

St. Paul the Apostle School



Curriculum Guide 2012-2013

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Early Childhood Programs:

Pre-Kindergarten

The pre-kindergarten program consists of different learning centers where children can explore and learn through play, using their imaginations. Socialization is the main focus of the class, enhanced with pre-writing, pre-reading, and pre-math skills. These skills are learned while playing at the various centers, and in small group or whole class lessons.

The learning centers include the Art Center, Book Corner, Building Blocks, Dramatic Play, Science, Math Manipulatives, Table Toys (puzzles, play dough, legos, and other toys using fine motor skills), Musical Instruments, and the Sensory Table which can be filled with water, sand, rice, cotton balls, and other materials. Tactile play is helpful for the children to learn through touch.

Getting to know Jesus Christ is the foundation of our pre-kindergarten program. The students learn that He is with us at all times. We use the religion series, Stories of God's Love by RCL Benziger, which consists of Bible stories and a weekly take-home packet. The concepts of faith, creation, thanksgiving, love, God our Father, Jesus' love for us, and Mary our Mother are developed throughout the year. The children learn that we are all special and that God loves us very much. We treat each other with kindness, respect, and love. We practice using good manners and sharing, and say three prayers daily.

The Letter People program is used to stimulate imagination and motivate children, creating life-long learners. This program promotes oral language and early literacy. Pre-reading skills are reinforced by teaching a new letter each week. We focus on letter / sound recognition and activities that make learning fun.

Children who will be entering Kindergarten the following year will learn to write their first name and work on tracing skills. Coloring, cutting, gluing, and painting are weekly activities in pre-kindergarten.

Kindergarten

Religion:

Religion lessons focus on the concept that each of us is special and has an important job to do during our lives. This job is to do the best we can all the time. Each day includes a constant reminder that God is with us always, and will be there to watch over us and guide us along the path to heaven. Special holidays are discussed and the Church seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter are observed through special seasonal projects.

We learn about the world around us and God, our Creator, using our religion series, Blest Are We. Children also work on Christian behavior through prayer and Mass attendance. Prayer occurs at the beginning of the day, before snacks, before lunch, and before dismissal. The children learn the Hail Mary, the Our Father, and the Glory Be. The children attend Mass one time per week along with the entire K-8 student body.

Language Arts:

Kindergarten Communications Skills are incorporated in many lessons throughout the school day. Language Arts are taught using the Pearson / Scott Foresman Reading Street reading series.

Communication skills include speaking in complete sentences, speaking clearly and distinctly, asking appropriate questions, and answering completely. Children learn to recognize upper and lower case letters of the alphabet in sequence, identify beginning and ending sounds of words, rhyming words, recognize basic sight words, and write complete sentences. Through shared reading, children learn to respond to books, retell stories, and put events in sequence.

To promote reading outside the classroom, a list of leveled books is provided to parents to encourage at-home reading.

Mathematics:

Students are introduced to the basic foundations of math through daily calendar activities as well as the use of the Pearson Mathematics series (Illinois Standards Based.) Through this series, which includes manipulatives, the children learn counting, number recognition, patterning, graphing, shape recognition, sorting, grouping, adding, subtracting, telling time, and counting with money.

Social Studies and Science:

The Scott Foresman Social Studies is used, with themed units that include personal feelings, community, holidays, Mexico, and historic leaders (Columbus, Lincoln, ML King, Jr.).

Houghton Mifflin's Discovery Works is used for science, with units of study that include Characteristics of Living Things, Exploring with Senses, The Solar System, and Weather and Seasons. Drug education is taught using the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (CHEF) Program.

Fine Arts:

Seasonal and thematic art projects are done throughout the year in which students learn to identify a variety of colors and express themselves with multiple art media. Music and seasonal songs are used to teach children about rhythm and rhyme.

Fine Motor Skills:

Children learn to cut with scissors, to control with crayons, to glue and paste correctly, and to grip a pencil correctly. Kindergarten children also learn to dress independently by tying, zipping, and buttoning clothes.

Social Skills:

Children learn to work with peers in free play time as well as in cooperative groups and in centers time. They learn how to share and take turns as well as how to work together, developing the value of friendship as well as responsibility. Problem solving skills are used during this time when a task or situation may be difficult or different.

Physical Education, Music, and Library Hour:

Classes are presented by special teachers. These are described in a later part of this Curriculum Guide entitled "Other Curriculum Areas."

Primary Self-Contained Classrooms:

First Grade

Religion:

First graders will learn through stories, activities, scripture, prayers, and discussion about the Catholic faith. The text book series Blest Are We by Silver Burdett Ginn is used with its focus on tradition, common prayers, and the themes of God the creator, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The celebration of the liturgy, the sacraments, and the liturgical seasons are introduced. Core values and beliefs of the Catholic faith are infused in the entire curriculum.

Drug education, through the use of the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (CHEF) program, is incorporated into the first semester religion curriculum.

Language Arts and Reading:

The Reading Street textbook series by Pearson/Scott Foresman is used for grades 1-5.

First grade language arts include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The program emphasizes skills that promote reading with fluency, comprehension, and interpretation of written materials, as well as both written and verbal communication. The skills acquired are applied and reinforced in all content areas.

Children experience authentic literature in the forms of poetry, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, fantasies, and plays. Reading fluency is expected to develop and improve during the year as students are presented with reading skills. Students increase their vocabulary and spelling skills by using word identification strategies and by linking spoken with written language. Students analyze written passages to distinguish fact from fantasy and to make predictions. They learn to sequence the events of a story, and to find the main idea of a nonfiction passage. Self correcting skills and cognitive thinking are developed. Students are introduced to the use of a glossary and dictionary.

A scheduled library class encourages the reading of children's literature throughout the year. In addition to the textbook and library books, students read a variety of leveled books which provide opportunities for flexible small group lessons with the teacher.

First grade students learn to write effectively using words and pictures to convey thoughts. They develop skills necessary to write simple sentences using correct grammar and writing mechanics. Focus is on phonetic spelling, correct capitalization, and basic punctuation. The textbook Handwriting by Zaner-Bloser is used to help students develop correct formation of upper- and lower-case letters, stressing neatness and correct form.

First grade students learn to listen for understanding, to follow directions, and to respond appropriately to the speaker. Students use acquired language and vocabulary to express ideas

and opinions. They present material orally, participate in discussions, and read and retell stories.

Mathematics:

Textbook: Pearson/ Scott Foresman Mathematics (Illinois Standards version)

First grade students acquire mathematical knowledge to solve problems using extended activities and hands-on manipulatives. They are introduced to graphing and comparing data, using the calendar, measuring length and width, using a clock to tell time, identifying and describing patterns and shapes, counting money, and writing the numbers 1 to 100. They learn addition and subtraction facts through 18, and use grouping and regrouping to solve word problems.

Science:

Textbook: Discovery Works by Houghton Mifflin

Students will use concrete, hands-on experiences to learn about science in the physical and natural world around them. Through observing, predicting, questioning, and explaining, students will study plant, animal and human growth. They will investigate habitats and be introduced to the properties of matter, gravity, force, and motion. They will also study weather and the patterns of change of the sun, moon, and earth.

Social Studies:

Textbook: Silver Burdett and Ginn, Social Studies: All Together

Students will develop an awareness of the people around them, with focus on families, homes, and neighborhoods. They will learn how groups work together to meet the needs of others through a system of delivering goods and services. During the second semester, life in Australia is compared to life in the United States.

Art:

Students express themselves and communicate their ideas through a variety of art forms presented by their classroom teacher. They learn to take pride in their work which is displayed frequently.

Physical Education, Music, and Library Hour:

Classes are presented by special teachers. These are described in a later part of this Curriculum Guide entitled "Other Curriculum Areas."

Second Grade

Religion:

Second graders will learn through stories, activities, scripture, prayers, and discussion about the Catholic faith. The text book series Blest Are We by Silver Burdett Ginn is used along with the Children's Catholic Catechism. The students prepare for the sacraments of First Reconciliation in November, and First Communion in May.

Religion lessons focus on tradition, common prayers, the sacraments, the parts of the Mass, and special celebrations of church feasts, seasons, vestments, and sacred vessels. Second graders expand their understanding of the Trinity as they come to know God as a loving Father who forgives them, Jesus as the One who gives us the gift of Himself, and the Holy Spirit who calls us to serve one another.

The study of morality continues as the children learn the concept of sin and its effects. Gospel stories teach the children their responsibility to care for others as Jesus did. Their understanding of Church as community expands as they learn that the Catholic Church is their spiritual home within Christianity.

Drug education, through the use of the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (CHEF) program, is incorporated into the first semester religion curriculum.

The celebration of the liturgy of the Mass occurs weekly. Core values and beliefs of the Catholic faith are infused in the entire curriculum.

Language Arts and Reading:

The Reading Street textbook series by Pearson/Scott Foresman is used for grades 1-5.

Second grade language arts include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The program skills include sentence parts, sentence types, parts of speech, and punctuation. Pre-writing and writing processes are taught as well as verbal communication. Spelling skills include instruction in long and short vowels, digraphs, compound words, words with silent letters and prefixes and suffixes, contractions and blends. The skills acquired are applied and reinforced in all content areas.

Reading is taught daily and is heavily emphasized in second grade. Decoding, comprehension, fluency, reference, and study skills are incorporated into the lessons. Additional reading selections, vocabulary lists, glossary and word-bank assignments are teacher-prepared to reinforce the textbook skills. Students read a variety of leveled books which provide opportunities for flexible small group lessons with the teacher.

A scheduled library class encourages the reading of children's literature outside the classroom throughout the year.

Second grade students learn to write effectively using correct grammar, spelling, and writing mechanics. The textbook Handwriting by Zaner-Bloser is used to help students develop correct formation of upper- and lower-case letters as they are introduced to cursive writing, stressing neatness and correct form.

Mathematics:

Textbook: Pearson/ Scott Foresman Mathematics (Illinois Standards version)

Second grade students acquire mathematical knowledge to solve problems using extended activities and hands-on manipulatives. They learn 2-digit addition and subtraction, place value through 999, counting coins and dollars, telling time, using a calendar, measuring length and capacity, and predicting the probability of an event. They will also learn to identify two- and three-dimensional shapes, concepts of fractions, and multiplication facts 1's through 5's.

Science:

Textbook: Discovery Works by Houghton Mifflin

Students will use concrete, hands-on experiences to learn about science in the physical and natural world around them. Through observing, predicting, questioning, and explaining, students will study interactions of living things, changes over time, energy and motion, sounds, liquids and solids, and what makes human beings sick.

Social Studies:

Textbook: Silver Burdett and Ginn Living In Communities

Students learn about community rules and laws, working in communities, communities of long ago, communities around the world, our country's government, and the holidays that people celebrate. They will also learn map skills. They will visit the Field Museum as part of the Native American study unit, and will study the Rain Forest of South America during the second semester.

Art:

Students express themselves and communicate their ideas through a variety of art forms presented by their classroom teacher, using the art curriculum guidelines of the Joliet Diocese. Art projects include the use of concepts of bright colors, details, texture, line, form, shape, patterns, and perspective. Some special stories are used to correlate art with literature. Students learn to take pride in their work which is displayed frequently.

Physical Education, Music, Computer, and Library Hour:

Classes are presented by special teachers. These are described in a later part of this Curriculum Guide entitled "Other Curriculum Areas."

Third Grade

Religion:

Third graders will learn more about the Catholic Faith through stories, activities, scripture, prayers, and discussion. The text book series Blest Are We by Silver Burdett Ginn is used.

Religion lessons focus on tradition, common prayers, and the marks of the Church: one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic. Students come to understand that the Church is a community of believers and that they are responsible members of this community.

Drug education, through the use of the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (CHEF) program, is incorporated into the first semester religion curriculum.

The liturgy of the Mass is celebrated weekly. Core values and beliefs of the Catholic faith are infused in the entire curriculum.

Language Arts and Reading:

The Reading Street textbook series by Pearson/Scott Foresman is used for grades 1-5.

Third grade language arts include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Language arts skills are closely related to each story in the basal reader, with focus on sentence structure, and parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Spelling words target basic phonetic skills: spelling lists include many of the vocabulary words from the basal reading textbook stories.

Students learn the basic steps in the writing process: pre-write, draft, share, revise, edit, and present. In addition, they strengthen their writing skills as they learn to apply the traits of good writing (ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions) to a variety of written pieces. Journal writing is an essential part of the writing process. The skills acquired are applied and reinforced in all content areas.

Reading is taught daily and is heavily emphasized in third grade. The basal textbook includes six themed units, each with five story selections in a variety of genres. Each story includes introductory skills, concepts and vocabulary. Focus is on comprehension and fluency. In addition, students read a variety of leveled books which provide opportunities for flexible small group lessons with the teacher. Students also read a novel in a literature circle format.

A scheduled library class encourages the reading of children's literature outside the classroom throughout the year.

Third grade students learn to write effectively using correct grammar, spelling, and writing mechanics. The textbook Handwriting by Zaner-Bloser is used to help students develop fluency in cursive writing, with attention to size, slant, spacing, and neatness.

Mathematics:

Textbook: Pearson/ Scott Foresman Mathematics (Illinois Standards version)

Students apply their knowledge of basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to solve problems. Basic math facts should be memorized to the point of automaticity in third grade. Additional math concepts include geometry, measurement, and fractions. Extended open-ended problem solving skills are taught regularly throughout the year.

Science:

Textbook: Discovery Works by Houghton Mifflin

Students will use concrete, hands-on experiences to continue learn about science in the physical and natural world around them. Through observing, predicting, questioning, and explaining, students will study earth science, physical science, and life science. Units include magnets and magnetism, classifying living things, ocean habitats and animals, and the planets of our solar system.

Social Studies:

Textbook: Silver Burdett and Ginn Comparing Communities

Students learn about relationships between communities, past and present. Additional areas of study include inventors and inventions, government, and geography.

Art:

Students express themselves and communicate their ideas through a variety of art forms presented by their classroom teacher, using the art curriculum guidelines of the Joliet Diocese. Art projects may be related to themes in language arts, science, and social studies.

Physical Education, Music, Computer, and Library Hour:

Classes are presented by special teachers. These are described in a later part of this Curriculum Guide entitled "Other Curriculum Areas."

Middle grades, Semi-Departmentalized Classes

Grades 4 and 5:

In the middle grades, classes are taught together in a daily paired block: religion and social studies, science and mathematics, reading and language arts. Students stay with their homeroom teacher for two of those three blocks of classes. They travel to the other grade level teacher's room for the third block, as well as to "special classes" in PE, computers, and music. They also stay with their homeroom teacher for "team time" on non-PE days and art and library once each week.

Religion:

Students will learn more about the Catholic Faith through stories, activities, scripture, prayers, and discussion. The text book series Blest Are We by Silver Burdett Ginn is used.

Religion lessons in fourth grade focus on the Trinity doctrine, the sacraments, service, the liturgical seasons, morality, and Church hierarchy. Fifth grade lessons extend these studies and also include decision making in family life.

Drug education, through the use of the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (CHEF) program, is incorporated into the first semester religion curriculum.

The liturgy of the Mass is celebrated weekly. Students in both grades have the opportunity to plan and assist in these liturgical celebrations during the year. Core values and beliefs of the Catholic faith are infused in the entire curriculum.

Social Studies:

Students in both grades will acquire a social and cultural understanding of the world around them, based on Catholic core values of peace and social justice.

Focus of the fourth grades lessons will include immigration, the role of government, meeting needs through goods and services, land, climate, and stewardship of US natural resources, geography and map skills, and learning the states and capitols.

The focus of the fifth grade lesson is on geography and map skills and the study of ancient civilizations, including the geography and history of Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia.

Language Arts and Reading:

The Reading Street textbook series by Pearson/Scott Foresman is used for grades 1-5.

Fourth and fifth grade language arts include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Language arts skills are closely related to each story in the basal reader, with focus on reading

fluency, comprehension and interpretation of written material, and communicating, listening, and speaking clearly. Spelling words target basic phonetic skills: spelling lists include many of the vocabulary words from the basal reading textbook stories.

Students in both grades use writing to convey meaning. They are expected to write legibly using cursive writing, apply correct grammar and mechanics, and write multiple sequential paragraphs on a topic based on an outline which they have written. They are expected to improve writing skills using the writing process: pre-write, draft, share, revise, edit, and present. In addition, they strengthen their writing skills as they learn to apply the traits of good writing (ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions) to a variety of written pieces, including narrative, persuasive, and descriptive essays. In addition to these, fifth graders will also write expository essays and poetry.

Fourth and fifth grade students will listen for understanding, follow directions, and respond appropriately to the speaker. Students will use acquired vocabulary to express their thoughts. They are expected to present material orally, make presentations to small groups, participate in small and large group discussions, and express their ideas clearly when speaking. In addition to these, fifth graders will also read fluently with oral expression, and evaluate group discussions.

Fourth and fifth grade students will experience authentic literature in multiple genres, including poetry, folktales, nonfiction, fiction, biographies, fantasies and plays. Reading fluency will improve as students acquire the following skills:

- Understanding cause and effect
- Understanding plot development
- Identifying figurative language
- Sequencing events of a story
- Analyzing details
- Using context clues to enhance vocabulary
- Identifying characteristics of fiction
- Stating the author's purpose
- Creating graphic organizers
- Self-correcting while reading

In addition to the above skills, fifth graders will also be able to:

- Compare and contrast works of literature
- Distinguish fact from opinion
- Identify different literary genres
- Identify synonyms and antonyms
- Understand literary devices

In addition to using the basal textbook, students will have the opportunity to read 2 novels in literature circles.

Mathematics:

Textbook: Pearson/ Scott Foresman Mathematics (Illinois Standards version)

Students apply their math skills to solve problems during extended activities with hands-on activities. Extended open-ended problem solving skills are taught regularly throughout the year.

Fourth grade students will be able to:

- Identify place value
- Use four operations to compute decimal numbers, and whole numbers up to four digits
- Add and subtract fractions
- Identify, describe, and compare properties of points, lines, and two and three dimensional geometric shapes
- Describe and use patterns
- Measure and compare units of length, capacity, and weight
- Graph and analyze data
- Solve problems with one variable.

Fifth grade students will build on the above skills by learning to:

- Use all four operations with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions
- Solve multiple step word problems
- Use ratio, percent, and probability
- Determine appropriate formulas to measure and compare area and volume
- Construct figures and shapes
- Identify and use commutative and associative properties
- Collect, display, analyze, and interpret data

Science:

Textbook: Discovery Works by Houghton Mifflin

Students will use concrete, hands-on experiences to continue learn about science in the physical and natural world around them. Through observing, predicting, questioning, and explaining, fourth grade students will study living things, physical and chemical changes, properties of matter, electrical circuits and magnets, the water cycle and weather patterns, forms of erosion and conservation of natural resources.

Fifth grade students will study states of matter, energy, our solar system, plants and animals, the systems of the human body, and ecosystems.

Art:

Students in both grades will express themselves and communicate their ideas through a variety of art forms presented by their classroom teacher, using the art curriculum guidelines of the Joliet Diocese. They will use elements of art including line, light, perspective, color, texture, form, shape, and patterns.

Physical Education, Music, and Computer:

Classes are presented by special teachers. These are described in a later part of this Curriculum Guide entitled “Other Curriculum Areas.”

Homework:

Fourth and fifth grade students will be assigned homework as needed for practice and reinforcement as well as for the completion of special projects.

Parents can help by:

- Checking the assignment notebook daily
- Checking Edline for grade updates
- Modeling active participation in weekly liturgy, and daily prayer and service
- Showing an interest in homework and school activities
- Providing a quiet place and uninterrupted time to do homework
- Encouraging good nutrition, rest, and exercise
- Staying in touch with the school through e-mail, the school website, the school Facebook page, phone calls, and written notes.

Junior High Departmentalized Classes

Grades 6, 7, and 8:

In the junior high, classes are taught together in a daily paired block: religion and social studies, science and mathematics, reading and language arts. Students travel among three teachers on a team for the three core class blocks, as well as to “special classes” in PE, computers, and music. They stay with their homeroom teacher for “team time” on non-PE days, as well as art and library once each week.

Religion:

Students will learn more about the Catholic Faith through Scripture, prayer, discussion, and reflection about the Catholic Faith.

The text book series Blest Are We by Silver Burdett Ginn is used.

Religion lessons in sixth grade focus on the Trinity doctrine, the sacraments, service, morality, the Old Testament, and Church responsibility.

Seventh grade lessons extend these studies and to include the New Testament and the universality of the Church.

Lessons in eighth grade include Church history, study of major Church documents, family life as it relates to Church teachings and life choices, and emphasis on preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation.

The liturgy of the Mass is celebrated weekly. Students in all three grades have the opportunity to plan and assist in these liturgical celebrations during the year. Core values and beliefs of the Catholic faith are infused in the entire curriculum.

Social Studies:

Students in all three grades will prepare for their role as informed citizens of a democratic society by studying the following concepts grounded in the Catholic core values of peace and social justice:

Sixth grade:

- * geography and map skills
- * explorers
- * citizenship and American values
- * economic development
- * revolutions and independence

Seventh grade:

- * U.S. Constitution and Civil Rights
- * Illinois Constitution
- * five themes of geography

- * economic systems
- * global issues
- * U.S. history: Discovery to Civil War

Eighth grade:

- * U.S. History: Civil War to present day
- * economic systems
- * global issues
- * political systems and Catholic teachings

Students in 7th and 8th grades will participate in a Social Studies project fair once during those two years.

Language Arts / Literature:

The Language Arts program includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, and the appreciation of literature. The program emphasizes the development of skills that allow students to read with fluency, to read with comprehension, to interpret written material, to communicate well, and to listen and speak effectively. These acquired skills are applied and reinforced in all content areas.

In all three junior high grade levels, a diverse selection of literature is used to enhance student development of higher levels of reading fluency, comprehension, and inferential thinking. Skills develop and improve over the three years of junior high as students are presented with the following reading focus in each grade level:

Sixth grade:

- Applying word analysis and vocabulary skills
- Understanding the author's purpose in various literary forms
- Evaluating fact, opinion, and bias
- Understanding elements of plot
- Identifying characteristics of myths and fables, fantasy and legends
- Analyzing style and purpose

Seventh grade:

- All of the above, plus:
- Analyze character conflict
- Identify plot, characterization, setting, point of view, and conflict in different genres
- Appreciate and analyze both poetry and prose
- Identify purpose of various forms of figurative language

Eighth grade:

- All of the above, plus:
- Distinguish among genres
- Extrapolate and use various literary devices

In addition to literature in the basal language arts textbook, students are required to read three books independently and prepare a project-based report on each, one per trimester. Students

in grades 6 through 8 are also required complete one novel in small group literature circle format each trimester during class time.

Students in all three grades use writing to convey meaning, applying classroom instruction in grammar, spelling, mechanics, and the writing process (pre-writing, writing, peer conferring, revising, peer editing, final draft). Skills develop and improve over the three years of junior high as students are presented with the following writing focus in each grade level:

Sixth grade:

- Construction of an outline or graphic organizer during pre-writing
- Write multiple sequential paragraphs
- Write in multiple forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive essays, as well as poetry
- Learn and use research skills

Seventh grade:

- All of the above plus:
- Use the steps of the research process to write a research paper

Eighth grade:

- All of the above, plus:
- Write in a variety of creative modes

Junior high students will listen for understanding, follow directions, and respond appropriately to the speaker. Students will use acquired vocabulary to express opinions. They are expected to present material orally, make presentations to small groups, participate in small and large group discussions, and express their ideas clearly when speaking, read fluently with oral expression, and evaluate group discussions.

Mathematics:

Junior high students will acquire knowledge of mathematics and the ability to apply math skills to solve problems through extended, open-ended activities, and hands-on experiences integrated with science. Students in grades 6 through 8 who meet certain requirements may accelerate one grade level in mathematics and science, with the expectation of taking freshman level courses in algebra 1 and biology at JCA during their 8th grade year.

In mathematics, the emphasis at each grade level gradually shifts from number sense to algebraic reasoning, with the following skills mastered at each level:

Sixth grade:

- Know and apply all four operations to whole numbers, fractions, and decimals
- Identify and use number patterns and number theory to solve problems
- Compile, graph, compare, and analyze data
- Use ratio and proportion to solve problems

- Identify geometric figures, including points, rays, angles, lines, parallel and perpendicular lines, planes, and various polygons
- Measure, using both customary and metric systems
- Use formulas to find perimeter and area of 2-dimensional figures
- Use formulas, expressions, and equations
- Solve one-step equations and solve for an unknown

Seventh grade:

- All of the above, plus:
- Use powers and scientific notation
- Use percents in addition to ratio and proportion to solve problems
- Master positive and negative integers
- Simplify expressions using order of operations
- Solve 2-step equations
- Use formulas to find surface area and volume of 3-dimensional figures
- Identify characteristics of polygons and polyhedra

Eighth grade: (pre-algebra)

- All of the above, plus:
- Use measures of central tendency to compare sets of data
- Solve multi-step equations
- Simplify complex algebraic expressions
- Graph linear equations, using slope and intercepts
- Find and interpret the slope of a line
- Apply the four operations to algebraic equations
- Add and subtract polynomials
- Find square roots and simplify radical expressions

Science:

Students use concrete, hands-on experiences to understand science in the physical and natural world. Students identify problems, formulate and test hypotheses, and evaluate experimental results integrated with mathematics. Students in 7th and 8th grades will participate in a Science Fair once during those two years.

Sixth grade units of study, from Prentice Hall: Life Science, include:

- Cells and Heredity
- Diversity of Living things
- Human Biology and Health
- Ecology

Seventh grade units of study, from Prentice Hall, Earth Science, include:

- Exploring Planet Earth
- Earth's Changing Surface
- Earth's Waters
- Weather and Climate
- Astronomy

Eighth grade units of study, from Prentice Hall, Science Explorer, focus on chemistry and physics, and include:

- Chemical Building Blocks
- Chemical Interactions
- Motion, Forces, Energy
- Electricity and Magnetism
- Sound and Light

Art:

Students in junior high grades will express themselves and communicate their ideas through a variety of art forms presented by their classroom teacher, using the art curriculum guidelines of the Joliet Diocese. They will use elements of art including line, light, perspective, color, texture, form, shape, and patterns. In addition, they will learn how various cultures throughout history have influenced art. They will also investigate a variety of occupations associated with different art forms.

Eighth graders will study artists who have made significant contributions, and then visit the Art Institute of Chicago art museum to view the works of those artists.

Physical Education, Music, and Computer:

Classes are presented by special teachers. These are described in a later part of this Curriculum Guide entitled “Other Curriculum Areas.”

Homework:

Junior high students will be assigned homework as needed for practice and reinforcement as well as for the completion of special projects.

Parents can help by:

- Checking the assignment notebook daily
- Checking Edline for grade updates
- Modeling active participation in weekly liturgy, and daily prayer and service
- Showing an interest in homework and school activities
- Providing a quiet place and uninterrupted time to do homework
- Encouraging good nutrition, rest, and exercise
- Staying in touch with the school through e-mail, the school website, the school Facebook page, phone calls, and written notes.

Other Curriculum Areas

Physical Education:

All children receive instruction in physical education (PE): grades K-5 twice per week along with daily activity at recess; grades 6-8 three times per week with active “team time” team building activities on non-PE days, provided by the homeroom teachers.

The purpose of formal PE instruction is to develop basic motor and physical skills, to promote fitness for life through the enjoyment of recreational activities, and to learn essentials of teamwork and sportsmanship. The lower grades focus mainly on developing basic skills and playing simple games, with skill levels increasing as students get older.

The primary grades (K-3) lessons include fitness testing, basic ball handling skills in volleyball, basketball, soccer, tennis, and t-ball or whiffle ball. Cooperative games, parachutes, scooters, jump ropes, and an obstacle course are also used at the primary level.

Grades four and five include Presidential Fitness tests, more formal instruction in the strategies of team sports including volleyball, basketball, soccer, tennis, kickball and whiffle ball. Jump ropes, scooters, stacking cups, and juggling add to the enjoyment of physical activities.

Junior high PE units of study include the Presidential Fitness Tests; skills and games of basketball, volleyball, and tennis; juggling, team handball, flicker ball, pillo-polo, jump rope, eclipse ball, and a unit on rhythm and dance culminating in a spring Musicale song and dance performance.

Music:

All grades K-8 receive weekly music instruction. Emphasis is on liturgical, seasonal, and patriotic vocal music. Students learn to read music and learn basic music theory of time signatures and keys. They also hear melodies, harmonies, and a variety of rhythms. Grades 2-8 receive several weeks of instruction in playing the recorder as they improve their music reading skills and apply the music concepts learned during the year.

Children in grades K-5 present an annual Advent program and a spring Musical Review. Children in grades 6-8 present a Christmas program/ talent show and a spring Musicale song and dance program.

Computer Technology:

Students in second grade receive weekly computer instruction in the computer lab; grades 3-8 receive instruction twice weekly. The computer curriculum includes lessons on ethical use of technology and Internet safety, instruction in Microsoft Word, Power Point, and Excel spreadsheets and graphing as well as computer draw and digital art, use of interactive software, and extensive opportunities for older students to work on content area research projects and papers.

Library/ Learning Resource Center:

Our library books are upgraded using profits from our three book fairs as well as donations from private individuals. Homeroom teachers have a scheduled weekly class for grades K-8 in which students may check out books, use research materials, or enjoy extended pleasure reading time.

Flex Classes

Intervention Classes:

Grades K-3 have a uniformly scheduled one hour daily reading class, followed by a half-hour flex class that allows students who need remediation in specific reading skills to go to a primary level teacher who specializes in providing that particular reading intervention. Students who do not need interventions read leveled books at their ability level in small groups during the flex time.

Grades 4 and 5 provide flexible grouping for students who need remediation during the half hour flex portion of their daily reading classes which are scheduled to coincide each day. Students who do not need remediation will form reading clubs in a “Great Books” format to read novels of choice for enjoyment and limited discussion in small groups during this daily half-hour.

Grades 6-8 provide a half-hour Flex class three days per week for students who need reading or math interventions. (The other two days per week will consist of a study hall for all students and a make-up class for the class missed during weekly Mass.) Those who do not need remediation in either reading or math will attend Book Clubs or other Clubs during Enrichment time.

Clubs During Enrichment Time:

Students in grades 6-8 who are meeting expectations in reading and mathematics attend a book Club or other club three times per week during the Enrichment time.

- **Book Clubs:** students may form small book clubs of 3 to 5 members to read a novel together for enjoyment or as preparation for the Battle of the Books competition.
- **Giant Times News Club:** Junior high students select writings from students in the journalism flex class, and also write, edit, and publish the monthly giant Times news, sold to students for \$.25 to defray the costs of printing the school newspaper. Emphasis is on news in the school and featuring student creative writing.
- **Yearbook:** Junior high students compile and layout the pages for the annual “Memory Maker” Yearbook for the school.
- **Ecology “E” Club:** students work together to encourage “going green” with various promotions for recycling multiple items including paper, cardboard, aluminum, plastic, ink and toner cartridges, old cell phones, etc.
- **Drama Club:** students work to put on simple theatrical performances and/or “Readers’ Theater” twice a year.

Extra-Curricular Clubs:

Extra-curricular clubs for grades 6-8, held outside of regular class hours, enhance the curriculum. They are the following:

- **Safety Patrol:** 8th graders provide safety crossing assistance before and after school as a service to the school, with a field trip as a reward at the end of the year.
- **Children's Choir:** students in grades 1-8 practice weekly after school to participate in the Children's choir at Sunday 10:30 Mass. Leadership is provided by our parish choir director.
- **Student Council:** Students in grades 4-8 hold campaigns and elections during school hours twice yearly for homeroom representation and officers among the junior high students. The Council meets at lunch time with the staff moderator to plan activities and dances for students.

Fairs:

The Science Fair and Social Studies Fair are held bi-annually during alternating years.

- Students in grades 6-8 do a Science Fair project according to the guidelines of the Illinois Junior Academy of Science. Prior to the presentation, students are given guidance during class time in the selection of a topic, research methods, experimentation methods, and presentation of the project. Presentations are timed so that projects can be displayed during the Catholic Schools Week Open House at the end of January.
- Students in grades 7-8 do a Social Studies Fair project. Prior to the presentation, students are given guidance during class time in the selection of a topic, research methods, and presentation of the project. Presentations are timed so that projects can be displayed during the Catholic Schools Week Open House at the end of January.

Field Trips / Service Learning

Field trips and service learning projects are an important enhancement to the daily core curriculum. Every grade level has a field trip outside of the Joliet area, including trips to Brookfield or Lincoln Park zoos, the Field Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Shedd Aquarium, the Adler Planetarium, and other sites of interest.

In addition, students of every grade do a service trip to Villa Franciscan, a local nursing home, to provide help with seasonal activities for the residents. During homeroom, art, or team time, students also complete service projects that include cards for nursing home residents, cards and gift packs for our military troops, survival packs and fundraisers for Catholic Relief Services to assist victims of natural disasters, and food drives for local Catholic Charities.

Students grow socially, spiritually, and emotionally by putting their Faith into action. Through service projects, they internalize our school motto: "One in faith, one in service, one in Christ."