



# St. Thomas Episcopal School

1416 North Loop 1604 East

San Antonio, Texas 78232

210-494-3509

[www.stthomaskids.com](http://www.stthomaskids.com)

Fully Accredited by the Southwest Association of Episcopal Schools

---

## **Our Mission Statement**

St. Thomas is an inclusive faith-based community that empowers children to develop critical minds, caring hearts, and ethical foundations for academic excellence and spiritual growth.



# ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

## Why Choose St. Thomas Episcopal School For Your Family?

### Why choose an Episcopal School?

You and your family are in the midst of considering educational alternatives for your children for the upcoming school year. The following is from the National Association of Episcopal Schools, and illuminates the core of Episcopal schools and many of the key considerations you should be mindful of when making an important decision about your child's education and future.

**Academic excellence** — Episcopal schools have long been known for providing superior academic training in core classes and in enrichment classes, such as music, technology, and art.

**Spiritual development** — A thorough understanding of spiritual matters and personal faith characterize students of Episcopal schools. Meaningful worship opportunities and the study of biblical principles help students develop not only a deep understanding of who they are but also an ability to accept all individuals and nature as God's creation.

**Service Learning** — Training in spiritual matters and ethical matters includes having students participate in larger community to make the world a better place. The leadership skills instilled in students who attend Episcopal Schools empower students to serve others.

**Opportunity** — Episcopal schools tend to emphasize giving every student a chance to participate in a range of activities that larger schools cannot offer. The result shows in high student confidence that goes with students long after graduation.

**Physical development** — Episcopal school students have plenty of opportunity for physical growth through organized and free play activities.

### Why Choose St. Thomas Episcopal Church & School?

**Daily Chapel Services** -- School chapel provides a unique opportunity for worship, reflection, spiritual growth, and the gathering of the school community. Chapel services address intellectual, emotional, and spiritual understanding; it is here that the school community learns and understands together. Combining students from preschool through elementary binds students of different ages together, building the St. Thomas community that is so loved and appreciated by our families.

Regardless of faith tradition, all students and parents are welcome to participate in daily chapel. Students as young as 4 years of age lead the chapel service; from carrying the cross to reading prayers, all students are actively engaged in worship. Appropriate for young learners, the liturgy incorporates songs, stories, celebrations and prayers. Biblical teachings are designed to encourage students to become the person God is calling them to be.



# ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

## Why Choose St. Thomas Episcopal School For Your Family?

### STEAM Focus

From the youngest of our preschoolers, to the upper elementary grades, our 2018-2019 focus will be on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. Students will spend time indoors and outdoors exploring, inquiring, and being creative.

**Science** – Elementary students learn through the use of the **STEMScopes** digital science curriculum from Rice University. Opportunities to explore God's world and experiment in the environment keep students from 2 years through the elementary school engaged in scientific learning and understanding.

**Technology** – Pre-K students attend structured technology lab classes and use iPads in their classrooms. Technology lessons through elementary learn about the proper use of technology including being a digital citizen. Coding classes are incorporated into Kindergarten and up lessons. Students use technology as a tool for learning in the classroom through the use of iPads, and Chromebooks are given to all students grades 2 and up. Robotics after-school classes and competitions are fun and accessible to our upper elementary students. **Learning.com, code.com and ABC Mouse** are incorporated into the curriculum.

**Engineering** -- Building with blocks is basic to all preschool classrooms; St. Thomas provides many opportunities for building in preschool, and incorporates design into the elementary classroom.

**Art** – The arts are often overlooked by public and charter schools, but research has proven the importance of the arts in other areas of academia. Music and visual arts are an important part of the St. Thomas curriculum all students. Music theory education begins with the 2-year old students and grows through the school years. Pre-K students and elementary students alike learn to move with music, play instruments, and perform. In visual arts classes, students use a variety of media while learning about the elements of art. Elementary students make art history connections through visits to local museums.

**Mathematics** -- St. Thomas began using the most current **Pearson Envision** Curriculum with its first graders in 2016-17. Each academic year the school implements the curriculum in the next grade level. In 2018-2019, the curriculum will be moved up to third grade.

Math Labs software in the computer room or on iPads and Chromebooks reinforce mathematical skills and permit differentiation of instruction. Students are encouraged to strengthen areas needing practice, move deeper into areas of strength, and reinforce classroom lessons and skills.

The math lab software is available for home use as well so parents will keep abreast of their child's progress in mathematics.



# ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

## Why Choose St. Thomas Episcopal School For Your Family?

### Gift of Time

Gift of Time (GOT) is a bridge between preschool and kindergarten that provides children with an extra year of growth before starting kindergarten. This transitional class offers a developmentally appropriate program designed especially to enhance academic readiness skills, improve motor skills, encourage good work habits, and model acceptable social behavior needed for success in elementary school. GOT blends elements of a preschool environment with those of kindergarten classrooms. Students enjoy centers and additional recess time on the playground. They also use much of the kindergarten curriculum to promote literacy skills. GOT students study a variety of science related topics. These classes include art, computer, music and movement, library, and physical education.

### Physical Education

A strong body is as important as a strong mind, and we offer physical education classes three days a week for our students. Through a variety of exercise regimens, games, sports, and skill development activities, students learn how to be healthy and participate in physical activities with others. They learn about teamwork, being a good sport, eye-hand coordination, rhythm, gross motor skills, and body awareness.

### Proven Track Record of Standardized Test Results

STES uses the Iowa Assessments (formerly the Iowa Test of Basic Skills) to ensure our students are on track for success. Each year our class averages are at least one year above the national averages for these tests. Small class sizes, dedicated teachers, and attention to curricular choices make our students perform well on these standardized tests without the daily grind of “teaching to the test” as can be the case with criterion-referenced tests. The achievement test is a snapshot in time that makes comparisons between groups of test-takers and is used to inform instruction in the school.

### St. Thomas Alumni

Since our beginnings in 1974, St. Thomas has educated hundreds of students, and we are now seeing the second generation of St. Thomas Tigers in our school! Our alumni attest to having made friends for life, developed a strong spiritual commitment, and learned to become leader and aspire for great things in life. The love and caring environment they had in St. Thomas prepared them for future educational experiences. STES students have gone on to all the prestigious private schools in San Antonio as well as many public schools. Many of our students attend TMI, The Episcopal School of Texas as well as St. George Episcopal School for middle school, Concordia, San Antonio Christian, Keystone, San Antonio Academy, and others. The parent surveys have indicated that our students are prepared to go on to be successful at the next school. Our students have learned to be organized, responsible, and respectful. Strong reading and mathematical skills make them stand out!

### Developmentally Appropriate Philosophy of Education

Preschoolers develop at their own rates, and early development in certain areas is not always indicative of long-term expertise. However, studies have shown that young children need to have a variety of experiences to develop their social skills, mathematical understanding, language arts development, motor skills, and “sciencing” processes.



# ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

## Why Choose St. Thomas Episcopal School For Your Family?

**Social skills** addressed include developing self-regulation, that is, learning to respond appropriately in social situations. Young children are taught how to relate to others, including their peers and teachers. Our youngest students learn to cooperate and collaborate with others in the learning community.

**Mathematical Understanding** in preschool includes exploration of measurement, developing number sense, beginning to experience number operations such as adding and subtracting, and exploring data through graphs. Also, young children learn about patterns, relationships of objects in the environment, comparison, and sorting by attributes.

**Language Arts Development** is key to future literacy skills. We use Abeka phonics, Frog Street Press, and other sources that are woven into a strong pre-literacy foundation. Children learn to listen for a purpose, use language to express their wants and thoughts, and begin to understand representation of sounds and words with symbols (letters).

Books and other print resources are used as models to help preschoolers understand that written language can be used to communicate. Discriminating sounds such as beginning, ending, and rhyming are fundamental literacy skills to learn in preschool.

**Motor Skill Development**, both gross and fine motor skills blossom in preschool through a variety of activities in the preschool classroom, in music class, in the motor lab, and outdoors on the playground.

**Science Processing Skills** are fun for young children, and they are naturally curious. Our preschoolers learn about physical, natural, and life sciences in their environment. Sensory awareness encourages students to use their science processing skills. They discover on their own, and are exposed to a variety of books, objects, and models to foster their sense of wonder about God's world.

**Art and Creativity** are critical for young children, and they learn to express themselves through free art choices. Structured art projects teach our young students to follow directions, develop an attention span, and complete projects.

**Music and Movement** – twice weekly classes are designed to introduce our children to musical concepts. Children experience music through a mixture of singing, dancing, acting and the use of percussion instruments.

**Play and Children--** The importance of play for all of our students is a priority at St. Thomas. All students have extended periods of unstructured play. Our playground for students aged 3 and up is one of the best in north central San Antonio. We have athletic fields and garden spaces for children to enjoy and explore. We have many opportunities for climbing, swinging, balancing, riding tricycles and little cars, pretending, running, playing music, and interacting with friends close in age from other classrooms.

Outdoor learning experiences look like play to the casual observer. But in the 40-45 minutes of play time for our preschoolers, much learning is taking place. Communication skills including questioning, clarifying, and learning point of view are happening all around. Research has indicated that “peer talk” is critical for later learning, especially when it comes to questioning, cooperating, and collaborating. Children learn to express their feelings as they learn about the feelings of others. Creating imaginative, dramatic play allows students to act out their lives, share the dreams, and “try out” roles such as superheroes, mommies, daddies, and the like.



## ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

### Why Choose St. Thomas Episcopal School For Your Family?

The outdoor learning experiences of interacting with natural environments, not rubber padded mats, provides the opportunity to learn about acorns, rocks, building with sticks, sorting with stones, and sifting through sand. The natural sunlight filters through the mature oak trees as children enjoy the protection of the sun in a nature-rich play area.

The small playground for the 2 year olds allows them a more protected environment for climbing, throwing balls, walking the balance beam, and playing in the sensory table. Opportunities for dramatic play abound with tricycles, little ride-in cars, a toy kitchen, and the playhouse. They enjoy learning to throw and catch balls, play with toy cars, and write on the giant chalkboard. Again, students appreciate the joy of finding a gecko, planting an acorn or watching a squirrel jump from tree to tree.

Many children have little opportunity to experience nature. Many preschools have moved towards a synthetic outdoor environment that deprives young children of the joy of nature and the sensations of scooping up leaves and watching them dance to the earth.

Because unstructured playtime is important, even our older children have 30 minutes to run and play with their friends. The music garden, tetherball, climbing equipment, gaga-ball court, and picnic tables on the playground provide choices for our students to enjoy and explore. It affords them time to relax and take a break from their studies so that they can do their best at school each day.

#### Non-discriminatory Policy

St. Thomas Episcopal School is open to all qualified students of any race, color, religion, nationality, or ethnic origin. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, or financial aid programs.