



SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Full Day School Program

Gardere Community Christian School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, or religion to all the rights privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Gardere Community Christian School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, or religion in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, tuition assistance programs, and other school-administered programs.

There are many challenges in teaching and learning. Therefore Gardere Community Christian School must be precise in its goals. We believe that all children can thrive and learn if given positive care, support, and opportunity. Our program is designed to address the specific needs of each age and stage in a child's development.

The goals of our curriculum are to help children develop a positive sense of self (who they are in God), be active and creative explorers, and in the process become enthusiastic learners. We hope that our students develop confidence mentally, emotionally, and physically, becoming responsible explorers of the world around them. We want our students to think creatively and begin seeing things from different perspectives. We hope to sharpen their skills, increase their knowledge, and to instill in them a lifelong love for learning. We want to motivate them to investigate possibilities, and provide them with opportunities through all areas of curriculum and development as described further below.

Classroom Environment

Students are respected as unique individuals created in the image of God, each with special abilities and needs. They are taught by skilled and knowledgeable teachers who love children and are dedicated to helping them realize their highest potential—spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and creatively. Classes are kept small so that each student will receive individual attention and have abundant opportunities to learn, participate and lead.

Character Training and Habit Formation

A great deal of emphasis is placed upon developing each child's character and in the formation of good habits that will benefit the child for the remainder of his or her life, not only in academic pursuits, but in any endeavor. We also desire to help children feel comfortable at school, to nurture their sense of trust, autonomy and belonging. We give them daily opportunities to experience a healthy pride and confidence, to develop independence and self-control. We want them to have a positive, Godly outlook on life.



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Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

In Pre-Kindergarten, to help children develop into confident, caring, competent individuals, our program is play oriented. We believe "play is a child's work" and that through play, children acquire the foundations for later academics. Learning through play is the preparation children need before they can understand how to use abstract symbols such as letters and numbers. For example: Before children can understand the concept of "soft" and "hard" they need to experience "soft" and "hard" by working with play dough or building with blocks. Before they can hold a pencil or control it to make a letter on paper, they need to have developed their small muscle skills through cutting, pasting, pouring, stringing beads, kneading dough and drawing. Likewise, to understand why $1 + 3 = 4$, a child needs to first have concrete experiences of counting objects, sorting them into piles, adding and removing some. In this way they acquire the foundation for logical thinking to later do math.

As students progress in Pre-K, through Kindergarten and later grades, developmental readiness is taken into consideration as subjects are taught and introduced to students. Pre-testing and post-testing are done to ensure students readiness and mastery in all areas and to insure the learning of skills and concepts needed to advance. We pay close attention to the individual needs of each student and adjust the teaching accordingly, giving individual and small group instruction as necessary.

Mathematics and Science

GCCS offers a mathematics and science program that enables them to participate knowledgeably in the scientific and technological discussions of the modern world. Our goal is to support children in their active explorations and help them become confident, independent and inquisitive learners. When children investigate or observe their environment, when they ask questions, when they experiment and talk about their findings, when they record them in writing, on charts, or through drawings, recreate them with blocks, or interpret them through dramatic play, they are learning to understand their world and demonstrate their understanding. We provide an environment rich in materials to explore, manipulate and talk about being a good steward of God's world. Children are guided to question, to experiment, to think, to reason and to appreciate the world in which they live.

From the early grades the mathematics curriculum encourages mastery of concepts and skills that are foundational for advanced study and emphasizes the real-life application. Students are taught through analyzing and comparing various ways of problem solving, communicating verbally, and in writing, mathematical concepts and the procedure for problem solving. Emphasis is put on proficiency of basic facts, mental math, logical thinking, text book and teacher instruction, and guided and independent practice. Students are encouraged to discover the organization of numbers and identifying



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patterns which support mathematical concepts, such as in time, money, place value, graphing, charting, probability, measurement, figures, operations, etc. We plan to utilize the Singapore Math program published by Great Source – *Math in Focus* which features a problem-based approach that builds on a concrete-to-pictorial-to-abstract progression.

The science curriculum makes use of a hands-on approach, which enables the students to acquire a solid understanding of the world in which they live through a direct encounter with the wonders and laws of God's creation. The program introduces children to the wonders of science with *Discovering Nature With Young Children*, a nationally field-tested curriculum funded partly by the National Science Foundation. Rather than focusing on learning facts without direct experience or observing random objects on a table, *Discovering Nature* makes science the exploration of materials and phenomena. GCCS hopes to build on the natural curiosity of the students, emphasizing inquiry skills and problem solving, acknowledging students as active participants in their own learning. We hope that students develop the understanding that living things are dependent on each other; living things live and thrive when their needs are met (physical, mental, and spiritual needs); and that living things are affected by, and affect, each other and their environment.

Language Arts, History and Bible (Humanities)

Gardere Community Christian School offers its students a rich humanities, arts, and social studies curriculum which integrates the study of literature and the arts with the study of history and geography, and then permeates it throughout the curriculum with a Biblical worldview, creating a truly integrated curriculum. Students come to understand the present and gain perspective on the future through knowledge of the past and knowledge of God. They are challenged to live virtuously and nobly through the example of those who have gone before. They learn to think critically and biblically by hearing, reading and evaluating the writings of outstanding thinkers of the past and present. They are encouraged to express themselves creatively in written and artistic media through exposure to literature and art.

At GCCS, the study of reading and literature is a primary focus of our instruction. The curriculum integrates many different aspects of reading, writing, and speaking. We utilize a *Four Block* approach which includes phonics – encompassing sound and letter recognition; word play - encompassing oral and written usage, word origins and roots, and vocabulary; sentence and grammar structure -both oral and written; and a rich variety of literature -encompassing read-alouds, teacher modeling, echo reading - both teacher led and student led small group discussions, vocabulary instruction, individual and group presentations and guided reading practice. We understand that true reading extends beyond decoding and fluency to comprehension and evaluation of the intended message of the text. Students are taught to distinguish between fact and fiction,



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compare, summarize, sequence, predict outcomes, and make inferences. They learn to interpret illustrations, charts, and graphs; respond both verbally and in written form; to use, critique, and interpret figurative language, points of view, mood and tone; listen and write for appreciation, critical analysis, and information; follow both written and oral instructions; identify author's purpose and develop purpose as an author or artist, creating for a variety of purposes and audiences.

GCCS Social Studies/History curriculum begins in the lower elementary grades with the study of families, neighborhoods, communities, and an introduction to United States History. Louisiana State History is taught in Grade 4 and an introductory course in World Geography is studied in Grades 5. Our goal is that through teacher instruction, text book study, map exploration, computer searches and family and community involvement, students will develop an understanding and appreciation for environmental, cultural and geographic factors that impact development and lifestyle of a people, appreciate the importance of human and natural resources, industry, the development of rules and laws to govern and protect and their impact in history. We hope students will build an understanding that people can plan, organize, and make decisions for the common good and develop and appreciate differences of opinion. GCCS hopes to promote respect for and a greater understanding of cultural and individual diversity within the community of the classroom, school and the student's greater community.

In all curriculum areas students are taught to utilize resources through a variety of references. They are taught research skills, how to utilize a dictionary, glossary, and thesaurus in all types of media, and knowledge and use of various scientific and mathematical instruments. They are taught to incorporate the use of active reading strategies, graphic organizers, note taking skills, and various genres to acquire information and develop their cognitive abilities.

Additional Elements of our Curriculum include:

- Daily chapel, Prayer and Bible time
- Field trips & service projects
- Music, Art, Computer (Technology), Health & Physical Education classes