



Curriculum Summary

Covenant Christian School

January 21, 2014

The curriculum for Covenant Christian School reflects our Reformed Christian worldview. In each subject we strive to provide an academically challenging curriculum that is infused with the truths of God's Word.

Bible

Christian School International's Bible curriculum is used through the fourth grade. The curriculum presents the story of God and His people chronologically, teaching biblical truths in the context of biblical events. By studying how God guides his people, students gain an understanding of what it means to be part of God's family. In fifth grade our students study the entirety of the book of Luke in depth. In sixth grade students are introduced to apologetics.

At Covenant we memorize and reinforce Scripture as a community in order to encourage families to learn the memory verses together. We recognize that younger children may only memorize a portion of the passage. Each teacher sets an expectation regarding the memory work for his or her class. Our prayer is that our students will place God's Word deep in their hearts.

In addition to Scripture, we also formally memorize our school hymn, Amazing Grace. Throughout the year we also seek to memorize several other hymns. As our students memorize and sing these hymns we emphasize the richness of the words chosen by the author and the underlying theological truths.

Language Arts

Civics

We seek to give our students an understanding of citizenship that includes, but also goes beyond, the formal structure of government. In particular, we seek to help our students understand government and their role in the governing process, while also desiring that our students would understand the fullness of their citizenship. In this, we seek to help our students understand their role as a citizen to care for others, to understand the depth of difficult issues, and to engage in civil discourse. Formal instruction in these areas is found in fifth and sixth grades as our students work through the history of our government's development.

Composition

Covenant students develop writing skills that include both creative expression and the communication of information. Writing is obviously a very important skill and one that is complex to teach. Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten our students begin the application of the 6+1 Traits method of writing. This method provides for a shared vocabulary for speaking about and working with student writing. In particular, students focus on ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, conventions and presentation.

Grammar

Understanding the structure of language through the teaching of grammar facilitates a greater understanding of the English language and its nuances. In addition, a solid grasp of English grammar supports our students as they begin to learn a foreign language. Our grammar curriculum at Covenant is entitled Voyages and focuses on practice and review to help students master the concepts.

History

The study of History in the lower grades focuses on U.S. history and famous Americans who have made a positive contribution to the shaping of our country. Through reading biographies, autobiographies, and source documents, students learn not only about the individual, but also about the time in which they lived.

Beginning in third grade, students study history chronologically using *The Story of the World* by Susan Wise Bauer. In third grade the students study the Ancients, fourth grade the Medieval and Early Renaissance period, fifth grade Late Renaissance and Early Modern Times and sixth grade the Modern Age.

Latin

With our Latin curriculum, *Latina Christiana*, students in fourth through sixth grades delve into beginning Latin. They learn about derivatives, translation and basic grammar while also learning to sing some worship songs in Latin. Through this course, students are taught the building blocks of the romance languages.

Literature

Authors Robert Littlejohn and Charles Evans declare that the secret to a great liberal arts education is to “Read, read, read and then read some more!” Good literature opens up our world and strengthens our “cognitive [the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning], cultural, social, spiritual, and epistemological [the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge] development.” We know that great readers are developed through the reading of great books. Our students are encouraged to read great books through our literature curriculum.

In addition, reading skills are further strengthened as our teachers read great books to our students. Being read to allows our students to build their listening skills, develop their imaginations, and learn to love good stories.

Logic

Formal logic instruction is included as a part of our mathematics curriculum. Students develop skills in analysis and respectful argument and discussion. Developing these skills is an important part of every aspect of our curriculum.

Penmanship

Our students need to be able to communicate in writing in a standard and legible manner. Our penmanship curriculum helps our students to do just that while reinforcing the beauty and order of language. Through Junior Kindergarten our students use the Handwriting Without Tears method for penmanship. Thereafter our students use Zaner-Bloser.

Presentation Skills

For many people one of the most difficult things they can do is to speak in public. By starting at an early age (remember show 'n' tell?), and continuing through sixth grade, we seek to have students who are comfortable and confident in speaking publicly. Informal opportunities such as joke telling, singing and doing skits at lunchtime exist throughout the school year. Formal presentations are made by each student once each quarter beginning in first grade. Covenant students learn to "speak and pray boldly" in a variety of settings.

Reading

In order to develop very good readers, Covenant teaches phonics, fluency and comprehension skills beginning at an early age. Through a solid understanding of phonics students are able to use letters to understand and manipulate sounds. In addition, our curriculum is designed to build fluency (accuracy, speed, and expression) skills. Finally, we work to help students develop comprehension strategies that help them understand and enjoy what they read.

Research

Covenant Christian School has developed a research curriculum for its students. Each student in grades 4 to 6 is required to complete a formal research paper in a manner appropriate for students in that grade level. Research papers require independent thinking, evaluating and using facts. The researcher must reflect on the topic, the information gathered and then reach a conclusion. This is a challenging assignment for our students.

Spanish

Covenant teaches Spanish using Symtalk, which is a total immersion method of instruction. Symtalk engages the student with a visual aids as well as academic exercises. During each session students engage in conversation, developing valuable verbal skills and enhancing vocabulary.

Spelling

Despite the advent of spell check, being able to spell is an important skill for our students. With phonics as our foundation, our students develop excellent spelling skills. It is important to note that developing a firm understanding of phonics is considered a prerequisite to the development of good spelling skills. Once letter sounds are understood, translating these to paper becomes a natural next step. Our Foundations phonics curriculum (Kindergarten through third grade) integrates these skills for smoother acquisition. Beginning in third grade our students use the Wordly Wise spelling and vocabulary curriculum.

Technology

The use of technology is an important aspect of the world in which we live. It is a gift that has been given to us by God for our use as we seek to educate children in a Christ-centered, grace-filled and academically excellent environment. In the context of our school, we recognize that there are three primary areas in which technology will be utilized: school administration, student instruction, and as a tool for students to gain knowledge as well as demonstrate what they have learned.

At Covenant, we believe that the education and inspiration of elementary age children can be furthered by bringing select audio/visual experiences to the classroom in support of content areas of study. Although teaching computer skills to students directly is not a priority, we do recognize that studies can be augmented via resources provided through the Internet, word processing and

presentation software, and other educational tools that require technological assistance. We desire that our teachers have access to these tools and are well trained in their use so that, therefore, they have the opportunity to both model the proper use of technology as well as its benefits in the learning process. Each classroom teacher is provided a MacBook and an iPad for their use.

Students must be prepared to access information and to record and present their work through the use of computers. This preparation begins with basic familiarity with hardware and software, which includes knowledge of basic ethical issues related to the use of technology. We provide typing skills (beginning in third grade) and presentation and research skills via the computer (beginning in fourth grade).

MacBooks for students use are available for student use through Covenant's Apple Mobile Education Lab (the "Apple Cart") for purposes of computer education.

Vocabulary

Covenant places a heavy emphasis on language arts, desiring each child to read well, write clearly, and speak effectively. Covenant takes an intensive phonics approach to reading, encouraging students to begin reading in Kindergarten. Grammar and mechanics are taught daily beginning in Kindergarten. Reading comprehension is taught through classic children's literature. With a strong foundation in phonics and continued exposure to great works of literature, students develop skills that will help them to master the English language and, in particular, its vocabulary. Beginning in third grade our students use the Wordly Wise spelling and vocabulary curriculum.

Mathematical Arts

Art and Drawing

The visual arts are critical to our students' understanding of what is good, true and beautiful while helping students to develop and improve "muscle coordination and perception skills." Art and drawing instruction are considered separate subjects. In each class the focus is on the learning and application of basic techniques and the work of great artists. The visual arts are integrated to a large degree into the curriculums of grades third through sixth.

In addition to creating and understanding art, our students learn to appreciate art, art history and architecture through:

- The integration of the arts with our history and other curriculums
- Regular interaction with great artists in the classroom
- Visits to the St. Louis Art Museum
- The thoughtful placement of art in the classroom.

Art projects and opportunities beyond the classroom are intentionally planned to support and stimulate the student as artist. Student work is displayed throughout the school, placed in school materials and featured in the community whenever possible.

Math

Covenant uses the Saxon program for Math, supported with student manipulatives. Saxon is a traditional, rigorous math program that employs an incremental approach. This grounds the

students in the grammar of math and provides continuous review of those skills. Teachers supplement the content of the curriculum to meet student needs and interests.

Geography

Geography is taught at each grade level, blending traditional memorization with a deeper understanding of geography's role in shaping our world. Students focus on learning map skills, locating countries, states, and cities and understanding major geographical features. The social, cultural, and political aspects of geography are continually integrated into other disciplines.

Music and Drama

Our music curriculum is designed to provide students with the ability to interact with great music developed over the course of creation. Students enjoy visits to the St. Louis Symphony and the opportunity to listen to national and local artists share their gifts.

Students participate in formal performances throughout the year and begin instruction in the playing of the recorder in third grade.

Covenant students are introduced to drama through trips to the St. Louis Children's Theater and to productions of interest directly tied into curricular content. In addition, our fourth grade students produce an annual Shakespeare production as a part of the school's Fine Arts Street Fest.

Science

Students learn science through an inquiry-based curriculum. As early as Kindergarten students participate in simple experiments and become familiar with the scientific process. An emphasis is placed on experiential learning, in which the students learn through doing. Guided by a teacher's instruction, they learn to make predictions and anticipate results in a way that enforces a fundamental understanding of scientific truths. Concepts build on one another throughout the years, creating a strong foundation in science. Physical, Earth and Life Sciences are all covered throughout each year. The outdoor classroom is a significant component for the science program and provides formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the school year.

Physical Education and Dance

Physical education plays a significant part in developing and training the bodies God has given us. Exercise helps students to grow in strength and coordination. Team sports and games require cooperation and encourage students to grow as Christians who can work together for the Kingdom of God. Students receive formal physical education instruction twice each week.

Dance is introduced to our students primarily through our Physical Education curriculum. Each year our students are exposed to folk and modern dance.