

**Our Shepherd Lutheran School**  
*A Private Christian Based Middle School*  
*Serving Avon & Greater Indianapolis, Indiana*  
*Grades 5-8 Curriculum*

The Middle School's broad-based curriculum allows students to excel in many areas. Small class sizes give students the ability to interact with their teachers and get the personal attention needed at this grade level. Preparing young people to succeed in high school requires growth academically, spiritually, emotionally and socially. The success of our program is seen through our alumni and their transition to high school.

Religion

The center of Our Shepherd's curriculum is our study of the Bible. Grades 5-6 use the "Voyages of Faith" curriculum from Concordia Publishing House. Grades 5-8 also begin their confirmation instruction. Grades 5-6 have confirmation 1 day a week and Grades 7-8 have confirmation 4 days a week. Each Wednesday the school community gathers together for worship in our chapel services. Each grade is given the opportunity to lead worship and this culminates in Grade 8's farewell chapel. Memory work from Luther's Small Catechism and Bible verses gives students the foundation to defend their faith.

Social Studies/History

United States history from discovery through early 20<sup>th</sup> century is covered in Grade 5. Geography of the United States and their five regions is also emphasized. *Our Country* (Scott Forsman) is the main text.

*The World and its People* (Scott Forsman) helps Grade 6 students explore World History including studies of ancient Rome, China, Greece, and Egypt. European history from medieval to modern times as well as geography of Africa, Asia, and Latin America round out this year's exciting program.

Grade 7 focus switches to Geography. Map skills are reviewed and the five themes of Geography are taught. These include Earth and its regions, location and place, human changes to Earth, and importance of movement. World climate, agriculture, and economies are studied. *People, Places, and Change* by Holt Rhineholt serves as our text. United States History is the Grade 8 social studies focus. *Call to Freedom* by Holt Rhineholt leads students in the review of United States history through World War 2. Special emphasis is placed on mastering the basics of the United States Constitution.

Language Arts

A balanced approach to Language Arts is used in Grades 5-8 to create well-read and articulate speakers and writers. Individual texts for grammar, and literature are used. The various genres are used based around themes. Novels are used at each grade level to supplement the published anthology. The Accelerated Reader Program promotes pleasure reading beyond the classroom.

Creative writing explores different genres including the writing of narratives, informative, persuasive, and descriptive work, as well as poetry. Research reports are required throughout the grade levels with greater depth of research required at the upper grades.

Recent successes at district and regional spelling bees have shown the success of our spelling program. The use of the writing process is expected as students prepare works to be published.

### Science

Grade Five begins with studying the classification system where students take a look at vertebrates and invertebrates. We then move into cells and their structures and function. Many of the human body systems are covered such as the skeletal, muscular, digestive, respiratory, and circulatory systems. Each student completes a systems project during this time. Students then have the opportunity to find out how plants grow and develop which includes finding out about photosynthesis. The rest of the year has the students moving through ecosystems and the environment. Time is spent on water and its importance. After this the class moves into a very interesting investigation on weather and climate. We spend time studying the structure of the Earth and the resources that are available as well. Finally, students end the year learning about matter, chemical reactions, force, simple machines, energy, and electricity.

Grade Six begins with a look at technology in relation to science. We quickly jump into a detailed study of cells where the class designs a cell and how it relates to a factory. We spend time looking at the classification system. Next the class studies the unseen world of bacteria, viruses, protist, and fungi. Students will also study the animal kingdom. Living things and their interaction with the environment is the next important topic that is covered. Students learn about the Earth's living resources and how pollution affects the land, water, and air. Next, we take a look at the relationship between the earth, moon, and sun. We spend some time with the atmosphere, weather patterns, and climate changes. Finally, students will investigate matter, waves, light and the electromagnetic spectrum. Grade Seven begins the year by studying scientific inquiry and the metric system. The students then spend time going through the bones, muscles, and skin. The digestive, circulatory, respiratory, excretory, immune, and nervous systems are investigated. Next, the Earth's interior is looked at and earthquakes and volcanoes are studied. The properties of minerals and classification of rocks are an important concept studied too. Students discover the vast ocean and its characteristics. The class then studies the solar system, stars, galaxies, and the universe. Finally, states of matter are reviewed and the students will take a detailed look at Chemistry including the elements, the periodic table and the structure of atoms.

Grade Eight starts by looking at the importance of technology and design. The class then jumps into the characteristics of living things. Cell processes are studied next. We then take a look at the challenging topic of genetics. Time is spent again with atoms where the class learns about bonds. Chemical reactions, acids, and bases are investigated too. Motion, force, work, and machines are studied. Students then shift to an energetic look at

energy and how it can be transferred. Finally the year finishes with discovering how electricity and magnetism work together.

### Math

All math classes are based on whole instruction. By the end of Grade Six students are expected to have mastered the four arithmetic operations, the order of operations, conversions, rounding and estimating of sums, differences, products, and quotients of real numbers. Students learn to graph; continue to build on Geometry skills; work with ratios, proportions, percents, and probability, and are introduced to integers in a Pre-Algebra chapter. All students in Grade Seven take Pre-Algebra where they continue to develop their math skills and add to those skills a more in-depth study of exponents, fractions, rational numbers, graphing on the coordinate plane, solving equations containing variables, scientific notation, inequalities, square roots, and Geometry. All students in Grade Eight take Algebra, which uses a high school text and curriculum. Pre-Algebra concepts are used to continue the study of variables and integers and new topics such as solving systems of equations, multiplying and factoring polynomials, solving and graphing linear equations, quadratic equations, exponential functions, and investigating right triangles. The expectation for the students is that they be placed in the next level of math in their first year of high school.

**Our Shepherd Lutheran School, a private Christian school based in Avon, Indiana that serves the needs of children in Greater Indianapolis. For more information please call 317-271-9100.**