

First Grade Curriculum

At Canyon Heights Academy, a leading private Catholic school in Campbell, California, our First Grade curriculum lays a strong foundation for a lifelong joy for learning. Our Integral Formation model is designed to foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, compassionate leadership, and a moral character rooted in Catholic values.

Language Arts - Reading, Spelling, and Composition

Our language arts program is designed to develop strong foundational literacy skills while cultivating a love of reading and writing.

In reading, students will:

- Develop phonemic and phonological awareness
- Master all letter-sound correspondences
- Read words and sentences with fluency and expression
- Recognize and read high-frequency sight words including color and number words
- Practice comprehension strategies: predicting, summarizing, visualizing, asking questions, and making connections and inferences whether stories are read silently or aloud.
- Explore literature elements: main idea, cause/effect, sequencing, fact vs. opinion, and point of view
- Identify literary genres: fiction, nonfiction, folktales, and poetry

In phonics and spelling, students will:

- Learn decoding strategies and word blends
- Build encoding skills through structural phonics
- Practice spelling rules and vocabulary through weekly spelling units aligned with reading materials
- Correctly spell high frequency sight words

In grammar and composition, students will:

- Compose simple paragraphs using correct grammar and punctuation
- Explore different types of sentences: questions, statements, commands, exclamations
- Learn basic parts of speech and verb tenses
- Use the writing process: plan, draft, revise, and publish
- Create a variety of writing pieces: creative stories, reports, instructional writing, and letters

In handwriting, students will:

- Use proper pencil grip and sitting posture
- Write legibly and efficiently in both manuscript and cursive using D'Nealian formation on lined and unlined paper

Communication Skills - Listening and Speaking

We give students many opportunities to share their voice through classroom projects, socratic method instruction, and wider audience engagements, which fosters confidence and poise for a lifetime of self-advocacy.

Students will:

- Sustain focused attention for up to 30 minutes
- Ask and answer questions clearly and respectfully
- Recite poems and passages from memory
- Present oral reports with organized main ideas
- Practice public speaking skills with poise and confidence

Mathematics - Developing Problem-Solving Skills

Our elementary math curriculum builds number fluency and problem-solving abilities through interactive lessons and hands-on practice, using the Sadlier Math program.

Students will:

- Understand number values and place value (up to 3-digit numbers)
- Add and subtract (regrouping introduced in Quarter 3)
- Practice fact families up to 20
- Continue awareness of multiplication facts
- Read and interpret clocks and calendars to measure time
- Identify and create patterns
- Use basic fractions, linear and volume measurements
- Apply strategies to solve one- and two-step word problems
- Understand coin values and money concepts
- Practice mental math, speed math, and estimation

Science - Experiential and Investigative

Our science program encourages inquiry, exploration, and wonder about God's creation. Students learn through hands-on experiments and discovery-based learning.

Students will:

- Engage in hands-on experiments and STEM-based investigations, using the scientific method
- Develop scientific thinking skills, including analyzing, predicting, and hypothesizing
- Study life cycles, states of matter, forces and motion, simple machines, weather, and the solar system
- Explore human anatomy, health, and nutrition through the lens of God's design

Social Studies - American History & Geography

First Grade social studies at Canyon Heights Academy introduces students to community, history, and the world around them, all through a Catholic worldview.

Students will:

- Develop an understanding of chronological thinking and historical change over time
- Learn about U.S. history, including Columbus, the Pilgrims, Native American cultures, the Constitution, the Founding Fathers, Civil War, Civil Rights Movement
- Become familiar with North, Central, and South American geography
- Compare and contrast historical stories, people, places, and situations
- Understand points of view based on perspective, developing concepts of community
- Develop basic research skills

Faith Formation - Christ-Centered

Through our religious education program, children begin to understand that they are intentionally and uniquely created in God's image and called to live with purpose and love.

Students will:

- Discover God as the source of life and grace as a loving Father who send us his Son to be our Savior
- Explore the Bible as the Word of God
- Learn about the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist as sources of grace and communion in the Body of Christ, God's family
- Study the life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and Mary
- Identify the Church, liturgy, and prayer as means of worshiping together
- Develop an awareness that others deserve love and respect because they made in the image and likeness of God
- Learn various forms of prayer, introduction to the lives of the saints, and participation in the Holy Mass
- Begin to practice virtue and morality through age-appropriate lessons in Theology of the Body
- Use Sacred Story as a reflective, contemplative practice to develop prayer habits

Enrichment Programs - Co-curricular

To nurture the whole child, First Grade students also attend weekly classes in:

- Art
- Music
- Library
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- Spanish Language
- Physical Education

These subjects enrich creativity, expression, motor skills, and global awareness.

Why Families Choose Canyon Heights Academy

As one of the top-rated Catholic private schools in Campbell, CA, Canyon Heights Academy offers a comprehensive, Christ-centered education that forms students in academics, character, and leadership. Our First Grade curriculum is carefully crafted to support children's intellectual and spiritual development in a nurturing and joyful environment.

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, we proudly serve families from Campbell, San Jose, Los Gatos, Saratoga, and the greater Bay Area.