

GRADE 1 CURRICULUM

The goal of the grade one year is to ensure that each student builds a solid foundation in basic skills that will uphold his or her academic progress for years to come.

BIBLE

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). We engage in Bible lessons embracing prayer, worship, and scripture memorization. We use the Jesus Storybook Bible to introduce students to God’s great story.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Language Arts program comprises phonemic awareness, phonics, reading, language, spelling, writing and penmanship. Our core reading curriculum emphasizes the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The reading progress of students is assessed through DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). The Lexia program is used to support struggling readers.

Because phonics is the code that unlocks our written language, the study of phonics is a high priority throughout the grade one experience. By the end of the year, first graders have been introduced to just about all of the sound-letter groupings in the English language. Students read through a mastery book list corresponding to their current reading level, advancing developmentally. First graders are exposed to a variety of literary genres to nurture a love for reading and literature.

Shurley English 1 is a grammar program designed specifically for first 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. 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. First graders learn to recognize complete sentences and to begin to use rules for capitalization and punctuation. Students are introduced to suffixes and prefixes, synonyms, homonyms, and opposites. Skills that build vocabulary and show how words interrelate are highlighted. First grade spelling words stress predictable spelling patterns along with common sight words.

Writing is integrated into all subject areas. Students implement the Writing Process to learn the traits of

effective writing: employing interesting ideas, developing clarity, using their personal voice, and refining sentence structure. First grade writers focus on the basic conventions in writing, while writing about topics based on their curriculum and real-life experiences.

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.
- Fact Fluency: Our Math program seeks to develop pattern seekers and problem solvers. These skills require deep mathematical understanding as well as fact fluency. First Graders practice single digit addition facts regularly to achieve personal improvement and to develop automaticity.

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. Singapore math 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 one include:

- Number bonds and number stories
- Addition (within 100 with and w/o regrouping)
- Subtraction
- Numbers to 100: counting, comparing, addition, subtraction, place value, estimation
- Counting by multiples
- Shapes
- Comparing and measuring length and weight
- Graphing
- Halves and fourths
- Telling and estimating time (to hr. and 1/2 hr.)
- Money (identification & value)
- Calendars

SOCIAL STUDIES / HISTORY

The Grade 1 Social Studies and History Course embraces the social science strands of history, geography, civics and economics. The social studies curriculum is reflective of a classical approach emphasizing content, but is also developmental in nature.

The emphasis in first grade is to enhance children's understanding of family life and structure in a global world. Students learn that the family is the primary support group for people everywhere and discover their roles as members of a family and a school community. Students explore the topic of families now and long ago, beliefs, customs, and traditions of families, and the roles and responsibilities of family members. Students begin to grasp how geography impacts the lifestyles of families, their homes, food, clothing, recreation, transportation, and reasons why families make geographical moves.

Students study how holidays are celebrated around the world, comparing and contrasting various traditions. Students are exposed to a variety of unique cultural expressions and customs.

Citizenship is a major concept as students expand their understanding of what it means to be a citizen of their school community, a citizen of the United States and a citizen of God's Kingdom. The necessity for rules and laws is developed in context of the classroom community and the local community. Students identify and appreciate the significance of symbols of American citizenship such as the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

SCIENCE

Science in the first grade is hands-on and guides students through studies on backyard nature exploration, the seasons, and the animal kingdom including a featured unit on insects and arachnids, habitats, the five senses, and simple machines. Children will experience the life cycles inherent in nature as they raise painted lady butterflies from caterpillars. Students learn the basic principles of the Scientific Method while investigating, experimenting, and discovering for themselves how things work. Scientific skills such as

observation, and collection of data are continually integrated. The overall discovery approach fosters the natural inquisitiveness of children and cultivates learners who truly enjoy learning about God's creation. Field trips and cooperative learning for the biennial Science Fair enhance our curriculum.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND MANNERS

Students develop good social skills by basic instruction in health, safety, and manners; choosing nutritious foods, getting enough sleep and exercise, taking care of our bodies, safety in the home, in the neighborhood, and in common activities such as playground safety, biking, and swimming. Manners emphasize proper respect for God, parents, teachers, and friends – at home, at school, in church, and in public.

ENRICHMENT

CLASSES

PHYSICAL

EDUCATION

The goals for first grade focus on helping students to acquire fundamental skills, fitness awareness, and understanding of movement and one's self. The fundamental skills of our program develop three categories: non-locomotor, locomotor, and manipulative. The curriculum focuses on rehearsing non-locomotor skills (twisting, bending, stretching, etc.) and locomotor skills (running, jumping, leaping, etc.) as well as developing manipulative skills (ball handling with hands and feet etc.). The second goal, fitness awareness, develops as students are exposed to activities that emphasize what makes a person healthy. The third goal, understanding of movement and self, is essential to developing both fundamental skills and fitness awareness. Self-understanding and decisional learning (fair play and cooperation) are also important for learning fundamental skills and fitness awareness. In order to accomplish these three important goals, the students engage in many fun activities including soccer, parachute play, floor hockey, running games, and creative movement.

MUSIC

Music is a multi-faceted curriculum based upon the premise that music is a gift from God, and that the study of music enabling students to bring glory to God in a unique way. To this end, students explore all aspects of music through the following activities: singing, playing instruments, composing, improvising, performing and listening. In first grade, singing continues to be the basis of the music curriculum. Students sing rounds, folk music, and patriotic songs in addition to praise music, all within the context of learning the basic elements of music theory, including notation, dynamics, meter and note values, and rhythm and beat patterns. Students develop facility on a variety of percussion instruments by combining singing, playing, and movement. Students engage in active listening activities designed to develop an understanding of musical form, phrase, and texture, as well as an appreciation for the aesthetic aspects of music. Students perform for one another in class and in public concerts, providing them with opportunities to share their developing skills.

ART

Children of younger ages develop art skills largely by experimentation based on their love of art activities and a natural sense of color and design. The goal of activities will be to teach skills in a logical way, to allow experimentation with various media, and to enable individual development. Students will be taught basic

drawing skills based on seeing shapes in the forms around them. Art history will be introduced by showing the students examples of artwork that will capture interest, discussing biological information of artists, as well as their inspiration for ideas. Students will be taught shading and basic color theory as they work on paintings, crayon drawings, colored pencil drawings, and pastel drawings.

LIBRARY

Students will enjoy weekly literature enrichment with our Librarian and discover new worlds and characters within the pages of a book. Over the course of the year, students are introduced to a variety of genres and authors, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and biography. Students are engaged in read-alouds, class discussions, games, building challenges, writing, and artistic responses. The primary goal of library time is to pique and expand students' interest in reading for pleasure and for information, and to help them interact meaningfully with the books they encounter.

PHILOSOPHY CIRCLES

Philosophy Circles is a program designed to introduce 1st and 2nd grade students to philosophical inquiry in a developmentally appropriate way. Students are encouraged to ask deep questions and to form and support their thinking through activities, group work, story prompts, and class discussions. The cornerstone principles that students gain from Philosophy Circles are: 1) Listening is the best gift, 2) Friends can disagree, and 3) Some questions have lots of right answers. Students learn that listening to each other is a way to show another person you value them and are interested in what they have to say. They also learn how to disagree well, holding true to their own opinions with kindness and grace. We acknowledge that some issues are not black and white and finding the best solution requires collaboration, generosity, and humility. The goal is for students to learn such skills that will serve them in their years of school and beyond.

For more information regarding our Grammar School Program
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