



# Monarch Minutes

## Classroom Updates

### January 2016

#### Upcoming Events

- 11 Open House, 6-7:30pm
- 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, no school
- 21 Parent Education Night, 6-7pm
- 22 12:15pm dismissal, no aftercare

#### Ms. Echo

Interviews below by Archer & Wyndham (5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, respectively)



#### So what do you like about the school?

"I like that we're learning stuff we should know by now and stuff other schools might not have taught us and I also like that it's a free environment and we're allowed to have class pets and I LOVE my teacher Ms. Echo."

—Jordan Freeman, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"I like the school because of Ms. Echo and sometimes we have free choices and we can go out and have bake sales."

—Fabrel Yahya-Moore, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"Umm, freedom. I can do the things I want to do, like make food and do the work, but choose the work that you want to do."

—Jibri Martin-Edwards, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

"Shelter."

—Jalen Young, 4<sup>th</sup> grade

"Uh, pretty much everything."

—Santana Robinson, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"I like that there's choices. it's fair."

—Talia Trotter, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

"Uhhh well I like some of the teachers some. I like how it has a garden we live next to the stand and we have an awesome playground the school has a library which is like so awesome."

—Jibril Young, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"It has recess and umm we don't have homework and we get to choose our work."

—Nick Barrette, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"Umm well it's free and we get more choices than at a regular school and we don't have to sit at a desk all day at our school."

—Marcus Beggs, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

#### If you had to pick, what's your favorite material at school?

"Two of my favorite materials are the metal inset fractions and the racks and tubes to do division with."

—Jordan Freeman, 5<sup>th</sup> grade



Jordan Freeman (J-man)

—Photo by Archer Briscoe

"My favorite two materials at school are my math book and my lead pencil."

—Fabrel Yahya-Moore, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"My favorite material I think is the books. I love reading."

—Jibril Young, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"My favorite material is the metal inset fractions."

—Talia Trotter, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

"My favorite material is the charts."

—Nick Barrette, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

#### What do you like about your teacher?

"My teacher is nice, fun and cool she's not boring or tight like a regular teacher. She's loose and fun."

—Jordan Freeman, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"My teacher is nice and fun because she lets us cook and she's very helpful and I can go on and on about how such a great person she is."

—Fabrel Yahya-Moore, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"She's a fair arguer."

—Jalen Young, 4<sup>th</sup> grade

"She's not strict and she plays video games."

—Jibri Martin-Edwards, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

"Everything."

—Jordan Jackson, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

"Purr snore, snore."

—Cinnamon Roll (classroom Guinea Pig)

"She's nice funny smart she helps me with a lot of stuff she helps me fix problems."

—Talia Trotter, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

"I like that she's nice and she tells us awesome stories."

—Jibril Young, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

"Uhh she is creative and fun."

—Nick Barrette, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

(classroom update continued on page 2)

#### Ms. Godsoe

Our class has been doing a broad study of American history and government over the past months. We have delved into certain events such as the actual first Thanksgiving and the founding of Washington, D.C. and have also looked at how life has changed for the citizens of our country over time.

As part of their government study, the 3rd graders were able to take a private tour the Capitol Building, visit the House of Representatives, and even ride the underground train! Seeing these famed places was impressive and also brought the idea of the federal government into focus.

Our entire class visited the Postal Museum to see how transportation, communication, and technology have changed over time. The lens of the postal system gave the children a concrete way to compare life now and at different times in the past. After our visit, many of the children were inspired to start their own stamp collections and try out "snail mail".

#### Ms. Kaufman

At this point in the school year we have settled into the daily classroom routine. There's a healthy buzz in the classroom during the morning and afternoon work cycles as the children receive new lessons and choose work from the shelves that they've already had lessons on. They take pleasure in making choices and it is a joy to observe them focusing, repeating, and concentrating on their work. This is what we always strive for in a Montessori classroom. Interspersed with the independent work are the opportunities to share snack, stories, songs, poems, Grace and Courtesy lessons, and Walking on the Line activities. All areas of the classroom are being utilized. In the Practical Life area the younger children enjoy polishing the brass, wooden, and glass objects which leads to the older children washing the polishing dishes and cloths to keep the shelves stocked with supplies for the polishing work to take place each day. In the Sensorial area the children love to build the Pink Tower, the Brown Stair, and the Red Rods and to explore the geometric shapes with the Geometry Cabinet, the Geometric Solids, and the Constructive Triangles. The geography materials are always popular as the children familiarize themselves with the puzzle maps and learn the names of the countries on each continent. In the Language area the children are learning new vocabulary with the picture cards, playing the Sound Game, tracing the Sandpaper Letters and saying the sounds they make, building words with the Moveable Alphabet, writing and illustrating stories, and reading up a storm.

In the Math area they are working with the 0 - 10 materials, the teens and tens, the decimal system materials, and learning simple math facts. Over the past month we have been reading about the many winter holidays celebrated around the world and enjoyed participating in the Primary Winter Musical that highlighted many of those holidays.

#### Ms. McCracken

In the fall months, we enjoyed the advantages of our location in a busy, urban center. For example, our second- and third-year students embarked on a walking field trip to Union Station in November. Each "team" of adults and children was on the look-out for shapes—including circles, rectangles, triangles—and the beautiful architecture of Union Station delivered! We roamed through the Grand Hall, enjoyed a snack while chatting with our classmates seated on one of the benches, and strolled back by dismissal.



—Photo by Leah Young

In addition, as part of the DCPS-mandated curriculum about community workers, the students got up close and personal with a horse from a mounted police unit and a canine unit that patrols the Capitol. We learned that the police-woman takes her patrol dog home with her each night, and that during her orientation, the dog "chose" her to be his working partner.

Throughout November, a student teacher from Loyola observed our class in preparation for her return in the spring for instructional time with our class. She had previously been a paraprofessional at a private Montessori school in Arlington.

At the end of November, students made their annual Thanksgiving tree, decorating the branches with leaves inscribed with "thankful for" messages. One of our winter crafts, scheduled before the holiday break, involved making paper snowmen incorporating our names.

Finally, we've all become weather trackers, recording the sunny, cloudy, and rainy days on a calendar first thing in the morning in our group meeting. We will continue that into the New Year!

# Classroom Updates (continued from page 1)

## What do you like about our classroom?

“Whine purr.”

—Oreo (classroom Guinea Pig)

“That we, umm, uh, that we get challenging work and do fun things like make pancakes.”

—Caitlyn Taylor, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

“It’s free.”

—Talia Trotter, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

“That it’s big that my friends are in it and uhh we have a view of the stand and the Kaiser Permanente building.”

—Jibril Young, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

“It’s big and it has a water machine and the cubbies.”

—Nick Barrette, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

## Lesson of the week, 6<sup>th</sup> grade



Jaylee Davis working on writing ratios/rates

—Photo by Archer Briscoe

**Jaylee Davis:** Ratios and rates. So a ratio is a comparison between two numbers you can write into a fraction and a decimal. Here’s an example: for every 6 pieces of sushi there’s 8 pieces of fish.



Close-up on Jaylee’s ratio work

—Photo by Archer Briscoe

## Lesson of the week, 5<sup>th</sup> grade

**Fabrel Yahya- Moore:** Literary devices. A metaphor is when you make a description without using “like” or “as.” My other one is literation. Literation is when the first letter of a sound is repeated in a line.



Fabrel Yahya-Moore reading Greek mythology

—Photo by Archer Briscoe

**Jibril Young:** Pronouns, emotions and accents in French. We worked on speaking French, like I can say he/ she in French its il/ elle and they is ils/ells. The “s” is silent though. It’s pronounced like someone’s sick ill but spelled il, and elle like the name Elle.

**Nick Barrette:** Literary devices. In literary devices you make a rhyme scheme so like label it a-z. Here’s a rap: take a look at my pants take a look at my shoes we are the awesomes yeah the awesomes take a look at my style you might take a while were the awesomes yeah the awesomes I know how to rhyme I just take my time I’m awesome yeah I’m awesome that’s the song and then you find the rhyme scheme.

## Lesson of the week, 4<sup>th</sup> grade

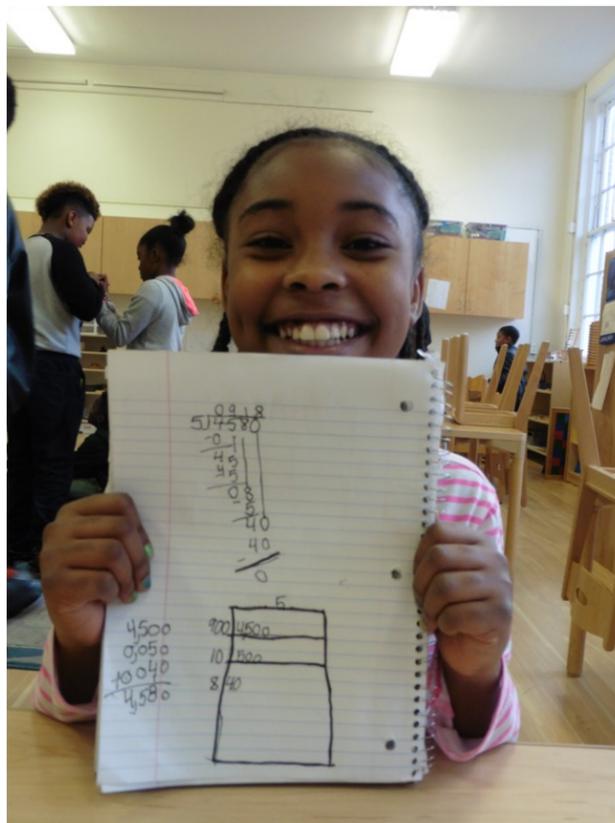
**Kayin Gunthrope:** The pegboard. On the pegboard you make factors.



Fabrel Yahya-Moore overlooking Kayin’s work with factors on the pegboard

—Photo by Archer Briscoe

**Scholar Blango:** Division. Here’s an example of another way that you can do division in standard algorithm or use an area model. Division is breaking groups into smaller groups.



Scholar’s pearly whites after finishing her division and checking it with an area model

—Photo by Archer Briscoe

These interviews and typed newsletter content were brought to you by Archer Briscoe and Wyndham Mills



Archer/Wyndham selfie

## Exciting Events

### OPEN HOUSE AT CAPITOL HILL MONTESSORI AT LOGAN

Adults come on down and join other prospective parents at the Open House on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from 6:00-7:30pm. Enroll your child at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan, the best school in Capitol Hill! Come learn more information about this Montessori school or go to the school website [www.capitolhillmontessorischool.org/enrollment/](http://www.capitolhillmontessorischool.org/enrollment/).

—Brought to you by Ms. Echo’s journalism team



### FAMILY FITNESS NIGHT

Capitol Hill Montessori @ Logan will be hosting a “Family Fitness Night,” currently scheduled for February 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:00–7:30pm. We would enjoy it if you came! Your family can do yoga and other sporty or working out activities you can imagine. Get your family in ship-shape and have your family looking the best on the block! Get pumped up or stretch those muscles! From yoga to volleyball, obstacle courses and toning!

—Brought to you by Ms. Echo’s journalism team

## Montessori Child @ Home

Saturday, January 16, 1:00pm

20<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Extravaganza with Sistah Joy and Collective Voices  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, 901 G St NW

Free.

Please join us as we honor the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Extravaganza with Sistah Joy and Collective Voices. This is a family-friendly event that features live poetry, drumming, dancing, youth performances, and much much more!

<http://dclibrary.org/node/50922>

January 16—February 28, Saturdays 11am-4pm and Sundays 12pm-5pm

Family Fun: Room for Children—Library and Arts Studio

Embassy of Sweden, 2900 K St NW

Free.

Room for Children is a Swedish library and arts studio for the young designed to stimulate their desire for books, music, storytelling and self-expression. A child’s perspective is applied throughout, from the greeting to the interior design and the way books are placed and displayed.

Adults and children are encouraged to engage in things together in order to share the experience. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a cornerstone of the work here; it refers to the right of children to participate fully in cultural life, to express themselves freely and to do so together with others.

Room for Children pushes the boundaries of what a library can be. This is the first ever international mini version of a Room for Children outside of Sweden.

<http://www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/Washington/Current-affairs/Events/FAMILY-Room-for-Children-sys>

## THANK YOU

The PTSO Board would like to thank families who have supported our school through the PTSO. Many of you have generously committed your time as a volunteer and made financial donations to the PTSO. Both of these contributions make great things possible for our school. Here are just some of the events and items that the PTSO has supported already this year thanks to your time and contributions:

- Haunted Harvest Festival
- Family Yoga and Dinner Night
- Parent and Staff Night Outs
- Wellness Wednesdays
- Portable kitchen carts for our health, wellness, and garden activities
- Classroom material funds
- Professional development at NAMTA conference for teachers
- Montessori University volunteer and financial support
- New books and a book/information rack for PTSO information area
- Chess club development and financial support
- PTSO meeting support and free babysitting
- Open House materials and food
- Drop off and parking signage
- Door alarm addition to entry/exit doors
- Garden work for first graders

Keep a look out for some exciting events coming up in 2016, including Family Fitness Night, the CHM Online Auction, International Day, and Field Day.

And, if you still haven't had the chance to donate, you can at: [www.capitolhillmontessorischool.org](http://www.capitolhillmontessorischool.org).

Hope you had Happy Holidays and a safe and fun winter break!

## MR. TAYLOR

Mr. Taylor, as a master gardener, has been facilitating the first graders' activities in their garden specials. The students have been focusing on exploring the garden, learning basic garden skills, identifying parts of plants, understanding what part of plants we eat, understanding what is living in our garden, and recognizing how different insects impact vegetation and may lead to the plant's death. The students have also eaten healthy snacks and focused on the vanishing bees. We anticipate that Mr. Taylor will continue this work next year.

January 2016



Happy New Year! Now is a great time to bring in all of the Box Tops that you've collected over the winter break. Have your kids fill in your latest Box Tops collection sheet or simply fill up a baggie with Box Tops and bring them on in! Box Tops can be turned into your child's teacher, into the Front Office or placed in the collection box at the Box Tops resource center in the main lobby of the school building. Box Tops collection sheets are sent home monthly, so be on the look out for a new sheet in February!

Thanks for supporting our school by clipping Box Tops! For more information go to: <http://www.BTFE.com>



## Spotlight on Montessori Materials



### What is that Primary Montessori Material?

It is the Sandpaper Letters!



In the Primary Montessori classroom the Sandpaper Letters are the child's first introduction to what the sounds he produces when he speaks actually look like. They are lowercase, cursive letters cut out of sandpaper and mounted on wooden tablets, with the vowels mounted on one color, generally blue, and the consonants mounted on another color, generally red or pink. To prepare the child for the Sandpaper Letter lessons, the teacher and child will

first play the Sound Game, also called "I Spy", to help him become aware of the sounds used in spoken language. The Sound Game uses several small objects at one time (e.g. a dog, a nest, a key) to initially introduce the first sound of each object, then to highlight the last sound of each object, later to identify other sounds in each object, and finally to put the sounds in order. The work with the Sandpaper Letters can begin when the child is comfortable with identifying the first sound of the objects in the Sound Game.

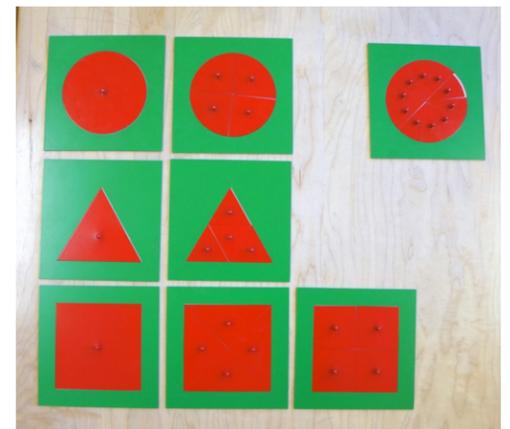
The teacher will choose three Sandpaper Letters that look and sound different, for example, e, m, and t, to introduce to the child as they sit together at a table. If the child's first name begins with a phonetic sound like \s\ as in Sam, the teacher will include that sound in the initial lesson. Generally, she will choose two consonants and one vowel and include letters that the child will connect with, such as \m\ for mom. First she will trace a letter and say its sound. She will repeat this several times and then will recite a list of words that begin with that sound (e.g. mom, milk, mouse, mountain, man, mat, meadow). She will trace the letter and say the sound it makes several more times and then invite the child to trace and say the sound. After repeating this process with the other two letters, she will begin the Three Period Lesson with the child. During the First Period she will trace each letter and say its sound. During the Second Period she will ask the child to point to, trace, and place the letters according to the sound she makes. During the Third Period she will ask the child to trace each letter and say the sound it makes. On succeeding days, the teacher will present three new letters at a time while also reviewing letters already presented. Sometimes she will choose two new sounds and include a known one. The purposes of the Sandpaper Letters are to give the child the symbols for the sounds of his own language by means of three senses (tactile, auditory, and visual), to directly prepare the hand for writing, and to stimulate further exploration of the child's own language.

Some important things to consider regarding the Sandpaper Letters: Italian is a phonetic language, so Maria Montessori didn't have the same challenges when presenting the Sandpaper Letters because each letter had only one sound. English is more complicated with some letters making more than one sound, such as the letter c making the sound \c\ as in cat and \s\ as in celebrate, so initially we present only one sound per letter to the child. In this case, the letter c makes the sound \c\ as in cat and the letter s makes the sound \s\ as in sun. The vowels are presented with their short sounds: \a\ as in apple, \e\ as in elephant, \i\ as in insect, \o\ as in octopus, and \u\ as in umbrella. The names of the letters aren't presented at this point because it tends to confuse the child. If we want the child to learn \m\ for mom, but they know it by the name of the letter m, they think the sound is \em\, which is really two sounds: \e\ and \m\, because those are the sounds they say to name the letter. The letter names c - a - t will never sound like cat, but if a child has learned \c\ - \a\ - \t\, the child will be able to hear the sounds in the word when they begin to write and eventually read. In addition to the 26 sandpaper letters in the phonetic alphabet, there are also 16 double Sandpaper Letters, or phonograms, mounted on green wooden tablets that show one way to make a new sound when two letters are put together, for example \c\ as in cat and \h\ as in horse, when combined form \ch\ as in chocolate. Learning the phonetic sounds of the letters prepares the child to build words with the Moveable Alphabet. Tracing the Sandpaper Letters prepares the hand to know how to move to form those letters when the child wants to write, first on a chalkboard and later on paper. The teacher and children enjoy the process of tracing the cursive sandpaper letters, saying the sounds that the letters make, and thinking of words that begin with those sounds.

### What is that Elementary Montessori Material?

It is the Fraction Insets!

Fraction insets are used to teach many lessons. Here is an example of parts of a whole and equivalence. Pictured here are a row of wholes, next to a row of fourths. To the right is a circle split into tenths.



# Student Writing from the Adolescent Program With Ms. Kim

## King & Obama

—Terrell Chavis, 8<sup>th</sup> grade

Many African-American men grow up being followed in establishments. Imagine if you were just minding your business and you walk into a store about to buy something that you want and randomly someone starts following you and kind of rushing you to hurry up and buy something or get out of the store. It's uncomfortable. I have been there before growing up as a young African-American male. I went into a store to get a drink and the clerk came from the register to see if I wouldn't steal anything so I just left because I didn't want to cause any trouble I just wanted a drink. In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a speech about how far African Americans are from actually living in the American Dream. Fifty years later, our president, Barack Obama, basically says the same thing—African Americans are being hindered from achieving the American Dream. In both President Obama's Speech on the murder of Trayvon Martin, and Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech they both share common views, which are illustrated by their rhetorical devices, figurative language, and historical facts.

King and Obama both used repetitive sentences to get their point across. King starts off by saying, "100 years later" and continues to say this quite a few times, before he gets into statistics and historical facts. Likewise, Obama uses the phrase "There very few African American men" a number of times before he starts talking about facts. Obama also uses the sentence "the African American community is naive" twice to make sure that in his speech everyone is following along and he gets his point across.

Obama and King both use figurative language in their speeches. For instance, Obama uses the phrase, "a lot of African American boys are painted with a broad brush" he says. To emphasize the fact that there are "these statistics" indicating that our boys are "more violent." King says, "the Negro is still sadly crippled" meaning the conditions of the African American community have not moved anywhere within the country—just like a crippled person who can barely move without his walker cane or wheelchair. Both King and Obama used forms of figurative language showing how similar they are.

Lastly, in both President Obama's Speech on the murder of Trayvon Martin, and Dr. King's, "I Have a Dream Speech", both share the same common views, seen by their use of historical points. In President Obama's Speech on the murder of Trayvon Martin, he states: "They understand that some of the violence . . . those communities can be traced to a very difficult history." King states, "But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free." These two quotes show how the history of the African American community continues to experience racism and discrimination in the country.

People of African descent in America have a troubled history. In my essay, I discussed the similarities between Dr. King's, "I Have a Dream Speech and Obama's speech on Trayvon Martin and Race in America. They both used rhetorical devices, figurative language, and historical facts.



## Angela's Ashes

—Morgan White, 7<sup>th</sup> grade

In the excerpt from "Angela's Ashes" by Frank McCourt, the narrator depicts his first Communion day. The day takes place in Limerick, Ireland which is very rainy, dreary, and is drowned with poverty. The Catholic Church is a very important part of the community and is "our refuge, our strength, our only dry place." In this excerpt, we see many perspectives of the characters. Through Frank's eyes the reader witnesses the interpretation of the mother, the grandmother, and Frank's on his first Communion day and how these multiple viewpoints creates humor for the reader.

On his first Communion day, Frank anticipates the "happiest day of his life", but instead he gets one of the two things that he wants to do. After he has his first Communion, he doesn't do what he expected. His original plan is to make his first Communion collection, which is something that Catholic people do on their first communion in which they collect money from others. Rather than that, his grandmother tells him that he can not make his collection until he has his "proper first Communion breakfast." After eating, he throws up, which makes his grandmother lose her mind. She is a very religious person and she believes "he threw up God in my backyard..."

On the other hand, the grandmother has almost the total opposite point of view. She believes that everything that is logical and radical she does. She decides to take Frank to the confession box and tell the priest what he has done wrong and how she should deal with the vomit in her backyard. When Frank comes out of the confession box, he tells his grandmother that the priest says, "Wash it away with water." She tells Frank to go back again a few minutes after his first visit to ask if she should "Wash it away with ordinary water or holy water?" The second time that Frank comes back, he is told to tell his grandmother that the priest said, "Stop bothering me." She is appalled and caught off guard that the priest would say such a thing and she reacts by calling him a "bloody ignorant bogtrotter."

The mother's outlook is in the middle of Frank's perspective and the grandmother's perspective. One event that supports this is when Frank wants to go see James Cagney at the movie theatre, but the grandmother doesn't feel that it is necessary for him to see the movie the way he "left God on the ground." Frank's mother replied, "That's my son. That's my son on his first Communion day. He's going to see James Cagney." After that, she takes Frank to the movie theatre knowing that he didn't make the collection and she doesn't have money. So she decides to sneak him in with a boy named Mike's help.

In conclusion, this excerpt talks about the perspectives of different people and how different viewpoints can help another person's perspective. Without the other perspectives, Frank's point of view is ordinary, but instead, McCourt creates a scenario in which the reader does not know what will happen next. Even though a lot of terrible and sad things happen in the story, the way the narrative plays out leaves the reader amused. The humor blocks out a lot of despair.

## Angela's Ashes

—Trevor Scofield, 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt is a memoir about his childhood in Limerick, Ireland. The setting of the narrative is Frank's first communion day. Frank grew up in poverty and in a town that was a strong Catholic community. As a result, the first communion day is very significant. On this day, we see Grandma's, Frank's, and Frank's mom's perspectives on the events that unfold. Here we are going to see the perspective of one another clashing.

Frank's perspective begins with excitement because of the Collection after communion. The Collection is the time after the communion ceremony when you can receive money from family and friends. Frank is happy not only about the thought of making the Collection, but seeing his favorite actor, James Cagney, at the Lyric Cinema. Although the religious part of the communion doesn't really matter to Frank, it is still an important day for him because this is the day in which he becomes an adult. In fact, after the communion, Frank's mom and Grandma hug him and cry so much that his "head is a swamp".

The perspective of Frank's Grandma is that she wants Frank to become a proper Catholic. After, he eats the first communion breakfast, he throws up the breakfast along with the wafer and the wine. She is enraged because Frank throws up the body and the blood of Christ: "God is in my backyard!" When Grandma becomes enraged; she is so mad that she drags Frank all the way to the confessional. Grandma is annoyed when Frank comes out and indicates that the priest instructs her to wash god away with water. She tells him to go back in and ask the priest, "Holy water or normal water." She is also annoyed when Frank goes to see James Cagney as opposed to being religious on the day of his communion.

The perspective of Frank's mom is that she is proud of Frank for becoming a member of the Catholic Church. When Frank comes out of the confessional and tells Grandma what needs to happen, she defends Frank because Grandma tries to prevent him from seeing James Cagney: "He's my son. No we are going to see James Cagney."

In conclusion, this excerpt from Angela's Ashes describes the perspectives of everyone clashing together and making humor for the reader. Each of the perspectives is seen through Frank's eyes. This makes it a memorable story.

ok: B Eatman



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