



## COVENANT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

### **BIBLE**

Using several sources, most importantly the Bible itself, the fourth graders explore the life of Christ. The Gospel of John will be used to introduce students to the life and ministry of Jesus from His birth through His resurrection. Topics will include but are not limited to The Birth of Christ, childhood, baptism, temptations, call of the disciples, miracles, preaching, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables, Christ's betrayal, death and resurrection, the Transfiguration, and Christ's promises to return. In conjunction with the fourth grade history curriculum, students will also study Catholicism in the Middle Ages. Students participate in weekly Chapels, present an all-school Chapel, and memorize Philippians chapter 2 and weekly Scripture verses.

### **LANGUAGE ARTS**

Our core reading program expands literary skills along with the integration of reading strategies. Comprehension is strengthened through the use of activating prior knowledge, making predictions, employing graphic organizers, and summarizing and paraphrasing text. Students identify the author's point of view, cause and effect, the main idea, supporting details, distinguish between fact and fiction, and draw inferences and conclusions. Students engage in higher-level responses to text (both in discussion forums and in writing). Students identify literary elements such as plot, setting, and character and explore the use of literary devices such as allusion, dialect, dialogue and narration, hyperbole, and figurative language.

Novels are incorporated in the literature program and instruction is designed to expose students to authors of both classical and contemporary children's literature. Students enjoy author studies and expand their listening skills, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. Fluency and accuracy in reading are promoted as students read aloud in a whole class setting, in small groups, and with partners. Books based on Social Studies topics are also integrated into the reading program. Books *may* include *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, *Crispin* by Avi, *The Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis and various novels by Roald Dahl.

### **WRITING**

Writing is taught as a process: prewriting, drafts, revision, editing, and publishing. Students refine skills such as applying clarity in sentence and paragraph structure. Throughout the year, students experience writing in narrative, persuasive, autobiographical, and poetry genres as well as writing friendly letters. Frequent journaling is encouraged through prompts, responsive reflections to literature, or general topic suggestions to refine communication and writing skills. Research skills are accentuated through written and oral reports.

Students will also participate in the beginning levels of the Progymnasmata, a classical approach to writing instruction in which students study, analyze and imitate high quality narrative selections.

### **GRAMMAR**

Shurley English 4 is a grammar and writing program designed specifically for fourth grade. Shurley is a proven, research based method for instructing students in the principles of correct grammar and oral and written language skills. Grammar is fundamental to speaking, reading, and writing. The essential components of this program include grammar question and answer flows, jingles, practicing and revising sentences and paragraphs, and writing effectively for all purposes. Students review nouns and verbs and proceed to identify and use adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Grammar skills are reinforced through formal lessons and integration into real-life writing activities. Daily instruction provides constant review, immediate feedback and utilizes all learning styles. It is our goal to prepare our students to carefully interpret the mechanics of written English when reading and effectively and skillfully communicate their knowledge, ideas, and most importantly their faith to others.

### **SPELLING AND VOCABULARY**

Students study weekly spelling lists based on the Reading Street curriculum and have weekly spelling tests. Students continue to develop advanced vocabulary skills through Vocabulary from Classical Roots (Greek and Latin) by Educators Publishing Service.

## **PENMANSHIP**

Students refine the formation, size, and spacing of their cursive handwriting. Neat handwriting is emphasized and encouraged in all subject areas.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Math In Focus is a complete program based on the highly successful elementary math program used in Singapore. Designed to equip students with a strong foundation in mathematics, topics are covered in depth and taught to mastery. By focusing on mathematical understanding, the program aims to help students develop logical thinking and critical lifelong problem-solving skills.

The Math In Focus program calls for direct instruction and focuses on mathematical thinking with immediate application of new skills to problem solving. By encouraging students to solve problems in a variety of ways, this program stretches the mind and promotes an understanding of the way mathematical processes work.

### **Pedagogical Approach and Methodology**

The Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract approach enables students to encounter math in a meaningful way through concrete activities before progressing to pictorial and abstract representations. This allows students to understand mathematical concepts before learning the “rules” or formulaic expressions:

- Students first encounter the mathematical concepts through the use of manipulatives.
- Students then move on to the pictorial stage in which pictures are used to model problems.
- When students are familiar with the ideas taught, they progress to a more advanced or abstract stage in which only numbers, notation and symbols are used.

### **Model Drawing**

Model-drawing is an ingenious problem-solving strategy built into the curriculum. Students are taught to visualize and construct concrete pictures to help them make sense of word problems. The model-drawing method requires students to understand the mathematical concepts underlying word problems and equips them with a strong conceptual foundation in mathematics to solve even the most challenging problems. The model-drawing technique not only provides a powerful method for solving problems, but also serves as a link to algebra. Symbolic representation of problems, the mainstay of algebra, emerges as a logical extension of the model-drawing technique.

## **Teaching to Mastery**

Each topic is covered in detail and taught to mastery. Immediately after new concepts are taught, students are engaged with a variety of mathematically rich problems. This ensures that the focus is on the student’s deep understanding of each topic. Math In Focus is geared towards producing mathematical thinkers, and it does this by walking children through all the component parts of a problem before presenting them with the whole problem to solve.

## **Spiral Progression**

Topics covered previously are reviewed at higher grades and with increasing difficulty. The introduction of new concepts is built upon the mathematical concepts students have learned previously. Spiral progression also allows for a review of important math concepts while expanding on that foundation.

## **Metacognition**

Metacognition refers to the ability to monitor one’s own thought processes. In teaching students to be conscious of the strategies they use to accomplish a task, this strategy encourages students to think of alternative means of solving problems and promotes logical thinking. Students are encouraged to be aware of how they arrive at their solutions. Alternative ways of solving the problem are provided as a form of guidance for students to check their thought processes. This is opposed to rote learning and application of formulaic strategies.

Skills and concepts covered in grade four include:

- Numbers to the millions: comparing, place value, rounding
- Addition and subtraction
- Measuring length, weight and capacity
- Multiplication and division
- Money
- Fractions/decimals; using operations
- Time, data analysis, probability
- Tables and graphs
- Geometry: angles, plane figures, symmetry
- Area, perimeter and volume

## **LATIN**

Latin is instructed in grade four to teach a language that forms the basis for more than 60% of our English words. Latin is a very useful, interesting, and challenging language to study. Studying Latin strengthens a student’s ability to decipher a complex grammar system and an extensive vocabulary. In addition, Latin helps to develop a student’s English and provides a solid foundation for

the study of other languages. The goals for Latin in the Grammar School are twofold. Firstly, Latin vocabulary will be increased through short stories, theme-based lessons, and even Latin conversation. Secondly, repetition will be used to memorize basic Latin paradigms to prepare students to master the increasingly more difficult grammar of middle and high school Latin courses. Our Latin instructors strive to create a fun and interactive environment where students can develop a true enthusiasm for learning a new language, complete with its rich culture and history.

### **SOCIAL STUDIES / HISTORY**

Fourth Grade history examines the world from the time of the ancient Greeks all the way through the end of the Middle Ages. This is a vast period of time with many exciting developments, changes, and stories that students will enjoy. A main theme of the year is that of government. Students will recognize the roots of a democratic government in the study of Greece and Rome, and they will see how the turmoil during the Middle Ages brought people around to the idea of limited government.

The year begins with a study of ancient Greece, where students learn about the first Greek civilizations and the philosophers, scientists, and artists that made Greece great during its Golden Age. Next, students will delve into ancient Rome where they will learn the story of Rome as it shifted from a kingdom to a republic and, finally, to a great empire. Students will learn about the accomplishments of the Roman Empire as well as the great people and events that comprise it. An examination of the fall of the Roman Empire leads easily into a unit on the Middle Ages. Students will learn how culture in Europe declined for many years before reemerging as a land made up of vast kingdoms. Students will enjoy their examination of feudalism, knights, and castles, and they will understand how people began yearning for limits to be placed upon their rulers with the creation of the Magna Carta. A study of the Islamic Empire, which happened at the same time as the European Middle Ages, will also shed light on this time period. Students will learn how the Muslim religion began, and they will understand the influence that the Islamic Empire had upon Europe, and vice versa. Students will learn about the many accomplishments made by the Islamic Empire.

By the end of the year, students will be well prepared to begin studies on the Renaissance and American

Colonialism, a time period in which limited government became a revolutionary idea.

### **SCIENCE AND HEALTH**

The grade four Science curriculum highlights physical and life science. Students review the steps of the scientific process: forming a hypothesis, conducting an experiment, drawing conclusions, and presenting their results. Scientific principles are applied through the use of “hands-on” units incorporated in the grade four program including: The Human Body, Electricity, and Ecosystems.

Through studying the human body, students are given basic information about major biological systems that allow the body to perform its many amazing functions. Students will learn the characteristics and structures of living things and learn how body systems affect their growth and development.

Students engage in the study of electricity: the basic properties of electricity, electric circuits, conductors, insulators, and the symbols used to represent the parts of a circuit in circuit diagrams. Students explore different kinds of circuits, learn about switches, construct a flashlight. Cumulative knowledge and skills are applied to wire a model house.

The study of ecosystems explores the unifying concept that interactions within and among living systems cause changes in matter and energy. Students recognize that organisms are linked to each other and to their environments in a web of relationships and that an ecosystem is a community of organisms that interact with each other and the environment. Students examine the impact that human decisions have upon ecosystems as well as our responsibility to be wise stewards of the resources God has entrusted us with.

Health topics focus on physical fitness, exercise, and interpersonal relationships from a Biblical perspective.

Students will also explore the phenomenon of buoyancy during a hands on unit called Floating and Sinking.

### **SKILL BUILDING**

These skills will be integrated into the grade four program throughout the year. Students work independently and in cooperative learning groups on research projects. While working on these projects, students refine skills such as note taking, summarizing, outlining, listening skills, oral presentations, research using the library, the internet and other resources.

Students also work together to learn problem-solving skills in math by applying math concepts to practical design, real-life projects, and building complex models.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The physical education curriculum stresses team sports and health fitness building. Class activities center on learning the skills of selected team sports: volleyball, basketball, touch football, soccer, and hockey. Developing these skills through drills and games comprise the creative dimension of motor proficiency. Strength training and conditioning with additional emphases on respiratory endurance will build health fitness. Our decisional goals are to share, care, and play fair.

### **MUSIC**

Music is a multi-faceted curriculum based upon the premise that music is a gift from God enabling students to bring glory to God in a unique way. In fourth grade, students continue to develop their musical knowledge through an emphasis on singing combined with playing instruments, improvising, composing, and listening, while focusing on the fundamentals of music theory. In addition to singing rounds, folk songs, spirituals, and American music, students begin to sing in two-parts accompanied by percussion instruments and recorders. While learning the recorder, students begin to develop the fine motor skills necessary for playing all wind instruments and learn to read musical notation in the treble clef. By combining playing the recorder with singing, students make important connections between melody, rhythm, and phrase, and are able to develop these elements in composing and improvising their own musical melodies.

Performing and listening skills are further enhanced through participation in concert activities and the opportunity to join our instrumental program and/or Junior Chorale.

### **ART**

Students refine basic drawing skills based on seeing shapes in common forms applying different values of gray and shading. Students learn basic color theory by experimenting with paintings, crayon drawings, colored pencil drawings, and pastels. Three-dimensional media facilitates working out designs in the round and students begin to learn perspective by using unusual points of view. Art lessons will include discussions of where artists get ideas; works presented by specific artists will be analyzed along with their biographies. This use of classical masterworks as references for some art projects will demonstrate how recognized artists have chosen to solve aesthetic problems.

### **KEYBOARDING AND COMPUTER**

Our biweekly instructional focus for fourth grade students is on the development of efficient and accurate keyboarding skills. In addition, our computers facilitate highly integrated software and empower students to create multimedia projects, while refining their skills in Pages and Keynote. Teachers enliven lessons and meet the growing demands for instructional skills through utilizing computers in the classroom and our computer lab.

For more information regarding our Grammar School Program  
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