

Eighth Grade

- **Language Arts –**

English 8: Eighth grade English covers composition and the process of revising and editing. Grammar and mechanics are covered daily. Daily language exercises help the skills of editing and revision. The Writers Inc. Handbook integrates research projects with social studies and computer to involve the holistic point-of-view.

Daily Vocabulary 8

Students write the definition for the “word of the day” and keep a file of these words. This is a fun way to enrich vocabulary skills. The words are those that students will find useful in their reading, writing and speaking.

Literature 8

Grade 8 Literature/Reading consists of three main components. These are:

- A – Assigned reading from trade books

Students participate in literature circles in which cooperative, collaborative learning is fostered along with independent reading. Novels may include:

The Outsiders

The Pigman

The Pearl

Summer of My German Soldier

The Giver

- B – Reader’s Workshop – Silent sustained reading

Students choose a school appropriate book. Combined with the reading, students write literature letters which describe the plot, include opinions, and explain how they relate personally. Students also set reading goals. Teacher-student individual conferencing is a part of the assessment process.

- C – Journaling

- **Math** – Students in eighth grade participate in one of two math classes based on their skill level.

Pre-Algebra

The Pre-Algebra classes focus on basic equation solving and working with variables. Through problem-solving and cumulative skill practice, students learn the following:

- Solving equations and inequalities
- Factors and fractions
- Integers
- Rational numbers
- Ratio, proportion and percent
- Functions and graphing
- Statistics and probability
- Polynomials
- Applying algebra to geometry
- Area and volume

Algebra

Eighth grade Algebra is the most advanced math class offered at the middle school level. Students are challenged to interpret word problems, mathematical statements, and symbols. Major topics and area covered are:

- Inequalities
 - Graphing
 - Expressions and equations
 - Rational numbers: expressions and equations
 - Polynomials
 - Radicals: expressions and equations
 - Relations and functions
 - Factoring
- **Religion** - Church History is the main focus of eighth grade religion class. Students are invited to learn what the first church was like by reading the Gospel of Mark and Acts of the Apostles. We then explore the history of the Catholic Church, both the successes and failures, up to the church today. We also spend time learning about religious orders, other Christian faiths, global social issues, and continue to expand our experiences of prayer, scripture, and service. Students also participate in two retreats, one focusing on their leadership role in our school, and another at the end of the year celebrating their gifts and challenging them to live out their faith in the future.

All middle level students participate in studies of social justice issues occurring in our world today in light of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Students also develop the use of journaling as a way of exploring their thought processes and aiding in spiritual growth.

Steps to Respect education continues to help children solve the problem of bullying. The program teaches students what to do about bullying and how to ask adults for help. This

program teaches prosocial skills – empathy, problem solving and emotion management – that help children succeed both socially and academically.

- **Science** – Eighth grade covers Earth Science. Units include the following: earth-moon system, sun and stars, air and weather, oceanography, rock and minerals, and chemistry.

**Each middle school grade level begins the year working on the Scientific Method. At each level, hands on labs are conducted to increase student understanding of the concepts covered in each unit. Quarterly projects are designed for each grade level to enhance student creativity and thinking skills.

- **Social Studies** – Eighth grade Social Studies covers several stages of American History. The course uses three different textbooks. Book One (Liberty for All) covers social and racial injustice. Book Two (Age of Extreme) covers the Industrial Revolution's effect on life in the United States. Also, a US textbook is used periodically, depending on the unit of study. Book Three (War, Peace, and All That Jazz) covers World War I and World War II. Other areas covered in project form are colonial times, territorial expansion, and selected presidents.
- **Art** - Students will review and build on the foundations of art theory, the elements of art (line, shape, color, texture, form, value, space) and applying that knowledge to projects and activities. Color production will continue to include the intermediate colors and other combinations. Eighth graders will continue to also explore all of the principles of design (balance, pattern, contrast, rhythm, unity, movement and emphasis) but with projects which emphasize the more complex concepts of three dimensional form, value and space and reflect cultures some of which are Celtic, Japanese, Chinese, Native American, Arabic and American.
- **Physical Education** - The Middle School level teaches specific skills for individual and team sports (soccer, football, volleyball, bowling, basketball, floor hockey, tumbling, dance, jump rope, fitness, track & field, tennis and softball). Offense and defense strategies are learned along with developing and maintaining cardio respiratory endurance, muscular strength, flexibility and body composition.
- **Music** - The middle school students have the opportunity to select the type of music class in which they would like to participate. The music class choices are:
 - Music Theory
 - Chorus
 - Instrumental
- **Music Theory** - Students will review all notes, rests, musical signs, and musical symbols previously learned and expand upon them. They will study how to and practice making scales and chords. They will review musical instruments and what family they belong to. They will write reviews of different music they hear and write their own melodies. They will learn and write about different composers and the musical era the composers belonged to. They will listen to and compare music of different cultures and times. They learn the layout and formation of the standard orchestra and discuss the role of the conductor. They will study jazz music and improvisation. They will study the musical history of the Church and plan music for their school masses.

- **Chorus** - Students will sing a variety of songs. The class is primarily participation based. They will sing for every school Mass, so a lot of hymns and psalms will be learned. They will sing at both concerts, Christmas and Spring. They will work on singing rounds and two-part harmonies, eventually leading to three-part harmonies. Music reading will also be stressed. Students will review notes, rests, musical symbols, and the letters for both the treble and bass staves. They will learn about dynamics, articulation, and tempo.
- **Concert Band** - The Band Program is open to students in Grades 4-8. Students may join band for the first time at any of the above grade levels; it is not necessary for students to start in 4th Grade in order to participate.

The Concert Band is open to all students in Grades 5-8 and those 4th Grade students who have achieved adequate preparation through lessons and Fourth Grade Band. Students have the choice of learning one of the following instruments: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, or percussion. Band students will learn to read music in the clef necessary for their chosen instrument. They will learn to play that instrument individually and as part of a group. Students are continually challenged to learn new rhythms, notes, and to reach new levels of expressiveness. Emphasis is placed on teamwork. Students are expected to play as a band, rather than as a random grouping of instruments that are all playing the same music at the same time. The Concert Band plays two concerts, Christmas and Spring, and when the opportunity is available, at the Band Festival held annually at Notre Dame Academy. Students are also given opportunities to participate in Honors Bands and Solo and Ensemble.

- **Spanish** - Your eighth grader can already have a conversation with a Native Spanish speaker, now it's time to fine-tune and add even more vocabulary and grammar! Some of the things covered this year will be situations like arriving at school, being in class, being at a party, being at a restaurant, and being at the store. We will also be adding vocabulary for family, things around the house, sports, and foods, and cooking. Other things we'll be covering are stem changing verbs, possessive adjectives, contractions, and some past tense verbs. Did I mention that we'll be going to a Mexican Restaurant as a class? At the end of the year, to wrap up our food unit, we'll be taking a field trip to a local restaurant and the students will be required to order in Spanish, request their bill in Spanish, and of course greet the waiter or waitress in Spanish. Eighth grade will be a blast, there is so much to learn!!
- **Technology** – Technology for the kids at Lourdes is part of the daily curriculum in the classrooms and computer lab with a variety of activities, lessons and software programs. All classrooms have personal computers for use in small group and individual activities. The computer lab is used for large group instruction, research and independent study. The lab is reserved by classroom teachers as required by their lesson plans.

Keyboarding occurs during the 1st semester with emphasis on technique, accuracy and building speed. Testing of student keyboarding skills and word processing knowledge is performed with guidelines provided by the area high schools to determine which classes (key boarding or word processing) to enroll in high school. Upon completion of the student testing, the results are provided to the families to assist in class registration at high school. A review of Microsoft Word, Powerpoint and Excel is performed. Internet terminology, history, safety, net etiquette, and search techniques are discussed and exercised. The students have access to the computers in the classroom or the computer lab during study halls or during class periods with teacher direction.