FOURTH GRADE HIGHLIGHTS

- Outdoor exploration of native plants and trees, including two field trips to old growth forest on Snoqualmie Pass
- Collaborative model house project that involves designing and building a house, with working electrical circuits and light fixtures
- Year long service learning project focusing on food justice, closely working with Food Lifeline of Washington
- Field trips that provide hands-on experiences in Science and Social Studies
- Genius Hour!

READING

Our fourth grade reading program is literature-based. Students work in small, flexible groups focusing on a variety of reading elements and reading comprehension strategies. As fourth graders develop cognitively and become aware of other perspectives, we use literature as a lens to explore a variety of perspectives, including other cultures, time periods, and geographic areas.

Students sharpen their reading skills by exploring non-fiction texts that support our science and social studies curriculum. In addition, they learn to communicate their understanding of literature and grade level texts through oral and written communication.

VOCABULARY

Fourth graders use a vocabulary-based program called Wordly Wise. Students are given two weeks to complete each section, with many of the assignments completed as homework and a test on the Friday of the second week.

Definitions, sentences, memorization, and vocabulary drills/games are just some of the techniques we use to encourage the development of a rich spelling and writing vocabulary.

SPELLING

Throughout the year, fourth graders work on individualized spelling lists from the program Words Their Way, a daily word study program that focuses on phonics, spelling, and vocabulary instruction. This program provides skill instruction that covers spelling patterns and focuses on examining and manipulating words, not memorizing them. Students think more critically about words and work on transferring their skills to reading and writing. They how to spell, decode new words, and improve word recognition speed in general.
WRITING

In fourth grade, we use a writer’s workshop to explore a variety of writing styles, including narrative, expository, and persuasive pieces. Writing assignments frequently connect to our social studies, science, and service learning themes. Through the writing process, we provide individualized instruction during one-to-one writer’s conferences in order to help students set goals that will further their writing ability. Throughout the school year, fourth graders are actively engaged in writing, revising, and publishing their pieces using technology.

MATH

Fourth graders are learning math through Envision Math, a rigorous, problem-based curriculum offering comprehensive, blended digital and print components. It is designed to help our students achieve mathematical proficiency levels that will provide the foundation for future math courses and beyond. At the center of this curriculum are the Common Core Standards.

Our students are actively involved in using concrete and digital tools to develop deep mathematical understanding and apply this understanding through practice and problem-solving in every math lesson. The problem solving component helps students to develop specific skills that are used by “good math thinkers.”

The focus topics in fourth grade are:

- generalize place value understanding
- fluently add and subtract multi-digit numbers
- use strategies and properties to multiply one and two digit numbers
- use strategies and properties to divide one digit numbers
- use whole number operations to solve problems
- factors and multiples
- fraction equivalence and ordering
- line plots
- understand and compare decimals
- find equivalence in measurement units
- algebra: generate and generalize patterns
- geometry: angles and angle measurement
- lines, angles and shapes

In addition to our math curriculum, students investigate real world use of math concepts through work on projects like model houses or in our school garden.
SCIENCE

The science curriculum for fourth grade incorporates inquiry-based instruction with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and STEM principles. FOSS kits, one of the curricula used in our science program, are designed to center around learning as a developmental progression, providing experiences that allow students to continually build on their initial notions and develop more complex scientific and engineering ideas.

Students experience the following units in fourth grade:

Physical Science: Our physical science unit provides first-hand experiences dealing with energy and change. Students investigate electricity and magnetism as related effects and engage in engineering design while learning useful applications of electricity in everyday life. Students apply their understanding of these concepts by creating working light switches to display in their model houses.

Life Science: Using the FOSS Environments Kit based on Next Generation Science Standards, we study the structures and behaviors of organisms. Students begin to understand the relationship between organisms and their environment, including the impact humans have on the environment. Students examine these concepts through hands-on investigations, many of which happen outdoors on our 31-acre campus.

SOCIAL STUDIES

In fourth grade, students examine the physical regions and early history of Washington State. We focus on geography skills, Native Americans who lived in our area as long as 10,000 years ago, the early explorers, and development of the Northwest, beginning with the Lewis and Clark expedition. Our study culminates with the arrival of early pioneers.

One highlight of our program is a simulation activity that brings to life Lewis and Clark’s expedition, with all of its hardships. Students work in groups in the classroom and spend time out on our campus imagining what it was like to be Lewis and Clark exploring a new land.
RELIGION

Religion is part of every day. Villa’s religion program is based on the Cabrinian tradition of educating the whole child and building compassionate hearts through service to others. With this as an overall theme, learning about the Catholic faith, class meetings, social/emotional learning (Second Step curriculum), and community service (including buddies) are all part of religion.

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

Through use of the text Blest are We, fourth graders learn about God’s love with a special focus on the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. They study the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent, and learn and experience the many forms of prayer. Students attend liturgies and prayer services during the year, and are responsible as a grade level for preparing and planning for one liturgy or prayer service per year.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Second Step program, taught in Preschool through Grade Five in Villa classrooms, focuses on four key areas in fourth grade:

- **Empathy and Skills for Learning** - empathy and respect, listening with attention, being assertive, respecting similarities and differences, understanding complex feelings, understanding different perspectives, conversation and compliments, joining in, and showing compassion
- **Emotion Management** - managing strong feelings, calming down anger, managing anxiety, avoiding jumping to conclusions, handling put-downs
- **Problem Solving** - solving problems, making a plan, solving playground problems, taking responsibility for your actions, dealing with peer pressure

Students learn and practice all of these skills through fun and interactive lessons, role plays, games, stories, video segments and short daily reinforcements. Students also begin to develop self care skills, an emotion vocabulary, and problem solving strategies that are used both in and out of school.

CLASS MEETINGS

Creating a safe, and emotionally secure classroom encourages students to share their feelings and solve problems together. Daily/weekly class meetings enable such an environment to thrive. Whether celebrating each other or solving problems together, fourth graders are empowered to make a difference in their classroom community and their school.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Catholic Social Teaching is taught through service learning as students work to fight hunger in our community. Work at Food Lifeline, classroom lessons, and discussions culminate in a special year end project. Fourth graders host a simple Soup Supper for their families, raising funds to benefit Food Lifeline.
SPECIALISTS

Fourth grade students also participate in a varied schedule and see specialists in the following areas:

- **Art:** 60 minutes - once a week
- **Library:** 45 minutes - once a week
- **PE:** 30 minutes - twice a week
- **World Language:** 45 minutes - twice a week
- **Music:** 30 minutes - twice a week
- **Technology:** 60 minutes - once a week

**ART**

Fourth graders continue to expand their concepts and vocabulary using the elements of line, shape, form, texture, color, space, and value.

In art class, students:

- identify and use complementary colors
- analyze the symbolic mood implications of color
- recognize that curved lines give the illusion of roundness
- develop control of tools and processes with increased complexity to produce detailed imagery in a variety of media such as: painting, drawing, printmaking, oils pastel, collage, and ceramics
- learn to apply a creative process
- refine their work based on feedback and present their work to others
- use and understand value of the arts for worship

**LIBRARY**

The goal of our library program is to develop students who value learning and can apply the skills, strategies, and processes to be independent users of information.

Fourth graders use self-selected topics to practice skills such as:

- generating central and sub-questions
- locating resources using keywords
- understanding various strategies for taking notes
- interpreting, comparing, and summarizing facts and ideas

Students listen and respond to a variety of stories and informational texts comparing styles, genres, perspectives, opinions, and facts, while building comprehension skills. They learn to locate resources using search stations and the classification system.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Fourth grade students continue to grow their skill sets and are introduced to more team sports such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, and floor hockey.

They get to show their skills in gameplay and are always working on being a great teammate. Students are also given leadership opportunities in class and exposed to some team sports.
WORLD LANGUAGE

All fourth graders at Villa Academy continue their study of French or Spanish. They use the language to communicate and to express themselves with increasing complexity. In a fun, active, and participatory environment, they learn through repetition, movement, songs, and games.

Fourth graders read and write in their target language and respond with physical activity to teacher directions. The language program incorporates Total Physical Response (TPR) and storytelling methods. This develops oral comprehension and facilitates language acquisition and retention. The majority of class time is conducted in French or Spanish.

MUSIC

The purpose of our fourth grade music program is to expose students to a wide range of musical experiences so they may develop a foundation for lifelong appreciation of music. We provide students with learning experiences so they develop the skills described by the Association for the Supervision of Curriculum Development (ASCD) benchmarks while learning concepts related to the elements of music.

The activities designed to provide such experiences are singing, playing recorders, Orff and other percussion instruments, moving to music, reading music, listening, and performing.

TECHNOLOGY

Once each week, fourth graders come to Villa’s Computer Lab for one hour to build their computer literacy skills. Assigned projects in this class integrate with the students’ classroom curriculum throughout the school year.

For fourth graders, technology class:

- reinforces skills learned in third grade
- introduces higher level concepts in digital citizenship as they use school email addresses and Google accounts
- introduces safe email practices and Villa’s acceptable use policy with technology
- reinforces strategies for safe and efficient use of websites for research
- teaches each of the Google Apps, with projects
- encourages proficiency and speed in touch typing with the Edutyping website

Applications that are introduced and used include Google Drive, Hyperstudio, Scratch, Inspiration, Pixie 3, iMovie, iPhoto, and Garageband.