

May 9, 2011

Dear 7th Grade Students and Parents,

As in previous years, 7th grade students will be required to create a nature collection for their Life Science Class. I am sending out this information now so that students can get started on their collections over the summer, since this is the best time to find bugs and leaves. The project will be due in September the Wednesday, prior to the MS retreat; the specific date will come after the date for the MS retreat has been published. This project will count as two test grades.

Students have two collections to complete. Collection 1, students will collect ten *different* insects as specified in the included directions. Collection 2, students will collect ten *different* tree leaves.

Collection #1 -

Students will collect 10 insects. They must have 2 different insect specimens from each of the following orders:

- Coleoptera (beetles)
- Diptera (flies, mosquitoes, gnates)
- Lepidoptera (moths, butterflies)
- Orthoptera (grasshoppers, crickets, katydids)
- Hymenoptera (ants, bees, wasps)

These specimens must be labeled by order, scientific name and common name.

**Please note that adult insects have six legs; spiders do not qualify. Also, please do not kill praying mantises.

Collection #2 –

Students will collect 10 tree leaf specimens (a bush is not a tree). Each leaf specimen must be labeled by scientific name, common name, and category of leaf blade type (either compound leaf or simple leaf).

The two collections must be completed neatly and with correct identification of the specimens. There are identification field guides available at school and at the local libraries in limited numbers. Field guides can also be purchased at local bookstores and even at Green Valley Book Fair. There are several online resources for insect and leaf identification as well.

Labeling – READ CAREFULLY!

- Common name must be written or typed
- Scientific name must be written or typed but both methods must include the Genus and the species name.
- The Genus name is always capitalized and the species name is not.
- If typed the scientific name should be italicized. If hand written the scientific name should be underlined.

Example: Domestic dog
Canis domestica

Collecting/Presentation –

Attached are pages 18-23 of the Student Activities Book, which explains the proper method of killing and pinning insects. Do not leave insects in the killing jar long after they are dead; they will begin to mold or fall apart. Take them out, pin or glue them and mount them so they can dry. Insect specimens should be grouped according to order when placing them in the display. The specimens may either have the identification directly next to them OR you may number the specimens and have a separate key list attached to the display, which identifies the insect by number and name.

Leaves should be pressed between the pages of a book until dry and stiff, then glued onto thick paper which can then be slipped into a loose-leaf photo page and put into a notebook. Magnetic-type photo albums also work well for this purpose. The common and scientific names as well as the leaf blade type should be included on the page next to the mounted leaf.

I hope the nature collection will be a good learning experience for the students, as well as an enjoyable one. Please do not do the project for your child! I look forward to working with each of the students as we learn about our wonderful God and His marvelous creation.

Warmly
Heather Gildea
7th Grade Life Science Teacher