



1953

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN ACADEMY

Leading in Courage • Learning with Purpose

2025-2026 ACADEMIC OVERVIEW LOWER SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN - 5TH GRADE

Shannon Forest Campus

829 Garlington Road Greenville SC 29615
864-678-5107

Downtown Campus

200 W. Washington Street Greenville, SC 29601
864-565-0990



Lower School Principal

Dear FPA Families,

It is a privilege to partner with you in the shared responsibility to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6). At First Presbyterian Academy, our mission is to provide a Christ-centered learning environment where students grow in knowledge, character, and faith, guided by teachers who model Christ’s love and truth each day.

With small class sizes and caring teachers, we are able to truly know each child, celebrate their strengths, support their growth, and encourage them to reach their full potential. Differentiated instruction allows us to meet students where they are while challenging them to think critically, communicate effectively, and collaborate joyfully. The result is a community where learning feels both personal and purposeful, and where every child is reminded daily that they are deeply known and loved by God.

Our curriculum, aligned with South Carolina State Standards, ensures that academic excellence remains a cornerstone of our program. Each subject promotes mastery of core skills, creativity, and problem solving, while integrating biblical truth that helps students see God’s hand in every area of study, from the wonder of creation in science to the beauty of language and the order of mathematics.

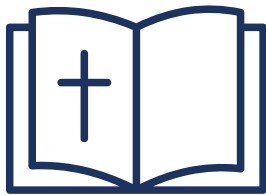
At FPA, we strive to cultivate a community that feels like family, a place where relationships flourish, confidence grows, and learning is filled with curiosity and joy. Beyond the classroom, students experience a well-rounded education through fine arts, athletics, service, and spiritual formation, nurturing both heart and mind. Our teachers embrace the call to “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19), walking alongside students as they discover their God-given purpose.

Thank you for allowing us to partner with your family in shaping the next generation of Christ followers. It is our honor to walk beside your children as they learn to love God wholeheartedly, think deeply, and live faithfully.

With gratitude,

Mrs. Sandy Lesley
Lower School Principal





CHAPEL

Every Wednesday morning, our entire student body gathers for one of our favorite parts of the week...Chapel! This year, our theme is *The Names of God*. Students are learning about who God is through the names He reveals about Himself in His Word. As we discover more about His character and promises, our love for Him grows deeper. God's names reveal His faithfulness, power, and care for each of us. Chapel is a time of worship, learning, and reflection, helping our students grow in their relationship with Christ.

*The more we know God,
the more we love Him.*



STUDENT SERVICES

At FPA, we are committed to helping every student thrive academically, spiritually, and personally. To support this mission, we offer two specialized student services programs: EXCEL and IGNITE.



Lisa Harris



Debbie Irwin



Julie Sellars

EXCEL strives to help every student succeed. EXCEL believes that each child is uniquely created by God. Trained teachers partner with classroom teachers to provide individualized, Christ-centered instruction. Students receive small group support or one-on-one intervention along with accommodations in the regular classroom. Instructional techniques include multisensory, Orton Gillingham based approaches as well as other research-based methods. Close communication is maintained between EXCEL personnel, classroom teachers and parents.

IGNITE serves high-ability learners in 2nd through 5th grade, identified through GPA, achievement, and ability scores. This program incorporates The College of William and Mary Center for Gifted Education research-based curriculum teaching models and strategies. Students meet in small groups for 3 to 3.5 hours weekly, with the first semester focused on Language Arts and the second on Science and Social Studies. IGNITE students also have opportunities to lead and serve, including producing Crusader Network News, helping with the Veterans Day Celebration, and coordinating school service projects.

Both programs reflect our belief that every child is uniquely gifted by God and can excel when given specialized instruction, support, and opportunities to grow.



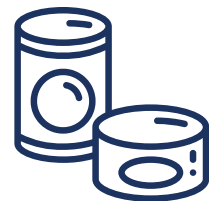
VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

Each year our lower school IGNITE students lead a special Veterans Day program to honor and celebrate the brave men and women who have served our country. Veterans from our community and our FPA families are invited to join us for a meaningful morning of patriotic music, prayer, special recognition, and celebration. Following the program our guests and students gather for refreshments and fellowship, creating a warm and memorable experience for all.



TOYS FOR TOTS TOY DRIVE

Our entire FPA family comes together each year to spread joy through Toys for Tots toy drive. We collect toys to brighten the holidays for children in need in our local community. We have collected almost 5000 toys over the past 8 years. Last year we collected 778 toys, and we're excited to see our students continue this tradition of giving and compassion this year.



CANNED FOOD DRIVE

To celebrate the 100th day of school, each lower school grade level takes on the special challenge of collecting 100 non-perishable food items to support a local food bank. Our students show incredible generosity as they help provide meals for families in need, turning a fun milestone into a meaningful act of service.



KINDERGARTEN



Alison Hynds



Jessica Sutton



Carey Martin



Nina Stephens



MATH

Our kindergarten math curriculum uses Math Expressions, a hands-on, interactive program that helps students build a strong foundation in number sense, patterns, shapes, and problem-solving.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Adding and Subtracting
- Graphing
- Measurement
- Comparing numbers
- Write and count to 100
- 2D and 3D shapes



READING

In kindergarten, we use the Bob Jones Reading curriculum, supplemented with UFLI for phonics instruction, to establish strong foundational skills in fluency and comprehension.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Letter names and sounds
- CVC words
- Consonant blends
- Silent e
- Sight words



WRITING

Kindergarten students learn to express their thoughts through pictures, letters, and simple sentences. They build vocabulary, explore sentence structure, and grow as confident, creative writers. Handwriting is taught using the Handwriting Without Tears program, helping students form letters correctly and develop strong writing habits.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Beginning, middle and end
- Sentence structure
- Informational writing
- How-To Writing



SCIENCE

Our kindergarten science intentionally weaves Biblical integration throughout each unit. Students explore God's creation through a hands-on, inquiry-based approach that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- 5 senses
- Living things
- Weather
- Matter
- Forces of Motion
- Human Body



SOCIAL STUDIES

Our history and geography curriculum is taught through a Biblical worldview, helping students see how God has shaped history for His glory. Students gain an understanding of the world while recognizing God's sovereign hand at work throughout time and place.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Mapping
- Wants & Needs
- Community helpers
- Who are we
- Holiday studies
- National symbols



BIBLE

Kindergarten students begin their journey in faith with the Deep Roots Bible curriculum, learning through engaging, hands-on lessons that make God's Word come alive. Each week, children practice scripture memory and explore foundational biblical concepts, including God's creation, obedience, and His love for people. Holiday and special units, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, help students see how biblical truths connect to their everyday lives.

Kindergarten Field Trips and Special Events:

- Callaham Orchard field trip
- Making History in-school field trip
- Critter Keeper in-school field trip
- Children's Museum field trip



FIRST GRADE



Jessica Brooks



Brittany Henderson



MATH

Our first grade Math Expressions program helps students strengthen their understanding of numbers, addition, subtraction, and problem-solving. Through hands-on activities, visual models, and real-world connections, students develop confidence and a genuine enjoyment of math.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Measurement
- Geometry
- Place Value
- Skip Counting



READING

In first grade, we use the Bob Jones Reading curriculum, supplemented with UFLI for phonics instruction, to establish strong foundational skills in fluency and comprehension.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Reading with expression
- Basic concepts of print
- Making inferences
- Applications of reading
- Research



WRITING

In first grade, students build on foundational writing skills to express ideas clearly through sentences and short paragraphs. They practice proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling while developing creativity and confidence as writers, guided by standards that ensure steady growth in writing skills.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Narratives
- Opinion Writing
- Informational Writing
- How To's



SCIENCE

In first grade, students explore God's creation through the Bob Jones Science curriculum. Hands-on experiments and engaging lessons help children observe, investigate, and ask questions about the world around them, fostering curiosity and a deeper understanding of God's design in nature.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Life Science
- Our Bodies
- Earth/Space Science
- Physical Science



SOCIAL STUDIES

In first grade, students explore communities, geography, and citizenship through engaging lessons that follow state standards. Through a biblical lens they learn about the people, places, and events that shape their world while developing an understanding of responsibility, cooperation, and how they can make a positive difference in their community.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Life in South Carolina
- History
- Geography
- Economics
- Civics Government



BIBLE

In first grade, students continue growing in their faith through the Deep Roots Bible curriculum. Lessons are hands-on and interactive, helping children understand key accounts from Creation through the life of Jesus. Students practice scripture memory each week, learn to observe and apply God's Word, and explore biblical concepts such as God's design, character development, obedience, and the promise of eternal life. Holiday and bonus units, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, help children connect biblical truths to everyday life.

First Grade Field Trips and Special Events:

- Roper Mountain Science Center field trip
- South Carolina Children's Theater field trip
- Eden's Farm field trip



SECOND GRADE



Meredith Collom



Molly Spurgeon



MATH

In second grade, students build on foundational skills using the Math Expressions curriculum. Lessons focus on addition and subtraction, early multiplication, measurement, geometry, and problem-solving. Hands-on activities and real-world connections help students develop confidence, critical thinking, and a love for math.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Arrays
- Shapes
- Measurement
- Telling Time
- 2 digit addition & subtraction



READING

Second grade students build strong reading skills with the Bob Jones Reading curriculum, focusing on phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Through engaging stories, hands-on activities, and guided practice, children develop confidence, independence, and a love for reading.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Fiction
- Nonfiction
- Poetry
- Articles
- Biblical events



WRITING

In second grade, students continue developing their writing skills by composing complete sentences and short paragraphs. Lessons focus on grammar, punctuation, spelling, and organization, helping students communicate clearly and creatively while meeting state standards for steady growth in writing.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Narrative writing
- Nouns
- Verbs



SCIENCE

Second grade students explore God's creation using the Bob Jones Science curriculum. Hands-on experiments and interactive lessons help children observe, investigate, and ask questions about the world around them, fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of God's design in nature.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Animals & plants
- Matter & motion
- Earth & space



SOCIAL STUDIES

Second grade students explore communities, geography, and citizenship through engaging lessons that follow state standards. From a biblical perspective, they learn about God's design for families and communities, the importance of character and responsibility, and how to reflect Christ's love while understanding maps, landforms, and the roles of citizens in their world.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Government
- Map skills
- Communities
- Key historical leaders



BIBLE

Second grade students grow in their understanding of God's Word through the Deep Roots curriculum. Lessons cover the life and ministry of Jesus, including His miracles, teachings, and the events of His birth, crucifixion, and resurrection. Students practice scripture memory, learn to observe and apply biblical truths, and explore concepts such as faith, obedience, compassion, and new life in Christ, helping them connect God's Word to everyday life.

Second Grade Field Trips and Special Events:

- Roper Mountain Science Center field trip
- Literature Fun Friday
- All American Day



THIRD GRADE



Abbie Meadows



Charity Collins



MATH

In third grade, students continue developing strong math skills using the Math Expressions curriculum. Lessons focus on multiplication and division, fractions, measurement, geometry, and problem-solving. Through hands-on activities, visual models, and real-world connections, students build confidence, think critically, and enjoy exploring math concepts.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Multiplication Facts (0-12)
- Place Value & Operations
- Multi-digit addition & subtraction
- Area & Perimeter
- Geometry
- Telling Time



READING

Third grade students strengthen their reading skills using a curriculum aligned with state standards, focusing on fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking. Through a variety of engaging texts and guided practice, students develop confidence, independence, and a lifelong love of reading.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Novel studies
- Figurative Language
- Poetry
- Word Work



WRITING

Third grade students continue building strong writing skills through lessons that focus on composing clear paragraphs, using proper grammar and punctuation, expanding vocabulary, and organizing ideas effectively. These activities help students communicate confidently and creatively.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Narrative writing
- Opinion writing
- Informative / Expository writing
- Cursive handwriting (Handwriting Without Tears method)



SCIENCE

Third grade students explore God's creation using the Bob Jones Science curriculum. Lessons cover topics such as plants and animals, ecosystems, weather and climate, the solar system, and matter and energy. Hands-on experiments and interactive activities help students observe, investigate, and develop curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper appreciation for God's design in the natural world.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Solar System
- Weather
- Rocks & Minerals
- Plant & Animal cells
- Force & Motion



SOCIAL STUDIES

Third grade students explore communities, geography, and citizenship through engaging lessons. Viewed through a biblical lens, they learn about God's design for families and communities, the importance of character and responsibility, and how to reflect Christ's love while studying maps, landforms, and the roles of citizens in their world.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Map skills & Earth's features
- Environments & People
- Natural Disasters
- Culture & Economy
- Exploration & Migration

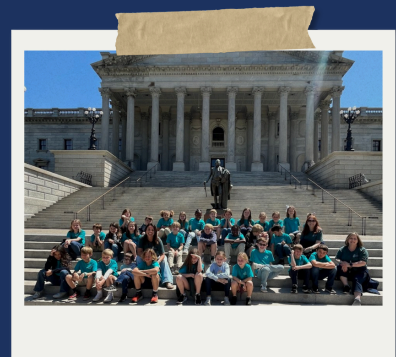


BIBLE

Third grade students engage in Bible lessons using the Deep Roots curriculum, from Creation and the Fall through the life of Jesus and the early church. Students learn about key figures such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and Daniel, while practicing scripture memory and exploring biblical truths about God's character, faithfulness, and plan of salvation. Holiday and special units, including Thanksgiving and Christmas, help children see how God's Word applies to everyday life.

Third Grade Field Trips and Special Events:

- Biography Tea
- Charlotte's Web County Fair Day
- Charlotte Motor Speedway & Museum field trip
- Roper Mountain Science Center field trip



FOURTH GRADE



Valerie Kinley



Susannah Shirley



MATH

Fourth grade students build strong math skills using the Math Expressions curriculum. Lessons focus on multiplication and division, fractions, measurement, geometry, and problem-solving. Through hands-on activities, visual models, and real-world connections, students develop confidence, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Place Value
- Multi-Digit Multiplication
- Long Division
- Fractions
- Geometry



READING

Fourth grade students develop reading skills, focusing on fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and text analysis. Lessons include a variety of literary and informational texts, guided practice, and activities that build critical thinking, reading independence, and a lifelong love of literature.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Novel study
- Genre study
- Non-fiction
- Comprehension strategies
- Making connections



WRITING

Fourth grade students continue developing strong writing skills, focusing on composing well-organized paragraphs, using proper grammar and punctuation, expanding vocabulary, and refining their ideas. Lessons help students communicate clearly and creatively while building confidence and independence as writers.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Personal narratives
- Expository
- Story writing
- Poetry
- Research



SCIENCE

Fourth grade students explore God's creation through the Bob Jones Science curriculum. Lessons cover ecosystems, plant and animal life, matter and energy, the human body, weather and climate, and the solar system. Hands-on experiments and interactive activities encourage observation, investigation, and critical thinking, helping students develop curiosity and a deeper appreciation for God's design in the natural world.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Structures and Functions of Plants & Animals
- Human Body
- Energy
- Earth's Surface



SOCIAL STUDIES

Fourth grade students explore South Carolina and U.S. history, geography, economics, and government, learning how people, places, and resources shape communities. Through a biblical perspective, they reflect on God's design for families and society, the importance of character, and how to live out Christ's love in their everyday lives.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Native Americans
- Early European Explorers
- Colonies
- Revolutionary War
- Westward Expansion
- Civil War



BIBLE

Fourth grade students continue growing in their faith through the Deep Roots curriculum. Lessons focus on the early church and the ministry of Paul, exploring key events such as the Great Commission, missionary journeys, and the spread of the gospel. Students practice scripture memory, develop skills in observation and application, and explore biblical concepts such as faith, perseverance, obedience, and prayer, helping them connect God's Word to their daily lives.

Fourth Grade Field Trips and Special Events:

- Pioneer Day
- Novel Study Celebrations
- Riverbanks Zoo field trip
- Roper Mountain Science Center field trip



FIFTH GRADE



Pam Mathieu



Sarah Grace Nichols



MATH

Fifth grade students build on their math skills with a focus on decimals, fractions, measurement, data, and geometry. Hands-on activities and real-world problem-solving help students think critically, develop confidence, and prepare for more advanced concepts.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Powers of 10
- Place Value
- Multidigit multiplication/division
- Order of Operations
- Written Expressions
- Decimals
- Fractions
- Scaling
- Geometry
- Measurement conversions



READING

In fifth grade, students deepen their reading comprehension skills by analyzing a variety of texts, including literary and informational works. They focus on identifying main ideas, understanding text structures, and interpreting figurative language. Through guided discussions and independent reading, students enhance their ability to draw inferences, summarize content, and evaluate the author's purpose and perspective. This approach fosters critical thinking and a lifelong appreciation for reading.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Novel studies
- Poetry
- Historical Fiction
- Character analysis
- Text features
- Oral presentations



WRITING

Fifth grade students strengthen their writing skills by crafting organized paragraphs and multi-paragraph compositions. Lessons emphasize grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, and idea development, helping students communicate clearly, think critically, and grow as confident, independent writers.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Personal Narratives
- Informational essays
- Book evaluations/summaries
- Opinion Writing
- Latin Root studies
- Vocabulary study



SCIENCE

Fifth grade students explore God's creation using the Bob Jones Science curriculum. Lessons cover matter, energy, sound and light, weather, ecosystems, fossils, and the human body, with hands-on activities that foster curiosity, critical thinking, and an appreciation for God's design.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Matter/ Changes in Matter
- Interactions / Changes in Ecosystems
- Biomes
- Minerals and Rocks
- Solar System
- Moon
- Stars



SOCIAL STUDIES

Fifth grade students explore U.S. history from westward expansion to modern day, including industrialization, immigration, world wars, civil rights, and contemporary issues. Through a biblical perspective, they reflect on God's design for justice, stewardship, and the value of every individual while learning to engage thoughtfully and responsibly in their communities.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- US states and capitals
- Westward Expansion
- Interactive Immigration Unit
- US Industrial Growth
- WW1 & WW2
- Roaring 20's



BIBLE

In fifth grade, students explore faith and critical thinking through Lee Strobel's Case For... series for kids. These engaging books encourage students to investigate the evidence for God, Jesus, and the Bible, helping them ask thoughtful questions and deepen their understanding of their faith. Students also practice scripture memory focused on God's truths about their identity, discovering who they are in Christ and how to apply biblical principles to their daily lives.

Fifth Grade Field Trips and Special Events:

- Each 5th Grader receives a school issued Chromebook for in-school use
- 5th Graders serve as worship leaders in our weekly chapels
- Roper Mountain Science Center field trip
- Barrier Island 3 day / 2 night field trip
- Ellis Island Experience
- 1920's Wax Museum





1953

Each day, students participate in 45-minute Related Arts classes, including Art, STEM, PE, Spanish, and Music. These classes nurture the whole child—creatively, intellectually, and spiritually—helping students explore God’s world, develop their gifts, and grow in character alongside academic learning.



De’quan Rowland
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

“Every PE class is a chance to move, learn, and grow; building strength, faith, and joy in Jesus through active play and teamwork.”



Ann Carruthers
SPANISH

“My goal for teaching Spanish in the lower school is to provide engaging exposure that makes the language feel familiar rather than foreign. I also encourage students to use what they have learned to glorify God and share Him with others.”



Maggie Nolen
ART

“In Art class at First Presbyterian Academy, students explore a variety of mediums and artists from around the world while learning how creativity reflects the character of God.”



Melonie Martin
MUSIC / Lower School Chorus

Lower School music classes use the joyful, child-centered Kodály method—combining singing, movement, and hands-on activities to build musical literacy, inner hearing, and a lifelong love of music. Students are encouraged to use their gifts to joyfully praise Jesus through various performances. The auditioned Lower School Chorus meets weekly to prepare for inreach and outreach opportunities to share their faith through song.



Tara McGovern
STEM

“The focus of the STEM program is to spark students’ curiosity, creativity, and critical “out-of-the-box” thinking through hands-on projects in science, technology, and engineering. The goal is to build a strong foundation that encourages students to explore, question, and better understand the world around them.”



Related Arts Special Events

- Lower School Art Show
- Christmas Program
- Grandparents Day Performance
- Field Day

