

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

Chinese Teacher (zhōngwén lǎoshī)

What an exciting year we're having so far! We are learning a lot and having so much fun in Chinese class! If you have questions, please contact me at christina.liu@lakemaryprep.com.



Happy Mid-Autumn (Moon) Festival!

On Sunday, September 30 there will be a full moon. More importantly, it marks the "Moon Festival," also known as the "Mid-Autumn Festival." This is the second most important festival of the year in the Chinese culture (next to Lunar New Year). It is celebrated by families getting together, eating special foods (moon cakes), and gazing at the Harvest Moon, which is said to be the biggest and brightest full moon of the year.

Stories and Legends of the Mid-Autumn Festival

There are many myths, legends, and stories about the Chinese Mid-Autumn (Moon) Festival. In class, we have discussed two of the most well-known stories underlying this festival. First, there is the story of Hou Yi the archer and his wife Chang E, who is known in many stories as the "Moon Lady." We also talk about how moon cakes helped to win a battle. While there are many different, intertwined versions of these stories, the stories we discuss are based on the version told in the book *"Moonbeams, Dumplings and Dragon Boats"* by Nina Simonds. The students will make a picture book to help tell different events of the story. If you are interested in hearing the story of the Moon Lady, have your child tell it to you, or check out this video on YouTube, which gives a similar version of the story that we discuss in class.



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPw_onzZhLs&feature=related



In the Classroom...

We have been learning about my favorite subject, FOOD! We have started with drinks (focusing mostly on drink choices in the cafeteria), and then we have moved onto foods, focusing mostly on lunch choices in the cafeteria. Next we will be discussing Chinese foods and introducing some popular foods served at dim sum (a Chinese tapas style brunch). We are building our classroom word wall with different Chinese words that the students ask about, from turtle to fuzzy blanket; unicorn to "Mocha Frappuccino." We will address them all!



There's an App for that...

I have some favorite iPad apps and websites for learning Chinese that I would like to share. To begin learning about Chinese characters and see how they are built, there is a great free game from PBS Kids, inspired by the cartoon series "Sagwa." <http://pbskids.org/sagwa/games/picturesaswords/index.html>

One of the apps that I use most often is called **Pleco**. Pleco is available on both iOS and Android devices. **Pleco** is free, and very useful. You can look up Chinese words you hear by typing in correct Pinyin (a primary reason we have focused on Pinyin in the homework). You can also look up characters by its components (radicals) to find out the meanings of the characters. In the near future, I will be teaching students how to use dictionaries and apps like **Pleco** to look up words themselves. To practice Pinyin and listening skills, I recommend **Pinyin Trainer**. <http://itunes.apple.com/my/app/pinyin-trainer-by-trainchinese/id376797304&mt=8>

Finally, a fun free game that can be played online or as an app to aid in learning Chinese characters is **Tilespeak**, a version of Mahjong solitaire with Chinese characters, at <http://www.tilespeak.com/>