

Eighth Grade Curriculum

At Canyon Heights Academy, a leading private Catholic school in Campbell, California, our Eighth Grade curriculum fosters confident, capable students 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.

English Language Arts (ELA) - Reading, Grammar, and Writing

Our ELA program encourages students to deepen their ability to analyze literature and express themselves through writing and speech, developing a lifelong love for reading, writing, and speaking.

In reading, students will:

- Delve into deeper contemplation of symbolism in literary works and evaluate the worthiness of literature, considering both the message and historical relevance
- Identify elements of a plot, using terminology related to the author's techniques
- Read several class novels and additional literary genres with the aim of strengthening reading as well as comprehension and exposure to various themes and genres
- Respond to texts through oral presentations and structured writing, including literal, interpretive, and allegorical responses
- Learn literary terminology and understand figurative language
- Conduct research projects using digital and print sources

In writing composition, students will:

- Identify and employ literary devices such as characterization, imagery, humor, point of view, foreshadowing, alliteration, rhyme and rhythm
- Create a variety of writing pieces: narrative, expository, and creative
- Strengthen skills in report writing, editorials, speeches, and debates
- Strengthen skills in descriptive and expository essays
- Develop self-reflective skills in drafting/editing stage of writing process

In grammar and vocabulary, students will:

- Compose essays with structured paragraphs, providing ample supporting statements and being mindful of varied syntax and diction
- Study Greek and Latin roots, prefixes, and suffixes
- Learn the denotations and connotations of basic and advanced vocabulary
- Master correct grammar and mechanics in all forms of writing
- Develop self-editing skills

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:

- Ask and answer questions clearly and respectfully
- Participate in various classroom discussions and formats (lecture, socratic method, debate, etc)
- Recite poems and passages from memory
- Present oral reports with organized main ideas
- Use technology (typing, digital research, formatting, slide deck building, etc) to conduct research projects and present findings
- Learn note-taking and studying skills in preparation for cumulative exams
- Practice public speaking skills with poise and confidence
- Use gesture, tone, expression, and blocking to keep the attention of the audience and communicate in a memorable manner

Mathematics - Algebra I

Our Middle School math curriculum emphasizes logical thinking and problem-solving abilities to advance math skills and apply them in real-world scenarios, using the Sadlier Math program.

Students will:

- Develop and master strategies for to solve and pose problems
- Apply coordinate geometry to locate and explore points, lines, and slopes algebraically
- Distinguish between relations and functions
- Solve equations and inequalities, linear and non-linear
- Apply basic and advanced concepts of algebra to explore, describe, and model patterns, relationships, and functions involving numbers, shapes, data, and graphs
- Use technology to model data and apply to real-world situations
- Perform operations with exponents, including operations with positive, negative, and fractional exponents
- Develop study skills to prepare for cumulative exams
- Participate in Catholic Math League

Science - Experiential and Inventive

Our science program encourages inquiry, exploration, and wonder about God's creation. In Eighth Grade, our students focus on Physical Science.

Students will:

- Explore the structure, properties, and states of matter, including chemical and physical changes, reactions, and bonding
- Examine mixtures, compounds, and atomic structure
- Study the Periodic Table to classify elements
- Study force, motion, and Newton's laws
- Explore work, energy, machines and fluid dynamics
- Investigate electricity, magnetism, and basic electronics
- Engage in hands-on experiments and STEM-based investigations, using the scientific method
- Develop scientific thinking skills, including hypothesizing, analyzing (conducting trial runs), predicting, classifying, and writing/reporting findings
- Use scientific tools and lab practices to apply skills and habits
- Complete an individual science fair project
- Attend overnight field trip to engage in onsite, hands-on scientific inquiry and experimentation

History - US History (Post-Civil War through 20th Century)

Eighth Grade history at Canyon Heights Academy encourages students to engage with community, history, and the world around them.

Students will:

- Use archeological, anthropological, and historical evidence to understand American history
- Review the story of American history through the Civil War
- Understand the Industrial Revolution with political, economic, and sociological impact
- Study the Spanish-American War and the rise of American imperialism
- Examine the rise of totalitarianism in Europe and World War I
- Explore the relationship between Post-War America and the Roaring Twenties, Great Depression, and the New Deal
- Understand the events that led to World War II, the aftermath, and the Cold War
- Examine global power dynamics throughout the 20th century
- Discover a variety of viewpoints and opinions through original source material and history textbooks written from other worldviews
- Encounter stories of virtuous leaders who inspired others by acting with integrity and communicating truth

Theology - Christian Morality & Apologetics

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:

- Deepen their understanding of moral law and conscience formation vs moral relativism
- Understand cardinal and theological virtues and their real world application
- Explore issues of life and dignity
- Understand self-discipline as an approach to truth and freedom with an understanding of free will and a well-formed conscience
- Engage in deep analysis and study of each of the Ten Commandments
- Recognize the source of joy as a holy person called to know, love, and service God and our neighbor
- Participate in local service projects
- Develop a stronger connection with and understanding of the community of Saints and their role in our lives
- Participate in the sacramental life of the school, including weekly Mass (serving the role of altar servers and lectors), Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Adoration
- Understand how the body is a gift from God through the Theology of the Body curriculum
- Use Sacred Story prayer as a daily reflective practice
- Integrate faith and creativity in projects and through hands-on learning in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Enrichment Programs - Co-curricular

To nurture the whole child, Middle School students also attend weekly classes in:

- Art - exploring techniques, various mediums, color theory, and artistic expression
- Music - learning rhythm, instruments, theory, and vocal performance
- Library - discerning texts for younger students, conducting research
- Foreign Language: Spanish or Latin
- Physical Education - building coordination, fitness, and teamwork
- Formation - deepening responsibility for education goals and developing self-assessment skills and strategies

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 Second 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.