



THE GENEVA SCHOOL

SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM

Second grade is a year of discovery during which students explore new things and enthusiastically learn with their classmates in a stimulating and structured environment. With ever-increasing confidence, they apply previously acquired skills and grow more fluent in the core subjects of language arts and mathematics. At The Geneva School, second graders begin their journey on the history and Bible timeline, and they spend much of the year excavating the wonders of ancient Egypt and learning about God's faithful provision for the Israelites. Through imaginative play and interactive learning centers, students participate in experiences that shape their minds, order their loves, and develop a strong sense of respectful community. An introduction to symbolic thinking allows students to engage metaphorically and experiment with using pictures to represent greater meaning. Children enjoy culminating experiences including Winnie-the-Pooh Day, a presentation of *The Exodus Retold*, and Egypt Day, each of which enhances students' imaginations and enriches their learning experience.



HISTORY

(Creation–30 BC)

History in second grade begins with the creation of the world and ends with Egypt's fall to Rome. Students enthusiastically marvel as they explore ancient cultures, and teachers encourage them to learn from the best each had to offer in its history, art, religion, and architecture. A study of the history of writing allows students to experiment with the ancient cuneiform wedge-shaped script of Mesopotamia and the hieroglyphic picture writing of ancient Egypt. Discovering the mysteries of these ancient writing forms reveals stories of these cultures and fills students with eagerness and engagement in learning. The story of Jean-Francois Champollion's passionate efforts to unlock the mysterious code of hieroglyphics inspires students to persevere and to set goals for their future. Students continue to follow ancient peoples through history, meeting both the strong and weak pharaohs of Egypt, the intriguing gods and goddesses worshiped by the ancient Egyptians, and the many warriors and intellects whose inventions and ideas influenced history. A



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study of the Great Pyramids of Giza stretches students' thinking as they speculate how and why the pyramids were constructed and compare and contrast the ancient Egyptian beliefs about death and the afterlife with our Christian beliefs. Students delight in the opportunity to walk through the mummification process by mummifying their own chicken legs and creating a decorative sarcophagus for the burial. Students complete the year with a culminating event called Egypt Day where they celebrate and apply their learning in meaningful ways.

LANGUAGE ARTS

READING

With a desire for all students to love stories, teachers strive to equip the students to become confident readers through daily practice and instruction. Second graders naturally delight in stories and eagerly engage in small group instruction where they read literature based on their interests and reading abilities. At this age, reading fluency is developing; students begin to read with greater expression and for deeper understanding. Reading groups

allow students to practice their skills and increase their comprehension strategies. Students explore main ideas, answer detailed questions, learn to use context clues, and predict outcomes through inferencing. Spelling instruction is phonics based and follows the Orton-Gillingham approach. Phonemes and spelling rules are taught explicitly in a structured and sequential manner. Second graders grow confident with new letter combinations as they spell one-syllable words. Later in the year, they learn about syllabication patterns as they master the spelling of longer words. The program is cumulative, helping students to strengthen previously learned skills as they learn to work with new letter combinations and rules. With many tools for success, second graders find themselves enjoying books with ease at school and at home.

COMPOSITION

To be able to express oneself in written form is an important skill. At Geneva, second graders continue to learn the art of letter formation and develop a mastery of manuscript D'Nealian penmanship. Once letter formation becomes more automatic, students are able to turn their



focus toward communicating through the construction of beautiful and effective sentences. Students enjoy Susan Wise Bauer's *Writing with Ease* curriculum where they are exposed to classical compositions that serve as models for the young writers. Excerpts from classic literature pique students' imaginations, and then students have the opportunity to narrate and summarize these passages in their own words. Becoming proficient in these skills allows students to identify key components of a passage while also finding their own voices in their compositions. Through copywork and dictation of sentences, students study the artistry of a well-crafted sentence and learn applicable grammar and punctuation skills. Studying classic authors who are masters at composition allows students to develop excellent writing skills at an early age. Students apply their knowledge to utilize correct grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Additionally, teachers use *Shurley Grammar* to augment students' understanding and application of the grammar rules they learn in class. As children model their work after that of the experts, they joyfully and confidently engage in age-appropriate written expression.

LITERATURE

The books selected for second grade literature studies captivate students' imaginations and present them with themes of friendship, community, and perseverance. Students begin the year listening to the clever rhyming works of Chris Van Dusen. Students gain an appreciation for the outdoor adventures of Magee and Dee, and their delight and laughter can be heard throughout the second grade halls during the shared reading of Van Dusen's books. Next, students journey through the wilderness with Sarah Noble as they listen to *The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Alice Dalgliesh. Students discuss the woodland adventures of the characters and focus on the bravery displayed by Sarah Noble. In *Winnie-the-Pooh*, students delight in the wit and charm of A. A. Milne's novel while enjoying and celebrating the different personalities of the characters. Just like each class of students, the characters work together, encourage one another in weaknesses, and celebrate the strengths of each individual. Rehearsing and performing a play about Winnie-the-Pooh teaches many lessons about friendship as students make a lifelong connection with this beautiful classic. Reading *The Velveteen Rabbit* engages students' imaginations about the power of love to transform. Students reflect upon how Christ's love



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has transformed their lives, and they delight in sewing their own stuffed velveteen rabbits to remember this work of literature. As students read the beloved story of *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*, they find themselves admiring and identifying with the characters while also developing an appreciation for the art of storytelling. Students ponder good versus evil as they witness the courage and resilience of the brave mongoose who defends his adoptive family from venomous cobras. The prospect of encountering real-life counterparts to the story's antagonists—the cobras Nag and Nagaina—fills the students with a mix of excitement and wonder. As a culmination of a unit on biographies, the students shine a spotlight on John James Audubon, the renowned ornithologist, by reading the book *The Boy Who Drew Birds: A Story of John James Audubon*. Their imaginations take flight alongside Audubon's vivid descriptions of birds in their natural habitats, beautifully illustrated with intricate detail. Students visit the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, where they marvel at the sight of eagles, hawks, and falcons. They relate their experience back to God's creation and also the importance of birds of prey to the Egyptians. The students' understanding of Audubon's work deepens as they go birding and observe birds on their own. Second graders end the year reading about the life of

King Tut in *Tut's Mummy, Lost and Found* as they prepare for the culminating event Egypt Day. Through the beauty of these well-told stories, students delight in reading and teachers continue to cultivate the love of stories in their second graders.

LIBRARY SCIENCE

Second grade library class acquaints the students with both classic stories and newer titles with an emphasis on Caldecott Award-winning books. Students are encouraged to discuss story elements and different art mediums. They are introduced to library concepts and the different types of books found in libraries.

MATHEMATICS

In second grade math, the goals are for students to develop a strong number sense and to demonstrate a growing understanding of why basic algorithms work rather than the act of simple memorization. While experimenting with numbers and math concepts through hands-on activities, the aim is for students to find joy in realizing that God has created a world full of mathematical patterns





and relationships. The Singapore approach found in the think!Mathematics curriculum supports this goal. Students first engage with concepts concretely through manipulatives, then explore them using pictures and drawings, and finally encounter and use abstract number sentences. Math is taught in context, and students appreciate the story that is connected to the beauty of mathematics. Students also enjoy hands-on games and activities to practice counting by tens, using real coins during the unit on money, and performing exercises with rulers and scales to find the lengths and masses of different objects. Through an experience called The Amazing Math Adventure, the students engage in real-world opportunities with math concepts, which opens their eyes to the ways math skills are both a delightful and necessary part of everyday life.

SCIENCE

THE LIBRARY OF THE SCRIBES

As the second grade students step back into history, they take on the role of a scribe in their science classes. In ancient

Egyptian times, the scribes learned about the world around them. Their knowledge was based on practicality. They observed all that happened in daily life and kept track of every detail. In a similar fashion, the students track and are attentive to the world in which God has placed them. They look to the heavens and hone their skills of observation and record keeping as they track the phases of the moon and the movement of the sun. This also deepens their understanding of how God has established order and regularities in nature and how, from this order, man was able to develop the calendar. They imitate the solving of life's problems as the Egyptians did to predict the flooding of the Nile. They develop paper and get water to their crops with irrigation and the shaduf. In addition, they work with tools similar to those developed by and used by the Egyptians in their daily lives. As the students study the properties of water and how it is affected by heat and salt, they begin to understand the process of mummification and, more importantly, the vital role dehydration plays in food preservation. By “living” the story of the Egyptians, the students sense a bit of the excitement of making discoveries, encountering



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new experiences, applying newfound understanding of the natural world, and seeing God's hand at work providing for and sustaining his creation throughout time. Moreover, the chief aim is that of leading the students to see the purpose of their studies as a pathway to praise God and serve one another.

MUSIC

In every lower school grade at The Geneva School, music study and performance are vital to developing an aesthetically rich liberal arts education. In second grade, the elements of music are studied through experiences with pitch, rhythm, dynamics, melody, tempo, and form. Vocal training continues to be an integral part of learning to tell stories, play games, improvise, match pitch, and identify melodic patterns. Students learn how to perform, respond, connect, and create through music. The students learn to sing folk songs, hymns, and spiritual songs that further develop their understanding of the role that music plays in our school, history, and the Bible.

Ear training and the study of rhythm continue as students learn to write, notate, and code/decode music notation using the Kodaly method. Second graders use their developing musicianship skills to play Orff instruments to enhance their auditory skills and hand-eye coordination while playing and recognizing melodic and rhythmic patterns of increasing difficulty.

In the orchestra unit, students learn about the four instrument families through an extensive study of classical music. These pieces are integrated into the music curriculum as an extension of their classroom thematic units as a means to teach dynamics, tempo, form, meter, melody, and timbre. Students also learn to play and identify classroom percussion as pitched and unpitched.

Second grade's study of the Old Testament provides a unique opportunity to teach and connect well-loved hymns, rounds, and spirituals to the stories of God's faithfulness to the Israelites during *The Exodus Retold* performance.

Music performances also include the Winnie-the-Pooh play and the second grade closing ceremony.

ART

By second grade, students have been introduced to the elements of art and principles of design (e.g., line, balance, value, rhythm) and color theory. Their knowledge is reinforced through the study of the art of the ancient Near East and Egypt as well as some projects based on classroom literature. Students learn about the symbolic meaning of the lotus flower in Egyptian culture and paint it onto papyrus. While learning about John James Audubon and birds of prey, students create a beautiful watercolor painting of a peregrine falcon. Second graders study famous artists including Henri Matisse and even create their own version of *Les Bêtes de la Mer*. They are encouraged to explore the use of a variety of media as they develop more independence in their artistic choices and appreciate, at a beginning level, the difference in styles. These students watch, learn from, and encourage each other in accomplishments and projects.





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BIBLE

The second grade Bible curriculum begins with creation and follows the early history of God's covenant people through the books of Genesis and Exodus. Students marvel as each story reveals the mercy and faithfulness of God to his covenant people. They learn that our faith is not founded on the perfection of Adam, Noah, or Abraham but on the steadfast love and faithfulness of the God who keeps his promises to his people and prepares them for the coming of the promised Lamb of God and Lion of the tribe of Judah: our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Second graders relate to the characters studied and wonder what they would do in the same situations. Students gain a deeper understanding of God's forgiveness and his delight in redeeming sinful human beings for his glory. Students are encouraged to imagine where and how their lives fit within the story of God's plan to redeem a people for himself. The year ends with a study of the Israelites' oppression in Egypt, and second graders cry out to God for freedom as they perform in *The Exodus Retold*. Imagining the literal struggles of being enslaved, students also think about being enslaved to sin and the need to be set free from spiritual oppression. Throughout the year, students fill their hearts and minds with rich passages of Scripture including Psalm 24, Mary's Magnificat, Isaiah 61, and Exodus 15. They also delight in memorizing numerous hymns and spiritual songs, including "I Sing the Almighty Power of God," "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," and "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand."



DRAMA

The drama program not only seeks to enrich students' learning through exploring history and literature in an experiential fashion but also seeks to build character through the rehearsal and production process. Students take on responsibilities appropriate to their developmental level and are encouraged to problem-solve and work together as an ensemble to creatively tell their story, emulating the body of Christ using their unique gifts for one common goal. As a student progresses through the grammar school, he or she is involved in many productions. With each play, the student grows more and more confident in front of an audience. This confidence is gained through proper character detective work, personally identifying with their given roles, and being "in the moment" while honoring the author's intentions. They learn that this character study is bottomless and only grows more rich with every rehearsal. As distinctly Christian thespians, they are pointed back to Christ as they study the behavior of human beings, the one creation made in God's very own image.

In second grade, performances include a charmingly whimsical story from *Winnie-the-Pooh* and a production that tells the powerful story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, *The Exodus Retold*. Both performances incorporate students as narrators. The narration of Israel's deliverance is a profound opportunity for the students to master the art of storytelling through one of the greatest examples of God's gracious love for his people. To encourage a safe environment, teachers are on hand with scripts to prompt the students when necessary. There are very few entrances and exits, with adults on hand to assist the students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Geneva School is committed to providing a physical education curriculum that allows for frequent and diverse opportunities to engage in physical activities that to support a healthy mind and body. Second grade students learn the importance of caring for their physical bodies as a moral responsibility and as part of their reasonable service to God.

Students develop and improve specific motor abilities such as balance, speed, agility, power, and coordination. The PE curriculum develops integrative movement skills and combination skills through practice and play. Students explore activities that develop motor proficiency and creative expression. At the end of the year, the students enjoy units that incorporate cooperative activities. By the end of second grade, students understand the importance of regular exercise, teamwork, and expressive play and recognize integrity as part of their personal responsibility to God and others.

FIELD TRIPS AND CULMINATING EVENTS

Second grade's culminating events are wonderful opportunities for students to celebrate learning in experiential ways. For example, frolicking through the Hundred Acre Wood in the *Winnie-the-Pooh* play or lamenting with the Hebrews in *The Exodus Retold*, second graders cultivate their moral imaginations and enjoy bringing these stories to life. Students sing songs, memorize lines, develop gestures, and respond to cues; these activities hone foundational skills while creating joy and inspiring wonder. Field trips are also an integral part of the second grade experience. A visit to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey helps deepen students' understanding of the important role birds of prey played in the lives of Egyptians. The SALT Serveathon develops compassion for homeless people as students make blessing bags that are distributed to the homeless in Orlando. As a final event, second graders experience Egypt Day and reflect upon their growing understanding of an ancient culture's history, religion, and art.

EGYPT DAY

All year, second graders explore ancient Egyptian culture, building their own educational pyramids of facts and information about this fascinating people group. As the year comes to a close, the capstone of the second grade experience is celebrated through Egypt Day. Students arrive to discover and explore a hallway transformed





into an ancient Egyptian tomb filled with artifacts and Egyptian paintings created by second graders themselves in the classic composite style. Students are greeted by an archaeologist who tells them of his discovery of King Tut's tomb and then welcomes them into a search for another ancient tomb to witness these kinds of artifacts for themselves. The day is filled with wonder and awe as students apply their knowledge of Egyptian culture at the various learning centers. Some highlights include

creating a Geneva Stone in the style of the Rosetta Stone, riding in a life-size chariot, excavating artifacts buried in hardened plaster, and completing the final stages of the mummification process for their chicken mummies in the Egyptian temple. Students go home with faces painted in Egyptian style, their necks and wrists adorned with Egyptian collars and jewelry, and their minds full of rich memories of their day of adventure.

FIELD TRIPS

- ◆ Audubon Center for Birds of Prey
- ◆ Central Florida Zoo Snake Exhibit

CULMINATING EVENTS

- ◆ Winnie-the-Pooh Day
- ◆ Winnie-the-Pooh Play
- ◆ Velveteen Rabbit Sewing Party
- ◆ Amazing Math Adventure
- ◆ *The Exodus Retold* Performance
- ◆ Egypt Day
- ◆ Closing Ceremony



YOUNG MINDS NEED
ROOM TO GROW.



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