



4th Grade

Program Overview

Update: August 28, 2014



In fourth grade we continue to use balanced literacy approach to provide a solid framework of integration between all language arts skills. Comprehension and vocabulary skills are continued priorities to help in the growth of our students as readers. Supplemental core stories also allow integration of biblical principles, science, social studies, health, art, and other subjects.

We use "process writing" in which students brainstorm to organize prewriting ideas, draft their writing, obtain teacher or peer response to the draft, revise, edit, and then "publish" selected pieces. Spelling and usage skills are developed through context. Cursive handwriting continues, but typing via computer begins.

McGraw Hill's *My Math* textbook is the primary resource for math practice and homework.

Harcourt *Science* and Pearson *My World Social Studies Regions of Our Country* provide inquiry-based learning in those areas. A pretend trip to China gives students special instruction in their Asian region.

We encourage children to use their personal *The International Children's Bible*, provided by Morrison Academy for use in Grades 2-5, for both home and school reading.

Specialists teach your child Mandarin, visual arts, performing arts, physical education, and library media skills. Each has a vital part in your child's week.

The vision of the Morrison Academy educators is that a maturing Morrison student will be a(n),

Moral and ethical citizen,

- make ethical decisions from a Biblical perspective
- respect persons of other ages, races, cultures, faiths, and values
- demonstrate self-control in attitude and behavior

Spiritual discerner

- appreciate who God is and His provision for reconciliation through Jesus Christ
- apply Biblical principles and values into life situations
- accept his/her self-worth as God's creation

Critical thinker and Creative Thinker

- analyze, interpret, evaluate, and synthesize concepts within various contexts
- utilize mathematics to problem-solve effectively
- create original products and works with high standards

Life-long learner

- maintain intellectual curiosity
- utilize the scientific inquiry method
- utilize technology appropriately

Effective communicator

- read and write skillfully and purposefully
- demonstrate competence in speaking and listening
- contribute to groups collaboratively with interpersonal skills

Wise and Responsible Steward

- serve others generously and compassionately
- maintain disciplined health habits
- appreciate the performing and visual arts

Language Arts

Students are created in God's image with the unique ability to communicate, create, and express ideas. The language arts develop these abilities to understand and influence God's world for His glory. Therefore, Morrison offers a balanced language arts approach that teaches students to read with fluency and comprehension, evaluate text and media with discernment, listen with understanding and compassion, speak with conviction and effect, and write with clarity and persuasion. (O'Malley 1999)

Fourth grade students will continue to become more and more independent in reading, writing, researching, listening, and speaking. The books they read and stories they write will become longer and require more thinking and research. Vocabulary and spelling skills will increase and become more complex. Students will continue with cursive handwriting and begin keyboarding instruction. Students will develop self-evaluation skills as they compare their work and thinking to expectations and other authors' writing. Students will develop technology skills in research and writing projects as well.



Reading

New vocabulary: affixes & use of thesaurus

Use all the reading strategies

Non-fiction: identify cause & effect; fact from opinion

Fiction: compare basic story elements & point of view

Writing

Imaginative story (300-500 wds)

Personal narrative (100-200 wds)

Expository: 2 paragraphs with 1 topic

Research project using Big 6 (2-3 minute presentation)

Traits of Writing

Speaking/Listening

Recite, narrate, explain using
visual aid & making eye contact

Use listening comprehension strategies
(monitor comprehension & graphic organizers)

Math

Morrison Academy strives to develop students who obtain a mastery of, and appreciation for, the content and processes of mathematics, as well as an understanding of how mathematics relates to other domains in life. While the study of mathematics occurs mostly within finite creation, it points us towards the character of an infinite God who values logic, order and consistency. Therefore, the purpose of mathematical instruction at Morrison is to develop students whose mastery of content includes insight into logical processes that will enable students to make meaningful connections to a world of order and help them transfer math concepts to other domains consistent to life. Such tangible engagement with math will help Morrison's students dynamically impact their world for Christ.

In Grade 4, we continue to work on ideas involving fractions, multiplication, and division. Students work on multiplying and dividing using a variety of strategies to ensure a solid conceptual understanding of the processes. The key areas are: (1) developing understanding and fluency with multi-digit multiplication, and dividing to find quotients involving multi-digit dividends; (2) developing an understanding of fraction equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions with like denominators, and multiplication of fractions by whole numbers; (3) understanding that geometric figures can be analyzed and classified based on their properties, such as having parallel sides, perpendicular sides, particular angle measures, and symmetry.



Physical Education

All people are creations of God designed to know and glorify Him through their lives and action. Therefore, Morrison's physical education program recognizes that our bodies are temples of God to be appropriately cared for and used in developing a mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually balanced life.

Students will continue to develop their motor skills by using games and age-appropriate movement drills. As they participate in structured "team oriented" sports such as soccer, softball, and basketball, students will experience and discuss issues related to participation, personal fitness, and a appreciation of a healthy and active lifestyle. The skills they worked on at this stage are further developed and reinforced when they advance to the middle school levels. PE at grade 3-5 also aims to develop a biblical understanding exercise and playing in a team sport.

Health

Morrison Academy is committed to following Christ's example of a balanced life. Therefore we desire growth in four areas: wisdom (mental/emotional), stature (physical), favor with God (spiritual), and favor with man (social). Consistent with our integrated-based philosophy of education, we strive to incorporate instruction for life-long wellness throughout the curriculum.



Science

Morrison's science program seeks to help students gain knowledge of God through the study of His creation. This is accomplished with an activity-oriented program where teachers and students think analytically and logically, solve problems creatively, and use technology as a tool. Morrison endeavors to help students acquire developmentally appropriate concepts and science skills to make positive contributions as Christians in an increasingly scientific and technological society.

Students will explore how electricity and magnetism are related and their useful applications to everyday life. They will also consider how all organisms need energy and matter to live and grow in their ecosystems and examine the properties of rocks and minerals and the causes which reshape Earth's landforms. Students are asked to consider meaningful questions and to conduct careful investigations.

Guidance

The program provides a biblically-based program that is available to all students, teachers/staff and parents helping them to recognize their uniqueness as individuals in Christ. Morrison seeks to provide a primarily proactive and preventative program which enables students to fulfill God's purpose in their lives by maturing spiritually, emotionally, academically, physically and socially.

Students will continue to learn that it is necessary to take responsibility for their school work and learning. The curriculum is structured to help students realize that they can use the skills learned in the classroom to explore their own interests and abilities. They will learn how to set personal boundaries and respect people's privacy. They learn how to respond to social influences and pressure. A safety emphasis will be to understand basic first aid procedures for common emergencies they may encounter. Students will explore how their school work prepares them for future careers. They will continue to discuss the process of transition and the changes.

Mandarin Chinese

God has given us the gift of language to communicate with Him, ourselves, and others. Morrison's Mandarin Chinese program is a foreign language program that equips all students to communicate more effectively in a global context to better impact their world as Christians. This is done through a unit-driven curricular program that teaches all students the four basic tenets (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of communication as well as Chinese culture and Christian concepts.

Teachers use high yield instructional strategies, a variety of materials, teaching styles, and enriching activities that are age-appropriate, promote higher order thinking, relevant, and integrate technology and faith.

Library Media Skills

Morrison Academy recognizes that people are gifted by God with the ability to inquire, gain knowledge, and delight in the creativity of others. Morrison Academy library program strives to equip students to enjoy information by teaching them how to use information effectively. The Library Media Center will support students by providing opportunities to become critical thinkers, life-long learners, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information.

The fourth grade library media class refines students' awareness of sources in the library, especially digital resources, and their ability to use the inquiry process. They will explore simple story structure further and be encouraged to read more for pleasure. During the inquiry process, they are asked to determine the best sources, summarize information, and cite sources using a simplified MLA format. They will also begin distinguishing the purposes of websites.



Bible

God is the source of all truth, and the Bible is God's special revelation for all humanity. Through it we are introduced to the life of faith and the redemption offered to all in Christ Jesus. We comprehensively teach the Bible to foster biblical literacy, develop spiritual discernment, and equip students with a Christian worldview resulting in students who are transformed by the Holy Spirit and willing to be obedient to God's truth. Bible education aims to encourage each student to love God and to serve others.

The Morrison Academy Bible Curriculum: 5 strands

- *Biblical Literacy*-Students will know basic content of the Bible: stories about Old and New Testament characters, chronology, cultural and historical background, recurring themes and topics.
- *Spiritual Discernment*-Students will be able to appreciate who God is and accept one's self worth as God's creation, while distinguishing right from wrong.
- *Biblical Worldview*-Bible classes not only impart biblical and theological knowledge but use it as the basis of a biblical worldview which is used to explore the world.
- *Christian Character*-Through the teaching of the Bible we desire to see the love of God perfected in our students so that they know God, obey God's commands and love others.
- *Christian Service*-Beginning in middle school, intentional, hands-on service to local and global communities enhances students' academic learning, a natural outworking of biblical truth.

Fourth graders learn Bible study skills and use these skills to study biblical doctrines. Students learn doctrines of the Bible, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the Church, heaven and hell, and see how these doctrines apply to them personally.

Social Studies

Social studies instruction at Morrison unites two important elements:

- *Acquiring a solid knowledge base of historical, geographical, civic, economic, and cultural concepts.*
- *Acquiring a social studies skill set to apply knowledge to situations using a global Christian perspective.*

Morrison's social studies program seeks to develop students who can influence the kingdoms of mankind as critically-thinking citizens of the Kingdom of God. We provide developmentally appropriate instruction through a balance of inquiry learning and direct teaching. Though implementing a United States based curriculum, we recognize the importance of a global approach to social studies curricula to meet the needs of our diverse population.

Regions of the United States (China)

In grade 4, student will study the geography and people of the United States. Students will learn geography by examining the physical and social geography of the five major regions of the United States (Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, West). They will learn fundamental economic principles to understand the economy of each region. In the civics strand, students study the structure and function of the United States government. Students will also look at the cultural distinctions and contributions of each region. They will also study China and explore the connections between China and the United States. Students will examine similarities and differences between the countries in climate, physical geography, resources, goods and services, culture and religion.



Visual and Performing Arts

Morrison Academy recognizes that students are made in the image of their Creator and that God has endowed them with His creativity and individual gifts. Because training in visual and performing arts is an essential component of educating the whole person, students must be given the opportunity to explore, develop, and enjoy their God-given artistic abilities. Students will learn to express their creativity by experiencing, appreciating and discerning the arts from historical, contemporary and multi-cultural perspectives. Morrison Academy's arts programs endeavor to use the arts to glorify and worship God, equip students to serve His church, and impact their world in a relevant and dynamic way.

Performing Arts

All elementary students receive general music instruction. Emphasis is placed on performance (playing various instruments, singing, improvisation, concert etiquette), notation (melody, rhythm, music symbols, reading music), and music appreciation (history of instruments and composers, folk dance, music of other cultures).

Students in 4th grade are poised and self-controlled on stage. They sing with correct vocal breathing and tonal placement, and can perform independently in canons and 2 part ensembles (both playing instruments and singing). There is increased accuracy in reading pitches and rhythms, and improved following of expressive marking as they appear in music. 4th graders will specifically study the Renaissance in music and the history of the recorder and other woodwind instruments, and the stories of famous composers.



Visual Arts

Children who complete the six grade levels of elementary art at Morrison Academy will be able to *create* art using a variety of art mediums in both the second and third dimensions and identify and use the common elements and principles of art. With confidence, they will create art that *communicates* their own thinking, tells stories, shares ideas, or evokes emotions. They will be led to *appreciate* the work of their peers, the art handed down through history, art from other cultures, and the place of art and artists in their world today.

Fourth Grade art is a hands-on class. Fourth grade art students will develop skills in drawing, design, watercolors, printing and/or pottery. They will learn techniques and skills safely using a variety of art materials and tools. The students learn principles and elements of art including line, form, balance, symmetry, contrast, or perspective. They may create posters or advertisements, both by hand and with digital tools to communicate specific messages or ideas. They will compare and contrast art from other cultures and from different times in history.



How Parents Can Help

Activities That Support Your Child's Learning

- Listen to your child
- Read to and with your child, asking questions about what is being read
- Praise your child's reading efforts
- Encourage older children to read to their younger siblings
- Model the importance of reading by being a reader yourself
- Talk with your child rather than at him/her
- Help your child keep a writing notebook or journal
- Provide a quiet place for homework and study
- Encourage early completion of homework while allowing the child to incur the natural consequences of lapses
- Help your child capitalize on his learning style
- Allow your child as much independence as he proves he can handle
- Encourage your child to ask questions and seek answers
- Celebrate successes
- Create special times to be alone with your child to participate in activities (cooking dinner, working in the shop, etc.)
- Take your child to places and talk about the visits
- Limit time spent on computer games
- Tell your child family stories, especially events that happened when you were his/her age
- Watch television with your child and discuss the programs together; limit viewing time; choose programs with care
- Play memory and math games, vocabulary games, physical games
- Talk with your child about the school work he/she brings home
- Give your child responsibilities
- Communicate your expectations regarding his/her behavior and performance at school

"Fathers, do not make your children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4 (ICB)