



Unless U Curriculum Spring 2025



Academic Classes

Our overall theme for the year is "Citizens of our World." This allows for a wide variety of emphasis while remaining centered on one main theme. Our two primary areas of study will be "What does it mean to be a good citizen?" and "How can we navigate our world?" Thus, we will learn a lot about our nation and world, how we can contribute to their flourishing, and the life skills necessary to thrive in our world today.

Bible

In Bible this year we are beginning a new study of both the Old and New Testament through a curriculum called "[The Biggest Story](#)." This curriculum pairs beautiful artwork, engaging stories, and interactive lessons and video to teach students about the big picture of the biblical story.

Our Bible class also incorporates song, arts and crafts, caring for one another through prayer and listening, and other fun opportunities. Bible class is a favorite to many of our students!

Teachers: Ms. Graham and Ms. Marti

Class Days: Monday–Thursday

Earth Sciences

In our earth sciences class students will learn about about the place we call home: Planet Earth! We have an engaging and exciting science curriculum that is full of experimentation, exploration, and lots of fun! Typically, students will learn about a subject and then do an activity, experiment, or craft to reinforce the learning.

Our main goal of science is to keep our students curious and engaged with the world around them, and always have their eyes peeled to the beauty around us. We find that practicing this through a science lens trains their brains and their habits to use this skill in other areas of their lives, whether it is personal safety or helping out around the house!

Teacher: Ms. Deanna

Class Days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Life Skills and Job Skills

Life Skills and Job Skills is a course dedicated to working on clear and specific skills we need to use every day to be successful in life and in our jobs. Topics covered include health and wellness, personal hygiene, choosing outfits, conversational skills, situational awareness, chores around the house, and more.

Teacher: Ms. Libby

Class Days: Friday

Life Skills Math

Life Skills Math builds and reinforces the most fundamental math skills necessary to thrive in our world. The primary focus of this class is on number sense (understanding what numbers mean), and skills related to money (including planning ahead, budgeting, and shopping), time (reading clocks, schedules, and calendars), and measurements (for cooking and distance). As with all our classes, we make math fun, interactive, and accessible to all.

Teachers: Ms. Libby and Ms. Kathleen

Class Days: Monday and Wednesday

Social Communication

We are blessed to have several speech therapists who work with us and teach communication skills in the classroom setting. This semester we are focusing on the theme of "Navigating our World." The topics we will cover are self-regulation, managing our behaviors, thinking about others' perspectives, situational awareness, friendship, and self-esteem. Students will work on these skills in class and throughout the day. Classroom learning is supported by various activities and at-home resources to continue developing a well-rounded communicator.

Teachers: Ms. Susan and Ms. Savannah

Class Days: Monday and Tuesday

Social Studies

Social studies is our broadest class, but it is a lot of fun! In our social studies class we rotate through a suite of resources for current events (News2You), character education (Core Essential Values), and global culture. The heart of this class is to help students grow as individuals, think about others and the world around them, and increase their reading comprehension.

Teacher: Ms. Ellen

Class Days: Wednesday and Thursday

U.S. Presidents

It is a tradition at Unless U to learn about American Presidents and U.S. history every presidential election year. Students will learn about the presidents, what they are known for, important things happening in the US and around the world during their tenure, and much more! They will also build a folder and do some experiential learning to reinforce all their covering in class. We may even have a dress-up day in November!

Teacher: Ms. Cathy

Class Days: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

Kahoot!

This semester we are bringing back a fan favorite, Kahoot! Kahoot! is an online quiz and learning platform that is well-loved by our students. Kahoot! builds skills in technology use, as well as presents plenty of opportunity for thinking and making decisions. Some of these quizzes will be for fun, and others will reinforce the learning students have done in class throughout the week.

Teacher: Ms. Savannah

Class Days: Friday

Pop Culture and Trivia

Pop Culture and Trivia is a fun way to teach our students about culturally significant people, places, and things. They will cover a wide range of topics from television and movies, to sports and music, to places, people, and even foods that have defined America.

Teacher: Mr. Keeling

Class Days: Friday

Electives and Activities

Our goal for spring electives is to help students expand their horizons by trying new things and practicing real-world skills. During our first week of classes students were able to fill out forms expressing their preferences for electives, and were placed into groups based on their choices.

Every day students participate in a physically active elective for half an hour, and a classroom elective for another half hour. After spring break, students will swap their elective classes and have an opportunity to try our other offerings. The classes and schedule we have are as follows:

Active Electives

P.E. and Games: Each day Coach Keeling plans a new game in the gym to keep students active, have fun, and learn new skills. Games are designed to work on coordination, fitness, following instructions, and working as a team.

Zumba: Our wonderful Zumba instructor, Gerd, comes to lead our students through a Zumba class. Watching Gerd at work is truly magical and he gets such great engagement from our students. This is a favorite of many staff and students!

Fitness: Ms. Cathy leads our students through various workouts to improve core strength and stability as well as overall health and wellness. These workouts are adaptive to suit each student's needs, but they are also meant to challenge our students and help them to grow.

Gym Party: On Fridays all students will head to the gym for the elective hour and we will play some games, listen to music, have time for walking, and have opportunity for free play. A fun and relaxed way to head into the weekend.

Scoops Elective: Students in our Scoops Job Training Program participate once weekly in an elective course structured specifically around working in Scoops and developing job skills to prepare them for employment or increase their overall confidence.

Classroom Electives

Spanish: Students will have the chance to learn basic conversational Spanish applicable to social settings, restaurants, and the classroom. This was a student favorite three years ago when we offered it and we are happy to bring it back!

Service and Cooking: Cooking and service has become a staple of what we do at Unless U. Students will work on making simple and creative foods they can prepare for themselves and grow in confidence in the kitchen. We will also coordinate some service opportunities for our students to serve our community. One way we will do this is by making sandwiches for a ministry serving the homeless population in partnership with Vestavia Hills Methodist Church, across the parking lot from UU.

Board Games: Students will play board games with each other! We will cover some old favorites while also introducing new games. Board games are a fun and powerful way to build social skills, counting skills, following instructions, taking turns, and many other important skills.

Creativity and Digital Art: Students will get to be introduced to a wide variety of crafts and have the opportunity to make art projects each week. They will also have the opportunity to learn and practice with some digital art apps and games on our ChromeBooks that we hope will spark new hobbies and interests for them on their devices at home as well.

Book Club: Students will select a book to read together and discuss during class. Students will

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Elective Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
P.E. and Games	Zumba	Fitness	P.E. and Games	Gym Party!
Spanish	Spanish	Board Games	Board Games	
Service and Cooking	Creativity and Digital Art	Creativity and Digital Art	Book Club	
		Scoops Elective	Scoops Elective	

Unless U Educators

Unless U would be lost without all of our amazing teachers. Please be on the lookout for a separate "Meet the Teacher" document with pictures and bios of all our wonderful staff.

Student and Family Support

Unless U exists just as much to meet the core needs of belonging and community as it does to foster growth and continued education. If there are any concerns you have regarding your student, their relationships at school, their behavior, or any situations at home that may be impacting your student, we want to hear about it! Please contact our Program Director, Ethan Smith (ethan.smith@unlessu.org) or Assistant Director of Programs, April Jung (april.jung@unlessu.org) with any concerns or considerations.

Unless U Scoops

Last spring, we diligently assessed every aspect of Scoops, from student experience to customer service, meeting with industry experts, business consultants, and occupational therapists. We implemented many structural and programmatic changes in order to more directly address our mission to build core job, life, and workplace skills. Scoops is now an integral part of our educational program, offering classroom elements, skills assessment, and opportunities for skill advancement in a focused and safe environment.

We have also hired Libby Faucett as our Scoops Job Training Specialist to ensure that our students are getting quality work experience and individualized attention to help them continue to grow as people and as workers.

Due to this renewed focus, in March of 2024 we selected a smaller group of students to work at Scoops more regularly and devote more time to building a strong foundation of job and life skills. This program is designed to last for a year. Once the current cohort completes their year in the Job Training Program, we will select a new batch of students to receive this focused training through Scoops.

Students who are not part of the Scoops Job Training Program may be able to work in Scoops, but the opportunities will be more limited, and will primarily be during the after school hours and for Scoops Cart events. Students who are new to Unless U will need to wait until we open admission for the 2025-2026 Scoops Job Training Cohort before they are able to work in Scoops.

Student and Parent Directory on Brightwheel

Many of you have been asking about a directory for a long time. We have attempted various approaches, but many have ended in roadblocks. However, we are very excited to announce that Brightwheel has recently rolled out a parent directory feature! It should now be active for all users.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Even if you have chosen to share your student's contact information, you will NOT see their name or profile in the directory. This is silly, but Brightwheel has made this design choice since you already have access to this info on your child's profile. We have double checked and every student/family is in there unless you have chosen to opt out.

You can read more about the directory and how to OPT OUT of having your information shared at [this link](#).