

The Journey Through Middle School

Welcome to a preview of our middle school program. Our goal is to prepare each child academically, spiritually and socially for their high school future and beyond. This packet is meant to be an informational curriculum guide to your child's 6th—8th grade years at Holy Apostles School.

Please note, that our curriculum is consistently reviewed and continually advancing. Our staff is committed to incorporating the most effective methods to help each child grow and learn. As your journey continues you will find many enhancements and updates are made every year to our programs.

Our teachers are dedicated to offering the extra support to help your child succeed. Every child learns differently. To meet those needs, students have scheduled times each week (Student Assistance Time) which can be used to get extra support from our teaching staff or work on homework. There are also many opportunities for extra curricular academic clubs that support learning.



We are excited to welcome your child into our middle school program and look forward to your questions.

Please contact the faculty or Mrs. Lee for more information.

[Our Mission : To advance the educational ministry of the Catholic Church by creating a compassionate atmosphere which develops faith, service, and academic excellence.]



Holy Apostles
CATHOLIC PARISH AND SCHOOL

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Middle School Religion and Service

As a Catholic school, our education is rooted in our faith and the traditions of our Church. This philosophy means that we are educating the whole child - mind, body, and spirit - and as such, **we strive to help all our students develop character in the image of Christ.** Through the values modeled by our community, the guidance of our teachers, and the instruction in the teachings of Jesus and the Catholic church, students develop into young men and women of faith & integrity. In addition, we use several resources designed to help the students develop good values, strong friendships and emotional maturity.



The 2021—2022 theme, chosen by the Class of 2022, which guides us:

If you have faith . . . you can move mountains.
Nothing will be impossible for you.

Matthew 17:20

Our Religion program offers a holistic view of the Bible. Students review Old and New Testaments over their time in Middle School. Each class participates in weekly Mass, and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. We also utilize the Blest Are We workbook to guide many of our discussions.

6th Grade—Study of the Old Testament , 7th Grade—Study of the New Testament, 8th Grade—Study of Church History
As part of our Religion program, our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students attend retreats to deepen their relationships with God and one another. They also have the opportunity to visit the Adoration Chapel weekly during their lunch recess and monthly as a class. We treasure these opportunities to help our students listen to and be present to Jesus and His love in the Blessed Sacrament.

Our middle school students are encouraged to volunteer for our school, parish, and in our community to broaden their perspective of those we serve and the world around us.

Service Hour Requirement: 12 hours for each grade (this year only). Half of the total service hours can be completed over the summer. Records and forms will be kept electronically. All service opportunities include a written student reflection that summarizes personal responses to the experience. Acts of service aim to deepen and personalize students' understanding of the Religion curriculum discussed throughout the year. In addition, students grow in awareness that serving others is not simply a concept to gain hours or complete an assignment. Rather, students are encouraged to connect serving others to serving Jesus, through His people. Our goal is to nurture servant's hearts in the lives of our students, so they can, "Love God, Love Others, and Transform Our World."

We are encouraging all Holy Apostles middle school youth to take part in our Middle School Service Nights supporting the MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary. We will be making bag lunches along with other needs for the guests. These Service Nights take place once a month. Check the Messenger for details.

We will also be working on in-school service during Religion class. If you have an idea for a service project for us to do during class, please contact Miss Motschall. Do you have questions about why we serve? [Read this!](#)

Emotional, Physical, Spiritual Health Connection

Health curriculum is taught as part of our Religion program. 6th-8th grade students learn about health as it relates to themselves, others and our faith. Students study topics including: empathy and communication, bullying prevention, emotional management, problem solving, substance abuse prevention, and Theology of the Body (8th grade).

6th Grade—focus on: working in groups, friendships, respect, emotions, substance abuse, and Catholic values.

7th Grade - focus on: communication in groups, negotiating and compromising, giving / getting support, bullying prevention, understanding anger, staying in control, stress, abuse prevention and sexual harassment. We will also incorporate the 7th grade DARE program which is generously instructed by N.B. Community Officer, Tony Fus,

8th Grade—focus on: leadership, handling grievances, prejudice, coping with stress, de-escalating tense situations and goal setting.

Theology of the Body for Teens, Middle School Edition, is the primary resource for 8th grade Health curriculum.

The following materials will be utilized for 6th – 8th grades:

Scholastic Choices Magazine: this magazine has helped present Catholic Social Teachings as it relates to current middle school topics.

Second Step – Success through Prevention – is a program to support the social-emotional development, safety, and well-being of children.

Topics for 6th Grade:

- Working in groups
- Friends and allies
- Considering perspectives
- Disagreeing respectfully
- Being assertive
- Recognizing bullying/prevention: bystanders
- Emotions: brains and body
- Calming-down strategies
- Problem solving: using the action steps, making a plan
- Substance abuse prevention

Topics for 7th Grade:

- Working in groups
- Disagreeing respectfully
- Negotiating and compromising
- Giving and getting support
- Responding to bullying
- Cyber bullying
- Sexual harassment
- Understanding anger
- Staying in control
- Coping with stress
- Substance abuse prevention

Topics for 8th Grade:

- Leaders and allies
- Handling a grievance
- Labels, stereotypes, and prejudice
- Our identity in Christ and His plan for life, love, and freedom in Him.

- Bullying in dating relationships
- De-escalating a tense situation
- Goal setting: making your plan and evaluating your plan

As noted above, 8th grade will also explore God's Plan for relationships and life, using *Theology of the Body for Teens, Middle School Edition*. A permission slip will go home in the fall. Learn more about this program [here](#).

Science



The Holy Apostles middle school science curriculum provides hands-on learning using state-of-the-art tools and programs designed to challenge and engage students. We have taken a blended approach to teaching science concepts, connecting learning from the scientific method and a project-based curriculum. Our program integrates classic science units, as well as Project Lead the Way - Gateway (PLTW), which is a nationally recognized Science, Technology, Engineering and Math program. Our three 3D printers allow students to design and print artifacts and collaborate on projects with 4K—5th grade students.

Our **Project Lead the Way (PLTW) - Gateway** program is designed to spark interest in STEM subjects and prepare students for high school level sciences. It allows students to gain knowledge and acquire skills in problem solving, teamwork, and innovation, as well as explore STEM careers.

6th Grade—Earth Science & PLTW—Students focus on earth science, which specifically includes Earth's Place in the Universe, Earth's Systems and Earth & Human Activity. They also begin the 3-year PLTW Design & Modeling Unit focusing on the engineering design process.

Our PLTW Design & Modeling unit allows students to visualize, design, and test their ideas using Autodesk Inventor software. Students take the Design and Modeling Unit over three years in order to experience the Design Process, practice measurements, and properly sketch and dimension their own designs. Students end the unit each year by completing CAD projects, many of these designs can be 3D printed. Our students even complete a cross-curricular project with Art by creating a prototype of their switch plate and therapeutic toy. Each year for Catholic Schools Week, students design a 3D printed item for the elementary grades (ex: math manipulatives, key chains, etc.).

The PLTW Energy in the Environment unit allows the students to design and model alternative energy sources and evaluate options for reducing energy consumption, including designing and building windmills and a penguin dwelling. Students will learn about the different types and forms of energy and how to properly apply the Law of Conservation of Energy.

In the PLTW Green Architecture unit learn how to apply green concepts to the fields of architecture and construction. They explore dimensioning, measuring, and architectural sustainability and apply what they have learned to design affordable housing units using Autodesk's® 3D architectural design software.

7th Grade – Physical Science & PLTW—Students concentrate on physical science, which is the study of the natural sciences dealing with Matter & Its Interactions, the Periodic Table of Elements, Motion & Stability, Energy and Waves. They continue building on PLTW Design & Modeling Unit, as well as integrate 3 additional PLTW units.

The PLTW Automation & Robotics unit has our middle school students studying mechanical and computer control systems, including robotics and animation. In order to understand mechanical systems, students create mechanisms using VEX Robotics equipment, such as to successfully design, model and test their very own pull toy. Finally, middle school students use the VEX Robotics and RobotC software to successfully design, model, and test common robots in society.

The Magic of Electrons unit blends in with our chemistry studies by challenging students to design circuits. Students use math skills to calculate the electrical flow within a system, and also convert electrical energy into mechanical energy.

The Science of Technology Unit is combined with our chemistry and physics curriculum. Students use basic chemistry concepts to think like a chemical engineer and a chemist, especially while exploring the influence of nanotechnology in our lives today. The physics lesson includes using the design process to build devices with simple machines, including a Rube Goldberg machine.

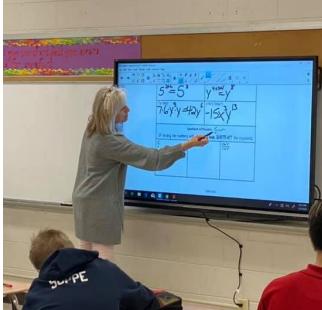
8th Grade – Life Science & PLTW—Students study life science, including Molecules to Organisms, Ecosystems, Heredity and Biological Evolution. They complete their PLTW Design & Modeling unit and incorporate a PLTW Medical Detectives unit.

Students play the role of real-life Medical Detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, measure and interpret vital signs, dissect a sheep brain, investigate disease outbreaks, and explore how a breakdown within the human body can lead to dysfunction.

In the 2021-22 school year, our science lab features:

- 21 PLTW laptops
- Autodesk Inventor software (CAD)
- RobotC software
- 6 VEX Robotics kits
- 3- 3D Printers
- Autodesk Revit Software

Middle School Math & Language Arts



Our middle school math curriculum was carefully developed based on the needs of each child. Upon entering the middle school at Holy Apostles in 6th grade the focus begins with making sure our students have mastered, both computationally and in understanding and applying, basic arithmetic skills. Whole numbers, decimals, and fractions are completed and reviewed along with percentages taught with real life budgeting and business planning, to name a few topics covered during this first year.

From there we begin our journey through pre-algebra beginning with integer work as well as working with other rational numbers. We go over ratios and proportions and that leads us to our introduction of slope and other linear algebraic concepts.

We complete our journey through middle school with refining linear systems before moving on to quadratics, polynomials, and some rational equations. Within these units we also cover the 8th grade geometric standards. Our goal is to challenge every student, meet their needs to the best of our ability, and send them on to the next level competent and confident!

Our middle school language arts program at Holy Apostles focuses on the study of the mechanics and conventions of the English language. Students will leave for high school with an in-depth understanding of the backbone of writing – grammar – and how it affects everyday life in both writing and speaking. Each year reviews the material taught the year prior and builds upon that information to the next level of complexity to help create a well-rounded language arts experience.



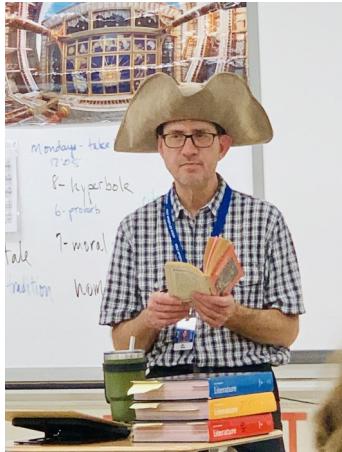
In addition to focusing on the grammatical aspects of language arts, various styles of writing are taught. These include narrative, persuasive, and various expository experiences. Using their deeper knowledge of the rules of the English language, students are able to create clearer and more meaningful essays to prepare them for higher education and their future occupations.

Vocabulary instruction is also a part of each week. Using the text *Vocabulary Power Plus*, students learn a new set of high level vocabulary words weekly, integrating these words into everyday use through a set of written exercises. Intense vocabulary instruction has been shown to increase reading comprehension in students of all levels.

Grammatical Units Focus: kinds of sentences, nouns, pronouns, verbs, modifiers, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, verbals and verbal phrases, sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, capitalization, and punctuation.

Literature & Social Studies

Our middle school literature and social studies curriculum connects current events, history, and literature as students explore all facets of literacy; reading, writing, speaking and listening. They learn character development, practical life skills, and problem solving as they examine how historical figures and authors teach us to overcome adversity. We have a passion for creating a life-long appreciation of reading, writing, and learning in each student.



The **middle school literature** curriculum centers on the individual development of each student. It is designed around developing the understanding of writing techniques used by authors and unveiling the deeper meaning of different types of informational text and genres of fiction. This is achieved by providing grade level and advanced material and different forms of assessment: technology based and hands-on projects, presentations and written responses.

To ensure students develop a high level of understanding of the middle school curriculum, content is integrated across the other subject areas. This supports the development of the students' learning and deeper comprehension of various concepts and topics.

In **Social Studies**, our Middle School students study three different topics: World Geography, World History, and United States History. Students are challenged to look at the world, and at history, critically through research and hands-on investigations that utilize different technological tools. While studying each subject, students create a variety of unique projects and presentations that focus on historical events within our world.

6th Grade—World Geography

- Amazing Race Project
- Country Relationship Essay
- Five Themes of Geography Project
- Modern Global Issues Research

7th Grade—World History

- Ancient Biblical Times
- Roman Emperor Project
- Renaissance/Global Age Summative
- French Revolution—Napoleon

8th Grade—U.S. History

- Cold War
- 1960s—Civil Rights
- Constitutional Convention Debate
- World War I Topic Project



Spanish, Physical Education, Music & Art

At Holy Apostles Catholic School, we strive to educate the whole child and broaden their perspective of themselves and the world around us. We offer curriculum, projects, clubs and activities to support and grow each child on their road to high school.

The middle school Spanish program is designed to help students become proficient in their language use and cultural knowledge in order to effectively communicate. At this level, the students focus on communication through listening, speaking, reading and writing. They begin to use their language skills in a practical manner. The material covered in our program is equivalent to a Spanish 1 course in high school. This allows students to further develop their language skills in high school at a higher level and allows students to receive high school credit in the public schools.

6th Grade—At the beginning of middle school, students are able to talk about their world. They can describe their interests, their school day and their community. They are able to create a city and discuss where they live, where they are going and how they get there.

7th Grade—As their time in middle school develops, students are able to describe themselves and talk about their health, their families, and their household chores.

8th Grade—In their final year, students are able to use their Spanish to shop at a clothing store and critique food in a restaurant. They are able to talk about events that are happening right now, as well as past events and future events. The year ends with the students reading a short novella written completely in Spanish. Students also begin to use their Spanish knowledge outside the classroom as they put on a fashion show for their first grade buddies, order food in a Mexican restaurant and shop at a Mexican supermarket.

The middle school Physical Education program advances on the knowledge and skills gained in 4th and 5th grades. Students develop more challenging skills and learn more details about the rules and procedures connected to each sport and activity.

6-8th Grade— In all units throughout the year, students explore how the activities in class help develop their cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength / endurance and flexibility. Students also use fitness testing results to reflect on current fitness levels, analyze what their results mean, and use these results to make plans to improve overall fitness levels.

We understand and appreciate the value of Music education in the lives of each individual student and provide students with music class twice a week. The middle school music program consists of various units all while celebrating the beauty of vocal expression, as well as its connection to our Catholic faith. Other units of focus include: keyboards, guitars, music history, theory, etc. In these units, we focus on rhythm, pitch, coordination, notation, group work, composing and performing.

The middle school Art program offers a child-centered approach to enhance the ability to visualize and develop creative expression. Middle school students have the opportunity to learn via independent study and often integrate projects with core curriculum including social studies, science, religion and language arts. Art appreciation and art history are integrated into the program. Students experiment with media including: clay, ink, oil, chalk, charcoal, textiles, paper mache, tempera and watercolor.

Clubs, Arts & Athletics

Mad Science (K-6) This program offers fun, inquiry-based, hands-on experiments. It covers a wide range of science topics such as physics, optics and rocketry.

Mass Servers (5-8) This is a wonderful opportunity for your child to grow spiritually and become an integral part of the mass.

FIRST Lego League Club (7-8) Teams will build autonomous robots with LEGO® MINDSTORMS® technology and perform a series of missions. They will practice STEM skills, while learning to make positive contributions to society.



Peer Mentoring (6-8) Students have the opportunity to share their talents by tutoring younger students on a weekly basis. The activities are designed by teachers and reinforced by the middle school students.

Run for Faith (6-8) Run / Walk for Faith is a club for middle school runners that parallels the endurance of a sport like running with the endurance of one's faith. At the conclusion of the program, participants will try to complete either a 5K or half marathon.

Scouts: (K-8) Boy and Girl Scouts is a great opportunity for children to learn responsibility while growing in their friendships and faith.

Ski Club (age 7 and up) Ski club is a family activity that travels to Alpine Valley Resort six times per season, either on Friday nights or Sunday afternoons. Advanced, intermediate and beginner skiers / snowboarders are welcome. All members of the student's family receive the discounted rates at Alpine Valley.

Student Council (6-8) This is an organization comprised of middle school students elected by the student body. The Council works closely with staff to create fun activities for the school as well as charity events for the community.

Programs and activities to promote the arts:

Band (4-8) Students receive instrumental music instruction in small group lessons offered weekly during the school day, as well as large group instruction after school. The band performs in the Christmas and spring school music concerts, as well as at events throughout the community.

Choir (5K—8th) There are 2 choir options to join: Children's Choir for 5K-8th grade students and Crescendo Choir for 5th-8th grade students. Both perform at Mass, but the Crescendo Choir also performs within the community and other events.

Forensics (6-8) This team gives students the opportunity to have fun developing and improving their speaking abilities. Students will be working with a specific topic or selection of literature and will present that topic or selection in front of an audience.



The Holy Apostles School athletic program for 5th—8th grade students provides a positive learning experience for Christian development in a competitive environment. Students learn sportsmanship and teamwork, while getting the opportunity to improve their knowledge of sports and practice skills. The program strives to develop self worth, sportsmanship, discipline, respect for authority and physical well being.

- **Volleyball**—Practice starts in late August and games begin in mid-September through November.
- **Basketball**—Practice begins the first week of December and games can go until the end of March.
- **Track & Field**—Practice begins in early April and meets begin mid April and end in early June.

More information about clubs and activities for middle school students will be provided at the start of the year. Watch the Messenger for details.