

Instilling *Wisdom*



Inspiring *Worship*

Middle School Curriculum

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

As traditional education involves the “three Rs” (reading, writing, and arithmetic), the middle school program at Spring Branch Academy seeks to instill these three basic skills into seventh- and eighth-grade students as preparation for their high-school studies in theology, humanities, the language arts, and the mathematical sciences.

Bible

Christianity is essential for classical education. While patterns in language and mathematics have been ascertained through the development of the liberal arts (both the trivium and the quadrivium, respectively), the patterns in history have remained a mystery to the classical and modern minds. Such patterns can only be known through revelation from God. The Bible reveals such patterns (in Greek, *types*) through its unparalleled prophecies and insights into the thoughts and ways of God. Therefore, wisdom truly does come “out of his mouth” (Proverbs 2:6).

In the Bible class, students read the entire Bible in two years. Instruction is given through the framework of eight principles of interpretation. Intriguing explorations in both interpretation and application are set up on Monday, shaped on Wednesday (through the writing class), and resolved on Friday, to the degree that God blesses. In addition, students also sing hymns and memorize both a catechism and lengthy passages of Scripture.

Writing

In preparation for high-school humanities, middle-school students receive training in *both* reasoning and writing. Training in reasoning involves a year in formal logic and a year in informal fallacies. Training in writing involves six of the ten forms in the classical *progymnasmata*, a traditional course in learning rhetoric through imitation. Content for the writing assignments comes from the Bible class; and comparison with biblical forms is encouraged. Students may enter this two-year class in either year, because both years stand alone and complement each other.

Grammar Bootcamp

To enter the writing class, students must pass a proficiency exam in English grammar. Students in need of additional help receive a year of grammar before enrolling in the writing class (assuming the exam is passed).

Nature as Numbers

As a wise Creator, God built the world with orderly patterns that can be represented with mathematical models. This class trains students to *see* these patterns in nature. As a result, students learn to express scientific puzzles in mathematical language, which complements the artificial way that math classes try to teach such skills through “word problems.” In this way, students learn the mathematical language of nature through a “lab” approach.

Arithmetic

Just as language is built on words and sentences, so arithmetic is built on numbers and computation. Therefore, *both* number theory and computational skills are necessary for “translating” patterns of nature into symbolic form. As an abstract subject, mathematics requires a student to grasp the various meanings of mathematical operations and put such abstract thinking into practice through real-life puzzles. In this curriculum, “word problems” cease to be silly add-ons, but instead form the heart of arithmetic and the foundation for high-school mathematics and science. In time, it is hoped that “Nature as Numbers” will be more fully integrated with “Arithmetic.”

Schedule

Spring Branch Academy has a college-style schedule in both high school and middle school. Students receive instruction that sets up a significant amount of schoolwork that must be done at home. Given both freedom and deadlines, students must learn to manage their own schedules under God. In the middle school, as seen below, classes meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Homework is designed to be done within the workweek with nothing due on Monday. Orientation Day this year is August 24th at 8:30 a.m.

Location

All classes are held at Countryside Bible Church (1651 E. Litchfield Road), north of Jonesville, Michigan.

Cost

Parents are responsible each year for a one-time enrollment fee (\$100 per family), tuition for each child (\$250 per month for one middle-school student), transportation arrangements, and books. Each summer, by July 1st, the school puts out a book list for the coming year. Parents are responsible for borrowing or buying textbooks for their student. In time, many books may be borrowed through the school or other parents; but for now, there is need of purchasing.

Enrollment

In contrast to high school, where homeschool families can enroll a student in one or more classes, the middle-school program is an integrated curriculum that only accepts full-time status. Students must take all the classes offered or possibly swap out a class in 8th grade for a high-school class (e.g. Algebra I). To enroll, families fill out the enrollment form and schedule an interview with Bob Snyder, the school director. Both the enrollment form and contact info are on the school's website: www.sbacademy.us. The enrollment form also has information on scholarship funds. Enrollment is limited, so families should apply early. Acceptance is on a first-come basis.

Elementary Program

For families with a student enrolled in middle school, there is also a homeschool co-op available for the elementary grades (1st through 6th grades). This program is still being developed, but currently it looks like a Wednesday morning similar to Classical Conversations and a Friday morning that supports a select menu of homeschool curricula, especially the Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW). Please ask the director for more details.

Spring Branch Academy

Middle School Schedule 2023-24

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			Remedial Advanced		
8:00	Staff Prayer Meeting		Staff Prayer Meeting		Staff Prayer Meeting
9:00	Bible History & Literature Singing & Memorization		Grammar Bootcamp Writing Progymnasmata Logic		Bible History & Literature Singing & Memorization
10:00	Nature as Numbers Patterns in Physical Science		Arithmetic Number Theory Computational Mathematics		Arithmetic Number Theory Computational Mathematics
11:00	Lunch		Lunch		Lunch
12:00					
1:00					
2:00	Note: To keep the first day of the week free for worship, no homework is due on Monday.		Note: For families with a student enrolled in middle school, elementary education is available on Wednesday and Friday.		Note: For families with a student enrolled in middle school, elementary education is available on Wednesday and Friday.
3:00					
4:00					