



"PASS IT DOWN"



A Special Assignment for the Whole Family Mrs. Whiteman's First Grade

Dear Parents,

Today, we got together with our fifth grade buddies for a whole hour! In that time, we read two wonderful books about immigrants who passed special items on to their children and to their children's children. In *The Keeping Quilt*, by Patricia Polacco, a quilt was passed from generation to generation. In *The Always Prayer Shawl*, by Sheldon Oberman, a man's name and prayer shawl were passed from grandfather to grandson several times. The children really enjoyed these stories and they enjoyed viewing some items (a quilt, a tablecloth, a ring, and some spoons) that Mrs. Westcott and I had that had been passed to us from people in our families.

The students are now being asked to participate in a follow-up response activity to these two books. They are asked to do some "research" in their own families to see if there are any items that have been "passed down" in their families. Your child's responsibilities for this assignment are to:

- "interview" you or other extended family members to find out about an object in your family that has been passed down from generation to generation
- ask specific questions of you (who, what, when, where, why) to get a clear understanding of the object and its importance to the family
- "take notes" on what they learned about the object by drawing a picture of it and by writing down some important information about it (you may help with the writing if your child needs help)
- select the most important information from their "interview" to record in the picture and writing

We have taken time in school to review these expectations. We have spent time discussing how to ask questions to learn more information about something (the "5 W Questions") and students have seen some examples of what is expected in terms of a picture and written description. Still, you may need to help your child as they complete the tasks above. *That's okay!* Part of the focus of this activity is to involve family members in student learning about immigration and family history.

After finishing this home research, students will have an opportunity to do a

short oral presentation about their object for our class and Mrs. Westcott's class. Students will be asked to speak for about a minute about their object. They are expected to speak loudly and clearly, giving details about their object and staying focused on their topic. After your child has completed his or her home research, you may want to check their understanding of the object and see if he or she has any further questions about it. Ask your child if he or she can tell the story of the item back to you.

We will begin our oral presentations on Wednesday, so we ask that your child complete the home research portion of this activity by next Monday. By that day, he or she should bring their picture and written description of the object to school.

As always, thank you for your help at home. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

" Beth Whiteman