



## Western Christian Elementary Curriculum Overview

At Western Elementary we are committed to providing instruction that is based on grounded educational principles of engagement, skill development, rich content, and exploration. While we are looking to standards to make sure benchmarks are reached, we also hold to a growth mindset, which communicates that growth is a continuum of understanding and development and in all cases is unique to the individual learner.

### Language Arts / Social Studies / Science

**Amplify CKLA:** We believe in giving kids rich content that helps them understand the past and present. Knowledge-based schooling puts the emphasis of early education on teaching and learning an enabling core of broadly shared knowledge—enabling because it builds strong foundations for later learning and opens doors to effective participation and mutual understanding in the wider society. Such knowledge is possessed by successful adults and taken for granted by literate writers and speakers. It's the broad and diverse knowledge that makes responsible citizenship possible. Amplify curriculum has assembled together for each elementary grade level deep-themed units that open the door to our rich history, [click here to visit our content page](#).

**Reading and Comprehension** are keys to effective learning as a child moves through school. In grades, K-3 students are primarily focused on learning to read. Then, around mid-year in third grade and beyond they are reading to learn. Now, this doesn't mean they can't learn content as they learn to read, it just means that the focus is primarily on learning to decode words, blend sounds, identify word relationships, and so on. Our reading foundation is based on phonics and linguistics where students learn to connect speech to sounds, sounds to letters, and letters to meaning.

**K-3 Amplify CKLA Skills** strand organizes children's reading experiences to maximize their practice in newly taught spelling-sound patterns. This is achieved in two ways. The first is the organization of instruction. A unique database was created to index every word in the English language and determine the most frequent spelling patterns. CKLA organizes instruction to teach the most frequent spelling patterns first in order to maximize the words children can read and move them into engaging, well-written, decodable texts early in the program. These 100% decodable readers are uniquely designed to provide children intensive practice with the code within an authentic reading experience. They reinforce children's sense of success as readers by eliminating the distraction of encountering untaught spelling patterns or exceptions. These decodable texts not only engage children in a variety of topics but are also written in the style of chapter books and inspire children to want to read more.

**In 4–5, students** are still focused on building reading and writing skills as well as knowledge and vocabulary, but the program no longer has two strands. Across the year, students study 8 to 9



content-focused units (including The Middle Ages, Geology, Treasure Island, and Native Americans). Taking 90 minutes per day, the various lessons in each unit include read-aloud; whole-group, small-group, and partner reading; close reading; literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension questions; vocabulary; grammar; writing; morphology and spelling (10–15 words per week); and unit assessments

## Writing - Structure Curriculum

Expression through writing is the key to effective communication. At Western, our writing curriculum follows the 6+1 traits of writing, which are researched based and proven strategies for helping students develop comprehensive writing skills. The 6+1 Trait® Writing Model of Instruction & Assessment comprises 6+1 key qualities that define quality writing. These are:

(<http://educationnorthwest.org/traits/trait-definitions>)

- Ideas—the main message
- Organization—the internal structure of the piece
- Voice—the personal tone and flavor of the author's message
- Word Choice—the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning
- Sentence Fluency—the rhythm and flow of the language
- Conventions—the mechanical correctness
- Presentation—how the writing actually looks on the page

## Math Curriculum

Proper math instruction is crucial for success in high school and beyond. There has been much confusion and controversy in recent years. Parents are concerned their children are not getting a good foundation and that the “rules” are changing. These are valid concerns in many instances. At Western, our approach is to assure our students are well prepared for middle and high school. Therefore we utilize a curriculum that has a well-rounded approach that has shown success for decades. Developed right in Oregon at The Math Learning Center, the 2nd edition of Bridges is a realistic and comprehensive approach. There are 8 units of study at each grade level. Each unit includes 20 lessons and takes approximately 4 weeks to complete. Each lesson takes a single class period. In addition to the main lesson of the day, students also work on their skills in 15- to 20-minute Number Corner exercises, many of which are games.

In Bridges classrooms, students:

- Play an active role in their own learning and in the classroom community
- Talk about math by sharing observations, explaining their thinking, and asking questions



- Use hands-on activities and a variety of math tools and visual models to understand how mathematical concepts work
- Build stamina for solving complex problems that require perseverance
- Play games in small groups to practice what they learn

As students develop their ability to recall basic facts, it makes good sense to address both mastery of the skill (quick recall of facts) and understanding of the concept (the properties of the operation and the relationships between facts). Bridges teach basic facts by first having students explore the operation (addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division) in the context of story problems or situations, which ensures students understand what it means to add, subtract, multiply, or divide. Students then learn strategies for solving basic problems; these strategies illustrate properties of the operation and can be used for mental math with larger numbers (as well as to help recall facts when needed). Finally, students practice the facts until they can recall them from memory. [Click here](#) more information specifically on [Bridges](#).

## Elementary Bible (Early Education—Grade 8)

[Purposeful Design Publications](#) offers an exceptionally effective, stimulating, and wonderfully engaging Bible series. Essential to the mission of Christian schools—which is preparing children and young people for living the Christian life—is guiding students to become grounded in and shaped by God's Word.

The thematic strands that flow through the Purposeful Design Elementary Bible series are as follows:

- God tells us His great story in the Bible.
- God's Word is the truth.
- The gospel of Jesus Christ and saving faith through Him.
- Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding come from a life grounded in the Scriptures.
- Becoming a spiritually formed disciple of Jesus is impossible without knowing God's Word.
- Developing a vital and authentic Christian worldview requires study, worship, and disciplined practice.

### Overview of the Purposeful Design Elementary Bible Series

The goal of the Purposeful Design Elementary Bible series is for every student to develop a Christian worldview. A worldview is that framework from which each person views reality, makes sense of life, and interacts with the world. The Christian worldview holds that the primary reason for each person's existence is to love and serve God. People develop a Christian worldview through both the knowledge and application of Scripture. For this reason, it is essential for students to have an in-depth knowledge of Bible truths as well as the ability to apply Scripture to their daily life.

### Scope and Sequence

- Kindergarten Familiar Bible truths that emphasize God's loving care



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- First Grade Familiar Bible truths that emphasize God's relationship to people
- Second Grade Studies on character traits of various people in the Bible with application to students' life
- Third Grade Studies in the life of Christ, the early Church, and missions from the time of Paul until now
- Fourth Grade Studies in the basic doctrines of the Church
- Fifth Grade Studies in the Old Testament that emphasize choices and their consequences
- Sixth Grade Studies in the New Testament that emphasize application to students' personal life
- Seventh Grade Studies Joseph - A character study; and Daring Deliverers - book study of Judges
- Eighth Grade Studies The Life of Christ (a year-long study) is both engaging and effective in teaching young people about Jesus through the four Gospels.

### **Expected Student Outcomes**

A strong Bible program requires that students not only acquire skills and knowledge but also grow in faith and demonstrate that faith by their behavior. For this reason, each lesson has a unique set of expected student outcomes—statements of desired student outcomes in the areas of life application, skills, and knowledge through studying the lesson. Because growth in faith is an individual matter, students will come to apply Scripture over the course of time as they grow in their relationship with God.

## **WCS Statement on Educational Standards and Culture**

Western Christian School has aligned with the skills bases standards of the state of Massachusetts. The question becomes, "Why did you choose to align with those standards?" Massachusetts is the leading state in the country for educational excellence. Their scores are far and above the national norms and their approach to education mirrors ours - to equip students for the 21 century with rich knowledge and skills that will help them succeed in an ever-changing world. The link here is to Massachusetts state standards: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/search/default.aspx>

Aligning with Massachusetts does not mean we have adopted their content only that we have adopted their skill-bases standards. WCS had determined that our core values should reflect our Christian heritage, therefore the curriculum we have chosen to use at WCS provides a deep and rich content of our history as a nation and our place in the world, past and present. While WCS will introduce topics and ideas, at age-appropriate levels, that are secular in nature, we will filter those ideas and topics through a Christian worldview.

WCS is a culturally conservative school, we do not adopt cultural trends or movements that move us away from a traditional understanding of God's Word. This isn't to say that we are not a tolerant school and understand that every individual is a child of God and deserves respect and dignity, but it does mean



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we do hold to traditional behavior and verbal standards that are counter, in many ways, to our present culture.