

The BIG DIG

Exceptional and unique opportunities is what we love to see our student experience at Sacred Heart Academy. One of these unique experiences includes the BIG DIG, which took place most recently on Friday, September 6. In this archaeological simulation, sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Wendy Lemke, incorporated a simulated archaeological dig as part of her social studies lesson. This year's overall sixth grade social studies theme is "culture" (within our study of world geography). Essentially, students in each sixth-grade class secretly invented an imaginary culture and then created artifacts representing a variety of the aforementioned culture universals.

The day before "The BIG DIG", Dr. Larry Lemke, Mrs. Lemke's husband, rototilled the earth to prepare it for "the salting" of artifacts. The morning of the event, early bird parents arrived to our "excavation" site at Main and Michigan, in downtown Mt. Pleasant, at 5:00 a.m. in the morning to bury the secret artifacts. Later in the day, Mrs. Lemke's students excavated artifacts from the culture that Mrs. O'Brien's class created, and Mrs. O'Brien's students excavated artifacts from the culture that Mrs. Lemke's class created.



Mrs. Wendy Lemke with the entire sixth-grade class.

After the artifacts were uncovered, the students returned to the classroom where they used inferences, critical thinking, and problem-solving to reconstruct the found cultures and attempted to decipher the languages. At the end of the day, the two classes faced off in a final confrontation, where they shared their hypotheses and ideas about the culture themes and values.

The learning objectives for this assignment include:

1. How to use observations to make inferences.
2. How to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
3. That all cultures are tied to specific **culture universals**, such as: RECREATION (games, sports, leisure time), ARTS (art, music, drama, dance, literature), POLITICS (government, laws, peace/war/military), RELIGION (beliefs, practices, death rituals), COMMUNICATION (spoken, written, number system), ECONOMICS (technology, transportation, money/trade, employment, FAMILY (division of labor, rites of passage, child training/education), and the BASICS (food, clothing, shelter).
4. As humans (both present, past, and ancient), we are all connected to each other since we all share variations of the same culture universals.
5. That we learn to appreciate our differences as well as our similarities!

Special thanks to Mrs. Wendy Lemke, Dr. Larry Lemke, and the early bird parents for making this experience possible for our students. Click this [link](#) to see the full folder of pictures, and click this [link](#) to read the article in the Morning Sun by Sue Knickerbocker Field.