



Nov. 27, 2006

This is a season of gift giving. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year or birthdays, it is certain your child enjoys giving gifts. For homework this week, I would like your child to focus on a special gift he or she has given at some time. This might be the gift of time (as in helping a family member with a project) or the gift of art work (is there a better gift from a child?) Perhaps your child has donated toys or food to a needy family, or written a letter to a sick relative. With a little help from you, I'm sure your children can remember a time when they gave a wonderful gift that meant a great deal to the recipient.

Your child is to write about this gift in a well-developed paragraph. We do this every week in class, so the writing process should not be too much of a chore. Use the newsprint paper for a "sloppy copy" and then help your child edit for spelling, capitalization and punctuation. The final, perfect copy should be written on the white, lined paper. The space at the top is for an illustration. I encourage you to begin this tonight, because this will probably take several homework sessions. As the year progresses, your child will be assigned longer homework tasks, and this **planning process** is a critical piece of your second grader's academic development. Thank you

Several parents have asked me for gift ideas for their second graders, and I do have a couple suggestions! Most children's **crayons** are looking a bit tired by this point in the year. We spend WAY more time

at the pencil sharpener than I'd like, so perhaps an individual **pencil sharpener** would make a nice holiday gift. Finally, we'll be doing lots of editing in the months to come, so several new **erasers** would be great!

If you notice me and many other Conant staff in casual dress some Friday, ask us the name of the charity we are sponsoring! We have decided to go "Casual for a Cause" one Friday each month. We pay a fee to a designated charity for the privilege of "dressing down." In December the staff will be donating to Toys for Tots. So while I'm enjoying my blue jeans and sneakers, I will do so knowing that a child in the Commonwealth will enjoy the toy I bring.

Our new literature study is off to a splendid start. We are studying the delightful stories and incredible illustrations of Jan Brett. We'll have a special class coffee in January to share our work with you. Details in the New Year!

I continue to enjoy this extraordinary group of kids. We have such fun learning together!

Sincerely,

Mary Tsacoyeanes