

# Middle School Program

## Grades 7-8

**The 7th and 8th grade curriculum** includes four core areas of instruction: language arts, math, science and social studies, as well as reading, theology, physical education, health, art, music, dance and world language exploration courses. Students in grades 7 and 8 prepare for the rigors of a high school college preparatory curriculum with emphasis on organization, study skills, cooperative learning and interdisciplinary studies.

**Language Arts** is designed to prepare students for future high school reading and writing endeavors. Summer reading is assigned in both grades. Lessons are based on different genres of literature, including short stories, novels, poetry and myths. Language Arts also focuses intently on writing skills, incorporating vocabulary, spelling, grammar, usage and mechanics. A separate semester of reading is taught in grade 8.

**Math** is designed for algebra readiness in grade 7 and pre-algebra or algebra in grade 8. The lessons in grade 7 involve challenging and realistic math material with emphasis on the development of problem-solving skills. Grade 8 reinforces the signed numbers in word problems involving fractions, inequalities and graphing. Basic facts of geometry, probability and statistics also are explored. Acceleration in math may be possible for qualifying students.

**Science** in grades 7 and 8 is designed to give students a broad understanding of science that is intended to prepare them for high school. Science in grade 7 includes environmental, life and physical sciences. Life science focuses on cell structure, function and processes and genetics. Physical science addresses motion, forces and energy. Environmental science includes ecosystems, population, weather and climate. Grade 8 focuses on earth and physical sciences and chemistry. This earth science course includes plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes, weathering, soil formation, erosion and deposition, and geologic time and astronomy. Physical science focuses on the characteristics of waves, sounds and light, and the electromagnetic spectrum. Chemistry includes the properties, changes and measurement in matter, atoms and bonding, chemical reactions, acids and bases and solutions.

**Social Studies** is designed to give the student an understanding of history in ancient times and the history of the United States through Reconstruction. Students in grade 7 explore ancient civilizations through the first global age. The grade 8 course covers United States history from colonization through Reconstruction. This course is presented in such a way that students will be impressed with the country's need for active participation in the democratic process. Specific units are taught on the United States Constitution, citizenship, and Native Americans. Historical fiction is woven into the curriculum.

**Theology** for grade 7 students focuses on the person of Jesus through a study of Jesus' life, loving actions and His presence in those around us. Students also study our call to respond to Jesus and to develop a deeper spiritual relationship with Him. Grade 8 theology focuses on the Church as an expression of Christ's presence in the world today. The course studies the nature, history and moral witness of the Church.

**Foreign Language** options are available for middle school students. Students in grade 7 may choose to study Spanish, French or Mandarin. This one year course is equivalent to the first semester of high school Spanish I, French I or Mandarin I. Students in grade 8 complete their foreign language I course. Thus, Elms students will be prepared to start high school in Spanish II, French II or Mandarin II.

**A curriculum of personal leadership development** and healthy relationship development for middle school students is based on *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. The interactive and engaging lessons are taught over the course of each year by the guidance counselor.

Middle School students present a compilation of academic works annually in the **Middle School Convocation**. Students work closely with a teacher/coach to demonstrate a concept learned within the curriculum and integrated with an outside interest of the student (e.g. French language and ballet.)



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# 2010-2011 Middle School Curriculum

## GRADE 7

Language Arts

Algebra Readiness

Problem-solving  
Computation

Science

Environmental Science  
Life Science  
Earth Science

Social Studies

World Studies from 1000 B.C. to 1750:  
Ancient Civilizations through the First Global Age

Theology

Creed and Prayer

French IA, Spanish IA or Mandarin 1A

Physical Education+

Art\*

Music

Choir  
Orchestra/Band

Dance\*

Computer

+ SEMESTER COURSE

\* QUARTER COURSE

## GRADE 8

Language Arts

Pre-Algebra or Algebra I

Science

Earth Science  
Physical Science  
Chemistry

Social Studies

U.S. Studies from 1607 to 1877:  
Colonization through Reconstruction

Theology

Liturgy and Morality

Reading: Library and Study Skills  
OR

French IB, Spanish IB or Mandarin IB

Physical Education+

Art\*

Health\*

Music

Choir  
Orchestra/Band

Dance\*

Computer