



1st Grade

Program Overview

Update: August 28, 2014



Children in first grade begin to develop independence as readers and writers. Our balanced literacy approach provides a solid framework of integration between all language arts skills. Reading other books at home is encouraged. Teaching comprehension and vocabulary are top priorities. Supplemental core stories also provide opportunities to integrate biblical principles, science, social studies, health, art, and other subjects. Technology is integrated to assist learning.

Phonics instruction using the *Foundations* program is a vital part of bringing security and depth of reading skill to the students.

We use "process writing" in which students brainstorm to organize prewriting ideas, draft their writing, obtain teacher or peer response to the draft, revise, edit, and then "publish" selected pieces. Spelling and usage skills are developed through context rather than isolation.

McGraw Hill's *My Math* textbook is the primary resource for math practice and homework.

Harcourt *Science* and Harcourt *Social Studies* provide inquiry-based learning in those areas.

We encourage children to use *The Beginner's Bible*, provided for each Morrison student, for both home and school reading.

Specialists teach your child Mandarin, visual arts, performing arts, physical education, and library media skills. Each has a key part in your child's week.

Language Arts

Students are created in God's image with the unique ability to communicate, create, and express ideas. The language arts develop these abilities to understand and influence God's world for His glory. Therefore, Morrison offers a balanced language arts approach that teaches students to read with fluency and comprehension, evaluate text and media with discernment, listen with understanding and compassion, speak with conviction and effect, and write with clarity and persuasion. (O'Malley 1999)

Children in Grade 1 begin to develop independence as readers and writers. They will continue the balanced approach and direct instruction of phonics and comprehension. Students will experience exposure to a variety of literature, writing opportunities, and basic research skills. Students will use technology as a resource.

Reading

Long vowel patterns & diagraphs on their own

With assistance, learn & use reading strategies (making predictions, asking questions to clarify, self-monitor understanding)

Non-fiction: independent reading to determine main idea with teacher help

Fiction: character, setting, & events

Writing

Imaginative story

Expository: 3-5 sentence with teacher help

No research

Traits of Writing

Speaking/Listening

Talk in small or large groups

Math

Morrison Academy strives to develop students who obtain a mastery of, and appreciation for, the content and processes of mathematics, as well as an understanding of how mathematics relates to other domains in life. While the study of mathematics occurs mostly within finite creation, it points us towards the character of an infinite God who values logic, order and consistency. Therefore, the purpose of mathematical instruction at Morrison is to develop students whose mastery of content includes insight into logical processes that will enable students to make meaningful connections to a world of order and help them transfer math concepts to other domains consistent to life. Such tangible engagement with math will help Morrison's students dynamically impact their world for Christ.

First grade continues to focus on the importance of numbers, as we build a strong sense of place value. There are four critical areas of focus this year: (1) developing understanding of and strategies for addition and subtraction within 20; (2) developing understanding of whole number relationships and place value, including grouping in tens and ones; (3) developing understanding of linear measurement and measuring lengths as repeating length units; and (4) reasoning about attributes of, and composing and decomposing geometric shapes.

Science

Morrison's science program seeks to help students gain knowledge of God through the study of His creation. This is accomplished with an activity-oriented program where teachers and students think analytically and logically, solve problems creatively, and use technology as a tool. Morrison endeavors to help students acquire developmentally appropriate concepts and science skills to make positive contributions as Christians in an increasingly scientific and technological society.

Students will explore the effects of change on physical properties caused by mixing, cooling and heating. They will learn to measure and evaluate how we use force and magnets to move objects to improve our lives. They will learn about plant and animal needs, features, habitats and dependence on each other to survive. Students will explore the diets of animals and the functions of the parts of plants. First graders will use tools to measure the predictability of seasonal conditions and keep records of daily weather changes. They will practice the scientific method to collect data and predict and record results. Students are asked to create meaningful questions and conduct careful investigations.

Guidance

The program provides a biblically-based program that is available to all students, teachers/staff and parents helping them to recognize their uniqueness as individuals in Christ. Morrison seeks to provide a primarily proactive and preventative program which enables students to fulfill God's purpose in their lives by maturing spiritually, emotionally, academically, physically and socially.

Students will continue to develop positive attitudes about themselves as unique and worthwhile people. Students will build upon their knowledge and experiences from Kindergarten as they talk more about identifying feelings and sharing them in appropriate ways, making friends and getting along with others, and learn how to be respectful and follow the rules.

Library Media Skills

Morrison Academy recognizes that people are gifted by God with the ability to inquire, gain knowledge, and delight in the creativity of others. Morrison Academy library program strives to equip students to enjoy information by teaching them how to use information effectively. The Library Media Center will support students by providing opportunities to become critical thinkers, life-long learners, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information.

Students in grade 1 will continue their discovery and usage of the library. As they learn more about varieties of literature, they will begin to form and express opinions about what books they enjoy. They will also begin to use basic research skills reinforced in the library to answer content related questions. As they learn more about internet safety, they begin to articulate basic internet safety rules as well.



Mandarin Chinese

God has given us the gift of language to communicate with Him, ourselves, and others. Morrison's Mandarin Chinese program is a foreign language program that equips all students to communicate more effectively in a global context to better impact their world as Christians. This is done through a unit-driven curricular program that teaches all students the four basic tenets (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of communication as well as Chinese culture and Christian concepts.

Teachers use high yield instructional strategies, a variety of materials, teaching styles, and enriching activities that are age-appropriate, promote higher order thinking, relevant, and integrate technology and faith.

Bible

God is the source of all truth, and the Bible is God's special revelation for all humanity. Through it we are introduced to the life of faith and the redemption offered to all in Christ Jesus. We comprehensively teach the Bible to foster biblical literacy, develop spiritual discernment, and equip students with a Christian worldview resulting in students who are transformed by the Holy Spirit and willing to be obedient to God's truth. Bible education aims to encourage each student to love God and to serve others.

The Morrison Academy Bible Curriculum: 5 strands

- *Biblical Literacy*-Students will know basic content of the Bible: stories about Old and New Testament characters, chronology, cultural and historical background, recurring themes and topics.
- *Spiritual Discernment*-Students will be able to appreciate who God is and accept one's self worth as God's creation, while distinguishing right from wrong.
- *Biblical Worldview*-Bible classes not only impart biblical and theological knowledge but use it as the basis of a biblical worldview which is used to explore the world.
- *Christian Character*-Through the teaching of the Bible we desire to see the love of God perfected in our students so that they know God, obey God's commands and love others.
- *Christian Service*-Beginning in middle school, intentional, hands-on service to local and global communities enhances students' academic learning, a natural outworking of biblical truth.

First graders study the redemptive story through the Old Testament stories of Creation, Adam and Eve (the Fall), Noah, Joshua and Caleb, Ruth and Naomi, Joseph, and the Ten Commandments. In the New Testament, they will learn about Jesus' Birth and his boyhood, and the early Church with Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul. Students learn Christian character traits of serving others, obedience, kindness, and forgiveness.

Social Studies

Social studies instruction at Morrison unites two important elements:

- *Acquiring a solid knowledge base of historical, geographical, civic, economic, and cultural concepts.*
- *Acquiring a social studies skill set to apply knowledge to situations using a global Christian perspective.*

Morrison's social studies program seeks to develop students who can influence the kingdoms of mankind as critically-thinking citizens of the Kingdom of God. We provide developmentally appropriate instruction through a balance of inquiry learning and direct teaching. Though implementing a United States based curriculum, we recognize the importance of a global approach to social studies curricula to meet the needs of our diverse population.

Families

First graders will learn about the differences between how people lived in the past and how they live today with a focus on families and daily life. Students will begin to explore maps by learning about continents and oceans, while also identifying basic landforms and reading a map key. They will identify rules and laws that are created to keep people safe. First graders will also begin to look at the concept of goods and services as well as producers and consumers.



Visual and Performing Arts

Morrison Academy recognizes that students are made in the image of their Creator and that God has endowed them with His creativity and individual gifts. Because training in visual and performing arts is an essential component of educating the whole person, students must be given the opportunity to explore, develop, and enjoy their God-given artistic abilities. Students will learn to express their creativity by experiencing, appreciating and discerning the arts from historical, contemporary and multi-cultural perspectives. Morrison Academy's arts programs endeavor to use the arts to glorify and worship God, equip students to serve His church, and impact their world in a relevant and dynamic way.

Performing Arts

All elementary students receive general music instruction. Emphasis is placed on performance (playing various instruments, singing, improvisation, concert etiquette), notation (melody, rhythm, music symbols, reading music), and music appreciation (history of instruments and composers, folk dance, music of other cultures).

There is a continued emphasis on the routines of working as a class to make music. Elements of music are named and taught through many different experiences, including instruments, singing, dancing, props, and physical movement. Finer distinctions are made between elements of music and students are challenged to describe and demonstrate in more detail ideas about the music they hear and perform. Students will study the percussion family, and learn how to use classroom percussion instruments correctly.



Visual Arts

Children who complete the six grade levels of elementary art at Morrison Academy will be able to *create* art using a variety of art mediums in both the second and third dimensions and identify and use the common elements and principles of art. With confidence, they will create art that *communicates* their own thinking, tells stories, shares ideas, or evokes emotions. They will be led to *appreciate* the work of their peers, the art handed down through history, art from other cultures, and the place of art and artists in their world today.

First Grade art is a hands-on class building on what students experienced in kindergarten art. First grade art students will draw, paint, cut, glue, and work with clay to create art safely using a variety of art materials and tools. The students will learn to identify patterns, repetition, primary colors, and many other elements of art. They will use art to express things about themselves, and learn about art from another culture and in history. They will also learn how digital technology is a tool for assisting artists.



Physical Education

All people are creations of God designed to know and glorify Him through their lives and action. Therefore, Morrison's physical education program recognizes that our bodies are temples of God to be appropriately cared for and used in developing a mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually balanced life.

Students explore the world of motor skills by using games and age-appropriate movement drills. The games and drills utilized at this level aim to help students develop a good foundation in movement, fitness and sport. This is achieved by focusing on the development of the students' basic motor skills. The skills they learn at this stage are further developed and reinforced when they advance to the upper elementary grade levels. K- 2 PE also aims to develop in the students a love for exercise and participation in sport.

Health

Morrison Academy is committed to following Christ's example of a balanced life. Therefore we desire growth in four areas: wisdom (mental/emotional), stature (physical), favor with God (spiritual), and favor with man (social). Consistent with our integrated-based philosophy of education, we strive to incorporate instruction for life-long wellness throughout the curriculum.



How Parents Can Help

Activities That Support Your Child's Learning

- Read to and with your child daily, asking questions about what is being read
- Praise your child's reading efforts
- Assist your child in sounding out words phonetically
- Encourage older children to read to their younger siblings
- Model the importance of reading by being a reader yourself
- Talk and listen to your child
- Help your child keep a writing notebook or journal with entries once or twice a week
- Encourage your child to ask questions and seek answers
- Play educational games including counting games
- Create special times to be alone with your child to participate in activities (cooking dinner, working in the shop, etc.)
- Take your child to places and talk about the visit(s)
- Read poems and songs; encourage your child to memorize the words
- Tell your child family stories, especially events that happened when you were his/her age
- Watch television with your child and discuss the programs together; limit viewing time; choose programs with care
- Play memory and math games, vocabulary games, physical games
- Talk with your child about the school work he/she brings home
- Give your child responsibilities such as bed making and picking up personal belongings
- Encourage your child to use toys that develop small muscle coordination, such as clay, lacing cards, and small blocks
- Communicate your expectations regarding his/her behavior and performance at school

"Fathers, do not make your children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4 (ICB)