

FIFTH GRADE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The following information has been prepared to acquaint you with the general course of study and learning activities in fifth grade:

READING: Reading experts tell us that the more a child reads; the greater growth and improvement will be evident in his or her reading ability. This year, our reading instruction program will include some individualization, using self-selected library books at the student's' independent reading level. These will correlate with the Accelerated Reader computer program by which the students take comprehension quizzes on the books they have read. Students and parents may access a list of the Accelerated Reader books listed alphabetically by reading level on the school's web site at www.valleypresbyterian.org/school/specialprograms/acceleratedreading/reports. The reading curriculum will also include core literature novel studies, reading skill development based on mini skills lessons, and reading some of the selections in the fifth grade basal reader, Dreams Go Far. Our goal will be to engage students in more independent reading that will produce growth in the areas of reading and thinking skills and will contribute to reading as a lifelong habit. There will be one major reading skills test given each quarter.

MATH: Using the text Saxon Math, we will begin with a review of basic operations, simple equations, and place value, focusing on the underlying mathematical principles by which these function. Our study of number theory will contribute to the expansion of your child's computational skills, specifically in multiplication and division of whole numbers. We will explore rational numbers and learn how to add, subtract, multiply and divide fractional and decimal numbers. Our mathematical investigations will also include the study of plane and space geometry, U.S. customary (standard) and metric measurement, graphing, and other numeration systems. Calculators will be used to strengthen computation skills and number concepts. Problem solving and investigative thinking will be incorporated into all math activities.

BIBLE: Our study of God's Word will cover three areas. Covenant training will be taken from the Children's Catechism of the Westminster Confession. Many of our Bible memorization scriptures will be taken from the Covenant Training. Using the workbook, Possessing the Land, from Positive Action for Christ curriculum, students will study people, events, and stories recorded in the Old Testament to encourage them toward more Christ-like character. In addition, each month we will highlight a specific Christian character trait. We will discuss together how we can develop that character trait in our own lives to become more like Jesus. Your child will be required to learn one memory scripture each week. Most verses, including those taken from the Covenant Training and those relating to the monthly character trait will be taken from the New International Version of the Bible (NIV). Verses taken from the NIV must be memorized from that text.

SPELLING: This year we will be using ACSI Spelling as our text. We will cover one unit each week, and a weekly test will be given, usually on Wednesday. In addition to the regular list of twenty words, additional words relating to other areas of the curriculum such as Social Studies, or Bible may be included on the test each week. Students will also be given a list of "No-Excuse Spelling Words". These words are taken from the most frequently used and /or misspelled words in the English language. Our expectation will be that students will know how to use and spell these words correctly. Since correct spelling is such an important factor in effective written communication, students will be expected to use correct spelling in all subject areas.

LANGUAGE: Grammar, composition, creative writing, and oral presentation will all be emphasized in our study of the English language. Using God's Gift of Language by A Beka as our workbook, we will study sentence patterns and structure, parts of speech, rules of punctuation and capitalization, and correct forms for writing letters and reports. The students will write original stories and poems to develop their creative ideas through written language. Participation in our annual speech meet will help them develop poise and expression in oral language.

SOCIAL STUDIES: Using United States and Its Neighbors, by MacMillan, we will learn about our country from historical and geographical perspectives. Our study of American history will include native peoples, European exploration and colonization, the founding of our nation, and the Civil War. Our geographical study will cover map skills, identification and location of the fifty states, and major U.S. landforms and geographical features. This will engage the students in a hands-on project creating a graphic-relief map of the United States. We will also examine the foundations of American government as set forth in the Constitution.

An important part of our social studies program will involve each student in a major research project. The project will include a written report, a visual display board, and an oral presentation about one of the fifty states. Students will have the opportunity to use Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint computer programs in the classroom as they work on various aspects of the State Project. The State Project will begin in November, extend into the third quarter, and culminate with the State Fair in May.

SCIENCE: One of the main purposes of our science curriculum is to encourage curiosity and appreciation for the wonder and complexity of God's creation. Our text, Addison-Wesley Science, will be our springboard to the scientific inquiry and exploration of living organisms, and the environment including ecosystems, giving students an opportunity to dissect barn owl pellets and reconstruct the skeleton of the owl's prey; the oceans, in which students will take a cruise aboard a marine science vessel and learn how to use oceanographic equipment; and the transport systems within the human body, wherein students will learn about the heart by dissecting and studying a lamb's heart. Special enrichment units on human nutrition and earthquake awareness will also be components of our study of science. During the year, each fifth grade student will be given the opportunity to plan one or more projects of scientific inquiry in the form of a written science proposal.

In addition to the above-mentioned subjects, **computer science, penmanship, art, music, and physical education** will also be included as regular parts of your child's educational program. In order to meet the needs of every child, we will be implementing a variety of teaching-learning strategies among the various subjects including ability grouping and sub grouping, cooperative learning, team teaching, individualized learning plans, and curriculum adjustment and differentiation (when appropriate).

FIELD TRIPS: We are planning a number of field trips to extend and enrich your child's learning beyond the borders of our classroom. We plan to visit the Los Angeles Zoo, two theatrical productions performed by Children's Theater Experience, the L.A. County Museum of Art, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, the San Pedro Harbor for a marine biology cruise aboard the Los Angeles County's Floating Classroom, and the California Science Center and IMAX Theater.

This information is intended to give you a "bird's-eye view" of the fifth grade year. We've tried to hit the highlights without getting too bogged down in the details. Remember that the learning needs and best interest of your child are most important to us. Fifth grade holds many exciting challenges, and with God's help, we know this will be a great year for all of us.

In the service of our Lord,

Mrs. Luedke and Miss Dhima