

Teacher Feature

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5th grade teacher

St. Michael School, Prior Lake, MN



Where and what level do you currently teach and why did you choose to become an educator?

I currently teach 5th grade at St. Michael in Prior Lake. I chose to become an educator because I have a strong background working with children in an in-home childcare setting. I've been helping kids through tutoring, volunteering, and being a substitute childcare provider since I was in my early teens! Becoming a teacher was a very natural next step for me as I chose my professional career.



How has agriculture and the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Program and resources impacted your students and instruction?

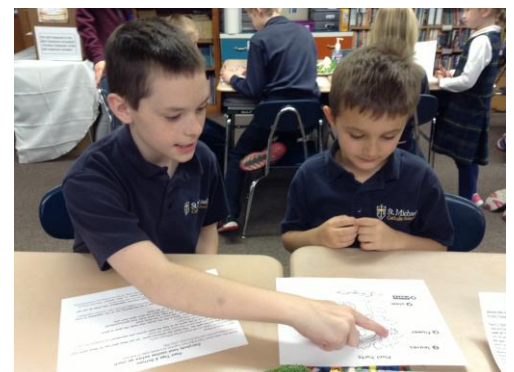
MN Ag in the classroom has impacted my students because I've been able to put them in the driver's seat for their learning. My 5th graders pair up with Kindergarten buddies, meeting several times a year. We've been able to take several Kindergarten Ag lessons and adapt them to be taught by my 5th graders. It gives them the chance to be the teachers, which they really enjoy doing! It has also been a great resource to help increase awareness of the high impact that agriculture has on our community in ways that they would have never considered prior to reading the [AgMag](#) or doing the lessons.

Describe any agriculture-based projects you have been involved in lately.

This past week, we paired up with our Kindergarten buddies and taught the "[Plant Tops and Bottoms](#)" lesson. We watched a video of the story *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens, and then worked on identifying the parts of a plant-from the roots to the fruit that they produce. My students were the teachers & even had scripts to follow! At the end of the activity, the 5th graders and their Kindergarten buddies were able to enjoy a healthy snack of vegetables together that they had just learned about. It was a really fun activity!

What advice do you have for other teachers on implementing agriculture into their classroom?

My advice to other teachers is to not be afraid to try it out! I thought at first it would be an overwhelming and intimidating feat to incorporate agriculture within my curriculum, but so many lessons fit in and are already done for me that all I have to do is practice them! It has been incredibly easy to implement and use. My students also like it because it is a different style of lesson than I usually teach, so it adds excitement to the different curriculum areas as well as connections to the real world that they had never considered before.



Why do you believe it is important for our students to be agriculturally literate and aware in today's society?

It is essential for students to be agriculturally literate in today's society because far too many students have no idea what kind of work goes into the food they are buying at the grocery store. Many have no clue how long it takes or the amount of time that is committed to feeding our nation thanks to the many dedicated farmers. If you don't know, you can't appreciate it!

