

Grace Lutheran School

where children grow in faith, academics and character

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Faith at the center

- At Grace School, we center our lives in God's grace and love.
- We worship God in daily devotions and prayer and in weekly chapel services. Children learn the story of Jesus' love for us in religion classes.
- We put our faith into action in service projects and in the way we live with one another every day.



Great academics

- Grace teachers create a challenging academic environment responsive to the needs and abilities of our students.
- Individualized instruction includes interactive computerized reading activities, opportunities for independent study, and multiple junior high math groups.
- A full-time resource teacher provides individualized support, in the classroom and in small groups.
- A part-time reading specialist helps struggling young students become successful readers.
- Grace School students continue their education at college-preparatory high schools throughout the area, often in honors-level classes.
- Test scores for Grace students are consistently above the national median.

We care about character

- We guide children as they reflect on their behavior. We notice when they do well. We support them as they strive to do better.
- In the classroom, on the playground, in the hallway, we help our students to care for one another, to stand up for each other, and to take responsibility for their own plans and actions.
- Weekly announcements from the school principal focus on specific character traits and encourage students to put these values to work in their lives.



Our mission here at Grace

Mission

Our mission at Grace Lutheran Church and School is to bring in, build up, and send out disciples for Jesus Christ. Our school prepares children for a life of discipleship by helping them to grow in faith, knowledge and character.

Philosophy

Education at Grace Lutheran School is a shared effort between teachers, students, parents and congregation. Together we seek a strong spiritual, academic, and moral foundation for our students, trusting in God's promise in Proverbs 22:6: "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray."

We seek to educate the whole student — mind, body and spirit – and to develop in students a lifelong love of learning. We strive to provide an intellectually challenging environment that is responsive to the needs of all students. We believe that learning occurs in the classroom and beyond- on the playground and playing field, in worship, in song and in service.

Goals

Faith formation. Students will develop a relationship with God that leads to ongoing spiritual growth and active involvement in the Christian community.

Academic excellence. Students will master a challenging and enriching curriculum that meets or exceeds established learning standards.

Character development. Students will develop the moral integrity and sense of responsibility that guides a life of service to God and seeks justice in God's creation.

Accreditation

Grace is Recognized School by the Illinois State Board of Education and is accredited by AdvancED.

Grace Church

Grace Church is an independent Lutheran church, a congregation firmly grounded in the unending, unchanging promises of God through Jesus Christ. We firmly believe that there is a place for everyone in the family of God. This means that we welcome people of every race and ethnic background. It means that leadership in our church is not restricted to men. It means that people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are one with us as children of God and that people of all physical and mental abilities are seen as God sees them, as people who are whole.

Traditions

A school that's more than 100 years old has a lot of traditions — living traditions that change and grow to serve our students and their families.

- **Children's Christmas Eve Service** From the candles in the dark to the soaring descant on "O Come, All Ye Faithful," the Christmas Eve service led by the children of Grace grounds our holiday celebration in God's great gift of love at Christmas. Families return for this beloved celebration even after their children graduate.
- **Heart and Soul of Chicago.** Fifth and sixth graders tour the city, with a special focus on unique and interesting places of worship.
- **Chapel partners.** Older students are paired one-on-one with younger ones. They sit together in chapel, read to one another, and share special projects throughout the year.



Living together in Christ



Our facility

From the skylights in the 3rd floor school commons to the lower-level junior and senior kindergarten classrooms, Grace School offers a bright and spacious learning environment. The large gym hosts after-school sporting events as well as fitness-focused P.E. classes. There's lots of room to run and play on the playground and field.

Our teachers

Our teachers are exceptional! Most have many years of experience at Grace School. They bring a high level of commitment to the teaching profession and to Christian elementary education.



“Parents getting together says a lot about the school, how families socialize and create community.”

Our families

It's easy to get to know your child's friends and their families. GPO—the Grace Parent Organization—hosts social events throughout the year for parents and children. Parent volunteers assist with classroom activities and with all-school projects like the Walk With Grace walkathon and A Graceful Evening, our dinner-auction fundraiser. Grace School families enjoy getting together and support one another as children grow.



Preschool and kindergarten

Part of the “big school”

Grace’s Early Childhood classrooms benefit from being part of a larger elementary school.

■ Specialty instructors from the elementary school teach music in Grace’s preschool classrooms.

■ PK, JK and SK students visit the Learning and Media Center weekly for story time and to check out books.

■ Older students at Grace are an appreciative audience for the Halloween costume parade, the Christmas program and other special occasions in preschool and kindergarten.

■ JK and SK students are paired one-on-one with older “chapel buddies” who join them for special activities and who offer greetings and high-fives in the hallway.

PK

Coming to school is a big step for three-to-four-year-olds.

For many children it is the first opportunity to spend significant time

in a structured setting outside the home or the presence of a known caregiver.

Young children find a warm, welcoming environment as they transition into life in Grace’s preschool. It’s a joy to see children’s confidence grow as the year progresses.

Children build, touch, count, sing, and converse as we grow into a community of learners who are busy exploring life using a variety of learning styles. There are times for free-choice play, small group activities, whole-group listening, eating together, and gross motor play.

JK

Junior Kindergarten is a time for four- and five-year-olds to find their place in the world, in their

families, in their

friendships, and in the new experiences school can provide. The fifth year of life is an important period of growth—physically, academically, socially and spiritually.

Cognitive, physical, social, and spiritual development are all part of the program at Grace.

Children refine their abilities in academic areas such as math, writing, and recognizing letters. They also gain increased motor control and become more independent in self-care activities such as getting dressed to go outside and helping with clean-up.

Preschool at Grace also focuses on developing solid social skills. Children learn how to be a friend and how to make friends.

We lay a foundation for future spiritual growth. We learn that God loves and cares for each of us and together discover ways to praise and worship God.

Children’s days are filled with new discoveries as they participate in activities planned to expand their sense of wonder.

We provide an environment that enriches life experiences and nurtures and stimulates children’s minds and spirits. There are many opportunities for self-expression, problem-solving, building relationships and making decisions.

Letter and number recognition, phonics, science, math and writing are all a part of our academic experiences.

We dedicate time to music, physical education and fine arts. We play games and practice sharing, cooperation and good sportsmanship. We strive to instill courage and confidence along with skills that allow each child to progress at his or her own pace.

Grace provides a Christian environment for learning about how much God loves us. We hear Bible stories, sing and pray together. Most of all, we appreciate and celebrate the unique person God created each child to be.



Preschool and kindergarten

SK

Kindergartners are curious, energetic beyond belief, and eager to learn everything. The senior kindergarten classroom allows

for hands-on discovery, free-choice interaction with peers and with the environment, and guided instruction from teachers.

The classroom atmosphere encourages movement, investigation, observation, and interaction between students and teacher. Through social interactions, children acquire vital problem-solving skills as they plan activities, make choices, and experience cause-and-effect happenings.

Free-choice activities at the beginning of each day allow the teacher to spend individual time with each child during the week. This one-on-one time allows the teacher to understand the academic and social needs of each child and to adapt the kindergarten program to accommodate children's specific needs and strengths.

Individualized reading instruction enables children to master basic skills and advance at their own pace.



Math involves hands-on experiences that help children discover the relationships between numbers, quantities and counting.

Most importantly, senior kindergartners learn that they are uniquely created children of God and that Jesus' love for them is constant and never-ending.



“Grace allowed us the option of all-day care for our daughter. We quickly realized that we had made the right decision. Our daughter feels very comfortable.”

Full-day options, flexible schedules for PK, JK and SK students

Class	Time	Days
Pre-Kindergarten (PK, age 3 by Sept. 1)	8:15–11:30 a.m.	M-W-F, T-Th, or M-F
Junior Kindergarten (JK, age 4 by Sept. 1)	8:15–11:30 a.m.	M-F
Senior Kindergarten (SK, age 5 by Sept. 1)	8:15 a.m.–3 p.m..	M-F
PK and JK afternoon program	11:30 a.m.–3 p.m.	1 to 5 days per week
Extended day care	3–6 p.m.	1 to 5 days per week

Support for beginning readers

- Students in the early grades may receive support services from our reading specialist.
- Regular screenings and collaboration between classroom teachers and the reading specialist determine needs and intervention strategies.
- The reading teacher then works with individuals and small groups to hone early literacy skills such as phonics and phonemic awareness.
- Older students may receive support with writing and comprehension skills.
- Services taper as students' progress indicates they are ready for greater independence.



GRADE 1

A **child-centered curriculum in first grade** gives children a place to wonder, question, and imagine. Lessons and activities are planned to help each student gather knowledge, and gain skills.

In religion class, students hear the many stories of God's love shown to people throughout the ages.

Language arts instruction focuses on important skills on the way to becoming lifelong readers. First graders encounter literature as they learn phonics, vocabulary, and grammar. They also practice comprehension skills, creative writing, and critical thinking.

Math instruction includes the use of manipulatives, games, and problem-solving activities.

In science we learn about living things, weather and seasons, and caring for the environment.

In social studies first graders learn about being good citizens and gain a better understanding of other places and cultures.

Classes in art, music, and physical education are additional opportunities for first graders to express themselves and grow in relationship with God and others.



GRADE 2

Second graders are enthusiastic and becoming more confident and responsible.

At a pivotal stage for learning to read they are excited to read selections from many different genres and to choose their favorites.

Second graders study double-digit addition and subtraction, are introduced to multiplication, and do story problems. They study time, money, fractions, measurement, and geometry.

Discovery and hands-on learning are a big part of our science curriculum. Lab activities in each unit call for intuitive reasoning, exploration and cooperation.

We study community, earth and its natural resources, economic goods and services, and government and citizenship in social studies, as well as landmarks, customs, and traditions in the United States and other nations.

As they live out their faith, second graders learn to negotiate friendships and to support and respect each other in the classroom.

Authentic writing experiences are woven into daily classroom activities. Students also participate in writing workshops where they plan, draft, revise, publish, and share their work.



GRADE 3

Children take giant steps forward in third grade as they find themselves standing firmly in the world of school.

Reading becomes integral to every other subject. By the end of the year, third graders are expected to read lessons and chapters on their own and to be ready to discuss them in class. Students will advance unevenly at times, but the goal in third grade is to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all students.

Fun activities in third grade reading include literature circles and reading novels together.

Third graders express their thoughts and ideas as they respond in writing in almost every subject (even math).

Students study geography and use in-depth map skills. They learn about economics and money.

Memorizing math facts lays a firm foundation for concepts taught in later grades.

We focus on the “how” of science: gathering evidence, taking measurements, constructing models, and connecting data to explain form and function.

Students learn how to manage time, use a planner, organize homework, study for tests, and bring the right materials home at night and back to school in the morning.



GRADE 4

In fourth grade we strive to never give up. Rather than say “I don’t know,” we say “I don’t know yet!”

We focus on creating a caring and supportive atmosphere. From this supportive atmosphere, we grow and explore and learn from one another.

Novel studies and encounters with other genres help fourth-graders become confident readers and writers.

With hands-on STEM exploration, students become scientists and engineers as they experiment and analyze their results.

Mathematical thought is put into action in problem-solving and more difficult calculations.



Social studies units focus on history and on our states and capitals.

Technology learning includes video projects and more.

The Art Studio

Creativity flourishes in Grace’s art classroom—the Art Studio. Whether the topic is a Master, a method, or a medium, the art curriculum engages students’ interest and fosters curiosity. Students in grades 1–8 come to a hands-on art class once a week to practice using different mediums and create work that reflects their best efforts. Students learn to give and receive constructive criticism. Art projects often take more than one class to complete and are a source of great pride when displayed at the art fair at the end of each school year. Skills gained in art class encompass everything from drawing to practical skills such as sewing on a button. Most of all, we learn that God has blessed us with many and different gifts and that we are God’s perfect creation.

The Library Media Center

- Our Library Media Center teaches skills that help develop lifelong learners, including information gathering, analysis, and collaboration, using print and digital information sources for all learning styles.
- Younger students attend story times, check out materials, and find answers to reference questions.
- Older students have research and technology classes and participate in project-based activities based on the International Society for Technology in Education standards.
- Students also find materials for recreational reading in the LMC. Fun programs encourage students to read a variety of literary genres.
- The LMC is a relaxed, welcoming space, with comfortable chairs, study areas for independent and group work, and a full-time library media specialist.

Special Education Coordinator

Grace School's full-time special ed coordinator works with classroom teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of children with multiple learning styles and challenges. Children receive supports in small groups, both in and outside of the regular classroom, with a focus on organizational skills as well as academics. When additional evaluations are needed, the special ed coordinator works with parents and the public school district to arrange testing and planning meetings.

GRADE 5

Fifth graders build bridges from the past to the future as they explore history, science, literature and math with increasing curiosity and sophistication.

Early American history and the making of a nation is the focus of social studies.

Investigations in science connect the work of scientists in the past with theories and principles that guide our explorations today. We test Newton's laws of gravity with an egg-drop experiment.

Fifth graders deepen their understanding of fractions and decimals, as well as problem-solving and reasoning.

Novels and stories in our literature book help students understand the lives of people in different times and cultures.

Creative writing activities prompt them to examine their own lives and values.

Fifth graders learn about Reformation history and lead a fall chapel service on Martin Luther and the theology of being saved by God's grace.



GRADE 6

Sixth graders are preparing for the future as they look forward to junior high. Higher-level

thinking, increasing independence, good Christian character and self-confidence are things we work on in sixth grade.

Each day begins with religion class where the theme is "Walking with God's People."

Math focuses on pre-algebra, number systems, ratios, expressions and equations as well as geometry.

Social studies looks at world history and geography, including an "Egypt Adventure."

The interactive science curriculum focuses on cells, earth's structure, and sound and light.

Technology is a key part of instruction and student research in all curricular areas.

Sixth graders write a major paper, following a step-by-step process of researching, writing and revising.



GRADES 7 & 8

Junior high prepares students to live out their faith in high school and beyond, as they acquire the

knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in the years ahead. The challenges of life and relationships with parents, teachers, and peers in junior high are not always easy. Grace students are reminded always that God loves them, and led by God's word, they are encouraged to seek God's will for their lives in all they do.

We have a challenging curriculum that prepares students for high school:

- Multiple levels of math instruction meet students where they are and offer opportunities to work independently.
- Language arts prepares students to write papers in high school and to think critically as they read.
- Students study a two-year American history curriculum, with challenging and thoughtful discussions of the "why" as well as the "what" of difficult chapters in the past.
- Science class includes the excitement of dissecting a frog and a sheep's heart, as well the challenge of building a roller coaster.



- Junior high includes an every-other-year trip to Springfield, Illinois, and exploration of interesting places in the city of Chicago.

Junior high students have many opportunities to explore interests and discover talents outside of the classroom as they take on leadership roles in the school community.

"Seeing that list of high schools that Grace kids get into was impressive."

PE classes

Our primary focus during physical education class is on movement skills, physical fitness, and team building. We promote confidence, healthy bodies, positive interaction, and the enjoyment of physical activity while playing cooperative games and learning new skills. We also work on strength and cardio endurance. Students in grades 5–8 use heart monitors to track progress toward fitness goals.

Foreign language

German is taught in grades 1–8, with twice-weekly classes for younger students and daily classes in junior high. Grace students enter high school prepared to take second-year German classes.

German has practical applications in today's world. Studying a foreign language means learning about other cultures and about how other people think. German is an important language historically to Lutherans, plus it is also the language of a country with great engineering, technology, innovation and business.



Handbells

The Strike Team handbell ensemble offers an alternative to choir during the school day for students in grades 6–8. Ringers work with five octaves of Whitechapel handbells and hand chimes and gain note- and rhythm-reading skills while learning to be part of an ensemble. Junior ringers are paired with older, more experienced ringers and progress through a series of skill tests to gain advanced ringer status. The Strike Team performs in chapel and in Sunday morning worship services. Ringers also pack up the bells and travel to assisted living facilities in the area to perform concerts in December.



TECHNOLOGY

At Grace we are always exploring new technology and ways to use it effectively in our classrooms. Resources include 1:1 PC laptops in junior high and 1:2 PC laptops in grades 3–6, class sets of iPads for the Early Childhood and grade 1-2 units, interactive whiteboards, online and offline learning and productivity software, and more. These tools increase student engagement and prepare our graduates for continued academic success in high school and beyond.

MUSIC & CHOIR

In weekly music education classes students age 3 through 4th grade are encouraged to be creative and expressive as they gain musical skills. They enjoy movement and singing games and perform music of many cultures, styles and historical periods. They practice singing skills and play instruments, including xylophones, drums, recorders, hand-held percussion, and chimes.

In Grace School Choirs we sing our faith in community with others. Students in grades 1–8 sing for school chapel services, for several Sunday morning worship services during the year, and in the traditional Children’s Christmas Eve Service. Choir rehearsals take place during the school day.



BAND & ORCHESTRA

The string orchestra program offers an intermediate and advanced ensemble. Weekly private violin lessons are available during the school day for students first grade and up, at beginning through advanced levels. Orchestra and private students perform throughout the school year for chapel, concerts, and competitions.

Grace participates in the Walther Grade School Band Program. Students in grades 4–8 receive private lessons during the school day and the band rehearses one morning a week before school. Grace students join students from other area Lutheran Schools to play in intermediate and advanced ensembles on Monday nights at Walther Academy in Melrose Park.



SPORTS

Grace Vikings sports teams are open to all students at the appropriate grade levels. Teams compete against other Lutheran schools in cross country, volleyball, basketball, and track and field in after-school games and weekend tournaments and meets. Grace athletes often qualify to compete at Lutheran Sports Association state tournaments. Teams are coached by Grace faculty and staff members and other qualified individuals.

Cross Country. Boys and girls in grades 3–8 race on Grace’s cross country team in fall.



Volleyball. Boys and girls play on a coed team in grades 5–6 and on separate teams in grades 7–8.

Basketball includes separate teams for boys and girls at both the 5–6 and 7–8 grade levels.

Track and field. Students in grades 3–8 compete at track meets in the spring.



Grace Parent Organization

GPO is a parent volunteer group whose mission is to build a strong community of parents and families and support educational opportunities at Grace School.

The GPO leadership team works closely with our principal and staff to schedule appropriate programming throughout the year. GPO events and programs include:

- Room parents
- After-school enrichment classes
- Social events throughout the year for parents and children.
- The annual student talent show
- Sales of Grace Vikings spirit wear
- Concessions at volleyball and basketball home games

GPO also offers support to school wide programs where possible including Lutheran Schools Week, Grandparents Day, A Graceful Evening (the annual dinner-auction benefit), and the Walk With Grace walkathon. GPO fundraising supports special requests from teachers, the principal or sports teams.

AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

after-school enrichment classes are fun for students at all levels. Children can learn more about favorite subjects (“Math Games”), try something new, hone athletic skills, or create works of art. Classes are offered in four- and eight-week sessions.

From “Comedy Improv Workshop” to “Lights, Camera, Star Wars,”

EXTENDED CARE

Before- and after-school care is available at Grace for students in Junior Kindergarten through 8th grade. Extended care is open in the morning starting at 7 a.m. There is a per family fee that can be paid on a daily basis or at a discounted rate for 10 mornings. Afternoon extended care is open from the end of the school day until 6 p.m. Fees are per child and can be paid either on an hourly or monthly basis.





“One of the really amazing things about Grace is the real family feeling....It’s a group of parents that are all here for the same reasons, and that’s really amazing.”



“You’re not sacrificing academics for a faith-based education. Grace’s program is strong in both areas.”

