



Junior Kindergarten Overview

Covenant Christian School

Junior Kindergarten is a transitional Kindergarten program for children who will be at least four years old before August 1st and who are ready for a five-day-a-week school experience but miss the age cut-off for Kindergarten. Junior Kindergarten also meets of the needs of children whose families prefer another year of development before beginning traditional Kindergarten. Classes meet daily from 8:15-11:30, with the option of enrolling in Covenant's enrichment program, Above and Beyond, for those who desire a full-day experience.

Bible

A biblical worldview is woven into the way we live, work, and play together. We seek to help our students understand the Bible, through formal Bible instruction, which takes place twice a week. Using Christian School International's *God's World* curriculum and supplemented with other sources, students study stories from the Old and New Testaments and pray together as a class.

Literacy

Covenant seeks to support young learners in their emerging literacy by providing a rich variety of literature experiences. Daily story time features books with unique illustrations, word choices, and thought-provoking ideas. Poetry is emphasized weekly, with the children selecting poems for memorization as a class from a specific collection of age-appropriate poems. The Junior Kindergarten class enjoys reading through the complete Henry and Mudge series of books by Cynthia Rylant during the school year. Reading through a series allows even young readers to experience the continuity of a recurring character in literature. To develop these young learners as future writers, Junior Kindergarten students participate in lessons from the *6+1 Traits of Writing* and are encouraged to engage in book projects that stretch them as beginning authors and illustrators. Emphasis is placed on growing each child in their ability to express thoughts on paper and to take an idea and develop it over a series of pages or sentences.

Letters and Handwriting

Each week students focus on the sound and formation of two different letters. All of the capital letters are covered first in developmental order during the first half of the school year, and two lowercase letters per week are taught during the second half of the school year. Handwriting instruction takes place using the *Handwriting Without Tears Kindergarten* curriculum, a developmentally-appropriate program that encourages writing on paper as well as the use of various manipulatives to build awareness of the vertical and horizontal lines, and large and small curves, characteristic of capital letters. Students practice name recognition and name writing using both capital and lowercase letters. Recognition and writing of common beginning sight words is emphasized as well.

Math Concepts

Formal math instruction takes place during calendar time and through daily structured activities. Numeric literacy is promoted throughout the day as teachable moments requiring the application of numbers occur. Emphasis in Junior Kindergarten is placed on number recognition as well as rote and rational counting, sorting, sequencing, and making predictions. In addition, students practice counting by 5's to 100 and experiment with complex patterns and beginning units of measurement.

Science

Junior Kindergarten students engage in science activities throughout the year using the Missouri Department of Conservation's curriculum for early childhood, *Nature Revealed*. Rather than the memorization of scientific facts, Junior Kindergarten science instruction is designed to grow each child as an observer of nature and a student of the natural world God has created. Additionally, Junior Kindergarten students regularly spend time in Covenant's own outdoor classroom space and partner with the fifth grade students for a six-week nature journaling project each spring, integrating their skills as scientists and writers.

Center Time

Center Time, or free play time, is a critical component of our Junior Kindergarten program and occurs daily. During Center Time children are allowed to make independent choices for play at a variety of centers, which rotate according to current curriculum in the classroom. Teachers provide guidance in negotiating social situations and helping each child establish cooperative play relationships with peers, while also engaging children in play that supports classroom learning.

Field Trips ("JOE's")

Three or four field trips (Journeys of Enrichment) take place during each school year in Junior Kindergarten. Locations are selected based on educational value for the children and relevance to class curriculum.

Enrichment

Junior Kindergarten students receive instruction in Music for half an hour each week. In addition, students visit our school library weekly, where they engage in story time with the librarian and get to check out books.