

## Experience the History

St. Ambrose School officially opened its doors for the first time on September 1, 1960. Enrollment was 338 students in grades one through six, under the direction of Sister Mary Alphonse Sachnik as principal and Rev. Victor Di Primeo as pastor. Faculty consisted of three other Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament and four lay teachers. No tuition system existed at that time. In 1961 grade 7 was added and then in 1962 the student body was completed with eighth grade. The first eighth grade class graduated on May 26, 1963. On December 7, 1964 (the feast of St. Ambrose) the cornerstone for the new church was laid and the old church became the school auditorium. The junior high wing was also built at this time. In 1966 that junior high wing was expanded to include a science lab and two additional classroom spaces. In 1967 tuition was required for the first time at a rate of \$22.00 per month per family. In 1968 St. Ambrose School received full accreditation status according to the Educational Standards of the state of Texas. St. Ambrose School was one of only seven schools in the Galveston-Houston Diocese to attain accreditation.

In 1981 the entire school marked a milestone with the addition of air-conditioning. 1982 introduced computer classes and an After School Care program. The early 1980s again found change for St. Ambrose School as tuition went from a per-family rate to a per-student rate. In 1985 St. Ambrose School celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and began to offer full-day as well as half-day kindergarten classes.

Meeting the needs of the community, the Pre-K four-year-old program was initiated in 1991. This popular program expanded in two portable classrooms. The 1994 school year included a special visit from former First Lady Barbara Bush, who graciously attended a donut sale sponsored by the Junior Beta Club. In 1995 a new church facility was built and the previous church building was converted into two permanent Pre-K classrooms, a gym, and an upstairs Spanish language lab. This year also included a special 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. The principal at that time was Mary Kay Volker and the pastor was Rev. Joe Gietl. Enrollment was 494 students and there were 32 staff members, including one full-time religious and one part-time religious.

The turn of the century began the development of a new playground area and improvements to the athletic field. An economic downturn in the Houston area about this same time found a drop in enrollment to 398. During the summer of 2003 the St. Ambrose Parent Organization completely refurbished the computer lab and began to provide all classrooms with a computer. We celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010 with Mass and a gathering of our St. Ambrose families. Enrollment at St. Ambrose for the past several years has stabilized at about 325 students. The school again received full accredited status in December, 2014.

## Experience the Spirit

St. Ambrose School is a fully accredited Catholic school in the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese servicing children in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade.

St. Ambrose School and Parish are called together as a community to nurture the spiritual formation, academic excellence, physical, emotional, and social growth of all students. The uniqueness of each student is embraced in a safe, loving, caring environment. St. Ambrose students are prepared to meet and respond to the opportunities and challenges of the future as responsible, Christian members of society.

The St. Ambrose School staff is comprised of dedicated degreed teachers and administrators, primary aides, office and cafeteria personnel, and a registered nurse. The goal of all St. Ambrose faculty and staff is the advancement, safety and well-being of each and every child.

Class sizes at St. Ambrose are not only in compliance with the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department but of a smaller teacher-student ratio. The

numerous programs offered at St. Ambrose challenge students of many different interests. There is much respect, learning, and fun at St. Ambrose School!

Enrollment for the 2014-2015 school year is approximately 320 students, with two classes per grade level from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Enrichment classes are offered across the grade levels. Pre-Kindergarten through second grade have Spanish, Music, Computer, Library and Physical Education in addition to their core classes. Grades third through fifth have Art, Spanish, Computer, Library, Music and Physical Education in addition to their core classes. Grades sixth through eighth have Art, Spanish, Computer, Guidance, Library and Physical Education in addition to their core classes.

All classes celebrate Mass together as a school family every Wednesday morning. St. Ambrose students also say a Morning Prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Texas Pledge, the school mission statement and The Learners Creed over the PA every morning. A weekly newsletter, the Hornet Happenings, is emailed every Tuesday as a communication tool for parents. Like all Archdiocesan schools, St. Ambrose administers a standardized testing instrument in the spring.

## Experience the Classroom

School hours are 7:45am-3:00pm Monday through Thursday and on Friday 7:45am-2:00pm for students in Pre-K through fifth grade. Sixth, seventh, and eighth grades hours are from 7:45am-3:15pm Monday through Thursday and 7:45am-2:15pm on Friday. St. Ambrose provides facilities with supervised care for students whose parents work and need before and/or after school care for their children.

To foster academic excellence outside the classroom, St. Ambrose participates in the DUKE Talent Search for grades fourth, fifth, and seventh, which is sponsored by the Duke University Talent Identification Program and is aimed at students who possess high academic ability. Students in grades second through eighth also participate in the John Hopkins Talent Search which identifies, assesses, and recognizes students with exceptional mathematical and/or verbal reasoning abilities. Students must score in the top 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on a nationally-normed standardized test in order to participate in these talent searches. Students in grades third through sixth are also nominated for the DeBusk Enrichment Center for Academically Talented Scholars (DECATS) program. This is open to students who qualify as a distinguished nominee, and score in the upper 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on a nationally recognized exam. The DECATS program offers a unique opportunity to participate in an intensive three-week summer session of challenging and enriching course work.

St. Ambrose sends student representatives from grades third through eighth to the Archdiocesan Spelling Bee and Science Fair. Junior High students are encouraged to compete in local and state Geography Bees. They are also active in High School Speech Tournaments, such as those offered by St. Agnes Academy, St. Thomas High School, St. Pius X High School and various public schools. St. Pius X High School National Honor Society's middle school academic rally sponsors competitions in the areas of Speech, Foreign Language, Art, Academic Subject testing, and Trivia. St. Ambrose students enjoy these competitions and have received numerous awards.

Every classroom has an Interactive White Board. Teachers use the whiteboards to provide different ways to show students anything which can be presented on a computer's desktop, educational software, web sites, and others. Skills are reinforced by using on-line interactive web sites.

A lunch program is available in the St. Ambrose cafeteria on a daily basis. A dedicated cafeteria staff prepares all food on the premises. We have a monthly lunch calendar which lists daily specials and everyday lunch items with prices. You may purchase food or drink daily or pay in advance through [www.LittleFlowerCafe.com](http://www.LittleFlowerCafe.com). Each grade spends 30 minutes in the lunch room and then lower grades have a recess break outside. Recess times vary with grade levels.

## Experience the Community

The St. Ambrose Parent Organization, led by a 15 member Executive board, assists teachers during the year and contributes to improvements throughout the school. As a parent/guardian of a St. Ambrose school student each parent is automatically a member of the Parent Organization. This dedicated group of parents sponsors a fall festival day of family fun including food and games. The Parent Organization also assists at Open House, morning safety patrol, after-school snow cone and popcorn sales, and Catholic Schools Week. An annual Gala honoring a figure from our community that has been a staunch supporter of Catholic Education is held every fall for parents and friends of St. Ambrose. The Gala is a fun and exciting evening that includes a dinner, live auction, silent auction, raffle and a dance.

St. Ambrose teachers and parents use RenWeb. This is a web-based student data management program. Parents can view various types of information about their child's progress. A private password is created for all parents. This is an easy way to keep track of homework, grades, tuition, and much more. Parents can view teachers' lesson plans, homework, and grades daily. This is truly a vital link to valuable academic and school information.

St. Ambrose provides facilities with supervised care for students whose parents work and need before and/or after school care for their children. St. Ambrose Church also offers an Infant – two year old Early Childhood Program for members of St. Ambrose School and/or St. Ambrose registered parishioners.

Students in grades sixth – eighth are able to participate in extra-curricular activities such as:

Football ~ boys	Volleyball ~ girls
Basketball ~ boys & girls	Baseball ~ boys
Track ~ boys & girls	Softball ~ girls
Drama Club ~ boys & girls	Cheer - girls
Beta Club ~ boys & girls	Yearbook ~ boys & girls
Student Council ~ boys & girls	Choir ~ boys & girls

... and many more.

# SAS Primary Section Pre~K~3<sup>rd</sup>

Experience Opening New Minds

### Pre-Kindergarten

St. Ambrose School offers Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 year-old classes; each having a full-time teacher and full-time teacher assistant. Pre-Kindergarten is a full day, structured, curriculum-based program where the children learn social and academic skills. Students practice rhyming, identifying shapes, colors, counting, and recognizing numbers and letters. Pre-K begins a Phonics program learning to sound out words, recognize sight words and identify beginning and ending sounds of words. Fine motor skills are enhanced by writing letters and words, cutting and pasting and playing with puzzles. Students also work in Math Centers, Block Centers, Kitchen Centers, Language Centers and Dress-up Centers. The Everyday Mathematics program is started in Pre-K. The reading program "Happily Ever After" is also started in Pre-K. Children in Pre-K3 attend Mass on Holy Days and special occasions, and children in Pre-K4 attend Mass every Wednesday along with the rest of the school. Their daily routine includes a

morning snack break, 30 minutes of uninterrupted free play, and a 90 minute nap time. In addition to their core curricular classes they also take the following classes: Computer, Spanish, Music, PE, Library and Guidance. The Pre-K4 students have seventh grade church buddies who sit with them during Mass.

## **Kindergarten**

St. Ambrose has two classes of full-day kindergarten, led by a full time teacher and a full time teacher assistant. Phonics is continued in kindergarten and students are introduced to double phonograms, learn to sound out words, read sight words, and write a complete sentence. Most students can read by the middle of kindergarten. Students receive a good understanding of numbers, and are introduced to addition and subtraction with the help of a Math series entitled “Everyday Mathematics”. This Math program has a very hands-on concept-oriented approach. The Reading program used is called “Super Kids”. Religion is taught daily and the children attend Mass every Wednesday and sit with an eighth grade student buddy. Social skills are enhanced, especially through sharing and cooperation. All children have an afternoon snack/rest break.

## **First Grade**

There are two classes of first grade each having a full time teacher and sharing a teacher assistant. Both classes use an interactive board to enhance learning. Students come to first grade as emerging readers, writers and mathematicians.

### **Spelling**

In first grade, phonics skills are further developed with the mastery of double phonograms such as digraphs and vowel combinations. Students learn spelling rules that unlock helpful patterns in spelling. Each week first graders learn to read and spell a new set of high frequency words.

### **Grammar**

Students learn sentence rules and basic parts of speech. First grade nurtures creative writing through journaling and a variety of both cooperative and independent writing projects. Students create stories and publish books.

### **Reading**

The reading program used is called “Super Kids”. Students are provided a great variety of books and language arts activities. First grade meets the needs of readers and writers at all levels of ability.

### **Math**

Math is taught in a concrete way using number grids, manipulatives and exploration. Math students learn concepts of addition, subtraction, time, money, geometry, fractions and measurement through the Progress in Math and the Everyday Mathematics series. Through a variety of math games, students have while learning math and challenge their math skills.

### **Science and Social Studies**

The internet and our interactive boards are used extensively in science and social studies. Each Science unit is brought to life with experiments and discovery. In Social Studies students learn good citizenship, map skills and many aspects regarding uniqueness of this great nation.

### **Religion**

Religion is taught daily with emphasis on each child’s special qualities and God’s love and blessings that we receive each day.

## **Second Grade**

### **Reading and Spelling**

Students in second grade practice phonics skills and learn helpful spelling rules. The children read novels, and read from the classroom library, to develop fluency and

reading comprehension. The teacher reads from children's literature to model fluency, to foster listening skills, to develop an interest in reading, and to build vocabulary. Each week, second grade students demonstrate what they have learned with spelling, dictation, and reading comprehension tests. Second grade students enjoy responding to literature with art projects and essays.

### **Religion**

Second and third graders focus on Catholic beliefs, Catholic prayers, morality, understanding the liturgical year, the Bible, memorizing verses, understanding the Holy Trinity, Women of Faith, and Jesus and the Apostles. The whole school attends Mass once a week and on Holy Days of Obligation. Students participate in Mass by doing the readings and singing in the choir. Second and third graders work on a Saint report and have a saint dress up day. They also have several service projects throughout the year. Second grade is a pivotal year in the student's faith development. Catholic students will make the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion for the first time. Here at St. Ambrose, your child will become part of our family; not just another student.

### **Language Arts**

Concentrates on nouns, simple & compound subjects, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, types of sentences, editing techniques and parts of a sentence. Students also practice strategies for the five steps of the writing process. Students begin to learn and practice formation of cursive letters in the second half of the year.

### **Math**

The Everyday Mathematics program is very hands-on with numerous manipulatives including individual tool kits with tape measurers, clocks, money, templates, and calculators. Students use slates throughout the year to demonstrate mastery of a concept. Many games are learned and used frequently to apply and practice principles being taught. Addition, subtraction and number patterns continue in second grade and by the end of the year, four and five digit problems are mastered, including borrowing in subtraction. We work into multiplication and use arrays, songs, rhymes and the G.E.T. method to gain understanding. Of course, that leads into an easy transition into division. Other units that we concentrate on are money, which includes setting up a store where students earn play money during the week and then can shop on Friday. If they are able to count out the sum correctly and make change, they may keep the item(s). This really inspires students to learn how to make change correctly. Geometry, including finding perimeter and area, as well as learning about Fractions are just a few of the units we explore. Second grade also has "Exploration Days" where two or three new areas are addressed and hands-on activities are done in small groups to better understand these concepts. Some examples are using the balance and platform scales, sorting attribute blocks, clock making, and going on a fraction hunt around campus.

### **Science**

Science is a hands-on project based curriculum. They work on biology, matter, dinosaurs, astronomy, and inventions. The second graders participate in a Science Fair.

### **Social Studies**

The students will work on map and geography skills. The children understand communities, which is defined as a collection of families and individuals who work, live, and play in a particular area. Other topics include rules and responsibility, history and time, presidents and patriots, American cultures and celebrations, government and citizenship, goods and services, money and market, and resources. The second grade students will also focus on learning all the states and their location on the map.

**Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth** - is presented to qualifying students in grades second through eighth. **John Hopkins** conducts national and international talent searches to identify, assess, and recognize outstanding academic talent. The criteria for those students who are nominated are based on their achievement at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher on certain indicated subject areas of a nationally normed standardized test. The criteria indicate certain acceptable reasoning

ability subtests and they also indicate which subtests are unacceptable. The nomination to the Johns Hopkins University Talent Search is an honor in that it recognizes a child's outstanding academic talent.

### **Third grade**

On the third grade level the four teachers "Team Teach" the students. Language Arts and Social Studies are taught by the same teacher to all these students; Math is taught by another; Religion and Science by one; and Reading and Spelling by the fourth. We are proud that our students are all prepared to meet and respond to the opportunities and challenges of the future as responsible, Christian members of society.

### **Reading and Spelling**

Students practice phonics skills and learn helpful spelling rules. The children read novels from the classroom library to develop fluency and reading comprehension. The teacher reads to the children from good children's literature to model fluency, to foster listening skills, to develop an interest in reading, and to build vocabulary. Each week, third grade students demonstrate what they have learned with spelling, dictation, and reading comprehension tests. Third grade students learn how to write sentences, paragraphs, work on poetry, and write simple reports in a clear and organized style. They respond to literature with art projects and essays. They work on Venn Diagrams, story elements, antonyms/synonyms, and reading comprehension. In spelling they concentrate on Short i, Short a, Double final f, l, s, Final n, ng, Short o, Final k spelled ck, Suffix "s", Short e, Short u, Final i spelled y, Suffix "ing", Suffix "ed", Doubling Rule, er spelled ir, Long a-consonant-e, Long a spelled ai, Long i-consonant-e, Long o-consonant-e, Long o spelled ow, Long u-consonant-e, Dropping Rule.

Third grade also performs a play from one of the novels they read in class and over the summer. On Fridays, third grade spends time on special projects designed to strengthen fine motor skills, to foster pride in workmanship, and to share ideas and skills. During these class periods, children meet in small groups to work with the teacher on lessons not fully mastered.

### **Language Arts**

Concentrates on the parts of speech; especially nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, articles and pronouns. The students also work on strategies for the five steps of the writing process. They use paragraphs to separate ideas, produce multiple drafts, elaborate on a central idea, and write with attention to audience, word choice and sentence variation. The children learn how to use reference materials, such as dictionaries and thesaurus to aid them in writing. The students also get a chance to have their essay entered in the University of St. Thomas yearly writing contest. The cursive writing that was started in second grade is developed and they begin to write their name in cursive.

### **Math**

Math focuses on extending place value from the millions to the thousandths. Students make a decimal place value booklet that they use to play math games and extend their addition and subtraction to seven digits. Multiplication facts up to the 12's are developed with 90% of students mastering before leaving third grade. There are level quizzes to challenge those students who can move faster than the average child. This is a self-paced program that Mrs. Velez has had success with in the past. In third grade students are introduced to division and at the end of the year are able to successfully answer long division problems with remainders. Pre-algebra concepts are introduced through number sentences with a focus on missing factors. One project in our Geometry unit consists of hunting for shapes around Houston and then documenting with a camera to create a display board. We work hard on creating a strong background in fractions with an emphasis on equivalent fractions and mixed numbers. We also write and illustrate number stories throughout the year. The first half of the year we use addition and subtraction and then after Christmas, multiplication and division. The Everyday Mathematics program continues its hands on approach

including the use of manipulatives, money, tool kits, slates, Math Sharks, and “Exploration Days”.

### **Social Studies**

The children have mastered all the states and their locations in second grade and now they concentrate on the capitals and geography. They know how to read world maps; are able to find locations on the globe, compare different parts of the United States (e.g., contrasting year-round climate of the various regions). They study topics relating to American history, such as Native Americans, the journey of the Mayflower, pilgrims, and the first settlers. They have fun exploring their creative side by becoming a historical figure in the form of a Wax Museum. The children study these people and portray them for the school.

### **Science**

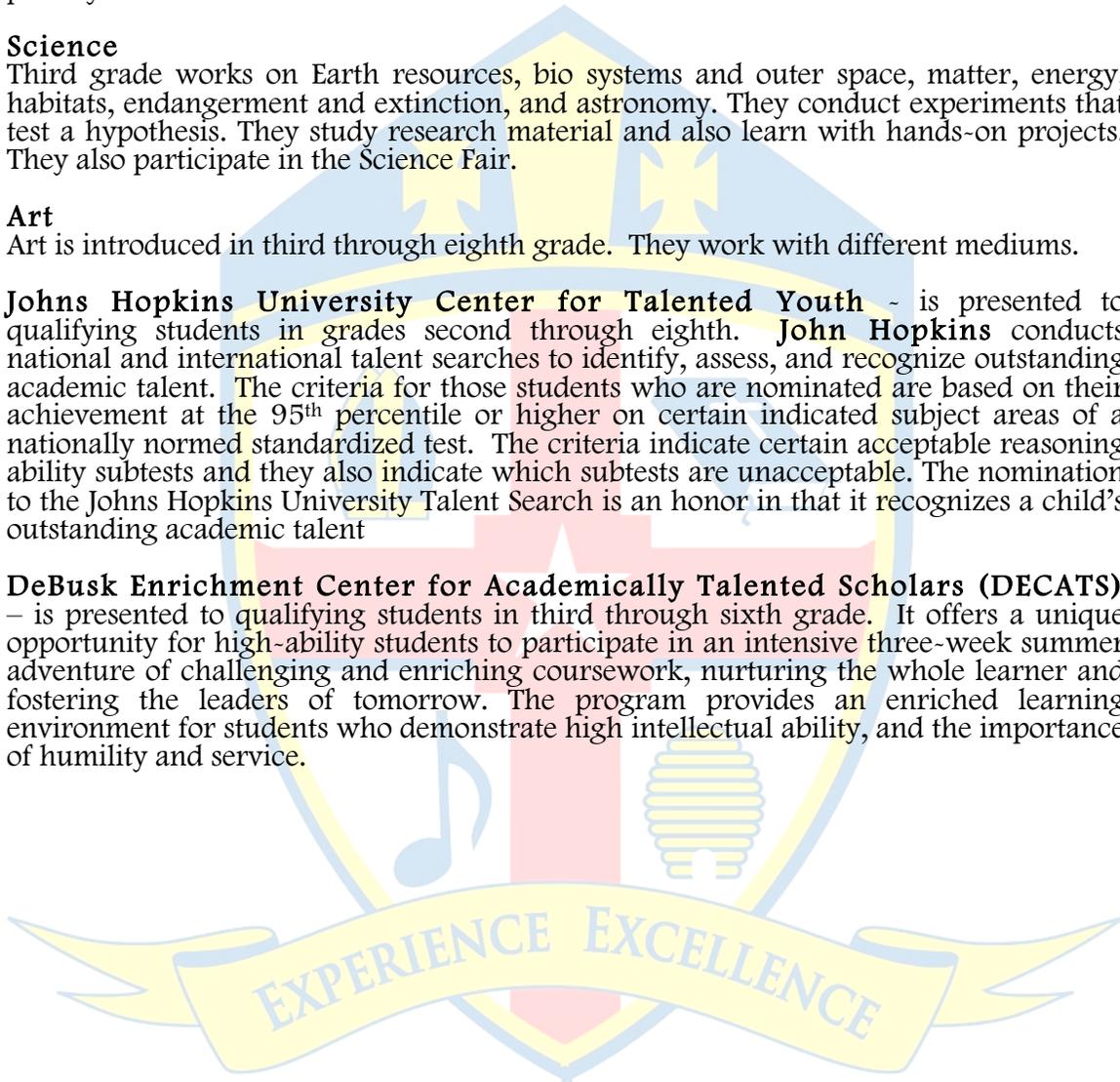
Third grade works on Earth resources, bio systems and outer space, matter, energy, habitats, endangerment and extinction, and astronomy. They conduct experiments that test a hypothesis. They study research material and also learn with hands-on projects. They also participate in the Science Fair.

### **Art**

Art is introduced in third through eighth grade. They work with different mediums.

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**DeBusk Enrichment Center for Academically Talented Scholars (DECATS)** – is presented to qualifying students in third through sixth grade. It offers a unique opportunity for high-ability students to participate in an intensive three-week summer adventure of challenging and enriching coursework, nurturing the whole learner and fostering the leaders of tomorrow. The program provides an enriched learning environment for students who demonstrate high intellectual ability, and the importance of humility and service.



# SAS Intermediate Section 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>

## Experience a Love of Learning

The fourth and fifth grade levels continue the Team Teaching approach with all the students. The students change rooms and teachers for Language Arts, Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Religion and all the ancillary classes.

### **Fourth grade**

#### **Reading**

Students learn reading comprehension strategies and how to read with fluency and expression. Writing assignments are included on a weekly basis. Reading vocabulary words come from the students Reading textbooks and from the National Reading Vocabulary List. Students participate in a variety of reading activities including written book reports.

#### **Math**

In our math program, “Everyday Mathematics”, our fourth grade students enjoy hands-on activities and practice multiplication skills through games. Throughout the year our students work with partners and small groups as well as independently. Different methods of multiplication and division algorithms are investigated, place value and rounding large numbers are reviewed, fractions and decimals are introduced, and the students learn to use a compass, a protractor, and a transparent mirror.

#### **Social Studies**

The Social Studies curriculum concentrates on learning about the United States and Texas History. The students also work on a multicultural project involving research, interviews, traditional costumes, and food appetizers from each country.

#### **Science**

Fourth grade students will begin to recognize the difference between expository writing and storytelling. They will learn to comprehend and organize scientific information. The subjects studied may include: Earth’s Land, Properties of Matter, Classifying Living Things, Magnetism and Electricity, and Weather and Climate. These subjects will be investigated through observations, research projects, cooperative learning, critical thinking, and problem solving.

#### **Religion**

The Religion program continues with the use of Faith First series, which encompasses a spiral curriculum design. Every grade level continues to learn about the creed, sacraments, morality and prayer at an age appropriate level. The series also has available an excellent website, integrating technology and religious beliefs. Our fourth graders are also invited to become Altar Servers for our church.

#### **Language Arts**

Language Arts concentrates on expressive language using grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions. Skills practiced include using simple, compound, complex sentences, the four kinds of sentences and the writing process steps are incorporated in written compositions. Practice of cursive writing continues in fourth grade. Use of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, coordinating conjunctions and negatives properly in written compositions is stressed. Diagramming of simple sentences is introduced.

Fourth grade students also participate in DUKE, JOHN HOPKINS, and DECATS.

## **Fifth grade**

### **Reading**

Students participate in a variety of reading activities including oral and written book reports, and perform plays based on Literature. They become authors and illustrators of Christmas books for young children. Writing assignments are included on a weekly basis, including the writing of personal narratives and speeches. Students are challenged to read books at a level higher than fifth grade.

### **Math**

In the Math program, “Everyday Mathematics”, our fifth grade students enjoy hands-on activities, quick reviews of multiplication facts and newly learned concepts are reinforced through games. Throughout the year St. Ambrose students work with partners, small groups as well as independently. Fractions, decimals, percents, exponents, negative numbers, coordinates, area volume, capacity and Algebra concepts are our main focus in fifth grade.

### **Religion**

Fifth grade Religion concentrates on the Parts of the Mass and all the sacraments. It expands on the pillars of the Catechism: Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer. Lessons from scripture study and the liturgical year are also included in the fifth grade Religion class.

### **Language Arts**

Language Arts skills including multiple meanings, figurative language, sequence of events, parts of speech, word study, sentence structure, research papers which incorporate the writing process steps, oral book reports where the children dress up as their characters, graphic organizers, story maps, and diagramming sentences take place in fifth grade.

### **Social Studies**

American History is the focus in fifth grade social studies, where the children also work on colony reports. The students also work on the Presidents and present oral reports to their classmates.

### **Science**

Fifth grade students will continue to learn and practice comprehending and organizing expository writing as opposed to narratives. Scientific subjects that may be explored include: Systems of Living Things, The Solar System and Beyond, Matter and Energy, Populations and Ecosystems, The Solid Earth, and Light and sound. These subjects will be investigated through observations, research projects, cooperative learning, critical thinking, and problem solving.

### **Special Activities**

Fifth grade also takes a wonderful four day/three night expedition to the School of Environmental Education in Plantersville. They work together, learn how to take care of the earth and have a great time.

In Music, our fifth graders devote themselves to being members of the SAS Bell Choir.

Our fifth graders continue to serve as Altar Servers for our church.



# SAS Jr. High Section

6<sup>th</sup> ~ 8<sup>th</sup>

## Experience a Strong Curriculum

Our Jr. High is completely departmentalized in order to prepare the children for high school. We have an extremely challenging, structured Jr. High program with few discipline problems. The students are respectful and work diligently to meet our high standard of academic excellence. Students in seventh and eighth grades are allowed to Bring Their Own Device (BYOD) for note taking and research during class. Students are monitored to ensure that only appropriate websites are being accessed. Students are very well prepared for their high school experience with many advancing to honors classes. The majority of the eighth grade class continues their education in the Catholic school tradition. They primarily attend St. Agnes, St. Pius X, St. Thomas, Incarnate Word Academy, Duchesne Academy and Strake Jesuit.

### **Language Arts**

Sixth and seventh grades concentrate on the mastery of the eight parts of speech; the writing process; writing mechanics; simple, compound and complex sentences;

diagramming sentences; various forms of writing including how-to articles, personal narratives, business letters, friendly letters, persuasive writing, and poetry. Eighth grade learns complex sentences and compound/complex sentences, creates media projects, delivers oral presentations, conducts peer evaluations, writes a properly MLA formatted research paper that is typed in the computer lab complete with a works cited, and masters verbals including infinitives, gerunds and participles. All junior high students participate in an archdiocesan writing competition through the University of St. Thomas and the writing section of the St. Pius X academic rally.

### **Literature**

The students read a minimum of 500 pages from the summer reading list, and write a short report on each book completed. In addition, the students participate in the Kidblog for our classes, writing observations and commenting on other student observations. The students have created a friendly, thoughtful atmosphere. All comments must be approved before posting. Inappropriate posts or comments will be deleted. The Kidblog is a good way to get to know the other students through their ideas about books. All conversations should relate to what the students are reading.

We work hard to develop each student's enthusiasm for reading and writing. While reading a class novel and various kinds of non-fiction texts that support and inform our reading of that novel in class, students in small groups will choose from a selection of novels about the same time period, in the same genre, or otherwise related to the main novel. These novels are read at home, during free time in any class, and whenever they can steal a few moments to read. We will be looking at art and listening to music that relates to the theme for each nine weeks. We will write many forms of texts - essays, poetry, short stories, letters, and journal entries, to name a few. We will occasionally create our own art work to further respond to what we have read. No matter your interests or talents, there will be many opportunities for the students to connect personally to the texts we read.

It is my goal that the students graduate from SAS with all the reading and writing skills you need to excel in high school and university, and that they carry with them a passion for reading and learning that will enrich their entire life.

### **Science**

Classes reference a textbook, rely on other supplements, many beyond grade level and are given various projects to enhance their learning. Eighth grade students complete Integrated Physics and Chemistry. Examples of Hands-on experiments include making ice cream, building Cartesian divers, building accelerometers and using triple beam balances. Seventh grade students learn Life Science and participate in a variety of microscopes labs that include animal dissections. Favorite projects include making an edible plant or animal cell and creating models of the organ systems. Sixth grade students study Earth Science. They complete a comprehensive weather unit (including building barometers and psychrometers) and create extensive 3-D and paper models throughout the year.

### **Social Studies**

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade Social Studies classes follow the curriculum as set forth by the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese. The sixth grade curriculum includes world cultures and geography. Seventh grade studies concentrate on Texas History. Eighth graders study American History in depth. This subject gives students an opportunity to use various resources in technology as well.

### **Math**

A two-tracking math program begins in sixth grade. There is an on level sixth grade Math class and an advanced level sixth grade Math class. The sixth grade completes challenging problems in the Progress in Mathematics program. This program emphasizes that math principles are used in everyday living and provides examples of such. Seventh grade continues the two-tracking program - IPA (introduction to pre-algebra) and PA (pre-algebra). The two-track program in eighth grade offers an Introduction to Algebra and Algebra class.

All assigned math projects are designed to encourage teamwork, cooperative learning, and the application of math facts to real-world situations.

### **Religion**

The sixth grade curriculum is based on God and the story of His people. It covers both Old and New Testament Bible stories, as well as, our relationship with one another and with God. Seventh graders study the New Testament and cover the seven Sacraments more in depth. Eighth grade focuses on Church History and Morality, with includes the study of the Ten Commandments.

## **Experience the Heart of a Hornet**

### **Jr. High Activities**

The St. Ambrose Chapter of the **National Junior Beta Club** is open to students in sixth through eighth grade. Teacher recommendation, grades and conduct determine membership. It is a leadership-service club whose purpose is to encourage effort and reward merit, and to promote those qualities of character that make for a good citizen. Members participate in various service projects throughout the year and attend the Texas State Beta Convention. At the convention students participate in various academic, talent and art competitions. This honor society allows a place for students to shine outside athletics.

The eighth grade visits Catholic High Schools during the Fall, they organize and run the school's field day, and are in charge of bringing food to needy families during Thanksgiving and Christmas. They participate in various activities to promote a sense of unity and to raise money for their graduation and eighth grade trip. Each graduating class selects class colors, a class song, a class flower and a class tee shirt. They take a three-day, two-night trip to San Antonio and celebrate graduation with a breakfast, a Church ceremony and afterwards a dance.

### **High School Entrance**

Students work on the High School Preparation test books throughout the first of the year in preparation for the Catholic High School Entrance Exam test towards the end of January.

The teachers host a "Practice HSPT test" for the seventh and eighth graders which takes place one Sunday in November and one Sunday in January. This helps the children prepare for the actual three hour exam.

### **Prep Bowl**

This is a fast paced game show type competition where students are formed into three – four player teams. They compete against other teams in a question and answer format based on current events, history, and general knowledge. Prep Bowl encourages teamwork and cooperation as well as allowing students to demonstrate their abilities and overall knowledge.

### **Drama Club**

The SAS Drama Club participates in both public school and private school drama tournaments throughout the year. The SAS Drama Club practices weekly (after school) for these tournaments. In addition, Drama Club does props and narration for the Christmas play and participates in fund-raisers throughout the year. We have won numerous tournament awards, including two first place sweepstakes trophies, at various drama tournaments.

### **Sports**

The sports program offered at St. Ambrose is an excellent way to show school spirit, sportsmanship and athletic ability. St. Ambrose offers boys basketball, football, track and baseball. The sports for girls are Varsity cheerleading, basketball, volleyball, track

and softball. All students must meet behavior and academic eligibility in order to participate in sports and extracurricular activities.

### **SAS Varsity & JV Cheerleading**

Cheerleaders learn the fundamentals of cheer, dance, tumbling and stunting at summer camp. Cheerleaders plan the first official school gathering, "Meet the Hornets Night" in which members of the sports teams are introduced. A junior high dance follows. Cheerleaders prepare Pep Rallies, banners and spirit sticks to encourage school spirit for the football, volleyball, basketball, baseball and softball sports programs, as well as other student organizations.

### **St. Ambrose Student Council**

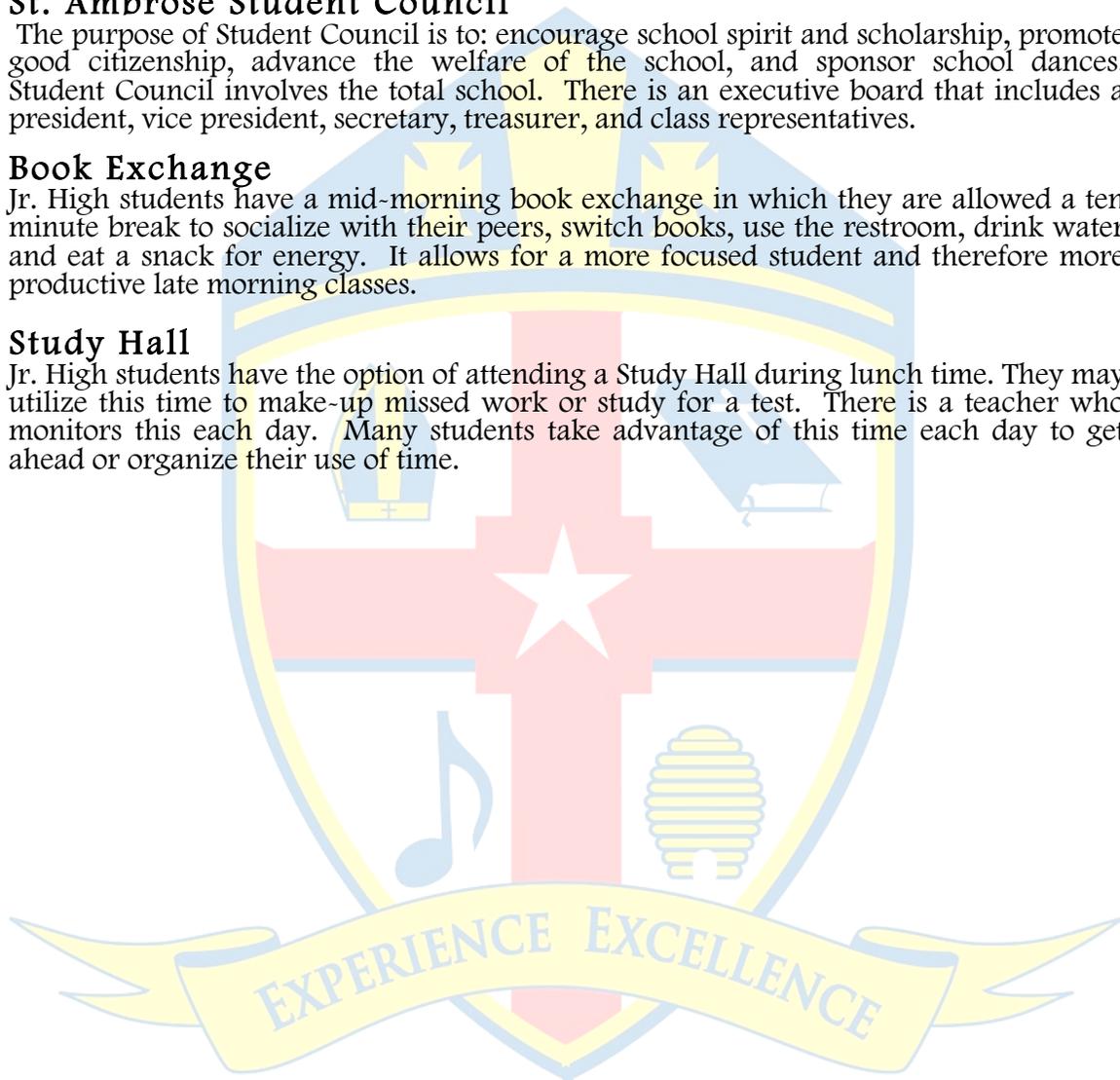
The purpose of Student Council is to: encourage school spirit and scholarship, promote good citizenship, advance the welfare of the school, and sponsor school dances. Student Council involves the total school. There is an executive board that includes a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and class representatives.

### **Book Exchange**

Jr. High students have a mid-morning book exchange in which they are allowed a ten minute break to socialize with their peers, switch books, use the restroom, drink water and eat a snack for energy. It allows for a more focused student and therefore more productive late morning classes.

### **Study Hall**

Jr. High students have the option of attending a Study Hall during lunch time. They may utilize this time to make-up missed work or study for a test. There is a teacher who monitors this each day. Many students take advantage of this time each day to get ahead or organize their use of time.



# Ancillary Classes

## Pre-K ~ 8<sup>th</sup>

### Experience a Broader Picture

#### **Computer Literacy Pre-K – 8th**

St. Ambrose has a full computer lab with 30 computers and an interactive whiteboard.

#### **Pre-K Classes**

Students in Pre-K learn to manipulate the mouse, location of letters on the keyboard, practice the appropriate way to handle the keyboard, start typing name, learn computer vocabulary terms, learn how to open programs, create digital stories using Tux Paint. Students build literacy and math skills through computer games.

#### **Kinder and First Grade Classes**

Classes learn to manipulate the mouse, location of letters on the keyboard, practice the appropriate way to handle the keyboard, learn computer vocabulary terms, create digital stories using Tux Paint, learn Microsoft Word, start creating and typing simple sentences using sight words, and are able to change font size and color. Students learn how to open and access programs and websites. Students build literacy and math skill through computer games.

#### **Second and Third Grade Classes**

Classes begin learning typing skills and finger placement, open and access programs and websites, troubleshooting skills, learn computer vocabulary terms, create and type paragraph, fixing errors, inserting graphics, print and save files in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Students learn about different types of computers, Internet safety and digital citizenship, research using the Internet, create digital stories and videos through different multimedia software.

#### **Fourth and Fifth Grade Classes**

Classes continue improving typing skills and finger placement, open and access programs and websites, troubleshooting skills, learn computer vocabulary terms and computer system, create and type papers, fixing errors, inserting graphics, and print and save files in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Students learn Internet safety and digital citizenship, research using the Internet, create digital stories and videos through different multimedia software, and creating websites.

#### **Sixth, Seventh, & Eighth**

Classes continue improving typing skills and finger placement (sixth typing 30 wpm, seventh typing 35 wpm, & eighth typing 40 wpm), open and access programs and websites, troubleshooting skills, learn computer vocabulary terms and computer system, create and type papers, fixing errors, inserting graphics, print and save files in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Students learn Internet safety, copyright laws, and digital citizenship, research, cite, and create projects using the Internet, create digital stories and videos through different multimedia software, and working on blogs, wikis, and online course management systems.

#### **Spanish Class** **Clase de español**

St. Ambrose has a Spanish lab located in a loft area of the gym. It has a sound system with head phones for conversational Spanish.

### **Pre-K ~ Kindergarten**

Students meet 30 minutes once a week. Basic expressions, songs, and vocabulary are taught. The children become familiar with the language.

### **First ~ Fifth grades**

Classes meet 40 minutes once or twice a week. Basic expressions are taught, commands, nouns(feminine & masculine), definite and indefinite articles, sentence structure, basic vocabulary such as parts of the body, days of the week, colors, numbers, etc. are covered.

### **Sixth – Eighth grades**

Jr. High meets 40 minutes twice a week. Conversation, listening, translation, reading, conjugation of regular and irregular verbs in present tense, and sentence structure are developed.

## **Fine Arts**

### **Music Class**

The children attend class in the Music room and may also take part in a children's choir and the bell choir. Each grade sings as a choir for at least one Mass each semester.

### **Pre-K, K & 1<sup>st</sup>**

Students learn to sing songs for Church, school and fun. They learn to clap in time, march, use a few rhythm instruments and work with others to make wonderful music.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> grades**

These classes study the different musical instruments how they sound and what they look like. They learn to read music, play a recorder and other instruments.

### **4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grades**

These classes are learning the basic theory of music: reading, writing and rhythm. Learning to play hand bells is the challenge for the spring semester.

### **Art Class**

Grades third through eighth have Art class once a week. Classes focus on using their imagination to create "Art". They are introduced to the elements of art: shape, line, color, and texture.

