

# St. Joseph Catholic School

## Curriculum



# **MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS**

At St. Joseph Catholic School we celebrate the uniqueness of all students. We take each student's needs into consideration every day. This begins with the belief that each child should be encouraged to work to their full potential. Various instructional methods are used to meet the strengths and challenges of all.

Beginning in the primary grades, small group instruction is emphasized, primarily in reading and math, to meet the varied needs of developing students. Each student is then able to work at his or her own instructional level. These levels include working on grade level, below grade level, and above grade level.

Students with academic and/or behavioral challenges receive accommodations or modifications in their programs.

From Fourth through Eighth Grade, math classes are divided into regular pace and faster paced groups. English classes are divided in this same way in both Seventh and Eighth grade to allow each student to flourish at their own ability level.

The following three pages specifically reflect how each grade level (grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8) assists students with challenges and students who excel.

# Meeting the Needs of Students Grades K-2

## Ways We Accommodate Struggling Students

- ◆ Modified Instructional Process
- ◆ Modified Methods Process
- ◆ Modified Materials Process
- ◆ Modified Pacing of Lessons (Time)
- ◆ One-on-One Instruction
- ◆ Small Group Instruction
- ◆ Staff/Student Ratio
- ◆ Providing Visual Information
- ◆ Learning Styles
- ◆ Heightened Parent Communication
- ◆ Preferential Seating
- ◆ In-staff communication
- ◆ Schools Attuned Process \*
- ◆ Educate parents regarding age-appropriate expectations – academic and social (*See Accreditation Self-Study, pages 25 – 78*)

## Ways We Accommodate Accelerated Students

- ◆ High performance expectation – subject related and teacher communicated
- ◆ Extended lessons
- ◆ Open-ended assignments
- ◆ Higher questioning techniques
- ◆ Acceleration opportunities (i.e. More difficult reading assignments, supplemental in-class math worksheets, science and social studies enrichment)
- ◆ Encourage self-motivation
- ◆ Small group instruction
- ◆ Schools Attuned Process \*

\* The **Schools Attuned Process** assists teachers in identifying how each student learns. Knowing how each student learns and identifying his or her areas of strengths and challenges, teachers have the tools to adjust their instruction to meet the specific needs of every student. In using the Schools Attuned strategies, we are able to help every child be successful here at St. Joseph Catholic School. For more information about Schools Attuned, visit the parent website at [www.allkindsofminds.org](http://www.allkindsofminds.org).

At the K-2 level, teachers try to balance the academic, social and spiritual development of each student. Many parents see their child as excelling in one particular subject and believe that extends to all academic areas. Our job is to maintain academic excellence in the area of strength while fostering growth, development and interest in areas of challenge.

# Meeting the Needs of Students Grades 3-5

## Ways We Accommodate Struggling Students

- ◆ Spelling - Modified amount and/or difficulty of spelling words
- ◆ Reading - Smaller reading groups
- ◆ Reading - Individualized tutoring with aides (pull-out time in tutor room)
- ◆ Reading - One-on-one help from teacher and tutor
- ◆ Reading - Leveled readers to allow opportunity for success
- ◆ Reading - Tests read to struggling readers
- ◆ Reading - Graphic organizers give information to visual learners
- ◆ Reading - Reading circles/ reading groups assigned by ability level
- ◆ Reading - Extended work time given to finish assignments/tests
- ◆ Math - Reduced amount of problems (assigning 'Reteach' vs. 'Practice')
- ◆ Math - Lessons and work created to child's pace
- ◆ Math - Aides to work with small groups/individual students
- ◆ Math - Tools/manipulatives to increase understanding with hands-on learning
- ◆ Math - Extended work time given to finish assignments/tests
- ◆ Math - Homework assigned to reinforce schoolwork - as expectation
- ◆ Skills - Individually checked planners, individual behavior contracts
- ◆ Skills - Option of parent typing/scribing for students with graphomotor difficulty
- ◆ Schools Attuned Process \*
- ◆ Educate parents regarding age-appropriate expectations – academic and social (*See Accreditation Self-Study, pages 25 – 78*)

## Ways We Accommodate Accelerated Students

- ◆ Spelling - Modified spelling words
- ◆ Spelling - Additional challenge words
- ◆ Reading - Small leveled reading groups
- ◆ Reading - Higher leveled readers
- ◆ Reading - Reading circles/ Reading groups assigned by ability level
- ◆ Math - Increasing depth/richness of assigned problems
- ◆ Math - Assigning Challenge Worksheets in addition to Practice Worksheets
- ◆ Math - Math groups created at regular pace and advanced pace
- ◆ Math - Tools/manipulative to increase understanding
- ◆ Math - Opportunity to teach to peers - 'buddy teach'
- ◆ Math - Homework assigned to reinforce schoolwork
- ◆ Skills - Opportunity to be a peer assistant to classmates and model skills (ex. planners)
- ◆ Extra Opportunities to develop skills and ability through Power Point projects, enhanced projects, extra research projects
- ◆ Schools Attuned Process \*

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At the Grade 3-5 level, teachers try to balance the academic, social and spiritual development of each student. Many parents see their child as excelling in one particular subject and believe that extends to all academic areas. Our job is to maintain academic excellence in the area of strength while fostering growth, development and interest in areas of challenge.

# Meeting the Needs of Students in Middle School

## Ways We Accommodate Struggling Students

- ◆ Present instruction using a variety of learning styles
- ◆ Provide topics for students to write about
- ◆ Text on tape/ CD
- ◆ Provide copies of notes
- ◆ Use connections (to self, text, world)
- ◆ Choose individual reading material
- ◆ Provide individual, small-group, whole-group reading experiences
- ◆ Use audio recordings
- ◆ Limit essay responses
- ◆ Extended time for assignment and/or test completion
- ◆ Accept word-processed assignments
- ◆ Provide writing prompts
- ◆ Assign topics
- ◆ Provide examples and models of finished products
- ◆ Use hands-on approach
- ◆ Daily assignment sheet
- ◆ Daily use of planner
- ◆ Teach planning and pacing
- ◆ Individual contracts
- ◆ Vary instructional methods
- ◆ Proctor test for student
- ◆ Modify grading criteria/weight
- ◆ Provide opportunities for heightened parent communication
- ◆ Teachers meet with public schools to arrange testing
- ◆ Teachers meet with high schools to understand future student expectations
- ◆ Schools Attuned Process \*
- ◆ Educate parents regarding age-appropriate expectations – academic and social (*See Accreditation Self-Study, pages 25 – 78*)

## Ways We Accommodate Accelerated Students

- ◆ High performance expectation
- ◆ Extended lessons
- ◆ Open-ended assignments
- ◆ Provide choice in activities and projects
- ◆ Higher order questioning techniques
- ◆ Encourage self-motivation
- ◆ Initiate complex ideas
- ◆ Provide advanced directions
- ◆ Expand upon knowledge base
- ◆ Encourage connection between subjects
- ◆ Small group instruction
- ◆ Promote leadership
- ◆ Provide opportunities for heightened parent communication
- ◆ Teachers meet with public schools to arrange testing
- ◆ Teachers meet with high schools to understand future student expectations
- ◆ Schools Attuned Process \*

\* The **Schools Attuned Process** assists teachers in identifying how each student learns. Knowing how each student learns and identifying his or her areas of strengths and challenges, teachers have the tools to adjust their instruction to meet the specific needs of every student. In using the Schools Attuned strategies, we are able to help every child be successful here at St. Joseph Catholic School. For more information about Schools Attuned, visit the parent website at [www.allkindsofminds.org](http://www.allkindsofminds.org).

At the Grade 6-8 level, teachers try to balance the academic, social and spiritual development of each student. Many parents see their child as excelling in one particular subject and believe that extends to all academic areas. Our job is to maintain academic excellence in the area of strength while fostering growth, development and interest in areas of challenge.

# **Kindergarten Curriculum**

**Religion:** Students participate in daily prayer, special designated school liturgies and service projects. Formal class lessons follow the themes in the adopted Religion series. The students learn about Christian values and Catholic traditions through integrated curriculum and example throughout the day.

**Math:** The Math program follows the Harcourt series. The topics and skills introduced in kindergarten are sorting and classifying, recognizing and reproducing patterns, identifying numbers through 30, writing numbers 0-9 and counting orally by ones, fives and tens to 100. The students work on beginning skills for money, telling time, measurement and calendar activities. Students are introduced to graphing, addition and subtraction.

**Language Development/Reading Readiness:** The Language and Reading programs are integrated through the use of Harcourt “*Storytown*”. The program includes:

- Phonetic awareness
- Letters of the alphabet and writing of those letters using Vertical Manuscript
- Identifying and reviewing the sounds of letters
- An introduction to early reading, blending and building
- An introduction to current children’s authors and literature.

The program reinforces these skills through oral sharing, writing activities, fine motor skills, following oral direction, and pre-reading and reading groups.

**Science:** The children are exposed to the wonders of science through hands-on activities. Scientific discovery skills are taught and supported through the Harcourt Science curriculum.

**Social Development:** The kindergarten program helps the early primary learner lay the foundation for formal education. The program assists in their social development. Daily activities help the student:

- Become independent learners
- Complete tasks in a timely manner
- Share and work cooperatively with others
- Take care of materials used
- Have concern and compassion for others
- Make the transition from parent assisted preschools or daycares
- Take accountability for choices and behaviors

Building these skills will assure a smooth transition into the next step of their formal education.

# First Grade Curriculum

**Religion:** The first grade curriculum focuses on building an understanding of God and his wonderful ways of mercy and love for us. Students practice committing to memory the prayers that are said at home: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace (before meals), and The Morning Offering. The Silver Burdett Ginn series “Blest Are We” helps us to expand our understanding of God and His Good News. Students learn about the Church community, and how all are a part of that through baptism and participation in liturgical life. Stories are read about Jesus and about the lives of the saints. Students attend weekly Mass and practice the appropriate behavior and responses for being active members of the parish.

**Reading:** Reading is integrated into as much of the day as possible! Children begin their day reading a Morning Message that has been written by the teacher where they have the opportunity to practice skills through an interactive model. The Harcourt “*Storytown*” series is used to provide an all-inclusive program of learning phonics, language arts, spelling, genre, and vocabulary. A variety of activities allow students to respond to the stories, through creative writing, artistic expression, and skill-building activities. Children are encouraged to use “kid spelling” as they acquire the knowledge of standardized spelling patterns. Weekly spelling lists and high-frequency words are taught to provide a solid foundation of reading skills.

**Math:** The first grade math program focuses on committing to memory addition and subtraction facts to 20. This emphasis provides a basis for growth in the subsequent years. The Harcourt “First Grade” Mathematical Series for Grade 1 presents a balanced approach to learning math concepts. Patterning, geometry, simple algebra, time, money, fractions, and tens and ones are also explored. The use of math manipulatives enhance the learning process.

**Social Studies:** In first grade, the students learn about their expanding world. Students explore families and move to an understanding of neighborhoods. They study map skills and the world around them. First grade uses Harcourt’s “A Child’s View” which provides support for social studies concepts. Additionally, first graders learn about the First Thanksgiving; Christmas around the World; Martin Luther King, Jr.; and presidents. Current events are discussed when appropriate to our understanding of the world.

**Science:** First grade uses the Harcourt Science series, which focuses on the three main branches of scientific study. In the Life Sciences, animals are explored by understanding their classifications and habitats. In the Earth Sciences, the focus is on rocks and fossils, as well as natural resources. Matter, forces, magnets and sound are the Physical Science topics explored. Learning is enhanced by the use of experiments, manipulatives, and the FOSS kits.

## Second Grade Curriculum

**Religion:** The second grade curriculum concentrates on preparing students for receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. The Silver Burdett Ginn series “Blest Are We” is used. The curriculum includes prayers, such as: The Sign of the Cross, Meal Blessings, The Lord’s Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Morning Offering, Act of Contrition, and Mass Responses. Through daily Scripture reading, students learn about God’s revelation and covenant, and will be able to retell Jesus’ miracles as they relate to the Eucharist in bringing new life. They also learn about the role of the Church and the liturgical seasons, the saints, how to be followers of Christ, the presence of God’s grace, and the importance of a parish community. The second grade students also participate in adoration throughout the year on Thursday afternoons.

**Reading/Language Arts:** Students use the Harcourt “*Storytown*” series program. This is an all inclusive program which incorporates language and reading skills. The program focuses on a variety of genres of literature. Children are introduced to vocabulary words both in and out of context. Phonics skills taught in class are reinforced in reading and spelling, insuring the children can not only spell the words but use them in daily writing. Students also have the opportunity to bring home their own copies of read aloud books most weeks, allowing them additional practice with phonics and oral reading skills at home. During Language Arts, students learn specific grammar rules, sentence writing strategies, parts of speech, and paragraph writing.

**Handwriting:** Students use the Zaner-Bloser handwriting book by Zaner-Bloser, Inc. Cursive writing is introduced toward the end of the year.

**Math:** The Math text used is the Horizons “Second Grade” Mathematics Series for Grade 2. Students learn new skills to enable them to work with numbers in a “hands-on” manner. Students will demonstrate basic math knowledge using various manipulatives. This program encourages students to not only get the right answer but to be able to explain HOW they got their answers. Students learn how to add and subtract double-digit numbers, with and without regrouping. They also explore geometry and measurement, money and time, data and graphing, and basic fractions. Students are also introduced to the concepts of division and multiplication.

**Social Studies:** In second grade, students learn about neighborhoods and communities. The Harcourt textbook “People We Know” for second grade is used. Students learn simple map and directional skills, graph skills, how the government works, and responsible environmental stewardship. Classroom time is also spent on the study of historical developments of events in both world and American history. Additionally, students learn to follow current events.

**Science:** The Harcourt Science Program is used in second grade. In Life Science Unit, students study how living things grow and change within their environments. The Earth Science Unit involves studying space and weather. The Physical Science Unit includes observing and measuring matter, along with exploring the changes in matter. Experiments from the Foss Hands-on Science kits supplement the program.

## Third Grade Curriculum

**Religion:** The third grade curriculum focuses on learning how to relate to our faith by seeing, celebrating, and living as Catholics. We use the Silver Burdett Ginn series, “*Blest Are We*”. This curriculum teaches the following unit themes: the Church is one; the Church is holy; the Church is Catholic; the Church is apostolic; and, the Church has a mission to the world. Students participate in daily Religion class and prayer, as well as weekly school liturgies. Focus is put on learning the Jesus Prayer, The Apostles Creed, and the Memorare, and reviewing the prayers learned in the previous grades.

**Math:** Students use the Harcourt Math series program. Students learn mathematical concepts by direct instruction, hands-on experiences, and step-by-step models that build conceptual understanding. They also practice these concepts by using problem solving skills and strategies. This curriculum teaches students to understand numbers and operations, money, time, multiplication and division concepts, facts, data graphing, probability, geometry, measurement, fractions, and decimals.

**Language Arts/Reading:** The Harcourt “*Storytown*” series program is used for third grade. The instruction presented in this program is based on recent research done in the area of language arts. Each week, students read a selection that emphasizes vocabulary development, silent or oral reading, and a response to the literature through comprehension checks and skill growth. Phonics is directly connected with reading, spelling, and writing through letter and sound relationships, and general rules in spoken language. Spelling consists of weekly units of study based on phonetic elements present in the work list. Handwriting is practiced consistently, with attention given to the cursive alphabet. Students use the “*Step Up to Writing*” program to learn narrative and expository writing. This writing is done using the “Five-Step Writing Process:” prewriting; drafting; revising; editing; and publishing.

**Social Studies:** Students use the Harcourt “*Horizons, People and Communities*” textbook, including supplemental worksheets. They study relationships with communities, citizenship, government, cultural geography, communities over time, and people working in a community. Students learn about problem solving, time lines, graphs, and maps.

**Science:** Through each of the science units, time is spent questioning, modeling, problem solving, designing and conducting investigations, and explaining. Main units of study are: plants and animals; the interaction of plants and animals; earth’s land; cycles on Earth and in space; investigating matter; and, exploring energy and forces. Students raise salmon from eggs, follow the life cycle, and eventually release them to the wild.

## Fourth Grade Curriculum

**Religion:** In fourth grade, there is an emphasis on Catholic values, building a relationship with God and being responsible stewards of His creation. The life of Mary, the saints and the Rosary are studied as deepening our love for the teachings of Christ. Students study the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, the sacraments, and prayer (focusing on the Nicene Creed and the Prayer for Peace). Students join in daily prayer, prepare liturgical celebrations, participate in school Masses, and contribute to ongoing service projects. Class materials include the “*Blest Are We*” text and the Bible.

**Math:** The math program offers students continued conceptual development and application of skills. The Harcourt textbook serves as the primary tool. By the end of fourth grade, students understand large numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers. The students also work with fractions and decimals.

**Reading:** The reading program emphasizes “reading to learn” as opposed to the earlier grades “learning to read.” Students learn to pull information from the texts they are reading, whether poetry, nonfiction, or fiction. Concentrated studies of short stories and novels help students become accomplished literature lovers. Students work to develop a vocabulary through structural analysis and key word learning. Students take a greater responsibility in their roles as proficient readers. The Harcourt “*Storytown*” series and supplements serve as the primary tools.

**Language Arts:** Students study grammar and the mechanics of good writing to help them become skilled writers. They practice capitalization, punctuation, usage rules, and the parts of speech. Opportunities to write and gain experience with various writing modes - imaginative, descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive - are given. Students use the writing process to plan, develop, and improve their writing. A spelling workbook and weekly tests help students develop their spelling skills.

**Social Studies:** The fourth grade Social Studies program concentrates on the Pacific Northwest, with a strong emphasis on the study of Washington State. Students hone map skills and general geography to assist them in their understanding of Washington. They study the history of our region, including early explorers, Native Americans, and the Oregon Trail. An in-depth unit on state facts and symbols, as well as a basic understanding of the legislative process, is culminated with a field trip to the State Capitol in Olympia.

**Science:** Students study physical science with an emphasis on matter, energy, forces, and motion. The study of life science focuses on living things and ecosystems. The use of tools and processes of scientific inquiry is taught through demonstrations and hand-on experiments. Students learn broad concepts and accompanying vocabulary while developing their critical thinking and study skills.

## Fifth Grade Curriculum

**Religion:** In fifth grade, students explore the depth of the seven sacraments and use the “*Blest Are We*” series. They participate in daily prayer and specifically learn the Joyful Mysteries and the Nicene Creed. Students study the parts of the Mass to gain a better understanding of their meanings. As students take more responsibility for their actions, they participate in the “*Steps to Respect*”, a bullying prevention program.

**Math:** Students perform the basic math operations with numbers, fractions and decimals using The Harcourt Series. In addition they are introduced to algebra, geometry, measurements, graphs, ratios, percents and problem solving. Students learn strategies to understand and solve real-world math problems. Students use Math manipulatives and work cooperatively as well as independently.

**Language Arts/Reading:** Using the “*Six Traits of Writing*” and “*Step Up to Writing*,” students continue to develop their writing skills. Students learn the parts of speech and the development of sentences and paragraphs with these writing techniques. The class continues to concentrate on the use of grammar and punctuation. Developing an appreciation for literature is a focus in fifth grade through the use of The Harcourt “*Storytown*” series. This is also taught through novel studies, literature circles and monthly book reports. Students continue to develop reading comprehension skills through literature and strengthen vocabulary throughout the Harcourt Program. Critical and analytical thinking are used to analyze an author’s use of language and perspective.

**Social Studies:** Using Harcourt “*Horizon*”, the social studies program focuses on exploration and colonization of the United States. Students work on map skills, states and capitals, and learn to develop graphs and tables. In addition, students focus on note-taking skills and examining cause and effect of events from our past.

**Science:** Students learn and use the Scientific Method of Investigation through our Harcourt Science Series. They explore and gain knowledge about living systems, processes that change the earth, the solar system, building blocks of matter, energy and motion. Investigation and experiments are used to give students hands-on experience in science. “*United Streaming*” multi-media is used to enhance student learning and note taking skills.

## Sixth Grade Curriculum

**Religion:** Sixth grade is a year when students take a more active role in their faith. They are taught about the Old Testament, Exodus, Creation, the prophets, the New Testament, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. Students spend time studying the Bible. An understanding of Liturgical seasons, saints, and the Holy Spirit are taught. Students join in daily prayer and examine living their faith by attitudes. Sixth graders must meet community service hour requirements. In addition, students spend time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday and participate in school Masses.

**Math:** The Math program emphasizes an understanding and application of Math concepts. Opportunities for reading, writing and speaking mathematically are provided. Areas of study include whole number operations, measurement, geometric sense, problem solving, mathematical reasoning, exponents, patterns & variable integers, probability, and properties of real numbers. Students experience application for math in real-life situations.

**Literature:** The need for working on comprehension and critical thinking skills continues to be important in sixth grade. The appreciation of literature grows as students complete a novel project once per trimester. A variety of genres are studied including short stories, folk tales, myths, poetry, non-fiction, and drama. Students learn to investigate literary terms and techniques. Students participate in independent, small group, and whole group literary activities.

**English:** The English program explores the writing process and different purposes for writing. Paragraph structure is emphasized in composition as well as specific instruction on grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sixth graders continue to improve building vocabulary skills. The program supports students as they develop community, study skills and organizational skills.

**Social Studies:** Discovering ancient civilizations and their people is the focus in sixth grade. Students research major themes such as economics, geography, politics, religion, society and culture, and science and technology. The skills of extracting and organizing important ideas from informational text are reinforced and practiced. Students learn to research, classify and report information through a variety of hands on experiences.

**Science:** In sixth grade, students explore the scientific process skills and apply their skills using the scientific method to create an experiment for a science fair. This year is focused on Earth Science, including ecosystems, earth history, physical systems, structures and processes, as well as space. Note-taking skills and project based activities are emphasized. The highlight of sixth grade science is spending a week at Outdoor School.

## Seventh Grade Curriculum

**Religion:** In seventh grade, time is spent exploring the Gospels and on understanding the person and teachings of Jesus. Students continue to deepen their understanding of the sacraments and prayers. Time is provided for self reflection on choices made, responsibilities taken and services provided to others. School masses, Eucharistic Adoration and Stations of the Cross help bring the students closer to Jesus.

**Math:** The seventh and eighth grade Math program concentrates on attaining a solid mathematical foundation that will prepare students for the transition into high school. Emphasis is placed on understanding and applying math concepts, and reading, writing and speaking mathematically. Areas of study include equations and inequalities, ratios, proportions, percents, geometry, algebraic problem solving, data analysis and application to real-life situations.

**English:** The seventh grade English program is designed to provide students with a solid foundation so that they can be successful in any high school they choose to attend. All of the following are emphasized throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades: knowledge and application of conventions, vocabulary building, expository and creative writing, essays, and research papers. In seventh grade, an emphasis is placed on public speaking and speech writing.

**Literature:** Seventh grade literature is an in-depth study of novel books. During the course of the year, we study many novels through Literature Circle Discussions, independent reading, read aloud, and whole class book discussions. We also spend time focusing on comprehension of the material, fluency of language, and reaction to the selections in a variety of ways. A portion of the class is placed on using the class's knowledge of the parts of a novel to construct a children's book. Poetry writing and analysis is also discussed.

**Social Studies - Geography:** The course covers the geography of the world through the five geographical themes of Location, Place, Human/Environment Interaction, Movement and Region. Emphasized is placed upon: using and constructing maps, charts and other resources; recognizing special patterns on the Earth's surface and understanding the processes that create these patterns; describing the natural characteristics of places and regions and explaining the causes of their characteristics; describing the effects humans have on places and regions; and identifying characteristics that define the Pacific Northwest and the Pacific Rim as regions. Students will learn to identify and examine people's interactions with and impact on the environment, analyze how the environment affects people and examine cultural characteristics, diffusion and interaction. Extensive use of all types of maps is stressed. Course work consists of lectures, discussions, investigation, research, presentations, case studies and debates.

**Science:** In seventh and eighth grade science, students learn the basic scientific principles such as the scientific method, questioning, explaining and communicating using technical vocabulary, problem solving and hands-on work. Students apply these basic principles through their study of life science, physical science and earth sciences. The seventh grade year focuses on Life and Earth Science. The students explore the cell, then build on the basic structure of life to discover the plant and animal worlds. The students also participate in an extensive earth/space unit which culminates in a simulated trip to the moon through NASA.

## **Eighth Grade Curriculum**

**Religion:** The course covers Learning About Our Faith through examination of Church history, theology, morality and social teaching; Living our Faith by reflecting on the sacraments and their role in our Christian attitudes; and Prayer Life through reviewing and learning many of the fundamental prayers of Catholicism. Students will be taught through lectures, discussions, investigation, research, presentations, analyzing current public policy and examining their own prayer life.

**Math:** The seventh and eighth grade Math program focuses on the students attaining a solid mathematical foundation that will prepare them for the transition into high school. Emphasis is placed on understanding and applying math concepts, and reading, writing and speaking mathematically. Areas of study include equations and inequalities, ratios, proportions, percents, geometry, algebraic problem solving, data analysis and application to real-life situations.

**English:** The eighth grade English program is designed to provide students with a solid foundation so that they can be successful in any high school they choose to attend. All of the following are emphasized throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades: knowledge and application of conventions, vocabulary building, expository and creative writing, essays, and research papers. In eighth grade, an emphasis is placed on critique writing and technical writing.

**Literature:** The eighth grade literature program integrates comprehension, vocabulary, and the understanding of literary terms with the reading of novels, poetry, and short stories. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate text both orally and through written responses as they refine their understanding of the author's craft. Classes are dominated by discussions and the free exchange of ideas.

**Social Studies - U.S. History:** The course covers the history of the United States from the emergence of modern America to contemporary times. Emphasis is placed upon: understanding historical time, events and causation; analyzing the historical development of events, people, places and patterns of life in the U.S., World, and WA State History; examining the influence of culture on U.S. history. Students will learn to analyze historical information and synthesize and reflect on findings. Course work consists of lectures, debates, discussions, presentations, extensive homework, writing essays, viewing of movies and videos, investigation, research and writing. Geographical understanding is important, as is use of maps and timelines.

**Science:** In seventh and eighth grade science, students learn the basic scientific principles such as: the scientific method, questioning, explaining and communicating, using technical vocabulary, problem solving and hands-on work. Students apply these basic principles through their study of life science, physical science and earth sciences. The eighth grade year focuses on Physical Science, discovering the physical world around them. They study a wide range of topics, including energy and motion, electricity and magnetism, waves, properties of matter, and chemical interactions. The focus in eighth grade is to be able to explain, in scientific and lay terminology, what we learn.

## Integrated Programs

**Physical Education:** Physical Education is a vital part of the education process. Primarily through movement experiences, physical education gives attention to all three learning domains: psychomotor, cognitive and affective. In the primary grades, emphasis is on motor development and activities that develop fitness, strength, coordination and agility. Intermediate grades continue to build on those skills with the addition of specific sport skills, fitness and team games. In the upper grades, emphasis is on lifetime fitness activities, and group cooperative games and activities. All students learn about how exercise and healthy habits positively affect their bodies through a curriculum of developmentally appropriate health topics. The life skills of cooperation, creativity, good sportsmanship and compassion are fostered in Physical Education class.

**Computer Lab:** The Computer Lab provides two periods per week for Kindergarten through sixth grade classes. Curriculum is designed to equip students with touch typing skills and knowledge to utilize standard Microsoft Office Programs, including Word, PowerPoint, Publisher and Excel. These skills are introduced in Kindergarten and built upon through sixth grade. Students in seventh and eighth grade utilize the Computer Lab to maintain and enhance their skills in typing and Office applications. The Lab is particularly important in ensuring that the students have the necessary technology skills for high school and beyond.

The Computer Lab works in conjunction with classroom teachers to enhance students' academic studies with the use of technology. This is achieved through Internet research, PowerPoint presentations, preparation of reports, touch typing lessons, and other educational exercises.

Thanks to the generous donors at previous St. Joseph School Auctions, the Computer Lab consists of 28 Pentium 4 computers with 17" LCD monitors. This accommodates an entire class at one time. In addition, student workstations are available in middle school classrooms. All computers in the school are networked and have internet connectivity. The Computer Lab has a full time instructor, who also assists students and faculty with any technical needs.

**Art:** Students in all grades at St. Joseph Catholic School are exposed to a wide variety of mediums. Students work with watercolor, tempera paint, oil pastel, egg tempera, charcoal, crayon, pencil and pen. They learn the fundamentals of art and the techniques of various mediums while building and creating fun, challenging assignments. They create paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, self-portraits, cartoons and collages. Students also work with mixed media and learn to draw from observation. They learn about various artists through a historical and cultural context, and they learn proper use and care for art materials and tools. Students are encouraged to find their inner artist in a fun and creative atmosphere!

**Music:** Students participate in a variety of activities including group singing, playing instruments, and movement. The music program encourages participation from every student. The following of musical content is covered: Rhythm, Melody, Harmony/Texture, Form, Style/Dynamics/Tempo, Timbre/Tone Color, Music History, and Performance/Audience Etiquette. Grades 4 and 5 use recorders as a supplement to the curriculum. Grades 6, 7 & 8 participate in our band program. All music students perform in an annual Advent Music Program during the month of December, as well as other school-related performances throughout the course of the year.

**Library:** The St. Joseph Catholic School Library is a busy, active place where students are given the opportunity to become life-long learners. Each class visits the library once a week for a forty-minute session. Students learn library and research skills, play learning games and learn about new authors and illustrators, but most importantly they get to hear stories and check out books! The library has over 6,000 volumes of fiction, nonfiction, and reference materials with new books added each year. Books are catalogued using Follett Library Automation software.