



About the 6th Grade Academy

Curriculum

Imagine a learning environment like this. Students are beginning a unit in life science that will include a study of endangered species. They'll research their habitats as well as the predators, diseases, or changes in habitat that have caused their populations to dwindle. They'll consider the efforts under way to restore their populations.

Meanwhile in social studies, they are mapping those habitats, learning about the landforms and bodies of water that are part of the habitat, as well as the human populations that surround those habitats and how different countries or cultures - past and present - interact with the plant and animal species within the habitats.

In math, students take information they've gained regarding population numbers over time and develop charts to depict the decline. They prepare a timeline to project when the species might become extinct, based on current rates of decline. Or they might reverse that timeline to project when the species might become healthy again, given efforts to restore populations.

In English, students are compiling all the information gathered into a thorough, well-composed research paper. They gather and organize essential information to build awareness of how individuals can help conserve the species. They write an argumentative essay to persuade groups and organizations to take action.

In Bible, they contrast the Christian and the secular worldviews around the issue of stewardship, connecting the concerns of endangered species to God's plan for humankind to "have dominion" over all that He has created. What does it mean when God tells Adam and Eve to "till and keep" the garden that He has created for them? What does it mean today?

In Beginning Tech, they prepare a multimedia presentation to deliver to school and community audiences, drawing on what they've learned about the animals and habitats, about their population numbers and decline, about the people groups that surround the habitat, and about building awareness and prompting change among individuals and groups.

Teaching Team

Imagine a teaching team like this. All teachers for the 6th grade academy begin meeting in the summer, creating interdisciplinary projects like this one on endangered species, using a current and engaging issue for meaningful connection across all subject areas. These projects enhance the curriculum in each content area, complementing the instruction essential to building the strong skills

and knowledge needed for academic excellence. As the year progresses, teachers meet on a regular basis to evaluate how the curriculum is working and to compare assessments on each student's work. Struggling students are identified, and strategies are developed to support these students' learning and to address their social-emotional needs. Communication with parents as teaching partners is an integral aspect of how this team works.

Students

Imagine the students who have learned in this environment. In addition to the math, science, social studies, and language skills they've developed, they know how to effectively identify and solve problems. They understand the real world connections for what they are learning. They know how to analyze information, evaluate solutions, and synthesize what they have learned across multiple disciplines. They've used their writing and technology skills to communicate the ideas they've developed. Their studies have prompted a new consideration of just how God would have them care for His creation. They are self-motivated learners, eager to find out more about the world they live in, better equipped to one day be effective Christian leaders who will do their part for bringing the kingdom of God into this broken world.

For more information, please contact:

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