

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

What an exciting year! St. Mary's Kindergarten students begin the journey through Lower School with a tremendous year of growth, development and learning. Students continue to develop social skills introduced in Preschool, while being challenged to understand responsibilities within an elementary classroom.

Language Arts

Students in Kindergarten know about letters, words, and sounds. They apply this knowledge to read simple sentences, and leave Kindergarten reading Grade level appropriate books. They are beginning to understand what they are reading and can identify the basic facts and ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed. They use comprehension strategies such as generating and responding to questions and comparing new information to what is already known. Instructional, guided practice is paramount at this level.

Kindergarten students are beginning to write to express themselves. They are able to write words and brief sentences that are legible. The six traits of writing are used as a basis for the writing program and the IB Units of Inquiry provide the content for their writing. Students write clear and coherent sentences that develop a central idea. They are able to write brief narratives and descriptions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process and their work includes prewriting, drafting, revising, and conferencing with teachers. Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Vocabulary, grammar, conventions and word study are imbedded into the program.

Math

Kindergarten Everyday Mathematics is used at St. Mary's. It is a program created by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This program is based on research and experience that shows that young children are capable of far more mathematics learning in Kindergarten than was previously believed, provided that the content is presented and explored in age-appropriate ways. Over the course of the year, your child will do many hands-on activities related to a range of mathematical topics, including counting, numeration, measurement, geometry, patterns, sorting, data collecting, and calculator use. Classroom routines such as keeping track of the days of school, helping with attendance, and observing and graphing weather and temperature give children real-life opportunities to develop and refine mathematics skills and become "math thinkers."

IB Units of Inquiry

Students in Kindergarten explore six units of inquiry throughout the year. Each unit is approximately six weeks long and is transdisciplinary in that it incorporates all subject areas. These units are in-depth investigations into important ideas and require a high level of involvement on the part of the students.

The IB units of Inquiry for Kindergarten include the following:

- **Nations of Neighbors:** The central idea is that "Communities all over the world depend on people helping people." Students will inquire into the make-up of a community, the building of a community, different types of communities and the roles within a community.

- **Out of This World:** The central idea is that “The earth has many elements necessary for life not found anywhere else in space.” Students will inquire into elements necessary for life, elements of the planets, sun and moon, constellations and living in space.
- **Going, Going, Gone:** The central idea is that “Studying living things from the past help us to understand the present and affect the future.” Students will inquire into the meaning of extinct and endangered, identifying animals that fall into these categories, and our responsibility in preserving the planet.
- **I’m In Love with Books:** The central idea is that “Readers make personal connections to authors for a variety of reasons.” Students will inquire into the elements of a story and how we connect to books and authors.
- **Down on the Farm:** The central idea is that “Farms from around the world meet our needs in many different ways.” Students will inquire into the characteristics of a farm, different types of farms and product movement.
- **Happy Body, Happy Me:** The central idea is that “Food choices we make influence our health. Students will inquire into nutrition, healthy vs. unhealthy foods and how they affect your body, the food pyramid and a balanced diet.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Spanish

Students attend Spanish two times per week. Kindergarten Spanish is an introduction to the wonderful world of Spanish. Students will begin to read, write and speak in Spanish, developing basic communication skills.

Physical Education

Students attend P.E. two times per week. The program follows the California State Framework and the IB Program Standards, while moving into a predominately fitness based curriculum. Kindergarten P.E. emphasizes “How I Move in My Environment”, along with developing motor skills and patterns.

Music

Students attend music one time per week. The program follows the PYP Music Standards, which concentrates on teaching fundamental music skills such as rhythm, pitch, dynamics, tempo, and form. Students also learn to read and respond to Western musical notation, and to create music using both written and unwritten methods.

Visual Arts

Students attend visual arts one time per week. The Kindergarten program follows the PYP Visual Arts Standards focuses on encouraging students to experiment a wide variety of media to explore and express ideas.

Technology

Students attend technology one time per week. The Kindergarten program allows students to learn new skills such as opening and closing programs, locating icons on the desktop, basic keyboarding, use of the mouse and toolbars, and how to access internet sites.

Christian Enrichment

Students attend Christian Enrichment class one time per week. Curriculum revolves around the IB Learner Profiles and Attitudes and how they relate to spiritual and moral issues. Through regular weekly Chapel and an additional weekly meeting, students develop their themes interactively, using Bible references, the Character Traits, and class discussion to clarify. This program is intended to provide a solid base of character and spiritual education and is reflective, engaging, and supportive of Christian values. Students maintain a journal of their notes and reflections.