

Challenger News

Keeping Parents and Campuses Connected

November 2017



November at a Glance

- **November 14 (G5–8)**
AMC 8 Math Test
- **November 21–22**
Thanksgiving Feast Days
- **November 23–24**
Thanksgiving Break—
No School
- **November 27 (G3–8)**
Class Spelling Bees Begin



CHALLENGER
SCHOOL

Beyond *The Rainbow Fish*

The Rainbow Fish, by Marcus Pfister, is a popular children’s book. Its popularity is partly due to its eye-catching illustrations and partly due to the story of a “beautiful fish who finds friendship and happiness when he learns to share.”

At first glance, this story seems to have some positive messages. But let’s look more closely. As the story begins, we see that Rainbow Fish is more beautiful than the other fish because of his colorful, unique, glittering scales. The other fish watch in awe as Rainbow Fish swims around them. One day, a plain fish, offering nothing in return, asks Rainbow Fish to give him one of his scales. Rainbow Fish is surprised and appalled by this notion, and sends the plain fish away.

The plain fish is upset and rushes to tell all the other fish what happened. From then on, all of the fish turn away from Rainbow Fish and ignore him when he swims by.

Rainbow Fish feels lonely and sad. He starts to wonder if there is any point in having nice scales if he can’t enjoy them.

A “wise” octopus, who has heard of Rainbow Fish’s situation from the waves of the sea, advises him to give one of his glittering scales to each of the other fish. The octopus asserts that even though Rainbow Fish won’t be the most beautiful fish any more, he’ll be happy.

That advice doesn’t make sense to Rainbow Fish. He wonders how he can live without his most prized possessions. But as he’s pondering how to proceed, the plain fish returns and asks again for just one of the special scales. This time, Rainbow Fish gives in.

Soon, all the other fish hear that Rainbow Fish has given away a scale. They swarm around him, each demanding a scale of their own. Rainbow Fish gives away his scales until he has only one left for himself. No longer a special beauty, he and all the other fish are now the same.

The story tells us that Rainbow Fish has found friendship and true happiness. But has he?



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Rainbow Fish, cont. from p. 1

Does the fact that Rainbow Fish has something that others want make it okay for the others to ostracize Rainbow Fish until he gives them what they think they deserve—what is not rightfully theirs? Doesn't Rainbow Fish have the right to pursue his own interests and make friends who will like him for who he is?

By believing that his scales have no value to him unless others admire them, Rainbow Fish is deriving his self-esteem from the opinions of others.

A better lesson would be that he should enjoy his scales and be proud of them because *he* values them, not simply because others like them. (This is true whether you consider his scales to be actual physical beauty or symbolic of valued attributes.)

As for the “wisdom” of the octopus, instead of telling Rainbow Fish to enjoy his possessions and/or engage in a fair trade with others, the octopus tells Rainbow Fish to give away his scales to the other fish, lose his unique beauty, and become the same as everyone else so he can be “happy” and have “friends.”

This story teaches that happiness comes from giving in to the demands of others, that self-esteem arises from the opinions of others, and that self-sacrifice is necessary to make friends.

At Challenger, we take a different approach.

- We teach reasoning skills so children learn to act and think independently without giving in to peer pressure. Additionally, as children learn to manage their emotions, they develop skills that increase their ability to relate and interact positively with others in social settings. Thus, there is no need to buy friends by “giving away scales.”
- We discourage blind acceptance of “wisdom” from authority figures. We encourage children to question—to constantly ask “why?” Furthermore, as children think independently, they can identify relationships that offer value and decide to share with people if and when they choose to.



- We help children gain personal independence as a key factor in recognizing their individual self-worth. When preschoolers can write their own names, zip up their own coats, and take care of their papers and backpacks, they find true joy in the ability to do things for themselves. Instead of making students feel guilty for having unique talents or abilities, we encourage them to strive for excellence. They gain their self-esteem from their accomplishments and not from the praise or acceptance of others.

At Challenger, we look for stories that instill the values and skills children really need to pursue authentic happiness for the rest of their lives.

American Mathematic Competition 8 (5–8)



On November 14, all Challenger students in grades 5–8 will participate in the American Mathematic Competition (AMC) 8. The AMC 8 is a 25-question, 40-minute, multiple choice examination in middle school mathematics designed to promote the development and enhancement of problem-solving skills.

Over 150,000 students worldwide participate in the AMC 8. We are excited to be able to offer our students this opportunity to demonstrate and challenge their mathematical skills.

Students can prepare for and parents can find more information about the contest by visiting <http://www.maa.org/math-competitions/amc-resources>.

Students will receive notification regarding their performance on the AMC 8 in mid-January. We hope that by participating in this contest, we can challenge and inspire students to want to develop their problem-solving skills.

Christmas Sings (PS-5) Christmas Concert (6-8)



Christmas Sings are fun to present!

Students are excited to present their Christmas Sings and Christmas Concerts next month. As we get closer to the performance dates, check ChallengerSchool.com for schedules, and watch for invitations to these festive events.

Science Fair (K-8)

Science Fair fun has begun! Challenger students in grades 6-8 have received their packets and are already coming up with their projects for the 2018 Science Fair. Information for students in grades 3-5 will be distributed this month, and K-2 classes will begin their projects after the first of the year.



Our students excel in creating outstanding Science Fair projects.

Every year, our students continue to come up with impressive projects. Please encourage your student as she works on this important assignment.

Veterans Day (K-8)

Elementary students will commemorate Veterans Day with a special assembly. This day honors the countless men and women who have defended freedom around the world.

Many students will have the opportunity to write to military personnel currently serving overseas. Others will read or hear first-hand accounts of veterans throughout U.S. history.



Thanksgiving Feast (K-8)

Here's an opportunity to have lunch with your child! On November 22, the lunch caterer will offer a special feast.* If you would like to attend, you may order a feast from the caterer for yourself and/or your child.

*Not available at all campuses



Thanksgiving Feast Day is a great family experience!

If you won't be purchasing a Thanksgiving lunch for your child, please remember to send one from home. In the next few weeks, we will send more information to you.

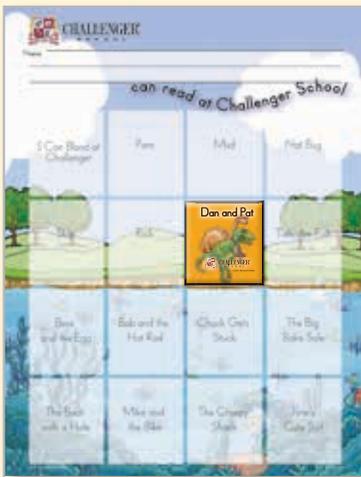
(Preschool students will celebrate with an in-class feast and will not participate in the catered lunch. Kindergarten participation varies by campus.)

Preschool

I Can Read! Magnet Charts

As 4-year-olds finish the Blending Book series, they'll move on to Pre-Readers.

You'll receive a magnet chart for the magnets your young reader will bring home after completing and returning each new book. This is a fun way to chart your child's reading progress!



Outdoor Clothing

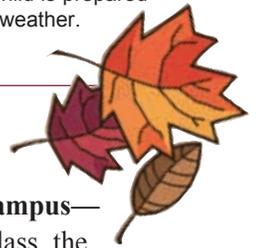
As the weather gets cooler, make sure that your child is dressed appropriately in outer clothes that he can handle with little assistance.

Please don't send an umbrella with your child; when combined with backpacks and lunch boxes, an umbrella is difficult to manage.

We will go outside every day possible, despite the cold weather. Label all outerwear pieces just in case items end up in the lost-and-found.



Make sure your child is prepared for colder weather.



Heard It in the Halls

Round Rock (TX) campus— As part of their Literature lesson, first grade students were studying terms related to stories.

When the teacher asked them if they could define the term *character* as it related to a story, Danica not only remembered what she had learned in kindergarten, but also recalled a recent grammar lesson on sentence subjects. "A character," she responded, "is a subject in the story—the 'who' or 'what' that does the action!"

Boise Bloom (ID) campus— During Geography class, the kindergarten teacher pointed to Idaho on the map and asked her students, "What is the capitol of Idaho?"

Ronit, remembering their discussion of capitalization in the morning, raised his hand and answered proudly, "The capital of our state is *I!*"



Thanksgiving Feast Day (PS-K)

This month, preschoolers and kindergartners will learn about the first Thanksgiving and celebrate the holiday with an in-class feast (as applicable at your campus).

Look for a notice with the food item your child is invited to contribute to our meal. We will prepare this together as we enjoy the blessings of freedom and prosperity.

