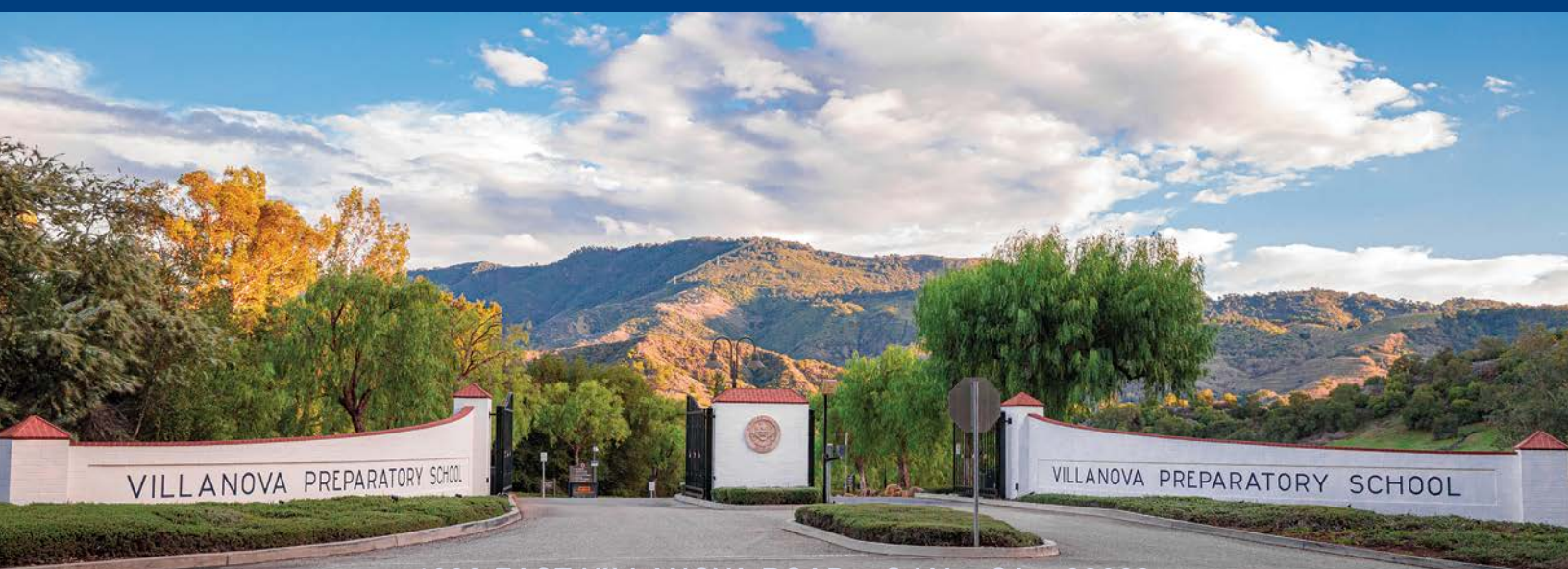




VILLANOVA
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL
CURRICULUM GUIDE 2026-27



1000 EAST VILLANOVA ROAD • OJAI • CA • 93023

MISSION AND LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Mission of Villanova Preparatory School

In the Augustinian tradition, the Mission of Villanova Preparatory School is to graduate mature young adults of diverse backgrounds who reflect the qualities of truth, unity, and love. The school does this by providing a challenging college preparatory curriculum and Catholic environment that promotes the development of mind, heart and body. These young adults will think, judge, and act in ways that are sound and in keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Middle School Learning Program

The Villanova Middle School Learning Program helps students become confident, self-aware, and independent learners who advocate for themselves and others. Rooted in Villanova's mission to develop the whole person, mind, heart, and spirit, and guided by the Augustinian values of caritas (love) and unitas (unity), the program supports students in their academic, social, and emotional growth. Students build essential life skills such as self-management, communication, empathy, and responsible decision-making while learning to navigate increasing independence and build meaningful relationships. Villanova also has a Learning Support Specialist who partners with families, teachers, and students to provide appropriate guidance and support. Through this work, students develop resilience, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, and respect, preparing them to thrive in school and contribute positively to their community.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Retreats

Middle School students participate in an annual retreat during the first trimester. The focus of the retreat is on spiritual development, personal growth, and class bonding and is accompanied by prayer, reflection, conversation, and group activities.

Field Trips

Learning beyond the classroom is an important component of our educational programming. Middle School students will have opportunities to attend field trips that focus on academic learning and experience, service to the community, and class bonding. The signature overnight trips include STEM Camp (6th grade), Science Camp on Catalina Island (7th Grade), and California History (San Diego or Sacramento). School field trips rotate over the years, but will include visits to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Santa Barbara Mission, Warner Bros. Studios, California Science Center, Santa Barbara Zoo, and Magic Mountain. The Villanova Middle School also volunteers at Poco Farms in Ojai throughout the year.

Athletics

Middle School students compete in fall, winter, and spring athletics, with opportunities including coed flag football, girls volleyball, girls and boys basketball, girls and boys soccer, and boys volleyball. Villanova currently participates in the Tri-Valley Christian Athletic League and also schedules non-league contests with regional schools including Oak Grove School, Ojai Valley School, Our Lady of Guadalupe School, St. Anthony School, and St. Augustine Academy. Spring aquatics, including swim and girls and boys water polo, are offered as an in-house program. Middle School athletics provides each student the opportunity to participate on a team while developing skills, sportsmanship, teamwork, and school spirit.

1:1 iPad Program

Middle School students participate in a 1:1 iPad program that enhances learning through age-appropriate technology integration across the curriculum. Included in tuition and fees, each student is provided an iPad to support organization, creativity, collaboration, and academic engagement while promoting responsible digital citizenship. The school has a clearly defined policy for iPad usage that supports them in a tiered approach to responsible use that corresponds with their grade level and social/emotional development.



English Language Arts: Grade 6

This course focuses on transitioning students to advanced literary analysis and structured academic writing. Following California CCSS for 6th grade, students engage in “close reading” to determine themes and cite textual evidence. The curriculum emphasizes the development of a personal voice in writing and the mastery of foundational grammar.

Sample Core Literature

- *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths* by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire
- *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

Key Learning Objectives

- **Reading & Comprehension:** Determining central themes and summarizing texts without personal bias.
- **Essay Writing:** Mastering the five-paragraph essay and narrative techniques.
- **Grammar:** Intensive focus on pronoun usage, punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes), and sentence patterns.
- **Public Speaking:** Delivering oral presentations based on research and personal narrative.

English Language Arts: Grade 7

The 7th-grade curriculum moves into deeper symbolic interpretation and comparative literature. Students analyze how authors develop points of view and how different forms (poetry, prose, and drama) affect meaning. This course challenges students to move beyond summary into critical argumentation and evidence-based analysis.

Sample Core Literature

- *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* by Kelly Barnhill
- *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor
- *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare

Key Learning Objectives

- **Reading & Comprehension:** Analyzing how specific elements of a story or drama interact.
- **Essay Writing:** Developing “claim-and-evidence” structures in argumentative essays.
- **Grammar:** Analysis of phrases and clauses to enhance sentence variety and precision.
- **Public Speaking:** Engaging in collaborative discussions and formal debates, emphasizing the use of relevant evidence.



English Language Arts: Grade 8

Designed as a bridge to high school preparatory work, the 8th-grade course focuses on complex texts and social commentary. Students evaluate the validity of reasoning in non-fiction and explore the historical context of classic literature. The rigor is aligned with California standards for high-school readiness.

Sample Core Literature

- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
- *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak
- *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare
- *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Key Learning Objectives

- **Reading & Comprehension:** Analyzing how a modern work of fiction draws on themes or characters from traditional myths or religious texts.
- **Essay Writing:** Producing clear and coherent writing in which the development and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **Grammar:** Mastery of the use of active/passive voice.
- **Public Speaking:** Presenting claims and findings, emphasizing points with appropriate gestures.



Math 6

Students transition from concrete arithmetic to abstract mathematical reasoning. In this course, we prioritize critical thinking over rote memorization. We view mathematics not as a collection of rules to follow, but as a language used to describe patterns, solve puzzles, and understand the world around us.

The Number System: Integers & Rational Numbers

Students extend their understanding of numbers to include negatives. We explore the concept of absolute value as distance, navigate the four quadrants of the coordinate plane, and master operations with decimals and fractions to represent real-world “gains” and “losses.”

Algebraic Thinking: Expressions & Equations

Moving beyond basic calculation, students learn to use variables to represent unknown quantities. We focus on writing, evaluating, and simplifying numeric and algebraic expressions using the distributive property and order of operations. Students solve one-step equations and inequalities to maintain logical balance.

Ratios, Rates, & Proportions

This unit develops a student’s “proportional reasoning.” We analyze unit rates (like speed or price per pound) and use ratio tables and double number lines to solve complex problems involving percentages, discounts, and scaling.

Geometry: Surface Area & Volume

Students apply their algebraic skills to spatial reasoning by “unfolding” 3D shapes into 2D nets, they calculate the surface area of prisms and pyramids. We also explore the volume of right rectangular prisms with fractional edge lengths. 5. Statistics & Data Analysis How can we tell a story with data? Students learn to identify statistical questions, calculate measures of center (mean, median, mode), and interpret variability. They will create and analyze visual data displays, including histograms and box-and-whisker plots.

Math 7

This course is designed to move beyond mechanical computation to foster deep mathematical intuition. Our primary goal is to develop critical thinking skills. Students will not just learn formulas; they will investigate the “why” behind mathematical laws, learn to model real-world scenarios, and defend their reasoning with logic and data.

Proportional Relationships

Students will analyze and use proportional relationships to solve multi-step problems. This includes identifying the constant of proportionality (unit rate) in tables, graphs, equations, and verbal descriptions.

Percents & Financial Literacy

Application of proportional reasoning to analyze and solve percent problems. Concepts include simple interest, tax, markups and markdowns, gratuities, commissions, and percent increase/ decrease.

Expressions, Equations, & Inequalities

Students will use variables to represent quantities and construct simple equations and inequalities to solve problems. This unit emphasizes solving linear equations of the form $px + q = r$ and $p(x + q) = r$ fluently.

Geometry & Spatial Reasoning

Focus on solving real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume of two- and three-dimensional objects composed of triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, cubes, and right prisms.

Statistics & Sampling

Students will learn to use sampling to draw inferences about populations. They will understand that statistics can be used to gain information about a population by examining a representative sample and will learn to assess the validity of those inferences.

Algebra I

This 8th grade course is designed to transition students from basic arithmetic to the powerful language of mathematics. While “finding x ” is part of the job, our true goal is to develop logical reasoning and analytical grit. Instead of just memorizing steps, students will learn to dismantle complex problems and build elegant solutions.

Solving Equations & Inequalities

Mastering the art of “balancing the scale.” We start by isolating variables in multi-step equations and move into inequalities, learning how to represent infinite solution sets on a number line and apply these concepts to real-world constraints.

Linear Functions & Equations

The foundation of algebraic modeling. Students will explore slope, intercepts, and various forms of linear equations (slope-intercept, point-slope, and standard form). We focus on how these functions represent constant rates of change.

Systems of Linear Functions

Analyzing the interaction of multiple variables. We will use substitution, elimination, and graphing to find intersection points, solving complex problems where two or more conditions must be met simultaneously.

Piecewise & Exponential Functions

Exploring non-linear growth. We will dive into piecewise functions (modeling different “rules” for different scenarios) and exponential functions, which represent rapid growth and decay, such as compound interest or population dynamics.

Polynomials & Factoring

The “grammar” of Algebra. Students will perform operations on polynomials and learn to factor expressions—essential skills for simplifying complex mathematical ideas and preparing for higher-level calculus and engineering applications.

Quadratic Functions

The study of the parabola. We will explore the unique symmetry of quadratic graphs and learn multiple ways to find their roots, including the use of the Quadratic Formula and completing the square to model projectile motion and optimization.



Science 6

In 6th grade science, students begin their journey as scientists by exploring the living world and Earth's dynamic systems. Using the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), students engage in hands-on investigations, collaborative problem-solving, and real-world applications.

Throughout the year, students study how living organisms are structured and how their systems function to support life. They explore how traits are inherited and how variation occurs within species. Students also investigate Earth's systems, including interactions between land, water, and atmosphere, and examine how human activities impact the planet.

In addition, students are introduced to the concept of energy and how it moves through systems. Emphasis is placed on developing scientific thinking, analyzing data, and constructing evidence-based explanations.

Science 7

In 7th grade science, students deepen their understanding of life science, Earth science, and physical science concepts through the NGSS framework, with a strong focus on systems and interactions.

Students explore how organisms function and interact within ecosystems, including how energy flows and matter cycles through living systems. They examine the relationships between organisms and their environments, and how changes can affect ecosystem stability.

The course also expands into Earth's systems and human impact, encouraging students to think critically about environmental challenges. In physical science, students investigate matter and its interactions, including the structure and properties of substances and how they change.

Through inquiry-based learning, students build skills in modeling, data analysis, and scientific argumentation while connecting science to real-world issues.

Science 8

In 8th grade science, students focus on key physical and life science concepts through the lens of the NGSS, preparing them for high school-level scientific thinking.

Students investigate forces and motion, exploring how and why objects move and what happens during collisions. They also study noncontact forces, such as gravity and electromagnetism, and how these forces influence phenomena we observe.

In life science, students examine the theory of evolution to understand the unity and diversity of life on Earth. They explore how species change over time and how adaptations support survival.

The course also emphasizes biodiversity and sustainability, encouraging students to evaluate how humans impact ecosystems and what actions can be taken to protect both local and global environments.

Students engage in hands-on labs, engineering challenges, and scientific discussions that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of the natural world.



World History 6

Sixth grade history is a survey of early history that covers the following topics:

- Prehistory
- Mesopotamia
- Egypt
- India
- China
- Greece
- Rome (time permitting)

For all topics, students learn basic geography and about the religious, social, and political history of these regions.

In this class, students practice critical reading skills, writing and analysis skills, research skills, and basic study skills. Additionally, students are expected to perform academic presentations in front of the class on a regular basis.

World History 7

Seventh grade history is a survey of medieval history that covers the following topics:

- Europe
- The Islamic World & India
- China & Japan
- Mesoamerica
- East & West Africa
- The Renaissance in Europe (time permitting)

For all topics, students learn basic geography and about the religious, social, and political history of these regions.

In this class, students continue practicing critical reading skills, writing and analysis skills, research skills, and intermediate study skills. Additionally, students are expected to perform academic presentations in front of the class on a regular basis, and they research & present on current events.

United States History 8

Eighth grade history is an introduction to early US history that covers the following time periods and topics:

- The Colonial Period
- The Revolution
- The Constitution
- The Early United States
- The Jackson Era
- Westward Expansion
- Antebellum North & South (time permitting)
- The Civil War (time permitting)

In this class, students continue practicing critical reading skills, writing and analysis skills, research skills, and intermediate study skills - all with an eye toward high school-level history classes. Additionally, students are expected to perform academic presentations in front of the class on a regular basis, and they research & present on current events.

THEOLOGY

Theology 6

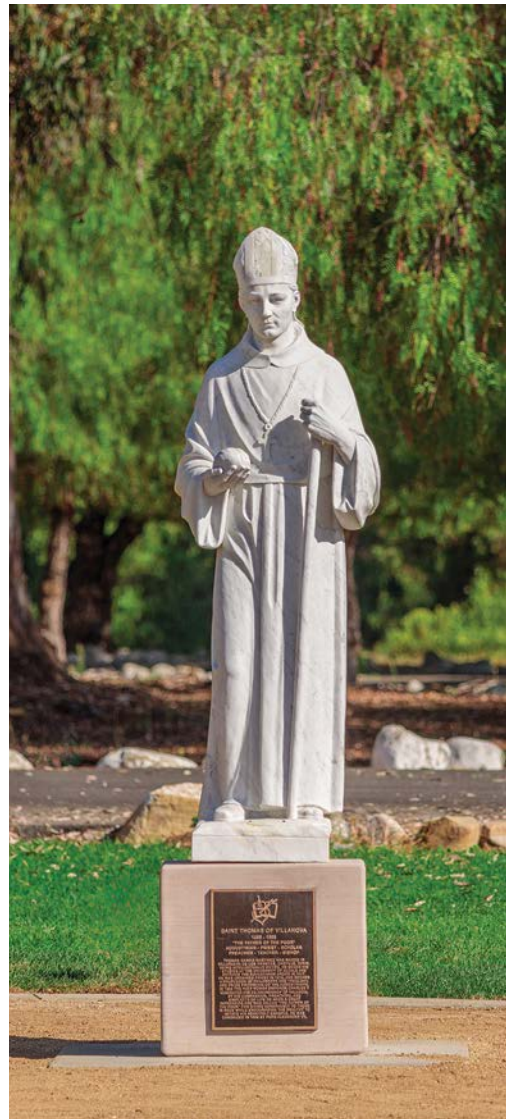
This year serves as a foundational overview of Sacred Scripture. We start by exploring how the Bible was written and how it serves as a unique, prayerful guide. Students will learn to navigate the major “chapters” of God’s plan, including the stories of Genesis, the Exodus, and the Chosen People. We’ll look at the era of the Kings and Prophets before finishing the year with an introduction to the New Testament. It’s all about seeing the big picture of how God has stayed close to His people throughout history.

Theology 7

This year is a journey through the heart of Catholic faith. We begin with the New Testament, helping students get familiar with the four Gospel writers and the different ways they tell the story of Jesus. We’ll look at how the Gospels were written and what they teach about being a disciple. During the second semester, we shift our focus to the Seven Sacraments, exploring how these gifts from the Church help us live out our faith and stay connected to God’s grace.

Theology 8

8th grade offers students a chance to explore the history of the Church from its earliest days up to the modern era. This historical foundation leads us directly into a study of Morality and what it means to follow Christ’s example today. Through the study of the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and God’s Mercy, students learn how to navigate difficult choices and develop a life rooted in love for God and service to others.



COURSE OF STUDY

6th Grade

- Math
- English
- Science
- History
- Theology
- Physical Education
- Art
- STEAM
- Robotics
- Photo & Film



7th Grade

- Math
- English
- Science
- History
- Theology
- Physical Education
- Art
- Film Studies
- Robotics
- Photo & Film



8th Grade

- Math
- English
- Science
- History
- Theology
- Spanish
- Physical Education
- Art
- Leadership
- Robotics
- Photo & Film
- CPR & Intro to Medicine



SAMPLE MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Period	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade				
	Tuesday Late Start	Tuesday Late Start	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Prayer/Pledge/Attendance/Announcements							
1	Elective Art, Robotics, Photo	Elective Art, Robotics, Photo	Elective Art, Robotics, Photo	Late Start	Elective Art, Robotics, Photo	Elective Art, Robotics, Photo	Elective Art, Robotics, Photo
2	Elective Tri 1 STEAM Tri 2 PE Tri 3 STEAM	Elective Tri 1 Film Tri 2 PE Tri 3 Film	Intro to Spanish		Intro to Spanish	Elective Tri 1 Leadership Tri 2 PE Tri 3 CPR/Med	Intro to Spanish
Break							
3	English 6	Science 7	Theology 8	Theology 8	Elective Tri 1 Leadership Tri 2 PE Tri 3 CPR/Med	Theology 8	Elective Tri 1 Leadership Tri 2 PE Tri 3 CPR/Med
4	Math 6	English 7	History 8	History 8	History 8	History 8	Theology 8
Lunch							
5	Theology 6	History 7			Science 8		
6	History 6	Theology 7			Math 8		
7	Science 6	Math 7			English 8		



VILLANOVA PREPARATORY SCHOOL

A CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE
AUGUSTINIAN TRADITION SINCE 1924

1000 EAST VILLANOVA ROAD
OJAI, CA 93023
VILLANOVAPREP.ORG