

Biblical Worldview Scope for Math 1

Introduction: This document is our attempt to answer the question, “What must a student understand and value to see first-grade math from a biblical perspective?” What follows is a list of the themes that we believe are essential for first-grade math students to understand and internalize. Early in the course, students are required to *recall* and *explain* these themes. However, as these themes recur, we require students to *evaluate* ideas within these themes, *formulate* a Christian understanding of these themes, and *apply* what they have learned about these themes to real-life situations. We hope to achieve high levels of internalization wherever students are required to *apply* their learning.

1. Exploring: God made the world so that it can be explored with math.

Creation: God made the world so that people can understand and describe it with math.

God has always been. He decided to make the world. God made a world that is measurable, quantifiable, and full of math. God numbered the days of Creation. He then had Adam name the animals, which came to him in pairs. Ever after, people have named the kind of math we see in the world. We can use math to count, add, and subtract. We use these math words to describe what we see in creation.

Fall: Some people do not know why our world is full of math.

These people believe that stuff is all there is (materialism). They try to use math to explain the world without God. They say that math is just here. They say that math just happened by accident, but that it is still very useful. They think that math enables them to understand the world. Math allows us to buy things, study the planets, and make big buildings. Because math is so powerful, they think they don’t need God. But the Bible teaches us that God’s instructions in the Bible are what allow us to understand math and use it the way He intended.

Redemption: The Bible teaches that the world and math would not be here without God.

God made the world out of nothing. The Bible helps us know how things started and how we should think about this world, including math. He made math a part of our world. The better we understand math, the better we can understand the world where we live. We can use math to live better lives in God’s world. We should praise God every time that we use math. Because God gave us math, we should use it in good ways and thank Him for its usefulness.

2. Working: Math helps people do work.

Creation: God made people to work and to rule over the world (Gen. 1:28; 2:15).

Work is good because it has been part of God’s “very good” creation from the beginning (Gen. 1:31). Work involves accomplishing a task. The task may be functional (e.g., painting a room), or the task may be creative and artistic (e.g., painting a mural). Both are work, and both are ordained by God. Both, also, may require math to accomplish. Using math enables us to accomplish all kinds of work that would otherwise be unthinkable. The better we get at math, the more work we can accomplish.

Fall: In a fallen world, doing work with math is difficult.

From the beginning, work has been challenging. But now the challenge is grueling—sometimes even impossible. Man’s ability to rule over the world through work is encumbered by a groaning creation. This struggle extends even to learning and using math. Students struggle to learn math because the Fall inhibits their learning in many ways,

including the temptation to laziness. Students struggle to use math to do work because solutions can be difficult or complex.

Redemption: God expects believers to work hard with math even in a fallen world.

Math can help us get work done that we otherwise could not do. Students must be diligent in math class to learn the math necessary to get tasks done. A biblical way of teaching math will encourage and enable students to overcome laziness and confusion when learning math. As students persevere amid these challenges, they become better at using math to problem solve. Solving problems with math makes work and proper rule of the world possible. When we teach students to do work with math, we are teaching students to glorify God.

3. Caring: Math helps us care for people.

Creation: Math should be used to care for people because they are made in God's image.

All people are made in God's image. As God's image bearers, they have unique value in this world. The needs of humans take precedence over the needs of other parts of creation. Math is useful for solving problems. We can count the number of cookies for the class, find out how many playground balls we will need, or remember someone's birthday. Solving these kinds of problems enables us to care for other people.

Fall: Math is often not used to care for people.

Because of the Fall, people's needs are much more severe, and they often go unmet. Selfishness often prevents people from caring for other people. In some cases, math is used to hurt other people. At other times, math is not used when it could be used to meet the needs of others.

Redemption: Math should be used to care for people to show them love and glorify God.

God calls on believers to love others and to live lives of good works (Matt. 5:14–16; 22:37–39). By doing this, believers lead those who live in darkness to see the glory of God and praise Him for His greatness and goodness. We should seek to care for people by meeting their needs as much as we reasonably can. Giving the gospel meets the biggest need, but we also should attempt to care for physical needs. We can meet physical needs with math by splitting up food to share or deciding how much money to give someone. Students should learn how math can help us spread the gospel and how math may be used to care for physical needs.