

ELEMENTARY
COURSE
CATALOG
2024-2025



Divine Savior Academy
— SANTA RITA RANCH —

course catalog

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COURSE CATALOG

The purpose of this course catalog is to provide parents and students with information regarding elementary school course offerings and the overall progression of classes within the Divine Savior Academy elementary curriculum.

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CORE COURSES	SPECIALS COURSES
Word of God	Physical Education
Mathematics	Music
Reading	Art
Writing	Spanish
Handwriting	Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum
Science	Technology
Social Studies	

SECOND GRADE

Chapel and Worship

One morning each week, students attend a chapel service that is led by a Divine Savior pastor or teacher. Each service features an applicable lesson based on a Bible story, a worship song, and prayer.

Throughout the school year, students learn, prepare, and perform songs at worship services at Divine Savior Church. In addition to weekly Sunday morning worship services, special church holiday services include Christmas Eve and Good Friday evening services.

We invite all parents to attend our weekly chapel and Divine Savior Church services.

Word of God: ChristLight –Northwestern Publishing House

ChristLight is the curriculum used throughout all elementary Word of God classes. Each week focuses on a specific theme, accompanied by two Bible lessons. Students use themes and stories to see how Biblical truths apply to their own lives.

In second grade, students will conduct a study of either the Old Testament or the New Testament (these rotate every year). The Old Testament lessons will demonstrate how God fulfills his promises through people such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, and Daniel. New Testament lessons will follow Jesus's life from his birth through his ascension into heaven.

Students will focus on one Bible passage or song each week that relates to the theme of the Bible lessons being studied.

Mathematics: Reveal Math –McGraw Hill

Math learning thrives on exploration, conversation, and reflection. Reveal Math is a complete K-12 core math program built on contemporary academic research and designed so all students can succeed in mathematics. By encouraging curiosity, exploration, and a growth mindset, Reveal Math allows students to learn problem-solving strategies and not simply memorize computational procedures.

Second graders will learn, practice, and reinforce the following skills: place value of three-digit numbers, add and subtract two- and three-digit whole numbers, continue developing their understanding of fractions, develop an understanding of equality and multiplication measure and solve problems involving length, tell time and solve problems involving money, identify and analyze two-dimensional figures and identify lines of symmetry, find perimeter of polygons, collect and interpret data using titles, labels, and units.

Reading: Being a Reader & Small Group Reading Sets –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Reader follows a continuum of reading development to meet each student at their instructional point of need and take them to their next level of literacy. It is grounded in scientific reading research and informed by our many years of experience working alongside classroom teachers. Through a unique blend of whole class, small group, and individualized approaches, students not only master foundational reading skills but learn the skills and strategies necessary for deep comprehension.

Through rich read-aloud experiences, classroom and partner discussions, and independent practice, students learn metacognitive comprehension strategies for navigating different genres and text types. They also learn how to support their thinking with evidence from the text, participate in meaningful academic conversations, build content knowledge from texts, and select texts for independent practice that help them grow as readers.

As students master foundational reading skills, small group instruction begins to focus more on developing fluency and using reading strategies to flexibly understand and discuss increasingly complex texts. They also learn how to generate ideas and talk about books with peers.

Through word study and spelling instruction, students develop word analysis skills and strategies that allow them to build vocabulary and read polysyllabic words with automaticity and accuracy. They also apply what they are learning about decoding words to encoding them through spelling.

Writing: Being a Writer –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Writer provides research-based, whole-class writing instruction. Using a workshop model, the Being a Writer program teaches the writing process while developing intrinsic motivation for the craft of writing through immersion in the narrative, informational, and opinion/argumentative writing genres. Instruction encourages students to write regularly with passion and intent as they build an understanding of and appreciation for the skills and conventions (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.) of writing. With Being a Writer, students learn to love writing and grow as writers, thinkers, and principled people.

In second grade, students study the following units:

- The Writing Community - In this seven-week unit, students generate writing ideas by drawing, listing ideas, and writing sentences. Throughout the unit students share stories, give feedback, and help one another become better writers.
- Telling More - This four-week unit helps students write longer stories and learn where and how to add more details to their writing, including giving and receiving partner feedback.
- Fiction - During this four-week unit, students use mentor texts to evaluate characteristics of fictional writing and apply those characteristics to their own writing. Students also explore the drafting process, including publishing their own writing.
- Nonfiction - In this five-week unit, students use mentor texts to evaluate characteristics of nonfictional writing and apply those characteristics to their own writing. Students practice writing questions, facts, functional nonfiction, and expository nonfiction.
- Letter Writing - This three-week unit teaches students how to read, discuss, and write friendly letters, including letters to one another, the teacher, family members, and friends. Throughout the unit, students learn to work responsibly, listen to the ideas of others, and share their own thinking.
- Poems and Words - For three weeks, students hear and discuss a variety of poems, informally explore figurative language, and generate lists of descriptive words to use in their own poems.
- Opinion Writing - In this three-week unit, students read and discuss examples of opinion writing. They write several opinion pieces supporting their opinion with reasons, using linking words to connect reasons to opinions and writing effective opening and closing sentences.

Handwriting: Zaner-Bloser

The Zaner-Bloser Handwriting curriculum focuses on the four keys to legibility: shape, size, spacing, and slant. It is based on research of how children learn best and offers flexibility in instruction based on student learning styles, language acquisition, and motor development. Each lesson includes an assessment rubric that helps students self-evaluate their handwriting, which builds confidence and ownership in the handwriting process.

In second grade, students hone their manuscript writing skills and progress toward writing application topics such as capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, and sentence combining. They also begin to learn and practice the basics of cursive handwriting.

Science: TCI - Bring Science Alive!

This science curriculum is tied to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and includes some exciting resources. Second graders are introduced to the diversity and interdependence of living things in ecosystems. Students compare the properties and functions of different kinds of matter and analyze the processes that shape Earth over long and short periods of time.

Unit 1 – Plant and Animal Survival

Students will learn about the different kinds of living things in the world, what they need to survive, how animals and living things depend on one-another, and how they survive in different environments.

Unit 2 – Materials and Their Uses

With this second grade science curriculum, students will spend their time learning about what makes up “everything,” the difference between solids and liquids, purposes of different materials, how things can be reused, and more.

Unit 3 – Earth Changes

In the final unit, students dive in to understanding and appreciating how God shaped the Earth, what is on the Earth's surface, the different kinds of land and water found on Earth, and how problems caused by wind and water can be solved.

Social Studies: TCI - Social Studies Alive! Our Community and Beyond

Second graders will study five different units related to communities:

- Government - branches of government and how our country's leaders are chosen
- Historical thinking - how a variety of activists and leaders made positive changes in their communities
- Native Americans - compare various Native American cultures, based on regional geography
- Geography - studying continents, oceans, map reading skills, and the student's location on a world map
- Culture - comparing and contrasting a variety of cultures to our culture in Texas
- Economics – studying goods and services, based on needs and wants within a community

THIRD GRADE

Chapel and Worship

One morning each week, students attend a chapel service that is led by a Divine Savior pastor or teacher. Each service features an applicable lesson based on a Bible story, a worship song, and prayer.

Throughout the school year, students learn, prepare, and perform songs at worship services at Divine Savior Church. In addition to weekly Sunday morning worship services, special church holiday services include Christmas Eve and Good Friday evening services.

We invite all parents to attend our weekly chapel and Divine Savior Church services.

Word of God: ChristLight –Northwestern Publishing House

ChristLight is the curriculum used throughout all elementary Word of God classes. Each week focuses on a specific theme, accompanied by two Bible lessons. Students use themes and stories to see how Biblical truths apply to their own lives.

In third grade, students will conduct a study of either the Old Testament or the New Testament (these rotate every year). The Old Testament lessons will demonstrate how God fulfills his promises through people such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, and Daniel. New Testament lessons will follow Jesus's life from his birth through his ascension into heaven.

Students will focus on one Bible passage or song each week that relates to the theme of the Bible lessons being studied.

Mathematics: Reveal Math –McGraw Hill

Math learning thrives on exploration, conversation, and reflection. Reveal Math is a complete K-12 core math program built on contemporary academic research and designed so all students can succeed in mathematics. By encouraging curiosity, exploration, and a growth mindset, Reveal Math allows students to learn problem-solving strategies and not simply memorizing computational procedures.

The following is a list of the concepts that will be covered in third grade:

- Number and Operations
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis and Probability
- Problem Solving
- Reasoning and Proof
- Connections and Representation

Reading: Being a Reader, Text Sets, and Book Clubs –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Reader follows a continuum of reading development to meet each student at their instructional point of need and take them to their next level of literacy. It is grounded in scientific reading research and informed by our many years of experience working alongside classroom teachers. Through a unique blend of whole class, small group, and individualized approaches, students not only master foundational reading skills but learn the skills and strategies necessary for deep comprehension.

Through rich read-aloud experiences, classroom and partner discussions, and independent practice, students learn metacognitive comprehension strategies for navigating different genres and text types. They also learn how to support their thinking with evidence from the text, participate in meaningful academic conversations, build content knowledge from texts, and select texts for independent practice that help them grow as readers.

As students master foundational reading skills, small group instruction begins to focus more on developing fluency and using reading strategies to flexibly understand and discuss increasingly complex texts. Students first work to complete all 12 reading text sets if they haven't done so yet. Then, students begin reading as part of Book Clubs, which promote more independence in reading to learn while still having a teacher-led lesson connected to the book students are reading in their small group. Students also learn how to generate ideas and talk about books with peers.

Through word study and spelling instruction, students develop word analysis skills and strategies that allow them to build vocabulary and read polysyllabic words with automaticity and accuracy. They also apply what they are learning about decoding words to encoding them through spelling.

Writing: Being a Writer –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Writer provides an entire year of research-based, whole-class writing instruction. Using a workshop model, the Being a Writer program teaches the writing process while developing intrinsic motivation for the craft of writing through immersion in the narrative, informational, and opinion/argumentative writing genres.

Instruction encourages students to write regularly with passion and intent as they build an understanding of and appreciation for the skills and conventions (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.) of writing. With Being a Writer, students learn to love writing and grow as writers, thinkers, and principled people.

In third grade, students study the following units:

- The Writing Community - This three-week unit review reminds students about their important role as a member of the classroom community of writers. Students explore various pre-writing techniques, respond to various writing prompts, and give one another feedback about their writing.
- The Writing Process - In this two-week unit, students focus on the entire writing process from brainstorming to publishing their final drafts, as a book.
- Personal Narrative - During this four-week unit, students explore the genre and write about significant events from their own lives.
- Fiction - This six-week unit allows students to explore various features of quality fiction and different types of fictional writing. Students practice incorporating the elements of character, setting, and plot into their own writing.
- Expository Nonfiction - For six weeks, students are immersed in nonfiction texts about animals. Students work with a partner to choose an animal, conduct research, and create a formal report to present to their classmates. Throughout the unit, students practice the writing process and learn various features of expository texts.
- Functional Writing - In this three-week unit, students read and discuss directions for how to perform simple activities and write directions for others to follow.
- Opinion Writing - During this three-week unit, students read and write a persuasive essay, defending a position on a topic. Students evaluate their audience and purpose as they present their own opinions.
- Poetry - For two weeks, students read, hear, and write poetry. Students listen to poems and generate ideas for writing and publishing their own poetry.

Handwriting: Zaner-Bloser

The Zaner-Bloser Handwriting curriculum focuses on the four keys to legibility: shape, size, spacing, and slant. It is based on research of how children learn best and offers flexibility in instruction based on student learning styles, language acquisition levels, and motor development. Each lesson includes an assessment rubric that helps students self-evaluate their handwriting, building confidence and ownership in the handwriting process.

Third graders spend time reviewing manuscript writing, and then are introduced to writing individual cursive letters. By the second semester they progress to connecting cursive letters to words and formulating entire sentences.

Science: TCI - Bring Science Alive!

TCI's 3rd grade science curriculum introduces students to the concepts of changing environments. Students will explore the variations and traits of different organisms that affect environments to how they affect survival in the past and today. Students will also spend their time learning about the weather, how to quantify and predict weather conditions under different circumstances and explore the effects of forces of motion.

Unit 1 – Environments and Living Things

Students will learn about organisms and where they live, why animals live in groups, how the environments can change, and how we learn about extinct organisms.

Unit 2 – Forces and Motion

Students will explore various forces, what they do, what happens when they become balanced or unbalanced, how to predict patterns of motion, and what magnetic and electric forces can do.

Unit 3 – Weather and Climate

Students will investigate weather and how to measure various types of weather, how to predict it, how extreme weather can affect people, and what they can do to reduce the damage of extreme weather.

Unit 4 – Life Cycles and Traits

Students will be introduced to inheritance, how environments can affect traits, why members of some species survive, and the life cycles of plants and animals with and without backbones.

Social Studies: TCI - Social Studies Alive! Our Community and Beyond

Social Studies Alive! Our Community and Beyond continues to broaden students' awareness about the local and global communities in which they live. Students learn the fundamentals of geography and explore different cultures and public service roles by answering the following Essential Questions:

- Where within the world and the United States is our community?
- How do people become part of our country?
- What makes our community diverse?
- How do people improve their communities?
- How are people around the world alike and different?
- How does our economy work, and how does global trade affect our community?
- What are the public services in our community?
- How do we have a voice in our community?

FOURTH GRADE

Chapel and Worship

One morning each week, students attend a chapel service that is led by a Divine Savior pastor or teacher. Each service features an applicable lesson based on a Bible story, a worship song, and prayer.

Throughout the school year, students learn, prepare, and perform songs at worship services at Divine Savior Church. In addition to weekly Sunday morning worship services, special church holiday services include Christmas Eve and Good Friday evening services.

We invite all parents to attend our weekly chapel and Divine Savior Church services.

Word of God: ChristLight –Northwestern Publishing House

ChristLight is the curriculum used throughout all elementary Word of God classes. Each week focuses on a specific theme, accompanied by two Bible lessons. Students use themes and stories to see how Biblical truths apply to their own lives.

In fourth grade, students will conduct a study of either the Old Testament or the New Testament (these rotate every year). The Old Testament lessons will demonstrate how God fulfills his promises through people such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, and Daniel. New Testament lessons will follow Jesus's life from his birth through his ascension into heaven.

Students will focus on one Bible passage or song each week that relates to the theme of the Bible lessons being studied.

Mathematics: Reveal Math –Mc Graw Hill

Math learning thrives on exploration, conversation, collaboration, and reflection. Reveal Math is a complete K-12 core math program built on contemporary academic research and designed so all students can succeed in mathematics. By encouraging curiosity, exploration, and a growth mindset, Reveal Math allows students to learn problem-solving strategies and not simply memorizing computational procedures.

This allows students the time and practice to retain the following math concepts:

- Number and Operations
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis and Probability
- Problem Solving
- Reasoning and Proof
- Connections
- Representation

Students in fourth grade expand on the skills learned in third grade and encounter the new skills of long division, division with remainders, exponents, comparing fractions and decimals, and square roots.

Reading: Being a Reader and Book Clubs –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Reader follows a continuum of reading development to meet each student at their instructional point of need and take them to their next level of literacy. It is grounded in scientific reading research and informed by our many years of experience working alongside classroom teachers. Through a unique blend of whole class, small group, and individualized approaches, students not only master foundational reading skills but learn the skills and strategies necessary for deep comprehension.

Through rich read-aloud experiences, classroom and partner discussions, and independent practice, students learn metacognitive comprehension strategies for navigating different genres and text types. They also learn how to support their thinking with evidence from the text, participate in meaningful academic conversations, build content knowledge from texts, and select texts for independent practice that help them grow as readers.

Utilizing research-based best practices for small-group reading, our Book Clubs provide the foundational lessons for independent, student-led book clubs and a variety of teacher-led mini-lessons that are used to support and deepen book discussions. Students learn how to generate ideas and talk about books with peers.

Through word study and spelling instruction, students develop word analysis skills and strategies that allow them to build vocabulary and read polysyllabic words with automaticity and accuracy. They also apply what they are learning about decoding words to encoding them through spelling.

Utilizing research-based best practices for small-group reading, our Book Clubs provide the foundational lessons for independent, student-led book clubs and a variety of mini-lessons that can be used to support and deepen book discussions.

Writing: Being a Writer –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Writer provides an entire year of research-based, whole-class writing instruction. Using a workshop model, the Being a Writer program teaches the writing process while developing intrinsic motivation for the craft of writing through immersion in the narrative, informational, and opinion/argumentative writing genres.

Instruction encourages students to write regularly with passion and intent as they build an understanding of and appreciation for the skills and conventions (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.) of writing. With Being a Writer, students learn to love writing and grow as writers, thinkers, and principled people, and teachers hone their skills, both as teachers of writing and as writers themselves.

The fourth grade curriculum consists of the following units:

- **The Writing Community:** In this three-week unit, students build a caring community to better get to know one another, generate writing ideas from read-aloud books, and draft pieces of writing in a variety of genres.
- **The Writing Process:** During these two weeks, students select drafts from the previous unit to develop and publish, learn revision strategies, practice proofreading, and then publish a final draft.
- **Personal Narrative:** In this four-week unit, students write about a single event from their own lives. They practice including sensory details, transitional words and phrases, and creating an ending that brings the story to a logical conclusion.
- **Fiction:** This is an intense, six-week writing unit that helps students create an interesting story plot, use sensory details to enhance the setting, utilize strong adjectives, appropriately punctuate dialogue.
- **Expository Nonfiction:** In this six-week research unit, students work with a partner to research and write a report about a country. Students use their skills of examining text features and take research notes to help organize their essay.
- **Functional Writing:** This is a fun and important three-week writing unit that helps students see the importance of informative writing. Student practice sequencing skills as they write directions for recipes, drawing cartoon characters, and playing different games.
- **Opinion Writing:** Students use this three-week unit to identify audiences and purposes of opinion writing. The focus of the unit is helping students to create strong and clear opinion statements and then support those statements with reasons and evidence.
- **Poetry Writing:** For two weeks, students tap into their creativity to create poems that explore imagery, sound, and form.
- **Reflection Writing:** The final unit of the year allows students to reflect on their writing journey throughout the school year. Students log their writing growth and create a writing plan for the summer months.

Handwriting: Zaner-Bloser

The Zaner-Bloser Handwriting curriculum focuses on the four keys to legibility: shape, size, spacing, and slant. The program is based on research of how children learn best and offers flexibility in instruction based on student learning styles, language acquisition levels, and motor development. Each lesson includes an assessment rubric that helps students self-evaluate their handwriting, building confidence and ownership in the handwriting process.

In fourth grade, students review the formation of lowercase letters, work on connections between cursive letters, and further develop fluency in cursive writing. Students are taught and practice handwriting through a variety of multi-sensory and writing-based activities.

Science: TCI - Bring Science Alive!

Bring Science Alive! examines the functions of internal and external plant and animal structures in growth, reproduction, and information processing. Students explore the roles of weathering, erosion, and deposition in shaping Earth's surface. They analyze patterns in wave motion and how energy is transferred by sound, light, heat, and electric currents.

Unit 1 – Plant and Animal Structures

Students will learn about plant structures and how they are used for support, growth, and protection. They will then move to understanding plant reproduction, how plants respond to their environment, and how various plant and animal structures are used for digestion, circulation, movement, and sensing the environment around them.

Unit 2 – Energy

In the second unit, students begin to understand the correlation between energy and motion, how energy is transferred through collision, sound, light, heat, and electric currents, and how energy is stored and used. This unit sheds light on how people choose from the various energy resources available to us today.

Unit 3 – Earth's Changing Surface

Students learn about how to identify how Earth's surface changes: how wind, water, and living things change the surface, how fossils form, and what people can do about natural hazards.

Unit 4 – Waves and Information

Students will explore waves, their properties, how they affect other people, what kinds of waves pass through Earth, how they can be used to send messages, and more.

Social Studies: TCI - Social Studies Alive! Regions of our Country

This course presents five regions of the United States through the lens of social sciences - economics, geography, political science, and history. In this course, students will study the following:

- Discovering the Social Sciences
- The Northeast
- The Southeast
- The Midwest
- The Southwest
- The West
- Studying Your State
 - Texas History

FIFTH GRADE

Chapel and Worship

One morning each week, students attend a chapel service that is led by a Divine Savior pastor or teacher. Each service features an applicable lesson based on a Bible story, a worship song, and prayer.

Throughout the school year, students learn, prepare, and perform songs at worship services at Divine Savior Church. In addition to weekly Sunday morning worship services, special church holiday services include Christmas Eve and Good Friday evening services.

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Word of God: ChristLight –Northwestern Publishing House

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In fifth grade, students are given their own Bible copy, which is used to read and study in class. The class conducts a study of either the Old Testament or the New Testament (these rotate every year). The Old Testament lessons will demonstrate how God fulfills his promises through people such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, and Daniel. New Testament lessons will follow Jesus's life from his birth through his ascension into heaven.

Students will focus on one Bible passage or song each week that relates to the theme of the Bible lessons being studied.

Mathematics: Reveal Math –McGraw Hill

Successful math learning thrives on exploration, conversation, and reflection. Reveal Math is a complete K-12 core math program built on contemporary academic research and designed so all students can succeed in mathematics. By encouraging curiosity, exploration, and a growth mindset, Reveal Math allows students to learn problem-solving strategies and not simply memorizing computational procedures.

During fifth grade, students study the following content:

- Number and Operations
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis and Probability
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Reasoning and Proof
- Connections
- Representation

Reading: Being a Reader and Book Clubs –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Reader follows a continuum of reading development to meet each student at their instructional point of need and take them to their next level of literacy. It is grounded in scientific reading research and informed by our many years of experience working alongside classroom teachers. Through a unique blend of whole class, small group, and individualized approaches, students not only master foundational reading skills but learn the skills and strategies necessary for deep comprehension.

Through rich read-aloud experiences, classroom and partner discussions, and independent practice, students learn metacognitive comprehension strategies for navigating different genres and text types. They also learn how to support their thinking with evidence from the text, participate in meaningful academic conversations, build content knowledge from texts, and select texts for independent practice that help them grow as readers.

Utilizing research-based best practices for small-group reading, our Book Clubs provide the foundational lessons for independent, student-led book clubs and a variety of teacher-led mini-lessons that are used to support and deepen book discussions. Students learn how to generate ideas and talk about books with peers.

Through word study and spelling instruction, students develop word analysis skills and strategies that allow them to build vocabulary and read polysyllabic words with automaticity and accuracy. They also apply what they are learning about decoding words to encoding them through spelling.

Utilizing research-based best practices for small-group reading, our Book Clubs provide the foundational lessons for independent, student-led book clubs and a variety of mini-lessons that can be used to support and deepen book discussions.

Writing: Being a Writer –Collaborative Classroom

Being a Writer provides an entire year of research-based, whole-class writing instruction. Using a workshop model, the Being a Writer program teaches the writing process while developing intrinsic motivation for the craft of writing through immersion in the narrative, informational, and opinion/argumentative writing genres. Instruction encourages students to write regularly with passion and intent as they build an understanding of and appreciation for the skills and conventions (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.) of writing. With Being a Writer, students learn to love writing and grow as writers, thinkers, and principled people, and teachers hone their skills, both as teachers of writing and as writers themselves.

The fifth grade curriculum consists of the following units:

- **The Writing Community:** In this three-week unit, students build a caring community and get to know one another through their writing; get a variety of writing ideas from read-aloud texts; and draft a range of pieces of writing in a variety of genres.
- **The Writing Process:** This two-week unit reviews the important ideas of producing texts. Students select one of the drafts they created in the previous unit, revise, proofread and edit, and construct a final version for publication.
- **Personal Narrative:** The first quarter ends with this four-week unit that allows students to write about significant experiences where they either learned or changed. In the process, students practice writing using sensory details, proofread for consistency in verb tense, and explore strong openings and conclusions to enhance narrative writing.
- **Fiction:** This is one of the longer units in the school year. For six weeks students explore the various literary features of fiction writing. Their main goals are to develop an interesting plot, explore a variety of conflicts, apply descriptive language to describe both setting and characters, develop characters through dialogue, use point-of-view to create accurate, consistent verb tenses.
- **Expository Non-fiction:** In this six-week unit, students learn and apply skills related to research writing. Students research a nonfiction topic of choice, explore expository text features to include in reports, and record and organize research notes.
- **Functional Writing:** In this unit students practice writing directions to a specific location. They examine the importance of understanding audience, purpose, sequence, accuracy, completeness, and clarity when providing instructions.
- **Opinion Writing:** This three-week unit helps students identify the audience and purpose for opinion writing, write clear statements of opinion supported by reasons, and explore strong openings and conclusions.
- **Poetry:** In this two-week unit, students are encouraged to tap into creativity as they write poems that explore imagery, sound, and form.
- **Revisiting the Writing Community:** The school year closes with students reflecting on their growth as a writer and a community member from the beginning of the school year. Students also create writing goals to pursue over the summer.

Handwriting: Zaner-Bloser

The Zaner-Bloser Handwriting curriculum focuses on the four keys to legibility: shape, size, spacing, and slant. The program is based on research of how children learn best and offers flexibility in instruction based on student

learning styles, language acquisition levels, and motor development. Each lesson includes an assessment rubric that helps students self-evaluate their handwriting, building confidence and ownership in the handwriting process.

In fifth grade, students further develop their fluency in cursive writing. Students are taught and practice handwriting through a variety of multi-sensory and writing-based activities.

Science: TCI - Bring Science Alive!

Students are introduced to the roles of decomposers, consumers, and producers within a healthy ecosystem. They will spend time studying the geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere and discover how each of these 'spheres' interact with one another. Students will then explore patterns caused by the relative positions of Earth and the sun, as well as learn how to identify particles of matter that are too small to be seen.

Unit 1 – Living Things and Ecosystems

Students will learn about an ecosystem, the roles within an ecosystem (decomposers, consumers, producers), how matter and energy moves within an ecosystem, how ecosystems change, and what is within a healthy or unhealthy ecosystem.

Unit 2 – Earth Systems

Students explore the four primary systems of Earth: how the Earth produces weather and climate, how various industries affect the Earth, how we as humans directly affect the Earth, and what we can do to protect the systems of the Earth.

Unit 3 – Changes in Matter

Students are guided through understanding matter, what it is made of, how substances can be identified, the causes of change, how weight can be affected by changes, what people can do about natural hazards, and how engineers can improve materials.

Unit 4 – Earth, the Moon, and the Stars

Students will explore what gravity is, why the sun is brighter than other stars, how there is night and day, why stars seem to move in the night sky over time, why the moon appears to change shape and move around, and how scientists observe space.

Social Studies: TCI – Social Studies Alive! America's Past

Social Studies Alive! America's Past builds the students' foundation for understanding U.S. history. Students learn about the first migrations into the America's through the 20th Century in the following units:

- America's Geographic Setting including Geography of the United States, Native Americans and Their Land, Native American Cultural Regions, How and Why Europeans Came to the Americas, and Routes of Exploration to the Americas
- Colonial Times including Early English Settlements, Comparing the Colonies, Slavery in the Americas, and Life in Colonial Williamsburg
- American Revolution including Tensions Grow Between the Colonies and Great Britain, To Declare Independence or Not, The Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution
- Civics and Economics in America including the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, Our Role in Government, and Shaping America's Economy
- Manifest Destiny to Today including Manifest Destiny and Settling the West, the Diverse Peoples of the West, the Causes of the Civil War, the Civil War, and the Modern United States

SPECIALS COURSES

All elementary students participate in specials courses that are designed to enhance their well-rounded education: physically, analytically, and creatively. Some of these courses vary their curricula, based on a multi-year cycle.

Physical Education

DSA's Physical Education program mission is to enrich a child's life with a holistic approach: spiritually, physically, cognitively, and socially in their elementary years. It empowers children by exposing them to fun and exciting games through fitness, and it focuses on teaching our elementary students' basic skills to enjoy and play a variety of organized sports for years to come. Through these games and activities, we seek to boost a child's brain, power, and physical development. The program covers all the physical fitness components necessary to help develop a fit and healthy young individual including balance, agility, strength, and other fitness components.

Music

Second grade music class provides students with singing opportunities as they rehearse and perform unison and partner songs, call-and-response songs, and sacred songs from a variety of cultures and languages. Students read and perform simple rhythms and use a variety of handheld percussion to demonstrate understanding of rhythm and expressive techniques, such as dynamics and tempo.

Third grade music class provides students with instrumental and vocal opportunities as they perform songs from a variety of cultures and languages. Students identify and perform rhythms in 2/4 and 4/4 meters. Students use handheld percussion to demonstrate varying rhythms and proper ensemble behavior.

Fourth grade music class provides students with a whole year of singing exploration and opportunities, including performing unison and partner songs, call-and-response songs, and singing in harmony. Students learn to sing melodies using solfege and moveable "do," while also identifying these notes on a music staff. Identifying and performing different rhythms and notes in different time signatures is a key component to the fourth grade curriculum. Besides their own voice and body percussion sounds, students also use various percussion instruments to play these rhythms and notes.

Fifth grade music class provides students with performance opportunities as individuals, in small groups, and as a whole class. Students learn to identify all of the notes of a scale and can sing or perform them in different combinations. Additional notes, rhythms, and time signatures are introduced in fifth grade music, allowing the students to build upon their musical foundation and perform duets with other students. Music reading is also an important part of the fifth grade curriculum.

Art

Elementary students learn about and practice artistic skills and concepts. The main objectives of the elementary art program are listed below:

- to continually remind students about how art and their individual artistic abilities are a gift and blessing from God
- to learn step-by-step drawing skills using basic shapes as a template
- to understand various types of media in art and how each creates a different artistic effect
- to discover different artists and time periods in art and examine their impact in the art world
- to teach students how to manage time wisely to complete their own projects in class

Spanish

SUPPLEMENTAL TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

The DSA Spanish program focuses on a variety of curricular areas: reading, writing, oral communication, and listening. Students will be introduced to the sound system and grammatical structure of Spanish. They will mainly focus on developing skills in the areas of listening, speaking, basic reading, and writing. Additionally, students will acquire a knowledge of the geography, culture, and people of the regions in the world where Spanish is spoken.

School Counselor Initiatives

The school counseling program is an integral component of the school's mission by following the American School Counseling Association national model (ASCA). The ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors are organized in the following way:

Category 1: Mindset Standards

Includes standards related to the psycho-social attitudes or beliefs students have about themselves in relation to academic work. These make up the students' belief system as exhibited in behaviors. The main focus is the belief in the development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, spiritual, social/emotional and physical well-being.

Category 2: Behavior Standards

These standards include behaviors commonly associated with being a successful student. These behaviors are visible, outward signs that a student is engaged and putting forth effort to learn. The behaviors are grouped into three subcategories.

- a. Learning Strategies: Processes and tactics students employ to aid in the cognitive work of thinking, remembering or learning.
- b. Self-management Skills: Continued focus on a goal despite obstacles (grit or persistence) and avoidance of distractions or temptations to prioritize higher pursuits over lower pleasures (delayed gratification, self-discipline, self-control).
- c. Social Skills: Acceptable behaviors that improve social interactions, such as those between peers or between students and adults.

The school counseling curriculum also incorporates the five SEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills).

K-8 School Counselor Lesson Themes:

- Growth Mindset/Attitude/Effort/Grit
- Respect/Differences/ Self-Esteem
- Responsibility/Behavior/Listening
- Feelings/ Emotion Regulation
- Friendship/Sense of belonging
- Bullying/Mean Behavior
- Kindness/Empathy
- Mental Health Education

These domains promote mindsets and behaviors that enhance the learning process and create a culture of college and career readiness for all students.

SUPPLEMENTAL TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Technology

All elementary classrooms have enough iPads in the classroom for a small group of students to use during math and reading rotations while the teacher is providing direct instruction to a different small group. Teachers can access a full class set of iPads as needed for integrating technology for other purposes throughout the curriculum. Each student receives a Clever badge for logging into the specific educational programs that they can access. Students learn to navigate the basics of an iPad and spend time working on one of the several educational websites detailed in the next section. In addition, students will learn digital citizenship and typing skills.

IXL Math

IXL Math helps students gain fluency and confidence in math as they master essential skills at their own pace through fun and interactive questions, build in support, and motivating awards.

IXL Language Arts

IXL Language Arts helps students learn phonics, reading comprehension, writing strategies, and more. IXL helps learners develop communication skills needed for success in the future.

EDU Typing

EduTyping helps elementary and middle school students in their keyboarding proficiency. The curriculum introduces new keys by rows where students first learn the middle row, then the top and bottom row of the keyboard. The content is designed with a purposeful focus on sight and high frequency words. Teachers customize how many lessons students are required to complete.

Newsela Essentials

Newsela is an Instructional Content Platform that brings together engaging, accessible content with integrated assessments and insights to supercharge reading engagement and learning in every subject. Content on Newsela covers topics students care about, that connect to core curriculum content, and that are aligned to standards. Each article on Newsela is published at five different reading levels so that every article is accessible to every student in a class, regardless of their reading ability. Thousands of articles are leveled specifically for grades 2-6, ensuring that teachers can find content that is accessible for all readers. Assessments are integrated directly into articles to help students engage with the content and to give teachers and principals actionable insights on students' activity. The result is more engaged readers—and engaged readers are better learners.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Academic Support Program

Our Academic Support Program consists of qualified classroom teachers and special education professionals that are available to assist students who need additional academic support in the classroom. Standardized testing scores, academic performance, and teacher observation and feedback determine which students need support and what type of support to provide. Academic support takes place both inside and outside of the classroom, in small groups or an individual setting, or through co-teaching.

Our Philosophy of Education

We believe every child should know the love of Christ.
Sharing His love with children is the reason we exist.

Education gives our children a foundation for life.
They are future explorers and creators,
innovators and leaders, neighbors and parents.

We are a community of families, students, educators,
and friends who are dedicated to working together to
help our children thrive. That's why we call ourselves
"The Divine Savior Family."

Our mission has an eternal impact and
that education can change the world.
Because we believe this, we strive to give our children
excellence in all we do.



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