

Our Middle School curriculum consists of a carefully structured, classical Christian course of study which advances the “intentionality or logic of learning.” Central to the curricula are six core academic subjects: Christian studies, history, language arts, Latin, math, and science as well as arts classes including band, choir, visual (studio) arts and drama.

In addition to core subjects, all students in grades 5 and 6 participate in seven or eight specialist classes each year, providing additional curricular breadth and exploration. Each subject at Bear Creek is taught from a Christian worldview which builds a critical framework to help each student become the individual God intends.

Course Descriptions

Mathematics

During the school day, math classes are offered simultaneously in grades 5 and 6 so that students are able to move to their ability-level classes for that instructional period. Based on ability and motivation, many students take advanced-level math courses and enter high school ready to enroll in a strong pre-collegiate advanced math course sequence.

Textbooks: *Go Math! 5* and *Go Math! 6* from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt as well as *Math 7, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2* from McDougal Littell and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Science

Students receive a lab-based, classical science education, inspiring them to greater reverence for God, passion for science, and responsibility in life’s decisions. Students learn design-thinking fundamentals, engage in traditional laboratory experiments; design investigations; participate in field studies; and learn to use science tools, materials, media, and technological resources to research and discuss relevant topics. Mathematical skills are strengthened through data analysis and modeling.

Grade 5: Energy and engines, the brain, geology, and electricity, Science Immersion Week and demonstration of the scientific method culminating in a Science Fair presentation.

Grade 6: Invertebrates, chemistry, immune system, plants, volcanoes, and earthquakes.

Language Arts

Language Arts skills play a foundational role in a liberal arts education. Students progress from the grammar stage (knowledge such as spelling and parts of speech) through dialectic (the ability to analyze and synthesize information) and into rhetoric (sharing original ideas through oral or written communication). The curriculum spirals through each stage, increasing in depth while building on previous skills.

Reading

Grade 5: Notetaking, summarizing, predicting, literary evidence, pacing, metacognition, and literature including *The Phantom Tollbooth*, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, and *Banner in the Sky*.

Grade 6: Decoding, vocabulary, main ideas, summarizing, identifying theme, connecting, predicting, identifying the author's craft, and literature including *The Golden Goblet*, *The Bronze Bow*, *The Trumpeter of Krakow*, and *Red Scarf Girl*.

Spelling

In grades 5 – 6, we use a multi-sensory approach through which students learn to spell by saying, hearing, writing, and seeing, thereby using all avenues to the brain.

Grammar

Grade 5: Eight parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjective adverbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

Grade 6: Eight parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjective adverbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

Writing

Grade 5: Daily journaling, research writing, creative writing, perspective writing, editing, and publishing.

Grade 6: Writing notebook, five-paragraph essay, expository writing, creative writing, research writing, poetry writing, editing, and publishing.

Latin

Latin is key to a classical Christian education. Early exposure to Latin prepares students for advanced study of foreign language in Upper School, improves English grammar and vocabulary, and increases understanding of history, language, and culture.

Textbook: *Lingua Latina*

Geography and History

The study of history undergirds a liberal arts education by providing students an understanding of their own and others' cultures and the development of wisdom over time. Students gain perspective and insights into the issues of our current day by examining the concerns and solutions of ancient, Medieval, and modern civilizations and comparing them to present day.

Textbook: Holt McDougal

Grade 5: Geography, including locations of countries in North America, South America, Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa, and Antarctica.

Grade 6: Ancient civilizations through the Renaissance, including Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, ancient Israel, ancient India, ancient China, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome; Shakespeare Immersion Week and performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Christian Studies

Christian worldview and biblical knowledge are fully integrated throughout the Bear Creek curriculum. In Middle School, students expand their knowledge of the Bible and the development of the Christian faith and begin to explore their understanding of Jesus and their own relationships with God.

Grade 5: Judges, Prophecy of the Christ, Samuel, David and the Psalms, and Solomon.

Grade 6: Armor of God; heroes of the Faith: Esther, Ruth, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Book of James; and names of God.

Field Trips

Field trips play an important role in extending the curriculum beyond the walls of campus and are eagerly anticipated by our students.

Grades 5 and 6 students participate in regular field trips tied to the curriculum. In the spring, grade 5 students enjoy an all-day Outdoor Education experience while grade 6 students discover creation, fall, and redemption on an excursion in the local area.

Study Skills

During Middle School, students transition from much of their life being managed by adults to a time of more self-management. However, most Middle School students need tools and strategies to successfully self-manage. Our study skills program is designed to teach students important keys to success in both school and life while modeling and providing support as skills are applied and practiced. Students learn organization, self-advocacy, note-taking, study strategies, exam preparation, and dealing with stress and anxiety.

Students in grades 5 and 6 begin learning these important skills in their homeroom. Students are taught important study skills needed for success now and in the future.

Specialists

In grades 5 and 6, classes meet regularly with specialist teachers:

- Art
- Band*
- Choir (grade 6)
- Computer Programming
- Drama/Speech
- General Music (grade 5)
- Lab Science
- P.E.

* All grade 5 students learn an instrument in Beginning Band. In grade 6, students may choose between band or choir.