



MAGNOLIA SCHOOL

## Curriculum Guide

## Introduction

“Education is not primarily about the acquisition of information. It is not even about the acquisition of ‘skills’ in the conventional sense, to equip us for particular roles in society. It is about how we become more human (and therefore more free, in the truest sense of that word). This is a broader and a deeper question, but no less practical. Too often we have not been educating our humanity. We have been educating ourselves for doing rather than for being.”

- Stratford Caldecott,  
*Beauty in the Word: Rethinking the Foundations of Education*

At Magnolia School, we believe that every human person has a desire for knowledge and is drawn to what is good and beautiful. Our teachers will introduce Magnolia students to the depth and richness of the world and appeal to their natural sense of wonder. Through the use of a rich, rigorous, liberal arts curriculum, the Magnolia girl will work towards three primary goals: to think in an orderly manner, to develop clarity of thought and expression, and to increase her storehouse of experience. These goals are kept in mind across all subjects taught at Magnolia, which include religion, math, natural history and science, history, language arts, Latin, studio arts, music and theater, physical education, and personal development. The wide breadth of the liberal arts taught at Magnolia School will feed the imagination of each student, thereby empowering her to excel in her future endeavors.

## Religion

“Religious education is the most important component of education. The most urgent duty is to open the child's path to God. Thus we can also say that to be formed religiously one must have living faith.

To have living faith means to know God, to love Him, to serve Him.”

- St. Edith Stein

The study of religion is at the heart of Magnolia's curriculum and is faithful to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. The goal of an authentic religious education is not only a thorough understanding of Scripture and the Traditions, teachings, and history of the Catholic Church, but also the development of the virtues necessary to transform each of those elements into a living faith. This fullness of truth also contains an immense amount of beauty, which will be

examined through the study of corresponding pieces of art, participation in reverent liturgies, and the reading of the lives of the saints. Each grade will utilize the appropriate textbook from the *Faith and Life* series, published by Ignatius Press. For middle school students, these texts will be supplemented with the use of both the Old and New Testament and the YOUCAT (Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church).

A note regarding religious formation: The pastoral care of Magnolia School is entrusted to a priest of Opus Dei who serves as Chaplain. Opus Dei is a Personal Prelature of the Catholic Church, founded by St. Josemaría Escrivá.

## **Math**

“The chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness,  
which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in a special degree.”

- Aristotle

The math curriculum at Magnolia has been carefully selected with attention given to the goal of helping our students learn to think in an orderly manner. The order found in math is a type of beauty that reflects the order found in creation. The study of mathematics is a cornerstone of a liberal arts education, and the skills learned through the diligent practice of math will benefit our students in their study of every other subject. Girls at Magnolia will be encouraged to become strong math students, offer answers confidently, and ask questions as needed. Across all grade levels, Sadlier-Oxford’s curriculum will be used, along with supplementary materials that will encourage creativity and problem solving.

## **Natural History and Science**

“The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”

- Gerard Manley Hopkins

The goal of the study of natural history and science at Magnolia is a cultivation of wonder at the beauty of creation and the order of the natural world. In the lower school, science instruction takes a naturalistic approach and includes an emphasis on the observation and subsequent analysis

of the world. The resources used for natural history will include field guides, beautifully illustrated books for specific units of study, the knowledge of local naturalistic experts, and field trips. As they move into middle school, girls will begin more specialized science courses: 6th grade students study Earth Science, 7th grade students study Life Science, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students study Physical Science. Students in these courses will use *Earth Science* and *Physical Science* published by Novare Press and *Exploring Life Science*, published by Prentice Hall. This gradual progression from a generalized study of natural history into a specialized study is a traditional and time-honored method of science education, which also provides an ideal foundation for girls who choose to continue their studies with a focus on STEM.

## History

“The Lord has allowed you to live in this moment of history so that, by your faith,  
his name will continue to resound throughout the world.”

- Pope Benedict XVI

Considering our commitment to a fully integrated curriculum, the study of history at Magnolia will be understood to be a comprehensive whole. Instruction in the ancient and medieval worlds will provide a solid foundation on which to understand modern times. Girls at Magnolia will become acquainted with the men and women who have turned the wheels of history to bring us to where we are today. Additionally, the study of history will provide the opportunity for the girls to examine their own place within the world and their obligation to live as responsible citizens. The texts used for history, which include Tan Books’ series *The Story of Civilization*, are vibrant and dynamic and contain captivating narratives to delight and inspire. In addition to the primary textbooks, which will provide an overview of each historical period listed below, appropriate novels and additional shorter texts will be utilized as supplementary materials.

## Language Arts

“Well-ordered words are as a honeycomb: sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

- Proverbs 16:24

The study of language arts at Magnolia contains several components including English grammar and composition, penmanship, poetry studies and memorization, spelling and phonics, and

literature. Each piece of the language arts curriculum ultimately comes together to give our students all the tools they need to communicate effectively and beautifully. A myriad of texts and resources will be used to instruct Magnolia girls in each aspect of English language arts, including Fountas & Pinnell reading, poetry anthologies, and grade level appropriate spelling lists. The pieces of literature selected for each class will introduce girls to beloved characters, heroines and heroes who will serve as role models of goodness and virtue. Additionally, materials from the Institute for Excellence in Writing will be consulted and integrated as appropriate. In addition to specific periods of instruction, language is, of course, organically integrated into all other subjects. The ability to communicate clearly is necessary across all disciplines, whether a student is preparing an essay for history, a lab report for science, or an original script for theater. Attention to precise communication and well-ordered words will be given at each step of a Magnolia education.

## Latin

“Omnium rerum principia parva sunt.”

- Cicero

*“The beginnings of all things are small:”* At Magnolia, we take this wisdom from one of the greatest ancient Roman orators and transform it into a Latin program that begins gently in the early years and grows into courses that provide a sound understanding of the mother of all Romance languages. The study of Latin provides a subsequent comprehensive understanding of English grammar, a facility with vocabulary that cannot be acquired elsewhere, and the joy that comes from committing facts to memory through the recitation of Latin paradigms. Additionally, Latin is an important part of the history of Christianity and Western Civilization, with a wide-reaching influence into subjects such as literature, philosophy, and science. The Latin program from Memoria Press will be used for our Latin courses. This series provides comprehensive instruction for our younger students as well as assistance in a seamless transition for older students who may be entering their first year of Latin studies in middle school.

## **Studio Arts**

“First the beautiful, then the good, then the true.”

- Bishop Robert Barron

Studio arts and an integrated study of art history at Magnolia encourage a love of beauty in two primary ways. First, instruction in artistic techniques teaches students the important truth that they are capable of creating something beautiful. It is a very human desire to create art and that desire will be cultivated at Magnolia in our art program. Second, observation and analysis of pieces of artwork help to train the eye to notice beauty and appreciate it more fully. Art history has a myriad of interdisciplinary applications with lessons that can incorporate history, literature, and religion.

## **Music and Theater**

“Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?”

- Traditional hymn

Girls at Magnolia will be so thoroughly steeped in beauty from both their surrounding environment and their academic studies that they will desire to share that with others. One of the primary ways that beauty is communicated is through music, both vocal and instrumental, and theatrical performances. Music and theater classes introduce girls to the techniques and skills needed for performing, including critical public speaking skills. Additionally, the girls study pieces of music, instruments, and plays that correspond with other parts of the curriculum, particularly various historical periods. The music and theater program will gradually develop and grow over the first several years of Magnolia with a goal of offering choirs, instrument lessons, and the opportunity to participate in theatrical productions.

## **Physical Education**

“Playing sports has become very important today, since it can encourage young people to develop important values such as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, sharing, and solidarity.”

- Pope St. John Paul II

Through planned physical education classes girls at Magnolia will come to understand the benefit of a sound body as a necessary counterpart to a sound mind. These classes provide an important balance to the academic work completed during the school day. Our physical education program is aimed at two primary goals. First, Magnolia girls will enjoy the immediate benefits of physical activity, including clarity of thought, improved physical health, and the enjoyment of playing with their classmates. Second, students at Magnolia will cultivate the habit of regular physical activity which will serve them well for the rest of their lives. The P.E. courses will include a balance of structured activities, sports, and games.

## **Personal Development**

“Your task as a Christian citizen is to help see Christ’s love and freedom preside over all aspects of modern life: culture and economy, work and rest, family life and social relations.”

- St. Josemaría Escrivá

A truly unique component of a Magnolia education will be courses in personal development. These courses, offered to all students, will be guided by dedicated teachers who themselves are committed to the pursuit of truth, beauty, and freedom in their own personal and professional lives. Personal development classes will include instruction and discussion of life skills that will enable the girls to live full, flourishing, authentically human lives. The topics covered will fall under the categories listed above, attributed to St. Josemaría: culture and economy, work and rest, family life and social relations. Sample topics could include, but will not be necessarily limited to, personal finance, cooking, how to dress beautifully and modestly, etiquette, and the art of friendship.

## Conclusion

“All that is good, all that is true, all that is beautiful brings us to God.

Because God is good, God is beautiful, God is the truth.”

- Pope Francis

Magnolia School will work alongside parents to inspire girls to acquire a love for learning that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. This guide represents an overarching view of Magnolia School’s vision for our curriculum. We anticipate that as Magnolia grows, courses will gain additional depth and specificity through the contributions of our highly skilled faculty and staff. The teachers at Magnolia are women who love learning. They are committed to the pursuit of truth, beauty, and freedom in both their personal and professional lives. Considering this commitment, they are well-equipped to serve as mentors and role models. At Magnolia, we believe that the example, physical presence, and instruction given by loving parents and teachers is preferable to education delivered via technology. Within the Magnolia environment, technology can and will occasionally serve our purposes, and teachers may utilize it in a limited number of ways. However, we will avoid the use of screens in most instances in order to allow freedom for the friendships that can flourish within personal, human interactions.

And so, in hope, we move forward. Through the careful instruction and guidance of teachers and parents, and within a loving community, Magnolia girls can be adequately nourished and gradually develop into young women who are prepared to share their God-given gifts and talents with the world.