



THE GENEVA SCHOOL

**FIRST GRADE
CURRICULUM**

First grade at The Geneva School provides a safe and nurturing atmosphere where the foundational and sweet early steps of faith and learning grow into a lifetime love of discovery. Children of this age are capable of profound thought and wonder as they engage subject matter; students are encouraged in higher-order thinking skills through developmentally appropriate activities that stimulate every sense and pique each student's natural curiosity. At The Geneva School, students discover the joy of being known and loved by God—who created them and the world around them—while they are also learning and growing in a secure environment.

First graders at The Geneva School embark on a journey through the fascinating state of Florida. They marvel at manatees, the gentle giants living in the warm waters of the springs, and are introduced to many other indigenous animals. Together they travel back to a time when early Florida natives inhabited the land and courageous European explorers first landed on this unknown shore—the “land of flowers,” La Florida. As students discover the magnificence of their home state, they also ponder their own value as sons and daughters of the very same Creator who hung the moon and stars that shine in the Florida night sky.



FLORIDA HISTORY

In conjunction with the study of creation, students begin the year learning about the planets of our solar system. They work their way down to planet Earth, the seven continents, North America, and the United States, and they finally arrive at our amazing Sunshine State—Florida. A visit to the Morse Museum in Winter Park provides a first museum experience and integrates their studies in art and history. During their study of indigenous animals, students learn about the unique characteristics and habitats of each one. Students choose a Florida animal to research, and they share what they have learned by dressing up in costumes and performing their animal monologues. The students are then fascinated to learn about the major tribes that inhabited this land hundreds of years before most of our ancestors. At the Florida Native Festival, the students create items, taste food, dance, and play games similar to those of the early





LANGUAGE ARTS

PENMANSHIP, PHONICS, SPELLING, GRAMMAR, READING, AND WRITING

Spelling instruction is phonics based and follows the Orton-Gillingham approach. Phonemes and spelling rules are taught explicitly in a structured and sequential manner. First graders begin with consonants and short vowel sounds. Over the course of the year, they add digraphs and learn to blend consonant sounds. The program is cumulative, helping students to strengthen previously learned skills as they learn to work with new letter combinations and rules.

- ◆ The discipline of daily instruction and an emphasis on proper formation of D'Nealian handwriting reinforce beautiful penmanship and allow for easy transition to cursive.
- ◆ Students learn the phonograms essential to English through systematic phonics instruction using the Orton-Gillingham approach. As they master these phonemes and phonograms, they are equipped to successfully spell, encode (write), and decode (read).
- ◆ Grammar instruction is integrated through the spelling curriculum including recognizing the difference between a phrase and a sentence; identifying and creating original declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences; and identifying parts of speech.
- ◆ Allowing for the wide range of developmental abilities, reading in first grade is done in entire class groups, individually, and in small groups with the focus on proper enunciation, punctuation cues, reading with expression, and learning to comprehend what they read.

LITERATURE

During the year in literature, students identify the following for each book they read:

- ◆ Genre
- ◆ Setting
- ◆ Characters

Florida natives. They take advantage of the chill in the January air to learn about and visit manatees at the warm springs of Blue Spring State Park. Students make manatees from clay in art class and then create habitats for their manatees. As they move through the history timeline, students learn about the first Europeans who discovered this beautiful land of flowers. Students learn about those who explored Florida, and they learn about the different flags that flew over the state of Florida throughout its history; they then create flags to represent themselves. Students also learn about many Florida flowers and plants as they study their home state. To finish their study of the great state of Florida, students have a Florida birthday party, which includes singing, the proclamation for Geneva from the governor's office, dancing, and a special strawberry shortcake dessert. Finally, as the year wraps up and thoughts drift to summer fun, they study shells, the treasures of the ocean; students recall that they, too, are treasures and are as unique and wonderful as any pearl.





◆ Plot

◆ Resolution

Students show their comprehension by answering questions orally about what they have read.

Students begin the year by reading Esphyr Slobodkina’s *Caps for Sale*, enjoying the repetitive text and careful order of this classic tale. They create posters and caps and parade around campus peddling their wares. As they focus on *Bedtime for Frances* and other books from the series by Russell Hoban, students list reasons they sometimes don’t go to bed and reasons they always should go to bed. First grade’s studies of the Bible, art, and science come together beautifully in their animal monologue presentations. The classic book *The Little House* leads to wonderful art projects and discussions about the seasons, sequencing in literature, and the use of meaningful adjectives. An introduction to the French language is inspired by the reading of Ludwig Bemelmans’ Madeline stories. The children write postcards to Madeline asking her questions about incidents and characters in her stories, and they are thrilled when she writes back in French!

December brings several beautiful books and stories about the birth of Jesus. As students usher in the new year, they compare and graph their tooth losses and enjoy William Steig’s witty book *Doctor De Soto*. During the friendship unit, they laugh through the adventures in Arnold Lobel’s *Frog and Toad* stories. A highlight of the first grade year revolves around *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and other stories by Beatrix Potter. Their performance of the musical play about this mischievous rabbit is always a hit. Students become detectives along with Marjorie Weinman Sharmat’s Nate the Great and solve a mystery that leads them back to the classroom for a tasty surprise—Nate’s favorite food. The students laugh as they read how literal and confused Amelia Bedelia behaves in Peggy Parish’s book series, and they learn about idioms and what they mean. Teachers and students alike cherish reading classic literature and consider this a significant and precious part of each day.

LIBRARY SCIENCE

The goal of first grade library class is to introduce the students to good stories and literature. The books chosen for story time are mostly classics and/or Caldecott winners often





focusing on a specific author and illustrator for a few weeks at a time. The students learn to appreciate the elements of the story and the different art media used in the illustrations. First grade students are permitted to check out two books at a time and are taught how to take care of them and return them on time. They learn proper library behavior and terminology. They learn the difference between fiction and nonfiction and how they are arranged differently on the library shelves.

MATHEMATICS

Curriculum: *think!Mathematics*

Within a framework of progressively concrete, pictorial, and abstract representations, this curriculum emphasizes strategies in problem-solving that are central to all mathematical study. First graders enjoy finding strategies for solving math problems that best suit their individual learning styles and skill levels. They build models, play related small-group games, and participate in engaging activities that enhance each concept.

First grade math concepts include the following:

- ◆ **Numbers and Operations:** Learning numbers to 100, cardinal and ordinal numbers, and using number bonds to represent number combinations
- ◆ **Money:** Identifying and relating coin values
- ◆ **Whole Number Computation:** Formulating addition and subtraction stories and using mental math strategies to add and subtract
- ◆ **Algebra:** Exploring patterns (identifying, describing, and extending two- and three-dimensional shapes), and learning properties (using the associative and commutative properties of addition)
- ◆ **Geometry:** Identifying and describing attributes and properties of real-world, two- and three-dimensional shapes, sorting and classifying two- and three-dimensional shapes and developing an understanding of congruence and symmetry
- ◆ **Measurement:** Measuring length using nonstandard units, comparing two masses by comparing each with a third mass, identifying days of the week and months of the year, and telling time to the hour and half hour





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



BIBLE

The Bible and God's truths are woven into daily life in first grade through the following:

- ◆ Weekly school-wide chapel
- ◆ Daily devotion and prayer time
- ◆ Bible memorization

In their study of creation, first graders learn that all of creation glorifies God and that they are created in his image. John 3:16–18 teaches that a fallen humanity needs a savior and that God sacrificed his Son so that we could be righteous before him. Students memorize the Lord's Prayer and discuss other ways to pray. As they enter the Thanksgiving season, students memorize Psalm 100 and think of and enact ways to express their gratitude to others. Advent devotionals and the memorization of Luke 2:7–14 help focus the students' hearts on the coming Savior. The new year brings renewed emphasis on stewardship as they consider ways to take care of their spiritual well-being, their physical bodies, and

the world around them. They memorize Galatians 5:22–23 and begin to understand the fruit of the Spirit as they seek ways to intentionally demonstrate love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control to those around them. The class unit on friendship and love focuses on 1 John 4:7–8 and includes the reading of *Frog and Toad Are Friends*. The students learn that God demonstrated the perfect example of love when he sent his Son as a sacrifice for all. Daily Lenten devotions help guide their tender hearts toward an age-appropriate understanding of the Resurrection. The year comes full circle as the students memorize the names of the books of the Bible. They store cherished Bible verses in decorated treasure chests and remember that they are treasured children of the King of kings. The year ends with a focused study of the Shepherd's Psalm: Psalm 23. The children marvel at the meaning behind David's intentional words of each verse and come to realize that they are looked after by the Great Shepherd who will never leave them or forsake them.



SCIENCE

The sciences in first through sixth grades focus on the acquisition of information through observation and exploration. As much as possible, students are encouraged to get their hands dirty while exploring God's creation. The method of instruction is generally guided inquiry that involves physical contact with the subject matter. Drawing, describing, comparing, questioning, making models, and compiling collections are activities that rule the classroom. The subject matter for each grade complements the areas of history and literature already studied by that grade, builds upon the science concepts learned in previous grade levels, and prepares the students for the science concepts to be introduced in upcoming years. The emphasis of science in first through sixth grades is on laying a broad knowledge base or foundation for future, in-depth exploration.

SCIENCE: FLORIDA RESEARCH OUTPOST

Our young Geneva naturalists awaken to the world around them as they enter the Florida Research Outpost.

The outpost is dedicated to nurturing wonder and exploration. As the students engage with God's creation, they begin to catch a glimpse of the Creator and marvel at his handiwork. Beauty, order, and design compel the students to ponder, ask questions, and desire to learn more. Studying early Florida natives and making observations of a variety of Florida ecosystems help each student to see the intricacies of the natural world and to understand their place and role. A trip to a Florida spring enriches their study. Walking in the footsteps of the early European explorers, who stepped foot on the shores of this unfamiliar land, ignites the students interest. The students learn from both of these groups and look through the eyes of faith to see the grand design. A thorough examination of a frog, inside and out, integrates all of their learning skills. Field studies of ants, worms, frogs, and birds along with observations and classification of plants and animals deepen understanding. Planting and tending a garden demand the application of those recent skills and understanding. Finally, interacting with the nonliving parts of the natural world reveals patterns of behavior and purpose in design.



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MUSIC

In every grade in The Geneva School lower school, music study and performance are vital to developing an aesthetically rich liberal arts education. In first grade, students learn the elements of music, which help them to identify the basic structures of music through experiences with dynamics, rhythm, and tempo. Vocal exploration continues to be an integral part of learning. Students use singing as a means to play games, tell and retell stories, match pitch, and identify melodic patterns. In first grade, 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.

It is important to give young musicians an opportunity to learn through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile experiences to enhance their learning and audiation skills. Ear training and the study of rhythm continue as students learn to write, notate, and decode music using the Kodaly method. Musicianship skills develop as students notate and recognize melodic and

rhythmic patterns in their repertoire. First graders play Orff instrumentation as a means to develop hand-eye coordination, enhance auditory skills, and play together in an ensemble setting.

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 to teach dynamics, tempo, form, meter, melody, and timbre. Students also learn to play and identify classroom percussion as pitched and unpitched.

In the study of Florida's history, students listen to and learn folk songs about Native American traditions that enrich their classroom curriculum experiences. Additional units of study include selections from *The Carnival of the Animals*, *The Nutcracker*, and the masterwork *Peter and the Wolf*. Music performances include the first grade Animal Monologues, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* play, and the closing ceremony at the end of the year.





ART

First grade art students work with a wide variety of media including watercolor, acrylic paint, soft pastels, oil pastels, clay, ink, colored pencil, and etching. They create many wonderful projects that reinforce their studies of color theory and the elements and principles of art and coordinate with each unit of study. Through each project, students learn a host of visual vocabulary to help them grow in art appreciation and are encouraged to engage in discussions of the visual aspects of this world.

Since they begin the year learning about the animals native to Florida, in art class they spend several weeks drawing and coloring a trio of these animals. During their study of Florida history, they learn many facts about the group of artists known as the Florida Highwaymen and work on their own oil pastel versions of a Florida landscape. During their manatee unit, they create several fun projects including clay sculptures, manatee sketches, and watercolor paintings. Finally, while reading Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad* books in literature, they learn about printmaking by carving frog images and pulling green ink prints.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Geneva embraces the importance of a sound mind in a sound body. It is committed to providing a curriculum in physical education that allows frequent and diverse opportunities to engage in physical activities necessary to support a healthy lifestyle. Through exposure to a wide variety of activities, students gain the necessary knowledge to understand the importance of achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

First grade students explore sensorimotor attributes such as locomotor skills, non-locomotor skills, balance, spatial awareness, manipulative skills, body awareness, and rhythm concepts. Through individual practice and cooperative games, students are introduced to simple team-sports concepts. By the end of the year, students have a better understanding of basic fitness concepts, including the importance of cardiovascular health. Students conclude the year playing a variety of team sports.





FIELD TRIPS AND CULMINATING EVENTS

Field trips and culminating events are part of Geneva's integrated curriculum and provide enriching opportunities to enhance the study of a topic in Florida history, Bible, and literature. Some of these events are the culmination of exciting units while others allow a time for these young students to focus their hearts outward to the needs of others. Often, these events provide rhetorical experience and a time to simply celebrate and apply newfound knowledge.

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE FLORIDA NATIVE FESTIVAL

As the students focus on the study of our great state of Florida, they begin the year learning about animals that are indigenous to our state and then focus their study on five early Florida native tribes. The students learn about the location, appearance, means for food, and culture of each tribe during their daily pow wow, which also includes Native American music and chanting. The Florida Native Festival is a culminating event, with the students traveling in small groups to various stations during the day. Many hands-on opportunities allow the students to use their artistic creativity to make a native vest, talking stick, necklace, and pottery. Native American music provides additional movement opportunities as the students learn to dance to the rhythm of these songs. Archery and outdoor games provide an opportunity to use large-motor skills and experience games of long ago. For many students, tasting items that the early natives might have eaten, such as jerky and dried fruit, opens their senses to a form of food that might be new to them. The fun-filled day provides an extension to the study of the indigenous people of Florida and allows the first graders to experience their culture and lifestyle.

FIELD TRIPS AND CULMINATING EVENTS

- ◆ The Morse Museum
- ◆ Blue Spring State Park and Boat Tour
- ◆ Caps for Sale Parade
- ◆ Zoo Adventure
- ◆ Animal Monologues
- ◆ Florida Native Festival
- ◆ Visit to School by Jimmy Sawgrass and Florida Native Dancers
- ◆ Madeline Parade
- ◆ Christmas Talent Show
- ◆ *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* Play
- ◆ State of Florida Birthday Party
- ◆ Nate the Great Day
- ◆ End-of-Year Closing Ceremony



YOUNG MINDS NEED
ROOM TO GROW.



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