



Lower School - 3rd Grade Overview

In third grade, students begin an important transition in their educational careers. The curriculum moves from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” The instructional goals evolve from basic skills proficiency to more advanced skill application. Students are given more opportunities to develop independence as they explore a wider spectrum of educational topics. Teachers work with students to develop quality study habits and time management skills.

Reading: Many resources are used to teach and refine reading skills, and to strengthen the student’s ability to process and synthesize information. In order to create connectivity, reading assignments are often correlated to content taught in other subjects. When the Titanic is studied in Social Studies, reading instruction might include a review of passenger letters, historical accounts of the sinking, or an examination of memoirs of those who survived to deepen the impact of both the reading and social studies lessons. Employing this type of collaborative learning reinforces important concepts such as identifying story elements, capturing main ideas, finding supporting details, recognizing sequencing, creating summaries, forming generalizations, and making inferences/predictions. Students will read a variety of genres, including realistic and historical fiction, informational text, and biographies. Teachers conference with students to set individual independent reading goals each quarter.

Grammar: The *Shurley English* program is a mainstay of third grade language arts instruction. This method follows a step-by-step approach to language arts skills. With the question and answer flow approach, students learn sentence structure by identifying and labeling parts of a sentence. Once proficient, students will then apply that knowledge by writing and revising their own practice sentences.

Spelling: The third grade spelling curriculum, *From Phonics to Reading*, engages students to become more effective readers and spellers by teaching how words are structured and providing multiple opportunities to practice in context. Spelling lessons include words representing a specific pattern or word-building rule. This allows students to apply those concepts not only to spelling, but reading and writing as well. Prefixes and suffixes are a focus in all lessons. Students will learn different parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The curriculum encompasses a word study approach which allows students to analyze words, break apart words, compare them, use them, and apply them in writing. The activities encourage students to think about words as well as retain the words for personal use.

Writing: The third grade writing curriculum enhances learning through interdisciplinary extensions. The curriculum includes a focus on composition of paragraphs, essay writing, and editing in order to strengthen the student’s mastery of language. As they progress, the students will improve their writing by organizing ideas, developing related concepts, and forming connective paragraphs. Using the basis of the *Shurley Method*, the year begins with composing descriptive paragraphs. As the year progresses, students will author biographies, procedural texts and fictional writing based on literature characters or plots. Additional writing opportunities include journal writing and writing solutions for problems found through interdisciplinary studies. St. George students master cursive handwriting in third grade.

Math: The third grade mathematics curriculum is designed to maintain a linear path of progression from basic operational skills to advanced concepts with a strong emphasis on solidifying number sense. Teachers use the *Dimensions Math* curriculum to help students build strong foundations in number manipulation, operation execution, and quantitative reasoning, including number patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking as they progress through the year. Basic functions, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are explored through the use of many different learning aids. Each class employs a variety of tangible manipulatives designed to connect concrete concepts to abstract algorithms. Students also utilize chromebooks to reinforce or extend concepts. The curriculum extends into the study of fractions, measurement, and probability to prepare students for higher level math instruction.

Science: The third grade science curriculum offers a comprehensive and rigorous hands-on approach to learning. Building a strong science foundation for students allows for genuine scientific extensions unique to St. George Episcopal School. We will use the learning platform, *EduSmart*. *EduSmart* provides one place for all science resources, is aligned to state standards with bite-sized instructional videos, lab simulations, interactive activities, and assessments. *EduSmart* brings science to life by using real-world examples relevant to your students' everyday experiences. It is designed to stimulate each student's sense of wonder, desire to problem-solve, and think critically. Students regularly complete experiments and hands-on investigations in the Lower School Science Lab. Units include matter, energy, geology, topography, meteorology, and astronomy.

Social Studies: Social Studies in third grade covers many time periods. The *Core Knowledge* series includes studies on Ancient Rome, Vikings, early exploration, westward expansion, and the Industrial Revolution. Students develop an understanding of the economic and cultural contributions made during each unit. Biographies, primary sources, secondary sources, folktales, legends, artwork, and technology are used to understand the culture and events of these differing time periods. Students have the opportunity to utilize chromebooks to research and develop presentations on topics of study. Teachers use a variety of critical thinking lessons and activities which allows students to connect, compare, and contrast main ideas found across units. Third graders also experience an immersive, school-wide economics and entrepreneurship event.

Social and Emotional Development: The third grade social and emotional curriculum is based on the *Responsive Classroom* model, which takes a proactive approach that focuses on creating a loving and respectful classroom community where each child feels valued and known by his or her teachers and peers. Every day begins with a morning meeting where students are greeted by name and invited to share about their lives. During this time, teachers introduce a variety of social skills throughout the year including: identifying feelings of self and others, resolving conflict, showing kindness, listening and responding, regulating emotions, practicing empathy, being a good citizen, and standing up for what is right. These skills are then discussed and modeled frequently by children and teachers alike. This approach provides each student with the tools to grow his or her own emotional intelligence, while also creating an environment of connectivity and care.

Co-Curricular Classes: Students regularly attend the following co-curricular classes: art, music, science lab, library once a week; Spanish and STEAM twice a week; physical education three times a week, and recess daily. Students also attend a developmentally appropriate chapel daily.