



# School-Home Connection

Our class is reading the section “Catching the Fire: Philip Simmons, Blacksmith” by Mary E. Lyons. The selection is an excerpt from a biography of Philip Simmons, a blacksmith from Charleston, South Carolina. Simmons was invited to participate in the 1976 Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C. At the festival, Simmons created an iron-work gate called the Star and Fish Gate. Later he received the Heritage Fellowship, and then the Smithsonian Institution bought his gate. You might want to discuss the selection with your child and work on the activities listed below. These activities provide you with the opportunity to explore and develop your child’s language skills.

## VOCABULARY

### Classify Vocabulary

Your child has learned the following words as new vocabulary while reading “Catching the Fire.”

ornamental	install
portable	forge
rugged	tributes

Discuss the words with your child. You might want to use the following as a springboard for your discussion:

- Items in our home that would be considered *ornamental*
- Things in our home we would need to *install* in order to use
- *Portable* items in our home
- Items in our home that might have been made in a *forge*



### TIME TO READ

Encourage your child to read for at least 30 minutes outside of class each day.

### Family Field Trip

Look in the local newspaper for craft fairs in your area. As you and your child visit one, encourage him or her to ask the craftspeople questions about their work. Later, ask your child to write about the craft that seems most interesting or unusual to him or her.

### For the Future

In addition to creating ironwork art, Philip Simmons loves to train future blacksmiths. Ask your child to brainstorm crafts or trades that are taught today by master craftsmen to apprentices. Discuss why such training is necessary in those fields.

