



Benilde-St. Margaret's

Junior High

Program of Studies

2015 - 2016

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INTRODUCTION

Benilde-St. Margaret's is a Catholic co-educational junior and senior high school with a college preparatory emphasis. We are happy to have this opportunity to introduce you to the junior high program (grades 7-8).

We are a school with a strong academic commitment to our students. We provide a caring yet structured environment. To meet the diverse needs of junior high students, we have a comprehensive curriculum and offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

The focus of the junior high program is the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and physical development of the young person. Our program includes a solid Catholic base of academic religion classes, liturgies, and prayer services. Homerooms meet every day for prayer, announcements, and occasional activities and special interest meetings. Relevant issues such as peer pressure, decision-making, self-esteem, diversity, and healthy social relationships are also addressed in the junior high.

Our curriculum includes three levels of English, literature, and mathematics: (1) basic (for students working and/or testing below grade level or having difficulty learning in that area), (2) standard (grade level), and (3) accelerated (for students working and testing significantly above grade level).

The junior high curriculum emphasizes the development of language arts skills. In addition to separate English and literature classes for all students, 7th grade students learn about the origin of words and the history of language in the Introduction to Language class. Eighth grade students have the opportunity to study a world language.

Our math curriculum includes pre-algebra, algebra and geometry. Basic skills are strengthened in preparation for higher math.

In the junior high technology is regarded as an important tool for learning. Each student is provided a personal laptop for daily academic use. Technology is integrated into all areas of the curriculum.

Each year our curriculum includes an area of enrichment selected for in-depth, cross-curriculum study. Seventh graders develop an understanding of community, while 8th graders focus on the earth and its environment.

At Benilde-St. Margaret's the 7th and 8th graders are on a quarter system. Some courses are offered for one semester, while other courses such as mathematics, science, and world language are year-long studies. Quarter grade reports, as well as other teacher updates, are posted online for students and parents. In addition, parent-teacher conferences are held twice each year.

Our program is designed to prepare the student for continuing education in high school and college as well as for life-long learning. We are deeply committed to Catholic education and to our students.

English/Literature

English

Year-long course required of 7th and 8th graders on three levels basic, standard, and accelerated

In English students study grammar, usage, mechanics, speaking, writing, and spelling. Areas of emphasis at each level are determined by student strengths and needs. Students are encouraged to improve their understanding and communication by relating the different areas of language study. Students also apply their writing skills across the curriculum.

Literature

Year-long course required of 7th and 8th graders on three levels basic, standard, and accelerated

In literature students develop vocabulary, comprehension skills, and ability to interpret and evaluate written material. Students are introduced to both classical and modern literature of every genre. The 7th grade course emphasizes American literature, the 8th grade course, mythology and legends. Students are encouraged to read independently and develop life-long reading habits.

Fine Art Art

Art 7

One semester course, meets every other day, required of 7th graders

Seventh grade art is a course designed to introduce and increase the knowledge of the elements and principals of art while giving the students opportunities to try multiple types of media. Students will learn fine arts skills through painting, printmaking, drawing and sculpture. Lessons are well integrated with contemporary and more traditional art forms so that students will understand and appreciate the influences of art from many genres and cultures.

Art 8

One semester course, meets every other day, required of 8th graders

Eighth grade art is a course designed to build upon and increase the student's knowledge of various elements, principles, and techniques of art. In addition, students will learn to analyze, compare, interpret, and evaluate works of art. Students will analyze their own work and the work of other artists. Students will further develop their art skills with various media and techniques.

Fine Art Music

Band

Year-long course, meets every other day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to choir or orchestra

This course teaches intermediate and advanced musical concepts. It is a building program and a continuation from elementary school. Suggested proficiency is one to two years playing experience. The band concentrates on larger performance skills and works to improve overall ensemble sound. Students will work on improving their rhythm, technique, and style. Two major concerts are performed each year and are required.

Choir

Year-long course, meets every other day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to band or orchestra

This course is intended to develop beginning to intermediate music competencies. Fundamentals are stressed with emphasis on performances. Music includes sacred, classical, and pop tunes. Attendance is required at two performances, the Christmas concert in December and the spring concert in May. There is an opportunity to participate in junior high pop choir, which meets Wednesdays after school.

String Orchestra

Year-long course, meets every other day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to choir or band

This course is designed for players of orchestral stringed instruments who have had one to two years of playing experience. Intermediate level techniques, along with the study of orchestral music from various styles and periods, are employed to broaden and refine fundamental skills and prepare for the transition to more advanced level playing. Performances in a variety of venues including school Masses, community and school events, and seasonal concerts with band and choir will require some after-school and before-school participation. The students will at times combine with high school players in order to perform larger works, as well as portions of oratorios to be performed with the choir.

Mathematics

Pre-Algebra 7

Year-long course offered to 7th graders on three levels basic, standard, and accelerated

In this course students will investigate the multiple representations of numbers and work towards mastery of the computation of those numbers. Students will also learn how to solve many forms of linear equations and inequalities, including proportions and problems that require the application of percent. Connections between algebra, geometry, and data analysis will be examined throughout the year. In order to improve their abilities to communicate about mathematics, students will apply these pre-algebra topics to real-life problems as they learn problem-solving techniques. Students will also connect mathematics to technology through the introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

Mathematics

Algebra Fundamentals 8

Year-long course offered to 8th graders on two levels basic and standard

This is an algebra course that covers aspects of geometry, trigonometry, probability, and statistics. Students will learn a variety of methods to solve basic and complex linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, and how to graph these functions. Students will apply these topics to real-life situations as they learn problem-solving techniques. Students will use technology for math games, instructional videos, introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

Algebra I

Year-long accelerated course

This is an algebra course that covers aspects of geometry, trigonometry, probability, and statistics. Students will learn a variety of methods to solve basic and complex linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, and how to graph these functions. Students will apply these topics to real-life situations as they learn problem-solving techniques. In addition to these topics, students in Algebra I will cover additional concepts including performing operations on polynomials, factoring polynomials, graphing quadratic equations, using the Quadratic Formula and performing operations on rational expressions. Students will use technology for math games, instructional videos, introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

Physical Education

Physical Education

Year-long course, meets every other day, required of 7th and 8th graders

The physical education program offers a wide variety of activities to assist students in developing interests and skills. The goal is to provide enjoyable activities in which the students can meet with success. Individual, team, lifetime, and fitness units are offered. The lessons focus on participation, fundamentals, sportsmanship, motor skills, and student interaction.

Life Skills

One semester course, meets every other day, required of 7th graders

Life Skills is a class designed to give students a better awareness of the effect their choices have on themselves and the people around them. Emphasis is on healthy decision making, refusal skills and peer pressure. Topics include race and stereotypes; computer safety and awareness; tobacco, alcohol and drug awareness; and global awareness.

Religious Studies

Religious Studies 7

Year-long course, meets every other day, required of 7th graders

This course introduces all major aspects of Christ's life including the prophets' foretelling of Jesus's birth, the infancy narratives, the beginning of His ministry, His parables and lessons as well as Christ's death and resurrection. The course also includes a survey of Scripture, which focuses on the development and creation of the Bible and the historical background of the gospel writers. Much of the course includes the study the gospels and the context in which they were written.

Religious Studies 8

Year-long course, meets every other day, required of 8th graders

This course provides students with themes of Christian leadership and components of Catholic Social Teaching to help them explore their spirituality and involvement within the larger community. A survey of historical figures and significant events in the Church's history deepens students' understanding of the Catholic faith tradition. Through exploring the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, students apply Christian values to current world issues and explore ways they are called to action. Students also explore themes such as community-building, decision-making, morality, sexuality, and justice.

Science

Life Science 7

Year-long course required of 7th graders

In this course students examine living systems, their interactions and interdependence. Areas of study include the scientific method and inquiry-based investigation, plants, animals, microorganisms, genetics, the human body, ecology, and the effects of humans interacting with the environment. Special emphasis during the year is placed on current events in science-related technology.

Earth Science 8

Year-long course required of 8th graders

In this course students explore the natural processes at work in the atmosphere, lithosphere, and hydrosphere of the Earth, as well as Earth's place in the universe. This class includes an introduction to geology, meteorology, and astronomy. Special emphasis during the year is placed on local geology and current events. Technology will be used throughout the school year as a tool for teaching as well as learning.

Social Studies

Each year, junior high students have the opportunity to participate in field experiences as an extension of the Social Studies curricula. Experiences are optional and require an extra fee to cover the costs of travel. In past years these opportunities have included trips to Boston to study the American Revolution, Washington, DC, to study our nation's history and government, a tour of Civil War battlefields, and a Civil Rights tour of southern states.

United States History 7

Year-long course required of 7th graders

Seventh grade United States history concentrates on the period of time between human migration to the North American continent and exploration of the western hemisphere. Included are the following units: American Indians, West African History and Culture, European Exploration and Colonization, the Revolutionary War, the U.S. Constitution, the Age of Jefferson, and the War of 1812.

United States History 8

Year-long course required of 8th graders

Eighth grade United States history focuses on the following topics: Jacksonian Democracy, immigration, reform movements, western migration, internal conflicts, slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the transition to the 20th century, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II & the Holocaust, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War and modern day topics.

The American Experience

Year-long course for selected 8th graders (Extra fee required.)

The American Experience is a uniquely formatted interdisciplinary class facilitated by two teachers over an 80-minute block. In *The American Experience*, students are presented with and consider multiple perspectives of American history while reading, interpreting, and evaluating interrelated literature to enhance their understanding and comprehension of key terms, concepts, and themes. In addition, the class offers learning opportunities beyond the classroom during which students connect their experiences to their studies.

Genocide & Social Justice

One semester course, meets every other day, required of 8th graders

Genocide & Social Justice (GSJ) is an interdisciplinary class taught by two teachers covering issues relating to social justice and both current and past genocides. While studying the occurrences of genocide worldwide, students discuss the impact genocide has on our global community. Students reflect on why genocide happens, how it is carried out and what can be done to prevent it. Through studying the components of social justice and human rights, students define, learn, and discuss the responsibilities we have to care for each other worldwide.

World Language

Introduction to Language

Year-long course required of 7th graders

Through the study of Latin, students increase their English vocabulary, develop verbal abilities and learn skills that can be applied to future world language study. Students study Roman history and culture, and learn about the importance of Latin in English and in the Romance languages.

Chinese

Year-long course open to 8th graders

This first year Chinese fundamental course offers students a solid foundation in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students will engage in simple Chinese conversations such as greeting, giving basic personal information, naming basic objects, showing preferences and immediate needs. Students will recognize over 120 Chinese characters related to greetings, calendars, family members, animals, time, sports and other daily activities and write about 120 characters in Pinyin and 50 Chinese characters related to daily activities. As students comprehend simple passages related to learned topics, they will develop critical thinking skills in Chinese. Teaching strategies will associate with technologies in various topics. Likewise, students will type in Chinese, use online tools, make movies, and use graphics to design alongside each topic. Students will expand knowledge and understanding of China's cultures and history as they compare Chinese culture to that of their own culture.

French

Year-long course open to 8th graders

This first-level French course offers students a balanced approach to language-learning giving careful attention to the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will gain cross-cultural awareness and compare and contrast the cultures of French-speaking countries and their contributions to the global society. Students will learn to talk about themselves, their families and interests as well as explore units on schools, cuisine and shopping. Teaching and learning methods will actively engage students in a variety of activities, which incorporate authentic materials, interactive technology, music, and films.

Latin

Year-long course open to 8th graders

This beginning course introduces students to the Latin language and to ancient Roman history and culture. The course focuses on grammar and vocabulary building, with an emphasis on the connections between Latin and English. Through increasingly complex Latin readings, students move chronologically through the classical period, from early Roman literature to the writers of the early Roman Empire. Cultural and historical perspectives are broadened through supplemental materials and class discussions and projects. Though this course serves as a continuation of Introduction to Language, it is also appropriate for students with no prior Latin study.

Spanish

Year-long course open to 8th graders

This level 1 Spanish course introduces students to the culture and language of the Spanish-speaking world. Students will engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, and exchange opinions on themes such as sports, hobbies, foods, school-life, family, clothing, home-life, community, and staying healthy. Teaching and learning methods will actively engage students in a variety of activities, which focus on balancing the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. An interactive online textbook, videos, music and song are integrated in junior high Spanish.



Benilde-St. Margaret's

A Catholic, college preparatory school, grades 7 - 12
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The premier Catholic, college-preparatory school in the Twin Cities