THIRD GRADE HIGHLIGHTS

- Our theme is “Exploring the World Around You!” It is perfect for the third grader who is becoming interested in the wider world and wants to know how the systems around them work.
- Caring for the Villa garden integrates science with service learning.
- Students explore their own cultural heritage and the amazing diversity of culture beyond their family and the classroom. Through an interactive simulation, students investigate how people become part of our country as well as the struggles immigrants undergo in the process.
- We explore democracy by studying the ways governments and communities make decisions. Students simulate the formation of a local town and government, creating a framework for civic engagement. All citizens voice their opinions in town hall meetings when the city is faced with a challenge that requires a critical decision.
- Beginning in third grade, students are able to participate in Orchard Recess on the Villa Orchard Playground. Students play creatively and cooperatively in a setting full of God’s creation!
- During every undertaking throughout the year, third graders work toward adaptability and initiative. They learn to view failure as an opportunity to learn. They are encouraged to explore, experiment, and reflect.

READING

Good literature is the foundation of our third grade reading program. Students read both fiction and nonfiction for a variety of purposes.

In literature circles, students:

- choose reading selections
- delve into an exploration of character, plot, theme, and purpose
- debate and defend their opinions
- develop their social imagination, moral agency, and acceptance of diverse points of view

Students record their literary examinations in book club journals, practicing how to order and express their thoughts with clarity and connection to the text. Independent reading time is a third grade staple.
Teachers conference with students during independent reading, guiding students to expand the depth and reach of their book selections. Through teacher conferencing and peer to peer book talks, students excitedly explore new genres, and follow interests. A lifelong love of reading is the goal!

**WRITING**

Our literature-based workshop model guides third graders in producing high quality work across several genres of writing, including narrative, nonfiction, persuasive, and poetry. We use mentor texts to examine strong writing technique and improve upon our written pieces.

The development of basic writing skills is integrated throughout our writing curriculum:

- **Daily grammar review** - enhances students’ ability to draft and edit meaningful pieces of writing.
- **Phonics-based spelling program** - supports students as lifelong spellers and increases the quality of their written work. The program focuses on 355 of the most frequently used words, along with individualized word lists based on students’ writing samples.
- **Cursive writing instruction** - promotes students’ writing fluency and fine motor skills, allowing them to write at a higher volume with greater ease. We use the Handwriting without Tears program.

**MATH**

Third graders are learn 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 to 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 develop specific skills that are used by "good math thinkers."

The focus topics in third grade math include:

- multiplication-meaning, facts, relationship to division, fluently multiply/divide within 100
- connect area to multiplication and addition
- represent and interpret data
- using strategies to add and subtract
- fluently add and subtract within 1000
- multiply by multiples of 10
- use operations with whole numbers to solve problems
- understand different meanings/kinds of fractions
- fractions equivalence and comparison
- solve problems with time, capacity and mass
- geometry
- problem solving with area/perimeter
SCIENCE

In third grade science, we study the physical world using our 31-acre campus. Our garden becomes the central focus in our Life Lab curriculum which explores seeds, soil, weather and climate, tools, plants, garden animals, and habitats.

The Life Lab Science scope and sequence integrates Life, Earth, and Physical science concepts in a systems approach to science. As the garden grows and changes throughout the seasons, it provides a natural laboratory for studying how the science disciplines are interrelated.

The Life Lab program meets all 8 Next Generation Science Standards:

- Asking questions and defining problems
- Developing and using models
- Planning and carrying out investigations
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Using mathematics and computational thinking
- Constructing explanations and designing solutions
- Engaging in argument from evidence
- Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Earth Science - Students learn that climate and soil are key parts of the environment and understand that these influence what living things can exist in a habitat.

Physical Science - The world is made up of matter, and matter has properties that we can describe. In our science program, students use their senses to observe properties of the things around them.

Life Science - Students observe living things to understand how they depend on habitats to provide their basic needs and how their parts help them survive on Earth. Third graders:

- examine and dissect seeds
- learn how plants grow
- apply the scientific process to their garden experiments
- work with botanists to examine plants during a field trip to the nearby UW Botanic Gardens

SOCIAL STUDIES

In social studies, third graders explore large frameworks for understanding how our country works. Using TCI’s Social Studies Alive curriculum, students begin with basic geography and progress through the following units:

- immigration
- community diversity
- how people improve their communities
- how people around the world are alike and different
- how the economy works
- how global trade works
- public services
- city hall
- democratic participation in a community
- helping the global community
Additionally, explorations of Time for Kids magazine challenges third graders to examine and discuss current culture, events, trends, and social studies issues.

The year concludes with our Storypath curriculum, Democracy in Action. This program utilizes all of the understanding students have developed during the year. In the final stages of the unit, we visit the state capitol in Olympia to experience how our state government operates and makes decisions. In this unit, students:

- create a paper environment on a bulletin board (including habitats, animals, plants, etc.)
- add a town, developing the town’s culture/identity, history, monuments to past community leaders, parks, traditions, etc.
- become a character in the town that is part of a family
- choose an occupation, character traits, age, and their roles within the community
- elect officials to positions in the local government which then hires a planning commission (selecting from submitted applications)
- use the democratic process to work with the entire town to solve an incident that arises

REligion

Religion is part of every day. Villa’s Religion program is based on the Cabrini 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

Third graders discover the role of Church as a community. 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 third grade:

- **Skills for Learning** - being respectful learners, using self-talk, being assertive, planning to learn
- **Empathy** - identifying others’ feelings, understanding perspectives, conflicting feelings, accepting differences, showing compassion, making friends
- **Emotion Management** - emotion management, managing test anxiety, handling accusations, managing disappointment, managing anger, managing hurt feelings
- **Problem Solving** - solving problems, solving classroom problems, solving peer-exclusion problems, dealing with negative peer pressure
Third graders 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 to use 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, third graders are empowered to make a difference in their classroom community and their school.

COMMUNITY SERVICE
Third grade’s service learning project focuses on one of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching: Care for God’s Creation. The third grade manages and cares for the Villa garden. They develop an appreciation for farm to table practices and discover the relationship between farmers and the food they eat. We bring food that we grow in the garden to the Villa kitchen and work with Chef Allison to decide what to plant. Students learn to serve their community by working the land to provide food for others.

SPECIALISTS
Third graders participate in a varied schedule and see specialists in the following areas:

- **Art:** 60 minutes — once a week
- **Music:** 30 minutes — twice a week
- **World Languages:** 30 minutes — twice a week
- **Library:** 40 minutes - once a week
- **PE:** 30 minutes — twice a week
- **Technology:** 45 minutes - once a week

VISUAL ARTS
Third grade students build on their arts knowledge and skills from their previous experience, including:

- recognizing the relationship between two-dimensional shape and three-dimensional form (i.e., square and cube, rectangle and cylinder)

- identifying/making light, dark, and middle values to show contrast or create illusions of form

- comparing lines that show direction and motion (i.e., diagonal lines to show motion or radial, converging, spiraling, wide to narrow)

- developing art skills and techniques like blending art media for different visual purposes

- using line to create details, and demonstrate the proper care of tools and materials

Students learn to respond to arts presentation and work they experience from art history, exhibits, or those in the school community, by engaging actively and purposefully. They learn to describe what is seen or heard, analyze how the elements are arranged and organized, and interpret the descriptive properties. They also learn to use evidence and criteria to evaluate and support their interpretations of a work of art.
MUSIC
In third grade, students learn how to play recorder, ukulele, and a variety of different rhythmic instruments. Students are taught using a method similar to the Suzuki Method, in which students first learn by rote and then by seeing the music. Since music is another language, we teach it like a language. People learn first what words are, and then they are taught how to read and write. Students continue to dictate rhythms and vocal solfege, while composing their own music.

WORLD LANGUAGES
All third 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. They 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.

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.

During library time, students learn information literacy skills such as generating central and sub-questions and locating resources using keywords.

They also practice simple note taking strategies and learn to interpret, compare, and summarize information in order to answer the research questions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
In Physical Education class, third graders are introduced to more complex activities such as Frisbee games, soccer, basketball, and capture the flag. We continue to focus on lifelong fitness and promote sportsmanship, individual growth, and teamwork. Some of the favorite activities in third grade PE are capture the flag, wall tag, and spooners.

TECHNOLOGY
Assigned projects in Technology class integrate with the students’ classroom curriculum throughout the school year. For third grade students, technology class:

- reinforces the skills they learned in second grade
- strengthens operations like digital photography, coding, and connecting alternative input devices
- introduces file management (create folders, use keyboard shortcuts and right click)
- introduces multimedia projects using Hyperstudio to create a plant kingdom project
- introduces digital citizenship as students collect copyrighted materials for their projects

The students work on gaining proficiency and speed in touch typing in the lab and at home with the Edutyping website. Applications that are introduced and used in third grade include Hyperstudio, Scratch, Inspiration, Pixie 3, iMovie, iPhoto, and Garageband.