



Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools

Academic Standards

Social Studies



3rd GRADE

The Local Community and Communities Around the World

In Grade 3, students study continuity and change in their local community and in communities in other states and regions of the world. They also learn how people have created and shaped their communities over time, the roles of citizens and functions of government in the community, State, and nation, and how people in communities interact with their environment, develop and use technology, and use human and natural resources.

The Archdiocese of Washington's Academic Standards for social studies are organized around five content areas. The content area Standards and the types of learning experiences they provide to students in Grade 3 are described below. On the pages that follow, age-appropriate concepts are listed underneath each Standard. Skills for thinking, inquiry, and participation in a democratic society are integrated throughout. Specific terms are defined and examples are provided when necessary.

Standard 1 — History

Students will describe how significant people, events, and developments have shaped their own community and region; compare their community to other communities and regions in other times and places; and use a variety of resources to gather information about the past.

Standard 2 — Civics and Government

Students will explain what it means to be citizens of their community, state, and nation; be able to identify the functions and the major services provided by local governments; use a variety of resources to gather information about government in their community and other communities around the world; and demonstrate understanding of democratic principles and practices.

Standard 3 — Geography

Students will explain that latitude and longitude are used to locate places on maps and globes, and begin to understand Earth/sun relationships, identify the distinctive physical and cultural features of their community, and explain the geographic relationships of their own community with the state/district, nation, and world.

Standard 4 — Economics

Students will explain how people in the local community make choices about using goods, services, and productive resources, how they engage in trade to satisfy their economic wants, how they use a variety of sources to gather and apply information about economic changes in the community, and how they compare costs and benefits in economic decision making.

Standard 5 — Individuals, Society, and Culture

Students will explain how communities are made up of individuals and groups of people, explore local connections with communities in other places, examine the contributions of people from various cultures to the development of the community, and use a variety of resources to collect information about the culture of the community.



Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools

Academic Standards

Social Studies



3rd GRADE

Standard 1 - History

Students will describe how significant people, events, and developments have shaped their own community and region; compare their community to other communities and regions in other times and places; and use a variety of resources to gather information about the past.

Historical Knowledge

- 3.1.1 Describe American Indian groups who lived in the region when European settlers arrived.
- 3.1.2 Explain why and how the local community was established and identify founders and early settlers.
- 3.1.3 Describe the role of specific communities in the development of the region.
Example: Explain the role of river towns or urban centers, in the development of this region.
- 3.1.4 Give examples of people, events, and developments that brought important changes to the local community or region.
Example: Developments in transportation, such as the building of canals, roads, and railroads connected communities and caused changes in population or industry.

Chronological Thinking, Comprehension, Analysis, and Interpretation

- 3.1.5 Develop simple timelines of events in the local communities.
Example: Use a school newsletter or local newspaper to make a timeline of current events.
- 3.1.6 Read fiction and nonfiction stories to identify the qualities of leaders, such as community leaders, soldiers, presidents, teachers, and inventors.

Research Capabilities

- 3.1.7 Use a variety of community resources — such as libraries, museums, and local historians — to gather information about the local community.



Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools

Academic Standards

Social Studies



Standard 2 – Civics and Government

Students will explain what it means to be citizens of their community, state/district, and nation; be able to identify the functions and the major services provided by local governments; use a variety of resources to gather information about government in their community and other communities around the world; and demonstrate understanding of democratic principles and practices.

Foundations of Government

- 3.2.1 Explain that people are citizens* of their community, state/district, and nation and explain the importance of good citizenship*.
- 3.2.2 Identify fundamental democratic principles and ideals in American songs, stories, and symbols.
Example: Songs and stories may emphasize freedom and equality. Symbols, such as the flag, emphasize unity and other ideals.

* citizen: a member of a community, state, or nation

* citizenship: the act of practicing one's rights and responsibilities as a member of a community, state, or nation

Functions of Government

- 3.2.3 Discuss the reasons why governments are needed and identify specific services that governments provide.
Example: Democratic governments protect individual rights and provide services, such as law enforcement.
- 3.2.4 Explain the consequences of violating laws and identify the duties of and selection process for local officials who make, apply, and enforce laws through government.
- 3.2.5 Explain that the world is divided into different countries with their own governments and identify neighboring countries, such as Canada and Mexico.

Roles of Citizens

- 3.2.6 Discuss and explain the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance*. Explain other ways citizens can affirm their citizenship.
Example: Students should know that the flag is a symbol of our unity as a nation and that the Pledge of Allegiance is a promise to be loyal to our republic*. Other ways that citizens affirm their citizenship include voting and jury duty.
- 3.2.7 Use a variety of information resources* to gather information about community leaders and civic issues.
Example: Identify leaders and issues from school newsletters, newspaper headlines, photographs, editorial cartoons, television, and other information resources.

* Pledge of Allegiance: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." (Francis Bellamy, 1892)

* republic: a government ruled by representatives chosen by the people

* information resources: print media, such as books, magazines, and newspapers; electronic media, such as radio, television, Web sites, and databases; and community resources, such as individuals and organizations



Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools

Academic Standards

Social Studies



Standard 3 – Geography

Students will explain that latitude and longitude are used to locate places on maps and globes, and begin to understand Earth/sun relationships, identify the distinctive physical and cultural features of their community and explain the geographic relationships of their own community with the state/district, nation, and world.

The World in Spatial Terms

- 3.3.1 Distinguish between physical and political features on maps and globes and label a map of North America identifying countries, oceans, major rivers, the Great Lakes, and mountain ranges. Locate the United States, Maryland/District of Columbia, and the local community.
- 3.3.2 Identify the continents and oceans, the equator, the Northern and Southern hemispheres, and the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

Places and Regions

- 3.3.3 Explain that regions are areas that have similar physical and cultural characteristics* and locate the local community in a specific region.
Example: Mid-Atlantic Region
- 3.3.4 Explain basic Earth/sun relationships*, including how they influence climate, and identify major climate regions* of the United States.

* cultural characteristics: human features, such as population characteristics, communication and transportation networks, religion and customs, and how people make a living or build homes and other structures

* Earth/sun relationships: the rotation and tilt of Earth on its axis and the revolution of Earth around the sun influence climate variation on Earth; this region has major seasonal differences in climate relating to changes in the position of the sun and the amount of sunlight received

* regions: areas that have common characteristics. Some regions have finite or absolute boundaries, such as political units like a country, state, or school district. Some regions have blurred boundaries, such as crop or climate regions or a region based on primary language. Regions also can be entirely perceptual. An example is the “Midwest,” where boundaries vary widely according to people’s perception.

Physical Systems

- 3.3.5 Explain how climate affects the vegetation and animal life of a region and describe the physical characteristics that relate to form an ecosystem*.

* ecosystem: a group of organisms in an area that interact with one another, together with their nonliving environment

Human Systems

- 3.3.6 Construct maps and graphs that show aspects of human/environment interaction in the local community.
Example: Patterns of rural, urban, and suburban development.



Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools

Academic Standards

Social Studies



Environment and Society

3.3.7 Use a variety of information resources* to identify local environmental issues and examine the ways that people have tried to solve these problems.

Example: Research how the community gets its water today compared with how early settlers got their water.

* information resources: print media, such as books, magazines, and newspapers; electronic media, such as radio, television, Web sites, and databases; and community resources, such as individuals and organizations

Standard 4 – Economics

Students will explain how people in the local community make choices about using goods, services, and productive resources; how they engage in trade to satisfy their economic wants; how they use a variety of sources to gather and apply information about economic changes in the community; and how they compare costs and benefits in economic decision making.

3.4.1 Give examples from the local community that illustrate the scarcity* of productive resources*. Explain how this scarcity requires people to make choices and incur opportunity costs*.

3.4.2 Give examples of goods* and services* provided by local government.

3.4.3 Give examples of trade* in the local community and explain how trade benefits both parties.

3.4.4 Define interdependence* and give examples of how people in the local community depend on each other for goods and services.

8.4.5 List the characteristics of money* and explain how money* makes trade easier.

3.4.6 Identify different ways people save their income and explain advantages and disadvantages of each.

Example: Home “piggy bank,” savings accounts, stock market, etc.

3.4.7 Explain that buyers and sellers interact to determine the prices of goods and services in markets.

3.4.8 Illustrate how people compare benefits and costs when making choices and decisions as consumers and producers.

Example: When a family is deciding whether to buy a car, they have to compare the benefit of having personal transportation with the cost of buying and maintaining the car.

3.4.9 Gather data about a proposed economic change in the community using a variety of information resources*.

Example: Invite a community leader to discuss the decision to build a bigger library or baseball park in the community.

* scarcity: the idea that resources are limited in relation to people’s wants

* productive resources: human resources, natural resources, and capital resources

* opportunity cost: in making a choice, opportunity cost is the next best alternative you do not choose

* goods: tangible objects, such as food or toys, that can satisfy people’s wants

* services: actions that someone does for someone else, such as dental care or trash removal



Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools

Academic Standards

Social Studies



- * trade: the voluntary exchange of goods or services
- * interdependence: reliance on each other to produce goods and services
- * characteristics of money: scarce (not easily found or duplicated), durable, easy to carry, and easy to divide
- * money: objects widely accepted in exchange for goods and services
- * information resources: print media, such as books, magazines, and newspapers; electronic media, such as radio, television, Web sites, and databases; and community resources, such as individuals and organizations

Standard 5 – Individuals, Society, and Culture

Students will explain how communities are made up of individuals and groups of people, explore local connections with communities in other places, examine the contributions of people from various cultures to the development of the community, and use a variety of resources to collect information about the culture of the community.

- 3.5.1 Give examples of how the local community is made up of many individuals, as well as many different groups.

Example: Communities are made up of families, as well as businesses and industry, religious and civic groups, and governing bodies.

- 3.5.2 Identify connections that the local community has with other communities, including cultural exchanges of several types, and ways that technology links communities in other places.

Example: Some nearby communities share cultural institutions, such as schools or museums. Other communities may have “sister cities” in other parts of the world. The technology of transportation and communication makes these exchanges easier.

- 3.5.3 Examine the contributions of individual artists (painters, sculptors, writers, musicians, and traditional artists) in enriching the culture of the community.

- 3.5.4 Identify factors that make the local community unique, including how the community is enriched through foods, crafts, customs, languages, music, visual arts, architecture, dance, and drama representing various cultures.

- 3.5.5 Use community resources — such as museums, libraries, historic buildings, and other landmarks — to gather cultural information about the community.