

Curriculum

Academic Education

The students of St. Ann School are offered a well-rounded curriculum. In addition to religion, language arts, math, science and social studies, the students have regularly scheduled enrichment classes in music, library science, physical education, health, Spanish and computer science. State standards and benchmarks guide the curriculum. Technology is integrated into all areas of the curriculum offering students the latest equipment to enhance instruction and to encourage learning in order to compete in the age of information technology. Interactive websites are used to enhance student engagement and learning. St. Ann School's expectation for student learning is for all students to master grade level expectations and surpass them to reach their highest academic potential.

Religious Education

Religious training is of the utmost importance and forms an integral part of school life. All students attend daily religion classes which provide the foundation of the dogma and doctrine necessary for a clear understanding of Roman Catholic living.

The student body has the opportunity to celebrate both Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist on a regular basis. Liturgical celebrations are also scheduled for major feast days (Holy Days of Obligation). Students in grades K – 7 attend Mass weekly.

Every effort is made to guide students in living their Catholic commitment daily in all they do. Parents are asked to cooperate, especially through an example of their own Catholic living, in the circumstances of each day and in their faithful observance of their Sunday Mass obligation. It is of vital importance that parents' examples do not confuse the children. Both family and school must give the same message to our children -- that we know, love, and serve the Lord, obeying the laws and commands He has given us.

Goals of Religious Education

- To provide, in cooperation with the family, a secure, Christ-like environment in the development of the whole person;
- To afford the opportunity for the children to learn and appreciate the truths of the Catholic faith that they may understand and live its content, purpose and expectations;
- To lead the students to an active participation in the faith community in their lives;
- To assist all students in achieving academic competence in accordance with the State of Louisiana which will render them capable of living in society as a responsible citizen;
- To provide programs that will allow ample opportunity for the development of special talents and interests that further enhance each child's potential, as well as provide fruitful and rewarding leisure time activities;
- To create an understanding and appreciation of one's own country, together with a broad world view; teaching Jesus' way of compassion towards others, especially the poor and needy, by participating in acts of charity/missions;
- To prepare the student to continue his/her education through high school and beyond.

Religious Textbook Series

St. Ann School has selected the following series: *We Believe*, William H. Sadlier, Inc. textbook series for grades PK4-7th and *Theology of the Body*, for grade 6. This program is child-focused and engages children in grasping the mystery of faith. Based in the teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the series presents the principles of faith in an interesting and inviting format. It is also family-focused in that it includes family-friendly activities and on-line resources. For more information concerning the series, please visit their website <https://religion.sadlierconnect.com/wbcid/webelieveweb.com>.

Language Arts Program

In our prekindergarten programs, our teachers use a whole language multi-sensory approach when working with their students. Children's literature comes alive as teachers incorporate music, dramatic play, games, and art into their lessons. Phonemic awareness and phonics skills are developed as the students participate in a wide variety of guided activities. Vocabulary and comprehension skills are enhanced through "show and tell", listening activities, and sharing time.

Our kindergarten teachers have created a unique program for our students. Phonemic awareness, the precursor to phonics, is developed through a variety of activities. Students learn to spell words that follow basic phonetic patterns for short vowels. McGraw Hill's Wonders series serves as a basis for the kindergarten reading program. Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are further developed through supplemental materials and teacher created activities.

Our first through fourth graders use the McGraw Hill's Wonders reading program as their basal reader. As basic reading skills are developed, teachers cultivate their students' critical thinking and reasoning skills by extending the program's lessons. Students respond to their readings by participating in writing and group activities. In addition to the McGraw Hill's Wonders program for language arts, our teachers also use the Sopris West Step Up to Writing Program. Teachers supplement the reading curriculum with books and outside readings. The staff at St. Ann School has worked diligently to merge all strategies into an effective, multi-sensory, systematic approach to improving writing, reading, listening and speaking skills.

The language arts program for 5th-7th grade includes: Sadlier's Vocabulary Workshop, Prentice Hall literature series, Voyage's language program, novel studies, and Sopris West Step Up to Writing program. Once again, we have found the best programs and merged them into a cohesive unit that develops our students' critical thinking skills. Our students learn to read, evaluate and synthesize information so that they can respond to a wide range of materials in an intelligent, informed manner.

Students in grades 3-7 participate in a rigorous writing curriculum. Teachers have mapped out a sequential process for writing essays that include introductory and concluding paragraphs. At least three times during the year 3rd-7th graders participate in the writing process of these essays.

In addition to classroom instruction, students in third through seventh grade participate in the Reading Counts program in the school library. The program is designed to help foster a love of reading while allowing students to check for accuracy through computerized Reading Counts quizzes.

Math

The goal of our math program is to help students understand the relationship between mathematics learned in school and real-life situations by providing meaningful learning experiences aligned with state standards and benchmarks. The layering of the math strands: number and number relations, algebra, measurement, geometry, data analysis, probability and discrete math, patterns relations and functions moves from the concrete to the conceptual. Age appropriate activities guide students' development of math concepts as the content becomes increasingly abstract.

Number and number operations and geometry are the core of the math program in prekindergarten - K programs. In first and 2nd grade measurement is included as an additional focus area. Students use math manipulatives to help develop the idea that representations are interchangeable. Students gain an understanding of measurement, data, and patterns while working with numbers. Critical thinking skills develop as students investigate math concepts through problem solving, reasoning, connections, and communication. Fundamental ideas of algebra are introduced, developed, and extended as students participate in math activities. Kindergarten students through fifth grade students use the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt math program and supplemental materials to develop these concepts. In first grade an additional multisensory program, Touch Math, bridges manipulation and memorization allowing for fluency.

Three crucial math themes: multiplicative thinking, equivalence, and computational fluency are emphasized in third and fourth grade. These themes fortify two major math objectives: making sense of math ideas and acquiring the skills and understanding needed to solve problems. Our students recall basic math facts fluently so that they can focus on higher order thinking skills. "Cognitive psychologists have discovered that humans have fixed limits on the attention and memory that can be used to solve problems. One way around these limits is to have certain components of a task become so routine and over-learned that they become automatic." (Whitehurst, 2003). Students demonstrate their understanding of math patterns, relations and functions by describing, extending and making generalizations about geometric and numeric patterns. Critical analysis of patterns and functions using words, tables, and graphs is further developed.

As middle school students move through the curriculum, they are challenged with a balanced math program that includes a significant amount of algebra and geometry. Middle school students are provided with problem solving experiences in which critical thinking skills continue to develop. They learn to generate various strategies for solving problems, to analyze variable quantities, and to apply algebraic methods to real- life situations. Teachers use the Holt math series as well as a variety of supplemental materials. The math program is accelerated. Beginning in fifth grade, all students are in a math textbook one year above their grade level. The mathematical content presented helps prepare our students to enter substantive high school courses.

Science

The students at St. Ann School gain an understanding of the natural world as they actively engage in scientific inquiry. Students are taught to ask questions, research, hypothesize, experiment, and observe as they analyze results and draw conclusions. All grade levels incorporate the scientific method in their studies of life, earth, and physical science. Teachers use tools such as lab equipment, the McGraw Hill and Glencoe series, video streaming, and internet web sites to enhance science curriculum. As students learn science content, process skills are continually developed. A fully equipped science lab makes it exciting for students to participate in scientific investigations. Third through seventh grade students are encouraged to participate in the Learning Fair engaging in activities that exhibit their understanding of the scientific method.

Social Studies

Our social studies program allows students to explore the world we live in and examine cause and effect relationships that have impacted history and continue to impact the world today. Students learn geography, civics, economics and history using such valuable tools as: Harcourt and Glencoe textbook series, Scholastic News, Unitedstreaming, BrainPop, Starfall, iPads, and the media center. Programs, fieldtrips, and guest speakers further develop our students' appreciation of our past and the present. Our program's goal is to mold responsible, well informed citizens who possess moral integrity and who will contribute to society in a positive way.

Assessment

The faculty at St. Ann School understands that evaluating a program using assessments is only as good as the assessment. For this reason, teachers are continually revising and fine tuning the assessments they are using to determine a child's progress and to meet each child's individual needs. Our staff is dedicated in providing a variety of assessments that are authentic, valid, and reliable. An assessment evaluation tool was created to help teachers analyze the assessments they are using with the students.

Using the information from a variety of formative assessments, the child's teachers and mentors are able to gain an understanding and appreciation of each child's unique approach to learning as well as how the child interacts with adults and peers. The students' performance on these assessments allows teachers to reflect on teaching methods and determine next steps in developing the students' skills and conceptual understanding. Students in Grades 3-6 are administered the ACT Aspire summative assessments. All assessments are analyzed and used to make decisions that will allow us to better prepare our students for the challenges they face. Curriculum changes are put into effect and monitored based on feedback from stakeholders and student performance on all assessments.

Standardized test scores continue to be above the national and Archdiocesan average in all grades and in all subjects. A significant amount of our seventh-grade students qualifies each year for the Duke Talent Search. This means that students scored a 95% and above on at least one subtest of the ACT Aspire Standardized Test. St. Ann students who participate in the Duke Talent Search testing have continually received state recognition as well as the honorable Grand Recognition.

Enrichment Classes

All students participate in enrichment classes such as health, music, computer, library, Spanish, and PE. Beginning with our two-year-old class, enrichment classes help our younger students explore the world of music, movement, and the arts. Every third-grade student learns to play a musical instrument. Beginning in fourth grade, students may join the school band. During library and computer, Middle School students utilize these enrichment classes to complete assignments across the curriculum to meet the technological demands of high school.

In addition to enrichment classes, outreach programs from organizations like the Audubon Institute and Diamond Del's Mobile Mine supplement the curriculum. Training camps with the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans and demonstrations from local high school students against destructive decisions all provide character education and promote our anti-bullying policies. Our Middle School students participate in a social media presentation which reviews social media etiquette and safety. Local authors, musicians, artists, and community helpers visit the students each year enriching our students' learning experiences.

Technology

Technology infiltrates the entire school. St. Ann School remains committed to our continued growth in the use of technology from classroom instruction to communication with parents concerning their child's grades, attendance, and assignments. Our use of technology also makes it easier for parents to register online, make payments for registration, tuition, cafeteria, and extended care fees.

St. Ann School remains committed to the continued need for remaining current as technological advances change our world. Putting these technology tools in the hands of our students better prepares them for the world they live in. Our initiative to place iPads in all of our students' hands has been launched. Currently all middle school students have their own iPad and use them during lessons. PK2 through fourth grade teachers also incorporate iPads and tablets for students to use in learning centers.

Clubs

St. Ann School offers a large variety of clubs (Art Club, Chess Club, Builder's Club, Beta Club, Junior Service Club, Lego Club, St. Joseph's Club, St. Mary's Club, Science Club, Spanish Club, STEM Club, Student Ministry Club, Technology Club), sports (flag football, volleyball, basketball, cabbage ball, Metro sports- baseball, bowling, tennis, cross country, soccer, swimming), and activities (Quiz Bowl, Student Council, Patrols, Band, Junior CYO, Cheerleading). These activities provide leadership opportunities, empower students, and build their self-esteem.