

Nitza Birk
Spanish 4th and 5th
birkn@trinityknights.org
(2026-2027)

Hello, my name is Nitza Birk and I am the 4th-8th Spanish Teacher at TCS. I hold a Bachelor's degree from The University of Puerto Rico. My three adult children are Trinity alumni and I have been teaching at Trinity for the last twenty years.

The Trinity Catholic Elementary and Middle School Spanish Programs are focused on Spanish language proficiency and cultural knowledge and understanding. Through the study of a world language, students will develop a sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic heritages of other groups and will be prepared to participate in a society characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity. In our global society, as the world becomes more interdependent, students' knowledge of world language is crucial for expanded career opportunities. It will also aid in developing responsible citizens of the world community and bring us closer to realizing the Kingdom of God on earth.

When children study world language, they develop higher cognitive thinking skills. Foreign language study helps students gain a better understanding of the grammar/structure of their native language. As a result they usually perform better on standardized tests (Terra Nova, SAT, ACT).

Our Spanish curriculum is an introduction to the Spanish language and to the cultures of the Spanish speaking world. Linguistically, this course focuses on developing the four abilities necessary to learn a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. We understand that the cultural component is just as important as the linguistic one for learning to communicate effectively; therefore, students will also be introduced to the diverse cultures of the Hispanic world.

Spanish will be used in class for practical purposes; however, English will also be employed to explain complex concepts.

Students who meet the standards of the Spanish curriculum should be well equipped to confidently enter their respective Spanish programs as incoming freshmen at their high school.

Objectives

In 4th and 5th grade Spanish class, students focus on building vocabulary, experience cultural activities and strengthen our Catholic identity.

- *Organization of class:* Students will work in various settings. These include direct instruction and active learning through peer and group work.
- *Participation:* Learning a language takes practice and the best practice is to listen with both ears and use the target language whenever possible. Active participation is vital to the success of learning a foreign language.
- *Instructional Strategies:* Students will learn through various strategies such as TPR (total physical response), visual aids, listening and speaking activities, role-playing, writing, and reading comprehension.

Catholic Identity

In 4th and 5th grade Spanish classes include the following Catholic Identity lessons:

- Prayer: Our class always begins with a prayer
4th-5th: *The sign of the cross*
4th grade: *Our Father*
5th grade: *Our Father and Hail Mary*
- Saints: *Los Santos Latinos* (Saints of the Spanish speaking countries).
As Christians, we are to be kind and compassionate. As we are learning a new language we make sure to show kindness and respect to each other.

Curriculum

4th Grade

Workbook: *Let's Learn Spanish*, 2003, Hayes (ISBN: 1-55767-535-X)

The topics covered in 4th grade are: month of the year, learning how to tell the date and the time, introduction to a school schedule, social topics related to the community and cultural activities.

5th Grade

Workbook: *Let's Learn Spanish*, 2003, Hayes (ISBN: 1-55767-535-X)

The topics covered in 5th grade are: how to tell directions, math concepts related to numbers and money, food, sports and cultural activities. In 5th grade the students learn Spanish one semester and Latin the other semester. Prior to entering 6th grade, they will select their Foreign Language option (Spanish or Latin) for the entirety of middle school.

Grades

Grading: Accumulative points. The amount of points will vary according to the activity.

1. Class work: teacher lead work on their workbooks, any worksheet or activity during class.
2. Homework: vocabulary
3. Quizzes
4. Weekly participation grade

Make-up Assignments and Late Work

If students miss a Spanish class, they will make up the assignment the next time they come to class (teacher will assist the student with directions and any other help they might need to complete the assignment).

Behavior Management Plan

Students are expected to listen, to work and to be kind to each other. The consequences of not following these rules are a verbal warning, communication with parents and detention.

Supplies

The students need their book, folder, notebook and their writing materials.

Communication

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a collaboration tool for teachers and students. Teachers create an online classroom, invite students to the class then create and distribute assignments. Within the Google Classroom students and teachers can have conversations about the assignments and teachers can track the student's progress. This is an organizational tool for the students to see all assignments and to-do lists in one place. Parents are can receive communication as well to see what the students are working on.

E-mail

The most effective method of communication between teacher and parents is e-mail. Parents should expect to receive a reply from the teacher within 24 hours. Students may confer directly with the teacher to resolve any questions or concerns. Students may use their school-issued email account to communicate, if there is not an opportunity in class.

My email is birkn@trinityknights.org

PowerSchool

Parents and students are responsible for checking PowerSchool on a regular basis to monitor progress. Please bring concerns to the teacher's attention as soon as they appear. Parents and teachers will work together to promote student progress. Questions regarding access to PowerSchool should be directed to the front office.