



# LOWER SCHOOL

## AT A GLANCE

St. Francis Episcopal Lower School students are encouraged to reflect and grow in the classroom as they learn to advocate for themselves and others, deepen their own and others' knowledge, and positively impact the world in which they play a part.

**2020-21 CORE CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS**



ST. FRANCIS  
Episcopal School

# THE ST. FRANCIS STUDENT



## Person for Others

Aware of the world beyond my walls, I use my time and talent to carefully plan, purposefully lead, and joyfully engage in service to others.



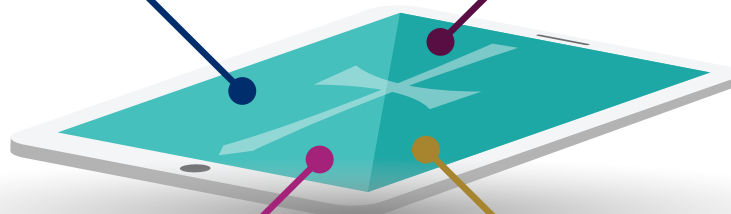
## Collaborator

I seek to collaborate across disciplines and communicate effectively with both peers and educators, always practicing empathy, respect, and fair-mindedness.



## Resilient Learner

A lifelong student, I embrace intellectual challenge and orient toward goals—realizing failure may be a necessary step along the path to personal growth.



## Innovator

I meet adversity with relentless effort to be a positive, constructive thinker who works creatively and confidently to better the world around me.



## Critical Thinker

I make decisions inquisitively, imaginatively, and with discernment toward a global focus, seeking meaningful solutions rather than the status quo.

## SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC LEARNING APPROACH

This research-based approach to teaching focuses on the strong link between social-emotional skills and academic, personal, and civic success. Integrating SEAL into the St. Francis curriculum helps students develop four core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

We offer a balanced physical education program that emphasizes the values of health-related fitness. Lower School students attend physical education class four times per week and enjoy a wide variety of activities presented in a well-structured manner.

## SPANISH

Spanish is woven into the daily learning environment, helping to facilitate language acquisition and retention. Students engage in a variety of fun activities, projects, games, and songs to stay motivated and feel confident using Spanish. Reading and writing instruction expands by grade level, while elements of Spanish culture are included in holidays, calendar events, and prayers.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Lower School students take part in a range of visual and performing arts courses, including drama, art, and music.

## LOWER SCHOOL CHAPEL/RELIGION

A primary component of our mission is to help our students appreciate and engage in the wonderful world God has made and entrusted to our care. As we gather regularly in chapel, we discover that our relationship with the Creator and Redeemer forms the heart and soul of our school family.

# 2020-21 CORE CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

In a nurturing, learner-centered environment that encourages active student engagement, risk-taking, and independence, Lower School students will concentrate on the following skills:

## KINDERGARTEN



### HUMANITIES

- Reading through a balanced approach to literacy, which includes differentiated word work, sight word recognition, shared reading, independent reading, and read-alouds
- Decoding using learned reading strategies
- Self-selecting appropriate-level books; daily reading to build fluency and stamina
- Building listening skills and learning comprehension strategies through interactive read-alouds
- Engaging in writing for authentic purposes and across genres, including narrative, informative, and opinion writing
- Cycling through all stages of the writing process
- Applying capitalization, punctuation, spacing, and spelling, taught and reinforced during the Writer's Workshop
- Understanding and applying word patterns and high-frequency words
- Developing a precise pencil grip and proper letter formation
- Integrating social studies concepts



### MATH

- Counting, representing, and comparing whole numbers
- Understanding addition as putting together and adding to, and understanding subtraction as taking apart and taking from
- Working with numbers to 20 to gain foundations for place value
- Describing and comparing measurable attributes
- Classifying objects and counting the number of objects in each category
- Analyzing, comparing, creating, and composing shapes
- Engaging in mathematical practices appropriate to kindergarten



### STEAM

*(science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics)*

- Asking questions and defining problems, planning and investigating, collecting and recording data, and engaging in critical conversations
- Using discovery and observation to understand scientific concepts
- Investigating concepts such as the five senses, force and motion, weather, and living/nonliving things
- Developing and using models
- Engaging in arguments from evidence
- Practicing logical thinking through basic coding and programming
- Practicing the engineering design process: defining the problem, identifying possible solutions, designing a solution, and creating a prototype and optimizing its design
- Developing and expanding critical thinking skills of communication, innovation, and creativity to solve complex engineering, science, and math problems.
- Using mathematics, information, computer technology, and computational thinking



### TECHNOLOGY

- Exploring and building proficiency with software, websites, and apps that support core curriculum and differentiated instruction
- Laying the foundation for an understanding of digital citizenship
- Using iPads to integrate technology into the curriculum

# FIRST GRADE



## HUMANITIES

- Reading through a balanced approach to literacy, which includes differentiated word work, sight word recognition, shared reading, independent reading, and interactive read-alouds
- Engaging in daily, rich literary discussions as a community of readers, where others' opinions are respected
- Practicing fluency and comprehension strategies through shared, independent, and partner reading from self-selected and leveled texts
- Focusing on specific reading comprehension strategies to delve deeper into texts
- Recognizing literary elements (genre, character, setting, problem)
- Writing authentic pieces across genres, including narrative, informative, opinion, and poetry writing
- Setting goals, reflecting, and developing writing voice and craft
- Cycling through all stages of the writing process
- Approaching grammar instruction holistically, with focus on capitalization and punctuation rules, parts of speech, and editing skills
- Understanding and applying word patterns and high-frequency words
- Integrating social studies concepts



## MATH

- Representing and solving problems involving addition and subtraction
- Understanding and applying properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction
- Adding and subtracting within 20
- Working with addition and subtraction equations
- Extending the counting sequence
- Understanding place value
- Using place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract
- Measuring lengths indirectly and by iterating length units

- Telling and writing time
- Representing and interpreting data
- Reasoning with shapes and their attributes
- Engaging in mathematical practices appropriate to first grade



## STEAM

*(science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics)*

- Asking questions and defining problems, planning and investigating, collecting and recording data, and engaging in critical conversations
- Using observation and discovery to understand scientific concepts
- Investigating concepts such as sound, light, space, seasons, water cycle, plants, and animals.
- Gathering and comparing data from observations and fair tests
- Developing and using models
- Engaging in arguments from evidence
- Practicing logical thinking through basic coding and programming
- Practicing the engineering design process: defining the problem, identifying possible solutions, designing a solution, creating a prototype and optimizing its design
- Developing and expanding critical thinking skills of communication, innovation, and creativity to solve complex engineering, science, and math problems.
- Using mathematics, information, computer technology, and computational thinking



## TECHNOLOGY

- Becoming familiar with the keyboard
- Exploring software, websites, and apps that support core curriculum and differentiated instruction
- Developing an awareness of, understanding, and practicing appropriate digital citizenship
- Using iPads to integrate technology into the curriculum



# SECOND GRADE



## HUMANITIES

- Progressing from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”
- Engaging in daily, rich literary discussions as a community, where others’ opinions are respected
- Practicing fluency and comprehension strategies through independent and partner reading
- Recognizing literary elements (genre, plot, character, setting, problem, theme)
- Participating in authentic, independent writing, including narrative, informative, opinion, and poetry writing
- Cycling through all stages of the writing process
- Setting goals, reflecting, and developing writing voice and craft
- Approaching grammar instruction holistically and strategically, with focus on capitalization and punctuation rules, parts of speech, and editing skills
- Understanding and applying word patterns and high-frequency words
- Integrating social studies through units focused on understanding communities from global to local, with a focus on Houston
- Engaging in the research process to promote inquiry and independent learning



## MATH

- Understanding place value
- Using place value and properties of operations to add and subtract multi-digit numbers
- Representing and solving multi-step problems involving addition and subtraction
- Working with equal groups of objects to gain foundations for multiplication
- Understanding concepts of area and relating area to multiplication and to addition
- Using the multiplication algorithm to multiply numbers up to 144
- Recognizing and describing fractional parts of a whole
- Estimating and measuring length in standard units
- Working with time and money
- Representing and interpreting data

- Recognizing, drawing, and analyzing two- and three-dimensional shapes
- Engaging in mathematical practices appropriate to second grade



## STEAM

*(science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics)*

- Asking questions and defining problems, planning and investigating, collecting and recording data, and engaging in critical conversations
- Using observation and discovery to understand scientific concepts
- Investigating concepts such as matter, heat, earth science, biomes, habitats, food chains, and plants
- Developing fair tests to answer scientific questions
- Developing and using models
- Using mathematics, information, computer technology, and computational thinking
- Engaging in arguments from evidence
- Expanding use of logical thinking through basic coding and programming
- Practicing the engineering design process: defining the problem, identifying possible solutions, designing a solution, and creating a prototype and optimizing its design
- Developing and expanding critical thinking skills of communication, innovation, and creativity to solve complex engineering, science, and math problems.
- Using mathematics, information, computer technology, and computational thinking



## TECHNOLOGY

- Becoming familiar with the keyboard
- Broadening research skills using the Internet and the school’s database subscriptions
- Exploring software, websites, and apps that support core curriculum and differentiated instruction
- Deepening understanding of and practicing digital citizenship
- Using technology to communicate information and ideas
- Using iPads to integrate technology into the curriculum

# THIRD GRADE



## HUMANITIES

- Engaging in meaningful discussions to reflect on personal growth and set goals
- Reading across genres to build a more robust personal “reading life”
- Applying reading comprehension strategies including thoughtful connections, observations, and “wonderings” that are modeled and taught during Reader’s Workshop
- Using context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words
- Writing across genres including narrative, research-based informative, persuasive, and poetry
- Cycling through all stages of the writing process
- Understanding writing mechanics and parts of speech through holistic grammar instruction
- Understanding and applying word patterns and high-frequency words
- Practicing cursive handwriting
- Applying nonfiction reading, writing, and research skills through social studies units focused on Texas history
- Developing communication skills through collaborative projects and individual presentations



## MATH

- Developing strategic thinking to solve story problems
- Using place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic
- Solving problems involving the four operations
- Identifying and explaining patterns in arithmetic
- Understanding the properties of multiplication and its relationship with division
- Gaining familiarity with factors and multiples
- Representing and solving problems involving multiplication and division
- Understanding fraction equivalence and order
- Estimating and measuring time, liquid volume, and mass of objects
- Solving problems involving measurement and estimation
- Representing and interpreting data
- Comparing, recognizing, and generating equivalent fractions and placing them on a number line

- Extending understanding of area and perimeter
- Drawing and identifying lines and angles
- Identifying, sorting, classifying, and constructing various shapes
- Engaging in mathematical practices appropriate to third grade



## STEAM

*(science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics)*

- Asking questions and defining problems, planning and investigating, collecting and recording data, and engaging in critical conversations
- Using observation and discovery and gathering evidence to understand scientific concepts
- Investigating concepts such as plant/animal adaptations, earth science, weather and climate, simple machines, forms of energy, electricity and circuits, and matter.
- Developing fair tests to answer scientific questions
- Developing and using models
- Engaging in arguments from evidence
- Expanding use of logical thinking through basic coding and programming
- Practicing the engineering design process: defining the problem, identifying possible solutions, designing a solution, and creating a prototype and optimizing its design
- Developing and expanding critical thinking skills of communication, innovation, and creativity to solve complex engineering, science, and math problems.
- Using mathematics, information, computer technology, and computational thinking



## TECHNOLOGY

- Conducting Internet research and creating visual presentations
- Continuing keyboard practice and proficiency
- Exploring software, websites, and apps that support core curriculum concepts and differentiated instruction including Google
- Understanding and practicing digital citizenship
- Writing programs and animations using more complex coding and programming concepts
- Using iPads to integrate technology into the curriculum

# FOURTH GRADE



## HUMANITIES

- Engaging in meaningful discussions to reflect upon personal growth and set goals
- Applying reading comprehension skills, with emphasis on author's purpose, theme, and synthesis across texts
- Using context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words
- Writing across genres, including narrative, research-based informative, persuasive, and literary essays
- Cycling through all stages of the writing process
- Understanding and applying grammar concepts taught through a systematic, holistic approach
- Applying spelling patterns, analyzing irregular words, and exploring how words are related in spelling and meaning, as well as their histories
- Integrating social studies through units and book clubs focused on United States regions in which geography and historical perspective are researched and analyzed
- Using digital tools to research, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically source information
- Collaborating with peers to develop, organize, and create multimedia presentations
- Developing critical-thinking skills and strategies to promote accountable talk and productive discussion



## MATH

- Using the four operations with whole numbers to solve problems
- Writing and interpreting numerical expressions
- Analyzing patterns and relationships
- Using place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic
- Using equivalent fractions as a strategy to add and subtract fractions
- Understanding decimal notation for fractions, and comparing decimal fractions
- Extending understanding of multiplication and division
- Solving problems involving measurement and conversion of measurements
- Understanding prime numbers, factors and multiples
- Converting like measurement units within a given measurement system
- Representing and interpreting data

- Understanding concepts of volume
- Graphing points on the coordinate plane to solve real-world and mathematical problems
- Applying the concept of area and perimeter
- Classifying polygons
- Engaging in mathematical practices appropriate to fourth grade



## STEAM

*(science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics)*

- Asking questions and defining problems, planning and investigating, collecting and recording data, and engaging in critical conversations
- Using observation and discovery and gathering evidence to understand scientific concepts
- Investigating concepts such as forces and motion, energy, circuits, weather, natural disasters, electricity, geology, astronomy, life science, and inventions
- Planning and conducting investigations and collecting evidence to answer scientific questions
- Inquiry-based learning
- Constructing explanations and designing solutions
- Engaging in arguments from evidence
- Writing original programs and animations using complex coding and programming concepts
- Practicing the engineering design process: defining the problem, identifying possible solutions, designing a solution, and creating a prototype and optimizing its design
- Developing and expanding critical thinking skills of communication, innovation, and creativity to solve complex engineering, science, and math problems.
- Using mathematics, information, computer technology, and computational thinking



## TECHNOLOGY

- Applying digital tools to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically source information
- Continuing the practice of digital citizenship
- Utilizing Google Suite software, websites, and apps
- Working toward proficiency with keyboarding
- Using iPads to integrate technology into the curriculum

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