



THE GENEVA SCHOOL

**SIXTH GRADE
CURRICULUM**

Wonder, curiosity, and charity are a few words that capture the sixth grade experience.

During this year, the culmination of the grammar school experience, the students build on their knowledge and prepare for their years in the dialectic and rhetoric school. The love of story is developed through literature, history, and Bible. In literature, students read coming-of-age stories and learn how the protagonists overcome their challenges. In history, they study the modern era and make connections with current events. In Bible, students continue to develop a love of God's word as they study Acts and the Pauline epistles. The students practice important study and organization skills that empower independence and promote confidence by transitioning from cubbies and desks to lockers and tables and learning from all of the sixth grade teachers. The pinnacle of the student experience is a four-day trip to Washington, DC. The priority of the grade is to foster a loving, charitable community so that students can think deeply, love beauty, and pursue Christ's calling.



HISTORY

(1815–Present Day)

Sixth grade history begins in 1815 and ends with present-day American events. America is a country formed with the vision of manifest destiny—moving across the continent and expanding its influence into the wider world. So, as the nation emerges, sixth grade students study critical events that shift the course of US history. They confront complex issues that continue to influence the world we live in today. Beginning with the antebellum period, they trace the story of America through the Civil War, two world wars, and the Cold War. Along the way, students encounter influential Americans like Andrew Jackson, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, FDR, and Martin Luther King Jr. Students begin to connect the history they have learned to current news stories, allowing them to meaningfully join an ongoing conversation.



Inspiring students to love beauty, think deeply, and pursue Christ's calling.



LANGUAGE ARTS

LITERATURE

To create excitement and to nurture a love of learning through books, teachers and students dive into such books as *The Hobbit*, *The Hiding Place*, *My Side of the Mountain*, *Across Five Aprils*, and *The Giver*. The main method students utilize to assimilate the text that they read is the classical practice of oral narration. Students also transfer their oral narrations to written narrations on a regular basis. This practice is foundational in strengthening the students' abilities in reading comprehension, writing, and rhetoric. Teachers delight in building wonder and enlarging the moral imaginations of their students through expressive reading and engaging questions.

COMPOSITION

George Orwell states, "If people cannot write well, they cannot think well, and if they cannot think well, others will do the thinking for them." Geneva aims to teach students the art of putting virtuous thoughts into words—true, beautiful, and persuasive words.

Using the *Writing and Rhetoric* curriculum, teachers seek to cultivate the skills necessary for the students to become skillful and winsome rhetoricians and to provide multiple opportunities for them to orally present their written work. Students employ grammatical concepts provided in *Shurley English* to write precise, well-edited paragraphs. Editing and self-correction are key components of the program, teaching the students to receive and provide feedback with humility and grace as a way to improve their writing. Geneva strives to develop articulate writers who recognize the benefits of writing within a supportive community.





LIBRARY SCIENCE

In sixth grade, students review book genres by discussing the hallmarks and value of each genre, and they are also given reading recommendations for each genre. They are encouraged to use the library computer catalog to find books and to send book recommendations to their classmates. Students also use the library to find resources for their various classroom research projects.

MATHEMATICS

The aim of the CPM mathematics program is for students to engage with real-world problems and use conceptual understanding to solve, discuss, and explore the nature of mathematics. More than simply using discrete algorithms, mastering calculations, or applying formulas, students explore the reasoning behind their calculations and why mathematics works. Students build on their understanding from prior grades to develop and deepen their grasp of concepts such as ratios, integers, expressions, rational numbers, and geometry.

Students are encouraged to use a variety of methods and tools to explain how they understand a problem. Moreover, students learn perseverance and collaboration as they learn to work with partners. By the end of the year, students have solidified and expanded their basic math grammar skills, explored beginning ideas of algebra, and learned to appreciate the order and beauty in God's world.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Geneva School is committed to providing a curriculum in physical education that allows frequent and diverse opportunities to engage in physical activities necessary to support a sound mind and healthy body. Through exposure to a wide variety of activities, students gain the necessary knowledge to understand the importance of achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Sixth grade students continue team sports education by learning rules, techniques, and basic strategies. Throughout the year, there are multiple opportunities to explore individual sports such





as golf, bowling, and tennis. By the end of the year, students understand fitness-building concepts and their benefits and are becoming personally responsible for developing healthy habits and making wise decisions regarding personal fitness. Sixth graders develop positive attitudes toward teamwork and cooperation and enjoy a class field trip to the bowling alley after completing the PE bowling unit.

DRAMA

The drama program not only seeks to enrich the students' learning through experiencing history and literature but also seeks to build character through the rehearsal and production process. Students are given responsibilities appropriate to their developmental level and encouraged to problem-solve and work together as a group to tell their story.

The sixth grade students perform *The Hobbit*, an adaptation of the J. R. R. Tolkien classic read in literature. Students journey with Bilbo Baggins as he learns about friendship and bravery. Students are asked to portray developed characters,

and they learn to show realistic emotion on stage. In the end, the students will have worked together to perform a very dramatic and moving story.

ART

In the sixth grade, students draw and paint, integrating their grammar studies in line, shape, form, volume, proportion, and color, with the goal of helping them to develop their own emerging sense of style and taste preference in the visual arts. Part of this process includes transitioning into understanding the logic of an art piece—how and why a piece is executed and created. One way the students learn the variety of elements and principles of design is to imitate the well-known artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

PICTURE STUDY

Picture study is a class that trains the students to look at, take note of, and imitate beautiful art. In a time where our attention is pulled in multiple directions simultaneously, it is important that we train our attention to focus on one task for a length of time. Not only does this class provide the opportunity for students to look at timeless pieces of art, it also challenges them to make observations, ask good questions, and learn more about the story behind the art. After making these observations, the students are then able to confirm what they see by imitating the piece using the same method as the artist. At its completion, the students step back having been a student and creator of beautiful art.

SCIENCE

Using scale-model representations, where the Sun becomes a bowling ball and Earth is a peppercorn, sixth grade science students take a half-mile solar system walk that gives them an impression of the size of our amazing solar system. This is how students begin their study of space and the history of space exploration. These sixth grade students meet the characters involved in the space program and hear the stories surrounding the astounding accomplishment of the US challenge of sending men to





Inspiring students to love beauty, think deeply, and pursue Christ's calling.

BIBLE

Seeking to communicate the centrality of God's word in a Christian's life, teachers use Paul's journeys and letters to create the backbone of biblical studies in sixth grade. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles provide a wealth of teaching on God's faithfulness, loving-kindness, and hope for all believers. Sixth grade is a year of deepening the students' knowledge of God's character and how he would have us live. Amidst a year of students' developmental and social shifts, the teachers seek to guide them through instruction, modeling, and teachable moments. The overarching desire is that students learn who God is and how to love others well in a fallen world.





the moon. When they view the *Apollo 13* movie, they understand that hundreds of people on the ground at mission control led to the success of each moon mission. The unit on space culminates with a field trip to the Kennedy Space Center where students see the components of the US Apollo moon missions. When they see the amazing Saturn V rocket, they have already seen its components in their classroom Saturn V model. In this way, the students' classroom learning experiences make their field trip more meaningful. For these students, examining these stories is tantamount to seeing "science in action." With the goal of inspiring students to love learning about creation, they also explore other topics such as the earth's structure, its magnetosphere, and plate tectonics. They also dissect the earth's crust by inspecting rocks and minerals, culminating in a geology dig where students sort rocks and minerals by type. All of creation, as it is uncovered by their studies, inspires admiration for our great God!

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In the sixth grade, students complete their introduction to Latin by learning different verb tenses and new forms of both verbs and nouns. After memorizing the imperfect and the

future perfect tenses, students are introduced to the most frequent (and complicated) type of noun: third declension nouns. Students also continue building up a base of key vocabulary words, and they put their grammar knowledge into practice by translating sentences and short stories. Using flash cards and chants, students gain a confident grasp of the language through practice and repetition. Finally, students learn the Vulgate versions of some of their Bible memory passages to experience the historical nature of the Christian faith through their language studies.

MUSIC

In every grade at The Geneva School, music study and performance are vital to developing an aesthetically rich liberal arts education. Sixth grade marks the completion of a student's grammar school music study at Geneva, and they develop a deep understanding and appreciation for the role music has played in our school, history, and the Bible.

Sixth grade students transition from soprano recorder instruction into alto recorder, continuing to learn how to play as an ensemble with good breath support, technique, and developing tone. Students are introduced to the music of the Civil War and American West, engaging in activities to create, sing, and play recorders, and non-pitched





Inspiring students to love beauty, think deeply, and pursue Christ's calling.





percussion. Students use their developing music theory skills to play and notate musical patterns consisting of sixteenth, eighth, quarter, half, and whole notes, along with quarter, half, and whole rests. They continue to review the notes on the treble staff, learn how to interpret a musical score, sing in parts, and read/play more complex meters and rhythms. These techniques are fostered in their yearlong study through their music workbook, *Master Theory Book 1*.

The sixth grade study of American pioneers, the impact of American wars and battles, and the Civil Rights Movement creates a unique opportunity to study patriotic songs, cultural folk tunes, twentieth-century composers, and the birth of American jazz. They also have the opportunity to further explore song form through the study of the blues. Performances include Lessons and Carols and their closing ceremony.

FIELD TRIPS AND CULMINATING EVENTS

Field trips and culminating events are an integral part of the curriculum; these days are not “add-ons” but rather are designed to support the study of American history. Two culminating days are Pioneer Day and Immigration Day. Students dress in time-period attire as they are transported to a bygone era in order to experience life in another culture and through a lens different from their own. What was it like to arrive at Ellis Island as an immigrant to this wonderful new nation? Students are given the chance to find out on Immigration Day. Their arrival at Ellis Island—created on campus—might be a shock to some who come with big dreams of freedom and great expectations.



Inspiring students to love beauty, think deeply, and pursue Christ's calling.



WASHINGTON, DC

After spending two years studying American history, sixth grade students journey to the nation's capital. They experience learning from the bounty of its museums, monuments, governmental and historical buildings, documents, and statuary. Their studies have taken them from the signing of the Declaration of Independence through various wars, presidents, and Supreme Court decisions. Sixth graders walk their history timeline while taking in the National Mall and exploring buildings the leaders of this country have used to govern and build our nation. They visit the Smithsonian Museums, Capitol building, and many other national treasures. This trip of a lifetime with classmates brings to life the history of the government of our great nation.

FIELD TRIPS

- ◆ T.E.A.M. Day (Trust, Esteem, Assurance, and Motivation)
- ◆ Kennedy Space Center
- ◆ Bowling Field Trip
- ◆ Washington, DC

CULMINATING EVENTS

- ◆ Pioneer Day
- ◆ *The Hobbit* Performance
- ◆ Immigration Day
- ◆ Closing Ceremony & Graduation



YOUNG MINDS NEED
ROOM TO GROW.



WWW.GENEVASCHOOL.ORG