

Fifth Grade Curriculum Guide for Parents



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5th Grade Language Arts

Reading

There are three aspects to reading instruction in fifth grade. The first aspect involves direct reading instruction based on a class novel that correlates with our study units. These books serve as the basis for instruction in various comprehension skills, vocabulary development, character analysis, and understanding figures of speech, similes and metaphors. As students read these books, they will be asked to analyze the characters and themes from a Christian point of view.

The second aspect of the reading curriculum is an individualized reading program which we call our “DEAR” (Drop Everything And Read) time. Students are given individualized goals based on their reading level and read independently for 20 to 30 minutes each day. Student progress is monitored through the use of the Accelerated Reader Program which provides computerized comprehension, vocabulary, and literacy quizzes. In addition, fifth graders write a book review about each book giving a summary and opinion on the story which is then available for their peers to read.

The third aspect of the reading curriculum is the at-home reading program called “Book It.” Students at this age need to read independently at home for a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes per day. Individualized monthly goals are given to each student.

Fifth graders also practice oral fluency as they meet weekly with their Kindergarten “Reading Buddy.”

Class Novels

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH – Animal Kingdom Unit

Biographies of famous explorers – Exploration Unit

Eating the Plates: A Pilgrim Book of Food and Manners – Pilgrim (Colonization) Unit

Joni's Story (autobiography of Joni Eareckson Tada) – Health Unit

Jean Fritz biographies: *Where was Patrick Henry On the 29th of May?*, *And Then What*

Happened, Paul Revere?, *Why Don't you get a Horse, Sam Adams?*, *Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?*, *Will You Sign Here, John Hancock?* – American Revolution Unit

The Story of Thomas Alva Edison – Electricity Unit

Dear Levi – Westward Expansion Unit

Writing

During fifth grade, we continue to emphasize the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing) with a special focus on the revising and proofreading steps. Some skills that are taught include using mature topic sentences, transition sentences, punctuating dialogue, varying sentence structure and starting words, and avoiding over-used words (using a thesaurus). Part of the assessment for each writing project includes examining the revisions or changes a child has made. Students' writing is published and shared in a variety of ways.

The Daily Oral Language program is used to help the students practice and review a wide variety of grammatical and mechanical skills. The *Writers Express* by Write Source serves as a resource for mini-lessons in a variety of areas.

Writing Projects for Fifth Grade

Why Story – Narrative writing with a focus on answering a why question and using a repeating plot pattern. Students publish this story in picture-book format to share with their Kindergarten Reading Buddy. (Animal Kingdom Unit)

Pilgrim Log – Part of the Pilgrim Unit in which the students write a diary from the perspective of a Pilgrim child incorporating historical information they have learned.

Compare and Contrast Essay – Students compare and contrast the life of Joni Eareckson Tada with that of another famous Christian based on a biography read for Book It that month. (Health Unit)

Family Heritage Project – Descriptive Essay and Personal Narratives

In conjunction with our study of early American history and colonization, the students do a family heritage project. This project involves gathering information by interviewing grandparents and parents, making a family tree, and researching one of their countries of origin. Based on the interviews, the students write a piece describing their family holiday traditions and a narrative piece documenting family stories. The culminating project involves creating a family heritage scrapbook with pictures, written pieces, and other mementos. On "Family Heritage Day," students make an oral presentation and share their scrapbooks with their families. The day concludes with a family heritage potluck lunch.

How To – Explanatory writing in which students write directions for an activity or task. Directions are published in a class book and are presented to class as a demonstration speech.

Tall Tale – Narrative Writing in which students focus on using descriptive language, similes, exaggeration, and developing conflict and resolution based in the setting of the 1800s.

State Report – Students develop research questions, take notes, develop an outline, and write a formal report using connecting topic sentences.

Spelling

As students become older, conventional spelling becomes more and more important. Our spelling curriculum is called *Spell It – Write!* Each week, students receive a basic list of words based on a spelling or phonics pattern. Then, each student individualizes his/her list by adding words that he/she needs to learn to spell. These words may be misspelled words from recent writing assignments or words that the student is interested in learning. In addition, students learn at least one new vocabulary word each week that they have collected from their individual reading.

Public Speaking and Listening

Students are given a variety of opportunities to develop and strengthen their skills in public speaking from explorer presentations to the family heritage talks to demonstration speeches. Opportunities are given for positive peer feedback in addition to the teacher's feedback.

Handwriting

Students in fifth grade are expected to use cursive for most assignments. If a child does not form cursive letters correctly, he/she will be given some additional handwriting practice to do at home.

Computers and Keyboarding

Computers will be used in conjunction with various units for the purpose of research or practice. Students will use predetermined websites.

In addition, students will use the computers for Accelerated Reader tests and for another reading assessment test.

AlphaSmart computers will be used for keyboarding instruction. Students work on keyboarding two to three days a week for about 15 minutes each time. Using correct keyboarding posture and finger placement will be emphasized. Our goal is to help the students move toward increasing their

speed and accuracy so that their typing speed is faster than their handwriting speed.

5th Grade Bible

The fifth grade Bible curriculum is based on *Biblical Choices* by Standard Publishing and aims to teach Biblical knowledge and understanding as well as to give practical applications in living as disciples of Jesus. During first semester, we cover the Old Testament period from the time of the exile in Babylon until the return to Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. During second semester, the curriculum focuses on helping students know the basis for their faith through studying Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, 1 & 2 Peter, and Jude. Lessons are designed to engage all students through a variety of approaches and experiences from making Christian witness T-shirts in response to a lesson on Daniel to participating in a spiritual Olympics as part of a study on Hebrews.

As the students examine God's action in the Scriptures and the responses of the prophets and apostles, they also have the opportunity to learn about contemporary Christian models of faith. In addition, they learn some traditional hymns and the stories behind them. Generally, each week a memory verse ties in to the lesson. Our desire is that students memorize various foundational Bible passages in addition to passages which students can apply to their own daily lives.

At Ann Arbor Christian School, we believe that serving those in need is an important part of our Christian discipleship. Thus, both individual-class service projects and whole-school service projects are part of the school year. In conjunction with a Bible lesson on Esther, fifth graders do an annual leaf-raking project to raise money for those who are defenseless. Traditionally, the money has gone to support Voice of the Martyrs (an organization helping persecuted Christians), Pregnancy Counseling Center, and Joni and Friends (an organization helping the disabled).

A daily morning devotion that includes singing, scripture reading, a lesson, and prayer is part of each day. Students are given opportunities to learn how to pray for the needs of others in a small-group setting as well as how to journal or write letters to God as they have an independent "quiet time."

Students experience corporate worship in chapel services twice a month. One is a K-8 chapel and the other is a K-5 chapel.

5th Grade Math

Students in fifth grade use the Scott-Foresman /Addison Wesley textbook as the basis for mathematic instruction. Graphing, double-digit multiplication and long division, adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators, and a variety of problem-solving problems are some of the concepts covered. Pre-testing and differentiated assignments are used to help meet the unique needs of the students. Generally, fifth graders have math homework twice a week to help them develop greater independence.

In addition to the textbook, students are taught *Hands-On Equations*, a simplified method of teaching algebra to young students. It is both enjoyable for students and helpful in preparing them for the algebraic concepts they will encounter later in middle school.

Students also have the opportunity to work at a variety of math stations such as Menu Math, calculator activities, critical thinking activities, math fact review, and problem-solving puzzles.

Students continue to review and show mastery of all of the basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts by using the Math-o-Matic computer program or other programs.

Units = Science and Social Studies Topics

“Units” are Ann Arbor Christian School’s approach to learning science and social studies. Units are not based on a textbook but rather on hands-on, teacher-created lessons which are correlated with reading and writing projects. Thematic units with a Christian focus are integrated in the curriculum with related literature, videos and other opportunities for hands-on activities, explorations and field trips.

Animal Kingdom Unit

In this unit, students discover how animals are classified and the importance of classification. As the students learn to identify the characteristics of the five vertebrate groups through a variety of hands-on activities, they also are challenged to grow in appreciation of God's power displayed through the intricacy of His creation and His care for all that He has made. Recognizing the unique place of humans as God's image-bearers and accepting the responsibility to act as caregivers for creation are important goals of this unit. “Classroom Critters,” a program that brings live animals to the classroom, gives students a close-up view of animals from each vertebrate group.

Exploration Unit

“Why should we study history?” and “How do we study history?” are two questions that challenge students as they begin their study of early exploration and colonization. We introduce basic economic ideas surrounding trade and trade barriers as students learn about Columbus and other early explorers of the New World. As part of this unit, students research an explorer and present their findings to the class in an innovative way—perhaps a first-person narrative or a game-show format or a news broadcast!

Pilgrim Unit

This unit is a simulation in which students vicariously experience the hardships of life in the New World as they are grouped in colonies and work together to make decisions and face consequences similar to those of the Pilgrims. Students keep a daily Pilgrim Log, incorporating facts they've learned into a historical fiction narrative. This unit culminates in “Pilgrim Day,” when students dress in costume and experience a day full of colonial crafts and activities including a traditional Thanksgiving feast.

Health Unit

In this unit, students investigate different aspects of three major body systems: the circulatory, respiratory and central-nervous systems. As students learn about the various parts of each system and their functions through activities and demonstrations, they also learn ways to keep each system healthy. As part of this unit, students participate in the “Healthy Hearts Program” at the Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute.

American Revolution Unit

In this unit, students learn about the major events surrounding the American Revolution as well as the causes and effects of those events. As students experience taxation in the classroom, organize protests, and participate in a mock Continental Congress, they become personally involved in the issues that faced the American colonists. Throughout the unit, students are asked to investigate Biblical principles concerning taxation and obedience to governing authorities. The unit culminates in a visit to the ‘Liberty and Justice for All Exhibit’ at The Henry Ford Museum.

Electricity Unit

In this unit, students experiment to investigate the properties of static and current electricity and magnetism. Students are encouraged to recognize both electricity and magnetism as gifts that God has given us in His creation. In addition, they are challenged to work cooperatively with a partner to

complete a variety of experiments. A visit to the Edison Complex at Greenfield Village reinforces what the students learned by reading the biography of Thomas Edison.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Unit

In this mini-unit, students learn some basic facts about medications, illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. They also learn some techniques for resisting peer pressure and saying “NO” to abusing these substances. The goal is to help students understand that their bodies and their health are gifts from God and that they should be good stewards of those gifts. As part of this unit, students may visit the Health Exploration Station for their workshop on “Drugs: Choice or Chance.”

Westward Expansion Unit

The first part of this unit continues the story students began as they studied the Pilgrims and the birth of the United States. Students learn how the United States acquired land from coast to coast. Learning experiences include choosing the supplies needed for a trip on the Oregon Trail and panning for gold. By researching a specific westward trail and designing a board game depicting the challenges along the way, students use researching skills, reasoning skills, and creative talents. The second aspect of this unit involves learning all 50 states. Students research one state, write a state report, and display their research.

5th Grade Art

The art curriculum helps students learn to recognize, enjoy, and process the aesthetic and cultural diversity present in God's creation. Students explore different mediums for artistic expression including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, design, textiles and performance. Projects are largely integrated with classroom units to help reinforce learning and to promote cross-curricular connections. Art history and aesthetic criticism are also integrated to expand critical thinking and awareness. Units develop creative problem-solving in order to help students find and express their unique voice in the world.

Our art classes reinforce the classroom curriculum and develop enthusiastic learners through applied art activities. We work to further develop technical skills and to build confidence by experimenting with a wide variety of new media and techniques. Students will learn to contextualize art works by relating them to the cultural and historical climates that influenced them as

well as to broaden their perspective on the possibilities of art making. Throughout this exploration, the teacher works with students to help them express their ideas both creatively and clearly. By providing differentiated learning opportunities where all students can succeed, we aim to foster student confidence, so that art can be used as a positive means of self-expression and enjoyment.

5th Grade General Music

The music curriculum helps students learn to recognize, enjoy, and process the aesthetic and cultural diversity present in music. Students explore different instruments for music expression including body percussion, percussion instruments (shakers and whackers), handbells, singing, and Orff instruments. Music instruction is integrated with classroom units to help reinforce learning and to promote cross-curricular connections. Music history and music criticism are also integrated to expand critical thinking and awareness. Units develop the understanding of rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, form, notation, expression, and performance.

In fifth grade, we emphasize teaching students to participate in worship. Our music classes reinforce the classroom curriculum and develop enthusiastic singers and instrumentalists through applied music activities. We work to develop listening and music-making skills and to build confidence by using a wide variety of music and techniques. Through the exploration of different styles of music and different ways of making music, the teacher helps students to grow in the understanding and use of music in their own worship.

Fifth grade music skills include:

- Worshiping God through song
- Performing scales and two part songs
- Read and write music notation through sixteenth notes, rests, and triplets
- Singing rounds, canons and partner songs on pitch
- Instrument identification
- Music expression
- Basic chord structure

To prepare students for instrumental music in sixth grade, individual instrument sessions will be offered near the end of second semester. These sessions allow students to experience several different instruments (percussion, brass, and woodwinds). Details will be communicated through the AACCS Blue Note, our weekly school newsletter. Once they complete instrumental testing

and are fitted to an instrument, they are encouraged to begin private lessons over the summer between fifth and sixth grades to give them a solid start in the fall of their sixth-grade year.

5th Grade Physical Education

Physical Education helps students develop in cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and spiritual domains. The program encourages individual potential, leadership, and participating which will promote lifelong fitness. Students grow in an understanding of rules, safety, and strategies of games and activities. Both individual and team sports allow for the expression of sportsmanship and sensitivity needed to function in a diverse society. Physical Education reflects the high value God places on human life and the respect we should have for ourselves and for one another. Students are encouraged to model behavior that Christ would exemplify.

The scope and sequence for fifth grade includes the following:

- strength, flexibility, and respiratory endurance building
- team sport skills
- dance and gymnastic skills
- rules of lead-up games
- fitness-building knowledge.

A wide variety of offerings keep students of all skill levels interested in physical activity. Units range from dance and gymnastics to football and basketball at age-appropriate levels. K-5 students look forward to once-weekly P.E. class while 6-8 students enjoy P.E. twice a week.

While technically not part of our physical education program, AACCS offers elementary school children encouragement to get daily exercise with what we call "Mileage Club." As long as the weather allows and we have sufficient volunteer parent supervisors, students can spend all or part of their lunch recess accumulating miles while walking or running on a set course outside the school. Students can earn awards for meeting mileage milestones like 25, 50, or even 100+ miles!

In addition, fifth graders are invited to participate in the following middle-school sports after school:

- girls volleyball
- girls basketball
- boys basketball

Academic Eligibility for 5th Grade Sports

Each player must continue to meet his or her responsibilities as a student. Homework assignments should be completed neatly, carefully, and on time. Students with two late homework assignments in one week will be ineligible for the following week. A minimum average of 74% should be maintained in order to be eligible. If a student drops below that average, the teacher and parents will meet to discuss an appropriate plan of action to ensure greater academic success.

5th Grade Special Events

Sex Education: Changes, Challenges, Choices Program

The philosophy of Ann Arbor Christian School is one of partnership between home, church, and school. We believe parents are children's first and primary teachers. Therefore, particularly in the important area of sexuality, AACCS wants to come along side of parents, both empowering parents to teach their children about their God-given sexuality from a Christian perspective as well as reviewing and reinforcing in various school settings a Biblical approach to adolescence and sexuality. AACCS wants parents to have an integral role in the presentation of material covered in the Sex Ed curriculum.

In fifth grade, two local physicians make presentations one evening for students and their parents. After an opening time together, the students go to two different sessions, one for girls and their parents and the other for the boys and their parents. The evening celebrates the wonderful way God has designed our bodies and serves to further open the door of communication between parents and children.

Fine Arts Festival

Hosted by Ann Arbor Christian School, the Fine Arts Festival brings together several area Christian schools to celebrate the arts. The Fine Arts Festival gives students an opportunity to share their abilities with parents, teachers, and peers and to receive recognition for their gifts through evaluation and awards. Each student will be evaluated against basic criteria and may receive either a first-, second-, or third-place ribbon. The students are asked to participate in two events that include art work, short stories, music performance, dance, and speeches.

Field Trips

We will go on several field trips in conjunction with our units. I will send home sign-up slips for each field trip. Since the school covers the cost of the

chaperones, I can only take a certain number of drivers. I will try to give as many different parents as possible the chance to accompany us on a field trip. Thanks for your understanding.

- Leaf-Raking Service Project – early November
- The Henry Ford Museum – January/early February
- Healthy Hearts at Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute - March
- Greenfield Village – May
- Fifth-Grade Camp – June 1-2

Fifth Grade Camp – usually around June 1-2

Fifth Grade Camp is a highlight of fifth grade. Held at Howell Nature Center, the two-day, one-night camp gives students a chance to experience outdoor education that is focused on both science topics and team-building activities. Two adult male chaperones and one adult female chaperone will be needed. First preference will go to fathers of boys and a mother of one of the girls. Please let the teacher know if you are interested in chaperoning when your child is in 5th grade.