Homeside Activities for Grades 3–5

- Everyday Math
- Family Folklore
- Harvey
- My Opinion
- Personal Time Capsule
- Then and Now
- Trading Places

To support family dialogue, build relationships, and learn new things about each other, we are sharing with teachers some Homeside Activities from the first edition of the *Caring School Community* program. The activities can be done in any order and do not need to be followed explicitly. Families should feel free to add or modify activities as necessary. These activities were originally designed to support the home-school connection. You can use these to support your virtual classroom community, making modifications for virtual sharing. You can also simply share these with parents as something they can do on their own time and not connect them to your classroom. The directions, along with forms for recording responses, are included with each activity.
Homeside Activities for Parents

These activities were originally one of four components of the first edition of the *Caring School Community* program. As a part of that program they were designed to help make a bridge from the home to the school, creating a “homeside” to the “schoolside” learning done in class.

Now that many parents are at home with their children looking for enrichment activities to do, we decided to make these activities available for use at home. These activities are designed to take 15–20 minutes and are built around conversations between you and your child. They are organized in two sets, one for primary (grades K–2) and the other for intermediate (grades 3–6) students. They deal with topics and ideas related to school, family, friendship, and social development. Activities may involve your child in a short writing or drawing activity, and always should be fun and not feel like work.

You will find that in Homeside Activities there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, no right or wrong ways to do the activities. As you will see, because these activities are designed for school, they may need to be modified to fit your needs. Don’t hesitate to make these your own. You can take the conversation in any direction you want, and you can have as many family members participate as you’d like. Just having these conversations is what counts, because they help your child develop thinking and language skills for life. These assignments contribute to your child’s academic and social learning because:

- they help you stay in touch with your child’s learning;
- working with you increases your child’s interest in the work;
- your child gets to practice communication skills and think about important ideas; and
- your child learns from you and sees how school learning relates to “real life.”

Some families may want to use these activities as a break during the day, others may see ways to use them as conversation topics at dinner, and others may see them as a great wind-down activity before bedtime. However you decide to use them, remember that hearing your child’s thinking and ideas as well as having them hear your thinking is the real point here.

Have fun!
Dear Student,

You are in charge of this Homeside Activity, which means you are in charge of finding an adult to do it with you, finding time you both have free to do it, explaining and “directing” the activity, making sure the adult signs it, and bringing it back to class. Please find about 20 minutes that you can spend on the activity with a parent or other adult—a neighbor, grandparent, older brother or sister, or family friend. If you’d like, get a bunch of people involved!

One of the most important reasons for doing this activity is that you and the adult will learn things from each other about what you think, feel, know, and want to know. In class we can then also learn from each other, when we share what we have learned at home. Just be sure to ask the adults for permission to pass along what they say—and don’t forget to thank them for contributing to our class’s learning!

Use the questions on the back of this page to interview a parent or another adult about how he or she uses mathematics in everyday life. Also find out about how the adult learned math when he or she was in school. You can make up your own interview questions, too. Take notes in the space provided.
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Can you think of two or three ways you commonly use math?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Do you have any quick tricks or mathematical “short cuts” that you use? If so, can you explain them to me?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Tell me a story about learning or doing math in school when you were a child.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Comments

After you have completed this activity, each of you please sign your name and the date below. If you have any comments, please write them in the space provided.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Signatures Date

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Interview a parent or other family member about your family history. Ask the questions below. (The person you interview may not have stories to tell about all of these questions.) Then on the back of this page write a summary of one of the stories to share in class.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Is there a family hero or “character” that you could tell me about?
- Do you have a story about how a family joke or saying got started?
- Can you tell me a story about a family courtship or wedding?
- What is your favorite story about when you were growing up?
FAMILY FOLKLORE STORY

In the space below, write a summary of one of the stories from the interview.

 Comments

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Date

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The attached poem, “Harvey,” is one person’s description of a special friend. Read the poem with a parent or adult friend, and share your ideas about what makes Harvey a good friend.

Then use the questions on the back of this page to interview each other about friendships. Take notes about your conversation in the space provided.
HOMESIDE ACTIVITY

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What qualities does Harvey have that you think you would like in a friend?
Student: ___________________________  Adult: ___________________________

What qualities are most important to you in a close friend?
Student: ___________________________  Adult: ___________________________

(For the adult only) Do you remember a best friend from elementary school? Why do you remember this person?
Student: ___________________________  Adult: ___________________________

Who is a close friend now? Why is this person important to you? Why do you think you are important to this friend?
Student: ___________________________  Adult: ___________________________

Comments
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Signatures  Date

Please return this activity to school. Thank you.
Harvey doesn’t laugh about how I stay short while everybody grows.
Harvey remembers I like jellybeans—except black.
Harvey lends me shirts I don’t have to give back.
I’m scared of ghosts and only Harvey knows.

Harvey thinks I will when I say someday I will marry Margie Rose.
Harvey shares his lemonade—sip for sip.
He whispers “zip” when I forget to zip.
He swears I don’t have funny-looking toes.

Harvey calls me up when I’m in bed with a sore throat and runny nose.
Harvey says I’m nice—but not too nice.
And if there is a train to Paradise,
I won’t get on it unless Harvey goes.

—Judith Viorst*

My Opinion

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Describe to a parent or adult friend the current issue you are concerned about. Explain why it is important to you and why you wrote to the person or publication you did.

Then read your letter to the adult. Ask for the adult’s opinions about the issue.

Discuss ways your opinions are similar and ways they are different. Take notes on your discussion on the back of this page.
## HOMESIDE ACTIVITY

### NOTES

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### Comments

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On the back of this page, list five to ten items that you would include in a personal time capsule to be opened in twenty-five years—things that tell something about who you are and what you like.

Tell a parent or adult friend about the things you chose and why you would include them in your time capsule. What does each item say about you?

Ask the adult to think of any other items he or she would add to complete the picture of who you are. Write those on the back of this page.
**MY PERSONAL TIME CAPSULE**

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With a parent or other adult, read the attached poem, “Grandma’s Bones.” Use the questions on the back of this page to interview the adult about the music, dances, and styles that were popular when he or she was your age.

Add your own interview questions if you’d like, and take notes in the space provided. In class we will use these notes for a writing exercise.
**HOMESIDE ACTIVITY**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

When you were my age, what were your favorite singing groups? Why?

What dances did you do?

What kinds of clothes and hairstyles were popular then?

What else do you particularly remember was popular in those days?

**Comments**

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**Signatures**

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Grandma's Bones

Grandma grew up
in the nineteen-forties
she can still do the jitterbug
a dance they used to do
to the music of Duke Ellington,
Benny Carter, Count Basie
and such

she can spin a yo-yo
much better than I
and sometimes she puts two sticks called bones
between the knuckles
of one hand and goes

crack crack crackety
crackety crack
crackety crackety crackety
crack crack
uh crackety crack
uh crackety crack
clack crack crackety
clackety crack!

—Eloise Greenfield*

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When we read stories and novels in class, we often talk about what life might look like from a particular character’s point of view.

For this Homeside Activity, tell a family member or family friend about one of these characters with whom you would like to trade places for one day. Why would you like to be this person? How might the character feel about being you for a day?

Then give the adult a chance to talk about a character (or real person) with whom he or she would like to trade places for a day. Take notes about your discussion on the back of this page.
TRADING PLACES

NOTES

The character I would trade places with:

Student: 

Adult: 

Why I would like to trade places with this character:

Student: 

Adult: 

How this character might feel about being me for a day:

Student: 

Adult: 

Comments

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Signatures 

Date 

Please return this activity to school. Thank you.