

*Dear Family,*

**In my class today** we learned about paleontologists.

**Did You Know?**

- Paleontologists are people who use fossils to learn about past life forms. Fossils are the remains of life forms that lived long ago and that have over millions of years, been turned to stone. Both paleontologists and archeologists explore sites to learn about past history, but paleontologists are different from archeologists. Archeologists explore artifacts to learn about the history of other cultures and life styles while paleontologists explore fossils to learn about the history of life forms. Both archeologists and paleontologists study their findings and preserve them so other people can learn from them. During an excavation paleontologists use special tools to carefully remove fossils from their surroundings. They may use shovels, trowels, paintbrushes, or dental picks. Once a fossil is collected, the paleontologist will carefully study the item and then preserve it.
- Dinosaurs were reptiles that lived through three periods of Earth's geologic history: Triassic (248–208 million years ago), Jurassic (208–146 million years ago), and Cretaceous (146–65 million years ago). Different species of dinosaurs flourished and then became extinct throughout these three periods. Dinosaurs roamed the Earth for more than 180 million years, and then they became extinct. Over 300 species of dinosaurs have been found. Dinosaur remains have been found on every continent, including Antarctica. All dinosaurs were reptiles, but not all reptiles were dinosaurs. Even though the name “dinosaur” means “terrible lizard,” dinosaurs were not lizards at all. They lived on land, and did not fly in the air or live in the water. All dinosaurs had four limbs. Some walked on all four limbs, others just walked on their two back legs. Dinosaurs had scaly skin and laid eggs.

**Ask Your Child:**

- What kind of community helper did you learn about today?
- What does a paleontologist do?
- What kind of egg did you make today?
- How did you make the egg? What ingredients did you use?
- What did you put inside of the egg that you made?

**Activities To Do With Your Child:**

- Go for an excavation in your yard or on a playground. Bring some gardening tools, sand toys, or some large spoons from the kitchen. Dig slowly and carefully. Examine what you find. Did you find rocks, seeds, pieces of broken items? What kind of information can you learn from what you found? Have your child draw a picture of what he or she found. Write some of your observations on the back of the picture. Let your child bring the picture to school to share with the class.

**Vocabulary To Use With Your Child:** mold, paleontologist, fossil, dig, egg, excavate