Summer 2026 Math Practice Guide

For Sacred Heart Families of Rising 4th and 5th Grade Students

Dear Sacred Heart Families,

As I prepare to work with our upper elementary students in math next year, I am excited to partner with families in helping students build confidence, strengthen foundational skills, and see themselves as capable mathematicians. My goal is to make math feel purposeful, manageable, and connected to real life.

With summer approaching, I would like to share a simple, practical way to help students stay confident in math before the next school year begins. I have also included data and resources to support your family. Summer should be a time for rest, family, play, and renewal. At the same time, even a small amount of consistent math practice can make a meaningful difference in helping students retain important skills.

Research on summer learning shows that students' academic skills can flatten or decline over long breaks, and math is often more vulnerable than reading. This matters because math is cumulative. Skills such as fact fluency, place value, fractions, multiplication, division, and problem solving are used again and again in upper elementary math. When these skills become rusty, new grade-level concepts can feel much harder than they need to feel.

At Sacred Heart, our end-of-year math data shows that students are entering next year with a wide range of readiness levels. Some students are ready to extend into new grade-level skills, while others would benefit from continued practice with foundational skills. This is normal, and it is exactly why summer practice should be simple, focused, and consistent rather than overwhelming. The goal is not to recreate a school day at home. Rather, it is to keep important skills fresh through short, meaningful practice.

I am looking forward to a year of growth, confidence-building, and problem solving with our students. Thank you for helping your child begin the year with strong habits and a positive mindset toward math.

Sincerely,

Mary Lukinovich

A little bit of steady practice protects confidence.

Recommended goal: 15-20 minutes, 3-4 days per week.

Minimum goal: 10 minutes, 3 days per week.

Why Summer Math Practice Matters

A short, consistent routine is more powerful than a large amount of work done all at once.

What the Research Shows	What This Means for Families
○ NWEA reports that summer score declines are typically larger in math than in reading. ○ Recent MAP Growth norms show expected math drops from spring of 3rd to fall of 4th and from spring of 4th to fall of 5th, while reading remains much flatter in those same transitions. ○ Home math routines and positive, age-appropriate expectations are associated with stronger math achievement.	○ Students do not need a long daily packet to make progress. ○ Short, repeated practice keeps important skills easier to access in August. ○ Parents do not need to reteach everything. A calm routine and a good resource can do a lot.

The 5 Summer Math Priorities for Rising 4th and 5th Grade

Priority	Why It Matters
1. Multiplication and Division Facts	Support multi-digit multiplication, long division, fractions, measurement, area, volume, and word problems.
2. Place Value	Supports reading, writing, comparing, rounding, decimals, estimation, and computation.
3. Fractions	Students need equal parts, equivalent fractions, comparing fractions, number lines, and real-life examples.
4. Word Problems	Students should read carefully, decide what is being asked, choose an operation, show work, and check reasonableness.
5. Real-Life Math	Cooking, shopping, measuring, travel time, games, and sports statistics make math meaningful and manageable.

For Rising 4th Grade Students

Focus on the skills that connect 3rd grade to 4th grade.

Rising 4th graders should strengthen the math foundations they will use all year: multiplication, division, place value, and fractions. In 4th grade, students use these skills in deeper ways as they solve multi-step problems, work with larger numbers, build fraction understanding, and explain their thinking.

Best Single Focus for Rising 4th Grade Students

Practice multiplication and division facts consistently. Students can use arrays, drawings, fact families, skip counting, and games. The goal is accuracy, efficiency, and flexibility - not just speed.

Most Important Skills to Practice

- multiplication facts within 100
- division facts connected to multiplication
- skip counting by 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 6s, 7s, 8s, 9s, and 10s
- reading and writing numbers up to 10,000, with extension to larger numbers as ready
- comparing and rounding whole numbers
- adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers
- understanding multiplication as equal groups and arrays
- understanding division as sharing or making equal groups
- basic fractions, including halves, thirds, fourths, sixths, and eighths
- equivalent fractions using pictures or models
- one-step and two-step word problems

Simple Practice Ideas

Fact Fluency

- Use flash cards for 5 minutes.
- Roll dice or flip cards and multiply.
- Say related division facts.
- Practice fact families.

Fractions + Place Value

- Draw a pizza, pan of brownies, or a sandwich and name fractions.
- Build numbers with base-ten blocks or drawings.
- Compare grocery prices or quantities.
- Round numbers found on signs or receipts.

For Rising 5th Grade Students

Keep 4th grade foundations strong so 5th grade math feels manageable.

Rising 5th graders should keep 4th grade foundations sharp so they are ready for 5th grade work with decimals, fractions, multi-digit multiplication and division, volume, and more complex word problems.

Best Single Focus for Rising 5th Grade Students

Practice multiplication/division facts and fraction sense. Fifth grade math becomes much more manageable when students are fluent with facts and comfortable thinking about fractions.

Most Important Skills to Practice

- multiplication and division facts through 12
- multi-digit multiplication
- division with remainders and interpreting what the remainder means
- place value through millions
- decimal place value to hundredths and thousandths
- rounding whole numbers and decimals
- adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers accurately
- equivalent fractions
- comparing fractions
- adding and subtracting fractions with like denominators
- using equivalent fractions to prepare for unlike denominators
- connecting fractions and decimals, especially tenths and hundredths
- multi-step word problems
- area and perimeter review
- measurement conversions in real-life situations

Simple Practice Ideas

Computation + Decimals

- Multiply 2-digit by 2-digit numbers.
- Divide 3- or 4-digit numbers by 1-digit numbers.
- Read decimals on money, measurements, or sports stats.
- Round receipts or prices to estimate totals.

Fractions + Problem Solving

- Compare fractions using benchmarks like 1/2 or 1 whole.
- Draw models for equivalent fractions.
- Solve 2-4 multi-step word problems per week.
- Explain whether an answer is reasonable.

Math Practice Resources

Here are a few resources that may support summer math practice. Please do not feel pressured to purchase anything or use every option listed. These resources are meant to make practice easier for families, not add more to your plate.

Recommended Online Resources

Resource	Best For	How to Use It
IXL (Summer Boost Plan) SHS Login Directions	short, focused sessions + progress tracking	Focus on fact fluency, review skills, and previously taught grade-level skills rather than trying to rush through upcoming content.
Khan Academy	short lessons + extra explanations	Use when a student needs a quick reteaching video or guided practice before trying a skill independently.
Math Drills Math Drills Flashcards	printable worksheets online flashcards	Use for quick paper practice with facts, computation, fractions, or review skills. Choose one page at a time rather than printing large packets. Flashcards may be used for 5–10 minutes of fact practice.

Optional Resources for Purchase

Resource	Best For	How to Use It
Think Tank Scholar Flashcards Basic Pack Premium Pack	fact fluency practice	Great for quick practice at home, in the car, or while traveling. Use in short sessions and focus on accuracy before speed.
Adsumudi Math Game [Wild Ones Version]	operations, fractions, decimals, and number reasoning	Use as an optional family game for students who are ready for a challenge. This is best as enrichment, not required practice.
Fraction Dominos	visual fraction understanding and equivalence	Use to compare fractions, build equivalent fractions, and make one whole. This is especially helpful for students who need to see fractions, not just solve them on paper.
Proof! Card Game	fact fluency and flexible number thinking	Use as an occasional math game to practice mental math and number combinations. Best for students who enjoy card games and challenges.

Final Tips

Many families are balancing work, summer schedules, camps, travel, and family responsibilities. Summer math practice does not require a parent sitting beside a child for extensive periods. A simple routine with the right resource can still be very effective.

A Simple Routine

Practice Session Guidelines

- Choose one resource or focus.
- Set a timer for 10-20 minutes.
- Let your child practice independently when appropriate.
- Check in briefly: "What did you practice today?" or "Show me one problem you solved."
- Celebrate consistency, effort, and accurate thinking.

Helpful Parent Language

Try Asking:

- What is the problem asking?
- What do you already know?
- Can you draw a picture or model?
- Is there another way to solve it?
- Does your answer make sense?
- How did you know?

Remind Your Child:

- Mistakes help your brain grow.
- Let's try a strategy.
- You do not have to be fast right away.
- Accuracy comes before speed.
- Math is something we practice.

Final Reminder: The goal this summer is not perfection. The goal is to help students return to school feeling prepared, confident, and ready to grow. Thank you for partnering with us and for supporting your child's learning in a way that is manageable for your family.

Research and Standards Notes for Families

Sources Used to Create This Guide

This guide was written to be parent-friendly while still reflecting current research, Sacred Heart end-of-year math data, and Louisiana math standards. No individual student data is included. The research below is included in case any family is interested in learning more.

Source	Used For
Daucourt et al. (2021): The Home Math Environment and Math Achievement	Meta-analysis on home math interactions, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and math achievement.
NWEA: Summer learning loss - what we know and what we are learning	Summarizes that average scores flatten or drop during summer, with larger drops typically in math than reading.
NWEA: What is typical summer slide on MAP Growth?	Reports recent MAP Growth norms for spring-to-fall summer change in math and reading.
Louisiana Student Standards for Mathematics	Emphasizes conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application.
Xu et al. (2024): Parental Homework Involvement and Students' Achievement	Meta-analysis noting that autonomy-supportive involvement is more helpful than controlling homework involvement.

Note on school data: Sacred Heart end-of-year math screening data was used to confirm that students have a range of readiness levels and that a one-size-fits-all summer packet would not be the best fit. This public guide intentionally avoids student names, scores, and class-level percentages.