

## INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

At Smith Preparatory Academy, we reject the fragmentation of knowledge that often characterizes modern education. Instead, we embrace a robust integration of subjects grounded in the belief that all truth is God's truth. In the classical Christian tradition, disciplines are not isolated, but united under the lordship of Christ, who is the *Logos*—the source of all wisdom and knowledge.

Our curriculum is deliberately structured to cultivate a coherent Christian worldview, where history, literature, theology, science, mathematics, and the arts are studied in conversation with one another. Students explore how ideas develop across time, how mathematical order reflects divine design, and how the great books reveal perennial questions of truth, virtue, and human nature. Teachers collaborate across subjects to emphasize meaningful connections and to encourage students to see the unity behind what they learn.

This integrated approach fosters deep understanding over shallow accumulation of information. It aims not merely at academic proficiency, but at the formation of the whole person—intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Through the recovery of a distinctly Christian humanism, we seek to cultivate students who are not only well-versed in the liberal arts but also shaped by the virtues, affections, and wisdom that flow from our shared heritage. By nurturing habits of attention, wonder, and contemplation, students come to know the world rightly, love what is true and beautiful, and live out their learning in faithful service to Christ and neighbor.

## LOWER SCHOOL

At Smith Preparatory Academy, our Lower School curriculum is rooted in the classical Christian tradition, which seeks to cultivate wonder, moral imagination, and a deep love of learning in young students. We recognize that the early years are a unique and formative time in a child's life—one in which habits are shaped, affections are ordered, and foundational knowledge is joyfully received.

Young children are naturally eager to memorize, imitate, and explore. We harness this God-given curiosity through practices that engage the whole person—mind, body, and soul. Recitation, song, storytelling, movement, and repetition are woven throughout the curriculum to help students internalize language, Scripture, historical narratives, scientific terms, and mathematical patterns. These practices are not merely techniques, but time-honored means of drawing students into the joy and order of God's world.

Our goal in the Lower School is to lay a strong foundation for lifelong learning—cultivating attentiveness, humility, and delight. As students grow in knowledge and virtue, they are prepared not only to think clearly and communicate effectively, but to live wisely and faithfully in response to the truth.

## **Language Arts**

Our Language Arts program encompasses phonics, spelling, penmanship, English grammar, vocabulary, composition, and literature. Students are encouraged to develop a passion for reading and they are given the skills to prepare them to become excellent writers and speakers.

Additionally, our students receive a systematic instruction in writing through the classical method known as the *progymnasmata*—a sequence of preliminary rhetorical exercises used from ancient Greece through the Renaissance to train eloquent thinkers and speakers. We use the *Writing & Rhetoric* series by Classical Academic Press as our core resource across the school. This curriculum guides students from the imitation of fables, narratives and oratory. Each book builds incrementally in difficulty, developing essential skills in writing, speaking, listening, and reasoning. Through this approach, students learn not only to write with clarity and beauty, but to engage with truth in a disciplined, imaginative, and meaningful way.

## **Phonics and Spelling**

In lower school, students learn the art of reading and writing through multisensory reinforcement of the rules that govern phonetic decoding and spelling. Students are taught the limited number of sounds represented by letters and letter combinations that express those sounds in the English language. Throughout this process spelling rules are introduced. These keys to reading and writing are memorized and reinforced on a daily basis. Students receive this instruction beginning in Kindergarten through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, thus equipping them with the phonetic skills needed to become fluent readers and strong spellers.

We use high quality literature to improve reading skills and to encourage a love for reading. Students are monitored to ensure that they are learning to read fluently and that they are learning to fully comprehend what they are reading. Students in our program are reading fluently by the time they enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

## **Penmanship**

In Kindergarten children are taught the formation of cursive letters as it promotes fine and gross motor skills. It is easier for fine and gross motor skills. From this point on, the children continue to write in cursive, improving their script as they mature. In grades 1 through 4, the students

practice their penmanship on a regular basis by copying scripture passages and passages from literature.

## **English Grammar and Composition**

Rules of language usage and style are essential as students mature in their ability to read and write. Introduction to the structure of the language at an early age allows students to develop their reading and writing in a gradual, progressive way. English grammar is taught early, beginning in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade and continued through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The students learn and memorize parts of speech and components of sentences using jingles, chants, and scripted question and answer flows. Students increase their knowledge of English grammar as they mature cognitively and analyze increasingly complex sentences. The earlier students begin to understand the structure of language the stronger base they will have for the study of other subjects.

## **Literature**

Beginning in Kindergarten, students are encouraged to develop a love of reading excellent literature through their introduction to high quality children's literature. Teachers read aloud to the students and they ensure that students are developing listening comprehension skills which provide the foundation for reading comprehension. In the lower school, comprehension is focused on answering questions about the literature and summarizing or narrating what was read. This is done orally and in writing to further develop both their listening comprehension and oral language skills. We want students to not only enjoy what they are reading, but to learn to love good stories and what they teach us about ourselves and God.

## **Latin**

In the early years, students build joyful familiarity with Latin through vocabulary, chanting, and basic translation. As they mature, they begin to dwell more deeply in the language with visual and auditory tools provided by Picta Dicta, a rich and thoughtful language-learning program. Beginning in third grade, students begin to become fluent by reading simple stories and learning basic grammar. In fifth grade and beyond, they study grammar in earnest, internalizing the structure of Latin through careful practice and reflection. Along the way, they read stories that increase in complexity with each lesson. This careful, incremental approach allows students not only to translate Latin, but to think in it, savor its nuances, and appreciate its beauty.

## **History**

History, like all other areas of study, is taught from the perspective of a Christian worldview. Students perceive God's providence as it is revealed in recorded history. They learn the historical significance and chronological position of events in history from creation to the present.

In grades 1 through 4, classes read Susan Wise Bauer's *Story of the World*. By the end of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, students have read about the ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern periods respectively. Grades 5 and 6 use the "Famous Men" series from Memoria Press which covers the same four eras in biographical perspective. Geography is studied within each year's historical content.

## **Bible**

Students learn that God's Word is truth, and that it is applicable to all life and learning. Throughout the grammar school years, the teaching of God's Word is integrated into all areas of study, laying a foundation for more in-depth study and understanding of God in later years.

Beginning in Kindergarten students learn and memorize the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Through the study of God's Word, students learn about basic theological concepts and major biblical themes, the attributes and characteristics of God, and the plan of salvation. By practice, students are encouraged to develop the Christian discipline of memorization of scripture and consistent prayer.

## **Science**

Through exposure to the sciences, students begin to develop an appreciation for God's perfect design in His creation. Students see order and precision in His creation. They discover that because of His design it is possible to hypothesize and experiment, as well as to identify and classify parts of creation.

In lower school, students are introduced to basic scientific terminology, vocabulary, and the scientific method. Students memorize foundational scientific information and practice the scientific method through many hands-on experiments. Teaching students to observe God's creation and to think like scientists is the focus of their early years.

## **Math**

Through the study of mathematics, students see the order and precision of God's creation. A solid foundation in mathematics is necessary before children can pursue higher mathematical reasoning. Our Lower School program facilitates this by extensive use of hands-on manipulatives to ensure that students understand mathematical concepts. During these early years, students also begin to memorize basic math facts and rules. Conceptual and practical understanding of mathematics and a mastery of mathematical facts are critical to ensure success at higher levels of math and reasoning.

## **Art**

In our visual arts program, Lower School students are encouraged to develop both interest in and appreciation of art. Projects relate to understanding and demonstration of the elements of art and the principles of design, the study of great artists and their work, and drawing from observation. Seeing the beauty of God's creation can spark awe and wonder and be a source of inspiration for our own creative work. Art makes this connection tangible.

## **Music**

The purpose of music instruction is to cultivate an awareness of and an appreciation for various musical forms. Attention is also given to learning basic music theory as it relates to choral performance. Students are introduced to a wide range of music from the Renaissance period to modern times. Students listen to the works of great composers while they learn about the composer's lives and the culture in which they lived. Students are also introduced to various musical instruments and learn about the different musical sections used in performing classical music. Each semester ends with a program where students can bless others with the vocal gifts and abilities they have developed through their study of music.

## **Aviation Lab**

Students engage in physics-oriented activities, learning about the properties of flight. They construct various mechanisms and test their flight ability.

## **Physical Education**

We encourage group participation, collaboration, and sportsmanship in our Physical Education program. We incorporate team building with games and activities so students learn how to glorify God as they joyfully engage in physical activity.

## **Kindergarten Curriculum**

Reading: Various Readers (A Beka, leveled readers)

Phonics: *First Start Reading*, Memoria Press

History: *History for Little Pilgrims*, Christian Liberty Press

Bible: *DK Children's Illustrated Bible*

Science: *Our Father's World*, Christian Liberty Press

Math: *Rod & Staff, Book 1*, Milestone

## **First Grade Curriculum**

Language Arts: *First Start Reading*, *Traditional Spelling I*, Memoria Press, *Shurley Grammar*

Literature: various read-aloud and literature selections

Latin: Latin prayers

History: *The Story of the World, Volume 1* by Susan Wise Bauer, Veritas Press Bible Timeline Cards

Bible: *Westminster Shorter Catechism for Kids*, ESV Bible

Math: *Rod & Staff, Level 1*, Milestone

Science: *Exploring Creation* series, Apologia

## **Second Grade Curriculum**

Language Arts: *First Start Reading*, Memoria Press, *Traditional Spelling II*, Memoria Press, *Shurley Grammar Level 2*

Literature: various read-aloud and literature selections

Latin: Latin prayers

History: *The Story of the World, Volume 2* by Susan Wise Bauer, Veritas Press Bible Timeline Cards

Bible: *Westminster Shorter Catechism for Kids*, ESV Bible

Math: *Rod & Staff, Level 2*, Milestone

Science: *Exploring Creation* series, Apologia

### **Third and Fourth Grade Curriculum**

Language Arts: *Traditional Spelling III & IV*, Memoria Press, *Shurley Grammar Level 4* (used both years), *Writing & Rhetoric*, Classical Academic Press

Literature: various read-aloud and literature selections

Latin: *Picta Dicta, Primer*

History: *Story of the World, Volumes 3 & 4* by Susan Wise Bauer

Bible: Westminster Shorter Catechism for Kids, ESV Bible

Math: *Rod & Staff Grades 3 & 4*, Milestone

Science: *Exploring Creation* series, Apologia

### **Fifth and Sixth Grade Curriculum**

Language Arts: *Writing & Rhetoric*, Classical Academic Press, *Well-Ordered Language*, Classical Academic Press

Latin: *Picta Dicta, Grammar*

History: *Famous Men Series*, Memoria Press

Bible: Westminster Shorter Catechism in Modern English, ESV Bible

Math: *Rod & Staff 5 & 6*, Milestone

Science: *Exploring Creation with Human Anatomy & Physiology*, *Exploring Creation with Chemistry and Physics*, Apologia