

Fourth Grade: A Time for Change



The fourth grade is a time of great change and growth for a child--physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. Developing a strong faith in God and focusing on His loving guidance helps the fourth grader deal with these personal changes and the responsibilities of greater independence and expectations. Through fourth-grade curriculum studies, students are encouraged to accept these challenges by developing more initiative, practicing better organizational skills, and using critical thinking skills to master more complex concepts.

The program of instruction in fourth-grade classes at Brentwood Christian School includes a wide variety of developmentally appropriate activities and studies. Teachers write curriculum for each area of study based on the school's philosophy and goals. In areas where texts are used, the teachers review publications from both Christian and secular publishers, select the best material, and write curriculum which employs that material. Studies and activities in each class are based upon the following guidelines:

BIBLE - Part of our mission statement at BCS is to "lead students to love God". In order for students to love God, they must first know Him and his Word. EL3/4 through 12th-grade students explore God's word in Bible class by hearing and studying the Bible stories of both the Old and New Testaments and participating in discussions and activities where they can apply the lessons learned through those stories in order to lead lives of Christian service and leadership.

CHAPEL – Held weekly with EL3/4 through 5th grade in attendance; about once every four to six weeks an all-community chapel assembly is held, and secondary students pair up with elementary students for the service. Chapel services have lessons that focus on character traits growing out of scriptural lessons and include singing and prayer. Most chapel services conclude with the principal's announcements or recognitions.

LANGUAGE ARTS – Focuses on reading, language arts, and grammar through a model called Reading Workshop. Emphasis is on the interaction between the readers and the text. Students receive a mini-lesson where they learn models, strategies, and tools for comprehending literature, then apply learnings through independent reading and close with group discussion and learning sharing. Students learn to ask questions, make connections with prior knowledge and previously read texts, and ask questions to clarify faulty comprehension. Spelling and writing are taught through weekly spelling patterns, and writing skills in interactive notebooks through pattern identification and sorts.

Texts currently in use: *Rocking Resources*, and Reader's Workshop – Students develop writing, language, and reading comprehension skills through practice and independent reading.

MATHEMATICS – Includes mastery of the four basic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) using whole numbers, including multiplication with two- and three-digit multipliers, division with one- and two-digit divisors, and teaches adding, subtracting, and multiplying decimals. This unit also teaches mastery of basic fractional concepts, addition and subtraction of fractions or mixed numbers with common denominators, naming equivalent fractions; and exploring concepts of number relationships, measurement, estimation, and geometry. Students will apply concepts and skills in problem-solving activities.

Text currently in use: *Big Ideas Math: Modeling Real Life*, Cengage.

SCIENCE – Explores the wonders of God's creation through an inquiry-based curriculum tapping into students' God-given curiosity to develop skills for predicting, investigating, observing, and analyzing. It is a study of systems through Life Science, Earth Science, and Physical Science. Science develops critical thinking through questioning, projects, lab experiments, and hands-on activities.

Text currently in use: *Science Fusion*, Texas edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Students will study the regions, resources, government, and economic development of Texas, as well as their citizenship in the state of Texas and the United States. This study divides lessons into units that include activity-based projects and projects requiring group and individual research.

Text currently in use: *Texas Weekly Studies*, videos, and online resources.

SPANISH - Taught by a Spanish teacher once a week. Spanish class incorporates singing, movement, and games to provide an opportunity to learn basic vocabulary and develop a positive attitude toward language learning. Students will sing children's worship music in Spanish and participate in activities in Spanish based on Bible stories that many of the students are already familiar with in English. Students will also participate in scripture memorization activities and have the opportunity to read and write in the language. At this level, students will have occasional, optional homework. The teacher uses repetition and visuals to maximize learning potential. Through this class, students will appreciate that God loves all people and can be worshiped in different languages while learning basic vocabulary and songs!

ART – One day per week students attend a forty-minute class focused on various art techniques. Art is also integrated into the other core curriculum on a regular basis by the classroom teacher tied to content area studies. This unit uses a variety of media and techniques including markers, crayons, yarn, colored pencils, origami, and chalk. Students work on the development of skills in the creation of products such as models, patterns, illustrations, creative borders, displays, character dolls, posters, maps, and independent projects.

MUSIC – Taught four days per week by two trained music teachers; Elementary Choir emphasizes singing while Beginning Recorder emphasizes learning a new musical instrument. Both classes teach concepts such as rhythm and beat, pitch, volume, and tempo, including more advanced instruction in music theory and preparing students to be good sight-readers of music. Both classes are reinforced by the classroom teacher, especially in devotional activities. Music class combines musical training with performance opportunities in a fall music concert, a spring music concert, and Grandparents' Day program. This study includes *Nutcracker* ballet at the Performing Arts Center in December when available, and Austin Symphony Young People's Concert in the spring.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Taught by physical education teachers daily during a thirty-minute class taking place in the gym and on outdoor fields. P.E. includes conditioning exercises, physical games and activities, and athletic skills.

COMPUTER LAB – Conducted weekly by a trained computer teacher. Students will begin focusing on using technology to create products that communicate to an audience. They will learn to use presentation software and email. Students will learn more about web browsing and how information is communicated on the Internet. More advanced word processing and formatting skills will also be developed at this level. During the fourth quarter, students will continue learning basic coding/programming by adding concepts such as problem decomposition, functions, nested loops, and conditionals.

Text currently in use: *Easy Tech*, Learning.com. Students will learn to communicate, construct, evaluate, collaborate, and create using technology

LIBRARY – Features a forty-minute class once a week where students are exposed to quality children's literature and have the opportunity to check out books.

FIELD TRIPS – Taken in connection with and to enhance subject area studies including such destinations as the San Antonio Missions, Nutcracker Ballet, Redbud Center, and the Austin Symphony Young People's Concert.

RECESS – A thirty-minute daily play time in an outdoor play area providing an opportunity for unstructured recreation.

HOMEWORK – Assigned about four times per week. Homework can include independent reading, spelling mastery, math computation, studying for chapter and unit tests in social studies and science, Bible memory work, and work on independent study projects. See Handbook for time guidelines for each grade.