

JUNIOR HIGH

2021 - 2022
PROGRAM OF STUDIES



Benilde-St.Margaret's

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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 of Studies (grades 7-8) which includes our class offerings for the upcoming school year.

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. Advisories convene weekly for academic support, 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) concepts (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, all students have the opportunity to study a world language of their choosing.

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

In 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.

In the Benilde-St. Margaret's Junior High 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, offered on three levels: concepts, standard, and accelerated

This course develops students' writing and speaking skills through the practice of conventions of communication: grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling. Areas of emphasis at each level are determined by students' strengths and needs, and writing skills are applied across the curriculum. Students are encouraged to read independently and develop life-long reading habits.

7th Grade: Emphasis is placed on the introduction to academic and analytical writing and the conventions of communication to improve writing that informs and persuades. Students also practice organization skills through speaking and research opportunities.

8th Grade: Emphasis is placed on further development of analytical writing skills and speaking skills with multiple opportunities for students to organize, practice, and present. A formal presentation is required each quarter. Students also focus on researching content, analyzing information, and the organization of writing.

Literature

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

This course develops comprehension skills and the ability to interpret and evaluate literature through various genres. Students practice response to literature through discussion and writing. Additional emphasis is placed on strengthening vocabulary and analyzing elements of story. The 7th grade course emphasizes adolescent literature, and the 8th grade course includes mythology and poetry. Students are also encouraged to read independently and develop life-long reading habits.

Fine Art

Art

All students are required to take one semester of 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 principles 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.

Eighth graders must choose one of the following offerings.

The Art of Craft

One semester course, meets every other day, open to 8th graders

Humans have been compelled to make things beautiful for thousands of years. While function is always important, the art of craft and form pushes the maker to incorporate design and beauty into their useable or wearable objects. Students will explore the many different ways humans make functional objects more beautiful through craft. The techniques we will include but are not limited to ceramics, textiles, book/papermaking, stained glass, and wood carving.

Design-Engineer-Innovate 8

One semester course, meets every other day, open to 8th graders

By using Design Thinking strategies students will create solutions for several challenges throughout the semester. Students will create prototypes (using multiple types of materials, CAD programs, and tools), test these ideas improving with each iteration. DEI (Design-Engineer-Innovate) will also highlight the collaboration of engineering and artistic practices by creating solutions that exhibit an understanding of constraints, optimization, functionality, and beauty. Take advantage of the opportunity to develop the Designer, the Engineer, and the Innovator in you with this class.

Drawing + Design

One semester course, meets every other day, open to 8th graders

Capturing the world around you on a piece of paper or with a paintbrush seems like such a hard skill to master! This class will show you the techniques artists use to draw, paint, and illustrate realistically. We will explore skills that will improve students' abilities to create artwork based on what they see in front of them. Students will try their hand at portraits, figure drawing, still life, and landscapes. All work will be two-dimensional.

Fine Art

Music

Band

Year-long course, meets every other day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an alternative to choir and 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. This band class 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 alternative to band and 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 weekly after school.

String Orchestra

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

This course is designed for players of orchestral stringed instruments (violin, viola, cello, and bass) who have had one to two years of playing experience. Advanced beginner/intermediate level techniques, scales, and exercises are taught and practiced in the class, along with the study of orchestral music from various styles and periods. Students will 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 may require some after-school and before-school participation. All students will be asked to play individually to determine repertoire for the ensemble.

Mathematics

Pre-Algebra 7

Year-long course offered to 7th graders on three levels concepts, 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.

Algebra Fundamentals 8

Year-long course offered to 8th graders on two levels concepts 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.

Health & Wellness

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 Seminar 7 & 8

Semester course, meets every other day, required of 7th and 8th graders

In this course, students are introduced to multiple themes that help them explore relevant topics and real world issues. While examining their own beliefs, values, and experiences, students evaluate how difficult decisions impact themselves and others. Through respectful dialogue and reflection, students explore what it means to be a part of a community and their contributions to the communities to which they belong. While developing important communication skills, students gain awareness of how to navigate the difficulties of adolescent life and experiences. This is a two-year course that meets every other day for a semester each year giving the students opportunities to explore various topics throughout their junior high experience.

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, and the human body.

Earth Science 8

Year-long course required of 8th graders

This course is a comprehensive overview of the processes of the Earth. It incorporates problem solving, researching and modeling to allow students to learn the processes that shaped the Earth and space that affect us everyday.

Religious Studies

All students are required to take religious studies. Seventh graders must choose one of the offerings.

Religious Studies 7

Year-long course, meets every other day, open to 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. There is also a focus on the development and writing of the Bible as well as the study of some of the major characters in both the Old Testament and the New Testaments. The course also includes a focus on the lessons that can be learned from Jesus's life and the lives of these Old and New Testament people and how these still apply to our lives and current issues today.

Religious Studies 7 Seminar

*Year-long course, meets every other day, *open to 7th graders*

Religion 7 Seminar focuses on the same fundamentals as the Religious Studies 7 course; however, it is delivered in a seminar-style format and will include additional off-campus field trips. This course sets a precedent in how students interact and understand faith in relationship to who they are as individuals, how they treat others, how they understand a larger community, and how they serve the world. The Religion 7 Seminar will incorporate a new model of theology curriculum where students engage in dialogue and discussion, based on theological texts, for a large portion of class. Additionally, there will be alternate learning experiences where students are exposed to professional speakers, becoming aware of local institutions and non-profits, and gaining a greater understanding and empathy for the larger community.

****If the number of course requests exceeds the maximum class size, students will be drawn from a pool. Remaining students will be enrolled in Religious Studies 7 and be placed on a waitlist for 7 Seminar.***

Religious Studies 8

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

Religious Studies 8 is a Catholic theology course that connects social justice with current events through the study of Catholic Social Teaching. While exploring the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, students apply Christian values to current world issues and examine ways they are called to action. Through the study of our Christian calling to be active in the world, students explore various world issues, discuss the impact of these issues on our global community, and what can be done to eliminate and prevent various problems. In collaboration with other disciplines, students are able to connect faith in action with broader world issues.

Social Studies

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: the first Americans, 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. A field experience to Boston to study the American Revolution may also be offered (for an additional fee).

History 8

Year-long course required of 8th graders

Eighth grade history focuses on a number of topics that connect to both American and world history such as citizenship, conflicts, geography, leadership, and policies. Students will exercise critical thinking skills by making connections between past events and current events.

The American Experience

*Year-long course *available to 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.

****Students are given the opportunity to apply for this course. If the number of applicants exceeds the maximum class size, applicants will be drawn from a pool. Remaining applicants will be placed on a waitlist and be enrolled in US History 8 and Literature 8.***

World Language

French A

Year-long course

French A offers the opportunity to begin the exploration of the French language, which connects students to 175 million French speakers in more than 50 countries. Our exploration of Francophone culture will include Quebec, the Caribbean, West and North Africa, and Europe. Throughout this course, students will focus on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) through a wide range of activities including pair and group work, role-playing, listening and reading. Students will be corresponding with French “epals” throughout the year, thus offering real life applications to students’ growing language capacities. A field trip to a French immersion weekend at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji, MN will also be offered (for an additional fee), as well the opportunity to host a French student for 10 days in February or 3 weeks over the summer. Vocabulary topics include: introductions, description, preferences, numbers, colors, time, family, school, weather, seasons, months, and daily routine. Grammar topics include: present and immediate future tenses for essential verbs, possessive adjectives and adjective/noun agreement. Students will also read three mini-novels in French: *Pauvre Anne*, *Brandon Brown Veut Un Chien*, et *Brandon Brown Va Au Québec*.

French B (Prerequisite: French A)

Year-long course

French B offers students the opportunity to continue their exploration of the French language as well as the Francophone culture. Throughout this course, students will focus on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and culture through a wide range of activities including pair/group work, role-playing, listening and reading. Students will continue their correspondence with French “epals” throughout the year and will also have the opportunity to host a French student for 10 days in February or 3 weeks over the summer. An opportunity to attend an immersion weekend at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji, MN will also be offered (for an additional fee). Vocabulary topics explored include: café food, clothing, shopping, house, places in a town, and travel. Grammar topics include: a review of all verbs studied in French A, additional irregular verbs and *le passé composé* tense. Students will do units on Paris monuments and art history. Students will also read three mini-novels in French: *Brandon Brown Le Nouvel Houdini*, *Alice la Liste*, *Le Maillot*.

Latin

Year-long course

Latin is offered at the introductory level and beyond (as a high school class) and is open to junior high students. See the *Senior High Program of Studies* for course descriptions and prerequisites.

Spanish A

Year-long course

Spanish A introduces students to the Spanish-speaking world. This introductory course focuses on building students' working vocabulary, speaking skills, and writing skills through various interpretive, interpersonal and presentational learning activities. Students will communicate with real pen pals as they will be able to ask and answer questions and give information regarding the following themes: hobbies and free time, descriptions, school life, mealtime, places in the community, invitations, making plans, and sports. Movies and music are extensive tools used to teach acquisition. Students will explore the cultures of Spanish speaking countries and become more aware of the diversity of cultures around the globe. As a cumulative activity, students will read, interpret, and retell a novice mid-level novel in the last quarter.

Spanish B (Prerequisite: Spanish A)

Year-long course

Spanish B expands students' knowledge of the Spanish-speaking world. Students will explore the global influence of the Spanish language and cultures through news sources, music, and movies. Students will continue to work in the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. Specific themes of study include the family, shopping and clothing, vacation and travel, entertainment, and the environment with an increased focus on vocabulary acquisition. Past tense structures are also introduced. Students will acquire pen pals from a Spanish speaking country in the second semester to interact with a native Spanish speaker while demonstrating intermediate communication skills, reading comprehension, and sentence structure. As a cumulative activity, students will read, interpret and retell a novice high-level novel in the last quarter.



Benilde-St. Margaret's

A Catholic, college preparatory school, grades 7 - 12

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