

Kindergarten: A Firm Foundation



The kindergarten year is a monumental one for a child. This is the year when most children make the important transition from the home, where they may be the focus of most or all of the attention of a parent, to a classroom, where they must share the attention of their teacher with many others. What can make this transition not only possible but also joyful is a loving, caring Christian teacher who understands both the needs of the individual child and the importance of the child's learning to co-exist peacefully and constructively with others. Brentwood Christian School's kindergarten program blends love and discipline in a way that helps the child learn from experience that school is an inviting, challenging, wonderful place to be.

The program of instruction in kindergarten 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 vary from class to class, but 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 studies, including singing and prayer. Most chapel services conclude with the principal's announcements or recognitions.

LANGUAGE ARTS - Includes alphabet recognition and order, phonetic sounds of letters, blends, and letter combinations, decoding, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and literature. Students will move into reading during the course of the year; students already reading will advance their skills.

Texts currently in use: *Abeka Phonics and Reading Program*. Students progress through leveled books that correspond with phonics lessons taught in the classroom.

MATHEMATICS - Includes sorting, classifying, shapes, patterns, comparing, ordering, graphing, numbers, measuring, time, money, and beginning addition and subtraction. A wide variety of manipulatives are used to enhance understanding of concepts.

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

SCIENCE AND HEALTH - Includes physical, earth, life sciences, and health. Studies are grouped into units in which students engage in meaningful, active participation in scientific practices. All science instruction is presented to enable the child to discover and appreciate God's design inherent in His creation.

Text currently in use: Full Option Science System, Texas edition by Delta Education.

SOCIAL STUDIES - Based on unit studies including manners, families, communities and their helpers, traditions, the world and maps, heroes of the past, the four seasons, Pilgrims, Thanksgiving, continents, country, and Texas. Mini-studies of holidays including Christmas, Valentine's Day, George Washington's Birthday, Abraham Lincoln's Birthday, and Easter are covered. Aspects of the child's familiar world, as well as unfamiliar subjects within a framework of faith and trust in God are presented.

Text currently in use: *Here We Are*, Savvas myWorld.

ART - Taught in a thirty-minute class once a week. Students will paint with various types of paint, practice work with mixed media, explore the color wheel, learn about art history, and study various artists. The classroom teacher may also use art in correlation with Bible class and unit studies. A variety of media is used including crayons, tempera paints, finger paints, watercolors, and clay or Play-Doh. Skills such as drawing, coloring, cutting, and pasting are developed which also encourages the child's use of imagination.

MUSIC - Taught by a trained music teacher in a thirty-minute class two days a week. Music emphasizes singing and movement and basic ukulele instruction. This study introduces music concepts such as rhythm and beat, pitch, volume, and tempo and combines musical training/appreciation with performance opportunities in the annual Christmas and Grandparents' Day programs. In the kindergarten classes, the teachers incorporate music in connection with other studies in the class and with daily devotional activities.

Text currently in use: *Spotlight on Music*, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. Students are introduced to music selections and music terminology.

DRAMATICS - Included with various studies such as Bible (re-enactments of biblical stories) and language arts (play-acting scenes from children's literature). Dramatics is used in role-playing when working on social skills. Movement and finger play activities are used widely in the kindergarten day.

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 - Students will work with a trained computer teacher using curriculum that reinforces language arts and math studies in this weekly class. Students will gain familiarity with basic computer input methods, including mouse basics and keyboarding. Critical concepts of online safety and digital will be introduced. Students will learn to gather information, determine which facts are both reliable and significant, and decide how to organize them. They will begin to use various applications and graphics to organize their ideas and information in order to create a simple multimedia project.

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

SPANISH - Taught by a Spanish teacher once a week. Spanish class incorporates singing, movement, crafts, 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. 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!

LIBRARY - Students have a thirty-minute story time each week with the librarian. Beginning in the second semester students can check out books from the library for independent reading.

FIELD TRIPS - Taken in connection with and to enhance unit studies, field trips are to the Crowe's Nest Farm and the Fire Station by way of the school bus. We try to give parents at least a two-week notice before each field trip to allow ample time to make arrangements or secure childcare for siblings if they plan to attend. Please remember that siblings are not allowed to attend field trips or class parties as stated in the Handbook.

LEARNING CENTERS - Used to reinforce skills that have been taught in direct instruction by the teacher. Learning centers include language arts, math, science, social studies, and Bible activities. They are used to develop creative thinking, as well as academic skills.

RECESS - Conducted as a thirty-minute daily playtime on the outside playground. All kindergarten classes enjoy this time to play and socialize together.

SOCIALIZATION - Under the watchful guidance and with the encouragement of the teacher, social skills are practiced at centers, during recess, and during various activities throughout the day.

HOMEWORK - Assigned on Tuesdays and Thursdays for reinforcement of concepts introduced and practiced in the classroom. Parental reading aloud to children on a regular basis is recommended throughout the year. Children will receive required reading homework around the middle of the school year.