



EARLY LEARNING GUIDE

2023-2024

MISSION, VISION, AND PILLARS

Mission Statement:

Grove Christian School exists to partner with Christian parents by providing a Christ-centered educational environment that integrates learning with biblical faith so that students can achieve God's purpose for their lives - spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially.

Vision Statement:

At Grove Christian School, we equip servant leaders to follow Jesus to transform generations and nations and impact the world.

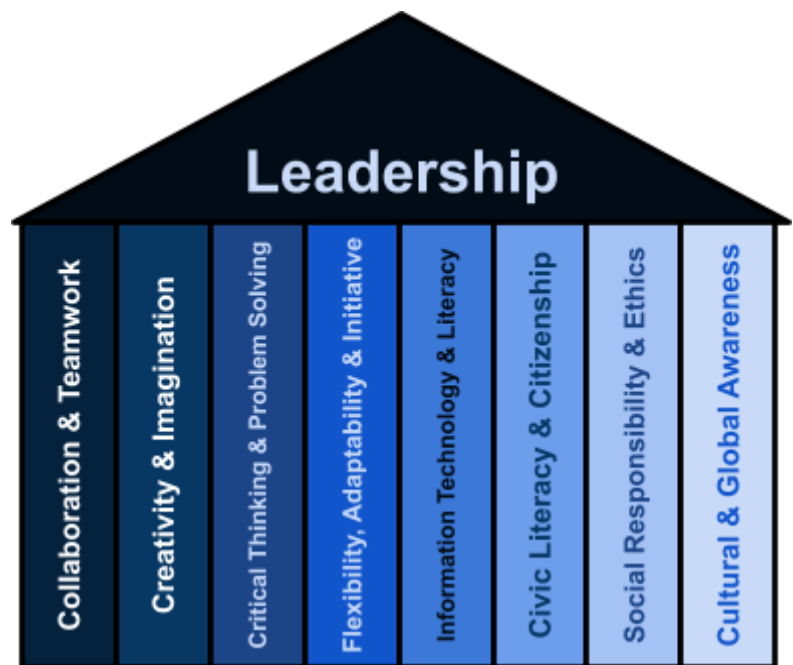
Pillars:

1. Students who are biblically led spiritually and receive their strength from Christ (Colossians 2:6-8; Philippians 4:13)
2. Students who intellectually achieve their highest potential equipped to think critically and creatively and discern Truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)
3. Students who physically develop and care for their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1, I Corinthians 3:16-17)
4. Students who socially build relationships with people for the sake of the Kingdom (Mark 10:43-45)

A Leadership Academy for Christ

We are a specialty school. All of the spiritual, intellectual, athletic, and social developments that are part of the profile of a GCS student are directed towards a singular end: helping each student become an influential leader for Christ in whatever way God may call each student according to their varying talents and abilities that He gave to them.

We design to cultivate 21st-century learners who can think both critically and creatively.



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PRESCHOOL

God's world is marvelous and has so much for us to explore. Preschool 3 will be a fun and new adventure for all students. We will explore God's world through Numbers, Phonics, Language development, and the Bible. Weekly, students memorize a new Bible verse, have Show and Tell, explore with Science, move in movement, create in art and music. Daily, students will explore through stations, sensory boxes, dramatic play, readings, and other fun activities.

Preschool is tailored to every student in the room. Every student is unique and in Preschool we honor what God has made and explore all the different gifts that He has given us. ParentSquare is where all class information will be communicated. Parents will receive a weekly newsletter keeping them informed of all the exciting activities we are learning in Preschool and any special events to participate in.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- ***Bible:*** Positive Action for Christ Exploring God's Love
- ***Phonics, Writing, Math:*** Abeka K3
- ***Science:*** More Mudpies to Magnets: Science for Young Children
- ***Social-Emotional Development:*** Abeka Growing Up with Amber Lamb

JR. KINDERGARTEN

Grove Jr. Kindergarten is designed for active, curious learners to acquire the skills needed to be Kindergarten-ready. Our lessons are filled with developmentally appropriate activities to help students grow spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially. Students will experience engaging, Biblically integrated lessons in the Bible, Phonics, Language, Social Studies, Science, Music, and Art, all of which are written to meet or exceed state standards while providing a Biblical Worldview. Theme-based learning centers that are both Teacher guided and student-led support student learning by encouraging critical and creative thinking, while strengthening communication skills, and giving them opportunities to collaborate with others.

Our students can look forward to weekly Show and Tell, Special Days throughout the year, and Special Visitors. All class information will be communicated to our Grove families through the use of our app, Parent Square. Parents will receive weekly updates keeping them informed of all the exciting things we are learning in Jr. Kindergarten and any special events to participate in.

Grove's Junior Kindergarten is fully aligned with [Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds](#).

CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- ***Bible:*** Positive Action for Christ Exploring God's Love
- ***Phonics, Writing, Math:*** Abeka K4 Readiness Skills & ABC-123
- ***Science:*** More Mudpies to Magnets: Science for Young Children
- ***Social-Emotional Development:*** Abeka Growing Up with Amber Lamb

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD

A child who is ready for PRESCHOOL will...

- ... separate from parents without extended periods of stress and anxiety, usually calming within 10 minutes of drop-off
- ... notice other children and join them in play
- ... talk in conversation with back-and-forth exchanges
- ... ask “who”, “what”, “where”, and “why” questions and follow a story read aloud
- ... listen and follow one or two-step directions
- ... put toys away when asked
- ... know first name and respond when asked
- ... use the bathroom with minimal accidents and manipulate clothing independently

Prepare your child for PRESCHOOL by...

- ... providing opportunities to play with other children, such as playdates or church events
 - ... talking to your child, asking questions, and listening to them
 - ... reading to your child every day
 - ... developing routines for sleep, meals, chores, and play
 - ... ensuring that your child is potty trained and is able to use the bathroom independently*
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A child who is ready for JR KINDERGARTEN will...

- ... separate from parents without stress or anxiety
- ... notice other children and join them in play, share with others and cooperate
- ... talk in conversation with back-and-forth exchanges; listen and follow one or two-step directions
- ... identify some uppercase and lowercase letters, and detect beginning sounds in words
- ... spell first name aloud and write first name with some help
- ... count to 10, identify shapes and colors
- ... use the bathroom without accidents and manipulate clothing independently
- ... walk, run, jump, throw a ball, and climb stairs with alternating feet
- ... hold a pencil or crayon with thumb and fingers, use scissors, draw and color with intention

Prepare your child for JR KINDERGARTEN by...

- ... providing opportunities to play with other children, such as playdates or church events
- ... talking to your child, asking questions, and listening to them
- ... reading to your child every day
- ... building math skills by counting objects or playing games that involve shapes and colors
- ... developing pre-writing skills with lots of drawing, coloring, and tracing
- ... teaching your child to spell his/her first name and write name with some help
- ... maintaining routines for sleep, meals, chores, and play
- ... ensuring that your child is potty trained and is able to use the bathroom independently*

** A child who is not adequately potty trained may be placed on probation after the first week of school and may not be allowed to continue in Grove's Early Education program until he/she is able to use the bathroom independently*

THE SCHOOL DAY

Hours of Operation

7:00 am	FalconCare program opens
7:45 am	Carline begins
8:10 am	All students in their classrooms
12:15 pm	Half-day preschool ends
3:15 pm	Dismissal for lower school students (Preschool - 5th grades)
3:30 pm	Dismissal for upper school students (6th - 12th grades)
6:00 pm	FalconCare closes

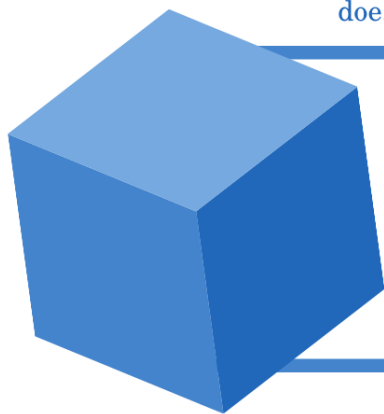
A typical day in Grove's Early Education programs will include:

- **BIBLE** Students are presented with the Bible story with emphasis on timeless truths about God's love. Students participate in worship and memorization of Scripture. Students complete hands-on activities that reinforce the Bible story and may include puzzles, mazes, sequencing, and cut-and-paste sections.
- **LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT** Students develop oral, listening, reading, and writing skills through phonics practice, letter recognition, blending and reading. Students learn to recognize vowels and their short and long sounds as well as consonants and their sounds. Students blend consonants and vowels and sound out one and two vowel words. Our integrated language arts curriculum builds upon phonics skills in writing and reading practice with hands-on, differentiated instruction.
- **MATH** Students develop mathematical skills through exploration, observation, and curiosity. Our curriculum encourages children's thinking and nurtures children's explorations and ideas, including the concepts of number, pattern, measurement, shape, space, and classification. Students are given opportunities to practice these skills with manipulatives, worksheets, and collaborative activities.
- **CIRCLE TIME** Students develop social-emotional skills and school readiness through this group learning activity. Students must listen and engage in a group setting and are given opportunities for leadership and sharing of ideas. The *Growing Up with Amber Lamb* curriculum is used to teach life lessons as students learn to interact with others, be kind, pray, share, obey, tell the truth, be a helper, and so much more.
- **CENTERS** Students develop independence and literacy, math, gross, and fine motor skills as well as social-emotional strategies through hands-on learning in a variety of play-based learning environments. Specific centers are provided to meet the learning needs of students with opportunities for natural differentiation, collaboration, as well as creative and critical thinking.
- **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT** This intentional time is set aside to develop children's listening skills and motor coordination through activities such as following instructions, coloring, cutting, and directed drawing. In addition, students are given a variety of opportunities to draw or color their own original creations to develop visual perception and motor skills.
- **RECESS** Active play is essential to early learning. Students have the opportunity to play in our indoor play space or outdoor playground during the morning and the afternoon. Students should be appropriately dressed for the weather, as we will prioritize outdoor play throughout the year.
- **SNACK & LUNCH** Students should bring a healthy snack and lunch or purchase from YayLunch!
- **NAP** Students will be given a designated rest period for at least one hour but no more than two hours.
- **ENRICHMENT** Preschool and Jr. Kindergarten students participate in weekly Art and Music Specials. In addition, the classroom teacher will provide a variety of enrichment activities using art, music, science, and social studies concepts.



BUILDING BLOCKS FOR KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Our Early Education program prepares students for Kindergarten and meets the doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/curriculum/foundation-blocks.pdf

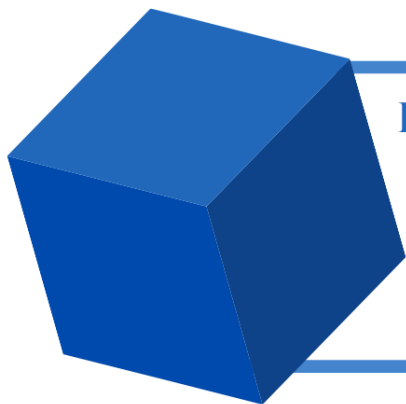
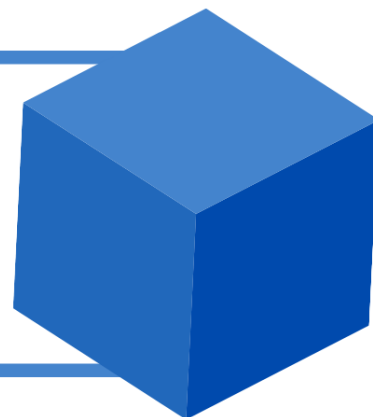


LITERACY FOUNDATION BLOCK

- Communicates experiences and ideas orally and listens to others
- Develops and uses an expanding vocabulary
- Identifies sounds in letters and words. Identifies words that rhyme
- Recites the alphabet and identifies uppercase and lowercase letters
- Knows how to correctly hold a book and follow a story read aloud
- Draws or writes to express ideas using a variety of materials

MATHEMATICS FOUNDATION BLOCK

- Counts to twenty and uses 1st-5th to identify the order of objects
- Compares groups of objects using concepts of more and less
- Identifies and compares tools and units of measurement
- Matches and sorts objects by shape, size, and color
- Explores questions of interest to find and analyze data
- Uses patterns to predict relationships between objects

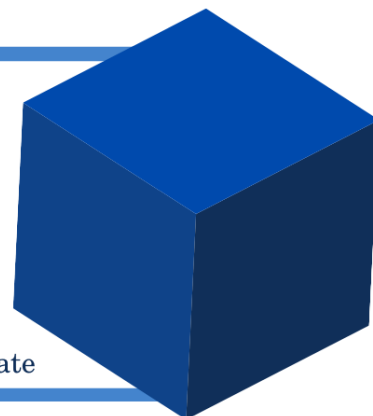


PERSONAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

- Demonstrates self-confidence and self-reflection
- Shows self-direction and responsibility
- Shows eagerness and persistence as a learner
- Interacts easily with one or more children and familiar adults
- Resolves conflicts with peers and asks for help when needed

PHYSICAL & MOTOR SKILLS BLOCK

- Maintains body control in various classroom settings
- Runs, skips, jumps, and climbs stairs with alternating feet
- Follows safety rules for physical activity
- Uses the bathroom and manages clothing independently
- Traces and copies lines and basic shapes
- Grasps a writing utensil with thumb and fingers
- Uses writing utensils and scissors with intention to draw and create





WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

- 1. READ TO YOUR CHILD EVERY NIGHT** Reading to your child builds vocabulary, imagination, and listening skills. It also nurtures the bond between you and your child. While reading a story, ask your child questions such as, *What do you think will happen next?*, *What would you do?* and *How did that honor God?*
- 2. DEVELOP WRITING AND DRAWING SKILLS** Provide materials and opportunities to write notes and draw pictures freely. Ask your child to tell you about the writing or drawing and to write his/her name on the artwork.
- 3. BUILD MATH SKILLS** Look for ways to talk about numbers in everyday life. Ask your child to bring you a certain number of objects, and play games that require counting or number recognition.
- 4. TEACH INDEPENDENCE AND RESILIENCE** Encourage your child to do things for him/herself, such as using the bathroom and dressing independently. Allow your child to struggle and make mistakes. Be patient and encourage your child to try again.
- 5. FOSTER SOCIAL SKILLS** Children need support as they learn to build relationships outside of their family. Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children close to their age, such as playdates or church activities.
- 6. DEVELOP ROUTINES** Routines for sleep, meals, chores, and play provide stability for young learners. Following a routine at home will help your child adjust to school routines as well.
- 7. MODEL HEALTHY CHOICES** Nutrition and sleep are essential to early learning success. Set an appropriate bedtime, taking into account that 10-13 hours of sleep is recommended for children ages 3-5. Mealtime is also an opportunity to promote healthy choices and strengthen the bond between family members. Eat with your child and be intentional about engaging them in mealtime conversations as a family.
- 8. BE INTERESTED AND ENTHUSIASTIC** Talk about what happened at school each day. Ask specific questions about your child's day, such as *Who did you play with at recess today?*
- 9. STAY INFORMED** Attend parent programs, meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. Check your child's folder daily and read newsletters from the class and from the school. Check ParentSquare regularly for news and updates.
- 10. PARTNER WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER** If you have questions or concerns about your child's progress, be sure to connect with the teacher right away. Pray for your child's teacher and classmates. Speak positively to your child about their teacher to encourage respect and enthusiasm towards their school experience.



WAYS TO PRAY FOR YOUR CHILD

PRAY FOR YOUR CHILD'S:

- SALVATION** Thank you, Lord, for sending Jesus to die for ____! May he/she choose to accept you into his/her life and heart and spend eternity with you. Help ____ to love and serve you all the days of his/her life. (*John 3:16*)
- LOVE** I pray that ____ will love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind and that they would love their neighbor as themselves. (*Mark 12:30-31*)
- GROWTH** I pray that you would teach ____ to grow in the Spirit and to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, gentle, faithful, and self-controlled. (*Galatians 5:22-23*)
- PROTECTION** I pray that you will rescue, guide, and protect ____ today. Answer when he/she calls on you, and be with him/her in times of trouble. (*Psalms 91:14-15*)
- OBEDIENCE** I pray that you will teach ____ the powerful gift and blessing of obedience, that he/she may understand that obeying teachers and parents is truly obeying and submitting to You. (*Exodus 20:12*)
- FRIENDSHIPS** I pray that you will surround ____ with companions of character - friends that love at all times, even through adversity. (*Proverbs 17:17*)
- GIFTS** Thank you, Lord, for the unique gifts, skills, and talents that you have given ____ to use for your glory. I pray that, as parents and teachers, we would encourage those gifts, so that they can be used to build up and edify those around _____. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-5*)
- THOUGHTS** I pray that you would guard and renew ____'s mind through your word. Help him/her not to conform to the pattern of this world, but saturate his/her mind with Scripture so that ____ dwells on things of you, not on earthly things. (*Romans 12:2*)
- FUTURE** Thank you that you are a good God who desires to give good gifts to your children. I praise you for the hope and future that ____ has through you. May your plans for his/her life strengthen his/her faith and draw him/her closer to you. May ____ seek to follow your will for the future and trust in you each day. (*James 1:17*)

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

EARLY LEARNING KIT

2022-2023

Students should bring the following supplies (all labeled with their name) to Opening Ceremonies or the first day of school:

- ☐ 4 Ticonderoga “My First Tri-write” pencils with eraser
- ☐ 8 ct. large Crayola crayons
- ☐ 24 ct. Crayola crayons
- ☐ 2 sets 10 ct. Crayola washable markers
- ☐ 5 large glue sticks
- ☐ 8 color Crayola watercolor paints
- ☐ 4-pack Play-doh assorted colors (3 oz.)
- ☐ Plastic pencil box (standard size)
- ☐ 1 plastic folder with pockets (any color)
- ☐ 3 packages baby wipes (flip top pack)
- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ Lunchbox and leakproof water bottle (labeled)
- ☐ Smock (or old t-shirt) for art class
- ☐ KinderMat - no yoga mats, blanket and pillow as desired
- ☐ Change of clothes in ziploc bag (labeled)

DAILY/WEEKLY:

FOOD

Please send a lunch box labeled with your child’s name. Please pack a morning snack and an afternoon snack in addition to a healthy lunch. We are not set up to warm children’s lunches. Please select foods that your child is willing to eat cold. Please do not send foods that present a risk of choking. Hot lunches may be ordered weekly from [YayLunch!](#) Good food will benefit your child’s health and learning.

Each day your child should pack at least one fruit, at least one vegetable, and a main course that includes grains and protein as appropriate for your child. Snacks may include crackers, yogurt, pretzels, cheese cubes or sticks, popcorn, granola bars, etc. Please only send in food that has nutritive value and does not contain sugar as a primary ingredient. Inappropriate foods include candy, sugary cereals, cupcakes, cookies, puddings, pop tarts, etc. Please remember to include any utensils your child will need for their lunch/snack.

WATER

Please send a water bottle labeled with your child’s name. Students may drink water throughout the day. Please do not send in sugary drinks or fruit juices.

CLOTHING **Preschool and Jr. Kindergarten students do not wear the school uniform.**

Please send an extra change of clothes that is appropriate for the season. We do play outside every day, so please dress your child for the weather. Make sure that your child is wearing shoes for easy movement and active play.

BEDDING

Please send a clean blanket for your child to use during rest time each week. A small pillow or a small stuffed animal is optional. These items will be sent home weekly to be washed.

SHOW & TELL Your child will participate in Show and Tell each week. This is an enriching opportunity for your child to develop social and oral skills to share interests, special objects, or experiences. Help your child choose an appropriate item to bring on the day indicated by his/her teacher.

COMMUNICATION

The key component to an effective educational partnership among parents, students, faculty, staff, and administration is effective communication. Certain assumptions should form the foundation for all communication among these groups:

- Everyone shares the same goal that the students be successfully prepared spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially to accomplish God's plan for their lives.
- The educational process may be an emotional one that can impact effective communication.
- Perceptions, while reality to the individual, do not often provide a complete picture of reality and should not form the sole reason for action. A complete and accurate view of a situation takes a conversation with all involved parties.
- If we approach those directly involved with open hearts and minds—in a spirit of humility— and work together, with God's help and guidance we can resolve any issue.

Grove Christian School sends all official communication electronically. Parents must maintain an active email address to the school in order to receive updates, financial statements, and all other communication. GCS utilizes the following electronic means as the primary communication vehicle with parents.

GCS PARENTSQUARE: ParentSquare simplifies communication by bringing together all communication solutions and features under one platform - alerts, forms, incidental payments, billing, newsletters, emails, schedules, polls, surveys, etc.

EMAIL: Current faculty email addresses can be found at <http://www.grovechristianschool.com/faculty>. Emails will be answered as promptly as possible within the time constraints of teaching and advising students.

GROVE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL WEBSITE: Visit <http://www.grovechristianschool.com> to stay informed. The weekly newsletter, school forms, Parent/Student Handbook, Dress Code, athletic events, school events calendar, etc. are some of the many valuable tools contained on the website.

GCS NEWSLETTER: Regular informational electronic newsletters are sent to keep families informed of activities and events at Grove Christian School.

Addressing Concerns and Conflicts

It is our sincere belief that the discreet conduct and speech characterizing relationships within our school community will reflect our dedication to the highest standards of Christian behavior and speak to the surrounding community and prospective students of our love for each other and our desire to honor Christ.

Issues between parents and teachers will arise from time to time. As a Christian school, we believe that issues and concerns should be resolved biblically. We practice the Matthew 18 Principle among administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents at Grove Christian School.

Please see the current GCS Parent/Student Handbook for further policies and information regarding communication and conflict resolution.

PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND

PRESCHOOL ORIENTATION - Two weeks prior to the beginning of school, parents and children should plan to attend a Preschool Orientation. The purpose of this dedicated time is for parents to ask and answer questions and for students to acclimate themselves to the classroom environment and other enrolled students in a semi-structured center time. Please check your email to RSVP for a Preschool Orientation in early August.

OPENING CEREMONIES - Opening Ceremonies is a school-wide event in which families may drop off supplies, meet their teacher, and fellowship with other families. It is a valuable opportunity to experience the school culture, pray over the school year, and begin to build relationships with other families.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT - Back-to-School Night is a focused time for parents to hear from teachers and to pray together for the class and for the students. During this time, parents can get a sense of how the class operates, what our goals are for the year, and how we can partner together for the education of our students. Children do not attend BTSN.

PARENT CONNECT - This organization was established to foster strong relationships among parents and the faculty, which lead to a strong and flourishing school where opportunities to volunteer, support major events and participate in fund-raising activities are dynamic and occur organically in connection. Events and opportunities will fluctuate from year to year. Parents can get involved by signing up at Opening Ceremonies/Back to School Night or on Parent Square.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher partnership is essential to effective early learning:

LISTENING CONFERENCE - The first conference of the year is in September. It is a Listening conference, at which the teachers are present to listen to the parent/guardian discuss their child's strengths, challenges, hopes, and interests. These conferences help to establish a relationship of respectful communication between parents and teachers. Teachers gain valuable information about the needs of the students in their care and help parents to build trust that their thoughts and feelings, hopes, and fears about their child are valued.

FALL CONFERENCE - Near the end of the 1st Quarter, teachers will meet with parents to discuss areas for growth for their children, based on initial observations and assessments. Students in Jr. Kindergarten will complete the PALS assessment prior to this conference. Teachers and parents will set goals for the year based on student data and needs.

MID-YEAR CONFERENCE - Before attending the mid-year conference, parents should view their student's progress reports and be prepared to discuss the child's strengths, challenges, and goals for the remainder of the school year. At this conference, the teacher may initiate discussions of placement for the next school year or any areas in which the child could benefit from remediation.

END-OF-YEAR CONFERENCE - During the last few weeks of school, parents or teachers may request a final conference to determine placement for the following year, based upon the GCS Kindergarten Readiness Report or GCS Jr. Kindergarten Readiness Report. An administrator may attend the end-of-year conference.

WHAT IS MY WORLDVIEW?

**Where do
I come
from?**

Who am I?

**Where am
I going?**

**What is
important
to me?**

**What is real
and true?**

**What am I
supposed
to do with
my life?**

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GroveChristianSchool.com