Young Explorers: A Most Excellent Place to Learn!

Young Explorers 3's
At Grand Haven Christian School we believe that children are a gift from God and made in His image. In the threes class we strive to help these covenant children grow through play and hands-on activities as well as an age appropriate curriculum that challenges these little ones academically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

In Three school your child will:
• Praise God with singing, instruments, and dancing!
• Explore God’s wonderful world.
• Grow in the knowledge and love of our Savior through songs, prayers and stories from the Bible.
• Gain independence and self confidence by having their own school experience apart from parents and siblings.
• Develop socially through building friendships, sharing, and imaginative play with other children.
• Increase expressive and receptive language as well as vocabulary.
• Sort, classify, match, and create patterns.
• Participate in activities that promote number recognition and counting as well as one to one correspondence.
• Strengthen large and small motor skills through various hands-on experiences.
• Improve listening skills and nurture a love of literature through reading stories.

Young Explorers 3's Curriculum

Spiritual: Travel through the Bible chronologically through stories, songs, and prayers. Develop a personal relationship with God by making Jesus and His word a part of their daily experience.

Academic: Develop a positive attitude toward school and learning. Foster curiosity, creativity, and problem solving abilities. Assist each child in reaching their God given potential. Through the use of different stations throughout the room, allow the children to create, explore, invent, and experiment.

Social-Emotional: Encourage children to feel that they are a special, unique masterpiece designed by God. Develop healthy relationships with other children within the classroom as well as adults by teaching them that this is what Jesus requires of us. Create an environment that teaches the children to express themselves.

Physical: Help the children develop large and small motor skills. Learn that we are created in God’s image and our bodies are meant to be kept healthy and safe. Marvel at God’s workmanship of how we are made.

Parent Testimonial
“We consider the preschool at Grand Haven Christian to be an extension of our home, where our values and beliefs are reinforced. We know our child feels safe and loved. As a parent, you can’t ask for much more than that.”

- Chris and Rebecca Hummel

Location
Young Explorers is the preschool program of Grand Haven Christian School. It is located at the east end of the Grant Avenue side of GHCS. All equipment and play areas are designed especially for young children.
Dawn Vos: Young Explorers 3’s

“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

It is such a joy to teach the youngest of children at Grand Haven Christian School. This is my 27th year of teaching and I am blessed with the same passion for my job as the first day I started! I believe that the home, church, and school all work together to develop and nurture the faith of a child. It is a privilege to be able to introduce these little ones to the good shepherd and tell them that they are his sheep and he watches over each one of them always. The children in my classroom leave knowing that they are a unique child of God, full of His promises and goodness and that their loving Father will always be with them.

Dawn Vos, BA
Kristin Clausing – Aide

Schedule:
Greet children
Circle time, puzzles
Prayer and praise
Story time
Craft/play time
Lunch/ Snack
Rest time
Bible Story
Calendar
Prayer and dismiss
Young Explorers 4's: A Most Excellent Adventure!

Young Explorers 4's
In Young Explorers your child is exposed to many opportunities to explore and learn, play and practice, work and worship, wonder and be curious. We use a literature based curriculum that not only reinforces letter and sound recognition, but also integrates math, science, and pre-reading/writing skills in a 2 1/2 hour session with built-in project and play time that facilitates socialization skills. We learn who God says He is in His Word to us and we learn to love Him back and be amazed as we see Him at work in us and around us! Young Explorers will provide your young student with a wonderFULL foundation for all future learning!

Young Explorers' Objectives
• Provide a secure and loving environment for the child’s development.
• Develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for God’s creation.
• Develop an assurance of God’s love for the child, and encourage a loving response to God and others.
• Nurture the child’s self image and strengthen the child’s concept of the worth of others.
• Establish a sense of social responsibility, encouraging cooperation and sensitivity to others.
• Enhance the child’s ability to express ideas and emotions in verbal and nonverbal ways (e.g. imaginative play and artistic activities).
• Gradually develop skills in preparation for Young 5’s or Kindergarten through exposure to alphabet letters and sounds, numbers and children’s literature.

Young Explorers 4's Curriculum
Bible: We listen to stories from God’s Word, we memorize some of his words into our hearts, we learn who He says He is…something new for every letter of the alphabet, we praise Him with new songs, we watch for Him and what He’s doing, and we celebrate how much He loves us! At Christmas we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus and at Easter we celebrate His resurrection! We learn to talk to God.

Language Arts: We are introduced to the Zoo Phonics program, explore with phonemic awareness, and put on our reading eyes to discover the letters and sounds of the week. We learn songs and discover that so many things available to us that week have something to do with the letter we’re learning and practicing!

Math: We practice our number recognition, counting, one to one correspondence, shapes and special awareness, measuring with inchworms and turkey basters, creating and practicing visual and auditory patterns.

Science: We learn what a miracle is by watching monarch caterpillars eat, shed their skin, eat some more, hang in a J formation, form into a chrysalis, and hatch into beautiful butterflies. We learn about all of the animals in the zoophonics zoo. We are amazed at God’s power and creativity as we go from Fall to Winter to Spring and Summer!

Visual Arts: We paint every week…with brushes and hoppers, hands and feet, toes and fingers, fruits and vegetables, bubble wrap and balloons, cars and plungers. We mix colors, tear paper, arrange shapes, show our feelings, and learn how God designed us! We love to make messes but our teachers say we’re developing fine motor skills and eye/hand coordination.

Parent Testimonial
“GHC preschool is a warm, magical, and safe place to grow and learn. Every day was filled with exciting adventures and Jesus was shared in the sweetest ways! Our children blossomed in this loving environment and went to kindergarten confident—a priceless experience!”

-Kelly and Dirk Powell
Barb DeVries: Young Explorers 4’s

I am a child of the King! I live to serve my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who has redeemed my life and sealed my future for eternity with Him.

It is my great joy to be able to celebrate God’s creativity, His provisions and faithfulness, His Story and our place in it each day as we gather in Young Explorers. We learn what a miracle is when we watch the monarch caterpillar eat and grow, shed his skin and be shaped into a beautiful chrysalis. There God forms intricate wings that carry it to the treetops and beyond when we release it two weeks later...after everybody gets a butterfly kiss, of course! At Christmas we wonder together at God’s great love for us in giving us Jesus as a baby to teach us about Him and His kingdom! Each week as we learn about a new Zoo Phonics animal we also learn something new about our Creator. We thank God for giving us healthy bodies and bright minds and tender hearts to know His love for us!

Not being able to acknowledge and worship God as Lord of all would be an incomplete education for our children!

Barb DeVries, MA

Schedule:
Greet children and feel in the Mystery Box (letter of the week practice)
Prayer and Praise
Instructional Circle - Zoo Phonics, story, phonemic awareness, reading eyes
Project/Play time - children are free to move about play areas and engage in the activities for the session. Project time provides one on one time with the teachers
Bathroom
Clean up, rest, prayer, snack/lunch
Movement/Music
Praise Time
Benediction
Line up, Good Bye song, dismissed

Cindy Bakker – Aide
Young 5’s: A Gift of Time

Young 5’s provides your child with the gift of time. It is designed to give your child an extra year to prepare for Kindergarten and to develop in many areas – socially, academically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. God’s children all grow at their own rate and Young 5’s allows your child to develop confidence and self-esteem before they begin their academic journey in K – 8.

In Young 5’s your child will:
• Learn more about God through Bible stories.
• Praise God through songs and Bible verses.
• Learn to work independently through a series of tasks.
• Learn to work cooperatively in a small group.
• Engage in activities that develop their sound awareness to promote reading readiness.
• Explore number concepts with counting and graphing activities.
• Develop fine motor skills and hand eye coordination.

Young 5’s Curriculum

Bible: Spending time with God through Bible stories, Bible memory, songs, and prayer.

Language Arts: Zoo Phonics, letter and sound recognition, poems, stories, pre-writing activities, writing simple words and stories, listening activities, and rhyming words.

Math: Shapes, counting, number recognition, writing numbers, measuring, money, and patterns.

Science: Learning about the Zoo Phonics animals, sinking, floating, magnetism, and seed growth.

Specials: Phys Ed, Library, Computer Lab (2nd semester), Lower elementary chapels

Parent Testimonial

“Not only was young five’s an excellent Christian foundation, the education that my son received started him on a focused journey for learning throughout his school life. The warmth and understanding he experienced helped him develop a very positive self-image, and the atmosphere in the classroom empowered him with a positive attitude toward learning.”

- Staci Timmer Granzetto

“Young 5’s at Grand Haven Christian prepared our children in so many ways - academically, socially, and emotionally. We saw them gain confidence and enjoy going to school, and were thrilled with the care and attention they received.”

- Caryn and Adam Navis
Mary Winkle:

This is my 21st year of teaching Young 5’s at Grand Haven Christian School. I consider it a blessing to teach at a school where we are challenged to make our teaching uniquely Christian. What a privilege to teach the kids that they are created and loved by God and He has made each one of them special. It is my intention each day to demonstrate in my classroom that God is at the center of all that we say, do, and learn.

I live in Spring Lake with my husband Jim. We have two children, a son who is an attorney for State Farm Insurance, and a daughter who lives in Hudsonville and is a Three School teacher at Hudsonville Christian School.

Schedule:

Opening Prayer
Group/Workshop
Circle Time - we learn about shapes, color words, ZooPhonics, animal of the week, themes for the week, songs, finger plays, etc.
Lunch
Structured play time and craft project
Recess
Bible, Math, and Science activities
We also participate in PE and weekly visits to the library.

Meet the Young 5’s Teacher
Kindergarten: A Solid Foundation

At Grand Haven Christian, we believe that all children are created in a unique and special way. Our Kindergarten program is designed to educate the whole child - spiritually, academically, socially, and physically - while providing a nurturing environment in which they can grow.

Your child will be:

• Getting to know who God is through His Word.
• Learning that Jesus is always there for them and wants to be their best friend!
• Learning the truths of the Bible and how to carry out those truths in their lives.
• Surrounded in an environment where they feel loved and secure.
• Learning how to relate to others in a loving, Christ-like manner.
• Developing a strong foundation for reading through the use of phonics and whole language activities.
• Exposed to a wide variety of literature, as they have opportunities to read and to be read to.
• Learning the fundamentals of writing sentences.
• Participating in math lessons that develop a base for symbolic understanding.
• Learning about the world around us and how God’s hand is in everything we see and experience.

Kindergarten Curriculum

Bible: Your child will hear Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments, as well as learn many Bible verses including Psalm 100, Luke 2 and ABC Bible verses.

Language Arts: Letter names, sounds, sight words, guided reading, and writing lessons. We use Zoo-Phonics’ “Response to Intervention” as well as the most up-to-date methods in literacy education.

Math: Numeration, patterns, counting skills, addition, subtraction, geometry, and simple algebraic equations.

Science And Social Studies: Insects, Plants, Planets, Pushes and Pulls, Nutrition, 5 Senses, Apples, Pumpkins, Native Americans, Map Skills, Presidents, Mexico, Japan, and the Farm

Specials: Library, Music, Phys Ed, and Lower Elementary Chapel Services

Parent Testimonials

“Life skills are being taught daily to the students through the will and direction of the Bible. The teachers demonstrate their pure love for God and their faith pours out of them and it is contagious. They are wonderful people for our growing kids to be taught and influenced by, what a true blessing.”

-Amy Betten

“GHCS teaches at a very young age to approach every encounter and situation as Jesus would see it and then do likewise. Time and time again, we have seen this demonstrated by our teachers and have witnessed the growth in our children to do the same. Two words come to mind when we think of Kindergarten and Mrs. Brace - love and patience. She demonstrates both of these qualities for each child at every stage of development.”

-Scott and Rachel Dyk
Meet the Kindergarten Teacher

Michelle Brace:

I have been teaching Kindergarten at Grand Haven Christian School for 15 years. I live in Grand Haven with my wonderful husband and my two daughters when they are home from college. They both attend Calvin College in Grand Rapids.

I consider teaching your children about God to be an honor, as I get to show them God’s truths through His Word. Your children are so precious to me, and my goal is to demonstrate the love of Jesus to them every day in my classroom. The children are very impressionable and I take every opportunity I can to show them the love of Jesus through my actions and words. When they walk into my classroom, I want them to feel the love of Jesus surrounding them as they go through each day. As I interact with the, I am teaching them how to interact with others in a Christ-like manner, so that when they walk out of my classroom, they are carrying that love with them.

Schedule:

Greeting/Devotions
Calendar Activities
Handwriting, Shared Writing
Morning snack and recess
Guided Reading and Literacy Stations
Lunch and recess
Math - whole group and math centers
Bible
Storytime
Specials: Gym, Library, Music
Afternoon snack and recess
Lower elementary chapel (once a month)
Free choice time
End of the day prayer
Early Education Offerings & Tuition

Young Explorers 3's
Three-Year-Old Session

Requirements:
• Must be 3 by December 31
• Must be toilet trained

Meeting Times:
Tues/Thurs 8 am – 10:30 am
Tues/Thurs 11 am – 1:30 pm

Tuition:
Two days a week class $130/mo

Young Explorers 4's
Four-Year-Old Session

Requirements:
• Must be 4 by December 31

Meeting Times:
Mon/Wed/Fri am 8 am – 10:30 am
Mon/Wed/Fri pm 11 am – 1:30 pm

Tuition:
Three days a week class $170/mo

Payments based on a nine month payment schedule

Young 5's

Requirements:
• Must be 5 by December 31

Meeting Times:
Mon/Wed .......... 7:45 am – 2:30 pm
Fri ................. 7:45 am – 11:15 am

Tuition:
2 1/2 days $3250/yr

Kindergarten

Requirements:
• Must be 5 by September 1

Meeting Times*:
Mon/Wed/Fri .......... 7:45 am – 2:30 pm
Progressive: Mon/Wed/Fri (adding Tues & Thurs during the year). 7:45 am – 2:30 pm
Mon – Fri .............. 7:45 am – 2:30 pm

Tuition**:
Three full days $3900/yr
Progressive $TBD
Five full days $6,500/yr

*All schedule options are subject to sufficient enrollment.
**All tuition rates are subject to approval by the GHCS Board
At GHCS, many families choose the Young 5’s option for children who have a birthday falling in the summer months, even though the cut off is September 1 for Kindergarten. We also have found that with boys especially, waiting to start Kindergarten has been beneficial. Waiting a year allows your younger child the chance to develop more leadership skills versus being a follower. It gives them the gift of time to develop socially, physically, emotionally, and academically. Giving that extra year to your younger child will be a boost in confidence when they enter Kindergarten the following year. Additionally, your child will be able to have more confidence in middle school and high school because they will not be the youngest in their class. Some other indicators that an extra year might be helpful:

- Your child doesn’t show much interest in letters or their sounds yet
- Your child needs more time to develop independent skills such as: using the bathroom without assistance, following directions, sitting and listening for at least 10 minutes, or taking care of their own belongings.
- The extra year would give your child time to develop and strengthen fine motor skills (cutting, holding a pencil correctly, forming letters and numbers correctly).
- Your child could use some further exposure to social situations to learn appropriate behavior with their peers.

Each child is uniquely and wonderfully made by God. Because of that, there is no set of strict guidelines for determining whether Young 5’s or Kindergarten will be a better fit. Our teachers will be happy to help with an evaluation and offer feedback if that is desired. We want to help you make sure your child is properly placed so that they can feel success and grow in the ways best fit for them.
Ways to Prepare Your Child For Kindergarten

As you prepare your child for kindergarten and consider your educational opportunities, we at Grand Haven Christian School would like to help. We see each child to be a unique individual with different gifts, talents, and paths of development, and we celebrate Psalm 139-13-14, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made…” Knowing this, it is important to consider what’s in store for the next educational step.

While cognitive areas are important, the most crucial aspects that make the biggest impact on the success of your child’s kindergarten experience are the areas of social and emotional development. We encourage you to consider these elements when making your decision. Some children may not be ready for kindergarten and thus we have a wonderful Young 5’s program here at Grand Haven Christian School that will give your child some extra time to develop in the areas mentioned here.

Academics:

- Help your child recognize his/her name and write it using an uppercase letter for the first letter of their name and lowercase letters for the rest.
- Practice saying their full name and age.
- Play games that will help them identify and verbally name colors. (red, orange, yellow, blue, green, purple)
- Play games that will require them to count up to 10.
- Help them identify and recognize numbers to 5 through play and real world experiences.
- Practice counting sets with at least 5 objects.
- Play games that will help them recognize and name the basic shapes. (circle, triangle, square, rectangle)
- Help your child be able to recognize most uppercase letters of the alphabet and recognize some lowercase letters of the alphabet through games, magnetic letters, books, and letters they might see in their environment.
- Play number games that help your child be able to repeat 4 numerals in sequence.
- Develop an understanding of rhyming by reading nursery rhymes, books that rhyme, and playing word games in which you say a word and then with your child, repeat other words that rhyme with your first word.
- Read books on a daily basis and talk about events in the story.
Social/Emotional

• Give your child opportunities to play with other children.

• Help your child learn how to take turns and share.

• Give your child chances to problem solve independently.

• Give your child situations where they need to be able to adjust easily to new situations and see how they react. Are they able to adjust easily? Are they able to control his/her temper? Do they get upset or sad?

• Help your child in managing bathroom routines independently.

• Does your child have the confidence to try new things?

Fine Motor/ Perceptual Motor

• Give your child 3 step directions to follow. Are they able to follow directions when given individually? Are they able to follow directions when given to a group of children?

• Do activities together that would require staying focused for 10-15 minutes at a time. (without needing to lie down on the floor)

• Create opportunities for your child to separate from you (play dates, preschool, Sunday School, etc.), so that they may gain confidence in knowing that you will return.

• Practice cutting, writing, stringing beads, working with play dough, etc. to develop fine motor skills.

• Practice cutting along a designated line on paper with scissors.

• Engage your child in art projects and help them draw a recognizable person.

• Help your child in learning to dress and undress self, particularly outerwear.