



Curriculum Guide
Academy of St. Joseph

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Mission Statement

The Academy of St. Joseph empowers and challenges Pre Kindergarten through Eighth-Grade students with a curriculum based on the arts, sciences, and the humanities integrated with the values of the Catholic Church.

The Academy fosters the intellectual, spiritual, social, emotional and physical development of students, while instilling in them the highest standards of character, competence, and compassion in a joyful, welcoming community.

The Academy creates a strong foundation for students to become life-long learners, responsible citizens and effective leaders as they embrace and improve the global society.

The school admits students of any race, religion, color or national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship policies, and athletic or other school administered programs.

Program Overview

The Academy of St. Joseph challenges students through a rigorous and rich curriculum through which students become critical thinkers, collaborative problem-solvers, and globally-minded leaders. Our teachers nurture a deep understanding of mathematics, science, and the humanities. All acquire basic skills in speaking, reading and writing in Spanish. Students also explore art, music, technology, and physical education, and Lower School students receive weekly instruction in Library Science and Chess. Project-based learning supports students' development as confident, competent, and collaborative learners with important foundational skills for lifelong learning, well-being and social development. The focus of all learning experiences at the Academy of St. Joseph is to challenge and engage students to build confidence, inspire a love for learning, and nurture a thirst for knowledge and wisdom.

English/Literacy/Language Arts

English/Literacy/Language Arts instruction focuses on enhancing competence and confidence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students are exposed to a wide range of literary genres. The curriculum includes lessons in spelling, handwriting, vocabulary, and grammar. Reading is taught through the study of phonics and sight word instruction as well as through read-alouds, choral reading, small group reading, and buddy reading. Each student has opportunities to practice public speaking, both in class and in front of the school when leading morning assembly. Students explore writing through poetry, persuasive essays, narratives, expository writing, creative writing, and journaling. Students focus on the formal craft of writing by learning to outline, draft, and edit their work.

History/Social Studies

The social studies curriculum links students' lives to the world. Students come to understand how the past affects their world and how they can help to create the future. Lower School students start from themselves and circle outwards to their families, homes, communities, city, state and country to understand the interconnectedness of the world around them.

Students in the Upper School explore the history of human origins and migration, early societies, Europe after the fall of Rome, and a two-year course on American History. The approach to history study is both thematic and chronological, with many themes, such as societal organization, power, authority, human agency, and democracy receiving attention at more than one level as these themes apply to specific periods of study.

Mathematics

The math program provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand real-world math problems. Students develop diverse problem-solving strategies and have hands-on opportunities to develop their number sense, abstract thinking, conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and problem-solving skills. Content and process are integrated with an emphasis on understanding formulas and logical thinking. In kindergarten through sixth grade, Singapore Math is the foundational curriculum, supplemented with additional materials as teachers developed by teachers.

Physical Education

The Academy offers students an exceptional physical education experience that embodies our school's core beliefs and contributes to their overall physical, intellectual, and emotional development. Our physical education program exposes students to a variety of athletic and fitness pursuits that pave the way for a lifetime of good health. Lessons are framed within the context of leadership, team building, and individual accountability and progress.

Religion

The religion curriculum is designed to infuse, integrate, and inspire Catholic values into daily living. The substance of religious instruction focuses on doctrine, community, and service. The curriculum focuses on the teachings of Jesus, the examples of saints, the sacraments, and the history of the Church. Students attend Mass once a month. The tenets and traditions of other faiths are respected.

Science

The Science curriculum at the Academy of St. Joseph is interactive and rooted in exploration, allowing students to relate and connect with Science through real life experience. It is organized around questions that explore engineering and technology, life science, earth science, and physical science. Students engage in lab work to make discoveries that make science relevant to their lives. Upper School students are introduced to the school Science Lab in fifth grade.

Spanish

At the Academy of St. Joseph, students study the Spanish language as well as aspects of various Spanish-speaking cultures throughout the world. Through speaking and singing, students become familiar with the spoken language, and this is enhanced through the study of cultural festivals and customs. Students also study basic Spanish grammar to prepare them for future world language study.

Technology

Students in both divisions receive direct technology instruction, learning how to code and format, among other skills. Teachers integrate technology in all subjects. Students in Early Childhood and Lower School have dedicated iPads. Students in Upper School have dedicated MacBook Pros. All classrooms at the Academy are equipped with Smart Boards.

The Arts

Familiarity with the nature and history of the arts, how to produce a work of art, and the importance of art in society are important components of the arts curriculum at the Academy of St. Joseph. In all grades, students learn about art and music created by others. They have opportunities to perform, and they can also create original artistic work.

Lower School

At the Academy of St. Joseph, we give young children a strong early learning foundation, with a program built on the following educational philosophy and principles:

- Children thrive in learning environments that are engaging, caring, developmentally appropriate, integrated, and challenging.
- An effective curriculum is interdisciplinary with an emphasis on hands-on learning, providing opportunities for children to question, research, and analyze. This supports a healthy balance among the social, emotional, intellectual and physical aspects of individual child development.
- Observation and documentation of how each child plans, executes, and completes a task is core to the assessment and future curriculum planning for each child.
- Social emotional intelligence is essential for future life success. Thus, children have fun developing character, competence and compassion as well as learning the ins-and-outs of good manners, etiquette, and respect for one's self and others.

Spanish Instruction

In the Lower School, especially the early grades, students learn basic and essential vocabulary through songs, pictures, movement and interactive games. Instruction emphasizes developing students' listening and comprehension skills using a variety of methods, such as read-alouds, teacher led conversations and videos. Students learn vocabulary and speaking skills to introduce and provide information about themselves, to talk about their likes and dislikes, tell time, and describe the weather. Writing is introduced in first grade. From first grade to fourth grade students develop their writing skills in Spanish as they learn to write about themselves and about topics learned in class. High frequency verbs, such as *ser*, *estar* and *tener* and their conjugations are introduced in second grade. Students study Spanish grammar in the second through the fourth grade.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning comprises valuable life skills that all students need to thrive in the classroom and in life. From self-regulation and re-direction in emotionally difficult moments to developing a sense of empathy and care for one's self and others, social and emotional learning at the Academy of St. Joseph is achieved organically, as well as through consistent dialogue, modeling, and practice. Teachers are trained in Responsive Classroom pedagogical techniques. They hear and value the voices of their students. Most important, they model for their students the standards of values and character that are integral to achieving a high degree of social and emotional intelligence. We know that students, especially those in the younger grades, respond to what we do more than what we say. That model serves us well in terms of teaching the values of observing reverence, communicating mutual respect, acting consistently with a strong sense of responsibility, and making the right choices.

Pre-Kindergarten Three

Pre-Kindergarten Three is a time to build confidence and positive social relationships within the school community. Students use their natural curiosity to explore their learning environment and make new friends.

Creative Development

Threes love to explore the world around them. Students participate in daily art and music activities with their teacher and in dedicated art and music classes once a week.

Language Development

Pre-Kindergarten Three students build their speaking skills by participating in class songs and discussions, interacting with teachers and classmates, and engaging with others throughout the day. Students discover literature through stories and books.

Mathematics Development

Students explore math through hands-on manipulation of real life objects to sort and classify, count to ten, put things in order, and learn about shapes. Students will not just learn math but they will also understand everyday applications of mathematical concepts.

Physical Development

Motor skill development is integral to the threes program. Cutting, gluing, drawing, and learning to grip a writing utensil facilitate fine motor development. Twice weekly physical education class, rooftop play, and classroom activities all facilitate physical development.

Religious Development

Students are introduced to the sign of the cross, showing reverence by turning our voices off during prayer, and learning simple prayers and songs.

Social Development

In Pre-Kindergarten Three students learn how school "works" by learning to be good members of their class. Students practice saying good-bye to their family, playing and working with friends, sharing and taking turns, using their best manners, cleaning up, and following directions and routines.

Pre-Kindergarten Four

Pre-Kindergarten Four is a time for daily exploration and adventure as students continue to learn what it means to be a good school citizen, classmate, and friend.

Language Arts/Literacy

The focus of the language arts curriculum is to engage students' listening, speaking, pre-reading and pre-writing skills. Students communicate their thoughts and ideas, ask questions, understand and follow directions, and learn about the structure of a book. Students also begin to learn strategies for the foundations of reading.

Mathematics

The mathematics curriculum develops early number sense through exploring, investigating and problem solving. Instruction emphasizes manipulation of concrete materials, measurement, numerical recognition, and number concepts.

Religion

The religion curriculum focuses on learning about God's gifts of life and creation. Students are introduced to the religious signs, symbols, and traditions of the Catholic faith.

Science

The science curriculum encourages exploration, manipulation and observation using all five senses. Students learn about the world around them by exploring the seasons, comparing and contrasting objects in their environment, and by analyzing and predicting weather patterns.

Social Studies

The social studies curriculum focuses on the relationship of the self to the family and the community. Students explore cultural differences, traditions, and current events and learn how to participate in their classroom and home communities.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a pivotal year. School life is in full swing at the age of five. Being an active citizen in the school community, learning to read and write more extensively, developing a strong number sense, and taking on leadership roles at school are all part of this important and active year. Structure and consistency are important for developing good school habits.

Language Arts/Literacy

Kindergarten is the foundational year for reading and writing. Students focus on strategies for decoding, fluency, and comprehension through a balanced literacy model. Teachers utilize the Writer's Workshop model to explore different topics through guided writing, shared writing, journal writing, and independent writing. Teachers approach reading instruction through a similar process. Students read a variety of mentor texts and experiment with writing in a variety of genres.

Mathematics

Students are introduced to early Singapore Math strategies and ways of thinking by exploring place value and early number modeling through number bonds and ten frames. Students work with manipulatives and pictures, eventually developing a more abstract number sense. They begin to build number sentences for simple addition and subtraction problems and also explore concepts of graphing, money, measurement, and geometry.

Religion

Students deepen their understanding of the meaning of reverence and the symbols of the Church, while building their working knowledge of important prayers, biblical events, and important events during the liturgical calendar.

Science

Students explore science through an interactive approach. They begin by defining what science is and the methods scientists use. Students delve into a study of living things, as they study the composition of the Earth and study weather patterns among other topics.

Social Studies

The theme of social studies in Kindergarten is *The World Around Us*. Students explore what makes up a community and what it means to be a good citizen. Students look in depth at jobs, maps, and neighborhoods through a modern lens and then celebrate history by looking at how the world has changed from the past to the present day.

First Grade

First grade is a year of change. Building from the foundation established in kindergarten, students in first grade engage in learning from a place of eagerness and excitement. Scholarly habits and the seeds of academic and personal independence take root in first grade.

Language Arts/Literacy

With early reading and writing skills in place, students begin to develop their literacy skills in many new ways. Continuing from a balanced literacy and reading/writing workshop model, students explore an array of themes as they look closely at the features of fiction and nonfiction writing, both as a reader and writer. Students also begin to explore writing poetry and song.

Mathematics

Singapore Math supports the growing development of number sense through the understanding of numbers as parts and wholes. Place value, ten frames, and number bonds are central important first grade topics. Students focus on mastering math facts and mental math strategies with numbers to 100. Teachers introduce model drawing as a strategy for problem solving. Students also explore graphing, money, measurement, geometry, and an introduction to early concepts in division and multiplication.

Religion

First grade students learn about the goodness of God and Jesus and the importance of responding to this goodness. Students explore the role of Jesus as the Savior as well as His role as the Good Shepherd.

Science

Having learned the basics of the scientific method, students begin to engage more deeply in thinking like a scientist by learning how to approach concepts from a design process. Students will also delve more deeply into the study of living things by exploring life on land versus water. Students will also study extinct plants and animals. Students will continue their exploration of weather by taking an in-depth look at the water cycle.

Social Studies

The theme of first grade social studies is *Families Living and Working Together*. Students continue to explore the concept of community by taking a deeper look at rules and laws, neighborhood helpers, weather, maps and globes, and goods and services. Students relate what they are learning to the community where they live. In first grade students also explore American symbols and holidays.

Second Grade

Second grade is a year to extend and refine the many critical skills learned in first grade. Second graders become more independent as they transition from learning to read, to reading to learn.

Language Arts/Literacy

Second grade students refine their reading and writing skills as they begin to transition from learning to read and write to using reading and writing as a means of learning. Students look in depth at characters and their stories and become adept at reading and writing nonfiction. Students also focus on extending themselves as readers and writers as they read longer books and write longer compositions. In second grade, students also begin to explore strategies for writing in different genres.

Mathematics

Singapore Math builds on number sense by extending the study of place value and model drawing, moving from the number bond to the bar model. Students revisit addition and subtraction with larger numbers and with an added focus on regrouping, developing mental math strategies with numbers to 1000. Basic multiplication and division are also a focus of the second grade year. Students revisit measurement, geometry, money, and graphing and are introduced to fractions.

Religion

The focus of the second grade program, *God Cares for Us*, is to prepare the students for the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. During this year students will also partake in the Second Grade Saints project.

Science

Second grade students continue to employ the scientific method and design process in hands-on projects as they dive deeper into scientific concepts. They learn about the importance of questioning to the work of scientists. Students study life cycles and engage in a detailed habitat study where they explore the types of rocks and minerals that compose different habitats. The study of weather continues, with a look at how weather is measured and tracked by scientists, and how severe weather occurs.

Social Studies

The theme of second grade social studies is a broad-ranging study of communities. Students previously explored what a community is on a smaller scale, and they now begin to study larger communities through a look at North America. Students learn about leaders and government, identifying location, resources, and culture. Students will relate their studies to themselves through a family history study. The history of America continues with a look at America's beginnings and heroes.

Third Grade

By the third grade, students are reading and writing as a mode of learning, participating in school life with a newfound independence, and mastering many other skills. Third grade is a time of great energy and excitement.

Language Arts/Literacy

Now that students are confident in their reading and writing skills, they can explore a variety of genres, both as readers and writers. These include mystery novels to persuasive speeches and fairytales. This variety supports an exploration of numerous elements of good writing from the perspective of a reader and writer. Mastering strategies for learning from reading and writing takes center stage.

Mathematics

Students are introduced to visualizing and repeated addition and subtraction as strategies for problem solving. They create arrays and groups to illustrate the concepts of multiplication and division. Students are expected to master their basic multiplication and division facts up to 12. Model drawing is a continued focus in Singapore Math. Students revisit and build their knowledge of fractions, money, graphing, measurement, geometry, and mental math.

Religion

In the third grade program *We Believe*, students explore the main truths Catholics believe and express in the Apostles' Creed. Students will also explore the goodness of God and His call to faith.

Science

In the third grade, students employ the scientific method and design process with a focus on technology. Other topics include further expansion of life science through classification of living things and the exploration of ecosystems. Students explore physical science through a study of the states of matter, forms of energy, and force. They also conduct a study of space through a look at Earth and our universe.

Social Studies

The theme of social studies in third grade is *Communities Near and Far*. By this point in their studies, students have explored the concept of community from their neighborhood to their continent. In third grade, they will explore what communities around the world look like with a focus on history, culture, and diverse customs.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade is a year for mastery of all skills learned in Lower School. Independence is paramount as the transition begins from Lower School student to Upper School student.

Language Arts/Literacy

Students continue their exploration of genre and the key traits of good readers and writers in fourth grade. Students work to interpret characters as they read and spend time developing characters as they develop narrative writing pieces. Students explore nonfiction writing from around the world, and develop their nonfiction writing skills as they write about topics of personal expertise. Students explore strategies for reading about history through a study of the American Revolution while also writing about it.

Mathematics

With a mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, students in fourth grade approach numbers methodically through the distributive property, partial product multiplication method and partial quotient division method. Students continue to model draw for all operations, and now include model drawing in their work with measurement and fractions. Students extend their study beyond whole numbers, beginning to work with decimals. Students also work with estimation, number theory, geometry and graphs.

Religion

In the fourth grade program, *God's Laws Guide Us*, students learn about the Blessed Trinity, the Church and its history and teachings, the Mass and the sacraments, and our call to be a disciple of Jesus. Students explore how the Ten Commandments help us to love God and to love others.

Science

Continuing with the scientific method and design process, students in fourth grade continue to expand their knowledge of life science through a study of the structures that help plants and animals survive. Earth science in fourth grade focuses on the resources of the planet and mineral and rock classification. The study of Earth and space continues with a look at how the Earth moves, star patterns, and the phases of the moon. In physical science students explore electricity and magnetism as well as motion and speed.

Social Studies

The theme of fourth grade social studies is *The United States*, with a particular focus on New York State history, including the physical and political characteristics of New York State and New York City. Students study the regions of North America and the indigenous peoples, followed by an examination of the changing landscape of North America as the colonies are formed followed by an analysis of the regions of North America and indigenous peoples. Students then study the changing landscape of North America, as the colonies are formed and take an in depth look at the American Revolution, particularly as it relates to New York.

Upper School

Upper School is a special place where students refine knowledge they have acquired in Lower School and prepare for the transition to high school. The Academy strives to address students' academic and social and emotional needs so they will be prepared for high school. The Upper School is guided by the following principles:

- Students develop at different rates and in different ways. They must learn to advocate for themselves when they need help and to challenge themselves to transcend basic expectations in order to excel.
- Students thrive in learning environments that are engaging, caring, cross-curricular and challenging. Ownership of and responsibility for classwork, schoolwork, and daily choices guide students' daily life.
- An effective curriculum is interdisciplinary with an emphasis on experiential learning, providing opportunities for critical thinking, research, investigation, analysis, and discussion.
- Social/emotional intelligence is essential for future life success. At the Academy of St. Joseph, students are supported as they grow in character, competence and compassion. Good manners, etiquette, and respect for one's self and others are daily practices. Service to others and self-care are part of this equation.

Spanish Instruction

In Upper School Spanish the curriculum focuses on developing students' speaking, pronunciation and writing skills. In addition, grammar and teaching different aspects of Hispanic culture are a main focus in Upper School Spanish. There are three program levels in the Upper School: Auténtico Level B, Auténtico Level 1 and Auténtico Level 2.

Some of the main topics covered in Level B are: vocabulary to order food at a restaurant; vocabulary to describe one's bedroom and house; number vocabulary; family vocabulary; and vocabulary necessary for shopping at a department store, among other topics. Students learn about celebrations and traditions in Hispanic culture, such as birthday parties and *Quinceañeras*. Grammar topics include conjugating high frequency verbs as well as important grammar topics such as the superlative, demonstrative adjectives, and positive *tú* commands.

In Level I, students learn vocabulary for classroom materials, vocabulary to talk about their school day, and vocabulary to describe their classes and teachers. Students learn vocabulary to talk about food and how to maintain healthy habits. Students learn what a typical day is like for students in different Spanish speaking countries. Grammar topics include infinitives, negatives, definite and indefinite articles, subject pronouns, present tense of verbs ending in *ar*, plural nouns and articles, among other topics.

Level 2 teaches vocabulary to talk about extracurricular activities, sports, trips, celebrations, the human body and ailments among other topics. Level 2 focuses on grammar. Students learn the past tense of high frequency verbs and learn the present tense of important verbs, such as *pedir* (to ask for), *empezar* (to start), *saber* (to know), *conocer* (to know) and *ir* (to go). Other grammar topics include reflexive verbs, possessive adjectives, demonstrative

adjectives, direct object pronouns, indirect object pronouns, and irregular affirmative *tú* commands. Students learn traditional songs and stories from Spanish speaking countries. Students also study traditions and celebrations such as *Carnaval* and *Día de los Muertos*; in addition to learning about different famous people who with their talent and work have contributed to the culture of Latin America, Spain and the United States.

Social and Emotional Learning

Educators recognize the imperative of emphasizing the social and emotional skills that children need to develop to be successful as learners and citizens. At the Academy of St. Joseph, our core values attest to the importance of social and emotional learning that is part of the curriculum. At the Academy of St. Joseph, we believe that:

- The nurturing of the whole child is essential to the development of future global citizens of character, competence, and compassion.
- Early learning experiences establish the foundation for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values that will enhance later learning and behavior.
- Children thrive in a learning environment that meets their individual needs and encourages respect for the individual and the community.
- Teaching is about inspiration and creating the possible. Our teachers are driven by the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students. They are patient, encouraging, respectful, and enthusiastic.
- It is imperative that our teachers integrate the tenets and values of Christianity into their teaching.
- Respect is the foundation of all interactions. Our students will embody the message of our school pledge by showing respect to all people and by being responsible for their actions and making good choices.
- A strong relationship between our school and our families is directly correlated to student success.

Believing that the inculcation of values and the teaching of social and emotional skills must be intentional, the Academy has implemented a new Advisory program in the Upper School. Students meet by grade level, with grades 5 and 6 meeting together and grades 7 and 8 comprising a second group. Each group is discussion-based and is facilitated by two faculty members, utilizing the *Overcoming Obstacles* program.

Fifth Grade

English Language Arts

The fifth grade curriculum introduces students to sophisticated literary analysis and expands their understanding of the structure and vocabulary of the English language. Many of the literary works are coming of age tales, exploring the complexities facing young adults. In their study of historical fiction through *Fever, 1793* and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, students complete companion projects exploring setting and character development. Students study literary fantasy in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and *Tuck Everlasting*. They develop analytical, persuasive, and expository writing skills in addition to creative and technical writing mechanics. The writing process includes revising and editing. In the fifth grade, students continue to learn new vocabulary words, utilizing the *Wordly Wise* series. They also practice grammar skills for their grade level.

History

Fifth grade history begins with a study of the origins of humans in Africa and then focuses primarily on the ancient world and the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, Greece and Rome. After an introductory unit on geography, students will investigate each of these civilizations through the themes of government, empire, technology, culture, and religion. At the end of the year, fifth graders will be tasked with choosing a topic to research and a related ancient artifact from the Metropolitan Museum to re-create and present for their Ancient Civilizations project

Mathematics

Singapore Math helps students build a solid conceptual understanding through the use of manipulative materials and visual models. In addition to a review of previously learned mathematical concepts, students learn new computational skills in order to develop conceptual understanding through practice. As skills fluency increases, understanding is reinforced in turn.

Religion

The Religion program for the fifth grade has been developed to build Catholic identity around core Catholic beliefs, practices and principles so all students can truly embody their faith.

Science

In the fifth grade, students are introduced to laboratory equipment and safety procedures. They learn how to present laboratory observations and results. Students identify properties of matter, physical and chemical changes, and solids, liquids, and gases. Students then study earth's interactive systems, focusing on water. Lessons present water distribution on earth, the human impact on water resources, and effect of the hydrosphere. Students then delve into the effects of the geosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere. The next unit presents the role of gravity and the Earth's place in space. Lab activities support the development of the conceptual tools and scientific skills necessary to explain natural phenomena.

Sixth Grade

English Language Arts

The sixth grade English/Language Arts program strengthens students' skills as readers and writers. Students explore contemporary and classic literature, including poetry, science fiction, historical fiction and nonfiction. They also pursue creative writing. Major themes include courage and perseverance, encouraging students to draw connections to their own lives and to view the world from a viewpoint other than their own. In *A Long Walk to Water*, the true story of a young teenage boy in war-torn Sudan, students learn about his struggle. While reading *Bud, Not Buddy*, students probe the life experiences of a ten-year old orphan during the Great Depression. Sixth grade students write essays that focus on mood, character, and recurring themes. Student writing now focuses on using text evidence to support thinking, as writers move from the literal to the abstract. Students continue to study vocabulary, utilizing the *Wordly Wise* series and vocabulary found in the literature they read.

History

Sixth grade history introduces students to the major events and developments that shaped much of the ancient and medieval world over an extensive period of time before the modern era. Throughout the first half of the year, students will study the ancient societies of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, Greece and Rome through the themes of government, geography, science, and technology. During the second half, students will study the events that historians claim bridged the gap between the ancient and modern periods, including the fall of Rome, the "Dark Ages," the Renaissance, and the Age of Discovery.

Mathematics

In sixth grade, students expand upon much of what they learned in fifth grade. The *Math in Focus* text helps students build a solid conceptual understanding through the use of manipulative materials and visual models. Computational skills develop from this conceptual understanding and are reinforced through practice. As fluency increases, so too does conceptual understanding improve.

Religion

The Religion program for the sixth grade has been developed to build Catholic identity around core Catholic beliefs, practices and principles so all students can truly embody their faith.

Science

Students begin their studies in the sixth grade with a unit on electricity and magnetism that incorporates magnetic forces, electric forces, simple circuits, and electromagnetism. The next engineering and energy transformation unit presents particles of matter, states of matter, thermal energy transfer and conductivity, and physical and chemical changes. A unit on ecosystems develops a conceptual understanding of energy flow and cycling of matter to develop a model of an ecosystem. Students explore an 'actual ecosystem,' investigating its resources, interactions within the this biodiversity. Finally, students investigate weather and climate and the impact of humans on climate.

Seventh Grade

English Language Arts

In the seventh grade, students explore literature that relates to their history curriculum and connects to their development as critical thinkers about the past, present, and future. Discussions happen on both the literal and abstract level, encouraging students to think deeply about what they are reading. Both *Chains* and *Across Five Aprils* relate to their study of American history, exploring both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. While reading *The Giver* and *Animal Farm*, students compare and contrast the role of government. Seventh grade students also read a collection of short stories. Poetry and creative writing are important as students read and analyze works by Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and other nineteenth century American poet. Students are expected to write longer and more complex pieces of work, through careful use of the writing process. They are challenged to write formal analytical essays in response to literature. Students continue their vocabulary studies, focusing on context clues and the *Wordly Wise* series. Students also study grammar.

History

Seventh grade history explores the history of the United States from the colonial period through the Civil War. Students begin by exploring the reasons colonists had for leaving Britain and the differences that developed between colonial societies and that of a “Mother Country.” The focus shifts from this external conflict to the internal conflicts that shaped the nation. Students will focus on the following concepts: revolution, building a nation, territorial conflict, social and technological change, and Civil War.

Mathematics: Pre-Algebra/Algebra

In seventh grade students begin a course of study in pre-algebra and algebra. Pre-algebra provides the foundation in algebra, geometry and problem solving that is needed for success in more advanced courses. Students will develop note taking skills and test taking strategies to build confidence and achieve success.

Religion

Students are prepared for and receive the sacrament of Confirmation in seventh or eighth grade, if they wish. The focus of religion in seventh grade is a two-year study focusing on learning to live your faith, which culminates at the end of the eighth grade year.

Science

In seventh grade, students explore the molecular structure of matter, energy, and states of matter, using experiments to determine how temperature and pressure affect matter. Students then explore the changing properties of matter by focusing on photosynthesis, cellular respiration, and synthetic technology. They then explore cell structure and function and examine how the organization of cells provides structure and support, allows for energy to be obtained and waste to be removed, and supports the moving of materials and control. The next unit explores the history of the earth’s formation in terms of continents, the earth’s surface and the cycling of materials. The final unit examines natural hazards including earthquakes, volcanoes and severe weather. Students will study the balance of earth’s natural resources and the impact humans have had on land, water, and the atmosphere.

Eighth Grade

English Language Arts

In the eighth grade, students intensify their studies as they prepare for high school. Themes found in texts this year include personal struggle, conflict, the role of rules and laws, and morality. Students read a variety of texts that connect to their studies in history class, including *To Kill a Mockingbird*, short stories, and twentieth century poetry. Students also read more contemporary works such as *I Am Malala* and discuss current social issues raised by such works. Students explore several genres of writing throughout the year. Students study and follow formatting and style requirements to write expository papers in preparation for high school-level work. In addition to reviewing and engaging in the research process, students engage in creative writing through journal writing on a weekly basis. Students continue with their vocabulary studies, focusing on using context clues and utilizing the *Wordly Wise* series. Students also continue receiving formal grammar instruction.

History

Eighth grade history examines United States history through the lens of various foreign and domestic policies of the late 19th and 20th centuries, beginning with Reconstruction. The first half of the year will primarily focus on the period following the Civil War up to World War II. The second half of the year will be centered on several interconnected social and political postwar developments. They will identify how events around the world affected the continuing development of the nation and the role America has played in major world events.

Mathematics

The content of Algebra 1 is organized around families of functions, with special emphasis on linear and quadratic functions. As students learn about each family of functions, they will learn to represent them in multiple ways. They will also learn to model real-world situations using functions in order to solve problems. Qualified students may pursue more advanced study in geometry.

Religion

Students are prepared for and receive the sacrament of Confirmation in seventh or eighth grade, if they wish. The focus of religion in eighth grade is the second year of a two-year study focusing on learning to live your faith, which began in seventh grade and culminates at the end of the eighth grade year.

Science

Students begin their eighth grade science study with a unit on energy and motion in which they learn to describe objects in terms of position and direction and examine motion. Students discuss the conservation of energy by focusing on kinetic and potential energy. Next, students explore the Earth's place in the universe, focusing on the Earth's motion around the sun, lunar phases, eclipses, and gravitational forces. A unit on the growth, development, and reproduction of organisms explores inheritance and types of reproduction in both plants and animals. The year culminates in a study of the evolution of technology in science while also building a foundation of waves, light, and signals.

High School Acceptances

Academy graduates have been accepted to the following high schools:

BASIS Independent Brooklyn	Loyola School
Berkeley Carroll School	Manhattan/Hunter Science High School
Birch Wathen Lenox School	Marymount School
Bronx High School of Science	Millennium Brooklyn High School
Brooklyn Friends School	Mount St. Mary Academy (NJ)
Brooklyn Latin School	Notre Dame High School
Convent of the Sacred Heart*	Oakcrest School (Washington D.C.)
Dominican Academy	St. Vincent Ferrer High School
Dwight-Englewood School (NJ)	St. John's Preparatory School
Fordham Preparatory School*	Trevor Day School
Hackley School	United Nations International School
Horace Mann School	Xavier High School
Hunter College High School	York Preparatory School
Léman Manhattan Preparatory School*	*Indicates a school where an Academy student was offered a scholarship.