



St. Martin's
EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

2025-2026
Lower School
Curriculum Guide

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Language Arts

Kindergarten

Reading

In Kindergarten, students build a strong foundation in early reading through daily experiences with rich literature, poetry, and nonfiction texts. Using the *Being a Reader* program, students learn to listen closely, retell stories, make text-to-self connections, and visualize what they read. Whole-class read-alouds, shared reading, and small-group instruction promote comprehension, oral fluency, and vocabulary development. Students explore print concepts, recognize high-frequency words, and begin reading independently during Individualized Daily Reading (IDR). Through interactive discussions and story-based routines, children develop a love for books and a growing confidence as readers.

Writing

Kindergarten students begin to see themselves as writers through a structured writing workshop that builds from drawing and labeling to composing complete sentences and stories. Using *"Being a Writer,"* students explore various writing purposes, such as expressing opinions, telling personal stories, and sharing information. Teachers model writing, support idea generation, and guide students in organizing their thoughts. Students participate in shared writing and independent writing, building stamina and fluency while learning how to revise and add detail to their work. Emphasis is placed on communicating ideas, experimenting with spelling, and developing the habits of a writer.

Foundational Skills

Foundational skills instruction is a cornerstone of the kindergarten literacy experience. Students engage in daily phonics lessons through Wilson's *Foundations*, which follows the Orton-Gillingham approach, a structured, sequential, and multisensory method for teaching early reading. Phonemic awareness is further strengthened through the *Heggerty* curriculum, which provides daily, explicit instruction in listening to, identifying, and manipulating sounds in spoken words. Students learn the names of letters, their corresponding sounds, sound-symbol relationships, and decoding strategies to support early reading and spelling development. Handwriting is

taught using *Handwriting Without Tears*, which develops proper pencil grip, letter formation, and fine motor strength through engaging and developmentally appropriate activities. Together, these programs lay a solid foundation for future literacy success by integrating phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and handwriting into daily instruction.

First Grade

Reading

In first grade, students strengthen their reading comprehension and fluency through daily read-alouds, shared reading, and small-group instruction using the *Being a Reader* program. Instruction supports students in making text-to-self connections, visualizing, retelling, and identifying story elements such as character, setting, and plot. Students begin to develop reading stamina during Individualized Daily Reading (IDR), where they apply decoding strategies and comprehension skills to self-selected texts. They engage with a variety of genres including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, and participate in interactive discussions that deepen their understanding of language and meaning in texts.

Writing

Students develop their skills as writers through the *Being a Writer* program, which combines the writing process with a focus on genre and craft. First graders explore personal narratives, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and opinion writing, learning to plan, draft, revise, and publish their work. They practice writing complete sentences, adding descriptive details, and organizing their ideas with clear beginnings, middles, and endings. Students share their writing with peers, learn to give and receive feedback, and build confidence through opportunities to publish and read their work aloud in the classroom community.

Foundational Skills

Foundational skills are developed through explicit instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, and handwriting. Using *Wilson's Foundations*, which is based on the Orton-Gillingham approach, students engage in structured, sequential, and multisensory lessons focused on letter-sound correspondence, decoding, encoding, and spelling patterns. Phonemic awareness is reinforced daily through oral language activities, and students apply these skills in reading and writing. *Handwriting Without Tears* supports

proper pencil grip, letter formation, and writing fluency, helping students build the fine motor skills necessary for confident written communication. These foundational tools are essential to supporting students' overall literacy development.

Second Grade

Reading

In second grade, students develop critical reading skills through daily whole-group and small-group instruction that builds comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and thoughtful engagement with texts. Students learn to make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections while exploring both fiction and nonfiction. Strategies such as visualizing, inferring, predicting, and questioning are explicitly taught and practiced. Beginning in second grade, students engage in novel studies as a whole class, with one novel read in the first semester and one in the second. These shared reading experiences help students build stamina, deepen comprehension, and engage in rich discussions around character, plot, and theme.

Writing

Second grade writing instruction follows a workshop model that supports students in developing their voice and applying writing conventions across multiple genres. Through the *Being a Writer* program, students explore personal narratives, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, opinion writing, and friendly letters. They are taught to plan, draft, revise, and publish their writing while using mentor texts to explore author craft. Daily writing routines support independent writing habits, while regular opportunities for peer feedback and reflection help students strengthen their ideas, structure, and expression. Writing is deeply connected to reading and supports the development of communication skills across the curriculum.

Word Study

Explicit phonics instruction shifts to word study in second grade. Word study is grounded in systematic phonics, spelling, and vocabulary instruction. Students work with sound patterns, syllables, high-frequency words, inflectional endings, homophones, and affixes through engaging activities and structured word sorts. Emphasis is placed on building decoding and encoding skills, while also developing strategies for spelling and word analysis. Word study is integrated with reading and writing, helping students

apply their knowledge across all areas of literacy. Instruction also supports social-emotional growth through collaborative work and encourages self-awareness, responsibility, and respectful communication.

Third Grade

Reading

In third grade, students expand their reading comprehension and fluency through a balance of whole-class, small-group, and independent reading experiences. Students learn to make inferences, ask questions, determine important ideas, and analyze text structure across a variety of genres, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Novel studies continue in third grade, where students read and analyze whole-class texts, learning to annotate and refer to textual evidence in discussion and writing. In the second semester, small-group reading shifts to teacher-guided book clubs, where students apply comprehension strategies and engage in thoughtful dialogue with peers. Throughout the year, students develop reading stamina and independence through Individualized Daily Reading (IDR), while reading journals and conferences help track progress and deepen engagement with texts.

Writing

Third grade writers explore a wide range of genres, including personal narrative, fiction, expository nonfiction, poetry, and opinion writing through the *Being a Writer* program. Students build stamina and fluency as they move through the writing process—generating ideas, drafting, revising, and publishing their work. They learn to develop strong leads and conclusions, use descriptive language, organize their ideas clearly, and apply grammar and punctuation conventions. Students gain confidence through writing conferences, peer feedback, and opportunities to share their work, culminating in polished pieces that reflect both creativity and structure.

Word Study

Word study in third grade supports vocabulary development, decoding, and spelling through structured, hands-on activities that promote deep understanding of word parts and meaning. Students explore syllable types, affixes, irregular plurals, morphemes, and high-frequency words, while learning to apply decoding strategies to polysyllabic words. Through word sorts, word collections, and focused vocabulary discussions, students analyze

patterns and build word consciousness. They also investigate figurative language, synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and shades of meaning to enhance their reading and writing vocabulary.

Fourth Grade

Reading

In fourth grade, students strengthen their comprehension and critical thinking skills through a rich variety of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Using the *Being a Reader* program, students apply reading strategies such as making inferences, summarizing, determining importance, and visualizing. They explore literary elements, including character, setting, plot, and theme, while analyzing texts across various genres. Students also participate in whole-class novel studies, close reading, small-group discussions, and student-led book clubs. Individualized Daily Reading (IDR) time supports students in building stamina, applying strategies independently, and deepening their engagement with texts through written reflections and goal setting.

Writing

Fourth grade writers build fluency, stamina, and craft as they explore a range of genres, including personal narrative, fiction, opinion, expository nonfiction, poetry, and functional writing. Through the *Being a Writer* program, students learn how to generate ideas, revise for clarity and structure, and publish their work. Writing instruction emphasizes the use of strong openings, sensory details, logical organization, and attention to grammar and conventions. Students build independence through daily writing practice, peer collaboration, and authentic sharing opportunities such as presenting from the Author's Chair. As the year progresses, students learn to write with a clear purpose and voice across a variety of formats.

Word Study

Fourth grade word study focuses on developing vocabulary, spelling, and word analysis skills through the exploration of word parts, including prefixes, suffixes, Latin and Greek roots, and multisyllabic words. Students learn to identify patterns, understand etymology, and use morphemic analysis to decode and spell complex words. Instruction also includes the study of homophones, idioms, figurative language, and semantic gradients. Students create word webs, engage in word collections, and apply vocabulary in context through reading and writing. These experiences help students

expand their vocabulary and apply a deeper understanding of language to their literacy work.

Math

In the Lower School, mathematics instruction focuses on developing deep conceptual understanding through the Developing Roots curriculum (Kindergarten) and the Think!Mathematics curriculum (1st-4th). This program emphasizes a concrete-pictorial-abstract (CPA) approach, guiding students from hands-on exploration to visual representation and finally to work with abstract symbols and equations. The curriculum is grounded in rich, meaningful contexts and is designed to build number sense, spatial reasoning, and early operations fluency. Students are encouraged to discuss strategies, solve problems collaboratively, and reflect on their mathematical thinking.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students explore key concepts such as counting and number recognition, quantities and number comparisons, sorting and classifying, ordinal numbers, composing and decomposing numbers, and teen numbers. They also delve into measurement (length, weight, and capacity), geometry (shapes and spatial relationships), and basic operations (addition and subtraction within 10).

The approach to learning is highly interactive and student-centered. Hands-on materials, including manipulatives and real-world objects, are central to instruction, allowing students to explore mathematical ideas physically before moving to symbolic representations. Collaborative learning is encouraged through partner work, group discussions, and shared problem-solving experiences that promote effective communication and critical reasoning. Ongoing assessment and differentiated instruction ensure that all learners are supported and challenged as they build a strong mathematical foundation.

First Grade

Throughout the year, first graders deepen their understanding of numbers to 120, develop fluency with addition and subtraction within 20 and later within 100, and explore place value concepts. They also investigate the properties of 2D and 3D shapes, partition shapes into equal parts, measure length using

nonstandard units, collect and interpret data, and learn to tell time and identify coins.

Instruction emphasizes hands-on learning with tools such as number lines, ten frames, base-ten blocks, and real-life manipulatives. Collaborative learning is central, encouraging students to work together on problem-solving tasks, explain their thinking, and compare strategies. Journal reflections, games, and anchor tasks provide frequent opportunities for students to engage deeply with mathematical ideas, while regular assessments support differentiation and guide instruction.

Second Grade

In second grade, students build a strong foundation in number sense, place value, operations, geometry, measurement, and data. A central emphasis is developing addition and subtraction fact fluency within 20 and extending operations to numbers within 100 and 1,000. Students learn multiple strategies to compose and decompose numbers, apply place value understanding, and solve one- and two-step word problems. They also explore equal groups as a foundation for multiplication, work with shapes and partitioning, understand fractions as equal parts of a whole, and build skills in telling time, measuring with standard units, working with money, and collecting and interpreting data.

Instruction promotes student agency by encouraging learners to choose and explain their own strategies, fostering deeper understanding and confidence. Fact fluency is strengthened through meaningful practice, strategy games, and daily problem-solving opportunities. This comprehensive approach supports both conceptual understanding and skill development, preparing students for more complex mathematical learning ahead.

Third Grade

In third grade, a major focus of the year is developing multiplication and division fact fluency. Students move through stages of counting, deriving, and mastering facts using strategy-based instruction rather than rote memorization. They explore multiplication and division through a variety of structures—equal groups, arrays, comparisons, and area models—and use known facts to derive unknown ones. These foundational skills support later work with area, fractions, and multi-digit computation.

Additional key content includes understanding place value through 10,000, solving multi-step word problems, applying the properties of operations, working with fractions as numbers and on number lines, and calculating area and perimeter. Students also engage with measurement of time, mass, and volume, and conduct statistical investigations using graphs and data analysis.

Throughout the year, students are encouraged to explain their thinking, use efficient strategies, and apply their knowledge to real-world contexts, setting the stage for more complex mathematical reasoning in upper elementary grades.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, students deepen their understanding of number operations, geometry, fractions, measurement, and data. A major focus of the year is on mastering multiplication and division fact fluency, which serves as a foundation for multi-digit operations, fraction reasoning, and problem solving. Students explore multiplication and division through a variety of strategies, including area models, number bonds, and properties such as the distributive property. They apply these skills in increasingly complex situations involving factors, multiples, multi-digit multiplication, and division with remainders.

Other key learning includes building a deep understanding of place value and operations with numbers up to one million, learning to compare, round, and represent numbers in various forms. They develop accuracy and efficiency in multi-digit addition and subtraction using the standard algorithm. In geometry, students classify two-dimensional shapes, measure and draw angles, and explore symmetry through hands-on investigation. Their work with fractions and decimals emphasizes equivalence, comparison, and operations, with a strong connection to real-world applications. Students also engage in meaningful measurement activities involving time, volume, and mass, including converting within measurement systems. In data and statistics, students conduct investigations, create visual representations such as line plots and bar graphs, and analyze results to draw conclusions. Finally, they explore algebraic thinking and patterns by generating and analyzing rule-based number and shape patterns.

Assessment methods include unit assessments, open-ended journal prompts, hands-on performance tasks, and opportunities for students to explain their reasoning. These assessments are designed to capture both procedural

fluency and conceptual understanding, and they provide teachers with actionable data to differentiate instruction. Through this approach, students build the confidence and competence needed for more advanced mathematics in middle school.

Science

The Lower School science program nurtures curiosity, critical thinking, and a love of discovery through hands-on, inquiry-based learning. Students attend science class twice in a seven-day rotation where they actively explore life, Earth, and physical sciences through meaningful investigations in both our dedicated science labs and outdoor classrooms. Students build foundational knowledge and essential skills like asking questions, developing models, conducting experiments, and communicating their findings. Our program is intentionally designed to support scientific thinking and problem-solving across all grade levels, preparing students to explore increasingly complex concepts with confidence and wonder.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students build foundational understanding through active, inquiry-based experiences that integrate observation, classification, and modeling. Using our outdoor classroom as a living laboratory, children immerse themselves in the natural world to make firsthand observations and discoveries about seasonal changes—how temperature, plant life, and animal behaviors shift throughout the year. They explore the physical attributes of materials—such as color, texture, shape, and buoyancy—using hands-on investigations that culminate in problem-solving tasks like designing a floating cargo ship. Additionally, students develop the ability to distinguish between living and nonliving things, compare the characteristics of organisms, and understand that all living things have basic needs to grow and survive. Essential skills such as asking questions, using models, making observations, and communicating findings are practiced consistently, fostering early scientific thinking and a sense of curiosity about the natural world.

First Grade

In first grade, students explore key concepts across three instructional segments: Plants, Animals, and Weather; Light and Sound; and Magnets. Through hands-on investigations, students learn about plant and animal life

cycles, seasonal changes, weather patterns, and the basic needs of living things. They also investigate the properties of light and sound, discovering how vibrations create sound and how light allows us to see. In the final unit, students explore magnetic forces and how they cause motion through attraction and repulsion. Throughout the year, students engage in science and engineering practices such as asking questions, developing models, conducting investigations, and communicating findings. Learning is brought to life through access to both a dedicated science lab and an outdoor science classroom, where students make observations, interact with nature, and apply scientific thinking in meaningful, real-world contexts.

Second Grade

In second grade, students investigate foundational scientific concepts across four instructional units: patterns in the sky, forces and motion, properties of matter, and the life cycles and environments of plants and animals. Students observe the movement of the sun, moon, and stars, exploring how day and night follow predictable patterns. They study how forces such as pushes and pulls affect motion and how heating and cooling change matter. In life science, students examine how plants and animals grow, adapt, and interact with their environment, including the process of pollination and how organisms can alter their surroundings. Throughout these explorations, students engage in key science and engineering practices, including asking questions, developing models, conducting investigations, and communicating their findings. Learning is enriched through both a dedicated science lab and an outdoor science classroom, providing opportunities for hands-on discovery, real-world application, and a deeper connection to the natural world.

Third Grade

In third grade, students explore Earth, life, and environmental sciences through three central units: Rocks, Soils, and Fossils; Under the Sun; and Pollution and Conservation. Students investigate Earth's materials and surface processes, studying the formation of rocks, fossils, and evidence of Earth's history. They learn how plants and animals adapt to their environments, and explore how energy from the sun influences life on Earth. In the final unit, students examine human impact on natural systems, focusing on pollution, conservation, and responsible stewardship. Science instruction emphasizes key practices, including asking questions, developing

models, conducting investigations, analyzing data, and communicating findings. Learning is enhanced through both a science lab and an outdoor science classroom, offering students hands-on, inquiry-based experiences that deepen their understanding of the natural world.

Fourth Grade

In the final year of Lower School, students build a deeper understanding of Earth, physical, and life sciences through six interconnected units: Weather and Moon Phases, Stars and Planets, Forecasting the Weather, Role of Organisms and Flow of Energy, Light and Sound, and Force and Motion. Students explore weather patterns, cloud formation, and the phases of the moon, as well as the larger solar system and Earth's place within it. They investigate ecosystems, food chains, and the impact of environmental changes, while also examining how light and sound interact with materials and how forces affect motion. Students regularly engage in science and engineering practices, such as developing models, conducting investigations, analyzing data, and constructing explanations. These concepts come to life through rich, hands-on experiences in both the science lab and the outdoor science classroom, where students observe natural phenomena, apply their knowledge, and make real-world scientific connections.

Social Studies

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students begin developing an understanding of themselves, their communities, and the world around them through engaging, age-appropriate themes. Key content includes learning about rules and responsibilities, understanding national symbols and holidays, exploring maps and basic geography, and recognizing the roles of community helpers. Students are introduced to the concepts of time and chronology by discussing past and present events, and begin to understand cultural traditions and celebrations. Social studies is thoughtfully integrated into the language arts curriculum, enabling students to develop vocabulary, comprehension, and communication skills while exploring various social studies topics. Instruction is also closely connected to the seasonal and holiday calendar, providing meaningful, real-world connections that help students make sense of traditions, historical figures, and community events throughout the year.

First Grade

In first grade, students explore foundational concepts related to history, geography, economics, and civics through the lens of their own experiences and communities. They learn about important historical figures, national symbols, patriotic holidays, and map skills while beginning to understand the roles of producers, consumers, and basic economic principles. Students also explore the responsibilities of good citizenship and the function of rules and laws in a community. Social studies instruction is often integrated into language arts, where students practice nonfiction reading skills, learn to recognize text features such as headings, captions, and diagrams, and build rich content-specific vocabulary. This interdisciplinary approach supports comprehension while deepening students' understanding of the world around them.

Second Grade

In second grade, students deepen their understanding of Georgia's history, geography, government, and economics. Key content includes learning about Georgia's regions and rivers, Native cultures, colonial beginnings, influential historical figures such as Sequoyah, James Oglethorpe, Jackie Robinson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Students also learn the foundations of good citizenship and economic decision-making. Students explore themes such as conflict and change, scarcity, and the impact of individuals and institutions on society. Social studies is scheduled twice in a seven-day rotation and is often integrated into language arts instruction. This interdisciplinary approach supports the development of nonfiction reading skills, helps students navigate text features like headings and captions, and builds essential academic vocabulary that enhances both comprehension and content knowledge.

Third Grade

In third grade, students explore U.S. geography, the contributions of American Indians, early exploration, colonial America, the foundations of American government, and basic economic principles. They learn to locate major landforms, study diverse cultural regions, and examine how people interact with their environment across time and place. Students also develop an understanding of democratic ideals, the structure and responsibilities of government, and key economic concepts, including trade, interdependence, and opportunity cost. Social studies is scheduled twice in a seven-day rotation

and is closely aligned with literacy instruction. Lessons reinforce nonfiction reading skills, enabling students to navigate text features such as maps, timelines, and informational headings while developing a rich academic vocabulary. Writing is a key area of focus, with students regularly practicing paragraph writing and engaging in more formalized research projects that support comprehension and critical thinking across content areas.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, students explore the history of the United States from the nation's founding through Reconstruction, examining key events, influential figures, government structures, and economic concepts. Units include the American Revolution, the development of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, westward expansion, the Civil War and its aftermath, and foundational economic principles such as opportunity cost and specialization. Social studies is a core subject taught daily, supporting students in developing critical thinking and historical analysis skills.

Instruction integrates nonfiction reading strategies, with an emphasis on understanding and using text features such as timelines, maps, and informational headings to extract meaning. Students build content-rich vocabulary that supports comprehension across disciplines. Writing is a key component of the curriculum, with students practicing short essays, opinion pieces, and more formal research-based assignments. Assessment becomes more formalized in fourth grade, helping prepare students for the academic expectations of middle school by emphasizing constructed responses, document-based questions, and analytical writing.

Spanish

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students are introduced to foundational Spanish language skills through joyful, immersive experiences. The curriculum focuses on greetings, introductions, classroom routines, feelings, colors, numbers, shapes, and body parts. Students sing songs, act out stories, play games, and engage with simple vocabulary through movement and hands-on activities. Instruction emphasizes listening and speaking, helping students build confidence and comfort with the sounds of a new language. Classes attend Spanish twice in a seven-day rotation, allowing for frequent exposure and meaningful repetition. The approach is highly interactive, using visuals, songs,

and stories to create a language-rich environment that supports early language acquisition in a fun and developmentally appropriate way.

First Grade

First grade students continue to build their Spanish vocabulary and communication skills through interactive lessons that include greetings, emotions, colors, numbers, classroom objects, and body parts. The curriculum also introduces cultural components through holidays and traditions in Spanish-speaking countries. Students engage in short dialogues, sing songs, and read stories to support language development. Instruction prioritizes oral comprehension and emerging reading and writing skills. With Spanish classes twice during each seven-day rotation, students benefit from consistent opportunities to listen, speak, and respond in Spanish. The learning environment encourages participation, movement, and play-based practice to reinforce language in context.

Second Grade

In second grade, students expand their communication skills through conversations, vocabulary development, and early literacy in Spanish. Units focus on topics such as the alphabet, spelling names, school vocabulary, food preferences, weather, and clothing. Students begin to participate in more structured dialogues and simple written tasks while continuing to learn through songs, storytelling, games, and visual aids. Cultural celebrations from Spanish-speaking countries are woven throughout the year to promote global awareness and understanding. Spanish meets twice per seven-day cycle, supporting consistent exposure and language retention. The approach remains active and student-centered, striking a balance between oral language practice and developing reading and writing experiences.

Third Grade

Third grade Spanish builds on students' growing language foundation by encouraging more independence in speaking, reading, and writing. Students learn to describe themselves and others, identify countries of origin, discuss school and sports activities, and express likes and dislikes. There is an increased focus on sentence structure, pronunciation, and reading comprehension, supported by songs, cultural stories, and interactive activities. Students engage in partner dialogues, read and act out stories, and complete projects connected to cultural themes such as Día de los Muertos. With two classes per seven-day rotation, instruction balances skill development with

joyful, engaging activities that promote both language acquisition and cultural understanding.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, students deepen their Spanish language skills through expanded vocabulary, cultural study, and increased emphasis on oral and written expression. They explore topics such as countries of origin, holiday celebrations, clothing, hobbies, and weather around the world. Students participate in dialogues, respond to stories, compare traditions, and begin to analyze and present information in Spanish. The curriculum fosters independence and confidence in language use while continuing to integrate games, music, movement, and storytelling. Meeting twice every seven days, Spanish instruction supports a gradual progression from oral fluency to early literacy, laying the foundation for success in more formal language study in later grades.

Art

In Lower School, visual arts education nurtures creativity, skill development, and self-expression through hands-on experiences with a variety of media and techniques. Students attend art class once in a seven-day rotation and have regular opportunities to display their work across campus, including in the annual Lower School Art Show and during Grandparents' Day. Across all grade levels, the art curriculum supports visual literacy, critical thinking, and creative confidence, laying the foundation for continued artistic exploration in middle school.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, artists are introduced to the elements of art through drawing, painting, sculpting, and collage. They experiment with color mixing, shape, line, and texture, while learning to use a range of art tools safely. Students express themselves through imaginative creations inspired by personal experiences and thematic explorations.

First Grade

First grade students build on foundational skills as they explore patterns, balance, and composition. They work with two- and three-dimensional media, including clay, paint, and textiles. Artmaking is often connected to themes in

nature and community, and students begin to reflect on their work and the work of others using age-appropriate art vocabulary.

Second Grade

Second grade students deepen their understanding of design principles, including contrast, repetition, and unity. They apply these concepts while working with more advanced tools and materials, including a broader range of clay techniques and printmaking processes. Students explore cultural connections in art and create pieces that reflect personal ideas and stories.

Third Grade

Third grade artists engage in increasingly complex projects that develop technical skills and creative thinking. They explore color theory, mixed media, and both traditional and contemporary forms of art. Students begin making more intentional artistic choices and use sketching and planning techniques to prepare for final compositions. Cultural appreciation and self-expression are key themes throughout the year.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade students demonstrate growing independence and artistic maturity. They work across a variety of media—painting, sculpture, ceramics, and digital tools—to create representational and abstract work. Emphasis is placed on craftsmanship, personal voice, and understanding the cultural and historical context of art. Students participate in group critiques and develop artist statements to reflect on their creative process.

Innovation and Design

Innovation and Design is a hands-on, project-based course where students build creativity, problem-solving, and engineering skills through exploration of technology, materials, and design thinking. Students in kindergarten through fourth grade attend Innovation and Design once during a seven-day rotation for one semester. This dynamic program emphasizes the engineering design process, encourages perseverance, and fosters collaboration and reflection. A hallmark of the program is frequent collaboration with core subject teachers, which allows for integrated projects that extend and enrich classroom learning across disciplines. Service learning and real-world problem solving are also central themes, helping students connect their work to community needs and global awareness.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students are introduced to teamwork, basic engineering concepts, and digital tools through tangible, hands-on experiences like building marble runs or designing and creating pop-up cards. They begin learning how to brainstorm, design, and improve their ideas while developing fine motor skills and spatial awareness in fun, age-appropriate ways.

First Grade

First graders build on these foundations by exploring simple machines, coding robots like the WonderBots, and creating comic strips and story animations. Students are introduced to basic coding, material exploration, and the iterative design process as they test and revise their work. Projects often support themes in science, writing, and storytelling.

Second Grade

In second grade, students deepen their understanding of environmental sustainability and digital literacy. They explore recycling, circuits, basic robotics, and Blockly coding. Projects include building Junk Bots, obstacle courses, and bridges that connect to both science and social studies learning. Students are encouraged to think critically and work collaboratively to solve real-world problems.

Third Grade

Third grade students focus on upcycling, cost/benefit analysis, and coding logic using LEGO robotics and e-waste awareness projects. They explore textile design, create wearable items, and engineer interactive games, all while integrating leadership and reflection. Emphasis is placed on innovation through reuse and responsible consumption.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, students take on more complex engineering challenges related to aerodynamics, motion, and circuitry. They build and test paper aircraft, explore LED circuits, and use Spike Legos and motors to investigate mechanical systems. Projects support science learning and often involve collaborative service efforts, such as designing LED greeting cards for community outreach. Students are challenged to communicate their thinking clearly and apply the design process with increasing independence and autonomy.

Music

The Lower School music program engages students in building musical skills and appreciation through singing, movement, instrument playing, improvisation, and ensemble performance. Classes meet once during a seven-day rotation, providing consistent opportunities for musical growth. A vibrant part of the music program includes seasonal and schoolwide performances, which give students the chance to showcase their skills and build confidence as performers in front of the school community.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students explore musical opposites such as loud/soft and fast/slow, distinguish between beat and rhythm, and develop pitch recognition using solfège syllables (sol and mi). They practice steady beats through movement and instruments, explore vocal timbre, and begin to recognize basic musical forms through listening and performance.

First Grade

In first grade, students deepen their understanding of rhythm through reading and creating patterns with quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests. They continue developing pitch awareness (sol, mi, la), experiment with expressive elements like dynamics and tempo, and begin to compose simple pieces. Students also explore classroom and folk instruments while learning to identify contrasting musical ideas and forms.

Second Grade

In second grade, students expand their skills by using barred instruments and voices to improvise and decode melodies. They compose rhythms, identify meters in duple and triple time, and participate in folk dances. Concepts such as form (AB, ABA), harmony (rounds, canons), and timbre are explored through both performance and analysis, supporting ensemble skills and musical literacy.

Third Grade

In third grade, students are introduced to more complex rhythms, including sixteenth notes, and improvise melodies using the pentatonic scale. They explore texture through partwork and rounds, build ensemble skills, and study musical form and timbre across a range of instruments. Students

demonstrate increased independence in reading, composing, and performing music collaboratively.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, students synthesize prior learning to arrange, interpret, and perform musical works with expressive detail. They study compound and complex meters, analyze musical forms (such as rondo and verse/refrain), and expand their vocabulary for describing dynamics, articulation, and timbre. Emphasis is placed on ensemble performance, musical expression, and reflective listening, preparing students for more advanced music experiences beyond Lower School.

Physical Education (PE)

The Lower School physical education program is designed to develop the whole child through movement, teamwork, and fitness. All students participate in PE three times during a seven-day rotation, engaging in age-appropriate activities that promote physical, social, and emotional development. The curriculum emphasizes the development of motor skills, cooperative play, personal responsibility, and an understanding of lifelong health and wellness. Students learn to follow rules, respect others, and participate safely and confidently in a variety of games and skill-building exercises. Each spring, all Lower School students participate in Field Day, a joyful community tradition that celebrates physical activity, sportsmanship, and school spirit.

Kindergarten

Kindergarteners build foundational motor skills such as hopping, galloping, and jumping, while learning to move safely and respectfully in group settings. Activities focus on spatial awareness, underhand throwing, catching, and cooperative play to foster self-expression, coordination, and early fitness habits.

First Grade

In first grade, students develop fundamental motor skills and coordination through activities like tossing, catching, dribbling, dancing, and striking with implements. They are introduced to a wide range of sports and movement-based games that reinforce teamwork, effort, and respect.

Second Grade

In second grade, students continue building their movement skills and begin refining coordination and control. They explore fitness, manipulative skills, and teamwork through ball handling, jumping, and small-group games, with a growing emphasis on cooperation, rule-following, and personal responsibility.

Third Grade

Third graders strengthen physical skills and stamina through four structured units that include foundational movement, striking, gymnastics, and fitness development. They participate in the Georgia Fitness Assessment, set personal fitness goals, and explore dance and jump rope routines that support balance, rhythm, and endurance.

Fourth Grade

Fourth graders engage in more advanced skill development, focusing on strategic gameplay, spatial awareness, and fitness concepts. They practice throwing, catching, kicking, volleying, and striking through small-sided games, applying their skills in rhythmic movement, fitness training, and teamwork challenges. Health education and emotional growth are integrated through goal setting, fitness tracking, and reflective discussions on effort and sportsmanship.

Religion

Lower School religion classes nurture students' spiritual growth, biblical understanding, and moral development within the context of our Episcopal identity. Classes meet once during a seven-day rotation in addition to weekly chapel, where students gather as a community for prayer, scripture, music, and reflection. The curriculum emphasizes inclusivity, wonder, and the importance of asking profound questions about faith, purpose, and how we care for one another. Service learning is integrated throughout the year, encouraging students to put their faith into action through age-appropriate projects that foster empathy, responsibility, and community engagement.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten religion, students are introduced to foundational Bible stories that highlight important people, events, and themes from the Old and New Testaments. Each story is selected to help students understand the lessons

and morals that continue to shape how people live and treat others today. Through interactive songs and stories, students learn about kindness, courage, obedience, and God's love. Discussions focus on how these stories relate to everyday life, encouraging children to consider how they can care for others, make good choices, and grow in their faith.

First Grade

First graders focus on the liturgical calendar, learning about the seasons and traditions of the church year, particularly as practiced in the Episcopal tradition. Each lesson is paired with a Bible story that explains the significance behind seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. These stories deepen students' understanding of key theological concepts while also helping them recognize how faith traditions are practiced and celebrated in community.

Second Grade

Second grade religion centers on understanding the nature of God through scripture. Students explore over 20 biblical titles and metaphors for God, each revealing attributes such as love, strength, justice, and protection. Through these lessons, students reflect on what these descriptions mean to people of faith and how they relate to their personal beliefs. They are also introduced to the ancient languages of Hebrew and Greek, learning the original meanings of select words and phrases and how they enrich the understanding of scripture and the Christian tradition.

Third Grade

In third grade, students explore the essential question, "What is Church?" Through scripture, discussion, and art, they come to understand that the church is not just a building, but a community of people united in faith. In the fall, students study the early church through the *Acts of the Apostles*, focusing on events such as the ascension of Jesus, Pentecost, and the missionary journeys of Paul. In the spring, they examine how the church evolved during the Middle Ages, learning about cathedral architecture, stained glass windows, and illuminated manuscripts, connecting history with spiritual expression.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade religion focuses on significant figures in the Bible, helping students understand how individual lives reflect God's presence and purpose.

In the fall, students explore stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph, reflecting on themes of trust, family, and faith. In the spring, they continue with the stories of Moses and David, and examine the life and teachings of Jesus and his disciples. Through storytelling, reflection, and class discussions, students deepen their understanding of God's relationship with humanity and how biblical figures continue to shape our faith today.

Speech and Drama

In third and fourth grade Speech & Drama, students develop essential communication, performance, and public speaking skills through creative, reflective, and structured activities. Students attend Speech & Drama once in a seven-day rotation, providing regular opportunities to build confidence and fluency in spoken expression.

Third Grade

In third grade, students focus on storytelling and creative expression. They begin the semester by sharing personal stories, learning how to add imaginative details, and speaking with confidence. They practice persuasive speaking by supporting ideas and thinking flexibly about different perspectives. Students also explore how to write and deliver inspirational speeches, developing poise and presence while speaking in front of an audience.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, the emphasis shifts toward structured public speaking and self-expression. Students build a foundation through consistent routines, reading aloud, and engaging in discussion. They study effective speech techniques and learn how to organize their thoughts into well-structured presentations. The curriculum encourages students to generate and share original ideas, building confidence, clarity, and a strong sense of voice as they learn to communicate effectively with others.

Woodworking

Woodworking in Kindergarten through fourth grade fosters creativity, problem-solving, and fine motor development through hands-on experiences with real tools and materials. Students attend woodworking once in a seven-day rotation,

providing regular opportunities to build skills progressively and engage deeply in project-based learning.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students are introduced to basic woodworking tools and safety procedures. Projects such as a Pinewood Derby car and a string art heart help students learn how to use hammers, clamps, sanding blocks, and wood glue with guidance. These activities strengthen hand-eye coordination, promote independence, and nurture creative expression as students begin to build confidence with real tools.

First Grade

In first grade, students expand their skills through more detailed projects such as string art and a bee box. They learn to measure and mark wood, use hammers and clamps with greater precision, and operate a drill press under supervision. These experiences introduce mathematical reasoning, encourage sequential thinking, and provide a foundation in planning and executing multi-step projects.

Second Grade

In second grade, students begin to work with cordless drills and explore more advanced techniques, such as pre-drilling pilot holes to prepare for screws. Projects like building a birdhouse give students opportunities to apply math skills, follow detailed steps, and problem-solve when adjustments are needed. Emphasis is placed on accuracy, tool responsibility, and perseverance through challenges.

Third Grade

In third grade, students combine function and design through projects like a wooden gumball machine and a nativity scene. These projects introduce basic mechanical concepts and emphasize precision, sequencing, and design thinking. As they sand, assemble, and finish their work, students develop fine motor skills and pride in creating functional and personalized items.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, woodworking becomes a platform for artistic expression and deeper reflection. Projects such as holiday ornaments and a large collaborative wood art installation, which align with school values, challenge

students to integrate abstract thinking with craftsmanship. As they design, cut, and assemble symbolic pieces, students refine their technical skills while exploring identity, community, and creativity through their work.

Questions regarding St. Martin's curriculum or supporting materials should be directed to the Division Principal and Director of Teaching & Learning.