

# **BRYN ATHYN CHURCH SCHOOL**



## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW K-8 2012**

# **BACS MISSION**

**The Bryn Athyn Church School seeks to provide children with an education based on the teachings of the New Church to prepare them to become confident, caring and useful citizens of this world and of the Lord's heavenly kingdom.**

# **BACS RELIGION**

The purpose of the Bryn Athyn Church School religion program is to help students learn, live and love the teachings of the Lord God Jesus Christ as revealed in the Old and New Testaments and the Heavenly Doctrines. Five broad goals serve as an overarching vision for fulfilling this purpose:

1. Helping students develop an ongoing and developmentally appropriate affection and understanding of who the Lord Jesus Christ is in their own lives
2. Nurturing an affection for, a knowledge of, and a belief in the Lord's Word and an ability to read it with understanding and delight.
3. Helping students learn how to live a life of charity and morality and give them opportunities to practice it.
4. Fostering in students an understanding and delight in the forms and uses of worship and prayer.
5. Helping students develop a sense of their place and use in the stream of Providence and a confidence that the Lord is continually leading them and providing for their needs.

The primary students are taught religion by their classroom teacher, in a worship setting. The students in grades four through eight have Monday worship in their classrooms given by their homeroom teacher. These students then gather together for worship on Tuesdays through Thursdays, where a particular part of the Word is taught. The school theme is emphasized one week a month. The whole school worships together on Fridays.

# KINDERGARTEN

## The Lord is our Heavenly Father

### Overview

Learning in kindergarten takes place through wide variety of "hands on" activities. We believe children at kindergarten age learn best through these activities as we guide them toward the beginnings of higher level thinking. Some highlights of the year include our singing *The Twelve Days of Christmas* at the annual BACS Christmas program, our international feast and our spring music show.

### Curriculum

#### Worship

Through worship, we introduce the children to many stories from the Word and help them gain an affection for them. To make the stories from the Word meaningful for the children, we experience them through a variety of approaches, such as: recitations, music, drama and projects. These interactions with the stories and lessons from the Word create the foundation for their ongoing religious education.

#### Reading/Writing Readiness

In kindergarten we have a rich beginning literacy program that develops a firm foundation for future literacy learning. We begin with basic letter recognition, sounds and formation. We move into many stimulating and interactive literacy activities, including things like the *Wilson Phonics* program.

#### Handwriting

This comes through small motor exercises such as tracing, cutting and the manipulation of small beads, blocks etc. The children learn to print their names as well as letters of the alphabet (upper and lower case), numerals and simple words.

#### Math

We enjoy an active, hands-on math program using the *Envision* math system as a guide. We involve the children in a variety of activities to engage their senses in different ways. We use games, manipulatives, and acting out different math concepts.

#### Social Studies and Science

Our social studies and science units are woven seamlessly into the many skill activities that the children engage in on a daily basis. We focus on the world around us and the wonderful things the Lord has provided for us, like the food we eat, people around the world and the four seasons.

#### Library—led by librarian

The students visit the library bimonthly to choose a book to bring back to the classroom and share with their classmates. They listen to a story and become familiar with the library and its operation. The selected books stay in the kindergarten classroom.

#### Technology

Kindergarten does not attend computer lab, but will have smartboards in the classrooms soon.

#### Art

We use a variety of projects and activities to lay the ground work for basic art skills and concepts.

**Music**

We work with the students to develop basic music skills through a daily variety of musical experiences.

**Physical Education**—specialist teacher

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. The emphasis in the primary grades is on throwing, catching, eye-hand coordination, cooperation skills, running, skipping and activities that help children develop the ability to cross the midline of their bodies.

# FIRST GRADE

## The Lord is our Heavenly Father, Creator and Provider

### Overview

First graders love to learn. This delight makes the first grade classroom a special place. This affection for learning is reflected in their questioning the "why" of so many things. They are very accepting of the great truths about the Lord, creation, heaven and charity to one's neighbors. A highlight of the first grade year is the first grade play performed in the spring.

### Curriculum

#### Worship

The two great commandments, to love the Lord and your neighbor, are the basis of the First Grade Religion Curriculum. Main topics of study include creation, Adam and Eve, Noah's ark, the Most Ancient Church, the Lord's Prayer (in sign language), parables and miracles, heaven, Ten Commandments and festival units. These teachings underlie all other areas of learning, nurturing the children's affections as the Lord instills innocence, precious truths and loves deeply inside their minds.

#### Reading

A large part of the day is spent awakening the mind to the new world that lies behind the printed page. Many children enter first grade with a basic knowledge of sight-reading. Others are prepared with reading readiness skills and are soon reading. Reading with understanding is taught throughout the year, and there is emphasis on basic language skills, continuing the *Wilson Phonics* program and other strategies that promote reading success. As children learn the mechanics of reading, we strive to instill affection for literature through the use of creative dramatics and projects.

#### Composition

Creative writing is nurtured along with reading. The children progress from labeling pictures to writing letters and creating language experience stories to writing their own fiction and non-fiction stories. They learn to critically review their own work and also read it to others.

#### Spelling

Our spelling program is based on the 25 core words (with 3 religious words) from the BACS spelling curriculum (the most frequently used words in the English language). These 25 core words are required by the end of first grade. Additional words are introduced, about five per week. Activities are based on Rebecca Sitton's work.

#### Handwriting

First grade reviews appropriate pencil grip and all lower and upper case letter formations.

#### Math

The math curriculum is based on the *Envision Math* series, a sequentially based math program which focuses on visualizing math concepts, problem solving, and group and individual practice. It makes use of a variety of hands-on materials to teach math concepts to the children. The children play structured games and use the materials to form a concrete base for understanding abstract concepts. Our primary focus is to support the children in learning their basic addition and subtraction facts, as well as place value, geometry, money, time, fractions and measurement.

**Social Studies**

We use the concept of the Lord as our Heavenly Father and focus on the family as the fundamental unit of society – one of the neighbor's to be loved. Major units include the Inuit, China, Heaven and Africa.

**Science**

The focus of the science curriculum is the Lord's loving care of His creation and some of the wonders of creation. We aim to reinforce the concept of our responsibility to care for His creation as it applies to ourselves and the world around us. Major units are the four seasons, trees, rainbows, and animals. A highlight of the first grade is hatching baby chicks.

**Library**—led by librarian

Students are assisted in choosing books for themselves based on interest and/or reading level. The librarian helps them to understand the purpose of a library and gives them further introduction to the organization of the library.

**Technology**

We attend computer lab weekly. It is a chance to learn basic computer skills and reinforce our reading and math concepts through a variety of educational games.

**Art**—specialist teacher

First graders are guided in their creativity using (among other things) block crayons, watercolor paint, clay modeling and handwork. The subject matter is often integrated with their classroom studies.

**Music**—specialist teacher

In first grade music, students sing, actively listen, move, and play a variety of pitched and non-pitched instruments. Musical repertoire includes folk songs and hymns in simplified notation or taught by rote.

**Physical Education**—specialist teacher

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. The emphasis in the primary grades is on throwing, catching, eye-hand coordination, cooperation skills, running, skipping and activities that help children develop the ability to cross the midline of their bodies.

# SECOND GRADE

## The Lord is our Shepherd and Creator

### Overview

Second graders' small motor strength, coordination, and attention spans continue to develop. They throw themselves into tasks and games, sometimes to exhaustion. They can independently care for most of their physical needs. With this in mind, we offer a variety of learning experiences, so each child can feel successful in various ways. Highlights of the year include feasts connected to social studies units, and trips to the Lenape Village and the Philadelphia Zoo.

### Curriculum

#### Worship

The students begin a sequential study of the Word of the Lord learning the key stories of Genesis. These stories provide a rich foundation for teaching the children about the Lord as their Shepherd and Creator. The students also study the Ancient Church. We use various recitations throughout the year to reinforce our worship units. The children also memorize the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm (in sign language), which is core for the religious theme for second grade, and the Ten Commandments.

#### Reading

Second graders are building on their reading ability. They are reading works of fiction (i.e. fairy tales), or to gain information. Therefore, reading is often integrated with our units in science and social studies. To reach the needs of each child, our reading methods vary. We sometimes read in groups of heterogeneous ability. Often we read in pairs, or groups of three or four. Phonics is studied through a workbook program. In the fall and winter, we also learn the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

#### Composition

We work on both imaginative and factual writing. We focus on writing complete sentences, which includes basic writing mechanics.

#### Spelling

Students learn 10 words a week, along with 2 optional challenge words. Activities are based on Rebecca Sitton's work. Every fifth week is a review week. At the end of the year, students are expected to have mastered the 75 core words from the BACS spelling curriculum, as well as the BACS religious words.

#### Handwriting

The first half of second grade is spent mastering the printed alphabet. We begin teaching the lower case cursive letters in the winter term, and students may want to attempt to write in cursive in their daily work when they have learned all the letters.

#### Math

Second grade follows the *Envisions* math program. This program includes work on basic addition and subtraction, place value to 1,000, multi-digit addition and subtraction, geometry, fractions, money, measurement, time, graphs, and an introduction to multiplication and division. Students also frequently practice basic addition and subtraction, and reinforce topics studied through games.

## **Social Studies**

The focus is on the theme of “The Lord is our Shepherd,” as we learn how the Lord provides for people around the world. In addition, we note how geography affects specific cultures, especially their food, clothing and shelter. Specifically, we study Native Americans, Ancient Nomads and Ancient Egypt.

## **Science**

Science units focus on the miracles to be found in the Lord’s creation. We introduce the children to the Lord’s three kingdoms (animal, vegetable, mineral), and study parts of them in depth. These studies include bees, birds, muscles, magnets, water, weather, ants, fish, baby animals and plants.

## **Library**—led by librarian

The children are aided in selecting their independent reading material based on their interest and/or reading level. Children practice their sustained reading skills. They are introduced to the different types of reading material available in the library and encouraged to expand their reading interests.

## **Technology**

Second graders are taught how to use the keyboard and some of its special functions through *Type to Learn, Junior* and are introduced to word processing and computer drawing. Reading and math concepts are also reinforced through a variety of educational games.

## **Art**—specialist teacher

Much of the second grade art curriculum focuses on practicing basic skills in crayons, watercolor paint, clay and handwork. The subject matter is often integrated with classroom studies.

## **Music**—specialist teacher

In second grade music, students sing, move, and play a variety of pitched and non-pitched instruments. Musical repertoire includes folk songs and hymns in notation and by rote.

## **Physical Education**—specialist teacher

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. The emphasis in the primary grades is on throwing, catching, eye-hand coordination, cooperation skills, running, skipping and activities that help children develop the ability to cross the midline of their bodies.

# THIRD GRADE

## The Lord is the Divine Provider and Lawgiver

### Overview

Third graders have an increasing capacity for abstract thinking, and are developing an awareness of cause-effect relationships and sequencing, yet there is a strong need to have everything grounded in the concrete. Third grade is a transitional year from childhood to pre-adolescent beginnings. Trying to fit in and be accepted by peers may become important as the year continues. The child needs to feel that the Lord loves him, and will help him in times of trouble. The child needs to gain a feeling of respect for the Lord's laws, and for His miraculous power. A highlight of third grade is the adopted grandparent program. It helps the children to develop relationships with older people in the community.

### Curriculum

#### Worship

Worship is the beginning of our day. It is the time set aside for religious instruction. The major part of our year is devoted to the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt and their wanderings. The students also study the Israelitish Church. A highlight of the fall term is when the children are presented with their own copy of the Word. Children delight in reading from it at the beginning of worship each day.

#### Reading

For reading and writing we use "The Daily Five" and the "CAFÉ" menu. The five activities in the Daily Five are: Read to self, Read to someone, Work on words, Work on writing, and Listen to reading. The CAFÉ is a menu of strategies the children use to improve their skills. The skills are Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expand vocabulary. By using these activities every day and being sure the children are reading books that fit their reading level, they enjoy reading, build stamina, and become better readers and writers.

#### Composition

Students continue developing their writing skills by writing detailed sequential stories that contain beginning, middle, climax and end. We also work on friendly letter format, poetry, and factual reports. We work on correct sentence structure that includes capitals and ending punctuation.

#### Spelling

Our program is based on the 150 core words from the BACS spelling curriculum. The students learn 15 words a week, with regular reviews.

#### Handwriting

We review the lower case cursive letters and teach the upper case letters in cursive and improve confidence with cursive in general. Sometime within the winter term the expectation is that the children will use cursive in all their daily work.

#### Math

In math we study place value, multi-digit addition, subtraction, multi-digit multiplication, geometry, simple division, number sense, problem solving, estimation, measurement, time, graphing, money, basic math facts, and fractions using the *Envisions* math program.

## **Social Studies**

Our focus in social studies is Life in a Community—The Children of Israel and Ancient Greece. We learn about heroes and heroines from various cultures and periods in history. We also practice some introductory map skills. Highlights of our social studies program are performing mythology plays and our hero celebrations.

## **Science**

A major theme of third grade is seeing series and cycles in the Lord's kingdom. The students learn about insects, astronomy, the five senses and precious gems. We also explore the circulatory system, amphibians, reptiles, and dinosaurs. In our studies of the solar system, we measure and create a scaled down solar system in the hallways of the school and spend a day "on the moon."

## **Library**—led by librarian

Students are supported in their independent reading to select books that are appropriate for their reading level. They are encouraged to select books that will satisfy their natural curiosity about the world around them and support the learning that is going on in the classroom. Students develop and practice their sustained reading skills.

## **Technology**

Students use the *Type-to-Learn* program to develop typing skills. They do simple research projects using *Encarta Kids* and use *Kidspiration* for composition and to create graphic projects. They also play educational games to support their math and phonics skills.

## **Art**—specialist teacher

The third grade continues to practice basic art skills with an emphasis on texture, both visual and actual. There is often integration with classroom studies.

## **Music**—specialist teacher

In third grade music, students sing, move, actively listen, create music, and play a variety of pitched and non-pitched instruments. The content includes folk songs, hymns in notation, musical forms, solfege exercises, digital music, and music history.

## **Physical Education**—specialist teacher

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. The emphasis in the primary grades is on throwing, catching, eye-hand coordination, cooperation skills, running, skipping and activities that help children develop the ability to cross the midline of their bodies.

# FOURTH GRADE

## The Lord is the Hero of War

### Overview

Fourth grade is a transitional year for students as they have graduated from the primary grades where they “learned to read”. A shift towards “reading to learn” is a focus in the intermediate grades. Socially, a fourth grader is becoming more peer conscious and they are delighted with the many opportunities to work with classmates. Practicing charity and respect for others is modeled and encouraged throughout the year. Highlights include the rainforest feast in the spring, as well as dressing in medieval costumes and making a pilgrimage to Glencairn. Fourth graders always enjoy the annual trip in the fall to the Adventure Aquarium.

### Curriculum

**Religion**—taught by a minister

Instruction of fourth graders is based on the books of Joshua and Judges. Colorful heroes like Joshua, Gideon, Samson, and Ehud, are great examples of people who courageously lead the Israelites to victory over their enemies. By means of these individuals and their heroic acts, some very powerful spiritual messages come through. Doing what the Lord says brings success and happiness, many times in miraculous ways; but disobeying the Lord brings swift punishment. These themes are repeated over and over again, showing the fundamental challenge for the Israelites, and for the students themselves, namely, to depend on the Lord for their happiness, guidance, and security.

### Reading

The teachers read several books aloud and the class reads several novels aloud to practice reading skills. Following *The Daily Five* program, the reading skills emphasized are dictionary use, fact and opinion, cause and effect, drawing conclusions, decoding, summarizing, sequencing, inferring, comparing and contrasting, and making predictions. We also work on following directions, expanding vocabulary (sight vocabulary and homophones) and interpreting figurative language.

### Composition

We use the five steps writing process as well as the *6 plus 1 Traits of Writing* program to teach writing. The students write stories, poems and reports, with a skills focus on creating organized paragraphs and first and final drafts.

### Grammar

In grammar we familiarize the students with identifying the parts of speech in sentences.

### Spelling

We learn the fourth grade portion of the BACS core words (the most frequently used words in the English language). We also focus on spelling skills and patterns in spelling.

### Handwriting

Fourth graders review how to form lower and upper case letters in cursive and they use cursive whenever they write sentences and paragraphs.

**Math**

The students earn Rainbow Ribbons to encourage the memorization of the multiplication math facts. The *Envision* math program is used to extend skills in basic computation, fractions, decimals, estimation, beginning algebra, measurement, geometry, statistics and problem solving. We also focus on understanding how numbers work and how we use them in our lives.

**History**

In history, we study medieval times and the Vikings.

**Geography**

Topics of study in geography are the continents, oceans, deserts, polar regions, the rain forest, Australia and map skills.

**Science**—specialist teacher

We study trees, seeds, mammals, sun, heat, light, digestion, and nutrition, often using hands-on techniques as much as possible.

**Library**—led by librarian

Students learn library science and basic skills associated with supporting research and presentation skills. They are introduced to several resources the library has to offer and expected to use these resources to support the learning they are doing in their classrooms. Students are encouraged to select books for recreational reading also.

**Technology**

Skills include keyboarding, completion of the *Type to Learn* program, word processing and creating presentations. Fourth graders use the internet for research and learning activities.

**Art**—specialist teacher

The fourth grade learns new painting and handwork skills. They explore color with a variety of media and subject matter. The projects are often integrated with classroom studies.

**Music**—specialist teacher

In fourth grade music, students sing, move, actively listen, create music, and play a variety of pitched and non-pitched instruments, with emphasis on recorder. The content includes folk songs, musical forms, hymns in notation, solfege exercises, music history, and choral music.

**Physical Education**—specialist teacher

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. In the intermediate grades we continue with the skills that we practiced in the primary years and add improving on loco-motor skills, cooperative skills, problem solving, decision making and fitness, team and individual sports.

# FIFTH GRADE

## The Lord is the King of Kings

### Overview

Fifth grade is a good age to emphasize friendship as it is a time when peers take on a new importance. Students begin to want to understand themselves in a social context. In general fifth graders are eager to learn and love to apply known skills and knowledge. Highlights of the year are the creation and performance of an explorer puppet play and a Colonial day in the spring.

### Curriculum

**Religion**—taught by a minister

In fifth grade the books of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel comprise the course of study. The fifth grade child is becoming more and more conscious of the “footprint” he or she makes in the surrounding world. The kings, Saul, David and Solomon, each make their mark in different ways as they expand the lands of Israel and lead the Israelites. Jehovah works with His people by means of the kings’ leadership. Studying about the struggles and blessings of these rulers in their efforts to be leaders while serving the Lord works well for fifth graders as they begin to form their own character, separate from the adults in their lives.

### Reading

Reading skills are taught and reinforced in our basic reading program which consists of novels and short stories. We introduce the idea of character development. Our vocabulary study centers on using context to discover meanings of new words found in the readings. We emphasize giving complete answers to reading questions. Fifth graders continue to change their reading focus from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”

### Composition

We work on both narrative and expository writing, with a skills focus on organization, descriptive word choice, interesting sentences, accurate use of proper grammar and paragraph formation.

### Grammar

Grammar skills are drawn from teacher resources and a grammar book, *Write Source Skills Book*. We use many games, drill exercises and board work.

### Spelling

The first few weeks of spelling consist of a study and drill of the 375 core spelling words from the BACS spelling curriculum. During the year we expect that these words are spelled correctly on papers in all subject areas. Weekly spelling units focus on patterns in spelling.

### Handwriting

Fifth grade reviews cursive as needed and students continue to practice cursive in their daily work.

### Math

We use the *Envision* math program, a sequentially based math program which focuses on visualizing math concepts, problem solving, and group and individual practice. Fifth graders become more confident with the long multiplication and division processes. New concepts include adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing of fractions and decimals.

## **History**

Exploration is the history theme for fifth grade. We look at how in the Lord's providence people have discovered new lands enabling the Lord's Word to be spread. We study how the explorers and settlers handled their responsibility in the new lands. It is a wonderful way to point out the use and abuse of power. We study the Native Americans, the explorers, colonization and settlement of the thirteen colonies, finishing the year with colonial life and our "Colonial Day," where we transform our classrooms into a colonial village, dress in period costumes, and share what we have learned about life in colonial times.

## **Geography**

In geography we emphasize both the world and individual countries as our neighbors. Map skills are learned as we study South, Central and North America. We study the life and culture of the people living in these regions. In the spring term, along with the study of the United States, each student researches and develops an extensive notebook on one particular state.

## **Science**—specialist teacher

The science curriculum focuses on understanding and appreciating the Lord's creation of the natural world and the laws that govern it. Students learn about the skeletal and muscular systems, geology, weather, and simple machines.

## **Library**—led by librarian

Students continue to learn library skills associated with research. They identify, define and practice research skills using a variety of resources. Students are supported in selecting books for book reports and are introduced to several different genres in literature.

## **Technology**

Fifth graders continue to develop their word processing skills through simple essays individual state notebook project and other assignments. They create presentations and use the internet for research and learning activities.

## **Art**—specialist teacher

The fifth grade makes explorer puppets and Native American masks. These are just two of the many projects they do that support classroom work. There is an emphasis on drawing.

## **Music**—specialist teacher

In fifth grade music, students sing, move, actively listen, create music, and play a variety of pitched and non-pitched instruments, with continued emphasis on recorder. The content includes folk songs, hymns in notation, solfege exercises, sight singing, music history, and choral music.

## **Physical Education**—specialist teacher

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. In the intermediate grades we continue with the skills that we practiced in the primary years and add improving on loco-motor skills, cooperative skills, problem solving, decision making and fitness, team and individual sports.

# SIXTH GRADE

## The Lord is the Prophet and Preserver

### Overview

Sixth grade is a year of transition between childhood and adolescence, between the intermediate unit to the upper, from elementary school to middle school. As a result, students can be in a variety of places in their spiritual, physical, affective, cognitive and social development. As the students progress through the year, they begin to take on more responsibility for their learning and they are increasingly ready for their minds to think more globally about the world around them. A highlight for the year is an independent country study that culminates in a Country Fair in early May where students showcase their vast amounts of knowledge for their individual country. Earlier in the year we visit the University of Pennsylvania and Glencairn to appreciate their artifacts from the ancient cultures we study.

### Curriculum

**Religion**—taught by a minister

Sixth grade students study 1 Kings and 2 Kings, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Generally the sixth graders tend to pull away from their parents and other authority figures. They yearn for independence. And yet they still value and need the supervision of adults who can provide rules and systems with clear consequences and rewards, while increasing students' freedom to make moral choices. This section of the Word provides many objective examples of people making good and bad choices, and clearly discovering the consequences of each. Through discussing these situations students gain a perspective of the Lord as a loving governor who knows all about human mistakes and outright evil and still continues to lead people toward heaven. Those who trust in His covenant and return to His commandments will gain the peace and happiness they are seeking.

### Reading

Specific reading skills include vocabulary study, main ideas, personification, comprehension, and critical thinking. Some of the novels read include *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, *The Sign of the Beaver*, and *The Egypt Game*.

### Composition

Students write regular literature responses as well as essays on personal experiences, fiction, non-fiction, research, and descriptions. Skills focus on correct sentence structure, paragraph structure, writing process, proofreading, and citing references.

### Grammar

The focus in grammar is on the parts of a sentence and the parts of speech.

### Spelling

Our spelling program is based on the 500 core words from the BACS spelling curriculum along with homonyms that are easily confused. During the year we expect that these words are spelled correctly on papers in all subject areas. In addition, we use the *Everyday Spelling Program* to reinforce skills.

### Handwriting

Students continue to practice cursive in their daily work, in order to build speed and maintain legibility.

**Math**

The *Prentice-Hall Mathematics Program—Course 1* includes a review of the four basic operations through problem solving, decimals, fractions, integers, measurement, graphs, patterns, and number sense, probability, geometry, ratio, percent, area, volume, and equations.

**History**

In history we learn about the Five Churches from the perspective of their culture, as well as the ancient civilizations of Sumer, Egypt, Greece and Rome.

**Geography**

Climate and topography affect how and where people live. We observe this theme throughout our study of Europe and Africa, and the independent country study. We also continue the development of map skills.

**Science—specialist teacher**

The science curriculum focuses on understanding and appreciating the Lord's creation of the natural world and the laws that govern it. Students study chemistry, magnetism, electricity, classification, plants (with a mini unit on microscopes) and ecology.

**Library—led by librarian**

Students continue to identify, define and practice research skills using several different resources. They are introduced to the proper use of citations and are asked to create citations for several different resources. Students are supported in selecting books for book reports and research projects. They are asked to identify and define several different genres in literature.

**Technology**

Sixth graders focus on finding a variety of sources from the internet as well as from school-chosen software programs for their research essays and projects, like the spring term country paper.

**Art—specialist teacher**

The sixth grade curriculum has an emphasis on form. Students make paper and clay sculptures and then learn to make realistic drawings of them. They learn about art forms from ancient times.

**Music—specialist teacher**

In sixth grade music, students sing, actively listen, create music, and play a variety of pitched and non-pitched instruments, with emphasis on hand bells. The content includes folk songs, hymns in notation, solfege exercises, sight singing, digital music, music history, and choral music.

**Physical Education—specialist teacher**

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. In the intermediate grades we continue with the skills that we practiced in the primary years and add improving on loco-motor skills, cooperative skills, problem solving, decision making and fitness, team and individual sports.

# SEVENTH GRADE

## The Lord as God of All Nations and Miracle Worker

### Overview

Seventh grade is the first time that boys and girls are separated into different classes. We believe that boys and girls learn differently and that this contrast becomes significantly more distinct during puberty. Consequently, even though both classes are learning the same curriculum, methods and activities are crafted to appeal specifically to boys or girls. Highlights for the girls include making gingerbread houses and fabric dolls. A special project for the boys is painting Revolutionary War cast soldiers.

### Curriculum

**Religion**—taught by a minister

Seventh graders concentrate on the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, the Minor Prophets, and portions of the gospels. Seventh grade is a time when the transition from pre-adolescent to high school states gains momentum. The rational level of the mind is becoming more active and significant physical maturation accompanies this development. Moving from an Old Testament focus on rules and consequences, students begin to reflect on a higher, moral standard that is the focal point of the Lord's direct instruction in the New Testament.

### Reading

We have an integrated, novels-based reading program that often connects to history. The boys read *Johnny Tremain*, *Old Yeller* and *Tom Sawyer*. The girls read *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, and *Dacey's Song*, as well as *Johnny Tremain*. Both boys and girls read short stories, myths and poetry.

### Composition

The girls interview and write biographies of women in the community, as well as creating a research-based Civil War notebook. The boys practice research skills, culminating in the writing of Civil War papers and biographies. Students learn how to research information through the internet and how to construct a bibliography.

### Grammar

In grammar the students review the parts of speech and the parts of a sentence. Grammar, spelling and composition are often integrated with each other.

### Spelling

According to the BACS spelling curriculum, students are accountable for the 500 core words in all of their daily work. They are regularly given proofreading style spelling tests.

### Handwriting

Students can choose to use printing or cursive in their written assignments, but legibility and presentation (attractiveness) is expected on all finished work.

### Math

In mathematics class, students continue with the series *Prentice-Hall Mathematics Program—Course 2*. It is basically a pre-algebra course where the students hone their problem solving, decision making and critical thinking skills, along with a few units on geometry. A major activity is the "Decimal Shopping" project at holiday time.

## **History**

During the study of American history, we seek to instill patriotism in the students. The discovery of America straight through to the Civil War and Reconstruction, with a continuation in eighth grade, serves as a back drop for valuable projects such as the Civil War notebook. Students are taught about the value of human relationships encased in the study of the story of our own nation. The students travel to Gettysburg to reinforce their study of the Civil War.

## **Geography**

Along with the study of American history, students review American geography. In addition, they review oceans, continents, geographic terms and postal codes. Later in the year, the focus shifts to the continent of Asia, with emphasis on China, Russia and the Pacific Rim.

## **Science**—specialist teacher

The science curriculum focuses on understanding and appreciating the Lord's creation of the natural world and the laws that govern it. Students are introduced to the scientific method, the metric system, cell structure and process and study the following aspects of the human body: circulatory, respiratory, nervous, digestive, and excretory systems.

## **Library**—led by librarian

Students are helped individually in the selection of books for book reports. The library supports learning in the classroom by providing appropriate materials for students to use for research projects. The librarian provides other resources and support on an as needed basis.

## **Technology**

As students grow in their knowledge of computer skills, they are taught about the social, ethical and moral implications of using technology. New skills include teaching graphic design, understanding desktop publishing, and developing spreadsheets.

## **Art**—specialist teacher

The seventh grade curriculum is a series of exercises that teach them about the elements of design- especially balance – and art work that lets them express what they have learned.

## **Music**—specialist teacher

In seventh grade music, students participate in choral ensembles, including eighth grade students. The content includes a variety of secular and sacred choral repertoire, hymns, solfege exercises, and sight singing.

## **Physical Education**—specialist teacher

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. In the upper grades we continue to work on all the skills from previous years and in addition focus on fitness for life. A more comprehensive understanding of the strategy and rules of both team and individual sports is developed.

# **EIGHTH GRADE**

## **The Lord as Teacher and King**

### **Overview**

Eighth grade is an exciting culmination of a student's BACS career. Our academic focus is on preparing students for the coming challenges of high school. Students have opportunities to practice time management while working on long term assignments. The eighth grade class pulls together to put on a play for the younger students, doing all aspects of theater production. Other highlights of eighth grade include a boys' trip to the USS New Jersey, a girls' teambuilding program at the Philadelphia Rock Gym, an Earth Day volunteer program, and a May trip to the shore for the class to celebrate their coming graduation.

### **Curriculum**

**Religion**—taught by a minister

More in depth study of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke with the addition of thematic units such as discipleship and charity) takes place in eighth grade. Students at this age have a conventional sense of political justice and get their authority from the consensus of valued groups, most often their peers. They need to see things as fair and also need parents and teachers to exhibit strong values and set reasonable limits. Cognitively, ideas begin to have power for eighth graders even though they still depend on their senses and concrete concepts for understanding the world. The Sermon on the Mount provides excellent material to stretch their minds and encourage higher level questioning and insight than previously experienced. They can appreciate that the Lord taught with authority, healed with compassion, performed dramatic miracles and still left people in freedom whether to believe or not.

### **Reading**

Students read, analyze and discuss novels, short stories, poetry, and nonfiction texts, many of which are connected with historical eras being studied. They enjoy beginning to look past plots and delve into the authors' messages.

### **Composition**

Students write essays and research papers, make speeches with a presentation program, write and illustrate children's stories, and learn to do careful editing of their own work.

### **Grammar**

Focus in grammar is on mastery of the parts of speech, sentence structure, punctuation, and their use in writing.

### **Spelling**

During the fall term, students are tested on lists of words often confused. For the rest of the year, the focus is on taking responsibility for getting work edited and making corrections for final drafts.

### **Handwriting**

Students can choose to use printing or cursive in their written assignments, but legibility and presentation (attractiveness) is expected on all finished work.

### **Math**

Eighth graders study either pre-algebra using the third book in the series *Prentice-Hall Mathematics Program—Course 3* or algebra using *Prentice Hall Algebra 1* according to their

ability level. Some students reinforce and review their math concepts, while other students begin venturing into higher math for the first time.

### **History**

The eighth grade studies the second half of America's history, from the Civil War up to recent times. This was a period in which our nation found its own identity and then became a major power in the world.

### **Geography**

The girls do a global survey of geographical concepts using a standard textbook, as well as a comparative study of first, second and third world lifestyles using *Material World*.

The eighth grade boys spend their final year of the curriculum looking back at the regions of the world which they covered in previous years. It is an opportunity to look at regions in a different light, delving into more advanced issues at times.

### **Science**—specialist teacher

The science curriculum focuses on understanding and appreciating the Lord's creation of the natural world and the laws that govern it. Students continue to use the metric system and the scientific method as they solve problems in a scientific manner. Topics of study are astronomy, rocks and minerals, motion and energy.

### **Library**—led by librarian

Students are helped individually in the selection of books for book reports. The library supports learning in the classroom by providing appropriate materials for students to use for research projects. The librarian provides other resources and support on an as needed basis.

### **Technology**

Students continue to develop awareness about the social, ethical and moral implications of using technology. A major unit is to produce their personal children's story in a digital format.

### **Art**—specialist teacher

The eighth grade girls each create a multimedia figure of a Victorian lady in the fall term and develop book illustrations in the spring term.

The eighth grade boys are split into two groups. In the fall term, half the boys work on small "junk" sculptures of warriors while the other half learns about motors and machinery. The groups switch subjects in the spring term.

In the winter term all students work on play scenery and props.

### **Music**—specialist teacher

In eighth grade music, students participate in choral ensembles (including seventh grade students) and rotate through digital music, percussion, and guitar classes each term. Choral content includes a variety of secular and sacred repertoire, hymns, solfege exercises, and sight singing.

### **Physical Education**—specialist

The physical education program provides the students with a standards based program that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and highly active. It fosters a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. In the upper grades we continue to work on all the skills from previous years and in addition focus on fitness for life. A more comprehensive understanding of the strategy and rules of both team and individual sports is developed.