found most kids do not like the more "adult" versions of these snacks or specialized flavorings. SO the plainer the better! Also, juice boxes, or gallon juice with cups.

Supplies:

The classes like rolled paper towels for fast cleanups, table wipes and snack usage at times. Also, Spray cleaner and Lysol disinfectant wipes are very useful! We seem to be just fine at the moment for tissues and hand sanitizer's...thank you!!!

Days Off:

Columbus Day, Monday October 10th School Closed

Friday, October 21st Parent Teacher reviews. Please see the ASA Office to sign in for the spot you need.

Field trips and Special Days:

Walk-a-thon, Friday October 7th:

Hello ASA families!!

Just a reminder that the walk athon is a wonderful celebration of the spirit of our school. It's 100% fun and fundraising at the same time! If you have Friday morning open on your calendar - bring your camera, your walking shoes, the stroller too and enjoy how great our students are and how amazing the faculty is too!!! Friday Morning 10/7. It usually gets going at 9am and lasts around 1.5 to 2 hours. (Note from Sheli Silveria).

Saturday, October 8th Columbus Statue:

Meet me at the Christopher Columbus Statue/Memorial Blvd. on Memorial Blvd and Bellevue (right next to Talbots) at 11am. I will place a plant and show the children the statue and the carvings of the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria. It usually takes about 15 minutes, but it may be fun if you have time. I park in the Bellevue Lot across the street.

Wednesday, October 12th Field trip to Escobar Farm:

We need Drivers with larger vehicles to accommodate at least 3 children each. The Fee is \$3 each, (including parents). Farm attire of course! Sign-up sheets available in each room. This is a great trip to live working farm (a unit we've been studying), that includes hayride, activities, a special snack and a pumpkin. See Miss Kim or myself for more details. Preschool and PreK invited. And anyone not attending ASAP on Wednesday is free to meet us there! We will leave at 9:30am from ASA.
(Rain date for Escobar's is Thursday, October 13th).

Tuesday October 18th Egyptian Day for PreK!

Please come to Walk Like an Egyptian on this day! Children will be studying the Egyptian life and times and are welcomed to dress accordingly this day. We will serve some Egyptian cultural foods, practice writing in hieroglyphics, design a sarcophagus, and listen to music to help reinforce our Social Studies unit!

Thursday, October 20th Pirate Day!

Aye mateys...ALL ASAP to attend Pirate festivities! Full Pirate regalia encouraged! Children will listen to stories of the Pirate days and enjoy some tasty pirate treats! Some one may even the plank that day!! I need some help with the booty (seriously "Pirate booty for snack for classes"). And help with a treasure Hunt. Please see me if your are interested!

Saturday October 22nd: Spooktacular!!!!

PTO sponsored activity inviting all of ASA to participate in a school-wide event to Trunk or Treat, games, and other activities to raise money for ASA. Costumes welcomed... 11-3 and please check your PTO info for more details! A wonderful PTO event for the whole family! Come get spooked!!! Prizes for best Trunk or Treat!

Thursday, October 27th ASAP Halloween Bash!

Students can dress in their favorite Halloween garb. ALL students are welcomed to attend from 10-12 for a special Morning Meeting, snacks, games and dance party! If your student doesn't normally attend on Thursdays, please drop off and pick up at lunchtime. All others... please pack a gym uniform in the backpacks in case they get sick of wearing their costume or HOT! Its sure to be a spooky and wicked fun time for all!

This and That:

Please make sure you are signing in, letting us know of changes in your family plans, concerns and needs (and thanks to many who do... it helps to help you if we know!) Concerns, lunches, resting (BTW.. Blankies from home are A-Okay), New Pick up people, changes in days, and other info you think will help us to serve you better! (And our ASAP community). Please check your daily mailboxes, kids folders, and note that some lessons are exploration and story.. Or continued. And art responses DO happen often, (or Observations), but maybe not in a take home fashion. The kids are so busy and stimulated learning so many new items. It scares me how much they parrot back at me.

And QUESTION! So, quite often we yield to address that important request and may be behind a day in our plans. But trust me it all gets covered!

Outer wear:

It time for vest and sweaters. Please make sure you student is in ASA attire each day. I must say I see some very pretty handsome girls and boys grace our classrooms each day! Please remember we still go outside each day and they may require a light coat at this stage of Autumn. Please mark all coats!

Violin:

Mrs. Lauren Benowits is doing once a gain a fantastic job with Violin Lessons! If your student is interested I highly recommend music instruction under her tutelage! They are learning more than music...like self-confidence and how to perform in public! Important skills and values. Please see me more information. We meet every Thursday!

Lunches:

Heat-ups can happen each day. Both Kim and have Microwaves in our rooms. So please send on in foods you know they will eat! Miss Gay uses Kim's. So please send in foods that warm the tummy and soul!

Upcoming:

I will be putting out a mid month reminder letter and notice to the upcoming November activities! Remember Halloween is a uniform day. And I will forward more on All Saints Day very soon!

(Hints... find a favorite Saint and you can dress like that for November 1st)

Once again, it is my pleasure and my joy, (and our staff), to serve you all each and every day! God Bless and enjoy this very exciting month!

Happy Autumn,
Miss Dawn, Miss Kim, Miss Gay, Miss Dana