



In the human experience, we always need math. It is all around us, every day. We might not even know we are using our mathematical minds as we are driving a car, but indeed we are calculating distances and space.

In Elementary, the children are introduced to the subject of math through a historical story. It is one of the Great Lessons that the children hear at the beginning of every year. It leads the children on a journey of the human being and math. It reveals how we arrived at the numerical symbols we use today. At the beginning of the story the teacher says,

*"We can imagine that, whenever people began to speak, they used words that meant the numbers of things they used or needed. People who lived a long time ago had the same need to talk about numbers that we do. They needed to know how many animals were needed to feed the tribe. Of course, the size of the animal was important. The bigger the animal, the fewer animals were needed to feed the group. When they found a cave, they had to decide if the cave was big enough for the group. ....Those who have studied the languages of many groups of people have never found a language that did not show the idea of numbers."*

The story tells about civilizations such as the Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Chinese, Arabs, and Europeans all creating their number systems. We deliver a message to the children that we are very thankful for the people who came before us who helped to create the number systems we use today.

This week, all the Elementary classrooms explored, discovered and celebrated math. There were the familiar topics of long division, square root, rounding, fractions, measuring distances, and measuring triangles. The beauty of the presentations and the guidance of the teachers lead children in the classrooms to enjoy math as you may never have experienced yourself. After receiving a long division lesson, one student was heard saying, "I can't believe how cool this is! I want to do this all the time."

Alongside the standard topics, some exciting experiences included math as well. Children watched a video on the "Relative Size of Stars" and "Marble Theory." Other children learned about measuring Hertz to understand further how sound waves work. Another group of children was reading about Echolocation because they were reading about the Great White Shark.

The work of surveys is still a popular exploration amongst the younger children. They are going from classroom to classroom and surveying various topics. Afterward, they are analyzing their data and are applying their knowledge of fractions. They discovered that  $\frac{4}{23}$  liked the color blue.

Math was also used within Grace and Courtesy. Children were exploring various virtues such as kindness, helpfulness selfishness, and honesty. It was the task of the children in one environment to turn in a gold coin when they had done one of the virtues. The goal was to hand all 22 coins in by lunchtime, having cycled through their virtue work with care, each practice inculcating the virtues ever more deeply.

We hope you have enjoyed this week's topic and fallen in love with math just a little bit more than you were before.

From All of Us to All of You,

*Lisbeth and the Elementary Team*