



ST. MARY'S
An IB World School

**CURRICULUM
GUIDE
2010-2011**

*St. Mary's is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School
dedicated to inquiry-based academic excellence, developing
well-rounded, confident children who flourish in a creative
environment founded on Christian values.*

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INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Forty years ago, a group of talented teachers from international schools around the world created the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. What started as a single programme for internationally minded students has today grown to be three programmes for students aged 3 to 19, experienced by half a million students from state and private schools in over 139 countries.

As the only private school in Orange County to offer the IB Programme from Preschool through Eighth Grade, St. Mary's mission embodies the importance of developing strong and capable leaders through programs that prepare students for positive interaction in a global setting. Through experiences in the classroom, field studies, participation in arts, music and athletic programs, and engagement in community service activities, students experience the fundamentals of leadership.

St. Mary's is authorized as An IB World School and offers the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP). The PYP and MYP both emphasize the dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, independent critical thinking, and the appreciation for the richness of life through international awareness.

Primary Years Programme

→ **For students aged 3-12**, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

Middle Years Programme

→ **For students aged 11-16**, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, becoming critical reflective thinker.

Both programmes:

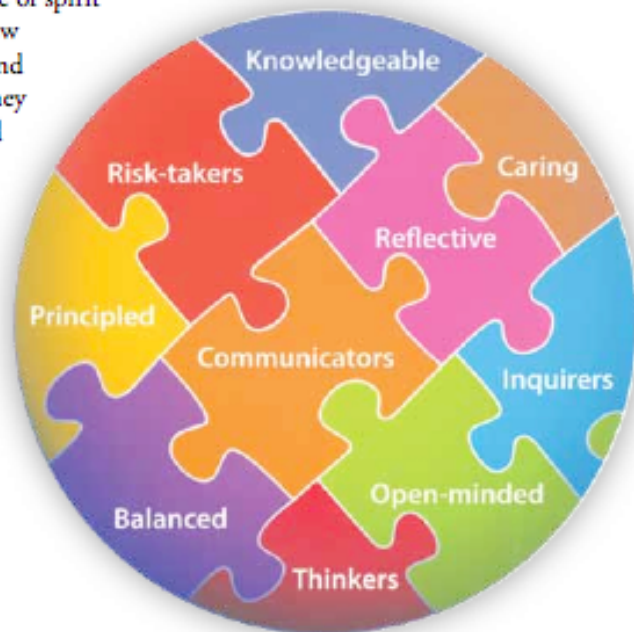
- have a strong international dimensional.
- draw on content from educational cultures around the world.
- require study across a broad range of subjects.
- include both individual subjects and and transdisciplinary areas.
- give special emphasis to learning languages.
- focus on developing the skills of learning.
- provide opportunities for individual and collaborative planning and research.
- encourage students to become responsible members of their community.

IB LEARNER PROFILE

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB Learners Strive to be:

- **Inquirers:** They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
- **Knowledgeable:** They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
- **Thinkers:** They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
- **Communicators:** They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
- **Principled:** They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
- **Open-minded:** They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
- **Caring:** They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
- **Risk-takers:** They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
- **Balanced:** They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
- **Reflective:** They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.



PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

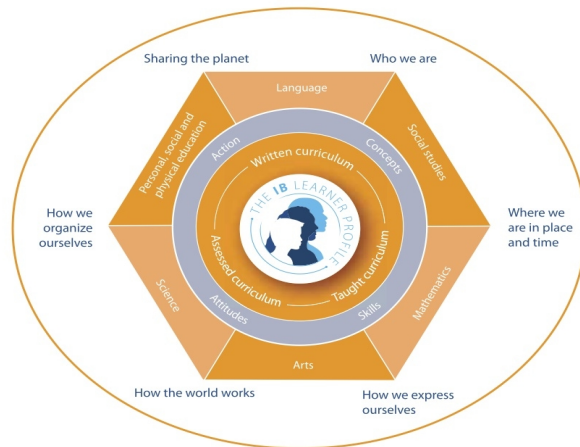
The IB Primary Years Programme, for students aged 3 to 12, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

The programme:

- encourages international-mindedness in IB students.
- encourages a positive attitude to learning by engaging students in inquiries and developing their awareness of the process of learning so that they become lifelong learners.
- reflects real life by encouraging learning beyond traditional subjects with meaningful, in-depth inquiries into real issues

In Preschool through Grade Five, students explore six units of inquiry each year. These six to eight-week transdisciplinary units are investigations into important ideas and require a high level of involvement on the part of the students. In each Grade level, the themes revolve around the following topics:

- ***Who we are***
- ***Where we are in place and time***
- ***How we express ourselves***
- ***How the world works***
- ***How we organize ourselves***
- ***Sharing the planet***



Since these ideas are related to the world and beyond school, our students see the relevance of the content and connect with it in ways that are engaging and challenging. This helps them to reflect on their responsibility as learners and become actively involved with their learning.

In addition to the critical thinking skills developed through these transdisciplinary units, students also learn all the skills necessary to effectively communicate their understandings. Reading, writing, mathematics and information skills are embedded into the entire program. The school also offers exploratory classes in music, Spanish, physical education, art and computer. By blending IB learning and traditional skills learning in the classroom, our Preschool and Lower School students are well prepared to transition into the Middle School at St. Mary's.

MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME

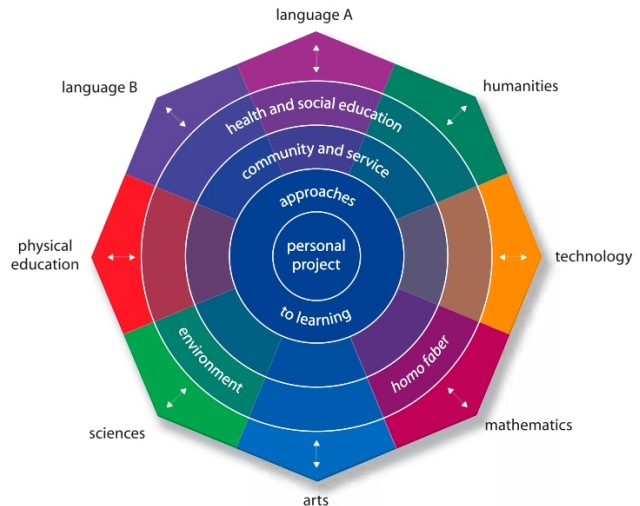
The IB Middle Years Programme, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers.

The programme:

- encourages international-mindedness in IB students, starting with a foundation in their own language and culture.
- encourages a positive attitude to learning by challenging students to solve problems, show creativity and resourcefulness and participate actively in their communities.

The curriculum

The curriculum consists of eight subject groups integrated through five areas of interaction that provide a framework for learning within and across the subjects. The diverse curriculum integrates mathematics, including pre-algebra, algebra, science, the humanities, geography, Christian studies, world languages including Spanish, French and Mandarin, physical education, health, the arts, music, technology and information skills, plus a rich variety of exploratory and elective opportunities. In the final year of the programme, students also engage in a personal project, which allows them to demonstrate the understandings and skills they have developed throughout the programme. The middle school grades prepare students to meet the demands of the world while living by the guidelines of respect and responsibility.



- reflects real life by providing a framework that allows students to see the connections among the subjects themselves, and between the subjects and real issues.
- supports the development of communication skills to encourage inquiry, understanding, language acquisition, and to allow student reflection and expression.
- emphasizes, through the learner profile, the development of the whole student—physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically.

Throughout the IB Middle Years Programme students and parents will come to develop an understanding of the IB learner profile. The ten aspirational qualities of the learner profile inspire and motivate the work of teachers, students and schools, providing a statement of the aims and values of the IB and a definition of what we mean by “international-mindedness”. IB learners strive to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced and reflective.

SERVICE LEARNING

The St. Mary's Service Learning programs foster the development of an intrinsic mindset in each student to connect and engage with communities, locally or globally. As students identify and work to address a given community's needs, they grow socially and spiritually, and develop strong leadership skills.

Through instruction and guidance in the classroom, Preschool through Fifth Grade teachers provide the initial introduction for students' connectivity and related responsibility to their community. Teachers actively connect curriculum with community projects in order to provide a meaningful and relevant learning experience for all students. Through role modeling from teachers and other members of the community, students will learn concrete examples of the processes involved in creating, planning, promoting, and executing a project or service.

Service Learning provides for the transfer of ownership in developing community projects from teacher to student. In Middle School, Sixth through Eighth Grade students are capable of taking complete ownership of their learning as they develop all aspects of a project, from inception to completion, with support and guidance from their advisor over the course of the Middle School experience. This process allows St. Mary's students to boost academic achievement, foster a commitment to civic involvement, develop personal and social skills needed for the global work environment, and apply knowledge of content and curriculum.

Through Service Learning, all of our students are given opportunities to use practical skills associated with higher order thinking such as analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking while developing character traits and leadership skills. Service Learning is an effective way of promoting higher levels of learning while simultaneously linking students' academic and career goals with service to the community. The immediate result of the program is student interest and ownership, while the long-term effect is an increased level of citizenship, self-worth, character and leadership traits in the students.

St. Mary's commitment to our Service Learning programs allows students the opportunity to create a meaningful representation of their complete education while positively affecting the community and developing essential life skills.



ST. MARY'S

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PRESCHOOL

Jean Piaget, leading cognitive theorist, theorized that a child's mental models, or cognitive structures, are based on the child's activities; engagement makes meaning. Free, unstructured play is healthy and, in fact, essential for helping children reach important social, emotional and cognitive developmental milestones. Piaget's theory is based on the idea that the developing child builds cognitive structures known as mental maps, or schemas, for understanding and responding to physical experiences.

St. Mary's offers an inquiry based program allowing the students to reflect on their learning in order to develop their own understanding of the world. Through teacher directed activities and child initiated play experiences, the student adjusts their mental model to accommodate their new knowledge. Our focus is on creating inquiry based, engaging activities taught in a transdisciplinary curriculum which also involves an important element: play. "Play is the work of the child." – Jean Piaget

Through play, the child learns to negotiate the world around them. Their imagination and creativity flourishes as they role play and invent games and the rules that govern. Through a fine tuned balance of academics and play, St. Mary's students become life-long learners prepared to conquer the challenges that lie ahead of them.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Two-Year-Old Classroom

St. Mary's offers a dynamic two year old program that focuses on the development of the child in relation to perception, motor skills, cognition, language, emotions, and social skills. Through a warm and loving environment, St. Mary's youngest students are able to learn about themselves developing autonomy while learning about the world around them and where they fit into that world.

Attachment is a complex, ongoing process that lasts a lifetime. Learning how to create attachment to others such as friends and family is an essential part to developing a sense of self and social skills in order to be successful in learning. Assisting the young children in creating bonds between the teachers and peers assists in the development of attachment which affects mental, social, and emotional development. By providing an environment where the children can trust that their basic needs will be met and they will be loved promotes strong attachment development in the children.

Perception is the ability to take in and organize sensory experiences and sensory information provides an important link to the other areas of development. Children learn to use their sensory experiences to learn about their world. St. Mary's provides a very sensory rich environment using music, stories, cooking projects, art, and visual object to stimulate the different senses.

Motor skills are divided in to fine motor skills, small movements of the body, like picking up a cotton ball, and gross motor skills, large movements of the body like running. Both fine and gross motor skills are important to the daily functioning of people. Fine motor skills and muscles are developed and strengthened through activities such as cutting a variety of mediums (such as green beans, spaghetti, yarn, paper), lacing, the use of nesting blocks, painting using different modalities (Q-tips, cotton balls, small paint brushes), using clay and clay tools, using small objects like tweezers to pick up and move other small objects like beads. Gross motor skills and muscles are developed when the student is engaged in our outside curriculum. The students are provided tricycles, balance boards, a climbing structure and room to run and jump while outside. When inside the classroom, the students are engaged in activities such as dancing with scarves, banging large drums, and hammering to aide in large motor developing and motor planning.

The process of gathering information, organizing it, and using it is the essence of cognition. Knowing and understanding comes from active involvement with people and materials. Young children are naturally active, interactive, and learning through their environment. They seek experiences that are interesting to them and that eventually lead to problems solving. St. Mary's promotes cognitive development by inviting and encouraging exploration in an environment rich in sensory experiences. When given the opportunity to play with a variety of materials as they wish, children will encounter problems such as how to make a large object fit in a small space. Allowing the students to explore the materials and manipulate them to solve these cognitive problems promotes cognitive development. Young children learn through constructing knowledge, meaning, by taking what they already know about an object and applying it to a problem, they can construct new knowledge about the new object and problem being presented to them. It is through this construction of knowledge that cognition is enhanced. By providing our students with a variety of materials and allowing them a degree of freedom to explore the objects and materials, they are developing a new knowledge daily. Our students are provided with materials in science, math, language, dramatic play, art, and music to allow for their cognitive development.

Math

Color mixing, cooking, planting and gardening, observing light and shadows, learning about plants and animals through observation and literature, and beginning to use scientific vocabulary are all ways in which our young students are learning about their environment and scientific principles.

Science

Counting songs and games, classifying objects by attribute, exploring shapes and colors, and using math vocabulary to describe their immediate environment (such as inside, outside, above, below, next to, behind, in front, up, down) are ways we introduce our students to math concepts. Providing a variety of blocks and materials allows for the development of spatial awareness and architectural concepts.

The Arts

Dramatic arts allow students to express themselves through creativity and imagination. They will use varying styles of drama to explore concepts within the units of inquiry as they are introduced by the teacher. Students will act, sing, dance and role play as an individual and in groups.

Art is incorporated daily through many different modalities such as using scissors, glue, crayons, markers, paint, chalk, oil pastels, or charcoal and all on different mediums such as cloth material, newsprint, foil, wax paper, or butcher paper.

Music

Music includes the exploration of sound and the expressive use of musical elements. Students will join together in musical activities using their voices, bodies and simple instruments to develop concepts about sound and musical awareness. They will participate both individually and in groups. Students will have opportunities for practice, and consistent exposure to music. They will begin to develop an awareness and appreciation of music from different cultures.

Language

Language includes both expressive and receptive language. Expressive language is the ability to communicate your needs and feelings to others. Receptive language is hearing and understanding what others are saying. Both receptive and expressive language is important in a child's development and is fostered daily in our 2 year old preschool. Engaging in dialogue daily, creating monologues, discussing events both past and future, telling stories, singing songs, creating rhymes and poems, reading books both individually and in groups, asking questions and encouraging our students to ask questions, listening to the students and summarizing for understanding, and helping our students listen to their peers are all ways in which we foster language development in our program.

Helping young children recognize their own feelings and cope with them contribute to the child's inner sense of self-direction and competence. Sometimes people want to label feelings as "good" or "bad". However, all feelings are good; they carry energy, have purpose, and can provide us with messages that are important to our sense of self. Through guidance, our programs assist children in identifying their emotions and feelings and validating how they feel. Children feel all the same emotions that adults feel at this young age; however, they don't always understand what they are feeling (such as frustration, embarrassment, elation, excitement, separation anxiety). By empowering our young students to understand their feelings, we are empowering them to be confident and communicate how they are feeling which leads to problem solving and peer relationship development.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Three & Four-Year-Old Classrooms

Language

In preschool, students are introduced to letters and phonemes. Through stories, games, and direct instruction, preschool students will gain letter recognition and phonemic awareness. Reading to young children is an essential tool for early literacy. In both large and small group, Preschool children are read to throughout the day from a variety of genre. Through stories, students strengthen their ability to rhyme, sequence, and demonstrate reading comprehension.

Through the above instruction strategies, Preschool students will begin to experiment with print materials, recognize and create rhymes, recognize and begin to spell their first name, begin to recall and re-tell stories, dictate sentences about life events and stories, and begin to show an interest in writing.

Math

Numeracy is an important skill for young children. Rote counting, number recognition, patterning and measuring through standard and non-standard units of measurement is the core of our math curriculum. Students are introduced to math through hands on activities with the use of manipulatives for counting, sequencing and patterning, as well as activities such as cooking and measuring for an interdisciplinary approach to teach math concepts.

Through hands on activities, students will learn to compare two sets of objects and identify which set is equal to, more than, or less than the other. They will begin to count numbers to 20, begin to identify, sort and classify objects by attribute and identify objects that do not belong. Students will begin to use math vocabulary such as longer, shorter, heavier, empty, full, next to, above, below, behind, up and down when describing their environmental boundaries and position of objects.

Science

Science is an abstract concept for young children; however, through the use of our garden, along with art and sensory activities, science comes to life. Interacting in the garden is a hands on way to learn about plants and what they need to grow, and why we need plants. Through cooking, art, and sensory activities, the students are introduced to the concepts of how materials change such as through color mixing and cooking. Through the use of ramps, the children learn how to negotiate through the world of physics and gravity.

Throughout the year, students will be provided the opportunity to observe environmental changes due to seasonal changes, care for the environment, begin to understand the life cycle of plants and observe how they change over time, identify the different parts of plants the purpose plants serve in the environment, classify materials by similarities and differences, explore how things move and begin to ask scientific questions in order to formulate predictions and record observations while communicating what happened.

Social Studies

Preschool students will gain an understanding of people and their lives, focusing on themselves, their friends and families and their community. They will gain an increasing awareness of themselves in relation to the various groups to which they belong. They will gain a sense of place, and the reasons why particular places are important to people.

Through our IB units of “Who Am I? Who Are You?” and “Tell Me a Story”, students will begin to understand that events occur in order, identify what places in their community are like, understand how to plan for a trip, recognize similarities and differences between people, understand that family and friends should care for one another, and begin to share their opinions respectfully.

The Arts

Art is an important component to our daily curriculum as it allows each child to develop in their imagination and creativity as well as provide an additional means to express their emotions. Each day, unstructured art is available to the students through the art/writing center in addition to a planned art activity. We focus on process driven art rather than product driven to allow all our students the ability to plan and create a piece of art they are engaged in and are proud of at the completion of their work.

Dramatic play is another essential art form in the preschool classroom. Through dramatic play, children are provided the opportunity to role play. Through role play, children take on roles of family members, peers, teachers, and learn to make sense of the world through their experience. Language confidence and acquisition is an important component to dramatic play as they interact with their peers in a variety of roles and settings. In order to continue in dramatic play development, the theme of our dramatic play changes throughout the year, often supporting our current unit of inquiry.

Music

Music allows the child to learn concepts such as rhythm, melody, and pace in a fun and interactive way. Music is incorporated throughout the day with the availability of musical instruments, such as rhythm sticks, drums, and shakers, in the classroom as well as singing together as a group in circle time. Music is also a means to teach concepts such as numeracy and literacy and is integrated into our core curriculum.

Gross Motor Skills and the Outside Curriculum

Through an abundance of materials provided for outside play such as bikes, climbing structure, balls, and organized games, our students are strengthening their large muscles, core strength, and balance. In addition to the daily materials provided, St. Mary’s provides additional outside activities to ensure each child is engaged during recess. These activities might include easel painting, gardening, or dramatic play.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are the small muscles needed to learn how to write. Through the use of clay, cutting practice on a variety of materials, using tweezers, art, and lacing activities, our students are strengthening those necessary muscles daily. Once a student has demonstrated strong fine motor skills, we will begin to teach proper pencil grip leading to writing success.

IB Units of Inquiry

Preschool students are engaged in four units of inquiry within the school year. The four units are transdisciplinary in nature in that the units encompass all academic and social disciplines essential for the child to be prepared for Junior Kindergarten and life. The units of inquiry for Preschool are: “Who Am I? Who Are You?” With a central idea of “similarities and differences make us special” engages the students in inquiry of who they are, how they are similar and different from their peers, why each child is special.

- **From Here to There:** The central idea for this unit is “taking a trip requires planning and preparation”. Students inquire into the concept of taking trips, why people take trips, what people need to take on a trip, and how they might travel.
- **Tell Me a Story:** This unit of inquiry is so literature rich. The central idea is “people express themselves through creativity and imagination”. Through the use of old favorites and new stories, students are introduced to the literary arts of folklore, poetry, storytelling as an art, and engaging in creating their own stories.
- **How Does Your Garden Grow?:** The central idea for this unit is “plants change over time”. We teach this unit in the spring when we can spend a lot of time in our Preschool garden planting and harvesting vegetables and learning how plants grow and change over time through a hands on unit. The students will inquire into the life cycle of plants, what people and animals get from plants, and how we help plants grow.

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

Four & Five-Year-Old Classrooms

Language

In Jr. Kindergarten (JK), the St. Mary's program builds upon what was taught in Preschool. St. Mary's utilizes the Orton-Gillingham method to teach students the building blocks of reading. This model allows the teachers to teach not only the letters, the sounds, and how to write them, but also how to blend consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. Learning how to blend three letter words is the beginning of reading instruction. In addition to Orton-Gillingham, St. Mary's utilizes Handwriting Without Tears as the method of instruction for proper letter formation and proper grip of the pencil. This program provides the students with a multitude of materials to begin the proper writing of the letters. On a daily basis, students are engaged in language activities that include teacher read stories from a variety of genre, rhyming, reading comprehension, dictation journals, and language manipulation. Through games, manipulatives, collaborative projects, and direct instruction, the students gain concrete knowledge of upper and lower case letter recognition.

Throughout the year and using a multitude of instructional practices, JK students will understand that listening is important in small and large groups, listen with increasing concentration, listen to a variety of genre, identify main events and relevant points in a story, follow multi-step directions and work collaboratively in a group. Students will learn to spell simple words, rhyme, blend sounds into words, make predictions about a story and understand the different elements within a story such as the characters, the conflict, and the resolution, identify the purpose of the author and the illustrator, and begin to tell their own stories both with and without picture cards.

Math

In JK, math is taught through a hands-on approach in which students are constructing meaning and concept, through increasing levels of abstraction. The teaching of math is taught in relevant and realistic contexts within the math areas of numeracy, algebra, data, measurement, geometry, and mathematical reasoning.

Students in JK will learn to compare and contrast sets of objects, begin to rote count and read whole numbers to 100, begin to write whole numbers to at least 20, begin to understand the concept of estimation, create describe and extend patterns, begin to understand the purpose of graphing data, begin to understand the concept of time through the use of the calendar and understand the sequence of the week and months in the year. Students will also begin to measure through standard and non-standard units of measurement and learn to identify and classify objects according attributes and explain why certain objects do not belong. Block play is essential in order to strengthen student's spatial awareness and achievement on spatial skills tests. Allowing students to build with blocks of different materials, sizes, and non-standard means reinforces their physical and spatial awareness skills.

Science

JK students are introduced to the concept of science through the study of the four strands of study provided by IB, the four strands are: living things, earth and space, materials and matter and forces and energy. JK students will develop their observational skills by using their senses to gather and record information, and they will use their observations to identify simple patterns, make prediction and discuss their ideas. They will begin to explore the way objects function and the basic cause and effect

relationship. Students will examine change over varying time periods and know that different variables and condition may affect change. Students will communicate their ideas using scientific vocabulary modeled throughout the year.

JK students will learn to identify the similarities and differences between themselves and other living things, begin to understand the life cycle of plants and animals, explore animal habitats and how plants and animals affect the environment around us and our responsibility towards maintaining their natural environment. Students will begin to observe how materials change over time and how some materials will cause that change. Building with ramps allows the children learn how to negotiate through the world of physics and gravity and begin to understand what makes things move. Science experiments exploring buoyancy, gravity, change, forces of nature, and living things are integrated into our curriculum throughout the year. The students learn to ask scientific questions, make a hypothesis, record their observations and discuss what happened. The culminating Science Faire in the Spring allows our students to showcase their scientific skills of how to form a hypothesis, conduct an experiment while observing what happens, and finally drawing and recording conclusions.

Social Studies

Students will gain an understanding of people and their lives focusing on themselves, their friends and families, and their immediate environment. They will gain an increasing awareness of themselves in relation to the various groups to which they belong. They will gain a sense of place and the reasons why particular places are important. They will also gain a sense of time, and recognize important events in their own life and how time and change affect people. There are three strands of social studies JK students will inquire into: history, geography and society. Within the three strands, JK students will begin to understand that events occur in an order, use and understand common words for the passing of time, know the days of the week and month, and discuss events in the past. Students will understand and identify what places are like and where they are in relation to where the student is and begin to understand that different places have different features. The students will begin to recognize what is fair, unfair, right, and wrong and begin to make diplomatic decisions. They will begin to recognize how their behavior affects others and the community around them.

The Arts

Art is an important component to our daily curriculum as it allows each child to develop in their imagination and creativity as well as provide an additional means to express their emotions. Each day, unstructured art is available to the students through the art/writing center in addition to a planned art activity. We focus on process driven art rather than product driven to allow all our students the ability to plan and create a piece of art they are engaged in and are proud of at the completion of their work. In JK, we begin to introduce the students to classic artists in history such as Van Gough, Kandinsky, and Cassatt. By learning about the artists, their medium of choice and common themes they produced, the students begin to recreate famous works while still adding their personal touch to their art.

Dramatic play is another essential art form in the preschool classroom. Through dramatic play, children are provided the opportunity to role play. Through role play, children take on roles of family members, peers, teachers, and learn to make sense of the world through their experience. Language confidence and acquisition is an important component to dramatic play as they interact with their peers in a variety of roles and settings. In order to continue in dramatic play development, the theme of our dramatic play changes throughout the year, often supporting our current unit of inquiry.

Music

Music allows the child to learn concepts such as rhythm, melody, and pace in a fun and interactive way. Music is incorporated throughout the day with the availability of musical instruments, such as rhythm sticks, drums, and shakers, in the classroom as well as singing together as a group in circle time. Music is also a means to teach concepts such as numeracy and literacy and is integrated into our core curriculum.

Gross Motor Skills and the Outside Curriculum

Through an abundance of materials provided for outside play such as bikes, climbing structure, balls, and organized games, our students are strengthening their large muscles, core strength, and balance. In addition to the daily materials provided, St. Mary's provides additional outside activities to ensure each child is engaged during recess. These activities might include easel painting, gardening, or dramatic play.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are the small muscles needed to learn how to write. Through the use of clay, cutting practice on a variety of materials, using tweezers, art, and lacing activities, our students are strengthening those necessary muscles daily. Once a student has demonstrated strong fine motor skills, we will begin to teach proper pencil grip leading to writing success.

IB Units of Inquiry

Through the use of a transdisciplinary IB programme, Jr. Kindergarten students are learning about the world around them and where they fit within that world. There are four units of inquiry taught in the year and are transdisciplinary in nature in that they encompass all areas of learning and developmental growth. The units of inquiry for Jr. Kindergarten are:

- **Peace Be With You:** The central idea is “when we express ourselves in a positive way and conflict is managed, peace is created. This unit is the first unit taught in the year and sets the tone from the first day of school. The students inquire into conflict resolution, what peace means, and how our choices contribute to a peaceful environment. Throughout this unit, the students become very good communicators and conflict is minimal as they begin to collaborate and work together to solve problems.
- **Energize Me:** this unit of inquiry is all about healthy choices and being a healthy person. The central idea of “healthy choices energize me” leads the students to inquire into nutrition, the importance of exercise, and how healthy choices affect how they feel. There is a lot of gross motor development within this unit as the students learn to build their own obstacle courses and teach others how to navigate them, begin to climb the rock wall and do yoga.
- **I'm A Scientist:** The central idea is “through observation and investigation, we learn about how our world works.” The students are deeply engaged in a rich science and math curriculum throughout this unit as they inquire into the world around us through investigation of forces and energy, materials and matter, and living things. Students learn to formulate a hypothesis, record their observations, and verbalize a conclusion with all their science experiments. The students

also engage in a Science Faire as the culminating summative assessment for this unit of inquiry. The Science Faire allows the students to showcase their “scientist” skills and abilities by teaching others about their science experiments.

- **Buzz on Bugs:** This is a student favorite as it’s all about insects. The central idea is “we need to understand and respect insects and how they help our environment”. The students inquire into the life cycles of insects, insects in their natural habitat, how insects affect us, and how we can respect insects.

PRESCHOOL TECHNOLOGY

All Preschool classrooms are equipped with video cameras, picture cameras, and light tables. Light tables provide the opportunity to explore science and light through engaging hands on activities. A variety of materials are placed on the light table such as x-rays and glass encased insects and small animals. Students are introduced to technology and curriculum content through interactive media to aide in learning and retention. Video and picture cameras allow teachers to capture students engaging in activities throughout the day. This equipment provides the means to create digital and video reflections for both students and parents. Videos capture the true essence of student learning at this young age, including dramatic play, social interaction with peers, creative interpretation, and making cognitive connections using ramps.

The Jr. Kindergarten program features three computers in each classroom and a Smart Table, used as an interactive computer for students in small groups. Learning games are designed and developed based on the current IB Unit of Inquiry. The Smart Table offers another method of visual and hands on instruction, encouraging students to actively participate in their own learning. The Smart Table and learning games reinforce concepts that are being taught in the curriculum and create a fun, social and interactive learning center in the classroom.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

St. Mary's is proud to be both an IB World School with a Preschool that is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is both an accrediting agency and advocate for young children. Part of being an NAEYC accredited school is being able to participate in Week of the Young Child (WOYC). NAEYC describes WOYC as:

“The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association, with nearly 90,000 members and a network of over 300 local, state, and regional Affiliates. The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

NAEYC first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971, recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life. The Week of the Young Child is a time to plan how we--as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation--will better meet the needs of all young children and their families.”

During WOYC, St. Mary's Preschool designates each day within the week-long celebration with a specific learning theme. Our goal is to showcase how much young children learn through play. Past themes have been: buildings and architecture, language and literacy, the arts, and through the senses. Within these themes the students are “playing” yet learning so much. Through buildings and architecture, the students are learning math concepts, spatial awareness, and how to building with materials other than blocks. This week long celebration takes place every April and is a favorite of our teaching faculty.



ST. MARY'S
An IB World School

LOWER SCHOOL

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.

FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM

Our First Graders are confident learners, full of wonder, curiosity and an eagerness to please. They understand the importance of being attentive in school, while still maintaining their desire to inquire. The reading process is in full swing, which allows First Grade students to see the world in a whole new way!

Language Arts

Students in First Grade are beginning to understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading. They are beginning to use comprehension strategies to help them understand what they are reading. They can respond to who, what, when where and how questions. They can predict what will happen next in a text by identifying key words. First Grade students are able to read independently, but are still receiving instructional guided practice on a daily basis.

Students in First Grade are writing on a regular basis. 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. First Grade students write fairytales, friendly letters, and small, short research reports. Vocabulary, grammar, conventions and word study are imbedded into the program.

Math

Everyday Mathematics is used in First Grade at St. Mary's. It is part of an elementary school mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This program offers students a broad background in mathematics. First Grade emphasizes the following content:

- **Numeration** Counting; reading and writing numbers; investigating place value of whole numbers; exploring fractions and money.
- **Operations and Computation** Learning addition and subtraction facts, fact families, and extended facts; beginning informal work with properties of numbers and problem solving.
- **Data and Chance** Collecting, organizing, and displaying data using tables, charts, and graphs.
- **Geometry** Exploring 2- and 3-dimensional shapes.
- **Measurement and Reference Frames** Using tools to measure length, capacity (quarts, liters), and weight; using clocks, calendars, timelines, thermometers, and ordinal numbers.
- **Patterns, Functions, and Algebra** Exploring attributes, patterns, sequences, relations, and functions; finding missing numbers and rules in Frames-and-Arrows and "What's My Rule?" problems; studying properties of operations.

IB Units of Inquiry

Students in First Grade 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 Second Grade include the following:

- **From Sea to Shining Sea:** The central idea is that “Symbols create a sense of belonging and loyalty.” Students will inquire into how families show what is important to them, the importance of belonging, and how symbols show our feelings of belonging.
- **Architecture and Design:** The central idea is that “The properties of construction materials influence the design of buildings and structures.” Students will inquire into what a structure is, the purpose of a structure, the materials used to build structures, and the process of building structures.
- **My Secret Garden:** The central idea is that “An interdependence has been created between the people of the world and the rainforests.” Students will inquire into locations of rainforests, what makes up a rainforest, the resources and products we get from the rainforests, and our responsibilities in using or overusing the resources from the rainforests.
- **Celebrations and Traditions:** The central idea is that “People recognize personal and cultural events through celebrations.” Students will inquire into why and how people celebrate, different types of celebrations, and how people celebrate, depending on their cultural background.
- **When in Rome...It’s all Greek to Me:** The central idea is that “Ancient civilizations have influenced and shaped our lives today.” Students will inquire into things that we have in our lives today that come from ancient civilizations, and what life was like in ancient civilizations.
- **Once Upon a Time:** The central idea is that “Fairytale are used to express basic human relationships, behaviors and attitudes.” Students will inquire into the features of a fairytale, why we have fairytales, and how location affects the writing of a fairytale.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Spanish

Students attend Spanish class two times per week. Students will further develop their vocabulary and Spanish skills by participating on units of study in Spanish related to the IB Unit of Inquiry being taught in their home classrooms. In First Grade, there is an emphasis on developing their emergent reading and writing skills as these students read, write and create their own books in Spanish.

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. First Grade students work on moving through space and time as well as developing eye-hand coordination.

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 First Grade program follows the PYP Visual Arts Standards and focuses on reinforcement of the concepts of line, shape, color and form in the creation of works of art.

Technology

Students attend technology one time per week. The First Grade program allows students to be introduced to all the basics of computer learning such as MS Office, Google Earth, keyboarding skills, tech vocabulary and basic internet skills.

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.

SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

Students in Second Grade begin to question where they fit into the world and how they can make a difference. They explore their cultural heritage, as well as the lives of well-known and everyday leaders. Their increasingly literate world allows them to understand and apply many of the skills that they learned in Kindergarten and First Grade.

Language Arts

Students in Second Grade understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading. They are beginning to use comprehension strategies to help them understand what they are reading. They read independently, and with guided practice.

Students in Second Grade are writing on a regular basis. 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 and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. 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. Second Grade students write fables, book reports, and small, short research reports. Vocabulary, grammar, conventions and word study are imbedded into the program.

Math

Everyday Mathematics is used in Second Grade at St. Mary's. It is part of an elementary school mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This program offers students a broad background in mathematics. Second Grade emphasizes the following content:

- **Numeration** Counting; reading and writing numbers; identifying place value; comparing numbers; working with fractions; using money to develop place value and decimal concepts.
- **Operations and Computation** Recalling addition and subtraction facts; exploring fact families (related addition and subtraction facts, adding and subtracting with tens and hundreds; beginning multiplication and division; exchanging money amounts.
- **Data and Chance** Collecting, organizing, and interpreting data using tables, charts, and graphs
- **Geometry** Exploring 2- and 3-dimensional shapes; classifying polygons.
- **Measurement** Using tools to measure length, weight, capacity, and volume; using U.S. customary and metric measurement units, such as feet, centimeters, ounces, and grams.
- **Reference Frames** Using clocks, calendars, thermometers, and number lines.
- **Patterns, Functions, and Algebra** Exploring number patterns, rules for number sequences, relations between numbers, and attributes.

IB Units of Inquiry

Students in Third Grade 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 Second Grade include the following:

- **Our Family Trip:** The central idea is that “People have a better understanding of themselves and their family history by researching their past. Students will inquire into the personal history of their ancestors, cultural differences among families, immigration and artifacts and past events that are important.
- **Cents and Sensibility:** The central idea is that “Money is used and earned in a variety of ways.” Students will inquire into trade, currency, income, and uses of money.
- **Neverending Story:** The central idea is that “Storytelling is an ancient and universal way of entertaining and teaching.” Students will inquire into fables, myths, legends and tall tales.
- **EveryBody Needs SomeBody:** The central idea is that “The functions of the human body are related and work together” Students will inquire into various systems of the body and how they work together and how the body overcomes seen and unseen disabilities.
- **From Zero to Hero:** The central idea is that “People’s contributions make a difference.” Students will inquire into what is a hero, qualities of a hero, well-known and everyday heroes, and how we can be heroes.
- **The Circle of Life:** The central idea is that “All living things have a life cycle.” Students will inquire into the importance of caring for living things, the major phases of life cycles in different animals, how the life cycle can be broken, and how bodies change over time.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Spanish

Students attend Spanish class two times per week. Students will further develop their vocabulary and Spanish skills by participating on units of study in Spanish related to the IB Unit of Inquiry being taught in their home classrooms. In Second Grade, there is an emphasis on developing their emergent reading and writing skills as these students read, write and create their own books in Spanish.

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. Second Grade students work on moving through space with a partner and learning to respond with the entire body.

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 Second Grade program follows the PYP Visual Arts Standards and focuses on reinforcing the concept that individual artists, and cultural groups, work with a wide variety of styles and purposes.

Technology

Students attend technology one time per week. The Second Grade program allows students to develop their confidence in skills such as how to maneuver through a website, type and format a story in MS Word, and create a table. They are introduced to using their class websites in MyFalcon.

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.

THIRD GRADE CURRICULUM

Third Grade at St. Mary's marks the second half of the Lower School experience. Students focus on both the community in which they live, as well as communities around the world. They continue the learning process of relying on themselves as they are striving to become independent thinkers and learners.

Language Arts

Students in Third Grade understand the basic features of reading. They read and understand Grade-level-appropriate material and use a variety of comprehension strategies such as responding to questions, making predictions and comparing information from multiple sources. They read daily, both independently and with guided practice. In addition to content based and individual choice books, students will read two class novels that connect to their IB curriculum. These include *Kensuke's Kingdom* and *Little House on the Prairie*.

Students in Third Grade are writing on a regular basis. 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 and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. 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

Everyday Mathematics is used in Third Grade at St. Mary's. It is part of an elementary school mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This program offers students a broad background in mathematics. Third Grade emphasizes the following content:

- **Number and Numeration:** Read and write: whole numbers to 1,000,000; decimals through hundredths, and fractions
- **Operations and Computations:** Demonstrate automaticity with addition/subtraction facts to 10 plus 10 and multiplication facts up to 10 x 10.
- **Data and Chance:** Collect and organize data and create charts, bar graphs and line plots.
- **Measurement and Reference Frames:** Estimate and measure length to the nearest $\frac{1}{2}$ inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ centimeter; measure perimeter of polygons; tell time to the nearest minute.
- **Geometry:** Identify: line segments, rays and right angles, plane and solid figures; Create 2 dimensional symmetric shapes.
- **Patterns, Functions and Algebra:** Read, write and explain number sentences using symbols.

IB Units of Inquiry

Students in Third Grade 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 Third Grade include the following:

- **Where In The World Are We?** The central idea is that “Where we live determines who we are.” Students will inquire into what makes up the map of the world; the seven continents and how people are different according to where they live.
- **The Land Around Us:** The central idea is that “There are many factors that influence the different landforms around the world.” Students will inquire into what defines each individual landform, what are the natural changes that affect land forms, how do landforms affect the weather, and how do plants and animals survive and adapt to different landforms.
- **Got Water?** The central idea is that “Water is a limited resource that we need and use.” Students will inquire into the water cycle, how people in different areas of the world get their water, where people in Orange County get their water, and why water conservation is important.
- **But I Was Here First:** The central idea is that “Indigenous people express their culture based on the resources available to them.” Students will inquire into indigenous cultures, how they met their needs for food, clothing and shelter, how they expressed themselves through communication, art and music, how the geographical location and climate affected their lives, and how they used the natural resources around them.
- **Destination Unknown:** The central idea is that “Throughout history, people explore and settle in new locations affecting life in the past, present and future.” Students will inquire into why people relocate, what challenges people have when they explore, how explorers get to their destination, how explorations changes people’s lives and who chooses to explore.
- **Take Me To Your Leader:** The central idea is that “People need governments in order to live in an organized, productive society.” Students will inquire into the features of a democracy, monarchy and dictatorship, why people need government and why a leader is necessary

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Spanish

Students attend Spanish class two times per week. The program builds upon the basic skills introduced in the primary years, and focuses on vocabulary development, oral and written skills and cultural appreciation within the context of the Units of Inquiry for Third Grade.

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. Third Grade students work on continuity and change of movement.

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 Third Grade program follows the PYP Visual Arts Standards and focuses on recognizing that art is a means of expression which is universal, not solely individual.

Technology

Students attend technology one time per week. The Third Grade program allows students to develop their confidence in skills such as how to maneuver through a website, type and format a story in MS Word, and create a table. They are introduced to using their class websites in MyFalcon.

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.

FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM

Fourth Grade is an exciting year where students explore California History and the amazing discoveries, inventions and adventures of our state. They compare these events to similar experiences around the world. Students in Fourth Grade are also becoming more self-reliant and independent. Study skills and work habits are sharpened as they prepare for the academic years ahead.

Language Arts

Students in Fourth Grade are reading a wide range of texts, with increasing accuracy and understanding. They read daily for a sustained period, both independently and with guided practice. Reading comprehension is reinforced through specific comprehension strategies such as summarizing, connecting and inferring. In addition to content based and individual choice books, students will read a number of class novels that connect to their IB curriculum. These include *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *By the Great Horn Spoon* and *The Iron Dragon Never Sleeps*.

Students in Fourth Grade are writing on a regular basis. 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, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions). Multi-paragraph compositions are practiced and include an introductory paragraph with an established and supporting central idea, supporting paragraphs with facts, details and explanations and a concluding summarization paragraph. Vocabulary, grammar, conventions and word study are imbedded into the program.

Math

Everyday Mathematics is used in Fourth Grade at St. Mary's. It is part of an elementary school mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This program offers students a broad background in mathematics. Fourth Grade emphasizes the following content:

- **Algebra and Uses of Variables:** reading, writing and solving number sentences.
- **Algorithms and Procedures:** exploring addition, subtraction, multiplication and division methods; inventing individual procedures and algorithms and experimenting with calculator procedures.
- **Coordinate Systems and Other Reference Frames:** using numbers in reference frames, number lines, coordinates, times, dates and latitude and longitude.
- **Exploring Data:** collecting, organizing, displaying and interpreting numerical data.
- **Functions, Patterns and Sequences:** designing, exploring, and using geometric numbers and patterns.
- **Geometry and Spatial Sense:** developing an intuitive sense about 2 and 3 dimensional objects, their properties, uses, and relationships.

- **Measures and Measurement:** exploring metric and U.S. customary measures, linear, area, volume, weight and exploring geographical measures.
- **Numbers, Numeration and Order Relations:** reading, writing and using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, negative numbers, and exploring scientific notation.
- **Operations, Number Facts and Number Systems:** practicing addition and subtraction to proficiency, and developing multiplication and division skills.
- **Problem Solving and Mathematical Modeling:** investigating methods for solving problems using mathematics in everyday situations.

IB Units of Inquiry

Students in Fourth Grade 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 Fourth Grade include the following:

- **Where The Wild Things Are:** The central idea is that “Human affect, protect and preserve animals and their habitats.” Students will inquire into animal habitats, protecting and preserving habitats, animal needs and adaptations, and animal communities (food chain, producers, consumers).
- **Coming to the Rescue:** The central idea is that “Natural disasters cause people to show compassion, act, and change the world around them.” Students will inquire into natural disasters, disaster relief organizations and emergency preparedness.
- **Look Out, Here We Come:** The central idea is that “Throughout history, groups of people have conquered new lands and greatly affected themselves and the indigenous people. Students will inquire into purposed of colonization, positive and negative effects of colonization, and California Missions.
- **Fools Rush In:** The central idea is that “Natural resources impact an area’s employment and unemployment.” Students will inquire into Boom Towns, discovery of precious minerals (gold, silver, etc.), effect on an area and effect on the people.
- **Invention Convention:** The central idea is that “Inventions grow out of people’s attempts to solve a problem in a new or creative way.” Students will inquire into inventions vs. discoveries, famous inventors/inventions of the past, present and future and creating invention.
- **Hear Me, Hear Me:** The central idea is that “People share their thoughts and feelings through written and oral expression.” Students will inquire into types of poetry, how well-known poets express themselves, how to write poetry and how to present poetry.

Field Trips/Field Studies:

In the spring, fourth graders embark on an exciting field study to our state capital, Sacramento. They visit the capitol building, as well as many other historic sites in the city. In addition, they visit gold mining sites and explore the mines of the Mother Lode.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES**Spanish**

Students attend Spanish class two times per week. The program builds upon the basic skills introduced in the primary years, and focuses on vocabulary development, oral and written skills and cultural appreciation within the context of the Units of Inquiry for Fourth Grade.

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. Fourth Grade students work on manipulating objects in and through space.

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 Fourth Grade program follows the PYP Visual Arts Standards and focuses on recognizing that art is a means of expression which is universal, not solely individual.

Technology

Students attend technology one time per week. The Fourth Grade program allows students to become problem solvers as they learn how to solve the twenty-three most common computer problems. They work in Microsoft Word, Publisher, Power Point and Excel. They are introduced to using their class websites in MyFalcon.

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.

FIFTH GRADE CURRICULUM

The Fifth Grade experience at St. Mary's encourages our oldest Lower School students to build confidence in their ability to work independently, develop problem solving skills, and conduct their own inquiry-based learning experiences. Students are able to explore our Nation's history through the eyes of an international inquirer. An exciting culmination to their year includes participation in the Fifth Grade Exhibition, where students will work in cooperative groups to develop their own self-directed lines of inquiry.

Language Arts

Students in Fifth Grade read and understand Grade-level-appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the text by using their knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose. Each unit of inquiry includes a novel study that will connect to the central idea, with the intention of extending student understanding of literary elements such as plot development, character analysis, and reader response. Our Fifth Grade novels provide an opportunity for students to build their overall vocabulary. Students will continue to receive individualized instruction in guided reading to develop fluency while reading aloud and to practice strategies for improved comprehension. Our class novels include *Frindle*, *George's Secret Key to the Universe*, *Witch of Blackbird Pond*, *Fighting Ground* and *Hoot*.

Students in Fifth Grade are writing on a regular basis. 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, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits the students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed. Vocabulary, grammar, conventions and word study are imbedded into the program.

Math

Everyday Mathematics is used in Fifth Grade at St. Mary's. It is part of an elementary school mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This program offers students a broad background in mathematics. Fifth Grade emphasizes the following content:

- **Numeration** Recognizing place value in numerals for whole numbers and decimals, expressing numbers in scientific notation; finding factors of numbers; comparing properties of prime and composite numbers; representing rates and ratios with fraction notation.
- **Operations and Computation** Extending whole-number facts with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to fractions and decimals; evaluating symbolic expressions.
- **Data and Chance** Collecting, organizing, and analyzing data using bar graphs, line graphs, circle graphs, and stem-and-leaf plots.
- **Geometry** Investigating angles and rotations; calculating area and volume; drawing to scale; introducing relationships of 2- and 3-dimensional figures; exploring new transformations that affect attributes of geometric shapes.
- **Measurement** Using linear, area, capacity, and personal reference measures.

- **Reference Frames** Locating items with reference to an origin or zero point; for example, ordinal numbers, times of day, dates, and temperatures.
- **Patterns, Functions, and Algebra** Determining divisibility; exploring number patterns; applying formulas to geometric figures; creating number models; working with scientific calculators; squaring and unsquaring numbers; exploring variables in formulas.

IB Units of Inquiry

Students in Fifth Grade 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 Fifth Grade include the following:

- **Power of the Pen:** The central idea is that “Writing allows us to express our feelings, record experiences and share our knowledge.” Students will inquire into writing genres, how to choose a writing style, how to revise written communication and the practical applications of writing.
- **Explore the Unknown:** The central idea is that “Humankind has always been driven to expand beyond their known world.” Students will inquire into famous explorers, the solar system, innovations and costs of exploration and the practical benefits of space exploration.
- **A Place Called Home:** The central idea is that “The expansion of an empire has consequences.” Students will inquire into the purpose of establishing colonies, the birth of a global economy, the motivation for moving to a colony and the impact on a native population.
- **War...What is it good for?:** The central idea is that “Change is created when an ignored population is forced into action.” Students will inquire into the causes of revolution, the American Revolution, and Revolutionary leaders.
- **We the People:** The central idea is that “Our government is organized and balanced to give equal power to the citizens.” Students will inquire into why and how government is organized, the American government system, and governments in other countries.
- **Global Issues (Fifth Grade Exhibition):** The central idea is “The use and misuse of resources around the world has a past, present and future impact on the planet.” Students will inquire into the advantages of renewable and non-renewable resources, how we can change the pattern of misuse, how an individual can make a difference and innovations in energy use.

Field Study

In the fall, Fifth Graders embark on an exciting field study to Astro Camp, in Idyllwild, California. Students spend three days focusing on various astronomy and physical sciences classes including rocketry, rock climbing, microgravity snorkeling and many other team building activities. The experience is designed to sharpen student interest in the scientific study of the universe, and directly connects with our Fifth Grade Unit of Inquiry on Space and Exploration.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Spanish

Students attend Spanish class three times per week. The program builds upon the basic skills introduced in the primary years, and focuses on vocabulary development, oral and written skills and cultural appreciation within the context of the Units of Inquiry for Fifth Grade.

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. Fifth Grade students work on manipulating objects with accuracy and speed.

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. In Fifth Grade, students begin playing an instrument, and will continue performing into Middle School.

Visual Arts

Students attend visual arts one time per week. The Fifth Grade program follows the PYP Visual Arts Standards and focuses on fostering students' confidence as artists and developing their individual artistic visions.

Technology

Students attend technology one time per week. The Fifth Grade program allows students to become problem solvers as they learn how to solve the twenty-three most common computer problems. They work in Microsoft Word, Publisher, Power Point and Excel. Technology is used routinely for a variety of purposes. Students will type documents in MLA format, access resources on the class Falcon page, communicate by e-mail with their teacher and peers, contribute to an online discussion board, and conduct research with MLA citations.

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.



ST. MARY'S
An IB World School

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Language A (Sixth Grade)

In Grade Six Language A, students continue along the life-long path of mastering English. They select one book per trimester for independent reading. In addition, they read between four and six novels during the school year, as well as mythology and poetry. Students write across genres, composing a memoir, poetry, a myth, business letter, and a variety of essays. Students move through the steps of the writing process, including brainstorming, pre-writing (drafts), self-editing and peer-editing, revisions and final copy. Vocabulary building and correct grammar are stressed. Students are asked to incorporate the Six Traits of Writing into their writing: Ideas, Word Choice, Organization, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Voice.

Language A (Seventh Grade)

In seventh Grade Language A, students explore humanity's enduring questions through the study of language and literature. This course provides students a language-rich environment in which they continue to develop their language arts skills in order to explore ideas about identity, relationships, culture, and the environment and to articulate clearly what they believe to be true. To strengthen critical reading, listening, thinking, and writing skills, students examine diverse texts and discuss them according to the conventions called for by the community or audience. Through journal submissions, writing workshops, peer reviews, Socratic Literature Circles, and reflection papers linked to students' Independent Reading, students experience the recursive process of writing as an indispensable tool for discovery. Their writing portfolios illustrate their journey of developing, testing, redefining, clarifying, polishing, and, ultimately, sharing their writing as a social action.

Language A (Eighth Grade)

Eighth Grade Language A is workshop-centered course that provides students with the tools and practice they need to become independent learners, ready for transition to high school. Students study such concepts as truth and consequences, using literature, outside research, and award-winning films. The Writing Workshop Program, based on Nancie Atwell's *Lessons That Change Writers*, is utilized. The curriculum is enriched with novels and it includes a focus on spelling and vocabulary acquisition. Strong emphasis is placed on students' reading with more sophistication, engaging in meaningful reflection and developing critical analysis. Students enhance their skills to brainstorm ideas, draft, structure, revise, engage in meaningful peer conferences, and self-edit their writing. This course is designed to provide students with a strong background for any type of writing they may encounter in life.

French 600

This course is designed to introduce students to the beautiful French language. Students acquire basic expressions for greetings, introductions, family members, friends, time, money, food and beverages, allowing simple but meaningful communication. The concept of gender is presented, and accent and pronunciation are stressed. Students create a Family Album, which they present to the rest of the class, in French.

French 700

Second year French logically follows and builds upon the first year study. Students review and reinforce the concepts, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation presented in the first year of French. Students also learn gender agreement, verb conjugations, sentence structure in the affirmative, negative and interrogative, and many useful common expressions. Topic areas include daily activities, school, recreation, entertainment and holidays. Students explore French culture by researching the French school system, and reporting on a French-speaking country. These advanced students enjoy an outing to a local French restaurant.

French 800

This class provides the opportunity to build on the second year skills already acquired and prepare for more challenging high school Language B classes. Students solidify their command of regular *er* verbs, and the useful irregular verbs *être*, *avoir*, *faire*, and *venir*, in present, future, and simple past tense. Students research a Parisian monument which they present to the class, in French. The study of colonial America in Humanities is augmented by research into the life of a French explorer of the Americas. These advanced students also enjoy an outing to a local French restaurant.

Mandarin Chinese 600

This course is designed to introduce students to Mandarin Chinese. Students acquire basic expressions for greetings, introductions, numbers, months, weather vocabulary, family members, and adjectives. The four tones are presented and emphasis is placed on proper pronunciation. Students learn the pinyin system along with simplified characters. Students create a Family Album and present it to their classmates.

Mandarin Chinese 700

Second-year Mandarin Chinese follows and builds upon the first year of study. Students review and reinforce tones, vocabulary, and pronunciation presented in the first year. Topics include daily activities, school, recreation, food and cultural traditions. Students explore Chinese geography through visuals, reports, and presentations. These more advanced students enjoy an outing to a local Chinese restaurant.

Mandarin Chinese 800

Third-year Mandarin Chinese provides the opportunity to build on the second year skills already acquired and prepare for more challenging high school Language B classes. Students continue practicing their listening, speaking, reading, and character writing skills on a daily basis. Small group and whole group activities require students to understand and speak Mandarin Chinese more often in and outside the classroom. These advanced students enjoy an outing to a local Chinese restaurant.

Spanish 600

This course is designed to teach beginning grammar and basic vocabulary with an emphasis on meaningful communication. There is also a cultural component which exposes students to the geography and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Class discussions and activities allow students to reflect upon guiding questions and the areas of interaction while exploring the target language.

Spanish 700

This class provides students the opportunity to build on the skills acquired in previous years. Students practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students steadily increase their language range, and increase their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and conventions. Class discussions and activities allow students to reflect upon guiding questions and the areas of interaction while exploring the target language. Students expand their evolving cultural awareness by studying the various communities in which Spanish is spoken.

Spanish 800

This class provides the opportunity to build on the second year skills already acquired and prepare for more challenging high school Language B classes. Advanced grammar structures are explored and students practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills on a daily basis. Students increase their language range, and their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and conventions at a more accelerated pace. Class discussions and activities allow students to reflect upon guiding questions and the areas of interaction while exploring the target language. Small group and whole group activities consistently require students to understand and speak Spanish more often in and outside the classroom. Writing submissions demonstrate the breadth and depth of second language acquisition. Students expand their evolving cultural awareness by studying the various communities in which Spanish is spoken.

Math 6

In Math 6, students focus on addition, subtraction, division and multiplication with whole numbers, fractions, decimals and integers. In the process they gain the ability to do the following: recognize and understand the relationships between fractions, decimals, and percent equivalences; solve ratio and rate problems; calculate basic percent problems using mental and written methods; begin to use the operations involved in algebraic expressions; translate word problems into algebraic expressions and solve corresponding simple equations; interpret data and utilize different mathematical representations including graphs, tables, charts, and formulas; analyze data using statistics and probability; develop an understanding of ratio and proportion and look at how it relates to 2-D shapes; investigate 2-D shapes and 3-D forms and their properties; and, apply general rules and patterns to solve problems associated with 2-D shapes and 3-D forms.

Pre-Algebra

In Pre-Algebra, students reinforce their understanding of rational numbers and integers and their operations; apply what they have learned to manipulate and evaluate algebraic expressions; begin to solve multi-step equations and understand and use formulas; review the relationships between fractions, decimals, percent equivalences and utilize an algebraic method to convert from a repeating decimal to a fraction; represent numbers in terms of exponents and as products of prime numbers; use their knowledge of squares and square roots to investigate the Pythagoras Theorem; apply the Pythagoras Theorem to problem solving on the Cartesian plane; extend their knowledge of ratio and proportion and measure and apply their knowledge to scale drawings; review percent and apply what they know in percent increase and decrease problems and simple and compound interest questions; study linear, quadratic and cubic functions and begin to understand the relationships between the equation and the graphical representation, including the slope of a line; study areas, perimeters and properties of quadrilaterals and circles; investigate the surface area and volume of a cylinder; and, investigate 2-D shape and 3-D forms and their properties and apply general rules and patterns to solve problems associated with them.

Algebra

In Algebra, students focus on more abstract concepts. Symbolic reasoning and calculations with symbols are developed. Algebraic skills and concepts are developed and used in a wide variety of problem-solving situations. In addition, students learn to identify and use the arithmetic properties of rational, irrational and real numbers; understand reciprocals, integer exponents, and fractional powers; use the rules of exponents; analyze and represent linear functions; solve systems of linear equations and inequalities; use operations to manipulate polynomials, rational expressions and functions; factor polynomials using different methods and learn how to choose the appropriate method for an expression; solve quadratic functions using graphing and a range of other methods; analyze the concepts of a relation and a function; identify the range and domain of dependent variables; and, know simple aspects of logical argument and be able to apply this.

Algebra Honors

In Algebra Honors, students build on the more abstract concepts learned in the previous year. They apply what they have learned to word problems and everyday Math so that they can see the connections between Math and the real world. Emphasis is placed on using a wide variety of problem-solving situations. Symbolic reasoning and calculations with symbols continue to be developed. Students learn to manipulate matrices using the four operations and solve systems of equations; demonstrate understanding of reciprocals, integer exponents, and fractional powers and use the rules of exponents; focus on analyzing and representing linear functions; solve systems of linear equations and inequalities; use all four operations to manipulate polynomials, rational expressions and functions; factor polynomials using different methods and learn how to choose the appropriate method; solve quadratic functions using a range of methods including graphing; demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of a relation and a function; identify the range and domain of dependent variables; demonstrate knowledge of simple aspects of logical argument and utilize this; apply what they have learned about the Pythagoras Theorem to 2-D and 3-D problems and use the theorem to calculate distances between points on a Cartesian plane; investigate similar triangles and solve a variety of problems using them; extend their knowledge of angles to find angles in any polygon; investigate transformations of 2-D shapes and look at the effects of enlargements on area and volume; study the relationships between different systems of measure and convert between them; apply their knowledge to map-scale problems; study rate problems, speed and density; and, review the concepts in number, algebra, geometry, and data handling learned at earlier stages of Middle School.

Ancient History (Sixth Grade)

Sixth Grade Humanities integrates the subjects of history and geography, and covers the time period from the discovery and development of early man, to the amazing advancements and contributions of the empires of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. Students are shown the connections between the past and the present through a deep study of three or more major civilizations.

World History (Seventh Grade)

In Seventh Grade Humanities, students investigate the story of human beings through eight unit focuses: Medieval Europe; the rise of Islam; West African culture and kingdoms; Imperial China; Medieval Japan; the Americas; the Renaissance and Reformation; and, the modern age as represented in the age of exploration, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment Era. The purpose of this course is to provide students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of world history and the connections between the historical past and today's world. In the process the objective is to provide students an enriching experience, in which they enjoy learning for its own sake; they strive to understand their own and each other's perspectives; and, they take risks in the process of growing, learning and improving.

United States History (Eighth Grade)

In Eighth Grade Humanities, students look at the history of our nation through many different lenses and they evaluate a variety of historical writings. Students develop their own historical perspectives based on information they analyze. Culminating with this eighth Grade course, the aim of Humanities in the Middle School is to encourage students to gain and develop knowledge, conceptual understanding, research skills, analytical and interpretive skills, and communication skills that contribute to the development of the student as a whole. In this course students are encouraged to respect and understand the world around them and to develop a skills base to facilitate further study. This is achieved through the study of individuals, societies and environments in a wide context: historical, contemporary, geographical, political, social, economic, religious, technological and cultural.

Earth Science (Sixth Grade)

This course is designed to introduce students to the structure of Earth including its surface, waters, weather, and resources. Thematic units expand upon National and State Science Standards. Specific concepts covered include plate tectonics and Earth's structure, topography and weathering, heat transfer, energy in the Earth's system, ecosystems, and the development of scientific inquiry skills. Students participate in a Catalina field study and document their experiences while creating Microsoft PowerPoint presentations. Students integrate reading, research and field-based applications with labs, models and summative projects.

Life Science (Seventh Grade)

This course focuses on Life Science, with particular emphasis on understanding the adaptations that animals, plants, virus/bacteria, and genes make to survive in their respective environments. Two guiding questions explored in this course are, "Does everything change for the better?" and "How does adapting help a species survive?" Students also consider ethical questions related to genetics, evolution, and the environment. In the process, they learn to support their opinions with researched facts and personal knowledge. Students develop their data processing and critical thinking skills through charts, data tables, statistics, and graphs; and, they determine the best ways to utilize information to prove understanding. A key objective in this course is to have students reflect on life on the planet and how we all impact one another.

Physical Science (Eighth Grade)

This course focuses on Physical Science with a strong emphasis on hands-on learning. Students develop skills to conduct labs, solve problems and write lab reports. Students engage in developing hypotheses that lead to conclusions. They analyze, organize and present data and observations. In the process, they learn how to identify and use controlled variables, manipulated variables, and responding variables. The content areas addressed in this course are connected to motion, forces, and such physical examples as rockets. The students investigate important scientific principles and laws including Bernoulli's, Pascal's, Archimedes' and Newton's Laws of Motion.

Technology (Sixth Grade)

In this course students study the “Digital World” and learn to navigate their computer environment with purpose and integrity. Guided by the question, “What inspires us to create?”, students establish their log-in accounts, submit assignments through email or an online drop box and practice keyboarding skills. Course content includes the study of basic components of computer hardware, and how these technology systems work together. Students complete a summative project at the end of the course which follows the IB Design Cycle for Technology. Students are guided through the investigation process, which culminates in their planning and creating a PowerPoint presentation on a topic they choose and present to the class.

Technology (Seventh Grade)

In this course students are guided through the serious issues of cyber bullying and its effect on health and social issues. Students are exposed in age-appropriate ways to real-life case studies, video testimonials, and informational cartoons regarding the anti-social behaviors of flaming, outing, exclusion, trickery and cyber-stalking. In the process, students learn how to identify these behaviors and how to react to them in a healthy way. This course concludes with students following the planning and creation processes of the design cycle to design an educational poster on a topic they choose to investigate. Students use software from edu.Glogster.com to create on-line presentations which demonstrate their appropriate on-line social skills.

Technology (Eighth Grade)

In this course students participate in a program to teach Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) concepts utilizing LEGO Mindstorms NXT Robots. Students work collaboratively in teams to learn how to program basic robot behaviors using motors and rotation, sound, light, touch and ultrasonic sensors. Following the planning and creation steps of the Design Cycle, students program the robots to complete multiple challenges based on real-world robots. In a final project, students design their own new challenge and present it to the class.

iFalcon

iFalcon is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which students maintain an online school newspaper. Two editors are chosen to oversee the publication, and other students serve as reporters. As a staff, the class develops an interest in writing and reporting on subjects that they believe are pertinent to the school. Human interest, sports, product and movie reviews, editorials, and international news coverage are just some of the stories covered. The course teaches key concepts associated with legitimate journalism: the importance of accuracy, the need for integrity and responsibility in reporting, and the significance of online security.

PERFORMING ARTS

Chorus

Chorus provides an opportunity for students to develop their voices within a large ensemble. They develop their abilities in music reading, vocal technique, theoretical knowledge of music, and their ability to work as a team. The choir performs several concerts during the year for the School and may have the opportunity to attend at least one choral contest. This class is offered to students who want to sing for enjoyment while continuing to develop their musical knowledge and vocal skills.

Musicology

Musicology includes the study of music through history, theory, composition, and technology. Students become familiar with historical eras including Early Music, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern. Students engage the elements of music theory through composition and analysis, and they learn music technology technique through sequencing, sampling, and soundtrack creation.

Orchestra

Orchestra includes the study of ensemble and instrumental techniques and musical performance. Students become familiar with ensemble techniques including listening, intonation, counting, and playing in sections and as a whole. Additionally, students become familiar with instrumental techniques including tone production, counting, and instrument maintenance. Students perform at the Christmas and Spring Concerts.

Through a variety of trimester-length Visual Arts courses, students are encouraged to find their own voice in Art. They have had Art History incorporated into their Art classes for many years. Learning from the masters has helped students to see the process artists use and give them a chance to replicate their styles. Students build upon these references by developing and understanding one's own aesthetics.

The aims of the teaching and study of MYP arts are for students to understand how the arts play a role in developing and expressing personal and cultural identities; appreciate how the arts innovate and communicate across time and culture; become informed and reflective practitioners of the arts; experience the process of making art in a variety of situations; explore, express and communicate ideas; become more effective learners, inquirers and thinkers; develop self-confidence and self-awareness through art experiences; and, appreciate life-long learning in and enjoyment of the arts.

The Visual Arts objectives interrelate with each other and form the basis of each student's experience in the arts. Personal engagement surrounds the student at the center and connects directly with each of the other objectives.

Ceramics I and II

Ceramic I and II courses include exposure to a variety of hand-building techniques, including pinch pots, coil pots, and slab construction. Students gain an understanding of the firing process and different glazing techniques.

Drawing I and II

Drawing I and II courses focus on learning to draw what we see. Students explore different types of drawing media and learn to create several pieces that highlight the elements and principles of design. Students study the use of light and shade, the foundations of perspective, and drawing form while using pencil, pen and ink, and pastel.

Painting I and II

Painting I and II courses focus attention on investigations of color, application, and space in specific areas. Course work is predicated on the perspective that in order to accurately express emotion about the subject being painted, one must understand the foundation essentials of painting, drawing, color, value and composition.

General Art I and II

General Art I and II courses include inquiry into the Art elements and principles of design. Students learn how to describe the elements of art and the principles of design, which contributes to the expressive qualities of their own work. Students focus attention on creative expression and exploring the use of different media to communicate meaning and intent in works of art. Additionally, students study the history and various cultures of art, and they complete projects related to early art such as cave paintings and Egyptian friezes.

Photography I and II

In Photography I and II students are encouraged to venture into all forms of Art with their imaginations and the many ways it touches their lives and is utilized in the world around them. Learning from professional photographer examples helps students see the process an artist uses and gives them a chance to replicate expert techniques. Students are given the opportunity to open up their experiences by developing and understanding the full scope of Art through photography.

Set Design

Set Design is a two-trimester course in which students work with a wide variety of mixed media to bring the sets for the school's dramatic productions to life. They learn about about such noted artists as Marc Chagall, who painted fantastic, dreamlike pieces reminiscent of his childhood in a small Russian village. All of Chagall's paintings reflect memories and display a clear Cubist influence (as well as Surrealist qualities). Students acquire knowledge of stage terminology, particularly that which relates to set design. They also create original gray-scale intaglio engravings which become Playbills for the show, and they craft mixed media, watercolor-based posters in order to effectively advertise the play.

Studio in Drawing I and II

In Studio in Drawing I and II students are exposed to the techniques and masterpieces of the world's great draughts men. They experiment with a wide variety of media including charcoal, pastel, Conte crayon, and engraving materials in order to create a series of sketches and complete drawings and engravings. The overall theme for this workshop is exploration of the way that symbols have been used by artists throughout art history in order to add layers of meaning to the communication of their pieces.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

(Sixth – Eighth Grade)

The Personal, Social, Physical Education & Wellness Program is designed to inspire students and to foster within them an appreciation for and understanding of healthy, active, life-long habits. The focus at each Grade level of this course is to develop skills and understanding necessary to participate successfully in a variety of physical activities. In the process, students are encouraged to learn, practice, refine, adapt, think, and interact with others. This course consists of physical activity as well as classroom instruction on Health topics.

RELIGION

Religion

The one-trimester Religion courses at the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade levels are aimed at encouraging students to gain and develop the knowledge, conceptual understanding, analytical, interpretive and communication skills that contribute to the development of the student as a whole. Course content and activities are designed to encourage students to respect and understand the world around them. This is achieved through the study of the Bible and supplementary materials and a focus on family and the daily lives of historical individuals and groups, from the creation story through today.

Students study the spread of ideas, cultures, and belief systems that impact our world. Natural connections across the curriculum allow students to develop a richly stratified understanding of history, culture, people, groups and belief systems. Students, through critical thinking, explore why and how to study Biblical history; and, through inquiry, they gain understanding in how the past has molded our current society. A significant goal of this course is to help students become global citizens. Class discussions and research assignments encourage understanding and tolerance of other cultures, religions, and faith communities.

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

(Trimester courses unless otherwise indicated, Sixth – Eighth Grade)

The St. Mary's Leadership Program is seamlessly integrated into regular academic studies with projects, discussions, student involvement, and practical application. In Middle School, it is designed to be a three-year, in-depth study into the principles and practices of developing strong leadership qualities in the students. The program begins in Grade Six, utilizing the International Baccalaureate's Learner Profile to illustrate how these traits can be reflected and demonstrated in daily practices. Grade Seven explores societal issues which directly affect adolescents with the objective being to equip students to make educated decisions based on an awareness of their surroundings. Grade Eight actively plans a vision for their educational and professional future by researching careers and professions which match the students' demonstrated leadership skills and personal interests. By exploring various programs of study at colleges and universities, students are able to select appropriate means by which to fulfill and complete their leadership vision.

Challenge 20/20

Challenge 20/20 is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective, sponsored by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), in which St. Mary's students engage with students from the International School of Milan to study and address select global problems. Students maintain an online presence with their partners in Italy and participate in local field studies. Through a class blog, students engage in on-going discussions of topics from J.F. Rischard's book, *High Noon*, as well as NAIS categories Sharing our Planet, Sharing our Humanity, and Sharing our Rule Book. Additionally, when the assigned topic was marine debris, students visited the Pacific Marine Mammal Center in Laguna Canyon and Scripps Institute of Oceanography in La Jolla. These and other activities encourage students to seek solutions to vital global problems. Students design brochures that alert the school community to particular global problems and they help to educate the school community through email correspondence and surveys.

iFalcon

iFalcon is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which students maintain an online school newspaper. Two editors are chosen to oversee the publication, and other students serve as reporters. As a staff, the class develops an interest in writing and reporting on subjects that they believe are pertinent to the school. Human interest, sports, product and movie reviews, editorials, and international news coverage are just some of the stories covered. The course teaches key concepts associated with legitimate journalism: the importance of accuracy, the need for integrity and responsibility in reporting, and the significance of online security.

Model United Nations

Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulation of the United Nations (UN), where the countries of the world send delegates to act as representatives of those countries' governments. In this course, students participate as either members of the General Assembly (GA), Security Council, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), or International Court of Justice (ICJ). Much of the work of the MUN is done in the preparation phase, where students research the countries they are representing and prepare background and position papers. Each student's primary role is to give the government's views on the issues in front of the UN. Students need to pay special attention to the economic, religious and educational issues of their country. Once they have developed

these papers, delegates present and debate resolutions or hear court cases. Students have the chance to speak out, let the world know what they think about today's most important issues, and help others to find their political voice.

STAR

STAR (Students as Teachers and Resources) is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which Middle School students gain experience interacting with younger students in the Lower School. This course teaches and practically applies the *Best Practices in Classroom Management & Organization* and the basics of the IB Primary Years Programme in the Lower School. STAR students are assigned to Lower School classrooms, where they assist teachers and interact with younger students in a supportive fashion. STAR students participate in related online discussion board conversations throughout the trimester, which concludes with a written reflection about personal experiences in the classroom.

Yearbook

Yearbook is a two-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which students are required to be highly organized, motivated, and technologically capable. The first trimester is centered on learning the "Year-Tech" software as well as learning how to navigate the website, yearbookavenue.com. It is on this site that students plan, organize and create the St. Mary's Yearbook. Each student has specific pages that they are responsible for contributing to the Yearbook. Individually and collaboratively, students create lay-outs; take and upload photos; insert photos on Yearbook pages; write and proof read; and, ultimately print pages.

FIELD STUDIES

Catalina Island (Sixth Grade)

Sixth grade students spend four nights and five days at beautiful Camp Emerald Bay, on Catalina Island. While there, students experience the local environment through laboratory activities, such as contact with aquatic species in touch tanks, microscopic analysis, and dissections. In addition, plenty of time is reserved for swimming, kayaking, snorkeling, and hiking. Through this field study, students experience life in a rustic setting which encourages them to adapt to their environment, share with each other and work for the common good. While this is happening, they are visited by affiliates of the Catalina Conservancy. These scientists describe their research activities on the island that are aimed at environmental preservation.

Pali Institute, San Bernardino Mountains (Seventh Grade)

Seventh grade students participate in a five-day, four-night field study program at Pali Institute for Outdoor Science and Leadership, in the San Bernardino Mountains. The staff at Pali Institute pride themselves on innovative curriculum that helps to bring textbooks to life through hands on experiments, activities and leadership activities. The courses that students participate in have been carefully selected to reflect the curriculum of the St. Mary's seventh grade, including connections to Science, Leadership, Math, and Physical Education. In Science activities, St. Mary's students gain a basic understanding of the Scientific Method, the importance of site preservation and how their decisions impact the environment and their futures, ecosystems, energy resources and the importance of recycling. Leadership activities emphasize group cooperation, goal setting, and embracement of other people. Orienteering activities emphasize physical fitness and help students understand map skills and how they relate to math. In sum, the experience at Pali Institute is designed to help students grow as individuals and as a class.

Williamsburg, Virginia and Washington, D.C. (Eighth Grade)

The eighth grade field study to Williamsburg, Virginia and Washington, D.C. is a memorable six-day journey designed to heighten students' awareness of the nation's historical past. During the course of this trip, students follow a historic trail from the first capital of English America, Jamestown, Virginia, to the national capital, Washington, D.C. In between, students visit many famous sites, such as Williamsburg, William and Mary College, Yorktown, Jamestown Settlement, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello estate, and the University of Virginia. Once in Washington, D.C., students visit the White House, Supreme Court, National Capitol, Union Station, the Air and Space Museum, and the American History Museum. Likewise, students tour the Roosevelt, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, Ford's Theatre, Washington Monument and the Vietnam Wall. The field study reaches a peak of poignancy at the Changing of the Guard and Wreath Laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns, at Arlington National Cemetery.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

International School of Milan, Italy

For the past seven years, St. Mary's has partnered with the International School of Milan (ISM) in Milan, Italy to provide an exchange program for our Middle School students. This partnership offers St. Mary's students an opportunity to become host families and welcome an international student into their home, in addition to journeying to Milan, Italy to reconnect with ISM students at an exchange hosted in Milan. The International School of Milan is a K-12 IB World School located in Milan and Monza, Italy. The school is the largest international school in Italy today, and the first one in the country to offer the complete cycle of International Baccalaureate Programmes for learners from three to eighteen years of age.

Students from ISM visit California in the fall, spending a week with St. Mary's students and families and experiencing life in the United States. St. Mary's students then visit Milan later in the year, living with host families for one week while attending ISM classes with their student hosts. Students and chaperones then travel throughout central and northern Italy to further explore Italian culture, customs and the people.

The ISM exchange supports the aim of the IB programme to develop internationally minded people by providing students the opportunity to travel abroad. This international field study prepares students for positive interaction in a global setting through experiencing another cultural perspective. Students gain in-depth knowledge of the Italian culture, customs and people and create friendships and memories that last a lifetime.

ADVISORY PROGRAM

The St. Mary's Advisory Program is designed to meet the unique needs of our Middle School students during a time of significant change and growth in their lives. Each student is assigned to a St. Mary's faculty member who serves as an advisor to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of the student. With Advisory's emphasis on communication and relationships, students are supported in their growth and development throughout the three year Middle School experience with the advisor and the small, co-ed, grade specific group of students. Weekly meetings between the advisor and advisee group will allow students to set goals, develop service learning projects, practice leadership and social skills, and advance personally and academically with close guidance. Mid-year conferences consisting of advisor, advisee, and advisee's parents holistically evaluate the progress of the student. By focusing on the developmental growth of our Middle School students, a strong relationship and partnership develops between the teachers, parents, advisors, and students.

Elements of the Advisory Program

- **Goal Setting:** Students will learn how to set and obtain goals to develop and understand their responsibility and ownership of social, emotional, and academic objectives.
- **Social Contact:** A smaller community for more individualized communication is created and supported by the teachers, parents, student, and advisor.
- **Weekly Reflection:** Meetings will allow for assessment of progress to demonstrate growth and progress toward goals.
- **Behavior Modification:** Students are able to discuss with their advisors ways to demonstrate behavior which make them a positive member of their school community.
- **Service Learning:** Students will develop a greater knowledge of their surrounding community through ongoing planning, leadership opportunities, and problem solving in developing their own service learning project.

Structure of the Advisory Program

Meeting time will be scheduled on a weekly basis to allow for the following focuses to be covered and addressed on a monthly basis.

- **Care/Share Meetings:** Students will openly and freely discuss topics and current events directly affecting them and their surrounding communities.
- **Academic Review:** Students will evaluate and discuss their academic progress with their advisor.
- **Guided Discussion:** The advisor will provide the group with a developed discussion topic involving leadership and the I.B. profiles.
- **Service Learning:** Students are able to coordinate with their advisor in the development of their service learning project.