

Saint Monica Curriculum Highlights

Primary Grades

Kindergarten:

Kindergarten is the start of a child's academic journey. At Saint Monica School, students grow in their love of learning, social skills, and interest in reaching out to the world. Consistency in the classroom encourages student participation, cooperation, and interaction. Through structured daily routines, students are provided the opportunity to gain independence.

Students learn in whole group and small group settings through our blended learning program. Students have opportunities to work independently and collaboratively, allowing them to grow as independent learners and develop their team-building skills. Learning is facilitated in the context of everyday experiences including calendar activities, current events, exploring, and celebrating many different cultures.

Each day includes time to create, pretend, and make choices. Experiences both in the classroom and outside the classroom, such as field trips, are important components in Kindergarten that help to increase knowledge and add fun and excitement to their learning experience.

1st Grade:

Students enter 1st grade with a natural curiosity about the world around them and an excitement to learn and discover. Using a curriculum based on the science of reading, these beginning readers and writers become increasingly fluent and independent. They expand their comprehension skills and knowledge base through study of a rich array of texts, including folk and fairy tales, non-fiction selections on the human body, early civilizations, and astronomy.

Students develop their mathematical computation skills as well as explore place value, measurement, and geometry. Students continue to learn of the love of God and grow in friendship with Jesus through music, a variety of prayer experiences, and study of the Gospel stories. They share family experiences, learn about communities near and far, and develop mapping skills.

Through hands-on activities, students investigate plant and animal traits, space systems, and light and sound waves. Students innovate, create, and share through our LEGO League Explore curriculum. Students also have the opportunity to explore our city and enhance their learning through a variety of field trips.

2nd Grade:

Second grade is a crucial period for the growth and development of young minds. We strive to create a supportive environment that fosters learning and encourages exploration. Developing key skills such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving, equips students with the tools they need to succeed as they grow academically and personally.

In 2nd grade, students continue their development as readers, writers, and mathematicians. Our comprehensive ELA program integrates reading, spelling, vocabulary, and phonics with Science and Social Studies, providing connection throughout their learning.

Students have fun participating in writer's workshops and writing books. Our math program challenges students through productive struggle, rich tasks, mathematical discourse, and formative assessments that help students self-identify their strengths and weaknesses. In addition to whole class instruction, students are provided opportunities to work in small groups.

Each student has their own iPad used to enhance the curriculum. Applications/programs include Google Classroom, Mathletics, Epic, Brain Pop Jr., Mystery Science, and Raz-Kids. Students explore STEM through engineering projects and learning coding.

A major focus of second-grade religion is preparation for receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion. Saint Monica 2nd grade students foster social-emotional development and academic growth with Second Step Curriculum.

Intermediate Grades

3rd Grade:

In 3rd grade, students look forward to many new and exciting activities. Now in the intermediate grades, students learn to accept ownership of their work and actions. Ms. Keb's classroom motto is "You Are Responsible For You!" Consistency and routine are key elements in the 3rd grade multi-sensory learning environment. Students are expected to work independently, and cooperatively in small groups. Third graders read chapter books in a variety of genres and write weekly book reports.

In Math, students review addition and subtraction skills, are introduced to multiplication and division, and learn to solve multi-step word problems. Science and Social Studies unit projects show knowledge and understanding of content and typically include a dinosaur diorama and a solar system project.

In Religion, students learn about the life and teachings of Jesus and how to be kind, compassionate, and respectful members of society. Technology is integrated into

the curriculum and allows students access to enriching learning resources such as Mathletics and RAZ Kids. Third graders also look forward to a number of field trips that support and enhance the curriculum. This is also students' first opportunity to participate in CYO sports.

4th Grade:

In fourth grade, students are becoming more independent learners. They further develop their oral and writing skills. Students build their confidence through opportunities to make short presentations during morning assemblies. They improve their sentence construction and work on paragraph writing. In addition to spelling, students delve into a more in-depth vocabulary study.

Emphasis is placed on organizational and notetaking skills. With the reading of nonfiction material, such as textbooks, becoming more prevalent, students are taught the skills needed to comprehend academic subject books. In math, students incorporate real world math concepts, such as making change with currency and knowing time differences, into learning as well as study advanced concepts such as an introduction to variables, expressions, and equations. The central theme of Religion in fourth grade is how God guides us.

5th Grade:

Fifth grade proves to be an exciting year as students grow in learning and responsibility. Vocabulary development continues with a focus on the parts of speech. Paragraph outlining and writing increases. Mid-year, students begin joining paragraphs together to form essays. Opportunities for public speaking are expanded through class discussions, projects, school functions, and membership in extra-curricular clubs.

Students progress in organizational and time management skills. Class assignments are designed to develop higher order thinking. In reading, students analyze and evaluate a variety of literary styles and genres. History classes center on the United States. In Science, students learn about the three branches of science: physical, earth and life. In preparation for junior high, students' mathematical foundation is solidified through instruction as well as use of enriching computer programs such as Accelerated Math. The central theme of Religion in fifth grade is "We are worshipping people."

Middle School

Sixth Grade:

In this milestone year, students begin their journey toward graduating from Saint Monica and transitioning to high school. In sixth grade, students are fully integrated into the Junior High School setting. They earn new privileges and acquire new

responsibilities. They experience different teachers in multiple subjects as the "departmentalized approach" to learning is expanded.

Academic accomplishments in 7th and 8th grade determine high school admissions. As such, students begin preparation for the high school evaluation process in sixth grade. Sixth grade students experience a high school prep curriculum that challenges them to be enlightened, empowered, and transformed.

The focus in Religion is on spiritual awareness. As students study the Old Testament of the Bible, they analyze and discuss passages and reflect on how these messages may resonate within their own lives. In literature, students read a variety of literary genres and forms throughout the year, with the concentration on comprehension and story analysis. Clear self-expression is the goal of English, developed through the practice of writing and grammar. The development and usage of expanded vocabulary is explicitly taught as well as incorporated across the curriculum.

Students explore Ancient World History in social studies, focusing on the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece, and Rome. Emphasis is also placed on current events. High school preparation is further enhanced as students in Math explore the principles and foundation of pre-algebra and learn about the earth in Science. Supporting curriculum for sixth grade students includes PE, Art, and Music. Technology is integrated into all classes.

7th grade:

The Middle School journey continues in seventh grade. Saint Monica School students become teenagers in an unforgettable, defining year highlighted as much by social, physical and emotional development as it is by intellectual achievement. This year also marks the beginning of the high school evaluation process. Admission into local high schools is determined by students' academic accomplishments at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth-grade years. With this in mind, the seventh-grade curriculum continues to challenge students to be enlightened, empowered and transformed.

Language Arts is divided into three subject areas: English (grammar), Literature and Vocabulary. Reading Comprehension is a hallmark of the 7th grade Literature class. Throughout the year, as students explore a variety of literary styles and genres, emphasis is placed on knowledge gained through comprehension to further each student's interaction with the text: analysis, critical thinking, and figurative comprehension.

Writing as a process is the foundation with which students express themselves through a number of formal (descriptive, expository, persuasive and research reporting) as well as informal styles (journaling, creating stories and poems). English

class is geared toward developing these writing skills. Equal emphasis is placed on proper language usage and mechanics (grammar, punctuation, spelling). Vocabulary building and expansion is explicitly taught as well as incorporated across the curriculum.

High school preparation is further enhanced as students study pre-Algebra and elements of Geometry in Mathematics, Life Science and Biology in Science, and World History and Current Affairs in Social Studies. Spiritual awareness is at the core of Religion class, as students learn about the life of Jesus in the four Gospels and try to apply Christ's teachings to their own lives. Seventh grade students continue with Technology, Physical Education, Art, and Music.

8th Grade:

Eighth grade students experience an exciting, challenging and rewarding year as they culminate their educational journey at Saint Monica School. High School admissions are at the forefront of the year. Students prepare to showcase their academic, extracurricular and spiritual accomplishments as they apply to various high schools. Our students are consistently accepted to the most competitive college preparatory high schools in San Francisco.

Our academic program prepares them well. Students take Algebra I, American History, Physical Science, English, Literature, Vocabulary, Art, Computer, Music, and Physical Education. English and Literature place a strong emphasis on grammar, language usage, mechanics, the writing process, and reading comprehension. Students read works from a variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction. In addition,

Catholic students will continue their spiritual journey as they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. As both a spiritual and class bonding experience, all students participate in the Confirmation retreat and fulfill service hour requirements. Throughout their time at St. Monica, eighth grade students have worked to achieve our Student Learning Expectations (GRACE) to become well rounded individuals.

Eighth graders are expected to be highly involved in the school and parish community by embracing their responsibilities as student leaders. Opportunities include tutoring, acting in drama, producing the yearbook, participating in Student Council and Service Club, singing in the choir, serving at Mass, and participating in our Bulldog sports program. Our graduating class embodies the outcomes of our Student Learning Expectations. They are ready to take the next step in their educational journey!