

St. Ignace Second Grade Students Become 'Berenstain Bears' Experts



Carrying baking sheets filled with biscuits to kitchen ovens at the school are Laci Sobaskey (from left) Ryan North, Jacob Fenlon, and Angel Hutchins.



Reading their favorite Berenstain Bears book, St. Ignace Elementary School second grade students take a seat on the edge of the cafeteria stage Wednesday, March 18, while they await their turn at making and eating honey butter and biscuits. Pictured are Josh Arthur (front row, from left) A.J. Ellison, Emily Coveyou, Tucker Shepard, Andy Metz; (back) Halley Halberg, Saylor Sorenson, and Joycelyn Jones.

By Karen Gould

Ask a second grade St. Ignace Elementary student about the Berenstain Bears, and he or she will be able to name the bears, tell about stories in the books, and share each bear's likes and dislikes.

Classroom lessons have school's two classrooms led by teachers Amy Metz and Helena Shepard have been studying the adventures of the fictional bear family of Papa and Momma Bear, Brother Bear, Sister Bear, and Honey Bear for the last four weeks.

focused on comparing and contrasting details. Students have looked at similarities and differences between stories and character traits, and a few select books have been compared to videos on the same stories.

They even are keeping a classroom list of character traits on each bear, which is often updated

as they read new stories.

A classroom lesson had students pretending to be one of the bears. Then, while in character, each student wrote a letter to another bear.

Using the school's computers, the young readers have gathered information about the bears and participated in online activities. Each student even has sent an e-mail message to their favorite bear, said Mrs. Metz.

The books fit the reading skills level of the students, she said. The children also can relate to story topics that include baby-sitters, sleepovers, pets, playing sports, and going on adventures.

"We like them because they're easy to read," said student Ryan North.

Tucker Shepard likes reading about the bears and their adventures.

"The Berenstain Bears help each other out," he said.

In the classroom, said Mrs. Metz, the focus has been on six of the Berenstain Bears books, although most of the students now are reading other books outside the classroom.

"They are just going crazy over these books," she said. "They are the perfect books for them."

Last week, the students picked their favorite character, drew a mask likeness of the bear, and made a costume out of a paper bag. Dressed in their creations, the students gathered in the cafeteria to enjoy reading and taking turns making and then eating honey butter and biscuits.

"We chopped it up and then we stirred it," said Kayla Smith of the honey and butter mixture. "It tastes good. The butter tastes really good."

The month-long lesson is part of the classroom's celebration of March into Reading.



Mixing honey with butter, Tucker Shepard (right) and Saylor Sorenson say it is hard work and the combination of the two ingredients creates a very sticky topping for the biscuits.



Friends Andy Metz (left) and Josh Arthur say they are having fun even if the butter sticks to their spoon and mixing it with honey is a challenge.

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