

Elementary Grades

Grace Lutheran School 7300 Division River Forest IL 60305



Grace Lutheran School Where children live the life of faith

Our mission at Grace Lutheran Church and School is to bring in, build up, and send out disciples for Jesus Christ. Our school prepares children for a life of discipleship by helping them to grow in faith, knowledge, and character.

First Grade

Children in first grade gather knowledge, acquire skills, and develop relationships with God and others. The curriculum is child-centered, with activities and lessons to help each individual develop intellectually, emotionally, and physically. The classroom is a place for children to “wonder, question, and imagine” as they embark upon the journey of learning.

In religion class students hear the many stories of God’s love shown to people throughout the ages. During weekly chapel students gather as a community to worship and celebrate the story of salvation.

Language arts instruction includes literature, phonics, vocabulary, grammar, comprehension skills, creative writing, and critical thinking. Children are nurtured in these important skills as they work toward the goal of becoming lifelong readers.

Math instruction provides a foundation of knowledge designed around direct instruction, the use of manipulatives, games, and problem-solving activities. Science is an opportunity to learn more about living things, weather and seasons, and caring for the environment. Children observe, experiment, and form conclusions as they design and create products to solve problems.

Social studies instruction helps children learn about being good citizens in a community. They read stories about real people, past and present, as well as gain better understanding of places and cultures.

Classes in art, music, and physical education are additional opportunities for first graders to express themselves. Each child has been blessed with many talents. The goal in first grade is that each child pursues learning and gains great success!

Paulette Reddel

Second Grade

In second grade, students are avid, enthusiastic learners. They are developing a sense of responsibility and confidence in their abilities. They learn to negotiate friendships and how to support and respect each other as part of the classroom community.

Second graders are in a pivotal stage of learning to read and write. They analyze literary elements and practice comparing, predicting, inferring, and summarizing. They enjoy the excitement of reading selections from many different genres and choosing their favorites. Writing is woven into daily classroom activities. The children also participate in writing workshops where they plan, draft, revise, publish, and share their writing.

In math, second graders become increasingly aware of the patterns of mathematics. They do more story problems, learn double-digit addition and subtraction, and are introduced to multiplication. They also study time and money, fractions, measurement, and geometry.

Discovery and hands-on learning guide our science curriculum. Second graders use intuitive reasoning, exploration, and cooperation skills in the lab activities which are integrated into each unit.

Social studies spans many important areas including the study of community, earth and its natural resources, economic goods and services, and government and citizenship. Additionally, students study American history, and the year culminates with a study of landmarks, customs, and traditions in the United States and beyond.

The second grade learning journey is dynamic and fun, and children emerge as confident, well-rounded, faithful, and hard-working students.

Stacy Sorg

Resource Rooms

The special education resource rooms at Grace School are places where children learn, grow, and become better students. Children move in and out throughout the day to work in small groups or individually. We welcome all who need help, support, or just a quiet place to think or work. We take great care to ensure that these rooms are places where children feel safe, where they can learn from their mistakes and experience success.

We use multi-sensory, hands-on techniques to teach reading and math skills, and we recognize and respond to individual learning styles. Both of the resource rooms at Grace are happy places where children receive positive feedback and are encouraged to do their best.

Kristine Washburn, Special Education Coordinator

Deirdre Byrne, Resource Teacher

Third Grade:

Children take giant steps forward in third grade. They still read, write, and do math, of course, but the way they do these things starts to shift.

Students move from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” and from “learning to write” to “writing to communicate.” My job as their teacher is to guide them closely, but also move them towards another goal: working independently.

After three years of being “little” in kindergarten through second grade, third graders are now among the “big” kids. Third grade is a time of significant growth as students find themselves standing more firmly than ever in the world of school. The curriculum is more challenging in third grade. Students will advance unevenly at times, but the goal in third grade is to differentiate to meet the needs of all students.

Third graders are asked to respond in writing in almost every subject, even math, so they get a lot of practice expressing their thoughts and ideas. They will write book reports and even learn to do research papers.

In social studies, students focus on communities within the United States and around the world. They study geography, use in-depth map skills, and learn about economics and money.

Reading becomes integral to every other subject in third grade and will continue to be so through college and beyond. By the end of the year, third graders are expected to read lessons and chapters on their own and to be ready to discuss them in class. In third-grade math students cross the bridge from simple computation to more complex skills. Students will memorize multiplication and division facts, laying a firm foundation for concepts taught in fourth grade.

Third grade science can be divided into two broad categories: science processes and science concepts. As we study basic concepts in science, we also focus on the “how” of the process of science: gathering evidence, taking measurements, constructing models, and connecting data to explain form and function.

Third grade is a great year for having fun while learning. There is always something exciting happening in our classroom.

Mary Berendt

Fourth Grade

The fourth grade classroom at Grace is inviting, stimulating, and exciting, a kaleidoscope of color, ideas, and information. It excites the imagination and invites children with different backgrounds and learning styles to grow and flourish.

Learning centers and bulletin boards reinforce and enrich the material covered in class. There are quiet areas for reading and writing and space for small groups to work together. Students also work in resource centers that challenge and develop higher levels of thinking and creativity.

Fourth grade students are encouraged to explore and share their special gifts and talents, and they are supported as they work to improve in areas of weakness. This is accomplished with large and small group learning experiences, peer tutoring, and individualized instruction. Students share what they learn through oral reports, projects, and presentations.

Fourth grade students learn to solve conflicts in non-violent ways. Time is set aside to discuss social and spiritual issues. Children are listened to, nurtured and supported as they are challenged to grow and learn.

Whether it's regular instruction in math, reading, social studies, or science, or special units on other cultures and types of literature, there is always something interesting going on in fourth grade. Fourth grade is a rewarding year as students learn to be responsible and take ownership of their work and progress.

Kat Albrecht

Fifth Grade

Enter fifth grade and be prepared for a journey to the past, present and future.

The journey to the past gets started with social studies. Looking back at American history helps students understand major events that have shaped our country into what it is today. Special programs such as the unit on the Protestant Reformation and the "Heart and Soul of Chicago" field trip also help students connect the past with the present.

Science is another subject where students look back and use the work of earlier scientists to help them explore the same concepts in our modern world. Life, earth and physical science topics are experienced with hands-on activities in the fifth-grade curriculum.

Math and language arts represent the present in the fifth grade journey. Mastering these subjects now is very important to future success in school. Part of the journey includes literature circles. Working in student-led groups, fifth and sixth graders have the opportunity to read and discuss novels. Leading and participating in religion classes, daily devotions, and weekly chapel services are part of the spiritual journey in fifth grade. Fifth

graders also take on a larger role in the annual Christmas Eve service.

The future and God's plan for us are part of the values we discuss and practice on a daily basis. This journey is remarkable.

Ruth Massman
Joel Zielke

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade is a year for preparing for the future, for looking forward to junior high and adolescence. Higher-level thinking, increasing independence, good Christian character, and self-confidence are goals for sixth-grade students.

The year includes a major field trip shared with the fifth graders. Trips follow a two-year cycle. One year holds an outdoor education experience. The second year is the "Heart and Soul of Chicago" field trip, which includes visits to places of worship in the city and other popular sites. As a final project, students design a model

worship space, incorporating elements from places they visited.

Sixth-grade math focuses on pre-algebra, and social studies looks at world history. In science the students encounter an interactive curriculum, with areas of focus on cells and heredity, earth's structure and surface, and sound and light.

One of the big academic events of the sixth grade year is the research paper, when students follow a step-by-step process for researching a topic and writing and revising a paper. The sixth grade language arts curriculum also includes work in literature circles.

Laura Clauss



Sports, Music, Art, German, After-School Enrichment

Music at Grace is an expression of faith, an opportunity to strive for excellence, and a source of joy and pleasure. Children sing for Sunday morning worship services several times each year and lead the early-evening services on Christmas Eve. Junior high students may participate in the handbell ensemble. Orchestra and band programs offer lessons and ensembles for students who play instruments. Annual dramatic presentations involve students in other dimensions of performing. Weekly art classes during the school day offer additional opportunities for creativity and self-expression.

German is taught at all grade levels, with twice-weekly classes for younger students and daily classes in junior high. Students enter high school prepared to take second-year German classes.

After-school enrichment classes include diverse activities such as Lego robotics, drama classes, art, and chess club. After-school sports teams for fifth through eighth grade boys and girls compete against other Lutheran schools in volleyball, basketball, and track, while students in third through eighth grade compete in cross country.

Junior High

The goal of the junior high school program at Grace is to prepare students to live out their faith in high school and beyond.

“Do your best; let God do the rest!”

We seek to give students the knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in high school. Each student is expected to do his or her best. Students in the junior high handle a challenging curriculum:

- Pre-algebra and algebra
- U. S. history
- Biology, physical, and earth sciences
- Old Testament and New Testament studies
- Foreign language
- Language arts, including grammar, literature, and writing
- Technology

“Each one a unique creation”

Students in the junior high have the opportunity to explore interests and discover talents outside of the classroom during and after the school day.

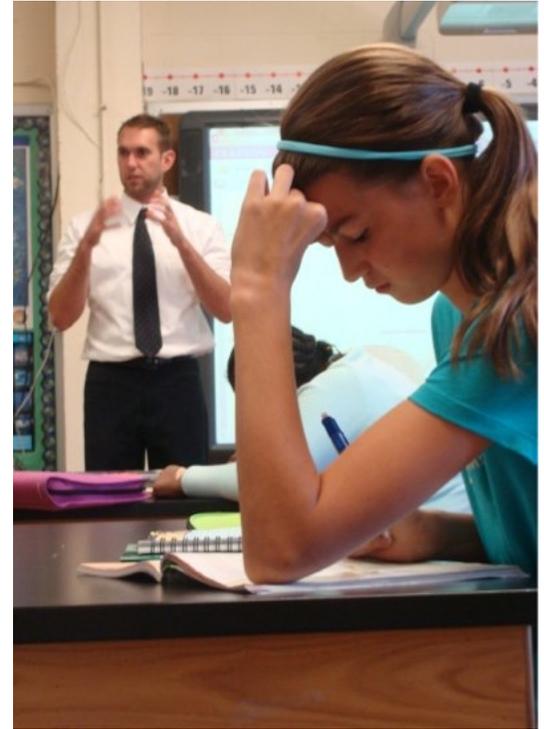
- Choir and bell choir
- Dramatic productions
- Class trip to Springfield
- Volleyball, basketball, cross country, and track teams
- Science, math, and other competitions

“Led by the Spirit”

We are a Christian community, bound together by God’s love. We worship, pray, work, and play together. The challenges of life in junior high and relationships with parents, teachers, and peers are not always easy, but led by God’s Word, junior high

students are encouraged to seek God’s will for their lives in all they do.

Lisa Wolfanger
Brian Schultz



Media and Technology

The Grace Library Media Center teaches students 21st-century learning skills, including information gathering, analysis, and collaboration. These skills will help today’s children become lifelong learners. Our materials collection includes items for all ages and learning styles, including print books, e-books, audio books, videos, databases and computers.

Younger students come to the library for story times, to check out materials and to get help with their reference needs. Older students use the library for Research and Technology classes, in which they participate in project-based activities and learn skills that are important for academic success, as well as finding materials for recreational reading, which aids their personal development. In addition, the Library Media Center hosts several reading incentive programs which encourage students to try a variety of literary genres.

The Library Media Center is open to students during school hours, before and after school, and at home through online access to our digital materials. It is a relaxed and welcoming space, with comfortable chairs and a loft for reading, study areas for independent work and group projects, and a full-time library media specialist to help students meet their information needs and interests.

Educational technology resources at Grace include a Mac computer lab, class sets of PC laptops and iPads which can travel throughout the school, interactive whiteboards, online and offline learning and productivity programs, and more. These learning tools help increase student engagement and prepare our graduates for continued academic success in high school.

Christa Holm, Media Specialist