

Middle School Grades 6, 7 & 8

Middle school at First Lutheran is a stepping stone to high school. Students have a homeroom teacher, plus specialty teachers. They move from class to class and take more responsibility for their work. Yet our middle school teachers make themselves much more accessible than high school teachers, helping students keep up with their books, assignments, and test dates.

Curriculum

Religion

We use the CPH curriculum in middle school as in younger grades. **Sixth graders** study topics such as Many Books-One Theme, The Sacraments, Who is Jesus? Teachings of Jesus, Illustrations of Jesus, Jesus Saves, New Beginnings, and The Church through the ages.

Seventh graders conquer the divisions and books of the Bible, learn in-depth the Ten Commandments and the corresponding Bible narratives, and memorize the Apostles' Creed and the meanings of each petition in the Lord's Prayer. students are given the tools they need to read and interpret the Bible faithfully, according to the central person and teaching of the Bible—that is—Jesus Christ and the Gospel. **Eighth graders** expand and reinforce their knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, review the sixth chief parts of the Small Catechism, learn about the Reformation, worship, the Church seasons, the Christian life of loving service to the neighbor, and above all to recognize the theme of righteousness that comes by faith in Christ Jesus as the Bible's main teaching.

Literature/English

Our curriculum from Prentice Hall covers all TN content standards and performance indicators for Language Arts, combining fresh, contemporary selections with classic favorites to deliver explicit instruction within a student-friendly design. Prentice Hall Literature is organized around Big Questions and on the Understanding by Design model by Grant Wiggins. Grant worked closely with the Pearson editorial team on developing the unit Big Questions. The Big Question is introduced at the beginning of each unit and is integrated into the unit with activities and assessments. It provides unity and focus to both the content and the instruction throughout the unit. In **all grades** we go over literary terms and ideas such as plot, conflict, resolution, theme, irony, metaphor, personification, and more. Students must use higher level thinking skills in the assessment of the stories. We cover many of the classics like Tolstoy, Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Poe, Thurber, George Orwell, Maya Angelou, and more. The **Accelerated Reader program** continues at this level with computer-generated reading levels and comprehension tests.

Math

Sixth grade: Math 7/6 helps improve preparation for high school math by introducing concepts your child will need for upper-level algebra and geometry, including circumference and pi, angles, coordinate graphing, and prime factorization.

Seventh grade: We split up the classes to be on a Algebra 1 track or a Algebra $\frac{1}{2}$ track for the 8th grade. (8/7 book in 7th grade leads to the Algebra $\frac{1}{2}$ book in 8th grade while the Algebra $\frac{1}{2}$ in 7th grade leads to the Algebra 1 in 8th grade). Math8/7 is a pre-algebra program for students who have completed Math 7/6. Includes a range of upper-level skills and concepts such as scientific notation, complex statistics, arcs, sectors, and the Pythagorean theorem. Algebra $\frac{1}{2}$ represents a culmination of prealgebra mathematics, covering all topics normally taught in prealgebra, as well as additional topics from geometry and discrete mathematics (used in engineering and computer sciences).

Eighth grade: Students are either in Algebra $\frac{1}{2}$ or will complete a High School level Algebra 1 course and will take the Gateway test at the end of the year. So far, ALL students that have taken

the Algebra 1 Gateway have passed and are therefore exempt from that class in High School.

Algebra 1/2 represents a culmination of prealgebra mathematics, covering all topics normally taught in prealgebra, as well as additional topics from geometry and discrete mathematics (used in engineering and computer sciences). Algebra 1 covers all topics in a first-year algebra course, from proofs, statistics, and probability to algebra-based, real-world problems. With Algebra 1, students begin developing the more complex skills and understanding required for high school level mathematics.

Science

All grades participate in plenty of hands-on activities, research, and experiments and participate in the science fair. We use the Core Knowledge curriculum.

Sixth graders study the scientific method, physics: force, motion, work, energy flow, astronomy: gravity, shapes, universe, energy: transfer of energy, circulatory & lymphatic systems, immune system: disease & immunization, and life cycle of a tree.

Seventh graders study the scientific method, atomic structures: history of models, chemical bonds: ionic, covalent & metallic, chemical reactions: chemical equations, cell division: genetics, mitosis, meiosis, DNA, and genetic engineering. **Eighth graders** study scientific method, physics: matter, motion, forces, energy, mass, volume, density, electrical energy; static electricity, magnetism-electric magnet,

electromagnetic energy, and sound and light waves-interference.

History

History is taught through the Core Knowledge Curriculum.

Sixth grade: Students study units such as Deserts of the World, Religions of the World such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, Ancient Rome and Greece, 17th and 18th Century France, Latin America, and Industrialization of the U.S.

Seventh grade: Students study units such as America 1890s, America, Emerging World Power, Spanish American War, European Geography WWI, WWII, Russian Revolution & Geography, America in the 1920s, and Tennessee History.

Eighth grade: Students study units such as British Empire Breakup, U.S. Constitution, The Cold War, America 1950s-1960s, Modern Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, History of the Middle East, and Contemporary Europe, Canada, Mexico.

Art

All middle school art is taught through the State of Tennessee curriculum guidelines and the Content Knowledge books and programs.

Sixth grade: Students start with Antiquity and move through modern times looking at each era individually, and then complete a project based on an idea or technique taught in each era.

Seventh grade: Students study more extensively Impressionism, Modern Art, Drawing (and all the

concepts associated with drawing), and create a variety of projects. **Eighth grade:** Students have a more in-depth study of Pop Art, Modern Art, Photography, Drawing, and Cultural Art.

Music

Choir: In choir students gain a basic understanding of musical concepts and notation through singing a varied repertoire of music, incorporating sacred and secular music, all from a teaching aspect. Students learn to sing pieces in varied languages and styles.

Middle School Band:

This is a combined class and the curriculum changes from year to year. We continue with Book 2 in the Essential Elements series, begin working on pep band music to play at basketball games, and work on band arrangements which involve students playing parts on their own. Students gain a better understanding of the concepts they learned in beginning band and we are able to build upon that learning in the middle school band.

Physical Education

Middle grade students participate in a combination of team and individual sports. Classes are separated by gender. Activities include: Girls: Fitness, Dance, Volleyball, Team Building, Frisbee, Track and Field. Boys: Fitness, Flag Football, Volleyball, Team Building, Frisbee, Track and Field. The Middle School also participates in the President's Physical Fitness test twice each year.

Computers

All middle school students engage in information literacy exercises throughout the year. When possible, learning exercises coincide with learning in core content courses to enable learning to have a meaningful context. Students learn and expand their skills in productivity

programs such as word processing, spreadsheet, basic database, and desktop publishing. Students practice to improve their keyboarding skills and learn to effectively access the Internet. Through learning activities students may also use peripheral devices.

Spanish

Middle school Spanish covers both speaking and writing in Spanish, plus lessons on Hispanic culture and history. Students study alphabets, numbers, vocabulary, and more.

April 2011 Stanford Achievement Test Results

Area	6 th	Nat'l	7 th	Nat'l	8 th	Nat'l
Reading	69.6	60.6	81.7	68.7	76.6	65.2
Math	61.6	56.2	81.7	68.6	81.7	68.2
Language	54.5	52.4	76.6	64.8	57.5	53.6
Spelling	59.5	54.7	75.6	64.3	53.5	51.5
Science	65.6	58.1	85.7	71.5	76.6	65.0
Soc Sci	64.6	57.8	81.7	68.6	76.6	65.0
Listening	61.6	55.7	71.6	61.4	71.6	62.0
Thinking	61.6	55.9	83.7	69.8	77.7	65.5
Complete Battery	63.6	56.8	79.7	66.8	72.6	62.2

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