



LOWER SCHOOL
CURRICULUM
GUIDE

Follow | Excel | Serve | Lead

Our Approach

At Heights Academy, we believe a truly excellent education transforms far more than a report card—it shapes the whole child. Our K-5th program is intentionally designed to cultivate academic excellence, confident leadership, and Christ-centered character in every student. We are set apart by our commitment to pairing rigorous, research-based instruction with daily opportunities for students to lead, speak with confidence, build meaningful relationships, and pursue who God created them to be. Every lesson, conversation, and classroom moment is rooted in God's Word and in the belief that strong character, joyful learning, and deep faith will carry far beyond our doors.

Our Lower School program strengthens this foundation by fostering comprehensive growth—academic, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual—within a nurturing Christian environment. We celebrate each student's unique gifts and needs, ensuring they feel known, supported, and challenged in meaningful ways. Through interactive learning and intentional discipleship, students not only grow in knowledge but learn how to apply what they've learned with purpose and confidence. Our educators are deeply committed to shaping students' hearts and lives for eternity, partnering closely with parents to build a well-rounded, supportive, and truly exceptional early elementary experience.

Our students grow into thoughtful problem-solvers, articulate communicators, and steady leaders—children who know who they are in Christ and understand that a high-quality education is both a gift and a calling.

Individualized Progress

Recognizing the unique strengths and areas for growth in each student, our differentiated approach supports their academic journey. We adapt teaching methods, materials, and ways of assessment to meet our students' diverse learning styles.

Faith-Based Learning

Rooted in the teachings of God's word, we empower students to Follow God faithfully, Excel academically, Serve passionately, and Lead others authentically. We intertwine faith and learning throughout our classroom lessons.

Well Rounded Development

In a safe and supportive environment, we provide hands-on, authentic learning experiences that reach far beyond the classroom. These experiences nurture academic growth while shaping each child's character, values, and practical skills for everyday life.

English Language Arts

K-2ND

At Heights Academy, our K-2 ELA program is intentionally designed to help every student become a confident, capable, and joyful reader and writer. Grounded in the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), our instruction ensures that all students master grade-level expectations in reading, writing, and language skills.

Within our *structured ELA block*, students experience a balanced approach of whole-group and small-group instruction. Whole-group lessons provide engaging, standards-aligned instruction that introduces new skills and concepts, while small-group instruction allows teachers to *personalize learning*, target specific reading needs, and support students at their individual levels.

To strengthen this foundation, we supplement instruction with highly effective, research-based tools that target essential components of literacy—phonemic awareness, decoding, encoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Together, this combination of SOL-based instruction, targeted small-group support, and research-backed resources makes our literacy program *rigorous, evidence-based, and remarkably effective*, ensuring every student thrives as a reader and writer.

Our Research-Backed Literacy Tools

UFLI Foundations: Phonics & Decoding

UFLI Foundations provides a systematic, explicit approach to phonemic awareness, decoding, and encoding (spelling). Its step-by-step routine helps students master the sounds, letters, and patterns needed to read words accurately and fluently.

FOCUS AREAS

Phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, blending, spelling, and connected text reading.

PURPOSE

Builds the strong decoding skills students need to access grade-level texts.

Heggerty: Daily Phonemic Awareness

Heggerty lessons focus on the critical pre-reading skill of phonemic awareness, developing the ability to hear, identify, blend, segment, and manipulate sounds in words.

FOCUS AREAS

Rhyming, alliteration, sound isolation, blending, segmenting, sound manipulation.

PURPOSE

Strengthens auditory processing and builds a foundation for accurate decoding and spelling.

Handwriting Without Tears: Writing Foundations

Handwriting Without Tears provides a developmentally appropriate, hands-on approach to letter formation, fine motor skills, and early writing success.

FOCUS AREAS

Letter formation, proper pencil grip, spacing, and handwriting fluency.

PURPOSE

Supports early writing development while reinforcing reading skills, fine-motor control, and student confidence in written communication.

Mathematics

K-2ND

Math instruction is intentionally sequenced to move students from concrete understanding to more abstract thinking, ensuring a strong foundation and lasting confidence with numbers and problem-solving. K-2 students engage in hands-on, visually rich, and deeply conceptual experiences that develop critical thinking and real-world application.

As students progress, instruction expands from number sense and early operations to multi-step problem-solving, early algebraic thinking, and applied math concepts such as time, money, calendar, measurement, and data analysis.

Across Kindergarten - 2nd Grade Experience:

- **VA SOL-aligned instruction** to ensure mastery of grade-level standards
- **Strong number sense foundation** with a focus on understanding the “why” behind math
- **Place value understanding** that grows in complexity each year
- **Hands-on learning with manipulatives** to explore concepts concretely
- **Math talk and reasoning** to articulate thinking and problem-solving strategies
- **Problem-solving routines** that build persistence and logical reasoning
- **Applied math concepts** including time, money, calendar, measurement, and data representation
- **A balance of conceptual understanding and procedural fluency**

Science & Social Studies

K-2ND

Our K-2 content instruction moves from curiosity → understanding → connection.

Students begin by learning about the world around them—weather, seasons, community helpers, simple science concepts—and grow into learners who can analyze, compare, investigate, and draw conclusions. Our goal is for students to see God’s world with wonder and understand how they fit into it.

We follow the Virginia SOLs, enriched with our curriculum and other supplemental resources, and deliver content through exploration, projects, hands-on learning, and discussion.

Our Students Engage In:

- Simple investigations → structured experiments
- Observations → predictions and conclusions
- Personal community → broader geography and history
- Basic maps → reading and interpreting maps
- Weather and seasons → patterns, natural resources, and environmental understanding

English Language Arts

3RD-5TH

Our 3-5 English Language Arts program is intentionally designed to ensure students meet grade-level expectations outlined in the Virginia Standards of Learning while engaging in rigorous, research-based literacy instruction. Building on the strong foundation established in earlier grades, instruction in grades 3-5 focuses on comprehension, analysis, and effective communication across reading, writing, and language. Instruction is supported by thoughtfully selected resources, including BJU Press, which provide a clear scope and sequence while allowing teachers the flexibility to meet student needs.

Within a structured ELA block, students engage in whole-group instruction, small group guided practice, and independent application. Whole-group lessons introduce grade-level skills and concepts aligned to state standards, while guided instruction allows teachers to target specific areas of growth and challenge students to think more deeply about text.

As students progress through grades 3-5, instruction expands beyond foundational literacy skills to emphasize reading for meaning, structure, and purpose. Students analyze increasingly complex literary and informational texts, develop academic vocabulary, and learn to support their thinking with evidence. Writing instruction includes narrative, informative, opinion, and research-based writing, with a strong emphasis on organization, clarity, and precision.

Across Grades 3rd – 5th Experience

- Reading to analyze, infer, and support ideas with evidence
- Exposure to complex literary and informational texts
- Vocabulary development through explicit instruction and application
- Writing across multiple genres with increasing structure and depth
- Grammar and language instruction embedded in reading and writing
- Speaking and listening through discussion, presentation, and collaboration

Mathematics

3RD-5TH

Math instruction in grades 3-5 emphasizes both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency, ensuring students meet and often exceed the expectations outlined in the Virginia Standards of Learning. Instruction is guided by a clear and coherent scope and sequence, using BJU Press as a foundational framework to support consistency, progression, and depth of learning.

Students engage in hands-on exploration, visual modeling, and increasingly abstract representations as they deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. Lessons are intentionally sequenced to build upon prior knowledge, allowing students to apply skills across a variety of contexts and problem types.

As students progress, learning expands beyond basic computation to include multi-step problem-solving, fraction and decimal operations, geometry, measurement, and data analysis. Instruction challenges students to reason mathematically, explain and justify their thinking, evaluate multiple strategies, and persist through complex tasks, developing strong problem-solvers prepared for advanced mathematical thinking.

Across Grades 3rd – 5th Experience

- Strong number sense with increasing complexity
- *Mastery* of multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals
- Problem-solving routines that build persistence and reasoning
- Math discussions to articulate thinking and strategies
- Applied math concepts including measurement, data, and geometry
- A *balance* of conceptual understanding and procedural fluency

Science & Social Studies **3RD-5TH**

Science and Social Studies instruction in grades 3-5 is intentionally designed to deepen students' understanding of the world through exploration, inquiry, and meaningful connection. Using BJU Press as the core curriculum, instruction provides a clear and coherent foundation while allowing teachers to bring learning to life through discussion, projects, and hands-on experiences that encourage analysis and application.

In Science, students engage in structured investigations and hands-on experiments that emphasize scientific reasoning, data collection, and evidence-based conclusions. Instruction builds understanding across physical, life, and earth science while strengthening inquiry skills, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate findings clearly.

In Social Studies, students expand from personal and local communities to broader geographic, historical, and governmental understanding. Instruction develops map skills, historical analysis, and an understanding of civic responsibility through discussion, projects, and written reflection, helping students make meaningful connections between past events, present systems, and their role within society.

Across Grades 3rd – 5th Experience

- Structured scientific investigations and experiments
- Data collection, analysis, and evidence-based conclusions
- Geographic skills including map reading and interpretation
- Historical thinking, timelines, and cause-and-effect analysis
- Understanding of civic responsibility and government foundations
- Connections between academic content and real-world application

Bible

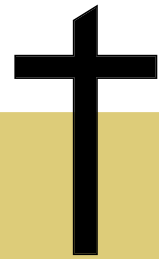
Our Bible studies grows intentionally with students—starting with story comprehension and memory, and growing toward deeper understanding, biblical literacy, and application. All students study a school-wide monthly Bible story and scripture, but K-2 students explore through a deeper lens.

Across Kindergarten - 2nd Grade Experience:

- Story details and sequence
- Context (*before and after the passage*)
- Biblical vocabulary
- Books of the Bible
- Old/New Testament structure
- Key people and themes
- Map skills (*locations, journeys, regions*)
- How to apply Scripture in daily life

Unit tests help reinforce comprehension and ensure students retain what they learn. Our students begin to know Bible stories, and even more they understand how Scripture fits together and can shape their lives.

Chapel Leadership

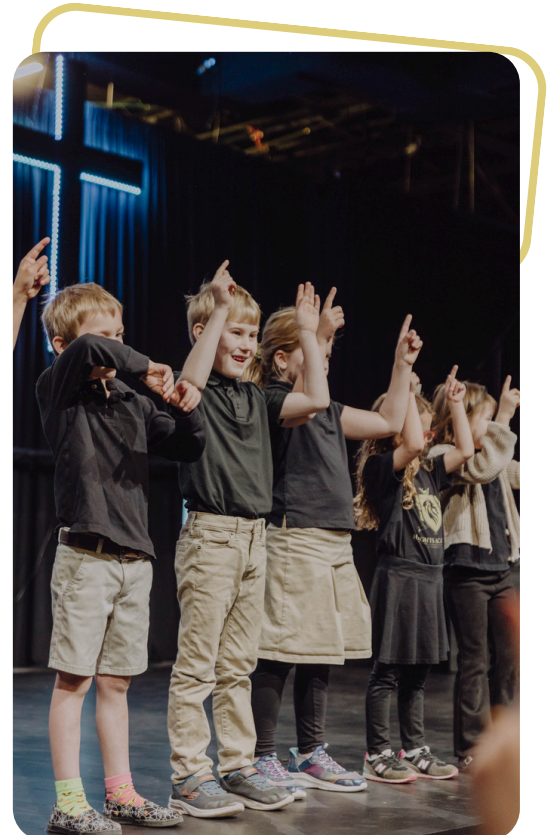


All K-2 students participate daily in Chapel Leadership class, engaging in meaningful, hands-on experiences that allow them to lead, serve, and grow in their faith. Responsibilities increase each year, providing a natural progression that develops essential life and leadership skills.

Through Chapel Leadership, students cultivate:

- **Confidence** – stepping forward to lead peers in worship and prayer
- **Stage Presence** – performing with poise and focus
- **Clear Speaking** – articulating prayers, pledges, and Bible stories with clarity
- **Cooperation** – working together to plan and execute chapel activities
- **Spiritual Leadership** – guiding classmates in faith-centered practices

This program not only strengthens students' public speaking and leadership abilities but also nurtures a deep, personal connection to Scripture and a lifelong desire to lead and serve others.



Enrichment Program

ART

Students grow from exploratory art—color mixing, drawing, simple shapes—to more detailed and skill-based art such as shading, perspective, design, and multi-step projects. Creativity, expression, and technique build each year.

MUSIC

Students begin with rhythm, movement, and simple songs, progressing to reading early notation, singing with greater control, and participating in worship and performances. Concepts build intentionally across the grade levels.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Movement skills → coordination → athletic fundamentals. Students grow from basic motor skills to organized games, teamwork, rules, and age-appropriate fitness practice.

SPANISH

Students are introduced to vocabulary through songs and conversation in K-1 and build toward phrases, simple sentences, cultural understanding, and application in 2nd grade.

SERVE

Service begins with understanding why we serve, then grows into how we serve, and ultimately leading service efforts with our Heights Local Missions Team.

Students develop:

- Empathy
- Responsibility
- A heart for missions
- Hands-on service skills
- Age-appropriate project planning





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