

Dear St. Joseph Families,

I feel so blessed and excited to be able to teach Spanish at St. Joseph this year! I wanted to give you an overview of what my students will be learning this year. Students will usually have Spanish twice a week. I will be following the same themes with students K-6 but will differentiate material, based on grade level. This way, siblings will be able to help each other out at home, if needed.

Passport: Latin America is the Jr. High elective for the first quarter. Students will cover similar material but through the lens of “visiting” different Spanish-speaking countries and exploring their cultures and traditions.

Throughout the year, students will develop all modes and skills in the Spanish language: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. I use the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) standards. The year-end target will be to reach novice-mid proficiency. Students will also explore practices, products, and perspectives of Spanish-speaking cultures to nurture intercultural communicative proficiency.

Proficiency Target: *What is novice-mid proficiency?*

Students will be able to do the following in Spanish:

- Use different words and phrases they’ve heard and memorized
- Introduce themselves
- Greet others
- Name some likes and dislikes
- Ask simple questions
- List things like numbers, colors, and animals

Proficiency-Oriented Language Course: *What does this mean?*

The primary objective for a proficiency-oriented language course is that learners be able to successfully communicate using the target language (in this case, Spanish). As such, instruction in this course emphasizes successfully communicating in Spanish and does not necessarily emphasize grammatical perfection. Instruction for this course takes into account brain research, educational psychology, language acquisition pedagogy, mindfulness in education, and Spanish language and culture content. Technology is entwined when possible to enhance the content and engage learners.

Class activities are designed to provide students with many opportunities to be involved with the Spanish language ***at or just above students’ level of understanding***. This is the sweet spot for language learning, and these opportunities ask students to stretch a bit, take risks, and **use** language to communicate. Each language proficiency-building activity is designed to introduce or strengthen the understanding of high-frequency words and phrases in Spanish. 80-100% of class will be taught in Spanish in order to encourage effective language acquisition.

Themes and Topics: *What themes and topics will we explore during this journey?*

Themes and topics that we will explore together include (but are not limited to):

- Introductions
- Weather
- Months and Days

- Numbers and Letters
- Colors
- Food
- Hobbies
- Christmas
- School
- Descriptions (adjectives)
- Family

Homework

Learning a language is a lot like learning any new skill and requires a lot of practice, just like learning a new instrument or sport. Students will notice that the more they participate in class, the better they will do on unit assessments (which look very different, depending on grade-level). Kindergartners will not receive homework, but lists will be sent home so parents or older siblings might help them review vocabulary. Grades 1-8 will have a weekly age-appropriate homework assignment that will be due during the following Spanish class. I will review all assignments, but random assignments will be used for a grade. The purpose of homework is to give students extra practice and continuously evaluate their proficiency. Assignments will be short refreshers, but there are many ways to increase language proficiency:

- Review Quizlet/vocabulary lists that will be provided for each unit
- Watch your favorite shows/movies in Spanish with English or Spanish subtitles (many shows on Netflix have a Spanish option)
- Download Duolingo or Memrise on a phone or tablet (10-15 minutes at a time is plenty)
- Ask where your local library's Spanish section is, and explore children's books in Spanish

A final note

"Todavía" is a Spanish word that means "yet" as in: *"No hablo español... todavía"* (I don't speak Spanish... yet), *"No entiendo... todavía"* (I don't understand... yet) and *"No puedo... todavía"* (I can't...yet). In this class, we will learn through listening, reading, speaking, and writing in Spanish, and there will be moments that are difficult. Learners will be stretched, and by stretching, we will grow. What learners are not able to accomplish one day may be accomplished the next day or next week - with effort, with practice, with patience, and with the right supports in place. As learners invest time and effort, they will progress. Learning a language takes time and a great deal of practice, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share this very exciting journey! Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions. God bless you!

Muchas Gracias