

# Elementary School *Curriculum Overview*

**Engaging. Nurturing. Transforming.**



**EASTERN CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL**

## **Art**

We recognize that God has expressed creativity as a core attribute in His creation. Art is a powerful and influential expression of God's indescribable creativity and the world's wonderful complexity. Because each person is created in the image of God as a creative and inventive decision-maker, we are committed to the study of art as a part of an excellent academic education each year in elementary school. In Art classes our students will learn skills and elements that will increase aesthetic awareness, gain an appreciation for forms and styles, learn historical, cultural and social influences, develop personal skills to produce products and performances, utilize their learning to critique art, and examine art's influence on a view of the world from a Christian perspective. Additionally, we are committed to teaching Art because it enhances our students' perceptions of the beauty of all creation. Art instruction is a part of our overall goal at Eastern Christian to develop within each student a knowledge of God and His world as each student identifies and cultivates his/her God-given talents for ministry and service.

## **Bible**

At Eastern Christian School, the Bible is regarded as God's infallible, inerrant Word. Its message and principles are central to the identity and fulfillment of our mission. At the elementary school, we are committed to demonstrate to the students two reasons why we study the Bible:

- Its importance: God's Word reveals to us the purpose and plan of creation and of humanity. On a personal level, it also reminds us of our sinful, fallen nature and need for redemption. The Bible explains how every one of us, including the elementary school student, can receive forgiveness and restoration from God through Jesus Christ. Understanding the message of the Bible, therefore, provides the student the opportunity to embrace and enjoy eternal life and a personal relationship with the Almighty God.
- Its relevance: God's Word has power and meaning to all people, in all places, at all ages, at all times.

Because of the Bible's importance and relevance, it is imperative that the Bible be presented in interesting and captivating ways.

### **Kindergarten**

Students learn that they are made by God, that Jesus is God's Son and the Bible is God's Word. Students learn about Old Testament heroes as well as stories about Jesus, his disciples and his miracles. They learn the importance of Christmas and Easter.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

In first grade students understand that the Bible is the Word of God. They learn stories from the Old Testament from creation to Elijah as well as the significance of Christmas and Easter.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

In second grade students review the Old Testament stories of creation, Abraham, Joseph and the first kings of Israel. They learn about Jesus' birth, death and resurrection as well as his parables and miracles.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

In third grade students review Old Testament stories from creation to the Tower of Babel. They learn details of the stories of the Old Testament Patriarchs, Moses and the Israelites journey through the wilderness with an emphasis on God's unconditional love and forgiveness.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Students in grade four progress through the stories of the Israelite kings and prophets. There is an emphasis on understanding Jewish culture and customs. Students memorize the books of the Bible.

## **Computers**

The technology vision at ECES builds information skills that enable students to become lifelong learners as they seek information to learn about, exercise stewardship, and restore God's Kingdom in our world. Students become discerning learners as they examine the many sources of information available in the Media Center in the light of God's Word. All goals and objectives will be based on the needs of the students and the school. Curriculum will determine the use of technology.

### **Kindergarten**

Students are introduced to the computer in kindergarten. Students will be able to use appropriate technology vocabulary, including: monitor, keyboard, mouse, icon and names of tools. Media Specialists create templates using the Kid Pix program that are integrated with classroom instruction. Students will manipulate the mouse to launch the program and demonstrate effective use of the following tools: letter, bucket, Oh No! Man (to correct mistakes), line and circle. Students are also introduced to simple card-making programs. They use appropriate tools to add their name and seasonal graphics.

### **1st Grade**

In first grade, students learn how to use the mouse to click, double click and click and drag. They gather and organize information through the use of several keys on the keyboard, including: shift, delete, return/enter and the letter keys. Students learn to use the menu bar to open, save and print information. Lessons include navigating through folders in order to access and save documents in a word processing program. Kid Pix lessons are expanded from the kindergarten curriculum to include selecting, moving and flipping graphics and creating simple slide shows. In first grade, students are introduced to the Internet. Media Specialists bookmark websites for students to view in connection with their classroom curriculum.

### **2nd Grade**

Building upon the skills learned in first grade, students in second grade effectively use a word processing program by inputting text using both hands for beginning keyboarding skills. Students learn how to change the font, size, style, color and alignment of text. Graphics are inserted, resized and rotated. Student-created slideshows include transitions, sounds and recorded voices for narration. Students present their slideshow to their peers. A timeline program is introduced where students gather and organize information, import photographs and present a finished timeline to their peers. Bookmarked websites are used to gather information.

### **3rd Grade**

Formal keyboarding skills begin in third grade through the use of Alpha Smarts. Word processing skills include proper formatting, selecting font, style, size and color of text, using menu buttons to open, edit, save and print documents. Students use the line, circle, paintbrush and paint bucket tools in a drawing program for illustrating. The use of graphics and digital pictures allow students to become familiar with inserting, resizing and moving an image. Students learn to navigate through websites and encyclopedia software to pull out important information for research purposes. Students are able to multitask between programs with the minimize button. The term plagiarism is introduced and students learn to translate information into third grade vocabulary.

#### **4th Grade**

Fourth grade students continue to build their skills in keyboarding and word processing. Students are expected to open and format documents, select and change font, style, size and color text. Proofreading and spell check skills are taught as part of the editing process. The use of graphics and digital pictures allow students to insert, resize and move images. Students take pictures with a digital camera and import the photos into a document or multimedia slideshow to be presented to their peers. Students use webquests to gather information for research purposes. Students are able to multi-task between programs with the minimize button. Plagiarism is reviewed and students are expected to translate information into fourth grade vocabulary.

## **Health**

Health education is an integral part of a well-balanced curriculum in which we seek to educate the whole child. Teaching health and how it affects their total being, helps students to fulfill their responsibilities as individuals, as family members, and as members of the community. Because of the numerous serious health issues which bombard our children today, it is necessary to teach health from a Christian perspective with the Word as our basis. God has specific and perfect direction for us as Christians, beginning with humans as His own creation, to the restoration we have in Christ alone. It is necessary to lead students to understand the Lordship of Christ and the need for them to live lives of service.

## **Language Arts**

ECES Language Arts instruction provides each student with experiences that will promote growth in literacy. Students will develop their abilities to read, write, spell, speak and listen. Daily, each student will participate in meaningful literacy activities relevant to understanding our world within the framework of a Christian Worldview. Our Language Arts curriculum is fully aligned with New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, provides opportunities for differentiation and is designed to encourage our students to see themselves as literate, articulate and creative individuals designed by God to appreciate, enjoy and transform our world.

### **Kindergarten**

Kindergarten engages children in literacy through oral language, literature appreciation as well as early reading and writing skills. Students become familiar with books, learning how to hold and care for them. They learn early decoding skills, interpreting illustrations, and following the progress of words left to right. Students develop listening skills, emphasizing comprehension and phonemic awareness. They learn to make predictions, sequence events and recall information from stories. Kindergarten students also learn proper pencil grip, letter names and sounds as they begin the writing process with illustrations and labels. By the end of kindergarten children begin to use written language to express themselves.

### **1st Grade**

Our first grade Language Arts Curriculum focuses on the fundamentals of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In first grade we emphasize basic sight words, as well as decoding and encoding words with various sound spelling patterns. Students learn strategies to enhance fluency and comprehension skills. By the end of first grade, students are expected to write simple sentences with capitalization and punctuation. Additionally, the students will be able to compose a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Our students will have opportunities to share their written work learning to speak in front of others, and to listen as well.

### **2nd Grade**

In Second Grade, our goal is to continue nurturing fluent and independent readers. Second graders will strengthen their knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters, thus improving their decoding and spelling skills. Students will be introduced to new vocabulary and practice using comprehension strategies. Second graders will also be exposed to the writing process, and will practice writing paragraphs in a variety of genres. In both reading and writing, we will encourage oral practice and appreciation through listening.

### **3rd Grade**

The Third Grade Language Arts program entails reading, writing, speaking and listening through a comprehensive and sequential skills development with a strong emphasis on phonics, word structure, fluency in reading, and vocabulary. Each of the six thematic units uses an inquiry process to help students collect facts, reevaluate the question, and confirm or revise their conjectures. After individual/group presentations, students are encouraged to identify any new questions. Also, six carefully chosen reading selections are provided for guided reading instruction and practice throughout each unit. There is opportunity for both oral and silent reading practice. Students learn many varied and increasingly complex comprehension skills and responses to text. The program advocates writing as a process and students learn to write for a variety of purposes and within many different formats. Additionally, the students have

opportunities to participate in literature circles to enjoy, analyze, and critique other children's books with similar themes and to silently read books of their choice.

#### **4th Grade**

The framework of Fourth Grade Language Arts instruction includes reading and writing workshop, spelling and grammar. Within this structure, reading workshop helps students explore different genres that are read as class books and also self-selected for book reports. Additionally, writing workshop allows students to practice writing various types of paragraphs, poetry and a year-end essay. Students develop skills and strategies for comprehension, writing process, learning vocabulary, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and reading and writing for fluency. In addition, students learn how to process information to understand and communicate in a variety of ways in both written and oral language.

## **Mathematics**

Mathematics is a God-given tool to use in the world in which we live. Math has applications in all areas of our lives, and our goal is to show that math truly is a gift from God. Students are taught from a Christian perspective to develop an appreciation for the fact that although God's world is so complex, it can be analyzed and studied mathematically. They are taught to understand that mathematics is an integral component in the creation of the world. Math instruction includes a balance of memorizing math facts with solving real problems, reasoning, and making logical connections between classroom instruction and real world applications. They will acquire the mathematical skills, understandings, and attitudes they will need to be successful in their daily lives.

### **Kindergarten**

Kindergarten focuses primarily on counting and recognizing numbers to one hundred. The use of hands-on materials develops early addition and subtraction skills and math sentences. Regular experience with sorting, counting, measuring, and weighing familiar objects and recording numerals on various graphs or worksheets, teaches the concept and usage of numbers.

### **1st Grade**

First Grade focuses primarily on counting, skip counting, recognizing and ordering numbers to one hundred, and basic addition and subtraction skills. Students are exposed to a variety of different strategies to compute addition and subtraction problems through eighteen. Students are able to use manipulatives, such as counters, snap cubes, or number lines, but are expected to commit the facts through eighteen to memory.

### **2nd Grade**

In Second Grade, the student develops a strong sense of operations and mathematical skills. The student primarily focuses on number relationships in computation and problem solving. Addition and subtraction involves regrouping with mastery of facts to 18. Students work with patterns, measurement, and data analysis to achieve math competency and to develop applicable life skills. Multiplication is introduced.

### **3rd Grade**

Third Grade primarily focuses on the mastery of multiplication and division facts and computation skills. Computation and problem solving in these areas include one-digit multipliers and one-digit divisors. There is an emphasis on a variety of problem-solving strategies. Other units of study include measurement, decimals, fractions and geometry.

### **4th Grade**

Fourth Grade primarily focuses on problem-solving strategies and basic skills that apply to the more complex problems in multiplication and division. Other units of study where there is extensive practice are geometry, measurement, decimals and fractions. Additionally, students will be exposed to probability, ratio and percentages.

## **Music**

Music is a powerful and influential expression of God's indescribable creativity and the world's wonderful complexity. Because each person is created in the image of God as a creative and inventive decision-maker, we are committed to the study of music as a part of an excellent academic education each year in Elementary school. In Music classes, our students will learn skills and elements that will increase aesthetic awareness, gain an appreciation for forms and styles, learn historical, cultural and social influences, develop personal skills to produce products and performances, utilize their learning to critique music, and examine music's influence on a view of the world from a Christian perspective. Music instruction is an essential part of our overall goal at Eastern Christian to develop within each student a knowledge of God and His world as each student identifies and cultivates his/her God given talents for ministry and service.

## **Owl's Nest**

The Owl's Nest program at Eastern Christian Elementary School provides a Christ-centered education for students who learn differently or need extra academic reinforcement. We use a variety of multi-sensory, highly structured and sequenced programs to meet our students' varied academic needs. The following is a partial list of the published programs we use:

- Orton Gillingham
- Preventing Academic Failure
- Merrill Linguistic Reading
- Imagine It Reading
- Basic Writing Skills
- Saxon Math
- Touch Math

In addition to these programs that “engage the mind,” the Owl's Nest “nurtures the spirit” with a low student to teacher ration (5:1 or less) that enables us to build relationships, encourage a positive self-esteem and reinforce the strengths our students already possess.

As our students' needs are met in the Owl's Nest it is our goal to prepare them to meet their future academic challenges with confidence and ultimately to equip them with the faith and the tools they will need to help “transform the world” in which they live.

## Physical Education

Physical education is an essential part of growth and development as we seek to educate the whole person. In an era of epidemic obesity among elementary aged students, we seek to inspire students to lead active lives and give them knowledge and opportunity to do so. Students learn that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, uniquely created by God. In light of this view, they develop physical strength and endurance for the opportunity to continually be serving God above all, and others in the community, throughout all of life. In addition to developing their own bodies, students also develop a positive Christian attitude towards their peers and the community surrounding them. Students learn to see strengths and weaknesses in all people. They learn to be patient, supportive, kind, tolerant, and helpful. They learn sportsmanship and to go beyond sportsmanship – to act in imitation of our Lord Jesus in all their dealings with fellow students.

All students will participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity and take part in experiences that build muscle fitness and flexibility.

Physical education in **grades K-2** focuses on body and object control skills, fitness awareness, creative movement and the integration of physical education with other subject areas. Students will develop the following game and sport skills: locomotor movement (running, skipping, hopping, jumping, galloping, sliding, leaping), overhand and underhand throwing and catching, rolling and kicking a ball, striking a ball with their hand or a hockey stick and basic gymnastic rolls. Second graders will participate in Physical Fitness testing twice a year.

Physical education in **grades 3-4** focuses on body and object control skill games, team sport skills, rules, strategies and teamwork, and health fitness. Students will develop the following game and sport skills: overhand throwing and catching, soccer dribbling, kicking and punting, dribbling, passing and shooting a basketball, and striking with a bat. Third and fourth grade students will participate in Physical Fitness testing twice a year. Fourth graders will develop volleying skills (underhand serving and setting) and/or throwing and catching in lacrosse.

## **Science**

Students in science class will be taught to recognize the hand of God in the creation around them. Through various studies of science, students will come to recognize the orderliness and complexity of God's world. They will be challenged as stewards of His creation and come to not only articulate the positive and negative effects we have on the physical world, but also to develop an attitude of care and respect for all of creation. In addition to this, the students will also learn to recognize and appreciate the wide variety of God-given talents and abilities of each member of the class.

In achieving this vision, students must:

- Acquire understanding of the interrelationships among science, technology and society;
- Develop understanding of important science concepts, processes and ideas;
- Solve problems and apply scientific principles.

## **Social Studies**

Social Studies is an important part of Eastern Christian's mission to recognize the world around us and to respond with a heart of love. Our students are taught that although they are different from their classmates, those in their neighborhood, and those throughout the world, they are alike in that they are created beautifully by God as image bearers of Christ in a broken and sinful world. Students learn about their community, state and country and the important role they play as a citizen. In obtaining a deeper understanding of the world, students are better equipped to love, serve and share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

### **Kindergarten**

Through guided practice, field trips, literature, art, and music, kindergarten children begin to acquire the socialization skills necessary to function as living examples of Christ-like behavior as individuals and as part of a group in the family, school and broader community. Social Studies in kindergarten fosters an understanding that each individual has been created in the image of God, with unique characteristics and spiritual gifts. Studying past and present life, as well as holidays, children begin to understand and exercise stewardship over resources.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

First grade focuses primarily on the national holidays with an emphasis on famous figures, customs and events in U.S. history. Students compare and contrast life long ago and life in the present. Students are introduced to beginning map skills and understand the importance of living and working as a Christ centered community.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

In second grade, students develop a sense of community that moves from their neighborhood to our country, our continent, and peoples of the world. From the arrival of the pilgrims, to Lewis and Clark's exploration of the west, the students will become familiar with our country's history and its leaders. Students will learn American values, responsibility and respect for others. They will learn about their individual family heritage. Students will understand the operations of a democratic government on a local and national level. Students will learn the differences between needs and wants and the means by which goods and services can be obtained. Students will work with map skills throughout the year.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

Third grade primarily focuses on the major geographic areas of the United States. We compare and contrast the use of its natural resources by the Native Americans and by the settlers. We emphasize the settlement and Westward Expansion of the United States and examine how the land is used today. We study how our laws are made and land is governed. The students are brought to an understanding that our nation is part of a global community. Map skills are covered regularly throughout the year.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Fourth grade students explore the state of New Jersey, master the states and capitals, and learn about, compare and contrast the different regions of the United States. The students study and understand the geographical characteristics, natural resources, economy, history, important people, places, and events, culture, and lifestyles in each region. Throughout the year, map skills are reviewed and practiced. Additional units of study include government, national symbols, current events, and international education.

