

Middle School Program *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 middle 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 how art can inform a Christian view of the world. Our study of art aims to enhance the students' perception of the beauty of creation and to cultivate their God-given talents.

Grades 6-8

Each year in art class students study the techniques, subjects, and styles of various artists. After learning about the artists' methods and works, they aim to emulate those techniques in their own creative works. In the process, students explore different art terms such as value, tint, shading, and texture. Each grade also has the opportunity to go into the third dimension by creating a clay piece. Students sculpt and glaze their clay so that it can be fired in our on-campus kiln. Each spring, selected artwork from all students is showcased in our annual art and cultural night for families to enjoy.

Bible

At Eastern Christian School, the Bible is regarded as God's infallible, inerrant Word. We believe that God's Word is God's inspiring story that begins with God creating and culminates with a resurrected Savior inviting His people, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to participate in a new era of reconciliation and hope. God's STORY is the inspirational framework for calling each of us to live in partnership with God and others to reconcile the world to the Creator. Its message and principles are central to the identity and fulfillment of our ECS mission.

- **ENGAGING THE MIND**
 - Every student will be able to sequence the Biblical narrative.
 - Every student will understand the Gospel message and how to apply it to every area of life.
- **NURTURING THE SPIRIT**
 - Every student will understand that true Christianity is about a personal, spiritual relationship with God the Father through the saving work of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit.
 - Every student will understand that Christians treat themselves and others with grace, love, and mercy, following the example of Jesus Christ.
- **TRANSFORMING THE WORLD**
 - Every student will understand the Reformed Christian worldview as being rational and defensible in the modern world.
 - Every student will understand that the Christian life is to be lived in partnership with God and others to reconcile the world to God.

Curriculum Resources

Christian Schools International: Walking with God and His People

Grade 6

The sixth grade Bible curriculum begins with a review of the overarching Biblical narrative, including the creation, fall, redemption and glory of God's people. After a broad survey, students focus on the later part of Jesus' ministry, culminating in his death, resurrection and ascension. This leads students into an understanding of the Holy Spirit's work in the apostles' ministry to the early church, as well as the spread of the gospel through Paul's missionary journeys and letters to the churches. Students work on memorizing Matthew chapter 6 of the Beatitudes.

Grade 7

Seventh grade Bible class sets up the story of the Bible, examining the authors and characters of the narrative. Students complete an overview of the Old Testament beginning with the Torah. Some of

the areas of focus include feasts and festivals of Israel, covenants and promises, the Judges, wisdom literature, and King David. Students complete a Proverb reflection in which they analyze a proverb and create a visual representation. Emphasis is also given to learning how to read and study the Bible, use commentaries and other study tools, and reflect through journaling. Students choose a book of the Old Testament in each of the Bible genres to read through independently, and they work to memorize Chapter 7 of the Sermon on the Mount.

Grade 8

The eighth grade Bible class reviews the narrative arc of the whole Bible. Students learn about the Roman Period and the birth of Christ, including the Jewish influential groups in play at the time. There is a focus on learning to understand the land and why Israel was so important that all the other empires wanted to conquer it. Students also complete a review of the Gospels. Next they examine the life, ministry and death of Jesus, and finish the year with His Ascension and the birth of the Church. Students choose a book in each of the Bible genres to read through independently, and they work to memorize Chapter 5 of the Sermon on the Mount. Grade 8 continues the Bible study skills they learned in 7th grade, and they choose New Testament books to read.

Computer Literacy & Technology

The Technology Vision Statement of ECMS is to prepare students to live, learn and work in the 21st century. Eastern Christian will provide technology education within the framework of our Christian perspective that enables students to be comfortable with the concepts and applications of technology. Education in the digital age is dynamic and demands that computer and information literacy be applied to all areas of the core curriculum. Teachers will effectively employ technology to enhance learning and increase student achievement.

Curriculum Resources

CodeHS

Grades 6-8

The curriculum in grades 6-8 is tailored for middle school students and emphasizes appropriate use of technology for educational purposes. Our technology courses are aligned to state and national standards such as CSTA, ISTE, and more. Introductory level block-based programming courses prepare students to pursue more advanced computer science opportunities in high school and beyond. Students are introduced to various topics in computer science, including:

- text-based coding languages
- web design
- digital citizenship
- networks
- game design

Students learn how to code in a text-based environment and are introduced to the basics of coding in Python that will prepare them for high school computer science courses. As students begin to see themselves as programmers, they are encouraged to think critically about the impact of sharing information online and how to be more critical consumers of content. They are also introduced to problem solving as it relates to programming while they learn valuable skills such as debugging, using resources, and teamwork.

Source: CodeHS

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 (i.e. wide use of drugs, AIDS, violence in families and communities, bullying, teenage pregnancy, sexual diseases, promiscuity, and the rise in obesity problems and thus disease) it is necessary to teach health from a Christian perspective with God's Word as our basis. God has a specific and perfect direction for us as Christians, beginning with the view of humans having been made in the image of God, the effects of sin on our health and relationships, and the restoration that exists 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.

Grade 6

Wellness and a Healthy Body

The 6th Grade curriculum focuses on providing information for students to understand that wellness, as a way of life, includes being able to make good choices concerning medicines, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Wellness also includes knowledge about, and the practice of healthy eating as a means toward developing a healthy lifestyle. God has called us to take care of our bodies because we belong to Him and are His creation.

Grade 7

Wellness and Body Systems

The 7th grade curriculum focuses on helping students to understand the importance of body systems and how they must function together in order to ensure wellness. 7th grade students will focus on two specific body systems - the skeletal system and the endocrine system. God knows every intricate detail of each of our bodies. He created them in such a way so that we can function as whole human beings in daily activities. The 7th grade curriculum also includes a unit focused on substance abuse on the ways substances affect the body.

Grade 8

Wellness in Human Relationships and Human Sexuality

The 8th grade curriculum includes a review of 5th grade human sexuality. It then focuses on a more in depth study of human sexuality and human relationships and the significant influence they have in maintaining a healthy way of life. It is necessary that students recognize God's plan for us as sexual human beings, so that students develop wholesome attitudes enabling them to be a positive influence in their own families and in their spheres of influence.

Language Arts

Language Arts instruction provides each student with experiences that will promote growth in literacy. Students will develop their abilities to read, write, 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 designed to encourage our students to see themselves as literate, articulate and creative individuals designed by God to appreciate, enjoy and transform our world.

Curriculum Resources

Center for the Collaborative Classroom - IXL

Grade 6

Sixth grade Language Arts integrates Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop and grammar. The goal is for students to have experiences throughout the year that encourage growth in their abilities to read, write, speak, and listen. Students will be able to see themselves as literate, articulate, and creative individuals designed by God to appreciate, enjoy, and transform our world through language.

Reading Workshop

Reading Workshop creates a structure for 6th graders to engage in texts of their choice at their individual reading levels, and class books. Students use Accelerated Reader to set personal goals for growth in comprehension. Sixth graders are instructed in a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts and taught how to respond to them using strategies and analysis of the text. Making inferences, synthesizing information, making predictions, summarizing, asking questions, using context clues, determining point of view, and making text connections help guide students in higher comprehension of reading. Knowledge of Greek and Latin roots and academic vocabulary allow 6th grader readers to decipher word meanings. Students also uncover the beauty of literary elements and devices that create and make texts come alive.

Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop in 6th grade allows students to express themselves through written words and oral expression. Students participate in various types of writing throughout the year, some of which include personal and fictional narrative, descriptive writing, research and expository writing, argumentative writing, creative journaling and response to text. Students follow all of the steps of a writer from brainstorming and drafting to peer and teacher editing before final publication.

Grade 7

Expanding Skills in Literacy

Seventh grade language arts students continue to learn language and reading skills necessary for effective communication. Seventh grade primarily focuses on developing students' abilities to evaluate literature critically from a Christian point of view and continuing to improve writing skills.

In reading, students explore a variety of genres and respond to them by analyzing themes and author's purpose. Through our Accelerated Reader program, comprehension is improved through independent reading. Students increase their vocabulary and improve their spelling through the study of Greek and Latin roots.

In writing, students are taught to write effective and well organized paragraphs and essays, creative and expressive pieces such as poetry, and improve in the skills necessary to conduct and write formal research papers. Focus is given to writing good thesis statements, MLA formatting and citations, and students learn email etiquette as well. Additionally, grammar and usage is taught in conjunction with, and through, writing assignments. Finally, students are given opportunities for presenting information orally to practice oral presentation skills.

Grade 8

Equipping Communicators

Eighth Grade Language Arts continues to equip students with knowledge and competency in literature, reading and writing. Eighth grade students grow in basic literacy skills that will help them to become effective communicators.

In reading, students study various genres of literature, concentrating on vocabulary, comprehension, inferences and point of view. The Accelerated Reading Program sets expectations for independent reading to continue to improve comprehension as well. Students increase their vocabulary and improve their spelling through the study of Greek and Latin roots.

In writing, students compose various genres of writing pieces. Students continue to hone their abilities to craft lengthier, deeper, and more descriptive narrative, persuasive, and research papers. Eighth graders work on analyzing literary works studied in reading to evaluate characters and themes both independently and in groups. In addition, grammar and usage is taught in formal lessons and in conjunction with writing. Oral presentation opportunities are assigned throughout the year. Our study of Language Arts provides many opportunities to discuss our Eastern Christian core values as they are incorporated in works of literature.

Math

Mathematics is a God-given tool used to help us understand 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. Students are enabled to solve real problems, reason effectively, and make 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.

Grade 6

Continued Study of Problem Solving Applications

Previous math skills will be reinforced, redefined and further developed for use in problem solving situations. Sixth-grade mathematics will focus largely on:

Operational Relationships - The sixth grade year reviews the four operations using whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. Students will learn the relationship between these three areas with a study of ratios, proportions, percents and probability.

Basic Algebra Concepts - Students will be introduced to the basics of Algebra, including writing and solving expressions and equations using whole numbers, fractions and decimals, the rules of the order of operations and integer operations.

Extending Geometry - Students will further develop geometric formulas to include 3D objects and how to use all of them in practical problem solving situations.

An accelerated 6th-grade math course is intended for highly motivated students who demonstrate mastery of prior year skills and display a strong problem-solving ability. Students in Accelerated Math will dig deeper into algebraic equations, concepts in geometry, and ratios, proportions, and percents. These students will extend their application of these concepts as they begin to operate and work with positive and negative numbers.

Curriculum Resources

Big Ideas Math, Modeling Real Life

Grade 7

Building a Solid Foundation

In 7th-grade math, previous math skills will be reinforced, redefined and further developed for use in problem solving situations. Seventh graders will gain a solid foundation in the four operations of math, decimals and fractions. They will have an in-depth introduction to integers and their use in the four basic operations. They will build on these foundations to solve equations using the four basic operations, decimals, fractions and integers. Students will also learn the relationship between integers, decimals and fractions with a study of ratios, proportions and percents. They will also further their study of geometry, statistics, and algebraic thinking.

Pre-Algebra is intended for mathematics students who possess excellent quantitative skills. Furthermore, students in this class have demonstrated capacity for dealing with abstract concepts. Students will review and build on traditional topics in numeration and computation using an algebraic approach. Furthermore, algebraic and geometric concepts are taught in an interrelated manner, and concept development and problem solving are a critical focus.

Curriculum Resources

Big Ideas Math, Modeling Real Life

Grade 8

Building Understanding of Solving Equations

Previous math skills will be reinforced, redefined and further developed for use in problem solving situations. Eighth graders will have a solid foundation in the four operations of Math, decimals, fractions and integers. Students will build on their understanding of solving equations and learn to add, subtract, multiply and factor polynomials. They will learn the relationship between these four areas with a study of fractions, ratios, proportions and percents. They will also be taught to graph and solve linear equations and inequalities. The instructional approach of the class balances the skill-focused units with problem solving-based applications designed to develop a connection between topics and a more algebraic approach to thinking and reasoning.

Algebra 1 is designed to equip students with the necessary skills to solve problems algebraically. Students learn to manipulate algebraic expressions, solve linear equations and inequalities, and graph equations on the coordinate plane. Students gain an understanding of concepts such as communication, balance, growth, patterns, relationships, and comparisons. Students learn exponents, polynomials, factoring, linear equations, inequalities, systems of equations and square roots. Algebra 1 aims to provide a solid mathematical foundation for future coursework, fostering skills essential for understanding more advanced concepts in Geometry, Algebra 2, and beyond.

Curriculum Resources

Big Ideas Math, Modeling Real Life; Algebra 1, Elayn Martin-Gay

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. In ensembles, 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, 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.

Grades 6-8

Students can elect to participate in musical ensembles such as choir, band, and orchestra. Participation in ensembles provides students with the opportunity to hone their talents and collaboratively create a joyful noise with their peers. Further talent development is cultivated in weekly sectionals. 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.

The Educational Support Services

We believe that all students can learn, every day. The Educational Support Services (TESS) in middle school are designed to help meet the specific learning needs of students to maximize their academic, social and emotional potentials through a Christ-centered education.

The goal is to help students understand the ways in which they learn best, and recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in order to help them develop independence in the general education classroom. Focusing on students who present a wide variety of learning needs, the Eastern Christian TESS teachers work closely with the general education classroom teachers, parents and Bergen County Special Services to ensure that comprehensive support for the student is achievable. These partnerships help provide differentiated tasks and instruction, accommodations, support structures and tools to help all learners feel a sense of belonging, autonomy and competence throughout their day at school.

In addition to the in-class support of general education classroom learning objectives and activities, the TESS program provides replacement instruction on a limited, or as needed basis for small groups of students in core academic areas. Supplemental curriculums include, but are not limited to, *Wilson's Just Words* and *Touch Math*. These additional tools help to close the learning gaps for some students.

Physical Education

Physical education, education of and through the physical, is an essential part of growth and development as we seek to educate the whole person. 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.

"The nature of middle school students must be considered when designing instruction to effectively meet their needs. In this context, needs should not be confused with wants; however, instructional design at any level should consider the developmental and maturational level of the learner. As middle school students enter and experience adolescence, they find themselves experiencing many changes in their lives. For most middle school students, physical changes, such as height, weight, and sexual maturation, are occurring at a rate far exceeding that of any time during the grade school years. These physical changes undoubtedly lead to changes in emotional and social development as well. In many cases, students become more keenly aware of their place within peer groups around them, strive to find themselves, and seek to be accepted by their peers and others. As students enter the middle school years, their focus shifts from a desire to gain the acceptance and approval of the teacher to a desire to gain the acceptance and approval of their peers." (Physical Education Curriculum, Christian Schools International).

Grade 6

Confidence Through Cooperation

The sixth grade Physical Education curriculum focuses on developing confidence and cooperation in working with partners, small groups and small teams. Students will be able to practice and apply movement concepts and movement skills through leadup games. The curriculum will also aim to encourage students regarding the importance of fitness concepts and wellness.

Grade 7

Challenged to Meet Success

The seventh grade curriculum focuses on students continuing to learn movement concepts and skills while being presented with challenges that will provide growth and improvement. Students will also be challenged to apply fitness concepts and skills for self in becoming physically fit on achieving wellness.

Grade 8

Leadership in Competition

The eighth grade curriculum focuses on learning leadership skills through team competition. Learned movement concepts and skills will be applied in competitive team play for continued improvement and practice. Students will also achieve wellness by personalizing learned fitness concepts and skills in developing personal strategies for an active lifestyle.

Science

The science program gives us an opportunity to focus on authentic science experiences that prepare and empower students to develop an appreciation and deeper understanding of God's amazing world around them while developing real world science principles. Guided by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), students will acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to become scientifically literate and solve real world problems. Through inquiry-based lessons and engineering practices, students develop connections between the disciplines of science.

During a student's middle school science career, we focus on solving interdisciplinary problems that involve a variety of skills and strategies, including effective work habits; gathering and processing information; generating and analyzing ideas; realizing ideas; making connections among the common themes of Mathematics, Science, and Technology; and presenting results.

- Working Effectively: Contributing to the work of a brainstorming group, laboratory partnership, cooperative learning group; planning procedures; identifying and managing responsibilities of team members; and staying on task, whether working alone or as part of a group.
- Gathering and Processing Information: Accessing information from printed media, electronic databases, and community resources and using the information to develop a definition of the problem and to research possible solutions.
- Generating and Analyzing Ideas: Developing ideas for proposed solutions, investigating ideas, collecting data, and showing relationships and patterns in the data.
- Common Themes: Observing examples of common unifying themes, applying them to the problem, and using them to better understand the dimensions of the problem.
- Realizing Ideas: Constructing components or models, arriving at a solution, and evaluating the result.
- Presenting Results: Using a variety of media to present the solution and to communicate the results.

Curriculum Resources

Amplify Science

Grade 6

Chemical Changes - This unit develops understanding both of the nature of chemicals and how chemicals should be handled.

It is important as God's caretakers to understand the effects of chemicals before they are widely used.

Energy and You - Energy is the ability to do work. Work occurs when an object is moved by a force acting upon that object. In this unit we will study several types of energy.

The energy demands of society have increased dramatically. We will explore the advantages and disadvantages of fossil fuels as well as other energy sources. How can we conserve energy as part of our calling as stewards of God's earth?

Temperature and Heat - This unit further develops the concept of energy transfer. We will focus on the three heat energy transfers: conduction, convection and radiation.

Our Changing Earth - Many processes in the Earth's atmosphere, hydrosphere and crust produce features that form natural patterns. God's creation is full of motion. Water rushes, winds blow, volcanoes erupt, etc.; our Earth is constantly changing.

How can you be a steward to God's creation? - We explore how we have been entrusted to use and care for the earth. We will gain a deeper understanding of how the interactions of all living and nonliving things impact God's creation.

Grade 7

The Restless Earth - Students will examine the relationship between internal forces of the earth and the external forces, which lead to the ever changing surface. We build on prior knowledge from sixth grade as we interpret earthquake and volcano data, look for patterns, and consider the various changes we see occurring on earth's surface.

Toward the Stars - With a Christian perspective, we will gain an understanding of the origin and structure of the universe and its ever changing mysteries. Students will explore their preconceptions regarding the earth and its place in the universe. We will have a better understanding of the connections between earth related events and our place in the universe.

Solutions and the Value of Water - We are all stewards of the world God created for us and have been commanded to care for the earth. Acknowledging water as a vital resource, students will be introduced to ideas such as solutions, solubility, desalination, and distillation and the natural processes that occur on Earth involving these concepts.

Scientific Processes - Recognizing God as the controller of the world, students will have opportunities to discuss and develop problem solving skills. With respect to each other's opinions, students will recognize that curiosity and open mindedness are all attributes of scientists.

Environmental Studies - We are all stewards of the world God has created for us and based on His commands to take care of the earth, students will develop an attitude of care and respect for God's world and understand how our actions can affect various ecosystems and our local environment.

Grade 8

Oceans and Climate - A huge part of our lives are affected by the connection between earth's four spheres: hydrosphere, atmosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere. Students will be able to better appreciate the complexity of the world God has created and also the responsibility we have to take care of this world for future generations. Students will use data to make weather forecasts based on past trends across the United States and we will discuss the role of climate change on our world.

Continuity of Life - The Bible teaches us that we are all created in God's image and as teenagers struggle with who they are and how they fit into the world around them, they will better understand and appreciate how God planned every detail of who they are and the person they will become. Time will be spent looking at family lines to help us comprehend physical traits (including hereditary illness) that are passed from generation to generation.

Machines, Work and Energy - Energy is involved in all aspects of motion and force and students must comprehend that machines are tools that make life easier, but are also very technical and mechanical in terms of their relationship to energy and work. After being inspired by the work of Rube Goldberg, students finish out their eighth grade year demonstrating many physics concepts through the invention of a contraption designed to make our life easier.

Scientific Processes - Recognizing God as the controller of the world, students will have opportunities to discuss and develop problem solving skills. With respect to each other's opinions, students will recognize that curiosity and open mindedness are all attributes of scientists.

Environmental Studies - We are all stewards of the world God has created for us and based on His commands to take care of the earth, students will develop an attitude of care and respect for God's world and understand how our actions can affect various ecosystems and our local environment.

Social Studies

Social Studies and History are 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 their classmates, different from 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 are encouraged to recognize their differences, histories and heritages, and compare them with those of people around them. 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. History is more than a series of events. Our understanding of history is often guided by personal values and worldview. It can become a well of experience from which students can learn to improve their own lives. In history we discover the truth about the past so that it can be presented in an accurate way that enriches lives in the present.

Grade 6

Explore the Eastern Hemisphere

The sixth grade curriculum covers not only the history, but also the geography, religions and cultures of the various peoples of the past and present in the Eastern Hemisphere. Our study includes much of this area throughout the year, specifically Europe. An important part of our year is the study of WWI, WWII and the Holocaust. The students compare the hatred surrounding the events of WWII and the Holocaust to the brokenness in our world today and together look to carry out the Good News of Jesus Christ. Sixth graders will take a journey through the regions of the Eastern Hemisphere with a goal of obtaining knowledge of its geography, cultures, histories, explorations, economies, governments and religions. Sixth graders use their reading and writing skills as they explore and discover meaning in history. Students work with expanses of time on timelines to look throughout history and make connections and cause and effect conclusions. Students are encouraged to become informed citizens of their communities and of the world through our weekly Monday Morning News activities. Students will see their roles as image bearers of Christ as they take into consideration the similarities and differences among themselves, as well as among the people of the Eastern Hemisphere and across the world.

Curriculum Resources

Geography Alive! Regions and People

Grade 7

Social Studies and World History:

This course of study begins with a review of map skills and develops a more extensive understanding of the Five Basic Themes of Geography: Location, Place, Region, Movement, and Interaction. The practice of exact location in terms of latitude and longitude and an awareness of the

world as a map are explored. We also introduce students into the rudiments of informal logic and the challenge of thinking well in terms of basic definitions and the giving of reasons for claims of truth. We then move into a basic chronology of history from prehistoric cave paintings up to the 17th century in western Europe. Human history and civilization are focused first on the four ancient cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. The focus then shifts to the European continent, beginning with the ancient Greeks and Romans, moving into the Fall of Rome and the ensuing Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation periods.

The class is interdisciplinary in nature and aspects of literature, art, science, philosophy, and the Bible are significantly explored as relevant to key historical events and characters. From a biblical and Christian perspective, the Bible is a key source that advances our understanding of human history and purpose. It offers significantly alternative explanations, and without a regular reference to Scripture, comparisons with other religions such as Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islam, and an exploration of GrecoRoman, Medieval, and Renaissance ideas would be hindered. The history of western Europe is profoundly influenced by the history of Christianity, and the turning point of the Protestant Reformation likewise cannot be fully appreciated without reference to the Christians and Scriptural passages that brought it about.

Curriculum Resources

The Medieval World and Beyond

Grade 8

American History: Early Settlement Through Modern Times

The 8th Grade curriculum emphasizes American history from its origins in Native American experience and the turning point of “1492” seen as the beginning of pivotal clashes and interactions of Native American, European, and African cultures and people. The western European “Age of Discovery”, stimulated in part by Renaissance and Reformation influences, began a process of conflict and exchange that would eventually bring to dominance the presence and interests of Spanish, French, and English interests on this continent. Thus the history of events that brought about the United States of America is chronicled from the period of the Thirteen Original Colonies and the movement into the Revolutionary War and our Independence as a Nation. The development of the Constitution and the resultant beginning of the Republic that would spread westward to the Pacific was underway. The inner forces that would eventually cause the Civil War and bring about the preservation of the Union, and the end of slavery will be studied, as will the difficult transition of the Reconstruction Era.

Through the year we will study the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Emancipation proclamation, and the Gettysburg Address as we seek to understand the ideas and principles that unite us as a Nation. Our approach is interdisciplinary as aspects of mathematics, art, literature, philosophy, and religion will be presented

and discussed. Throughout the year we will also relate a Christian perspective and passages of Scripture to our study. The Mayflower Compact, the First and Second Great Awakenings, and the abolition of slavery are examples of how the Christian faith and practice of believers impacted the history of who we became as Americans. Students will be challenged from this perspective and will be given opportunity through inquiry and discussion to develop the practice of thinking well about the meaning of American history in our lives.

Curriculum Resources

The United States Through Modern Times