



2022-2023

Junior High | Program of Studies

**Benilde-St.Margaret's**

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# INTRODUCTION

Benilde-St. Margaret's is a Catholic co-educational junior and senior high school with a college preparatory emphasis. We are happy to have this opportunity to introduce you to the Junior High Program of Studies (grades 7-8) which includes our class offerings for the upcoming school year.

We are a school with a strong academic commitment to our students. We provide a caring yet structured environment. To meet the diverse needs of junior high students, we have a comprehensive curriculum and offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

The focus of the junior high program is the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and physical development of the young person. Our program includes a solid Catholic base of academic religion classes, liturgies, and prayer services. Homerooms convene weekly for academic advisory, activities, and special interest meetings. Relevant issues such as peer pressure, decision-making, self-esteem, diversity, and healthy social relationships are also addressed in the junior high.

Our curriculum includes three levels of English, literature, and mathematics: (1) concepts (for students working and/or testing below grade level or having difficulty learning in that area), (2) standard (grade level), and (3) accelerated (for students working and testing significantly above grade level).

The junior high curriculum emphasizes the development of language arts skills. In addition to separate English and literature classes, all students have the opportunity to study a world language of their choosing.

Our math curriculum includes pre-algebra, algebra and geometry. Basic skills are strengthened in preparation for higher math.

In junior high, technology is regarded as an important tool for learning. Each student is provided a personal laptop for daily academic use. Technology is integrated into all areas of the curriculum.

In the Benilde-St. Margaret's Junior High the 7th and 8th graders are on a quarter system. Some courses are offered for one semester, while other courses such as mathematics, science, and world language are year-long studies. Quarter grade reports, as well as other teacher updates, are posted online for students and parents. In addition, parent-teacher conferences are held twice each year.

Our program is designed to prepare the student for continuing education in high school and college as well as for life-long learning. We are deeply committed to Catholic education and to our students.

# English & Literature

## English

*Year-long course required of 7th and 8th grade students, offered on three levels: concepts, standard, and accelerated*

This course develops students' writing and speaking skills through the practice of conventions of communication: grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling. Areas of emphasis at each level are determined by students' strengths and needs, and writing skills are applied across the curriculum. Students are encouraged to read independently and develop life-long reading habits.

**7th Grade:** Emphasis is placed on the introduction to academic and analytical writing and the conventions of communication to improve writing that informs and persuades. Students also practice organization skills through speaking and research opportunities.

**8th Grade:** Emphasis is placed on further development of speaking skills with multiple opportunities for students to organize, practice, and present. A formal presentation is required each quarter. Students also focus on researching content, analyzing information, and the organization of writing.

## Literature

*Year-long course required of 7th and 8th graders, offered on three levels: concepts, standard, and accelerated*

This course develops comprehension skills and the ability to interpret and evaluate literature through various genres. Students practice response to literature through discussion and writing. Additional emphasis is placed on strengthening vocabulary and analyzing elements of a story. The 7th grade course emphasizes adolescent literature, and the 8th grade course includes mythology and poetry. Students are also encouraged to read independently and develop life-long reading habits.

# Fine Art

## Art

**All students are required to take one quarter of Art. All seventh graders take Art 7. Eighth graders may choose one of the offerings.**

### **Art 7**

*One quarter course, meets every day, required of 7th graders*

Seventh grade art is a course designed to introduce and increase the knowledge of the elements and principles of art while giving the students opportunities to try multiple types of media. Students will learn fine arts skills through painting, printmaking, drawing and sculpture. Lessons are well integrated with contemporary and more traditional art forms so that students will understand and appreciate the influences of art from many genres and cultures.

### **The Art of Craft**

*One quarter course, meets every day, open to 8th graders*

The Art of Craft is the study of how people came to express themselves by beautifying everyday objects. While function is always important, the art of craft and form will challenge the maker to learn the techniques and skills, then expand on them to incorporate design to create their art. The techniques will include, but are not limited to, ceramics, carving, textiles, paperarts, painting, and mosaics.

### **Intro to Design and Making**

*One quarter course, meets every day, open to 8th graders*

Intro to Design and Making is a hands-on, highly collaborative, and experiential learning course merging art and engineering. Students dissect the design process by brainstorming, designing, and making solutions to their choice of design challenges. Maker equipment such as CAD, 3D printers, glowforge (laser cutter), vinyl cutter, Makey Makey, Arduino and others are open for possible exploration. All students will not complete the same projects in this course. Students will have the opportunity to choose which challenges to focus on in depth and will share their learnings with classmates. This is a collaborative environment that requires self motivation, a willingness to take risks, persist, and learn new things.

### **Building the Book**

*One quarter course, meets every other day, open to 8th graders*

Capturing the world around you on a piece of paper seems like such a hard skill to master! Students will build their own sketchbook and begin to fill the sketchbook with exercises that help them to learn to see and to draw with greater skill. This class will show you the techniques artists use to draw and illustrate realistically. Students will try their hand at portraits, figure drawing, still life, and perspective. They will use different drawing materials with emphasis on shading. All work will be two-dimensional.

# Fine Art

# Music

## Band

*Semester course, meets every day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to choir or orchestra*

This course teaches intermediate and advanced musical concepts. It is a building program and a continuation from elementary school. Suggested proficiency is one to two years playing experience. The band concentrates on larger performance skills and works to improve overall ensemble sound. Students will work on improving their rhythm, technique, and style. Two major concerts are performed each year and are required.

## Choir: Vocal Focus

*Semester course, meets every day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to band or orchestra*

This course is intended to develop beginning to intermediate music competencies. This section will focus on vocal technique, music literacy, more challenging repertoire, and preparing for an end-of-semester performance. Music includes sacred, classical, and pop genres. Attendance is required at performances, the Christmas concert in December or the spring concert in May.

## Choir: World Drumming Focus

*Semester course, meets every day, available to 8th graders as an option to band or orchestra*

This course is an innovative and hands-on curriculum where students will discover and perform music from around the world using a variety of percussion instruments. The curriculum is specifically geared towards kinesthetic learners who may benefit from movement in a music classroom. The repertoire will include music that includes singing, drumming, and movement. A focus on world cultures and music traditions will be included in daily lessons. The class will culminate at end-of-semester required performance, the Christmas concert in December or the spring concert in May.

## String Orchestra

*Semester course, meets every day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to band or choir*

This course is designed for players of orchestral stringed instruments (violin, viola, cello, and bass) who have had one to two years of playing experience. Advanced beginner/intermediate level techniques, scales, and exercises are taught and practiced in the class, along with the study of orchestral music from various styles and periods. Students will broaden and refine fundamental skills and prepare for the transition to more advanced level playing. Performances in a variety of venues including school Masses, community and school events, and seasonal concerts with band and choir may require some after-school and before-school participation.

# Mathematics

## Pre-Algebra 7

*Year-long course offered to 7<sup>th</sup> graders on three levels concepts, standard, and accelerated*

In this course students will investigate the multiple representations of numbers and work towards mastery of the computation of those numbers. Students will also learn how to solve many forms of linear equations and inequalities, including proportions and problems that require the application of percent. Connections between algebra, geometry, and data analysis will be examined throughout the year. In order to improve their abilities to communicate about mathematics, students will apply these pre-algebra topics to real-life problems as they learn problem-solving techniques. Students will also connect mathematics to technology through the introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

## Algebra Fundamentals 8

*Year-long course offered to 8<sup>th</sup> graders on two levels concepts and standard*

This is an algebra course that covers aspects of geometry, trigonometry, probability, and statistics. Students will learn a variety of methods to solve basic and complex linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, and how to graph these functions. Students will apply these topics to real-life situations as they learn problem-solving techniques. Students will use technology for math games, instructional videos, introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

## Algebra I

*Year-long accelerated course*

This is an algebra course that covers aspects of geometry, trigonometry, probability, and statistics. Students will learn a variety of methods to solve basic and complex linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, and how to graph these functions. Students will apply these topics to real-life situations as they learn problem-solving techniques. In addition to these topics, students in Algebra I will cover additional concepts including performing operations on polynomials, factoring polynomials, graphing quadratic equations, using the Quadratic Formula and performing operations on rational expressions. Students will use technology for math games, instructional videos, introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

# **Physical Education/Life Skills**

## **M3PE**

*Semester course, quarters 1 and 3 or 2 and 4, required of 7th and 8th graders*

M3P3 affords students the opportunity to learn health related topics, improve skill level, and master game play. The physical education program offers a wide variety of activities to assist students in developing interests and skills. The goal is to provide enjoyable activities in which the students can meet with success. Individual, team, lifetime, and fitness units are offered. The lessons focus on participation, fundamentals, sportsmanship, motor skills, and student interaction.

## **Life Seminar 7 & 8**

*Semester course, meets quarters 1 and 3 or 2 and 4, required of 7th and 8th graders*

In this course, students are introduced to multiple themes that help them explore relevant topics and real world issues. While examining their own beliefs, values, and experiences, students evaluate how difficult decisions impact themselves and others. Through respectful dialogue and reflection, students explore what it means to be a part of a community and their contributions to the communities to which they belong. While developing important communication skills, students gain awareness of how to navigate the difficulties of adolescent life and experiences. This is a two-year course that meets every day for two non-consecutive quarters giving the students opportunities to explore various topics throughout their junior high experience.

# **Religious Studies**

**All students are required to take religious studies. Seventh graders may choose one of the two offerings.**

## **Religious Studies 7**

*Year-long course, meets every other day, open to 7th graders*

This course introduces all major aspects of Christ's life including the prophets' foretelling of Jesus's birth, the infancy narratives, the beginning of His ministry, His parables and lessons, as well as Christ's death and resurrection. The course also includes a survey of Scripture, which focuses on the development and creation of the Bible and the historical background of the gospel writers. Much of the course includes the study of the gospels and the context in which they were written.

## **Religious Studies 7 Seminar**

*Year-long course, meets every other day, \*open to 7th graders*

Religion 7 Seminar focuses on the same fundamentals as the Religious Studies 7 course; however, it is delivered in a seminar-style format and will include additional off-campus field trips. This course sets a precedent in how students interact and understand faith in relationship to who they are as individuals, how they treat others, how they understand a larger community, and how they serve the world. The Religion 7 Seminar will incorporate a new model of theology curriculum where students engage in dialogue and discussion, based on theological texts, for a large portion of class. Additionally, there will be alternate learning experiences where students are exposed to professional speakers, becoming aware of local institutions and non-profits, and gaining a greater understanding and empathy for the larger community.

**\*If the number of course requests exceeds the maximum class size, students will be drawn from a pool.  
Remaining students will be placed on a waitlist.**

## **Religious Studies 8**

*Year-long course, meets every other day, required of 8th graders*

Religious Studies 8 is a Catholic theology course that connects social justice with current events through the study of Catholic Social Teaching. While exploring the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, students apply Christian values to current world issues and examine ways they are called to action. Through the study of our Christian calling to be active in the world, students explore various world issues, discuss the impact of these issues on our global community, and what can be done to eliminate and prevent various problems. In collaboration with other disciplines, students are able to connect faith in action with broader world issues.

# Science

## Life Science 7

*Year-long course required of 7th graders*

In this course students examine living systems, their interactions and interdependence. Areas of study include the nature of science, ecology, cell biology, genetics, and the human body. Students will also work to develop science practices such as data analysis, model construction, and argumentation that they will apply to future courses.

## Physical Science 8

*Year-long course required of 8th graders*

This project-based course gives students an introduction to physics and engineering. Students will learn fundamental science skills through which teamwork and cooperative learning will be emphasized. Topics covered will include measurement, the metric system, motion, forces, energy, and electricity. Also, physical and chemical properties, using properties to classify matter, the periodic table, chemical formulas, and nomenclature, will be covered. Activities will include projects, laboratory work, formal assignments, inquiry-based activities, lectures, and demonstrations.

# Social Studies

## United States History 7

*Year-long course required of 7th graders*

Seventh grade United States history concentrates on the period of time between human migration to the North American continent and exploration of the Western Hemisphere. Included are the following units: the first Americans, West African History and Culture, European Exploration and Colonization, the Revolutionary War, the U.S. Constitution, the Age of Jefferson, and the War of 1812. A field experience to Boston to study the American Revolution may also be offered (for an additional fee).

## History 8

*Year-long course required of 8th graders*

Eighth grade history focuses on a number of topics that connect to both American and world history such as citizenship, conflicts, geography, leadership, and policies. Students will exercise critical thinking skills by making connections between past events and current events.

# World Language

## French A

*Year-long course*

French A offers the opportunity to begin the exploration of the French language, which connects students to 175 million French speakers in more than 50 countries. Our exploration of Francophone culture will include Quebec, the Caribbean, West and North Africa, and Europe. Throughout this course, students will focus on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) through a wide range of activities including pair and group work, role-playing, listening and reading. Students will be corresponding with French “epals” throughout the year, thus offering real life applications to students’ growing language capacities. A field trip to a French immersion weekend at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji, MN will also be offered as well the opportunity to host a French student for 10 days in February or 3 weeks over the summer. Vocabulary topics include: introductions, description, preferences, numbers, colors, time, family, school, weather, seasons, months, and daily routine. Grammar topics include: present and immediate future tenses for essential verbs, possessive adjectives and adjective/noun agreement. Students will also read three mini-novels in French: *Pauvre Anne, Brandon Brown Veut Un Chien, et Brandon Brown Va Au Québec.*

## French B (Prerequisite: French A)

*Year-long course*

French B offers 8th graders the opportunity to continue their exploration of the French language as well as the Francophone culture. Throughout this course, students will focus on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and culture through a wide range of activities including pair/group work, role-playing, listening and reading. Students will continue their correspondence with French “epals” throughout the year and will also have the opportunity to host a French student for 10 days in February or 3 weeks over the summer. An opportunity to attend an immersion weekend at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji, MN will also be offered. Vocabulary topics explored include: café food, clothing, shopping, house, places in a town, and travel. Grammar topics include: a review of all verbs studied in French A, additional irregular verbs and *le passé composé* tense. Students will do units on Paris monuments and art history. Students will also read three mini-novels in French: *Brandon Brown Le Nouvel Houdini, Presque Mort et Le Maillot.*

## Latin

Latin is offered at the introductory level and beyond (as a high school class) and is open to junior high students. See the *Senior High Program of Studies* for course descriptions and prerequisites.

## **Spanish A**

*Year-long course*

Spanish A introduces students to the Spanish-speaking world. This introductory course focuses on building students' working vocabulary, speaking skills, and writing skills through various interpretive, interpersonal and presentational learning activities. Students will communicate with real pen pals as they will be able to ask and answer questions and give information regarding the following themes: hobbies and free time, descriptions, school life, mealtime, places in the community, invitations, making plans, and sports. Movies and music are extensive tools used to teach acquisition. Students will explore the cultures of Spanish speaking countries and become more aware of the diversity of cultures around the globe. As a cumulative activity, students will read, interpret and retell a novice mid level novel in the last quarter.

## **Spanish B (Prerequisite: Spanish A)**

*Year-long course*

Spanish B expands students' knowledge of the Spanish-speaking world. Students will explore the global influence of the Spanish language and cultures through news sources, music, and movies. Students will continue to work in the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. Specific themes of study include the family, shopping and clothing, vacation and travel, entertainment, and the environment with an increased focus on vocabulary acquisition. Past tense structures are also introduced. Students will acquire pen pals from a Spanish speaking country in the second semester to interact with a native Spanish speaker while demonstrating advanced communication skills, reading comprehension, and sentence structure. As a cumulative activity, students will read, interpret and retell a novice high level novel in the last quarter.



# Benilde-St. Margaret's

A Catholic, college preparatory school, grades 7 - 12

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