

Biblical Worldview Scope for Math 2, 5th Ed.

Our understanding and use of mathematics intimately relates to our worldview. The following document is our attempt to answer the question, “What must a student understand and value to see second-grade math from the perspective of a biblical worldview?” What follows is a list of themes that we believe are essential for second-grade math students to grasp and internalize. The biblical worldview themes discussed below attempt to help students form a biblical framework for using mathematics to glorify God. As such, the first part of the course leads students to *recall* and *explain* these themes. Throughout the course, students will begin to *evaluate* the ideas of each theme, *formulate* a Christian understanding of them, and *apply* them to various aspects of their lives.

1. Exploring

God made the world in a way that it can be explored with math.

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

God has always been, and He decided to make the world for His own purposes and glory. 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 that came to him. Math is a kind of naming that seeks to understand and describe creation in quantifiable terms. We can use math to count, add, and subtract; these math words help us talk about what we see in creation.

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

The uncertainty has led people to believe that stuff is all there is (materialism). They try to use math to explain the world without God. To them, math is just here—just something that happened by accident—but it is still very useful somehow. They think that they can understand the world because of math. We can buy things, study the planets, and make big buildings because of math. Because math is so powerful, they think they don’t need God. But the Bible teaches us that we can only understand or use math rightly with following God’s instruction in the Bible.

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. God 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 for our abilities. God gave us the blessings of naming animals as well as naming quantifiable things with math. We should use math 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 Christian way of teaching math will encourage and enable students to overcome laziness and confusion in order to learn math. As students persevere in the midst of challenges, they become better at solving problems by using math. Solving problems with math makes work and proper rule of the world possible. We are teaching students to glorify God when we teach them to do work with math.

3. Caring

Math helps us care for people.

Creation: Math should be used to care for people who 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 not used to care for people.

Because of the Fall, needs are much more severe, and they often go unmet. In their selfishness, people often do not care for others as they should. In some cases, math is even 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 they 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 use math to split up food to share. We can use math to decide how much money to give someone. Students should learn how math can help us spread the gospel. They should also learn how math may be used to care for physical needs.