

## Lower School Chinese Classes

# 小學的中文課

xiǎo xué de zhōng wén kè



### From the Desk of the 中文老師 zhōng wén lǎo shī (Chinese Teacher)

I cannot believe it's almost March already! Chinese New Year decorations have been put away for another year and we are having fun learning lots of new things in Chinese class! If you ever need to contact me, I can be reached at [christina.liu@lakemaryprep.com](mailto:christina.liu@lakemaryprep.com).

### Firecrackers and Dragons and Lanterns, Oh My!

For three weeks in January and February, we have learned about many aspects of the Chinese (Lunar) New Year.



We listened to folk tales and discussed how they relate to Chinese New Year traditions. This includes the story of the Nian Monster, the story of the animals of the Chinese Zodiac, and the story of the Lantern Festival. Ask your child to tell you these stories! The students made crafts from the folk tales and myths. Many thanks to the parents who came in and helped the students make the crafts! We made "firecrackers" (the noise of firecrackers scare the Nian monster and keeps it away), dancing dragon puppets (shown above), and lanterns.

### "What's Your Name?"

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students have received their Chinese names! (Second and third Grade students will be receiving Chinese Names in the coming weeks. Chinese names do not translate directly from the

English names (unlike Spanish or French, where "Pablo" is "Paul" or "Guillaume" is "William"). Most Chinese names are made up of three parts or words.

The beginning of a Chinese name is the 姓 xìng, or *surname*, which is what we usually call the "last name" or "family name" in English. The second part of the students' Chinese name is their "given name." Given names can be made up of one or two words. For my students' names, I assigned an actual Chinese surname that shares a similar sound, first letter, or meaning with their own surname in English. For their given name I selected two words that when put together, sound a similar to their *given name* in English, or what we call a "first name." Given names can be made up of just about any words but are usually selected to have good meanings. Ask your child to show you their Chinese name!

### A Fun Learning Resource

I have started using a great resource for learning Chinese: [www.ChinesewithMike.com](http://www.ChinesewithMike.com). I met Mike Lǎo Shī (teacher Mike) at a Chinese Teacher's Workshop in Beijing last November. Mike Lǎo Shī has put together a great series for learning Chinese in 10-minute video lessons. He continues to add lessons to his website. He is currently up to Lesson 55. He also has downloadable materials for each lesson. All of his materials are free! "Chinese With Mike" is not just for children, it's great for adults too. It is very entertaining for parents, relatives, and friends who want to learn Chinese. This is a great way to start! Mike Lǎo Shī's Chinese pronunciation is excellent. He speaks with an authentic, nearly native accent. In fact, I am supplementing what I teach in class with some of Chinesewithmike.com videos for homework so students can continue to learn and practice Chinese at home!