

Curriculum and Instruction

In-Depth Study: Social Studies

What Students Learn

The school provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose, strengthens Catholic identity, and results in student achievement of the grade level subject area expectations.

Holy Angels' social studies curriculum reflects the school's mission and philosophy statements, rooted in the Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) as well as meeting the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines. The guidelines are met by creating a curriculum that is inclusive of the Catholic identity and the diversity of the school community. The faculty and staff are continually developing a challenging program to meet the diverse needs of all students. The social studies curriculum is integrated with reading, writing, religion, computer, dance, music and art. It teaches a historical perspective, provides opportunities to experience the democratic process and encourages the development of a social and environmental consciousness.

Teachers use SLEs, Social Studies Outcomes and the San Francisco Archdiocesan grade level expectations to guide students towards meeting appropriate skill levels. Teachers use these guidelines to help students become more competent communicators, critical/creative thinkers and problem solvers. These skills can then be applied to life situations. Teachers employ various methodologies to help students develop organizational skills and demonstrate their ability to work in cooperative learning groups, give oral presentations, participate in class and group discussions, complete written research and art projects.

Students use a variety of tools and methods to reinforce learned skills which help students to think conceptually. Students are engaged with different historical questions and taught to look at social studies from different perspectives. Students use a variety of mediums to enhance their learning experience. For example, students use the Internet,

United Streaming site, Catholic Telemedia Network (CTN) and encyclopedias as reference materials. Students are encouraged to explore the use of different problem solving strategies such as critical thinking and make connections through the use of Venn Diagrams and other graphic organizers. They are encouraged to ask questions and use the information obtained either cooperatively or individually to understand concepts and vocabulary taught.

The social studies expectations challenge and lead students to integrate knowledge with other curriculum disciplines and are inclusive of all students. Students are challenged to carry over the skills, strategies and techniques learned from one grade level to the next to expand and build upon these skills. Teaching materials include textbooks, resource handbooks, CTN, videos, audiotapes, library books, internet sites, maps, timelines, Scholastic News, Weekly Readers, California Weekly Studies, USA Weekly Studies, field trips and newspapers. These resources provide enrichment and knowledge of events, both past and present. Students apply knowledge of social studies concepts throughout the curriculum by using problem-solving strategies in the different disciplines.

The school's philosophy and Catholic identity are incorporated as part of the social studies curriculum. Students are expected to interact respectfully in group activities and have respect for the opinions of others. Students are encouraged to be morally responsible citizens and advocates for peace and justice. Activities are used to explore diverse cultures in their community. These activities include, but are not limited to, dances of different countries/cultures, outdoor education at Caritas Creek, guest speakers, student government elections, oral presentations on current events and correlations between literature, religion, social studies, art, math, computers and science. Outreach activities are conducted to assist those in need, including, but not limited to, donations for disaster relief, canned food drives, Christmas Adopt-A-Family, performing for the seniors and making gifts for those confined to nursing homes.

Students at Holy Angels School are expected to *Be The Best They Can Be* as described in the SLEs. This expectation promotes independent, confident and informed students. Students gain knowledge of past events and are encouraged to think critically about current and past

events. This expectation leads students to acquire a greater awareness of their community and the world in which they live.

The social studies program begins in the primary grades with students becoming aware of communities and the world around them. As students progress through the social studies curriculum, teachers encourage them to better appreciate and understand history. This knowledge affords the students the opportunity to learn from the past, live in the present and plan for the future. They demonstrate their knowledge in social studies through various activities such as Power Point presentations, mission and current event reports, models and role-playing. Classes take field trips to Sacramento, Alcatraz, Lemos Farms, Hidden Villa Farm, Academy of Science, police station, fire station, San Francisco Opera, San Jose Tech Museum and the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco.

*San Francisco
City Tour*

Mission Dolores

Grade level social studies expectations are inclusive of the needs of every student. Teachers strive to meet these needs by using differentiated instruction, multiple intelligence and multi-sensory teaching strategies. Skill level is age-appropriate and teachers modify lessons and activities as necessary to meet the needs of every student.

How Students Learn

The professional staff designs and implements a variety of learning and formational experiences which actively engage students and are consistent with the school's philosophy and goals.

In keeping with the philosophy of Holy Angels School, the professional staff strives to meet the needs of each student in forming the whole child, both spiritually and academically. Implementing new instructional strategies expands the scope of learning in the curriculum. Faculty participation in workshops, in-services and postgraduate coursework ensures on-going professional development and is encouraged by the principal. Teachers plan to meet on a regular basis to review and discuss the social studies curriculum. In

accordance with the Archdiocesan curriculum mapping requirements and to help improve continuity through the grades, we will begin our mapping in the area of Social Studies.

A variety of teaching models and strategies are used to promote the development of the whole child while integrating Catholic values. Individual instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on demonstrations and multi-sensory tasks are strategies used to instruct and evaluate a student. Skills are acquired through multiple intelligence activities such as role-playing, teacher-directed lessons, individual and group work, special projects, games, flash cards, creating models, graphic organizers and projects. Classes also use videos, audiotapes, television programming, technology integration and overhead projectors to facilitate student learning. Student collaboration is apparent in group activities and partner work. Collaboration between students and teachers is evident in one-on-one instruction, group work, individual work and teacher-directed lessons.

Students have the opportunity to work collaboratively with parents, teachers and other students. Parents are informed of grade level expectations at “Back-to-School Night” meetings. Parents are informed of students’ progress by reviewing their child’s work that is sent home weekly or bi-weekly, progress reports and through continuous access to SnapGrades.

*Family Tree
Traditions
Homework
Field Trips*

When a student is identified as “at risk” academically or is identified with learning differences, the principal, teachers and parents comprising the Student Success Team (SST) work together to develop a plan to meet the individual needs of the student and to monitor his/her progress. The SST meets as needed throughout the year to re-evaluate interventions. The principal is able to monitor all students during the year by reviewing SnapGrades, progress reports and report cards, as well as through formal and informal observations in the classroom.

Students incorporate critical thinking and problem-solving skills into their learning through interaction in small group activities, class and group projects and class discussions. Critical thinking skills are practiced regularly throughout the social studies curriculum. Students

*Cooperative
Learning
Puzzles
Dramatization*

are given clear guidelines for class participation and completion of assignments through rubrics. Students learn how to self-evaluate by completing rubrics, thereby knowing if assignment/project expectations have been fulfilled.

Students develop an understanding of the democratic governmental process through participation in Holy Angels' Student Government. Second through eighth grade have a classroom president and vice president who serve as student representatives. In addition, each class has a secretary. First grade students are appointed as Ministers of their classrooms to establish the sense of being responsible for their classroom environment.

The students begin to develop a panoramic view of the diversity of the people and cultural practices within our world, past and present. Students also start to perceive how individual, small group, large group, national and global decisions can have positive or negative outcomes. With this developing perception, they learn the importance of the motto from our Safe and Caring School program "Stop, Think, Pray and Choose."

The principal, faculty and staff strive to establish an active learning environment while modeling a positive attitude that provides a creative learning atmosphere. Curriculum is reviewed to ensure that it reflects the school's philosophy, mission statement, the Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) and meets the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines.

How Assessment is Used

Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process.

Assessment data is the basis for:

- **Measurement of each student's progress in achieving the grade level subject area expectations**
- **Regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction**
- **Allocation of resources**

Teachers use various forms of assessments such as tests from social studies textbooks, teacher-created assessments, classroom observations, peer evaluation and various standardized tests. Students' prior knowledge is assessed through classroom discussions, shared experiences, diagnostic tests and brainstorming. This knowledge is evaluated and used to develop lesson plans and materials needed in the classroom to assure the students' progress toward reaching their grade level social studies expectations. They make use of rubrics to help clarify their assignment expectations, as well as help to identify students' strengths and areas for growth, and provide guidelines for students. Teachers encourage students to use rubrics for self-evaluation and organization. Peer evaluation is used to generate ideas and discuss expectations and progress.

Teachers hold students at all grade levels responsible for the assessment of their own work through portfolios and the use of rubrics. Students review and evaluate pieces in their personal portfolios every quarter. Students are encouraged to share their knowledge with peers, allowing them to assess their own understanding. Students also correct various homework and class assignments, giving them immediate awareness of their strengths and areas for growth.

Teachers use a variety of assessment methods and strategies to evaluate progress. Teachers use chapter tests, unit tests, teacher generated tests, evaluation of students' class work, homework, group projects, individual and collaborative presentations, worksheets generated by teacher or textbooks and teacher observations. These authentic methods of assessment are also used to help identify students' strengths and areas of growth within the social studies curriculum.

Iowa test (ITBS) results for grades two through eight are reviewed by the principal, teachers and staff to identify growth from one year to the next. Riverside Publishing's Interactive Results Manager website shows individual student's and whole class progress achieved over a five year span of time. Iowa tests are used to improve instructional strategies by providing feedback for teachers to identify social studies

concepts mastered by the students or those that require further remediation or clarification.

In order to ensure success for students identified with learning differences through the SST process or more formalized testing, students are provided with interventions by their teachers. Some of these interventions include, but are not limited to, preferential seating, reduced workload, extended time on assignments and tests, study guides, open book tests, one-on-one/small group tutoring, the opportunity to orally expand a written answer and time to think before being called upon prior to the class discussion. The principal, teachers and staff goals encourage students to succeed to the best of their ability not only in school, but in their community as well. The end results are students who are advocates for themselves and their diverse learning styles.

The assessment plan is in accordance with the school's mission and philosophy statements and the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines. Holy Angels is dedicated to the formation of the whole child, spiritually and academically. The principal, faculty and staff strive to provide a quality education that incorporates Catholic values. The social studies curriculum at Holy Angels School, including the area of assessment, carries out these statements by integrating respect for others and a sense of social justice for all as they live out the Gospel message.

All of these assessment methods help the teachers evaluate and select textbooks and instructional materials in accordance with the students' needs. The school purchases appropriate technological software and hardware resources. The school offers funding for teachers to participate in social studies workshops in order to expose all teachers to current teaching trends and to promote professional development.

During in-service days and faculty meetings, teachers have the opportunity to articulate and discuss grade level activities, strengths and areas of concern. Teachers continually consider new ways to strengthen the assessment plan. The implementation of curriculum mapping will further assist teachers in tracking student growth and achievement. The Archdiocese Mentor Program helps facilitate the professional growth of new teachers. All teachers benefit from peer-

observation of other teachers. This articulation and evaluation by faculty and staff, with regard to curriculum programs, lead to the allocation of resources to meet the needs of our students.