# LETTER HOME

Exploring Fractions

Dear Family Member:

The activities in this unit will help your child better understand fractions. Your child will explore the concept of a whole. Understanding the size of the whole is important to understanding the fractional parts of that whole. For example, a half gallon of milk is larger than a half cup of milk because a whole gallon is larger than a whole cup. On the other hand, it is also necessary to understand that the parts of one whole must be equal—one half must be the same size as the other half.

A third important idea is shown in the picture. The fewer pieces the pie is divided into, the larger each piece will be. Your child will use concrete models to name fractions, compare the size of fractions, and find equivalent fractions.

You can help your child learn about fractions with the following activities:

Look for Fractions. Point out places where fractions are used outside of school. Examples include preparing a recipe, measuring wood for a project, purchasing fabric, or in sales advertisements.
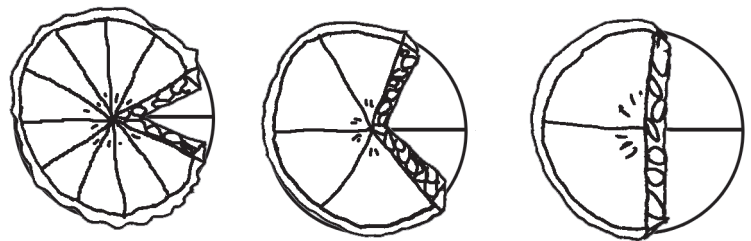
Pies divided into twelfths, sixths, and fourths.

Play Fraction Fill 1 or 2. The object of each game is to be the first team to earn 6 points by filling 6 unit wholes with fraction pieces. Directions, game boards, and spinners are in the *Student Activity Book* in Lesson 7.

Play Fraction Order. In this game, each player has a game board with six boxes. Players take turns drawing fractions from a deck of fraction cards and then placing the fraction in a box on the game board. Once a fraction is placed it cannot be moved. The goal is to be the first player to fill the game with fraction cards in order from smallest to largest. Directions, game boards, and fraction cards are in the *Student Activity Book* in Lesson 9.

$$\frac{5}{12}$$

| $\frac{1}{8}$ | | $\frac{5}{10}$ | | $\frac{9}{12}$ | |

Smallest   Largest

Math Facts and Mental Math

This unit continues the systematic review and assessment of the division facts.

Division Facts. Students review the division facts for the 9s to maintain and increase fluency and to learn to apply division strategies to larger numbers.

You can help your child review these facts using the flash cards that are sent home or by making a set of flash cards from index cards or scrap paper. Study facts in small groups each night. As your child goes through the flash cards, put the cards in three stacks: Facts I Know Quickly, Facts I Can Figure Out, and Facts I Need to Learn.

For Facts I Need to Learn, work on strategies for figuring them out. Good strategies include:

Start with the multiplication fact. If your child does not know the multiplication fact related to the division fact, start by developing strategies to solve that multiplication fact.

Reasoning from known facts. To solve $36 \div 9$, think $9 \times ? = 36$. $9 \times 4 = 36$ so $36 \div 9 = 4$.

Turn-around facts. To solve $45 \div 9$: I know $9 \times 5 = 45$. So $45 \div 9 = 5$.

For Facts I Can Figure Out, use the flash cards to practice the facts for fluency.

For Facts I Know Quickly, help your child use mental math strategies to divide 10s and 100s: $3200 \div 40 = 8$; $56{,}000 \div 8 = 7000$; $420 \div 6 = 70$.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with your child about what he or she is doing in math.

Sincerely,