

Kindergarten Curriculum Guide for Parents



Ann Arbor Christian School
5500 Whitmore Lake Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Phone: (734) 741-4948

Fax: (734) 929-6629

E-mail: office@annarborchristian.org

Kindergarten Curriculum

Kindergarten Bible

The kindergarten Bible curriculum is based on *The Story of God and His People: God's Wonders* by Christian Schools International. It tells the Bible story of God's acts and words as well as human obedience and disobedience in chronological order.

In kindergarten, we provide an overview of the Bible beginning with creation and the conflict of sin. We then learn how God acted to save and restore his people to a right relationship with Himself. With the Christmas story, students come to school in costume to act out the Nativity. The climax occurs with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and ends with the promise of a new heaven and the new earth.

The stories told to students are reinforced in a variety of ways such as: acting out; related illustrating and writing of class books; follow-up coloring handouts; booklets; and hands-on projects such as building an ark with blocks and using stuffed animals to act out the story.

Kindergarteners have opportunities to share the love of Jesus by singing Christian songs at a local nursing home facility called Sunrise Assisted Living.

Daily devotions include praise singing and group prayer time during which students have opportunities to pray for others.

Students experience corporate worship in chapel services twice a month, one of which is a K-8 chapel and the other a K-5 chapel. Kindergarteners lead two chapels that go along with the yearly chapel theme, allowing them to share God's word with older students. They also enjoy presentations put on by older AACCS students at other chapels and being mentored by older children in their "chapel families." Each kindergartener is assigned to a multi-age chapel family at the start of the year and they sit with these families during chapels.

Kindergarten Language Arts

We have a balanced approach to literacy with an emphasis on phonics. We use the "Letter Land" program and integrate selected literature corresponding to the alphabet. Christian faith and thematic units also are appropriately integrated with our literacy program. A variety of writing experiences and beginning reading texts are provided. "Handwriting Without Tears" is the handwriting program used.

Many types of learning experiences are incorporated into the curriculum.

Speaking/Listening

Kindergarteners focus on expression of thoughts, listening attentively and responding appropriately to literature by sharing books and discussing them. They also make predictions focusing on specific aspects of the text (i.e. letter of the week, rhyming words, repetition) and attend a local children's play.

Auditory/Visual

Kindergarteners learn to reproduce sounds and patterns by echoing, story/journal writing, reciting word families (rhyming, etc.), and saying words with visual pictures from a bulletin board.

Beginning Reading

Kindergarteners make letter name and sound connections, blending sounds for words, learn sight words, read simple texts with understanding and fluency. They do whole-group, partner, and individual reading. In a program we call "Reading Buddies," each student partners with a fifth grader, meeting weekly with that same student through the year to read to each other.

Beginning Writing

Kindergarteners draw clear pictures and write phonetically to tell about it, and use some real spelling. They do journal writing, writing of class books, and work on beginning, middle, and end sounds which is known as "Kindergarten writing." They incorporate sight words in their writing.

Handwriting Without Tears

In this kinesthetic-based handwriting development program, kindergarteners learn to use a correct pencil grip; write upper and lower case letters; write their name and numbers legibly; use wooden shapes to build letters as they learn the basic letter strokes and shapes.

Kindergarten Math

Our *Everyday Math* curriculum uses a variety of manipulatives for hands-on, exploratory learning. Often, thematic units and language arts are integrated into our math lessons.

Kindergarteners practice counting and patterning daily with calendar counting activities. They also construct pattern block trains. They experience

classifying/sorting through hands-on exploration with a variety of manipulatives. Lessons even touch on geometry when students identify two- and three-dimensional shapes.

To begin making sense of numbers, students are exposed to an estimating jar, calendar activities, and “Zero the Hero” visits. On dates with a zero in them, the principal disguises himself as a character called “Zero the Hero” and passes out tiny themed gifts. Students learn to count by tens and have fun with “100s day” when children in all the lower elementary grades bring in collections of 100 items of their choice and share them with the school.

Kindergarteners start simple adding and subtracting using hands-on manipulatives and even do mental math exercises.

To being to understanding measurement, students learn hands-on by exploring with pan balance scales, using rulers, and working with unit measurement links and Unifix cubes. Time telling lessons use the “Judy Clock” and students handle real coins during money lessons. Students have opportunities to problem solve with math story problems from the Exemplars program. This method of teaching encourages students how to begin thinking and communicating mathematically.

Units = Social Studies/Science/Health 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.

Colors Unit

This unit includes mixing paint and reading related “color” books (like the *Clifford the Big Red Dog* series) and creating student color booklets based on the literature presented. They have fun mixing colors with Cool Whip.

All About Me Unit

This unit involves sharing as the “person of the day,” creating *All About Me* booklets which incorporate Kindergarten writing and illustrating.

Thanksgiving Unit

Class discusses American Thanksgiving traditions and enjoys a festive meal with some traditional foods while wearing student-made costumes.

My Five Senses Unit

Students make senses booklets, incorporating Kindergarten writing and illustrating, anatomy and physiology of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and hand. They enjoy a tasting party to discriminate between bitter, sweet and salty. Culminating the unit is a fun visit to the Ann Arbor Hands-on Museum.

Safety Unit

Kindergarteners create a safety idea web on a chart, view safety videos, discuss and role play, and enjoy a visit from a law enforcement officer.

Health Unit

Students exercise as a class. We emphasize fruit and veggie snacks and make a health booklet with illustrations by kindergartners. Kindergarteners discuss health and hygiene topics and a pediatrician visits the class.

Animals Unit

This unit emphasizes farm animals, wild animals, and pets. Each student does an individual animal research project completed by making a paper-mache model of their chosen animal. Kindergarteners complete animal fact booklets, write animal stories using the writing process, and bring in pets to share with the class. Field trips go to the University of Michigan Natural History Museum and a local working farm. Students even experience live animals visiting the classroom.

What's in My Backyard? Unit

The children love to learn about plants and insects. They explore seeds and observe plant growth by placing seeds in a plastic baggie with a wet paper towel and taping them to a window. They sort living and non-living things. Kindergarteners observe and keep records of real larvae in the classroom until they become butterflies. Then we set them free outside the school. Students explore on-site pond life. They write related stories, make patterns with bug stamps, and visit the Leslie Science Center.

Mini Science Units

This unit involves practice with exploring and observing scientifically. Students perform experiments with magnets, floating and sinking, and record results. They create both Gooblek and Flubber exploring their properties with their senses.

Chapel /Chapel Families

We are a Christian school that values community. Children have multi-grade-level chapel families with whom they praise and worship God on a regular basis.

Chapel is an integral part of our school curriculum. Each year, chapel focuses on a particular theme, which is reflected in individual chapels throughout the year. This year, the theme is "The Fruit of the Spirit." Previous themes have included:

- Serve the Lord with Gladness
- God so Loved the World
- God Keeps His Promises
- Walking in the Light
- Our World Belongs to God
- Let us Fix our Eyes on Jesus
- Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, We are the Body of Christ
- The Names of God

Through chapel, students learn how to pray and sing publicly and to participate in worship. Middle school students are actively involved in planning chapel worship. Chapels may vary in grade level format; K-5, 6-8, and K-8 are all incorporated throughout the year. Guest speakers talk to students about their Christian walk, or focus on an area relevant to a service project or another topical issue.

Kindergarten 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.

In Kindergarten, we emphasize teaching students to observe and respond to their surroundings. Our art classes reinforce the classroom curriculum and develop enthusiastic learners through applied art activities. We work to develop fine-motor skills and to build confidence by using a wide variety of

media and techniques. Through the exploration of differing styles of artwork, the teacher helps students to express their ideas both creatively and clearly.

Kindergarten 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 Kindergarten, we emphasize teaching students to observe, participate in, and respond to music. Our music classes reinforce the classroom curriculum and develop enthusiastic singers 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 daily lives.

Kindergarten music skills include:

- Moving to the beat
- Long, short, low, high, fast, and slow sounds
- Basic music notation by sight and sound
- Echo
- AB form

Kindergarten Physical Education

Physical Education helps students develop in cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and spiritual domains. The P.E. program at AACCS encourages individual potential, leadership, and participation, 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.

Our P.E. instruction includes fundamental skills/movement patterns; attributes like balance, rhythm, and creative movement; motor abilities like coordination, quickness, power, speed, agility and flexibility; fitness (movement, body awareness, muscles, bones, regular exercise); sports skills like playing performance and proper technique; and knowledge and understanding of rules and procedures.