

Curriculum Overview: K-8

A typical school of most any type includes daily instruction in Language Arts, and Math. Social Studies (Geography, Civics, History), Science, and Bible, are taught 2-3 days a week, as are Art, Music, and PE.

For HIS Schools, it is recommended that Language Arts, Math, and Social Studies be taught by grade level. Combining K-2 and 3-5 for Science and Bible, as well as the enrichment courses is the most efficient way to take advantage of reducing cost, preparation, as well as the learning benefits of multi-age grouping (older students helping the younger ones).

Keep in mind, HIS School is probably going to work differently than what you've experienced before, especially in terms of grouping by age/grade. A homeschool model is a "Red School House" approach. Many educators have seen the advantages of such an education. This approach enables the use of the benefits of a multi-age, less factory-like education that scholars have recognized but unable to employ in large public and private school systems. Indeed, as it is, in the vast majority of each individual public and private classroom, there is a **broad spectrum** of abilities, behaviors, being taught with a ratio of 1 teacher for 25 or more students.

Links and Cost are Provided throughout the Curriculum Guides!

We at HIS schools spared no short cuts in looking for the BEST as well as AFFORDABLE curriculum for HIS children. Sample textbooks were ordered when necessary and frequently returned. (Perhaps one reason the children are falling behind in learning is big mistakes being made in writing curriculum). After digging, excellent curriculum was found in unlikely places, and most of it is FREE!

Language Arts

Is there any skill more important than reading and writing? The founding fathers started schools so the children would be able to read the Bible. It is the humble opinion of this site that there is one reading and writing curriculum that has the best track record of building a strong foundation in these skills. The good news is that it is Christian. ABEKA is one of the best around. It is the biggest cost included in this guide. It is only recommended for grades 1 & 2. It will, without a doubt, provide a firm foundation for language arts. Bear in mind that the ABEKA homeschool kits include student workbooks, reading books, teacher guides for not only reading, but also writing, spelling, etc. Also Abeka has a discount for homeschool families, including a flexible payment plan. The discounts expire mid-to-late August. You can sign up here: <https://promotions.abeka.com/biggestdiscounts>

IF ABEKA is cost prohibitive, Wonders is also available through Amazon. And it is **much more** affordable. If used books are available, the 3 books needed can add up to as little as \$30 (Amazon, used). But they are not always available. The most it would be is \$100 for the three books (all new). Links are provided throughout the curriculum guide. This curriculum will be less than ABEKA, but it is unclear if it will be as comprehensive. It does not have the track record that ABEKA has. ABEKA has been critiqued for being weak on literature. The curriculum guide provided here takes that into consideration in grades 3 and higher.

Once they are in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade, they can build on the ABEKA foundation with **Wonders** from **McGraw Hill**. This curriculum has been vetted by a trusted private Christian school. You can find used copies for as low as \$10 on Amazon. Links are provided.

Math

The good news is that the **math** curriculum is far more affordable. There are various math approaches presented. ABEKA is the most reasonable and is sufficient for K-12. Two additional math programs are provided for those of you who have heard of them and want them for your child. Those approaches do cost more.

Social Studies Curriculum

There are two excellent curriculum for grades K-5 for social studies and both are **FREE**. Although not Christian authored/published, the following free resources are really well done. They include far too many resources to vet completely. However, enough has been vetted to recommend them with this caveat: There is no perfect curriculum. These are able to be downloaded immediately. It will be easy for you to spot any aspects that you disagree with. **Feel free to omit, or turn it into a learning opportunity. It is the position of HIS Schools, that we better prepare our students by teaching them how to discern HIS truth in the midst of varied beliefs and positions** (within reason, of course)!

Neither of these free social studies curriculum are comprehensive alone. You will need to use both. Of course, there **every curriculum gives much more** than you can cover in one year, but you will need some of the topics found in each. The curriculum guide will provide more detailed guidance.

- **Hillsdale University** provides their **Social Studies/Civics/American History courses (K-12) -- FREE!** This is an affordable social studies unit that aligns with a biblical worldview. You can find it here: <https://k12.hillsdale.edu/Curriculum/The-Hillsdale-1776-Curriculum/>

It only covers America. You will need to supplement.

Grade specific links are provided in the Curriculum Guides.

- **Core Knowledge**, a really well written curriculum, is politically neutral, accurate, and fills in the gaps in the 1776 Hillsdale Curriculum. The main page for the free curriculum is listed here. <https://www.coreknowledge.org/curriculum/download-curriculum/>

Grade specific links are provided in the Curriculum Guides.

Note on **Core Knowledge** curriculum: The foundational belief behind the foundation that funds this resource is it is important for children in America to learn about the many different cultures and beliefs of our country. As a site providing resources for Christian parents and Christian schools, HIS Schools for HIS Children agrees that it is important for us to learn and understand the people around us. The Apostle Paul had a mastery in understanding Greek philosophy (Western Worldview) in addition to his tremendous understanding of the Hebrew and Biblical

Worldview (closer to Eastern than Western). This rare combination brought God-given ability to speak to the Gentile world. Much of Christianity today is a result. Let us keep this in mind as we focus on learning. As we carefully and prayerfully guide our children to learn HIS truth despite what the world teaches, we give them tools to speak to the world for Him when they are older. That said, there were some social studies units that were deemed confusing (too much detailed information on other religions in second grade) and hence not included in the curriculum guide.

Science Curriculum

As with Social Studies, two excellent science curriculum were found and both were free. The first, **Core Knowledge** has excellent science units for grades K-2. They also have science units for grades 3-5, but there is another excellent curriculum that is better suited for those grades.

- **Core Knowledge**, a really well written science curriculum. The main page for the free curriculum is listed here. <https://www.coreknowledge.org/curriculum/download-curriculum/>

Grade specific links are provided in the Curriculum Guides.

These are recommended for grades K-2. They can also be used to supplement if desired in grades 3-5. There are free pdfs to download immediately. They will “charge you” your email. In addition to the Student Book, there is a Teacher Guide PDF. This includes many hands on activities. You do not have to do them all. There are many that can be done in a church facility. You will find the links to these units in the curriculum guide. There are also one-page paper-and-pencil activities, such as matching, definitions, etc. You can download and print each individual pages as needed.

Many of the units (but not all) were vetted. The only concern discovered was in grade 1. It discussed the invention of vaccines. Encouraging vaccines might be a concern for some of you. HIS Schools does not take a position on the subject. Use as you will.

- **Scott McQuerry** science curriculum is also FREE. This is an excellent science curriculum, providing teachers guides and student books via pdf to download. As with the Core Knowledge science, there are many hands on activities and pages that can be printed in the teacher’s guide. This curriculum is better suited for a higher grade level than the Core Knowledge and is a fun approach that will keep grades 3-5 engaged. There is a link to a curriculum well suited for grades 3-5 combined.

There is a link to “Elementary” Chemistry for Middle School. It works well for grades 6-8 for this topic. There are also links to supplemental resources to give them a firm foundation for High School Chemistry.

Bible

The Bible curriculum has a minimal cost (\$18). It is a superb Sunday School Curriculum which will teach your child the Bible from beginning to end, over the course of 4 years. You will, of course, have prayer and a devotion every morning, with two to three 15-30 minute lessons a week. Sunday School Curriculum is written for 60 minutes, so it will work. We recommend the students read from their own Bible: The Beginner's Bible (K-2), or The Adventure Bible (3-5).

The Bible Curriculum recommended on this site is Gospel Light publishers. It aligns with most mainline as well as evangelical denominations. They have consistently taught the STORY successfully for over 60 years (founded by Henrietta Mears -- if you haven't heard of her, look her up, she's a hero in educating children in God's Word). As such, Gospel Light Publishers (now David C Cook Publishing) continues to be the most preferred method for teaching the Bible to children -- *sequentially* -- as any story is told -- from beginning to end. Their plan teaches the Bible story, from Genesis to Acts over the course of four years. (The epistles and apologetics aspect are added in the Middle School and High School).

You can access the scope (everything that is covered) and sequence (what order) for their Bible curriculum over 4 years. This is a free resource.

This is the link: <https://g.christianbook.com/ns/pdf/202103/scope-and-sequence-gospel-light.pdf>

Dr. Sheila Schuller Coleman has this to say about Gospel Light Curriculum,

"I learned the Bible as a little girl by going through this curriculum during my entire elementary days. When I found this curriculum and saw that it is the same narrative, sequential approach as that which shaped my biblical understanding as a child, I was elated! Although there might be some very slight doctrinal differences, at elementary age -- the most important lessons they will learn is the story. The story teaches them WHO God is. The story teaches them GOD loves them. The story teaches them they can have a personal relationship with GOD. The story teaches them their real identity is they are HIS child! The story teaches them to love their neighbor as they love themselves. Let us tell them the story as HE did, not by themes, but as ONE story-- HIS story!"

This curriculum will provide a foundation that aligns with most denominations. Through discussion, the student can learn HIS Story, and what they can learn about HIM through it.

If you are affiliated with one of the following denominations you can find Bible Curriculum that has been published for your specific doctrines:

- Lutheran -- <https://www.cph.org/>
- Reformed -- <https://www.csionline.org/>
- Foursquare -- <https://resources.foursquare.org/foursquare-children-and-youth/>

Special Abilities

A word on varying abilities, especially those who excel in reading and writing. In such cases, parents worry their child will be bored. In terms of language arts, this just doesn't happen. Children who are innately gifted in language, including reading and writing, will automatically read and write more and more and more. Just encourage these students with more and more.

In terms of math, the easiest way to approach this is to find online assessments for the grade they are currently in. Find an assessment for each math unit. Give them one assessment after another until they are unable to pass it. That will show you the skills they have learned. Usually, there is one or two they still need to learn. Teach that skill, then move them on to the next grade level math.

For those who struggle in either math or language arts, encourage them. Help them find that God-given skill that He gave them that is easy for them to do. It might be in making friends, or sports, or music, or art. Remind them this is easy for them, but hard for others. When something is hard, we pray for God to help. And pray for God to give us the strength to work hard. The harder something is, the harder we need to work. And the more we will learn that God helps when things are hard.

Anyone can do easy.

Too few do the hard.

When it is hard, it is too easy to give up.

But when asked, God gives strength to do the hard.

And when we do not quit, no matter how hard,

Working hard on the hard is true success!