

The grades 7 and 8 curricula consist of a carefully structured, classical, and Christian course of study that introduces students to the “logic of learning” and teaches them how to think.

Central to the curricula are courses in Christian studies, English, fine arts, history, Latin, math, physical education and science. In grade 7, logic is taught consecutively with Latin.

In addition to the required courses, the curriculum is enhanced with electives. Students in grades 7 and 8 enroll in up to two semester-long elective classes each year.

## Required Course Descriptions

*All required courses are full-year courses except for Latin 7, Logic 7, Physical Education, and Fine Arts courses (Art, Band, Choir, or Drama).*

### Christian Studies

**Biblical Theology 7: Old Testament:** In grade 7, students begin a two-year study of the Bible. This class offers an introduction to the Old Testament and traces the narrative of salvation history from creation to the establishment, judgment, and restoration of Israel. Throughout the year, students examine the story as well as the major themes of the Old Testament, paying particular attention to the questions: Who is God? Where do we see the Lord moving in the story? What is the Lord doing? Who is the Lord calling us to be? What is the Lord's invitation to us?

**Biblical Theology 8: New Testament:** In grade 8, students complete a two-year study of the Bible. This class offers an introduction to the New Testament, tracing the narrative of salvation history from the birth of Jesus to the establishment of the Church. Students explore the cultural background of the New Testament, examine the Gospels, discuss the growth of the Church in the book of Acts, and examine basic Christian belief and practice as presented in the Epistles. Throughout the year, students focus on the following essential questions: Who is Jesus? Where do we see the Gospel? What is God's kingdom like? Who are we? What is God's invitation to us?

**Logic 7:** In this course, grade 7 students will study the fundamentals of thinking well and learn how to use language to reason. Students will make accurate statements and learn how to formalize arguments using categorical form. This course will also focus on the importance of detecting fallacies of distraction and how making assumptions can lead to the wrong conclusion.

### English

**English 7:** In grade 7, students read and analyze literature from and about the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Against the backdrop of chivalry and romance, the class explores the nature of heroism, honor, character, and Christian witness. In addition, the curriculum focuses on understanding not only what a text is saying, but also how and why an author makes stylistic choices to create meaning. Using the six-traits writing model, writing assignments emphasize sentence fluency and word choice. Grammar lessons focus on comma usage. Major projects include creative legends, 5-paragraph essays, encomiums, and dramatic performances.

**English 8:** In grade 8, students explore identity as followers of Christ and citizens of the United States through a variety of texts from and about American history. Students read literature spanning Native American legend through Postmodernism. The curriculum continues the study of literary terms and introduces advanced application of grammar concepts within the writing curriculum. The written assignments focus on literature-based analysis through both formative and summative essays. Students show their learning through a variety of modes, including 5-paragraph essays, creative writing, poster presentations, and seminar discussions.

## Fine Arts

The Bear Creek School highly values the arts as part of a classical education. Through education in the arts, students develop personal expression, creative thinking, imaginative communication, and intellectual curiosity. An effective and challenging arts curriculum provides students with opportunities to perform and create in visual art, music, and drama; perceive and respond to each of the arts disciplines; understand the role of the arts in our world; and make connections between the arts and other educational disciplines.

Students in grades 7 and 8 are required to choose at least one semester each year from the following arts classes. Band and choir students are recommended to enroll in *both* semesters. Up to three semesters may be selected each year (e.g., both semesters Band and one semester Art).

**Art:** Art students focus on creativity, originality, effort, and perseverance while exploring drawing, painting, collage, and mixed media. Students develop craftsmanship, skill, consistency, and correct terminology, while learning the seven elements and principles of art. Students also have the opportunity to show their work in Bear Creek's annual art show. This course is offered in both fall and spring semesters and may be repeated.

**Band:** Band students continue to build skills on their instruments with emphasis on developing a good concept of ensemble sound and tone quality while performing in the Middle School Concert Band. In addition to a Christmas concert and a spring concert, the band participates in at least one event outside of school, and participants are invited to play with the Pep Band during home sporting events. This course is offered in both fall and spring semesters (recommended as a full-year course) and may be repeated. Prerequisite: Band is open to any student who participated in grade 6 band. Students who did not play a band instrument in grade 6 should contact the band director for information about how they may still be eligible to participate.

**Choir:** Choir students can be creative in an environment full of encouragement. Students learn and practice basic choral techniques and are exposed to different types of music while performing in the Middle School Concert Choir. Though there is certainly an independent element to singing, much of what is accomplished as a choir is attained as a team. The choir performs at Christmas and spring concerts and participates in other local performances. This course is offered in both fall and spring semesters (recommended as a full-year course) and may be repeated.

**Drama:** The course is designed to introduce students to the art of theatrical storytelling. Students will engage the questions: What does it mean to tell a good story? What can theater teach us about truth, beauty, and goodness? Students will engage in the history and technique of theater and be given a chance to showcase their own performance techniques. A production is performed during the semester. This course is offered in both fall and spring semesters and may be repeated.

## History

**Medieval Western Civilization:** In this course, grade 7 students learn the story of Western Civilization from Diocletian's Great Persecution to Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Special emphasis is placed on the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the development of feudalism, the cultural impact of Charlemagne's empire, the origins of Islam and its broader impact on the West, the establishment of monasteries throughout Europe, the Norman invasion of England, the consequences of The Hundred Years' War, and the *great chain of being* as the dominant form of medieval thinking. Students read historical surveys of events and biographical sketches of key historical figures as well as primary source materials. Class discussions utilize the Socratic seminar method which requires careful reading, logical thinking, and rhetorical skills as students engage one another.

**Modern Western Civilization:** In this course, grade 8 students learn the story of the birth of the modern world, beginning with the gradual rejection of medieval thinking during the Enlightenment and finishing with the Cold War. Students study the novel ideas and themes of the modern world, emphasizing the impact of the Age of Exploration, the Enlightenment, the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and World Wars I and II. Students examine the transition from medieval thinking to modern thinking as they read writings such as the works of Voltaire, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. Students also read biographical sketches of historical figures and will engage in Socratic seminar discussion, which requires logical thinking and rhetorical skills as they engage one another. At the conclusion of the course, the students will be able to trace the significant developments of thought from the end of the ancient world to the modern day, giving them penetrating insight into why the world is the way it is. *Students also fulfill the Washington State history and government high school graduation requirement through in-class instruction and assessment.*

## Latin

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.

**Latin 7:** In this one semester course, grade 7 students learn basic elements of Latin grammar and vocabulary, with special emphasis given to proper pronunciation, composition, and listening and reading comprehension. Class discussion incorporates Roman literature, history, and daily life.

**Latin 8:** In this full-year course, grade 8 students build on the fundamental skills acquired in Latin 7 and advance in careful listening and reading, grammar and comprehension, written compositions, and speaking. The curriculum also includes Greek and Roman mythology, literature, history, and connections between modern and ancient languages.

*Students who complete the Latin course of instruction in grades 7 and 8 will satisfy the Latin I equivalency prerequisite for Latin II.*

## Mathematics

**Pre-Algebra:** This course provides a strong foundation for success in Algebra 1, and students begin solving algebraic word problems. Critical thinking skills are introduced, and applications to everyday life provide context and relevance. Students entering Pre-Algebra should have command of basic math facts and competency with fractions and decimals. Prerequisite: Math 6

**Algebra 1:** Algebra is the foundational course for all further mathematics and science courses. Algebra students learn to formulize and generalize the concepts of arithmetic into a set of algorithms useful in other settings. As each skill is introduced and developed, applications to areas of mathematics, science, nature, and everyday life are included. In this course, each student develops his/her abilities in logical, critical thinking and problem solving. Prerequisite: Pre-Algebra

**Geometry:** By enhancing logical thinking and deductive reasoning, geometry provides a foundation for problem solving that is necessary for success in subsequent math courses. The first semester focuses on the development of geometric proofs using definitions, properties, postulates, and theorems. Second semester topics include triangle similarity, right triangle trigonometry, angle and segment relationships in circles, and surface area and volumes of solids. Prerequisite: Algebra 1

**Algebra 2:** This course includes topics in linear equations, inequalities and functions, systems of linear equations and inequalities, matrices and determinants, quadratic functions, polynomials and polynomial functions, powers, roots and radicals, exponential and logarithmic functions, rational equations and functions, quadratic relations and conic sections, sequences and series, and trigonometric ratios and functions. Prerequisite: Geometry

## Physical Education

**Physical Education:** In this course, students participate in a wide range of sports and activities to improve physical fitness as they learn to serve the Lord and each other, discovering activities and sports which they can enjoy. Sports and activities may include soccer, volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, softball, badminton, flag football, track & field, dance, and gym games. Physical Education students also learn about human physiology, good health, and sound dietary habits as an acknowledgement of the body as God's holy temple. Students must wear a P.E. uniform during class. This is a required course, and students are enrolled one semester in grade 7 and one semester in grade 8.

## Science

Students receive a classical science education, inspiring them to greater reverence for God, passion for science, and responsibility in life's decisions. In each course, students learn the grammar of the science by learning the facts, formulas, and principles that compose the scientific body of knowledge. Students also develop their dialectic skills by discussing concepts, constructing mental models, and continuously utilizing the scientific method. In the rhetorical process, students apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills in real-world scenarios, articulate their findings, and present them in verbal and written form. In these Middle School science courses, students 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.

**Introductory Biology and Epidemiology:** The study of biology and epidemiology will challenge grade 7 students as they engage in critical thinking and inquiry-based problem-solving skills. Through lectures, readings, exploratory activities, dissection, and discussions, students will investigate and learn about the wonders of God's world. The course covers lab methods, cell structure and function, genetics, anatomy and physiology, diversity of organisms, and interactions of life. Students also engage in the study of epidemiology. Epidemiologists use the scientific method as "disease detectives" to get to the root of a public health problem or emerging public health event affecting a specific population. The case studies used in this exploration teach students how to analyze and synthesize data, draw relevant conclusions, and better understand the world in which we live.

**Earth Science and Engineering Design:** The study of Earth science and engineering design challenges grade 8 students to think critically about the world around them as they discover the connections between the Earth systems: atmosphere, biosphere, geosphere, cryosphere, and hydrosphere. This hands-on, project-based course emphasizes scientific inquiry and the engineering design process to develop the mental habits and skills valuable to the work of scientists and engineers. The tremendous character of our Creator God is revealed as students investigate natural phenomena such as plate tectonics, weather, and ocean currents. Throughout the course, students employ the engineering design process to identify needs as well as generate, embody, test, and evaluate concepts. Students practice communication of knowledge through both written and verbal expression using engineering notebooks, class discussions, presentations, notes, and tests.

## Elective Course Descriptions

To enrich the required curricula, Middle School offers a variety of elective classes from which grades 7 – 8 students choose to study. Each student may enroll in up to two electives each year depending on the number of arts classes enrolled.

- If 1 semester arts, then 2 elective classes
- If 2 semesters arts, then 1 elective class
- If 3 semesters arts, then no elective classes

As a general rule, there is no homework given in elective courses, though in rare cases, minimal outside work may be required. *All electives are one semester courses.*

**Computer Programming:** In this class, students will learn basic programming principles and build upon those skills throughout the semester. Students will learn elements of the software development process, including commenting, testing, error handling, basic debugging, and game development. Instruction will be differentiated based on the skill level of each student.

**Creation Lab:** In this course, students learn not only the skills and tools with which to be creators and innovators, but also the design thinking process needed to solve real-world problems for real people. From cardboard prototypes to interactive circuitry and 3D printing, students learn to apply design processes in a hands-on, collaborative environment. Students may enroll in this class once in either grade 7 or 8.

**Creative Writing Lab:** Students in this class write poetry, reflections, fiction, and creative nonfiction pieces. This class encourages students to use their voices, imaginations, words, and ideas as they generate original writing pieces. Students may enroll in this class once in either grade 7 or 8.

**Digital Storytelling:** In this course, students integrate elements of design and technology using software applications. Students also learn to use digital single lens reflex (DSLR) cameras and learn basic photo composition. By the end of the semester, students will provide a digital glimpse into the life of a Middle School student. Students may enroll in this class once in either grade 7 or 8.

**Guided Study Hall:** This class is more than just a quiet work time. Instruction includes mini-lessons on executive function: managing time, managing materials, self-advocacy (including written and verbal communication), test-taking skills, and note-taking skills. Students will be held accountable for demonstrating proficiency in these areas. This class is for students who need more extensive academic support.

**Rhetoric:** Rhetoric is the art of effective speaking. Students will develop writing, public speaking, and critical thinking skills by composing speeches and analyzing the work of others. To this end, students will build an analytic vocabulary for stylistic devices and the structure of arguments. The course will include informative, entertaining, and persuasive speeches as well as an in-class debate. Students will have the opportunity to present their work for parents and peers at an end of the semester performance. Students may enroll in this class once in either grade 7 or 8.

**Robotics:** Students in this class explore real-world challenges using robotics to investigate possible solutions. This class encourages students to use collaboration, creativity, exploration, and hands-on problem solving. Students may enroll in this class once in either grade 7 or 8.

**Strength Training:** Students participate in activities to increase body strength by training with weights and plyometrics. Proper technique and methods are emphasized. Since students are still in the early stages of adolescence, they use less weight and more repetitions. Emphasis is on improved knowledge and body strength over the course of the semester. Students learn about the muscular system and names of several muscle groups. Boys and girls are scheduled in separate classes. Students must wear a P.E. uniform during class.

## Course Sequence: Grades 7 and 8

### Grade 7

- Math (see sequence)
- Introductory Biology and Epidemiology
- English 7
- Logic 7 (fall or spring)
- Latin 7 (fall or spring)
- Medieval Western Civilization
- Biblical Theology 7: Old Testament
- Physical Education (fall or spring)
- Fine Arts (fall, spring, or both)

### Grade 8

- Math (see sequence)
- Earth Science and Engineering Design
- English 8
- Latin 8
- Modern Western Civilization
- Biblical Theology 8: New Testament
- Physical Education (fall or spring)
- Fine Arts (fall, spring, or both)

### Mathematics Course Sequence

- Pre-Algebra
- Algebra 1
- Geometry
- Algebra 2

### Fine Arts Courses

- Art
- Band
- Choir
- Drama

### General Electives

- Computer Programming
- Creation Lab
- Creative Writing Lab
- Digital Storytelling
- Guided Study Hall
- Rhetoric
- Robotics
- Strength Training