

Middle School

An Introduction to Middle School

Students have a great time learning in 6th Grade. In history they travel through ancient civilizations, which parallels with religion. In religion they tour the Old Testament, from creation to the prophets. Language Arts takes the students through character analysis and they learn how to write research papers. Poetry and oral narratives are explored. All students do many cross-curricular activities. Math focuses on computing and problem solving with fractions, mixed numbers, decimals, proportions, and percentages. Solving algebraic equations is also introduced. Weekly, the students visit the computer lab where each student has his assigned computer. In the lab, the students view standards-based streamline videos supplied by Catholic Telemedia Network. In science, they include internet research and mapping with GPS. In language arts, the students prepare presentations which they deliver to the class. In Social Studies, students tape and make an I-movie of an Interview With a Character From Greek Mythology. Field trips vary but include museums, theatrical plays, and hands-on activities. The students have separate science, PE, music, religion, and computer teachers which is an advantage because they learn from teachers who specialize in those areas.

Language Arts

Students follow a comprehensive course of studies in language arts. English, reading, and computer teachers collaborate to teach language arts. Students read from various genres. A Shakespeare play is read and seen on stage in both seventh and eighth grades. The Accelerated Reader program is used in the seventh and eighth grade to encourage independent reading practice and the acquisition of reading skills. Students work in literature circles to collectively read, analyze, and discuss various works of literature.

In the sixth grade, students study character analysis and learn the methods of writing effective research papers. Students develop knowledge of literary concepts, techniques, and analysis. Proficiency in reading strategies, comprehension skills, and critical and creative thinking are also enhanced.

All Middle School students work towards the mastery of the conventions of grammar and build vocabulary and spelling skills through reading and a core spelling/vocabulary list. Catholic philosophy is frequently applied in analyzing literature and assessing the behavior of characters.

Math

The math curriculum follows the California standards using Prentice Hall Mathematics with PH Success Net. Our Math Specialist provides a challenging curriculum. In both seventh and eighth grade, we have academic grouping, where the seventh graders follow either the PH course 2 or the course 3 curriculum, studying a combination of pre-algebra, fundamental geometry, and basic math skills. At the eighth grade level, students follow either PH course 3 or Algebra 1 course work. The curriculum involves projects and technology, interactive group work, in addition to traditional whole-class instruction. Simple Solutions is our homework program. After school assistance is available three days per week.

History

Middle School history covers ancient Civilization (6th Grade) world History (7th Grade) and American History (8th Grade).

A variety of methods are used to explore and explain the topics. In addition to textbooks, explanation, and note taking, students also see videos, DVDs, and listen to audio tapes to gather information. Students use the computer lab for internet research. They do a variety of critical thinking and interpretive skills.

Among these are debates regarding controversial issues in history. Other projects involve oral reports and the use of PowerPoint and hyper-studio presentations. Many projects such as newspapers and brochures call for the use of the original art work and computer generated design.

Research papers, essays, and original narrative poems are processed on the computer. One project that uses a variety of methods is on the Founding Fathers. Students work as partners for this assignment. In this cross-curricular (history and computer technology) project the students research their topics using the internet. They prepare a live interview and PowerPoint presentation which is performed in front of the class. Students also create a life size figure of the Founding Father that is used to record information about that person.

Students use the Junior Scholastic magazine to stay informed of current events. During presidential elections, 8th grade students stage mock campaigns, film debates, and hold an election. This project instills knowledge of history and government as well as the importance of good citizenship.

Science

In Middle School, students learn about Earth Science (6th), Life Science (7th), and Physical Science (8th). Classes take place in a modern laboratory classroom environment and hands-on learning activities are emphasized. The use of technology is incorporated into class projects when possible. A yearly science fair showcases experimental projects that are part of the Middle School science curriculum.

Music

Students continue to develop and apply their musical knowledge by playing an instrument. In sixth grade, they are introduced to the recorder, an early woodwind instrument, and the precursor to the modern flute. They develop style and explore the art of interpretation while honing their music reading skills. They learn the challenges of playing in a large group versus playing alone. Students will continue to play the recorder through the seventh and eighth grades, with opportunities to learn pieces for school masses. In addition, lessons in singing, music history and appreciation, musical theater, multicultural music, and music for healing and prayer are incorporated throughout the school year. There are also opportunities for students to cantor at school masses and/or sing in the choir. (Students interested in cantoring must audition and will be accepted on an individual basis according to ability. This also requires practice time outside of regular class periods with Mrs. DiRocco.)

Social Justice

Holy Trinity fosters an environment where students are encouraged to use their gifts and talents in service to others. Students apply Catholic social teachings in real world experiences. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. The school conducts food drives to benefit the local community regularly. Student Council sponsors monthly "Free Dress" days for \$2.00. These funds are donated to local families or charities each month. They also help out when asked to for special events, like our local LAPD's Helping Badge Program where toys, gift cards, and canned goods were donated by our student body to help local families during the holidays. Our jog-a-thon funds are used to support several charities such as ALS, Diabetes, SIDS, Autism, and several other foundations.

Each classroom or grade also has a social justice project that they complete each year.

The entire school writes letters to soldiers at Christmas and Valentines Day, and helps out any way needed for our school families and the community.

Computer Technology

Middle School students use the Mac Lab in two ways. Using the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS), students are taught core computer application skills to provide a foundation for using technology. Middle School students study technology in our society with a emphasis on social, ethical, and human issues. They learn to use technology productivity tools such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Database, and PowerPoint. They design and publish documents, using digital cameras, i-movies, and i-photo. They use the Internet to research, develop, and present assignments. Holy Trinity School subscribes to two excellent internet sources, i.e., Catholic Telemedia Network and Discovery Education which provides standards based materials.

In Middle School, the computer lab is an extension of the classroom. Teachers collaborate to plan cross-curricular lessons and projects. These projects meet the standards of several curricula and are taught in the lab.

Talented and Gifted Program

Our TAG program provides enrichment for Middle School students. Students participate in 4-week rotations in areas that include drama, newspaper, Spanish, debate, tolerance, and art, including art history and an eight week rotation with the Artist in Residence from Angel's Gate Cultural Center. Decathlon teams use this time to participate and study their chosen areas.

Physical Education.

The Physical Education program in the Middle School, meets one hour per week and supports one main objective: to emphasize knowledge and skills for a lifetime of physical activity. Physical Education classes feature cooperative, as well as competitive games, and actively teach cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation. The purpose of games that are played are to keep players moving and making the physical activity fun. Activities include, but are not limited to, teambuilding games, jump roping, volleyball, baseball/softball, hockey, basketball, and frisbee throwing. Throughout the school year students also are given the opportunity to learn about anatomy (bones and muscles), physiology (calculating heart rates), and the benefits of being physically active. Emphasis on warm-up and stretching are taught throughout the school year. The curriculum is designed to help students develop a positive attitude toward physical activity for life.