

## **What is Spanish Immersion?**

A research-based, proven method of educating children by immersing them in a second or “target” language so they become fully bilingual. The Spanish Immersion Program is an option for students at Lynden Christian Schools. It gives students an opportunity to complete the Lynden Christian School curriculum in a nontraditional and exciting way—by immersing them in the Spanish language and culture from kindergarten through 12th grade. Students in the program become proficient in both Spanish and English, while learning the same curriculum content and Christian worldview as their peers outside the program. How is this accomplished? With lots of hard work, parental involvement, and a dedicated staff!

## **How does this program differ from other LCS Classrooms?**

Students in the Spanish Immersion Program are taught the LCS curriculum, but receive their core content (Bible, Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts) instruction in Spanish. They learn to understand, speak, read and write in Spanish. Classroom teachers have native or near-native ability in the Spanish language and are chosen for their skills and their commitment to the goals of the program. By 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students from Spanish Immersion test at average or above grade level in core academic areas.

At the elementary level (K-5), students receive the majority of their instruction in Spanish. Teachers speak Spanish to the students, while making sure they understand instructions and receive answers to their questions. English specific skills (those parts of the language that don't exist in Spanish) are introduced in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

As our first SI students move into middle school, the plan is for them to take two or three classes in Spanish each year. The rest of their classes are taught in English.

Students in high school will take one Spanish Immersion class each year.

## **What if no one at home speaks Spanish?**

Report cards, notices and newsletters are issued in English. However, children whose parents obtain at least a basic knowledge of the language may have an advantage. Spanish homework assignments are not translated into English and it is not expected that parents will assist in Spanish homework activities.

## **Why choose the Spanish Immersion Program for my child?**

Studies have found that learning a second language at an early age has many benefits:

- There is a positive effect on brain development and intellectual growth.
- Students gain flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening.

- It opens the door to other cultures and helps children understand and appreciate people from other countries.
- Students acquire Spanish language fluency.
- Spanish Immersion produces successful learners.
- Students have increased job opportunities in many careers or ministry where knowledge of another language is an asset.

## **How will Spanish Immersion affect my child's English skills?**

English language instruction begins in third grade. At that point, many students are behind their English-only peers in English reading and writing ability. However, by 5th grade their English skills are usually equal to their peers.

Studies show that Spanish Immersion students perform in English language arts, math and other areas as well as their monolingual peers on standardized achievement tests administered in English.

## **Are students in the Immersion Program screened for admission?**

Children are not screened or pre-selected on the basis of IQ or other variables. However, parents of children with auditory problems, language delays or other challenges to learning should seriously consider the appropriateness of this program for their child. They may wish to consult with the elementary school counselor or principal to discuss their concerns.

## **What should parents think about when considering this program?**

The best decision can be made by thoroughly exploring all aspects of the program and speaking with parents and students to learn about the benefits of language immersion.

Enrolling a child in this program should be viewed as a commitment at least through grade 5. The goals of the program are best met when students stay with language immersion until they graduate from high school. It is not in the best interest of students or the program for students to be enrolled for only a one or two year "experience".

## **When do I enroll my child?**

Enrollment begins in February for the following fall's kindergarten class. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available, a lottery is conducted to determine admission. Students whose applications are not drawn during the lottery process will be placed on a waiting list and contacted by the school if space becomes available.

## **Can I enroll my child after kindergarten?**

Most students enter the program in preschool or kindergarten but new non-Spanish speaking students can enter as late as first grade. If openings occur during Grades 2 through 5, students may test in to those grades. Entry is by test-in/evaluation only. Students must be at grade level in all areas and will take a written and oral test in Spanish.

## **Is transportation available?**

A bus service is available from centralized locations for students. There is no additional charge/fee for riding the bus.

## **Who do I contact for more information?**

Please call us at 360-318-9525.