

HTS Spotlight: 1st Grade

Whether it is in math, reading, science, handwriting or social studies, Holy Trinity School first graders have an opportunity to embrace foundational concepts in a fun way and learn how to be independent thinkers. This is important as students make the transition from kindergarten to a more structured academic day. Creating an environment that enables students to not only learn but also to thrive academically is important. Holy Trinity School's curriculum and structure enables teachers to give students a personalized and faith-based educational experience. It also allows teachers to readily use innovative and creative teaching methods in their day-to-day lessons, going beyond the standard core curriculum.



For example, as part of their social studies curriculum, first graders recently had an opportunity to travel the world. Students made passports that reflected where they were born and then using those passports selected different continents, countries and states to study. It was interesting for the children to learn that not everyone in their class was born in New Jersey or even in the United States. The passport journey also was used to teach students about maps, interesting facts about continents, and highlight the difference between continents and countries.

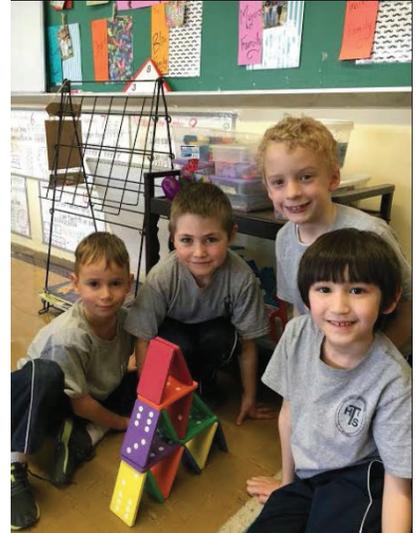
Holy Trinity's curriculum provides integrated learning across subjects. Along their passport journey, students also learned about the different habitats and climates of each continent. The students particularly found interest in learning about the different layers of the rainforest, the natural resources we use and where they come from, and the habitat and activities of Arctic animals such as the polar bear.

In reading, students are divided into small reading groups with each reading group targeting the specific needs and reading levels of the student. Teachers work closely with the students to help them sound out words and to comprehend what they are reading. The class regularly discuss a story's setting, main characters, and author's purpose.

The children also complete a number of writing assignments and are taught how to start pulling information from text to establish a story or main idea. Earlier this winter, the students completed their first book report. They selected books on Abraham Lincoln or George Washington, gathered facts, and wrote their book report in class. The students were proud of this achievement and displayed their book reports in the school's hallway.



During math, teachers use a variety of visuals and manipulatives so that students can see, build, and explore more abstract concepts.



Similar to all grades at Holy Trinity School, faith and service permeate the first grade curriculum. Students participate in daily prayer, attend Mass regularly, and participate in a variety of community service projects. One highlight for first graders is leading the “Parade of Saints” for the broader student community. First graders are partnered with 8th grade students to learn and study about a chosen saint. The students then share what they have learned during a school assembly. The “Parade of Saints” has become a tradition at Holy Trinity School - teaching faith, community, and mentorship. First graders also make cards for homebound residents during the holidays and collect mission money throughout the year.

First grade students also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of clubs and sports at Holy Trinity School. First grade students participate in the Chess Club, Daisies, Cub Scouts, Track, Cross Country, and both Basketball and Golf clinics.



Ms. Antonette Carpinteri and Ms. Clare Trelease serve as Holy Trinity School’s first grade teachers. Both teachers are New Jersey natives and products of Catholic education. Ms. Carpinteri has taught first grade at Holy Trinity School for 35 years. She has a BS in Elementary Education and degrees Reading and Early Childhood Education from Seton Hall University. Ms. Trelease is in her fifth year at Holy Trinity where she has taught both third grade and first grade. She received her BA in Early Childhood Education from the University of Scranton and is completing her Masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Montclair State University this May. “I am happy that I work and teach in a community that encourages and promotes positivity in everything we do. It is not only good for our students but our teachers and community” said Ms. Carpinteri. Ms. Trelease agrees, “I enjoy teaching at HTS because the sense of community is amazing and everyone is willing to go the extra mile for each other.”

Since 1916, Holy Trinity School has provided a quality Catholic education to Westfield and the surrounding communities. A 2011 National Blue Ribbon and a Middle States accredited school, its mission is to educate students to actualize their full, individual potential both spiritually and academically.