

Our First Grade Mission:

Our mission is to provide a challenging and nurturing, learning environment in which Catholic values, academic and behavioral skills are taught. Students are encouraged to reach their fullest potential, become responsible life-long learners, and live a Christ centered life. Our classroom instruction builds upon continuous reflection and implementation of the most current research-based educational practices. First grade students will continue to lay the foundation started in Kindergarten. They will participate in activities, which build the basic skills. First graders participate in activities that increase competence in verbal and nonverbal communication. In areas of instruction, students will be expected to express and receive ideas and feelings effectively and appropriately. By providing an environment of high standards, students will develop high expectations, set realistic goals, and work towards mastery levels of achievement. Students will be given opportunities to develop healthy, positive self-concepts that will enable them to feel successful academically, personally and socially.

Art: The Visual Art Program at Saint John Vianney aims to inspire, challenge, and empower each student through exposure to the arts. It is our goal that students will become life-long learners, appreciators, and supporters of the Fine Arts.

Art creation is the foundation of our program. Students are expected to take pride in their work while developing their craft with patience and perseverance. The curriculum addresses both historical and contemporary practices, exposing students to a wide variety of media, techniques, and processes in two and three dimensional design. Students are taught how to evaluate and analyze art, thus, gaining an appreciation for a wide range of styles, movements, cultures, and historical works of art. Students learn concepts and vocabulary associated with the visual arts, as they are expected to communicate these ideas in visual, oral, and sometimes written form.

The range of art projects is as varied and diverse as the unique individuals that create them. The Visual Arts Program supports all subject areas and incorporates cross curricular instruction as much as possible. From mathematics to religion, the arts span all disciplines and require higher order thinking skills, creative problem solving, self assessment, expression, and awareness. The art curriculum is derived from Diocesan Standards and strives to remain current with state, national and global trends in art education.

GRADES K-4 CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS:

Content Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
Achievement Standard: 1. Students know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes. 2. Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses. 3. Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories. 4. Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

Content Standard #2: Using knowledge of structures and functions: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas. 2. Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses. 3. Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

Content Standard #3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art. 2. Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

Content Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures. 2. Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places. 3. Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art

Content Standard #5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art. 2. Students describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks. 3. Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks

Content Standard #6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students understand and use similarities and differences between characteristics of the visual arts and other arts disciplines. 2. Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum

Foreign Language: The foreign language program in First Grade is designed to allow our students to experience other cultures through literature, music, art, dance, and other entertainment. Students learn and recite proverbs, short poems, songs, prayers and anecdotes, to identify people and objects from oral and written descriptions, to use appropriate gestures and oral expressions for greetings, leave-takings, and common classroom interactions. Our students are introduced to and participate in age-appropriate cultural activities including games, Catholic Spanish customs, and traditional Spanish celebrations. They begin to recognize and identify people, Spanish saints and objects from oral and written descriptions and use this information in other school subjects.

Language Arts: The language arts program encompasses listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills necessary for future proficiency in these disciplines. A primary focus in first grade is to foster a love of literature. Listening comprehension and vocal reading development are a key component of our reading program. Phonological awareness, letter recognition, vocabulary development, and listening comprehension are explicitly and consistently developed throughout the year.

During the course of the year speaking skills are strengthened through work with singing, rhyming, sharing experiences and ideas, and conversing with peers and adults. Our first grade students recite from memory, tell simple stories, learn to enunciate words correctly and participate in group discussions and story development. Listening skills continue to be strengthened by following both one and two step oral directions, hearing stories and songs on a daily basis, by discriminating sounds, and then answering orally to specific questions about a lesson demonstrating basic comprehension skills.

Reading skills continue to develop common word recognition, syllable identification, blending and segmenting of sounds, producing rhyming words, recognizing blends, antonyms, synonyms, and homophones, as well as organizing events in sequential order and recognizing root words and suffixes in grade-level appropriate materials. Students will begin to learn to use a variety of reading strategies, picture clues, context clues, phonics, sentence structure, and prior knowledge to discern main ideas and predict endings, while drawing upon a variety of comprehension strategies. They participate in a take home reading program designed to provide exposure to a variety of literature, as well as an opportunity for families to spend time together sharing their thoughts about the stories. Our summer reading program is to continue developing each student's reading progress with the aim for each child to be proud of their success.

Every child will observe and participate in a variety of writing activities focused on writing responses across the curriculum in the form of letters, journals, poetry, directions to complete a task and observations about authors. Each area is designed to enhance the child's confidence in their ability to communicate. Handwriting activities are designed to convey the first grader's need to express themselves, to share their experiences and to promote proper formation of all manuscript letters and their desire to do things the correct way, as they gain command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

Library: During their weekly library visit, first grades continue to discover the realm of possibilities that can feed ones imaginations. Each child begins to develop the skills essential to becoming an active and thoughtful library user. The class listens to literature for pleasure and information, often participating in the storytelling, drama, songs puppetry, finger plays and poetry, then relating the elements of the literature to personal experiences and predicting the outcomes of each story. Then each child is able to share in the selecting of their own books, verbalizing requests in locating materials, developing the proper procedures to checkout their selections at the circulation desk and to return the materials. Students at this age are beginning to identify themselves as readers. They are learning to choose books that are appropriate for their reading level. They are then able to reinforce comprehension skills with a computerized testing system called Book Adventure. This can be accessed via the internet. The students continue to predict outcomes, discern the different types of literature, such as fairy tales, folklore, poetry, etc. and to share opinions about the materials heard, read or viewed. Each visit is designed to spark the child's imagination, enhance the desire to read and to discover a world beyond their scope of existence.

Math: The math experience for the first grader continues to focus on mathematical explorations in the context of real-life experiences, geared to maintain the child's interest by introducing exciting opportunities for mathematical thinking. This process tends to be hands on using manipulatives and games to develop recognition of numbers to 100, simple time concepts, counting, measurements, seasons, temperature, patterns, size, quantity, shapes and to solve problems. The children will continue to count by twos, fives, and tens, add and subtract 2 digit numbers, begin working with fractions and measurements, to write and tell time, begin to solve word problems and identify geometric shapes and terms. Students continue to develop numeric patterns as well as how to choose the correct operations to solve problems and to construct their own graphs from given data and become more proficient in identifying and reading graphs. Time is spent working with money, giving it a real world connection by relating money transactions with retail stores that a first grader would most likely come in contact with during the course of their day. As the students begin to perceive the usefulness of mathematics in everyday life, understand the relationship between mathematical concepts and skills, realize the relevance of mathematics across the curriculum, they become mathematical thinkers.

Music: The sense of music skills is a sense of rhythm and pitch. The first grade student chants, sing songs, and do rhythmic activities to develop their singing voice and lend toward group music experiences. They begin to follow the directions of the conductor, to differentiate tempo, rhythm and beat and to interpret mood of music. Students will explore and experiment with a variety of musical instruments and dance to develop their natural inclination toward self expression and creativity to reinforce self-esteem and foster enjoyment. Students will also create their own stories and distribute rhythm instruments to their classmates, and direct them to imitate key words with the rhythm instruments in their stories. Students will be introduced to Sibelius software in the computer lab to begin the process of creating music.

Physical Education: The emphasis in PE is on the development of each child's strength, endurance, co-ordination, balance, and large muscle activities such as running, galloping, climbing, throwing, catching, kicking, dancing, bending, etc. First graders build on the skills learned in Kindergarten such as the necessity of warm-ups of body muscles before strenuous exercise, movement in a space without collisions, jumping rope, and the wearing of proper clothes and shoes for physical exercises. Students continue to demonstrate the ability to lead and follow, dribble, kick and catch a ball, understand oral directions, and maintain balance in a variety of postures. Continued development of the concept of shared space, equipment, group co-operation, and team effort is an important part of the first grader's experience and curriculum.

Religion: We believe that the salvation of each child's soul is primary and with their salvation in mind, we direct each student to lead virtuous lives pleasing to God, not for their own prestige. Their academics and their spiritual instruction will help them to witness the Gospel in the world and to learn what God has planned for each one of them. To this goal appreciation of one's abilities and uniqueness of self and others, identifying rights and responsibilities of membership in family, neighborhood, parish faith

community, and society, as well as recognizing the authority of God and of parents in one's life are key. Each student is taught to recognize negative and positive feelings, to express gratitude, to show and ask for forgiveness, and to demonstrate honesty, sharing, charity, and respect for all people and the world around us. Each student identifies and practices Christian values, the persons with authority in the church, and participates in Christian services. Every child is taught that the two great commandments are the core of Jesus' message and that Jesus is the model of all God wants us to become. Recognition of the major title of Mary as the Mother of God, that the Father as our Creator, and the Spirit as the source of unity and grace carrying out the work of Christ in the world encourages each child to show concern for the poor, the weak and the suffering. Explanations of the liturgical year, the Eucharist as a meal sharing celebration, the bible as the inspired word of God and the sacrifice of Jesus' gift of Himself, the sacraments, the different parts of the mass, the meaning of gestures such as kneeling, signing, genuflecting, responding to prayer, and the different forms of prayer, enable each student to become an informed and active members in the Catholic community. Discussions of scripture help each child reach a deeper understanding of life, faith, and love of oneself and others. Each child participates in spontaneous prayer, recites basic responses of the Mass, which they attend once a week, and memorizes the prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Angel of God, Grace before/after meals, Act of Contrition, and the Morning Offering, as well as begins the spontaneous prayer experience. Identifying and discussing the lives of saints as friends and models for Christian Life helps each student reach a deeper understanding of life and faith. First graders begin the studies of the life of Jesus as both human and divine, focusing on the events of Holy Week, with an emphasis on the Triduum and views on the life of Christ and Mary within the context of the liturgical year.

Science: First graders are naturally curious and eager to work together to discover about the world using the scientific process to study the earth, the weather, animals, plants, matter, and the universe through hands on activities which encourage the discussion and sharing of ideas as they work to process what they are observing. Activity and conversation fill the room as children participate in the activities to explore, investigate, observe, and describe a wide variety of exercises geared to expand and acquire scientific knowledge. Developing keen observational skills is an integral part of the first grader's science program. The students benefit from hands-on learning in activities such as becoming weather forecasters as they learn about the weather, recording their observations and data, using graphing skills to record their findings, and making new observations when discrepancies exist.

Social Studies: Each student begins to express and understand the concepts and language of geography in the context of classroom, home and community. Geography is the emphasis of the first grader's social studies. Students begin to describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens, recognizing and using maps, globes, legends, and directions to locate their street, city, country in relation to the equator, other continents and oceans to compare and contrast the various locations of people and places. Students continue to identify people who influence the United States' history, e.g. leaders, inventors, explorers, the symbols of the U.S. i.e. flag, eagle, patriotic songs, holiday, as well as

traditions and customs of the United States. They will compare and contrast everyday life in different times and places around the world, and be introduced to basic economic concepts.

Technology: The presence of computers in the classroom gives each child the opportunity to play games that reinforce other disciplines such as reading, math, etc. and to begin teaching simple word processing skills. Students are also able to extend their knowledge, and teachers are able to challenge individuals who excel in certain disciplines. Each first grader goes to computer class once a week, enhancing the classroom experience with the use and understanding of the proper and responsible use of the Internet, basic computer terms and concepts, and the use of websites and graphics programs to create and research information to convey an idea and further on topic knowledge. Students begin keyboarding skills using the “Type to Learn” program by Sunburst. The use of a word processor, saving and retrieving files and documents, and learning keyboarding skills with increased speed and accuracy enables each first grader to work independently as they enhance their knowledge across the curriculum.