



LOWER SCHOOL CURRICULUM SUMMARIES

THEOLOGY

In addition to covering Catholic Holy Days and Holidays, we celebrate and learn about the many faiths that comprise our Stuart community. Service learning is included as an important part of our religious program.

Kindergarten

This program strengthens the child's readiness to grow in understanding beliefs, practices and opportunities of faith. Bible stories and real-life situations guide the children to make wise choices. Activities reinforce and extend the faith life of the children. The program helps the children see themselves, others, and the world in a God - centered way. Our three prominent themes for the year are creation, love, and family throughout different religions. Students explore these concepts through multi-sensory play, crafting, dramatic exploration, and sharing personal experiences.

Grade 1

Children understand God as our Creator and loving parent; they are led to understand that God hears and answers prayer and that we are called to listen. Old Testament and gospel stories serve as guidance for moral choices and teach children to love and serve God. Liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter are celebrated with activities, instruction, personal prayer and community worship. Leadership and instruction, choice and responsibility, and milestones define the first grade year. Students will study leadership positions within the Catholic church, personal practice of Sacred Heart goals, and sacramental study.

Grade 2

Families may choose between a course which prepares the children for receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist; and another which responds to the needs of an inter-religious group. Both include age appropriate moral development, focus on the life of Jesus, as well as worship and religious seasons and symbols. All children are introduced to the holidays of the world's major religions. The interfaith class uses the Call to Faith religion series. It focuses on age-appropriate moral development, the life of Jesus, and religious seasons. These ideas are woven through the themes of Creation, faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, sacraments and prayer. Each lesson helps the students understand and appreciate the Church's teachings and connects the sacraments, worship, and prayer. These lessons also help the students understand and appreciate the Church's teachings and connects faith to their everyday lives. All lessons include a variety of the following: reflection, prayer, scripture, dialogue, group and independent activities, music, and song.

The second grade Sacramental class prepares the girls to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and

Holy Eucharist. We use *We Celebrate Reconciliation* and *We Celebrate the Eucharist* as our texts during the year. We also explore the Church's teachings and how our faith strengthens our everyday lives. The themes are: God loves me, Jesus calls me to love others, and Jesus forgives us during our preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In preparation for receiving the Eucharist, the themes center on belonging to the church, making peace, giving thanks and sharing a meal. All lessons include group and independent activities, dramatic play, prayer, reflection, music and song.

Grade 3

Children learn about the Church as a Community, the Holy Trinity, the Sacraments of Initiation, Healing and Service. They are introduced to the hierarchy of our Church leaders. They learn that the kingdom of God is love, peace and justice for all and that we all have a responsibility to love and forgive. Students learn to connect their faith to their daily lives. In addition to celebrating Christian Holy Days, students celebrate and learn about the different faiths that make up the Stuart Community. The girls visit the Kindergarten as part of their Community Service throughout the year. Continuing the *Call to Faith* series, the focus for this grade is on age appropriate moral development, the Trinity and the Church. Lessons include discussion, reflection, art activities and dramatic play. The girls engage in service learning by visiting the Kindergarten classes and creating decorative holiday placemats and cards to be placed on food trays for Meals on Wheels in the Princeton area.

Grade 4

The children learn how the Commandments and Beatitudes shape their Christian and moral life; the importance of friendship, honesty, kindness and compassion; and how receiving the Sacraments strengthens their faith. The fourth graders perform a presentation of *The Way of the Cross* for the entire student body during the season of Lent. Stuart's Community Service program is enhanced through the visits to the Early Childhood classes on a regular basis. Participation and public speaking at prayer services and liturgies is emphasized. The customs, beliefs and holidays of several world Religions are also included in the class time. This year represents a continuation of the religious education using the *Finding God* series. It focuses on a faith grounded in Scripture and tradition and the recognition of God's presence in all things. The following topics are discussed throughout the year:

1. God is our Creator and Father.
2. The Commandments and Beatitudes and how they shape our moral and Christian faith.
3. The importance of friendship, honesty, kindness and compassion.
4. Each individual's responsibility to care for our world.

We also continue to strengthen our inclusive community and develop an appreciation of the Holidays and traditions of other World Religions as we encourage the students (and parents) of all faiths to share customs and traditions. The girls also visit the Early Childhood classes as a part of their service learning experience.

All of the theology classes work closely with our lower school counselor to further incorporate our character education program and Word of the Month.