

“Oh what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we practice to deceive!”

Sir Walter Scott

Power, Love, and Deception in Ancient Rome

By: Barbara Welch

In our studies of ancient civilizations, the fifth and sixth grade students became acquainted with powerful historical figures. In the study of ancient Rome, our students “met” Cleopatra, Marc Antony, Julius Caesar, as well as Octavian (also known as Augustus), to name just a few. To learn more about these historical figures and their contributions, we began our research at UHI’s library and then visited the Osterhout Free Library to gather more sources.

From these materials, our students proceeded to learn more information about these people than our textbooks provided. For example, they learned that Caesar emerged as a dictator – loved by the common folk but feared by the ruling Senate. After Caesar’s assassination, there was a struggle for power among the triumvirate which included Octavian (Caesar’s great-nephew), Marc Antony, and Lepidus, who was eventually removed from power.

They discovered that Cleopatra formed alliances with Caesar first and then with Marc Antony so she could remain in power as the queen of Egypt even though Egypt was under Roman rule. The students also learned that when Octavian and Antony went to war in a struggle for power, Cleopatra sent a false report of her suicide so that Octavian would abandon his pursuit of Egypt. In his grief, her husband, Marc Antony, stabbed himself; and on his deathbed, he realized that Cleopatra was really alive. As it turned out, Cleopatra, after trying unsuccessfully to make peace with Octavian, did take her own life by placing an asp on her body.

Through research and the writing that accompanies this research, our students go beyond what our texts have to offer as they explore the historical figures’ motivations and examine the rich history of the ancient civilizations.



## BROCHOS, BROCHOS

By Geveret Pernikoff

Learning Brochos has always been an adventure in our class. In our old school, we had the grocery store right down the road from us. We would walk across the driveway into the store, buy the fruit, cookies, veggies, drinks, etc., walk back to our school, make our brochot, eat the food and smile. Now we need booster seats, we need a driver, and we need good weather. We also miss our kitchen, our refrigerator, our oven, and so much more. But, we try our best with what we have. We made challa for Hamotzi week anyway. We borrowed booster seats and drove my car to Aldi’s where we bought kosher cookies for Mezonot week. We took kosher grape juice home for Hagofen week to make “kiddish” on Shabbos. Yes, for Ha’etz week, we will again buy fruits and make brochot and enjoy. We will learn Brochot anyway we can, even if it takes a little more effort!



## Music Class

By Maureen Salley

Music is starting off the New Year building on the triumphs of the past. We are doing a short piece called “The Train” by an anonymous African composer in four parts. The children had a taste of how much fun part singing can be from their Thanksgiving song “Mashed Potatos”.

This Chanukah, I was pleased to feature the students singing the holiday songs that Mrs. Kaplan shared with me when I first came to UHI. One song told the tale of the brothers Macabee while two others used instruments and dance to tell of holiday joy for the gelt, menorah and latkes. Later in the afternoon we went through other Chanukah songs in class that may make next year’s performance. There is a two part version to Rock of Ages that I hope will entertain luncheon goers next year.