

## **Our Eighth Grade Mission:**

Eighth grade is a year of leadership and responsibility based on Christian witness within the school. Students are preparing themselves for the transition to high school with a focus on critical thinking, advanced writing skills, higher level math and advancement in the study of art, music, and Spanish. They develop and maintain cooperative relationships with teachers, classmates and parents, seeking help when necessary and holding themselves to high standards. They take initiative in leading student government, volunteering in services, and promoting the common good of the school. They prioritize and balance their school work and study time with extra-curricular sports, art and forensics activities. They learn to act appropriately within different social situations, accepting others' differences with respect.

**Art:** The Visual Art Program at Saint John Vianney aims to inspire, challenge, and empower each student through exposure to the arts. It is our goal that students will become life-long learners, appreciators, and supporters of the Fine Arts.

Art creation is the foundation of our program. Students are expected to take pride in their work while developing their craft with patience and perseverance. The curriculum addresses both historical and contemporary practices, exposing students to a wide variety of media, techniques, and processes in two and three dimensional design. Students are taught how to evaluate and analyze art, thus, gaining an appreciation for a wide range of styles, movements, cultures, and historical works of art. Students learn concepts and vocabulary associated with the visual arts, as they are expected to communicate these ideas in visual, oral, and sometimes written form.

The range of art projects is as varied and diverse as the unique individuals that create them. The Visual Arts Program supports all subject areas and incorporates cross curricular instruction as much as possible. From mathematics to religion, the arts span all disciplines and require higher order thinking skills, creative problem solving, self assessment, expression, and awareness. The art curriculum is derived from Diocesan Standards and strives to remain current with state, national and global trends in art education.

## **GRADES 5-8 CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS**

**Content Standard #1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes  
*Achievement Standard:* 1. Students select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices. 2. Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

**Content Standard #2:** Using knowledge of structures and functions: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work. 2. Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas.

3. Students select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas

**Content Standard #3:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks. Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

**Content Standard #4:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures. 2. Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts. 3. Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

**Content Standard #5:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others: *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art. 2. Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry. 3. Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures

**Content Standard #6:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines *Achievement Standard:* 1. Students compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context. 2. Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts

**Foreign Language:** The foreign language program in Eighth Grade is designed to allow our students to experience other cultures through literature, music, art, and dance. Students continue to learn and recite proverbs, short poems, songs and anecdotes, to identify people and objects from oral and written descriptions, to use appropriate gestures and oral expressions for greetings, leave-takings, and common classroom interactions. Our Eighth graders begin to use materials and/or media from the target language such as newspapers, literary texts, etc. The students begin to use more advanced grammar (comparatives/superlatives, affirmative and negative commands, etc.) as well as learn how to order a meal in Spanish, work with the Euro and Spanish currency, communicate daily household chore requests, and converse in Spanish during class time.

**Language Arts:** The Language Arts teacher helps each student to develop and embrace a lifelong appreciation of reading, writing, and effective communication. Writing skills are the primary focus in Seventh grade with attention to grammar skills. Reading skills continue to be developed and enhanced. Teachers are mindful of the demands of High School for well-organized exposition, correct sentence structure, and punctuation, correct spelling, a large working vocabulary, and analysis. In order to develop these skills, our Eighth graders continue to develop listening comprehension, independent reading, word

analysis, vocabulary development, regular in-class writing to emphasize student initiative and self-direction rather than teacher centered analysis are explicitly and consistently developed throughout the year. These skills are extended as the students confront more challenging literature and longer writing assignments.

Our Eighth grade students are required to read The Pearl and one other book from the summer reading list sent home with report cards. They participate in dramatizations and group projects, give formalized speeches by using aides to speak formally (i.e. note cards, props etc.) and participate in group discussions and story development. Listening skills continue to be strengthened by following both two and three step oral directions, recalling sequence of events in a story, by predicting outcomes, and then answering orally to specific questions about a lesson demonstrating basic comprehension skill. Our Eighth graders continue to correlate and evaluate the information taught in class so they can express their own thoughts, views, and opinions on a given topic as well as determine if the information given is either: fact, fiction or opinion. Our Eighth grade students will continue to learn to use a variety of reading strategies such as context clues, phonics, sentence structure, and prior knowledge to discern main ideas and predict endings. The Eighth grade student continues to connect reading vocabulary through a variety of reading, writing, listening, and speaking language activities in the language arts and other subject areas and develop it by using mapping activities. Eighth graders read to identify the plot line, the setting, the main characters and their motivation in a story/selection. They use a thesaurus to find new words to increase their vocabulary and to develop word meaning skills by using multiple-meaning words and analogies. Eighth graders understand inferential meaning by interpreting cause/effect and recognizing figurative/picturesque language and by making compare/contrast relationships in relation to a story or text.

Every child will observe and participate in a variety of writing activities focused on writing responses across the curriculum in the form of letters, journals, poetry, directions to complete a task, and observations about authors. They understand that prewriting is the stimulation of ideas and gathering of thoughts. A few strategies used to develop our Eighth graders' writing skills include participating in small group or whole class written pieces as well as continuing to free write to stimulate cognitive and imaginative processes that provide thoughtful reflection. Students write drafts, then revise each type of writing i.e. essay, letters, invitation, thank you, drama, poetry, narration, argumentation, etc. then use the proper form for each type of writing. Grammar skills are honed such as punctuation, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, interjections, conjunctions, and analysis of the written work by sentence function. Each area is designed to enhance the child's confidence and ability to communicate.

**Library:** During their weekly library visit, Eighth graders continue to discover the realm of possibilities that can feed ones imaginations. We build library skills into English as well as other curriculum areas, as student search for information to complete their projects. Each child continues to develop the skills essential to becoming an active and thoughtful library user, as they nurture their love of literature by exploring the library and broadening their exposure to the various types of literature thru more in-depth examination in the various areas available to them. Students are able to independently able to use the computerized card catalog system. Eighth graders continue to use

encyclopedias, dictionaries, magazines, computer websites and atlases in the reference section to research topics across the curriculum. Each visit is designed to spark the child's imagination, enhance the desire to read and to discover a world beyond their scope of existence.

**Math: Pre-Algebra:** The pre-algebra experience for the Eighth grader continues to bridge arithmetic and algebra by emphasizing the development of strategies to solve computations and algebraic concepts and techniques. The students will continue to work with measurements which extends to spatial reasoning, fractions, ratios, percentages, multiplication and division, to solve word problems, to find averages and to solve equations. We reinforce the importance of geometric concepts i.e. area, radius, circumference, angle, perimeter, number theory, probability etc. Mathematics is presented as a form of logic that allows students to understand relationships among various forms and mathematical ideas.

**Math: Algebra:** The algebra experience for the Eighth grader introduces the algebraic concepts of using and solving with variables early in the curriculum. We emphasize the development of strategies to solve computations and algebraic concepts and techniques. The students will continue to work with geometric concepts e.g. area, radius, circumference, angle, perimeter, number theory, probability etc. We also focus on concepts of linear functions, slope, polynomials, and quadratic formulas. Mathematics is presented as a form of logic that allows students to understand relationships among various forms and mathematical ideas to include the use of rational and irrational numbers, radicals, and integers.

**Music:** The Eighth grade student continues to develop the elements of music i.e. meter, notes, tone, chords, beat, mood of music, good singing posture, breathing, diction, and does rhythmic activities to develop their singing voice and lend toward group music experiences. Students will explore and experiment with a variety of musical instruments, with a focus on music composition to explore their natural inclination toward self expression and creativity to reinforce self-esteem and foster enjoyment. Students will learn about songwriting and write lyrics about something dear to them. Students will also write their own melody with chords to accompany their lyrics. Students will engage in orchestrating a simple melody utilizing Sibelius software in the computer lab.

**Physical Education:** The emphasis in PE is sports and physical education skills. Eighth graders build on the skills learned in previous years such as the necessity of warm-ups of body muscles before strenuous exercise, aerobic activities to enhance flexibility and co-ordination, and movement education to perform loco motor and nonlocomotor skills in various sequences. . Students will learn how to officiate different sports. Continued development of the concept of shared space, equipment, group co-operation, good sportsmanship behavior, strategies of various sports, and team building emphasizing co-operation and problem solving is an important part of the Eighth grader's experience and curriculum.

**Religion:** We believe that the salvation of each child's soul is primary and with their salvation in mind, we direct each student to lead virtuous lives pleasing to God, not for

their own prestige. Their academics and their spiritual instruction will help them to witness the Gospel in the world and to learn what God has planned for each one of them. To this goal appreciation of one's abilities and uniqueness of self and others, identifying rights and responsibilities of membership in family, neighborhood, parish faith community, and society, as well as recognizing the authority of God and of parents in one's life are key. Each student is taught to recognize negative and positive feelings, to express gratitude, to show and ask for forgiveness, and to demonstrate honesty, sharing, charity, and respect for all people and the world around us. Each student identifies and practices Christian values, the persons with authority in the church, and participates in Christian services.

Every child is taught that the two great commandments are the core of Jesus' message and that Jesus is the model of all God wants us to become. Recognition of the major title of Mary as the Mother of God, that the Father as our Creator, and the Spirit as the source of unity and grace carrying out the work of Christ in the world encourages each child to show concern for the poor, the weak and the suffering. Explanations of the liturgical year, the Eucharist as a sacrificial banquet, the bible as the inspired word of God, the sacraments, the different parts of the Mass, the meaning of gestures such as kneeling, signing, genuflecting, responding to prayer, and the different forms of prayer, the principles for ethical Christian behavior, the Eternal, divine and natural law, the formation of conscience, all enable each student to become an informed and active members in the Catholic community. Discussions of scripture help each child reach a deeper understanding of life, faith, and love of God, oneself and others. Each child participates in spontaneous prayer, recites basic responses of the Mass, which they attend once a week, and memorizes the prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Angel of God, Grace before/after meals, Act of Contrition, and the Morning Offering.

The basic course of study includes a focus on Church history. History, far from simply a record of economic or social events, is taught as the interplay of God with man and the development of His Church acting for the salvation of all. Church history includes a focus on major events from the apostolic foundation to the modern world and includes identifying and discussing the lives of saints as key instruments and protagonists in history as well as friends and models for Christian life. Disputed historical events such as the Crusades, the Inquisition, the controversy with Galileo and the Church's involvement in the World Wars are discussed and evaluated. Relationships with Judaism, Islam and other Christian religions are studied. Eighth graders continue to study the sacraments, especially the sacrament of Confirmation, since this is the year that Catholics of the Nashville diocese are confirmed. The practice of volunteering service to the community is only one of the ways that students begin to live their commitment to a stronger union with Christ and His Church. Lastly, there is an analysis and evaluation of current moral/ethical situations (just war, medical ethics, social justice, human sexuality) in light of sound and traditional Catholic and biblical principles. This is done so that students are able to apply the basic principles to situations later in life. Current events in the Church often bring real-life situations to the discussion. Students are encouraged not to make their religious education end upon graduation but to continue it all their lives.

**Science:** The science curriculum for Eighth graders is Physical Science introducing them to basic concepts and theories of physical science. Developing keen observational skills

is an integral part of the Eighth grader's science program as they focus on experiments which are designed to give them a strong foundation and understanding of substances and their physical properties. The students will work on projects concerning energy, force, matter, and elements, as well as physical and chemical changes. Activities are designed to allow students to rely mostly on concrete thinking, yet allowing for creativity and abstract reasoning. The students participate in science fair, creative challenges, group projects, and debates as well as create models, dioramas, and power point presentations.

**Social Studies:** Our Eighth grade social studies experience focuses on American History and Political Science. Students begin to identify the effects of World History, economics, and policies of world leaders as they affect America. We begin to look at historical justice and understand the role of the individual in society and ethnic group ideology. Our students continue to use current events to keep informed and identify recent happenings as well as recognize the need for world peace and an understanding of others, their lifestyles, and beliefs. Class discussions often involve students' critical thinking; analyzing leaders, events, and ideas; and debating current and historical events.

**Technology:** The presence of computers in the classroom gives each child the opportunity to continue to enhance the learning and teaching process. Each Eighth grader goes to computer class once a week, enhancing the classroom experience with the use and understanding of the proper and responsible use of the Internet, basic computer terms and concepts, and the use of websites and graphics programs to create and research information to convey an idea and further on topic knowledge. Students are proficient in their typing skills but will continue to develop speed and accuracy using the Type to Learn Program by Sunburst. Eighth graders continue to learn the appropriate and ethical conduct of computer/internet use by following the school's Internet User Policy, and respecting the privacy of all users. The emphasis on creativity and preparing class presentations and photo galleries by the use of a word processor, saving and retrieving files and documents, and researching thru the use of other reference websites and search engines, enables each Eighth grader to probe more deeply into their computer/class projects and work independently as they enhance their knowledge across the curriculum.