

Our Sixth Grade Mission:

Sixth Grade continues to be a transitional year as the students are faced with the additional challenge of changing classes and more homework in middle school. Most students begin to develop an understanding of their individual learning styles and grow in their ability to take responsibility for their academic work both at school and at home. We are working to improve study skills, critical thinking skills, and the ability to reason. We encourage students to hold themselves to high standards, to ask for help when needed, and to maintain a cooperative relationship with classmates, teachers, and parents.

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 5-8 CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

Content Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
Achievement Standard: 1. Students select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices. 2. Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

Content Standard #2: Using knowledge of structures and functions: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work. 2. Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas. 3. Students select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas

Content Standard #3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks. Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks.

Content Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures. 2. Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts. 3. Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work 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 compare multiple purposes for creating works of art. 2. Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry. 3. Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures.

Content Standard #6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context. 2. Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts.

Foreign Language: The foreign language program in Sixth Grade is designed to allow our students to experience other cultures through literature, music, art, and dance. Students continue to learn and recite proverbs, short poems, songs 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 Sixth graders begin to use materials and/or media from the target language such as newspapers, literary texts, etc. Students become familiar with the Euro and Spanish currency. They are introduced to basic Spanish grammar.

Language Arts: Exploration and guided discovery are the driving forces behind the language arts program which encompasses listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills necessary for future proficiency in these disciplines. Reading skills are the primary focus in Sixth grade. Grammar skills continue to be developed and integrated into student writing. While our Sixth graders continue to develop listening comprehension and vocal reading development their phonological awareness, word analysis, vocabulary development, and listening comprehension are explicitly and consistently developed throughout the year.

Our Sixth grade students are required to read Hatchet and to choose one other book from the summer reading list which is sent home with report cards. During the first week of school they will present projects and write reports on their summer reading books. Throughout the year, the Sixth grade students will read 2 novels in addition to the

literature text and independent reading. Students use a variety of reading strategies such as context clues, phonics, sentence structure, and prior knowledge to discern main ideas and predict endings. The Sixth grade student continues to connect reading vocabulary through a variety of reading, writing, listening, and speaking language activities in the language arts and other subject areas and develop it by using mapping activities. Sixth graders read to identify the plot line, the setting, the main characters and their motivation in a story/selection. They participate in dramatizations, give formalized speeches by using aides to speak formally (i.e. note cards, props etc.) and participate in group discussions and story development. Listening skills continue to be strengthened by recalling sequence of events in a story, predicting outcomes, following both two and three step oral directions, and answering orally to specific questions about a lesson demonstrating basic comprehension skill. Our Sixth graders begin to correlate and evaluate the information taught in class so they can express their own thoughts, views, and opinions on a given topic as well as determine if the information given is either: fact, fiction or opinion. They begin to use a thesaurus to find new words to increase their vocabulary and to develop word meaning skills by using multiple-meaning words and analogies. Sixth graders understand inferential meaning by interpreting cause/effect and recognizing figurative/picturesque language and by making compare/contrast relationships in relation to a story or text.

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. They understand that prewriting is the stimulation of ideas and gathering of thoughts and participate in small group or whole class written pieces as well as free write activities to stimulate cognitive and imaginative processes that provide thoughtful reflection. Students write drafts, then revise each type of writing including essay, letter, invitation, thank you, drama, poetry, narration, argumentation, etc., and use the proper form for each type of writing. Students learn grammar through the context of writing. Grammar skills are honed such as punctuation, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, interjections, conjunctions, and analysis of the written work by sentence function. Each area is designed to enhance the child's confidence in their ability to communicate.

Library: During their weekly library visit, Sixth graders continue to discover the realm of possibilities that can feed ones imaginations. We build library skills into English as well as other curriculum areas, as student search for information to complete their projects. Each child continues to develop the skills essential to becoming an active and thoughtful library user, as they nurture their love of literature by exploring the library and broadening their exposure to the various types of literature thru more in-depth examination in the various areas available to them. Students are able to independently use the computerized card catalog system. Sixth graders continue to use encyclopedias, dictionaries, magazines, computer websites and atlases in the reference section to research topics across the curriculum. 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: Honing the mastery of the whole number, decimals, fractions, and computation is one of the primary goals of our math program in Sixth grade. We continue to focus on

mathematical explorations which are core to our daily activities and correspond to opportunities for mathematical thinking. The students will continue to work with different forms of measurement which extends to spatial reasoning, ratios, percentages, multiplication and division, to solve word problems, to find averages, and to solve equations. We reinforce the importance of geometric concepts e.g. area, radius, circumference, angle, perimeter, etc. Mathematics is presented as a form of logic that allows students to understand relationships among various forms and mathematical ideas. Mathematics is applied in science and as the year progress each student realizes that math is evident throughout their day and come to appreciate this fact as the year continues. We also have an introduction to algebra concepts, in that we begin solving problems in terms of a variable, or an unknown.

Music: The Sixth grade student continues to develop the elements of music i.e. meter, notes, tone, chords, beat, mood of music, good singing posture, breathing, diction, and does rhythmic activities to develop their singing voice and lend toward group music experiences. Students will explore and experiment with a variety of musical instruments, with a focus on music composition to explore 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 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 learn about songwriting and write lyrics about something dear to them. Students will also write their own melody with chords to accompany their lyrics. Students will engage in orchestrating a simple melody utilizing Sibelius software in the computer lab.

Physical Education: The emphasis in PE is sports and physical education skills. Sixth graders build on the skills learned in previous years such as the necessity of warm-ups of body muscles before strenuous exercise, aerobic activities to enhance flexibility and co-ordination, and movement education to perform loco motor and nonlocomotor skills in various sequences. Students will learn how to officiate different sports. Continued development of the concept of shared space, equipment, group co-operation, good sportsmanship behavior, strategies of various sports, and team building emphasizing co-operation and problem solving is an important part of the Sixth grader's experience and curriculum.

Religion: This year Religion class centers around the Old Testament as it leads to and prefigures Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Church. With a foundational understanding of Revelation as contained in Scripture and Tradition, students learn to read about stories and people directly from the source of Holy Scripture and interpret the events with the mind of the Church. They learn about the inspiration of the Scriptures with their historical backgrounds and the differences in genres and literary forms to convey various messages. Far from understanding the people and events as isolated stories compiled into a single volume, the students come to understand how God is slowly preparing His people for the fullness of His merciful and redemptive love. Beginning with Genesis, students discuss the state of original justice in which Adam and Eve were created and then the original sin and its effects. Other significant time periods

and people focused upon include: Cain and Abel, Noah, the Tower of Babel, the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah), Moses and Joshua, Judges (Samson, Deborah, Jephthah and Gideon), Kings (Saul, David, Solomon, Rehoboam), the Prophets (Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Daniel, Jonah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah) and the Maccabees. Significant woman figures in the bible are also highlighted including Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, Rachael, Leah, Miriam, Ruth, Hannah, Judith, Esther, Susannah). Each of these are read and understood according to the four senses of Scripture taught by the Church: the literal, allegorical, anagogical and eschatological. Therefore, the figures/events are seen to have a significance in and of themselves but also are types or foreshadowings of people/events to come. They are also seen as examples of virtue or vice. Thus the students are taught to identify virtues such as faith, modesty, prudence, honesty, justice, and courage as they are embodied in the lives of these people.

Because this year places a special emphasis on the Catholic heritage of Judaism, students learn in depth the historical basis for many Jewish celebrations and customs including Passover, the Seder Meal, Purim, Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah, Simchat Torah and the recitation of the Psalms. They distinguish between a synagogue and a temple and, when there is the opportunity, they visit and tour a modern orthodox synagogue. Having established the context, they then are able to see the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours) as a prayer that would have been prayed by Jesus Himself. They understand the Mass as a transformation of these Jewish customs by Jesus into redemptive acts that continue throughout time by His action within His Church. Studying the ancient Jewish culture in Religion class coincides with what is being learned in Social Studies so that the students frequently are able to make cross-curricular connections which stimulate and excite their love of learning and of both subject areas.

There is an emphasis on faith and reason as they complement each other in Biblical studies. For example, having studied the event of the Flood and Noah, students learn from archeological evidence that a flood did really happen in that part of the world at the time indicated in the Bible. Science aids and reinforces what the Biblical text says (even though the Bible does not intend to convey scientific truths but religious ones.) Students come to understand that no truth is contradictory; all that comes from God, either religiously or scientifically, forms a comprehensive whole.

All of this takes place within a context of study but with devotion, reverence and a desire for what is true and holy. Attendance at Mass, opportunities for Confession, First Friday Adoration and Eucharistic Processions with Triple Benediction provide students with many and varied opportunities to deepen their spiritual lives. Explanations of the liturgical year, the meaning of gestures such as kneeling, signing, genuflecting, responding to prayer, and the different forms of prayer, all enable each student to become an informed and active member in the Catholic community. Discussions of scripture help each child reach a deeper understanding of life, faith, and love of God, oneself and others. Each child participates in prayer at the beginning of class, is involved in spontaneous prayer, recites basic responses of the Mass, attended once a week, and memorizes the prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Angel of God, Grace before/after meals, Act of Contrition, Morning Offering, Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, and the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel.

However, the faith they profess goes more than just rote memorization; it encompasses a whole life vision. 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 and knows and respects the persons with authority in the church.

The curriculum covers a large amount of time but gives the students a sense of the fullness of the beginnings of the Catholic Faith and a desire to learn more about the individual elements within it.

Science: The science curriculum for sixth graders is Earth General Science. Their exploration of the world using the scientific process to study the earth's age, cycle, weather, geological features, and geological events helps the students to develop an understanding of the physical world by investigating their questions such as why something is, how it works, and why it does what it does. Often in answering their many questions they discover more questions to investigate. Developing keen observational skills is an integral part of the Sixth grader's science program as they focus on the physical world, the experiments which are designed to answer their questions, and present the data which justifies their experiment results. The students participate in science fair, creative challenges, group projects, and debates as well as create models, dioramas, and power point presentations.

Social Studies: Our Sixth grade social studies experience focuses on world history, beginning with ancient history and continuing through modern times. Students continue to identify people who influence the United States e.g. leaders, inventors, explorers, and continue to use current events to keep informed and identify recent happenings as well as recognize the need for world peace and an understanding of others, their lifestyles, and beliefs. Our Sixth graders begin to investigate exploration and trade, World Wars, major world events, civilization, religions, and historical periods to better understand world events and ideology.

Technology: The presence of computers in the classroom gives each child the opportunity to continue to enhance the learning and teaching process. Each Sixth 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 are proficient in their typing skills but will continue to develop speed and accuracy using the Type to Learn Program by Sunburst. Sixth graders continue to learn the appropriate and ethical conduct of computer/internet use by following the school's Internet User Policy, and

respecting the privacy of all users. The emphasis on creativity and preparing class presentations and photo galleries by the use of a word processor, saving and retrieving files and documents, and researching thru the use of other reference websites and search engines, enables each Sixth grader to probe more deeply into their computer/class projects and work independently as they enhance their knowledge across the curriculum.