



# Middle School Academic Handbook 2023–2024

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# MCA Mission and Vision

## Mission Statement

We are an influential school of collaborators, innovators, and explorers grounded in Christian faith, empowering co-creators of tomorrow.

## Our Culture in Action

Maranatha is not just a school, it's a community with a heartbeat and a soul. Each student and staff member breathe life into and contributes to what makes up the school's culture. Together, we commit to becoming:

- **Spirit Driven Leaders**
- **Curious Explorers**
- **Impactful Innovators**
- **Courageous Changemakers**
- **Gracious Community Builders**
- **Empathic Problem Solvers**

## Accreditations and Memberships

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)  
Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools  
Cognia  
College Board  
Independent School Management (ISM)  
International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA)  
Minnesota Association of College Admission Counseling  
Mindependent  
Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL)  
National Association of College Admission Counseling  
National Association of Student Councils  
National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)  
Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship (ORUEF)

# Middle School Philosophy

Like middle C on the piano, we believe the middle is the foundation, the home base, the starting point for what will become a beautiful composition in life's masterpiece. Equally, middle school at Maranatha is a well-orchestrated element of our students' education and future.

When students and parents visit our campus, they feel the difference here almost immediately. Maranatha is a community with a heartbeat, and each student plays an essential part in our community. We believe our Middle School students were created to Thrive!

## Maranatha helps your student Thrive

Survive	Thrive
My teachers are annoyed by me.	Maranatha's teachers enjoy engaging with me and value my ideas.
I tread lightly around my teachers.	Maranatha's teachers believe I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
My teachers tell me what I have to do to get good grades.	Maranatha's teachers know my name, struggles, and passions and help me succeed in school.
My teachers are too busy to answer my questions.	Maranatha's teachers anticipate my questions and welcome them.
My teachers only help me during class time.	Maranatha's teachers help me beyond my academic classes and offer help sessions to me.
My school doesn't give me any freedom.	Maranatha believes in giving me opportunities to grow as a learner.

# Academics

## School Year Marking System and Grade Point Average (GPA)

Maranatha operates on a semester system. The school year consists of two semesters, each approximately eighteen weeks. After a quarter/semester, report cards are uploaded to FACTS Family Portal. The Grade Point Averages (GPA) scale below is used to award high academic achievement honor roll, National Honor Society, academic lettering, etc. To calculate a GPA, total the point for all classes and divide by the number of courses taken. To see the value of each percentage score/grade, refer to the MCA Grading Scale below.

Grade	Percentage	GPA Value
A	92.5—100	4.0
A-	89.5—92.49	3.67
B+	86.5—89.49	3.33
B	82.5—86.49	3.0
B-	79.5—82.49	2.67
C+	76.5—79.49	2.33

Grade	Percentage	GPA Value
C	72.5—76.49	2.0
C-	69.5—72.49	1.67
D+	66.5—69.49	1.33
D	62.5—66.49	1.0
D-	59.5—62.49	.67
F	0.00—59.49	0

## Schedule Changes

At the beginning of each semester, students in Grades 7–8 will have three school days to request a change to their semester elective classes. All schedule change requests must be submitted via the online form link sent to students to their school email by the College and Career team. All changes will be made through the College and Career Counseling Office.

# Courseload

Required Classes	Grades			
	5th	6th	7th	8th
Art	X	X		
Bible	X	X	X	X
Foundations of Tech			X	
Literacy Hour	X	X		
Language Arts	X	X	X	X
Math	X	X	X	X
Physical Education/Health	X	X	X	X
Science	X	X	X	X
Social Sciences	X	X	X	X
Spanish (5th –Middle School Spanish)	X	X	X	
High School Spanish 1 or High School American Sign Language 1				X
STEAM	X	X		
<b>Fine Arts</b>				
Band (Yr.) Grades 5–8, Choir (Yr.) Grades 5–8, Theater (Yr.) Grades 6–8	X	X	X	X
<b>Semester Exploratory Courses</b>				
Art History , Current Events, Design Lab, Fantasy Literature, Historical Fiction, Lego Programming, Speech, Textile Arts, Theater, Video Game Story Design			X	X

# Art

## Art Grade 5

Required

Students will begin to study art history, focusing on individual artists. Students will use previous art experiences and multiple mediums, including drawing, painting, and clay, while creating projects highlighting knowledge of the artist being studied. Each project assists students in using their own God-given artistic gifts and talents.

**Available to:** Grade 5

**Length:** Year

## MS Art Foundations Grade 6

Required

Art exploration lessons incorporate art history, criticism, and self-assessment, using multiple art media, including research and innovation of brainstorming, analyzing, and creating artist-inspired teapots. Students begin the year with step-by-step instruction on the basics of drawing and color theory, leading into painting and ceramics. This art class applies creative skill and imagination, which is a way to worship God and glorify His name with unique expression.

**Available to:** Grade 6

**Length:** Year

# Bible

## Bible Grade 5

Required

*Building on the Rock: Stewardship* curriculum introduces biblical and unbiblical beliefs about God through Scripture, the universe, human beings, truth, and value. Students will memorize scripture, identify main points, creatively apply concepts, reflect on important ideas, and participate in class discussions surrounding Biblical Christianity as the true view of God and the world. We also build in times for community worship in the classroom. Students build confidence in the knowledge of scriptural truths and encouragement in their personal relationship with the Lord.

**Available to:** Grades 5

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 30 min

**Service Hours:** 15

## Bible Grade 6

Required

*Building on the Rock: World of Worldviews* builds upon concepts taught in Grade 5. Students will continue to memorize scripture, compare and contrast our Christian worldview with another worldview, reflect on important ideas, and participate in class discussions surrounding Biblical Christianity as the true view of God and the world, all while receiving encouragement in their personal relationship with the Lord.

**Available to:** Grade 6

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 30 min

**Service Hours:** 15

# Bible

## Bible Grade 7

Required

*Light Bearers: A Biblical Worldview* is a curriculum that surveys the Biblical evidence to show students a Christian view on every discipline. The disciplines that constitute the class are as follows: Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, Psychology, Sociology, Law, Politics, Economics, and History. Students learn the Christian view, discover the Biblical evidence, and compare competing worldviews in each discipline. The goal is to ensure the student knows how to apply the Bible in every area of life.

**Available to:** Grade 7

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 30 min.

**Service Hours:** 25

## Bible Grade 8

Required

*Walking in Truth: Christianity in Action* helps students understand how to live out their Christian worldview in a post-Christian culture. This two-part course begins with a focus on the application of our Christian worldview within the disciplines of theology, philosophy, ethics, psychology, sociology, biology, and history. Part two of this course focuses on the New Testament Epistles and the application of God's Word to students' daily lives.

**Available to:** Grade 8

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 30 min.

**Service Hours:** 25

# Computer Applications

## Foundations of Technology Grade 7

Required

This course will introduce foundational technology skills students need to succeed as they continue through upper school at Maranatha. Students focus on using personal devices as a learning tool and increasing student competency in a digital organization, common word processing, presentation, and educational applications. Students will learn how to utilize Schoology as a learning management system. Students will also learn what it means to be a good digital citizen and use social media and technology in a way that honors God.

**Available to:** Grades 7

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–15 min.



# Language Arts

## English Grade 5

Required

This course incorporates the reading of novels, writing, spelling, and grammar. We teach the basics of literary analysis, expository writing, creative writing, and poetry analysis. It includes extensive vocabulary development and an opportunity to write an MLA research paper. After this paper is completed, the students participate in a Wax Museum that brings their historical figure to life. This course focuses on proper mechanics and grammar through a variety of activities. Further, students will use critical-thinking skills while reading a variety of literature that encompasses different genres and literary devices. Works will include *Hatchet*, *Number the Stars*, *Derwood Inc.*, and *Maniac Magee*.

**Available to:** Grade 5  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## English Grade 6

Required

Students continue learning the basics of literary analysis, expository writing, creative writing, and poetry analysis through literature, writing, and grammar. It includes extensive vocabulary development and an opportunity to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information while writing an MLA research paper. The course focuses on proper mechanics and grammar through a variety of activities as students are given opportunities to make connections, ask questions, and authentically ideate for themselves. Students work in pairs and small groups to discuss topics, solve problems, and develop a deeper understanding of the Christian worldview. Works will include, but are not limited to: *Found*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *The City of Ember*, and *Where the Red Fern Grows*.

**Available to:** Grade 6  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–60 min.

## English Grade 7

Required

English 7 builds on literary analysis, expository writing, and creative writing skills, and vocabulary development. Students write a MLA research paper for *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* unit. By reading and discussing in small groups, *The Giver*, students develop a deeper understanding of Christian worldview. In-class reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker* also introduces students to the genre of plays.

**Available to:** Grade 7  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–60 min.

## English Grade 8

Required

Incorporating literature and grammar, English 8 continues to build upon the basics of literary analysis and expository, creative, and persuasive writing while strengthening vocabulary development. Students will be introduced to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and write an MLA research paper in conjunction with Christopher Paul Curtis' *Bud, Not Buddy*. Students will also write a speech with a digital slide/media presentation in conjunction with Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's play *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Additional works read: *The Hobbit* and *The Old Man and the Sea*.

**Available to:** Grades 8  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–60 min.

## Literacy Hour

Required

Innovation Hour combines literacy with innovation to produce a fun, hands-on class. Students will research, design, and create various projects during the year, such as the tiny house and the wax museum projects. In addition, students will spend time working in literacy circles and reading for fun.

**Available to:** Grade 5–6  
**Length:** Semester  
**Homework:** 0–15 min

# Math

## Math Grade 5

Required

Students are introduced to basic pre-algebraic concepts and will build upon previous math knowledge and increase new skills to help students become stronger, more confident problem solvers. Students will discover the process of finding solutions to word problems. Primary concepts include multiplying, dividing, adding problems, and solving ratio and rate problems. These concepts are related to the biblical worldview because the Bible is truth, and we serve a God of order.

**Available to:** Grade 5  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–15 min.

## Foundations of Math Grade 6

Required

Students will collaborate and connect as they are introduced to fundamental arithmetic concepts, build upon previous math knowledge, and increase new skills to prepare for Pre-Algebra. Students explore what their Christian worldview looks like in math through various activities. In the “enVision” Curriculum, concepts are broken up by topics taught throughout the year to ensure success. Primary concepts include positive rational numbers, numeric and algebraic expressions, equations and inequalities, ratio and rate, percent, area and volume, and data usage.

**Available to:** Grade 6  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–60 min.

## Pre-Algebra

Required

Students will study primary concepts including rational and real numbers, proportional relationships, percentages, equivalent expressions, equations, inequalities, linear equations, probability, and basic geometry. Students will collaborate and connect in the “enVision” curriculum as they go through concepts by topics taught throughout the year to ensure success. These concepts are related to biblical worldview on numbers and how to be wise with money.

**Available to:** Grade 6–7  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–60 min.

## Algebra 1

Required

Students will collaborate and connect in the “enVision” Curriculum as they go through concepts by topics taught throughout the year to ensure success. Topics include solving linear equations: solving power properties, writing, factoring, and graphing linear functions: writing and graphing exponential functions, polynomials: writing, factoring, and graphing quadratic functions, and simplifying rational expressions. These concepts are related to how God’s creation integrates math and the biblical worldview on numbers.

**Available to:** Grades 7–8  
**Prerequisite:** Pre-Algebra  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–60 min

## Geometry

Required

This course will introduce students to the foundations of Geometry, followed by instruction on postulates and theorems in a formal proof setting, with particular attention devoted to critical thinking skills. Other concepts include parallel and perpendicular lines, transformations, congruence and similarity in triangles, quadrilaterals, introduction to trigonometry, circles, and two- and three-dimensional models. Many innovative projects, such as Design-A-City, are incorporated throughout the year to enhance learning.

**Available to:** Grade 8  
**Prerequisite:** Algebra 1  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 30–45 min

# Music

## Beginning Band

In this first year of band, students will begin to develop skills to perform on an instrument as an individual and as a group. Students will perform at the Christmas Concert and Experience Maranatha. Students are invited to the Summer Band Open House to explore instruments and decide which instrument to play. Schmitt Music will be on hand to coordinate the purchase of instruments.

**Available to:** Grade 5  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 60 practice min.  
**Required:** 1 Fine Art course in Grade 5

## Choir Grade 5

Students will develop singing skills while preparing for performances. Vocal techniques, stage presence, music of varying cultures, foundations of sight-reading, musical terms, and basic theory will be taught. Students will learn to sing in two-part harmony. Performances include the Christmas Concert and the spring concert at Experience Maranatha.

**Available to:** Grade 5  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–15 min.  
**Required:** 1 Fine Art course in Grade 5

## Intermediate Band

Students continue to develop skills for performing on a chosen instrument as an individual and in a group. Students are expected to participate in performances during the year, including the Christmas Concert and spring concert during Experience Maranatha.

**Available to:** Grade 6  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 60 practice min.  
**Required:** 1 Fine Art course in Grade 6

## Choir Grade 6

Students will develop their singing skills while preparing for performances. Vocal techniques, stage presence, sight-reading, musical terms, and basic theory will be taught. Students will learn to sing in two-part harmony. Performances include the Christmas Concert and Experience Maranatha.

**Available to:** Grade 6  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–15 min.  
**Required:** 1 Fine Art course in Grade 6

## Band Grades 7–8

Students continue to develop performance skills in a large group setting, emphasizing instrumental performance techniques and the development of a good overall band sound. Students are expected to participate in performances during the year, including the Christmas Concert and Experience Maranatha concerts.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8  
**Prerequisite:** One year of school band  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 60 practice min.  
**Credit:** Exploratory Course

## Choir Grade 7–8

Students will develop their singing skills while preparing for performances. Vocal technique, stage presence, solfège (sight-reading), musical terms, and beginning theory will be taught. Students will learn to sing in two- or three-part harmony. Performances include the Christmas Concert and the spring concert during Experience Maranatha.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8  
**Prerequisite:** Sing independently on pitch  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min  
**Credit:** Exploratory Course

# Physical Education and Health

## Health Grades 7–8

Required

This class alternates curriculum every other year. Year one focuses on health and wellness, taking charge of your health, achieving mental and emotional health, managing stress, and coping with loss. This class will also emphasize relationships; family, peer, and dating relationships resolving conflict; Project Alert (drug, alcohol, vaping, and cigarettes); and preventing violence.

Year two focuses on living a healthy life through proper nutrition, managing weight, eating behaviors, physical activity, and fitness. Other units covered include personal care and body systems, drugs and alcohol, and growth and development. This class also includes a dating/abstinence unit.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## P.E. Grades 5–8

Required

Physical Education focuses on lifetime sports, sports education, fitness, and sportsmanship. It involves strategic learning relating to overall lifetime health, fitness, sports, sports competitions, and conduct, keeping in mind to be Christ-minded in all activities. Units that may be covered include volleyball, badminton, pickleball, playground games, golf, softball/baseball, tennis, hockey, soccer, basketball, tchoukball, etc. Classes are divided by grade; the uniform is a gym shirt purchased from Branding Wearhouse.

See *Physical Education Uniforms below for further details.*

**Available to:** Grade 5–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## Physical Education Uniforms

The expectation for all Physical Education classes is that students are dressed in Maranatha Physical Education attire, including a Maranatha gym performance T-shirt, athletic bottoms, and athletic shoes. This expectation will be part of the participation grade. Students not wearing correct Physical Education attire will lose participation points. Consequences will be issued if students continue to attend class without the required clothing.

Physical Education attire is available for purchase through Branding Wearhouse ([maranatha.brandingwarehouse.com](http://maranatha.brandingwarehouse.com)). Students may wear black, dark blue, or grey athletic pants (no yoga-type pants) with red, gray, or white trim—no other colors are allowed. Pants and shorts may be obtained independent of the school clothing store, Branding Wearhouse.

# Science

## General Science

Required

Grade 5 Science class explores environmental, life, ecological, and physical sciences through a biblical worldview lens. Students will develop and use problem-solving skills: observation, classification, sequencing, measuring, and comparing/contrasting. The curriculum focuses on fundamental principles of science and presents God as the creator, sustainer, and upholder. It also includes a health unit focusing on body transitions through adolescence.

**Available to:** Grade 5  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–15 min.

## Earth and Space Science 1

Required

This course is a study of energy and matter, with an overview of chemistry, physics, and earth/space sciences. The student will develop and use problem-solving skills: observation, classification, sequencing, measuring, and comparing/contrasting. It delves into space exploration and discusses origin theories with God as the creator of all things.

**Available to:** Grade 6  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min

## Life Science

Required

Cells, heredity, diversity of living things, the human body, ecology, and the environment—Students study different types, parts, and functions of cells. Students will explore heredity and the characteristics of bacteria, viruses, and animals. Students will also study population dynamics in communities, Earth’s ecosystems and resources, and the human impact on our environment. Structures and functions of each body system and how systems work together are detailed in the unit on the human body. Students will complete hands-on laboratory experiments to explore these topics more deeply.

**Available to:** Grade 7  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min

## Earth and Space Science 2

Required

This course builds on Earth and Space Science 1 and dives deeper into studying features of Earth, plate tectonics, natural phenomenon, and outer space. Students will study differing worldviews of dinosaurs, the creation of Earth, and life on other planets through Biblical truth.

**Available to:** Grade 8  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min

# Social Science

## History Grade 5

Required

In this class, students explore geography, different ages of exploration, Native American tribes, and the 13 colonies. The year completes with an entrepreneur unit and a fun field trip to Biz Town! Students will have the opportunity to learn how to research, use STEAM skills to create a website, give mini-presentations, and collaborate with classmates on other fun projects.

**Available to:** Grade 5

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–15 min.

## Minnesota History Grade 6

Required

This class explores Minnesota's long and diverse history, beginning with its earliest inhabitants, highlighting historical markers in our state's history, and continuing to the present day. Students will be able to collaborate and problem-solve while studying Native American settlement, early European settlement and influence, and Minnesota's role in the Civil and World Wars. Students will explore how Minnesota's people and ideas helped shape the state and impact the nation, along with citizenship, economics, and the government of the United States.

**Available to:** Grade 6

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## Global Studies Grade 7

Required

This course covers world regions, cultures, and global issues. Students will use skills such as civic participation, economic reasoning, geographic inquiry, and historical inquiry while exploring the world around them. Students explore the relationships between diverse cultures and the world in which they live. Students will become empathetic problem solvers as they use various print and non-print sources to analyze and suggest solutions to real-world problems and analyze global and societal issues. The course aims to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the world's different geographical and cultural areas.

**Available to:** Grade 7

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 0–30 min

## U.S. Studies Grade 8

Required

This class offers an interactive and comprehensive overview of the history of the United States. Students will begin reviewing the history of the European settlers in North America and will conclude with the World Wars. Students will become empathetic problem solvers as they explore the content by annotating primary and secondary sources, reading historical literature, creating hands-on projects, and participating in class discussions. This course also gives a glimpse of how all of us are part of God's redemptive plan and how He wants us to be co-creators of the future. An optional summer trip to Washington D.C. will happen every other year for 7th and 8th grade students.

**Available to:** Grade 8

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 0–30

# STEAM

## STEAM

Required

5th grade STEAM will continue to build on coding skills and knowledge gained from previous STEAM classes. We will apply these skills and knowledge to units such as LEGO robotics and animation programming. 3D modeling is a crucial skill that will be learned to prepare students for upper school programs and expand students' thinking and creativity.

**Available to:** Grade 5

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 0–15 min.

## Design and Modeling

Required

This hands-on course has students work to develop innovative solutions for design and engineering problems. Students design and create a tabletop game, use CAD software to create 3-D objects, and use everyday items to design different animal prosthetics. Communication, teamwork, brainstorming, and problem-solving are critical parts of the work in this course.

**Available to:** Grade 6

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

# Theater

## Theater Grade 6

Students learn the basics of stage terminology, stage movement, pantomime, voice quality, characterization, and improvisation through games, monologues, sketches, and scripts. In addition, participation in a one-act play or variety show at the end of the semester will showcase skills they have successfully acquired.

**Available to:** Grade 6

**Length:** Year

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

# World Language

## American Sign Language Grade 8 Required

This class is designed to introduce students to the basics of American Sign Language and the culture of the American Deaf community. The focus is mainly on vocabulary and the mechanics of communicating manually instead of verbally, including fingerspelling, numbers, verbs, greetings, and introductions in ASL and basic grammar sentences. The environment of the class is designed to be both fun and educational. Songs and games will be incorporated into the curriculum to help students constantly review and practice what was learned.

**Available to:** Grade 8  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min.  
**Required:** Either ASL or Spanish 1  
**Credits:** 1 High School World Language Credit

## Introduction to Spanish Required

In this course, students will begin their academic journey into the Spanish language and culture. They will learn about colors, days of the week, telling time, and more. By the end of the class, students will be reading short stories in Spanish.

**Available to:** Grade 5  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–15 min.

## Middle School Spanish 1 Required

In this course, students will build on their Grade 5 knowledge and expand their learning to include studies about the alphabet, animals, emotions, and food. They will increase their reading abilities as well.

**Available to:** Grade 6  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min

## Middle School Spanish 2 Required

In this final middle school Spanish course, students will learn about Latin American and Spanish cultures, celebrations and holidays, and study the Mexican and Spanish flags, all while increasing their ability to communicate in social environments.

**Available to:** Grade 7  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## Spanish 1 Required

This Introductory course features the integration of language skills with the culture of Spanish-speaking people in a situational context. Course emphasis is on establishing the natural output of the Spanish language using consistent comprehension-based strategies.

**Available to:** Grade 8  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min.  
**Required:** Either ASL or Spanish 1  
**Credits:** 1 High School World Language Credit



# Grade 7–8 Exploratory Courses

## Art History

In this hands-on art class, students will focus on art and cultures from Pre-Historical to Baroque time periods. Students will analyze each time period's historical significances and worldviews of each time period, creating their art to reflect each culture. Students will create art with different mediums such as drawing, painting, pottery, and calligraphy.

*Offered alternating years with MS Art Design.*

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## Current Events

This course focuses on current issues affecting students' everyday lives. Students learn how to detect media bias, embrace exploration by researching current topics, and learn how to lead with empathy, and become empathetic problem solvers by listening to different perspectives. Additionally, students will conduct interviews, participate in class discussions, and bring current news to the class. Above all, students will learn how to ground themselves in Christian faith amidst the various conflicts of the world.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## Design Lab

Students will learn, design, and create different moving mechanisms in this hands-on course. Students will explore mechanical systems, energy transfer, and machine automation, use CAD software, explore computer programming, and build toys. Problem-solving, tinkering, and teamwork are a part of this course.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 10–20 min.

## Fantasy Literature

This course focuses on the study of fantasy as a genre and how to write fantasy stories. The main novel read throughout the semester is *Alice in Wonderland*, but many excerpts from other books, such as *The Return of the King*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, and *Catching Fire* will also be read/studied. This course covers everything from early fantasy tales found throughout Greek mythology and the legend of King Arthur up to modern-day fantasy written by well-known authors such as Brandon Sanderson and Rick Riordan. This course is open to anyone interested in the “fantasy” genre.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–60 min.

## Historical Fiction

This course offers a unique and comprehensive introduction to historical fiction genre. Students will read examples of the genre and discover new glimpses of the past. In addition, students develop critical skills to be an author of historical fiction to an audience of a specific age group from K–6. Conducting research with primary and secondary sources, students will craft an original work of historical fiction.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

# Grade 7–8 Exploratory Courses

## Lego Programming

Students in this course build and program Lego EV3 Mindstorm, starting with constructing a robot vehicle and programming its movements to navigate a maze. Students are challenged to build and program robots or machines to solve problems through different missions and objectives. In this hands-on course, students work together, use the design process, solve problems, and explore physical computing.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## MS Speech

This introductory course in public speaking will give students opportunities to develop skills in preparing speeches and delivering them with confidence. Students will be exposed to various speech types, including impromptu, informative, and persuasive. This class will also equip students with the presentation skills needed to succeed in High School courses.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## Textile Arts

Using the medium of textiles: threads, strings, cloth, etc., along with the possibility of dyes, paper, paint, and other media, students will create two- and three-dimensional works of art such as collages, soft sculptures, and functional pieces like backpacks, ties, vests, bracelets, string bags, weaves, Macramé hangings, bags, aprons, and totes. Students will also learn simple hand stitches and practical sewing skills. In addition, students may incorporate used articles of clothing and other recyclables and upcycle them into new works of art for decoration or function. Students will also learn simple “fix it” projects to repair rips, holes, hems, etc.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

## Theater

Students learn improvisation through acting games, exercises, sketches, short lessons, and scripts. The goal for students is to experience a learning process that enhances lives and develops skills used in the world beyond. Theatre work contributes to developing 21st Century learning skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and other life skills to serve them well in school and beyond. Students participate in a one-act play or variety show to showcase their new skills at the end of the semester. Also required is attending a theatrical production within the semester (Maranatha productions do count).

**Available to:** Grade 7–8

**Length:** Semester

**Homework:** 0–30 min.

# Grade 7–8 Exploratory Courses: Music

## Band Grades 7–8

Students continue to develop performance skills in a large group setting, emphasizing instrumental performance techniques and the development of a good overall band sound. Students are expected to participate in performances during the year, including the Christmas Concert and Experience Maranatha concerts.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8  
**Prerequisite:** One year of school band  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 60 practice min.  
**Credit:** Exploratory Course

## Choir Grade 7–8

Students will develop their singing skills while preparing for performances. Vocal technique, stage presence, solfège (sight-reading), musical terms, and beginning theory will be taught. Students will learn to sing in two- or three-part harmony. Performances include the Christmas Concert and the spring concert during Experience Maranatha.

**Available to:** Grade 7–8  
**Prerequisite:** Sing independently on pitch  
**Length:** Year  
**Homework:** 0–30 min  
**Credit:** Exploratory Course

# MCA Accelerated

MCA Accelerated exists to provide extension activities and accelerated curricula for advanced or academically gifted students and to support advanced students' social and emotional needs. Students are identified for the program through testing and teacher recommendations.

## Accelerated STEAM

Students will participate in project-based learning related to Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math. They will solve real-world math problems, complete open-ended investigations related to science and technology, and participate in competitions such as MN Math Masters and the Mini Science and Engineering Fair. 6<sup>th</sup> graders have the option to develop and showcase a project or research paper at the Twin Cities Regional Science Fair.

Qualifications:

- Students must have an average MAP Math score at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above during the previous school year OR CogAT Quantitative test score at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above
- MAP Science score at or above grade level\*

**Available to:** Grades 5–6

**Length:** Year

**Fee:** \$225 annually (billed \$25 per month)

## Accelerated Language Arts

Students will hone their critical thinking skills by reading challenging and interesting texts they choose themselves. They will develop their vocabulary and explore writing for a variety of purposes. Students will create and publish their own newsletters, magazines, websites, and books. Accelerated Language Arts students will participate in WordMasters Challenge, a national vocabulary and analogical reasoning competition.

- Students must have an average MAP Math score at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above during the previous school year OR CogAT Quantitative test score at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above
- MAP Language Arts score at or above grade level\*

**Available to:** Grades 5–6

**Length:** Year

**Fee:** \$225 annually (billed \$25 per month)

## Accelerated Seminar

Students will explore their interests and discover advanced concepts in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Language Arts as they create projects centered on real-world themes. Students will participate in competitions, including Perennial Math, WordMasters, and the Twin Cities Regional Science Fair. In addition, they will get a head start on college planning and preparing for college entrance exams, including the ACT, PSAT, and SAT.

Qualifications:

- Students must have average MAP Math or MAP Reading scores at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above during the previous school year OR CogAT Quantitative or Verbal test score at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above. When space in the program is limited, students with scores above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in both Math and Reading OR both CogAT Quantitative and Verbal are admitted first. \*

**Available to:** Grades 7–8

**Length:** Year

**Fee:** \$675 annually (billed \$75 per month)

\* Qualifications represent a typical situation and may be subject to change in special circumstances, such as students with additional diagnoses that could interfere with testing. In such cases, additional qualifications that may be considered, include but are not limited to: Neuropsychological Test Results, CogAT Nonverbal Test scores, teacher recommendations, and student work samples.

# Academic Honors and Support

## Honor Recognition

Academic Honor Roll recognition is awarded each quarter. Students who receive a “D” or “F” in any course become ineligible for the honor roll during that quarter. Honor Roll is marked on a student’s report card each quarter. There are two honors categories for middle school students:

- High Honor Roll: grade point average of 3.5–4.0
- Honor Roll: grade point average of 3.0–3.49

## National Junior Honor Society

The National Junior Honor Society (Grades 6–9) is the nation’s premier organization recognizing outstanding middle-school students. More than just an honor roll, NJHS serves to honor students who have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. Students must have a 3.5+ GPA and demonstrate service, leadership, and character strength.

## Academic Intervention

Academic intervention is designed to hold students accountable for missing assignments, tests, and poor academic performance and to see them achieve their full academic potential. Academic interventions take place in coordination with each specific teacher’s help sessions.

Teachers may require students to attend a mandatory tutoring session as a result of one or more of the following:

- The student has two late assignments in one class OR
- An assignment is two class periods late OR
- The student has an incomplete test OR
- The student demonstrates poor/failing grades or generally poor academic performance (based on teacher discretion)
- If issues continue, students may be placed on an academic-tracking plan with the advisor.

## Summer School

Students who fail a course during the school year may be required to make up for the resulting loss of credit by satisfactorily completing a maximum of one credit during summer school.

Additional makeup credit must have prior approval from the College & Career Counseling office.

Credits received in MCA’s optional summer semester academic enrichment classes or other outside organizations are not accepted in place of MCA-required courses unless Upper School

Administration has given previous clearance. See the Parent and Student Manual for more details on summer school.

## Learning Support Service

Learning Support Services (LSS) is committed to identifying and meeting the distinctive educational needs of students through individualized educational programming by partnering with students and teachers.

- Assist students needing organizational support
- Special class placement in math for small group or one-on-one instruction based on student’s need
- Dyslexia mini-screening and tutoring
- Outside services by referral for Speech and Language Therapy

# Service Hours

The Service Hours program provides every student in Grades 5–8 the opportunity to experience Acts 1:8 in ministering to the community through local, national, and international level service projects. Upper school students are required to participate in the program each year. Service outreach offers an intensive learning experience for each student ministry volunteer, allowing the opportunity to try on various roles of responsibility while providing vital services for the community and ministry.

## Areas of Ministry

- Direct community service (e.g., hospital visitation, working at a food shelf, shoveling neighbors driveway, etc.)
- Church involvement (e.g., assisting Youth Group, teaching Sunday School class, Worship Team, etc.)
- In-school ministry (e.g., sports team concessions, special project for teacher/staff not for extra credit/grade)
- Missions

## Requirements

- Students in Grades 5–6 must complete a minimum of fifteen hours of service per school year.
- Students in Grades 7–8 must complete a minimum of twenty-five hours of service per school year.
- Students may begin earning hours on the first day of summer vacation to be applied to the upcoming school year.
- Students must complete and submit their service hours in Naviance.
- Students not adhering to the quarterly service hour due dates will have mandatory service hours assigned.

## Service Hour Specific Limitations

- Service hours cannot be carried over from year to year.
- Students cannot include hours for which they were compensated monetarily or academically
- MCA reserves the following options:
  - Find mandatory service hours for students not fulfilling the required hours.
  - Find mandatory service hours for students with a history of not fulfilling required hours.
  - Decline hours that are not “pure ministry” (e.g., family business or chores).

# College and Career Counseling

The goal of academic and college/career counseling during the Middle School years is to embrace exploration as students learn more about themselves and the opportunities available to them. Naviance is an online site that students and parents can use for various purposes, including interest evaluations, knowing yourself, setting goals, and more. Each Maranatha student and parents have an individual account.

	Grades			
	5th	6th	7th	8th
<b>Parent and Student Information</b>				
Welcome to Middle School Student & Parent Meeting (Spring of 4 <sup>th</sup> grade year)	X			
Welcome to High School Student & Parent Meeting				X
<b>College Readiness Testing</b>				
Pre-ACT 8				X
<b>College Planning</b>				
Naviance	X	X	X	X

**9201 75TH NORTH, BROOKLYN PARK, MN 55428**  
**MARANATHACHRISTIANACADEMY.ORG | 763.488.7900**