

ACADEMIC MISSION / CURRICULUM BRIEF

Academic Mission: Redeemer Lutheran School maintains high academic standards and nurtures students to excel to the highest level of their God-given abilities. Curriculum goals and objectives help students:

- grow in the Christian faith through the Biblical Word that is taught directly according to historically Lutheran interpretation and integrated into all areas of instruction;
- become spiritually and intellectually trained to “give a defense” for their faith;
- mature academically through instruction in the core curricular subjects of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies;
- become versed in the accurate and complete history of the United States of America and the important documents that shaped the character of our nation;
- strive toward academic excellence through sound educational instruction that is politically neutral and reflects commonly shared Christian values.

Religion – The Christian faith is intentionally taught to enable students to develop their relationships to God, others, and the world in which they live.

- Preschool through Kindergarten children learn basic Christian concepts in “Jesus Time” to nurture their emerging faith and relationship to Jesus, their Savior.
- As students progress through grades 1-5, they learn Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments to help them understand and apply God’s Word in their lives. They memorize Bible passages and related expressions of faith.
- Students in Grade 6 learn Bible study skills to more deeply examine God’s Word and how it applies to personal faith and life issues. They, too, memorize Bible passages and related expressions of faith.
- Students in Grades 7-8 explore how the six main Biblical teachings identified in *Luther’s Small Catechism* have lifetime applications. They memorize Bible passages and basic catechism teachings.
- While religion is taught intentionally through these described means, it is also integrated throughout the curriculum to reveal God’s hand in all areas of life.

Reading – Reading is taught to enable students to read, comprehend, discuss, and use the Bible and other written materials. Reading also engages students to apply higher thinking skills, develop companion writing skills, and understand and appreciate a variety of literary genres.

- Preschool and Pre-kindergarten children begin learning letters and letter sounds and how written symbols represent verbal and written language.
- Kindergarten and Grade 1 students are trained in Intensive Phonics, a step-by-step phonetic method that teaches the names, sounds, and formation of consonants and vowels.
- Reading is introduced as a curricular area in Kindergarten. Big books, read-along stories, nursery rhymes, songs and finger plays, and worksheets reinforce the skills taught in Intensive Phonics. Alphabet activities and sight words are also taught and supplement the phonics skills that build the reading foundation.
- Grades 1-5 continue the development of capable readers. The students learn reading skills, expand their vocabulary, and develop comprehension. Chapter books are introduced within these grades, as well.
- The emphasis in Grades 6-8 is on literature. Literature textbooks and novels provide a good mix of genres, cultures, eras, themes, and ideas for students to explore, discuss, and comprehend.
- Language skills cannot be separated from reading, and age-appropriate verbal and writing skills are developed at all grade levels.
- The *Accelerated Reader* independent reading program is introduced in Grade 1, and student participation is required of students through Grade 8.

Spelling – Spelling is a specialized language art taught separately and in relation to reading and other subjects.

- Students in grades 1-8 receive intentional spelling instruction to learn how to spell given words and to apply spelling rules to new words.
- Students are also taught spelling to help develop vocabulary, reading capabilities, proofreading skills, and knowledge of words as they are found in various disciplines and sources of information.

Please see the reverse side for additional curriculum notes.

Language Arts – Language arts instruction is related to and supports reading instruction. Students learn how the English language is structured and how it is used in verbal and written communication.

- Early childhood learners build verbal communication skills and begin the transition to reading and writing.
- At each succeeding grade level, instruction becomes more complex as students learn how to combine words into phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and compositions.
- Students also learn the mechanics of writing (including capitalization and punctuation), word usage, parts of speech, and various forms of written and verbal expression (including fact, fiction, prose, poetry, essay, report, speaking, and listening).
- Language arts instruction enables students to apply communication skills in other subject areas.

Social Studies – Social studies instruction encompasses a variety of social sciences, especially history, geography, economics, and civics.

- As students progress through the grades, their world expands from home and neighborhood to community, community to state, state to nation, and nation to world.
- Special emphases include the Minnesota studies taught at the 4th grade level, and United States studies conducted in Grades 5, 7, and 8. Geography is the emphasis of Grade 6 instruction.
- Overall, Redeemer students gain knowledge and appreciation of God’s hand at work through the course of time and in a diverse world.
- We also promote respect for our nation and those who serve it to preserve our freedoms, including the freedom to worship the one true God. Attention is given from a Christian perspective to the individuals, movements, events, and documents that have shaped the character of our nation.

Mathematics – The purpose of mathematics instruction at Redeemer is to enable students to use reasoning, known facts, and relationships to solve mathematical problems.

- Preschool and Pre-kindergarten students learn concrete concepts and skills to prepare for more formal Kindergarten instruction.
- From Kindergarten through Grade 8, Saxon Math guides students to discover and understand the simple to more complex mathematical properties of God’s world.
- Primary Saxon Math (K-Grade 4) employs guided instruction and manipulatives to move students from the concrete to the pictorial to the abstract.
- Intermediate Saxon Math (Grades 3-5) promotes problem solving, real world applications, and meaningful hands-on activities to help students learn to reason, communicate, and make connections.
- Middle School Saxon Math (Grades 6-8) engages students in algebraic thinking and in-depth problem solving to enable them to apply strategies and justify their thinking.
- To that end, the Redeemer mathematics curriculum is designed to prepare students to complete Pre-algebra in Grade 7 and Algebra 1 in grade 8.

Science and Health – Science and Health instruction is faith-integrated by our teachers to emphasize God’s creative handiwork, as well as our responsibility to care for His world.

- Redeemer students are taught a mix of scientific concepts of life science, earth science, physical science, and space and technology from Kindergarten through Grade 5.
- Middle school students engage in year-long studies of focused science: Earth Science in Grade 6, Life Science in Grade 7, and Life Science in Grade 8.
- All students discover how science helps reveal God’s world and how faith applies where science cannot.

Art, Music, Physical Education, Computer, and Spanish – Planned instruction in these areas enrich the academic experience of Pre-K through 8th grade students.

- Students practice, demonstrate, and appreciate the fine arts of Art and Music.
- In PE they engage in regular physical activity and learn to care for their bodies as temples of God’s Spirit.
- Students learn Computer skills and applications.
- Students learn the Spanish language and gain appreciation not only for Hispanic culture but for the diverse, multicultural world for which Jesus is the Eternal Hope for all people.

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