

JUNIOR HIGH



Benilde-St. Margaret's

2024-2025 Program of Studies



2024-2025 – Junior High Program of Studies

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About this year's Program of Studies Cover: Katherine Berthoud, a member of the Class of 2025 and BSM's Marketing & Communications EPIC internship, is the creative mind behind this year's cover. Reflecting on her involvement, Katie expresses, "Being a part of the EPIC Marketing and Communications internship has been nothing but a positive experience! I am gaining real-world work experience I didn't know was possible in high school. So many opportunities have opened for me to improve my writing, creativity, photography, communication, and time management skills. I think these skills and experiences will help me as I head into college, possibly studying marketing!" Katie is currently exploring her options for post-secondary education, deciding on a college where she can effectively apply the skills she has cultivated during her time at BSM, with a potential focus on marketing.

Introduction

Welcome to the 2024-2025 School Year

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.

Junior High Program

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.

Curriculum

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 an 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.

System Format

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 and are happy to have your student part of our school community.

Go Red Knights!

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, persuades and communicates effectively. 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 responding to literature through discussion and writing. Additional emphasis is placed on strengthening vocabulary and analyzing elements of a story.

7th Grade: Emphasis is placed on adolescent literature.

8th Grade: The course includes mythology and poetry.

Students in both grades are also encouraged to read independently and develop life-long reading habits.

Fine Arts: Visual 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, 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 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, open to 8th graders

The Art of Craft explores craft as fine art. Crafts developed throughout history and the world will be explored in this course: from the alebrije creatures of Mexico to the paper quilling of ancient Egypt and China. The art of craft will teach the maker new techniques and skills, using the elements and principles of art to inform artistic choices. These techniques will include, but are not limited to, paper arts, textiles, sculpture, and Mosaic.

Intro to Design and Making

One quarter course, 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.

Drawing + Design

One quarter course, open to 8th graders

Capturing the world around you on a piece of paper or with a paintbrush seems like such a hard skill to master! This class will show you the techniques that artists use to draw, paint, and illustrate realistically. We will explore skills that will improve students' ability to create artwork based on what they see in front of them. Students will try their hand at portraits, figure drawing, still lifes and landscapes. All work will be two-dimensional.

Band for Beginners

Semester course, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to choir or orchestra.

Would you like to be in band but missed the chance to learn an instrument? Is there a new instrument that you would like to learn? The objective of this class is to provide an environment in which nontraditional beginners can learn a musical instrument. The course focuses on the basics of instrumental music such as playing simple pieces, learning fingerings, developing a good tone, and understanding basic music vocabulary. In most cases, students will provide their own instrument. Students can remain in beginning band as long as they wish, but also may transition into the main ensemble at the discretion of the director.

Band

Required proficiency - At least one year of recent playing experience.

Semester course, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to choir or orchestra.

This course strengthens the fundamentals of ensemble playing such as tone, technique, and musical style as well as develops valuable skills such as collaboration, problem-solving skills, and decoding in a hands-on way. Seventh grade band is a building program and a continuation from elementary school. Eighth grade band focuses on solidifying musical knowledge as they prepare to transition to high school band in 9th grade. Both seventh and eighth graders will receive sectional lessons during the week to work on individual skills and musicianship. Each grade will perform in one concert throughout the year, and attendance is required.

Choir: Vocal Focus

Semester course, 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.

String Orchestra

Semester course, 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 7th 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 8th 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.

M3PE 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

Quarter course, required for both 7th and 8th graders

In these courses, 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.

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, Newton's laws, forces, and energy. 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.

**As an alternative to these required science classes, incoming seventh grade students have the option to opt into our thematic science classes described on the next page.*

Thematic Course Offerings

This two-year sequence of courses, beginning in 7th grade and continuing in 8th grade, provides a thematic approach to learning science. Each course will integrate earth science, life science, and physical science concepts. Students will participate in multiple field trip opportunities to dig deeper into the content. These courses are designed for students who are interested in science and would like accelerated, hands-on programming. The 8th grade course will be offered during the 25/26 school year. Students enrolled in the 7th grade course during the 24/25 school year must enroll in the 8th grade course the following year. Field trip fees for each class are estimated to be around \$175 and will be billed through tuition.

If interest exceeds capacity in the class, students will be randomly selected for this class.

Our Place in the Universe 7

Year-long course taken in place of Life Science 7

This place-based course will provide the opportunity to learn more about the geological and ecological processes that have shaped the state of Minnesota. We will explore Earth's place in the universe and physics concepts that support our knowledge of astronomical systems. Beyond content area knowledge, emphasis will also be placed on science practices and literacy. Students will develop skills in data analysis, scientific modeling, and experimental design.

The Chemistry of Us 8 (Offered 2025/2026)

Prerequisite: Our Place in the Universe

Year-long course taken in place of Physical Science 8

This course is the second in the thematic science course sequence. This course will investigate the human body from the atomic level to body systems. The chemistry that supports biological processes within our bodies will also be covered. Emphasis will be placed on interactive labs that allow students to grow a deeper understanding of the content while building upon science skills introduced in the 7th grade thematic course.

Social Studies

United States History 7

Year-long course required of 7th graders

Seventh grade United States history concentrates on the period of time immediately following the Revolutionary War through the early-1900s. Units of study include: Foundations of Our Nation, The Age of Jackson, Reform & Changing American Life, Westward Expansion, The Civil War, Reconstruction, & Industrial America. Throughout the course, students will work to develop skills in historical reading comprehension, historical literacy, evaluation of various historical sources, and argumentation based on relevant evidence.

Global Studies 8

Year-long course required of 8th graders

Over the course of the school year, eighth grade global studies students seek to answer this essential question: How do we humans shape the land and how, in turn, does the land shape us? Students will strive to understand the dynamic between humans and the Earth. Students will also exercise critical thinking skills by making connections between past events and current events.

Theology

All students are required to take Theology in both 7th and 8th grade.

Theology 7

Year-long course, meets every other quarter, required of 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.

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. Students will be assessed through a variety of formats including discussions, projects, and presentations. Student choice will be offered for some assessments but students should be aware that aspects of discussion, presentations, and projects will contribute to their grades.

Theology 8

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

Religious Studies 8 is a Catholic theology course that connects Catholic tradition and teaching to current topics. 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.

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 as the opportunity to host a French student for 10 days in the Spring 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 mini-novels in French: Brandon Brown Veut Un Chien.

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 the Spring 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 mini-novels in French: Brandon Brown Le Nouvel Houdini and Alice la Liste and watch a mini-series, "Rendez-vous à Nice".

German I

Year-long course

Learn to speak German, the language of engineers, scientists, and musicians, in an interactive and engaging environment! German I offers students a multi-faceted approach to learning German by focusing on the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will produce basic conversations to express their feelings and exchange opinions on common, everyday topics such as personalities, school, food, family hobbies, and clothing. At the same time, students will experience German culture and history. A variety of methods and resources are used, including readings, videos, and music, as well as authentic audio and reading exercises.

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, stories, 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, stories, 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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STAY CONNECTED

