Parent Guide to Your Child's Eighth Grade Program

Christian Learner/Social Emotional Learner

Christian Learners/Social and Emotional Learners possess skills and attitudes that are the foundation of learning. Our thinking, approach and actions should show everyone we are Christians. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) assists students to gain and apply knowledge, attitudes and skills to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. The tenets of Christian living and SEL competencies support the individual throughout life. Acting as Jesus would want us to act is the goal of everyone in our Catholic school community- teachers, parents, students, staff, principals and pastors. The skills learned through understanding, adopting and practicing social and emotional competencies and the values of our Christian faith will help ensure your children have a fulfilling life. So, welcome to our Catholic school. We are pleased to partner with you in the education of your children. We promise our prayer and support, and we ask for yours. We trust Jesus to bless the education we offer in His name.

Religion

Your eighth-grade child tries to discover God on an adult level and is moving into a principled stage of moral decision-making. His or her growth is influenced by the saints and other outstanding people. Class content focuses on the 4 pillars of the Catholic faith: Creed, Sacraments, Christian Living, and Prayer.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- The creed as a summary of faith
- Models of the Church: Community and Institution, Herald, Prophet and Servant, Pilgrim, Mystical Body of Christ, Universal Sacrament and Sign
- The history of the Church
- The Sacraments as special signs within the life of the Church
- The themes of each season of the liturgical year
- Witness to Christian Life by the teachings of Jesus
- Maturity and morality
- Prayer in the age of the Church

English Language Arts & Literacy

To prepare for bigger challenges in high school, eighth grade students must grapple with major works of fiction and nonfiction that extend across cultures and centuries. As they work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, students also must learn to question an author or speakers' assumptions and assess the accuracy of his or her claims. They also must be able to report findings from their own research and analysis of sources in a clear manner.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- Citing the evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what is explicitly stated and/or implied from a book, article, poem, or play

- Analyzing where materials on the same topic disagree on matters of fact, interpretation, or point of view
- Learning how authors support their ideas through word choice, sentence and paragraph structure, and other methods
- Building writing around strong central ideas or points of view; supporting the ideas with sound reasoning and evidence, precise word choices, smooth transitions, and different sentence structures
- Planning and conducting research projects that include several steps and use many credible and documented print and digital sources
- Analyzing the purpose of information presented in diverse media (e.g., print, TV, web) and evaluating its social, political, or commercial motives
- Present findings and claims to others, emphasizing key points with relevant evidence and sound reasoning, adapting speech to the audience and the formality of the setting, and responding to questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas
- Using strong, active verbs to create a clear picture for the reader (e.g., walk, skip, meander, lurch, limp)
- Interpreting figures of speech (e.g., irony, puns) and developing a large vocabulary of general academic words and phrases

Mathematics

In eighth grade, your child will learn a number of skills and ideas that he or she must know and understand to be ready for college and career. Your child will continue to learn how to write and reason with algebraic expressions. Your child also will make a thorough study of linear equations with one and two variables. Building on previous work with relationships between quantities, your child will be introduced to the idea of a mathematical function. Your child will prepare for high school geometry by understanding congruence (same shape and size) and similarity of geometric figures.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- Understanding slope and relating linear equations in two variables to lines in the coordinate plane
- Solving linear equations (e.g., $-x + 5(x + 1/3) = 2x - 8$); solving pairs of linear equations (e.g., $x + 6y = -1$ and $2x - 2y = 12$); and writing equations to solve related word problems
- Understanding functions as rules that assign a unique output number to each input number; using linear functions to model relationships
- Analyzing statistical relationships by using a best fit line (a straight line that models an association between two quantities)
- Working with positive and negative exponents, square root and cube root symbols, and scientific notation (e.g., evaluating $\sqrt{36} + 64$; estimating world population as 7 x 109)
- Understanding congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software (e.g., given two congruent figures, show how to obtain one from the other by a sequence of rotations, translations, and/or reflections)

Parent Guide to Your Child's Eighth Grade Program

Science

In eighth grade, New York State Next Generation Science Standards groups your child with the Middle School Standards. However, in a grades 6-8 configuration, the topics studied may vary from grade to grade as the state simply lists a series of content topics and skill processes that must be completed by the end of Middle School. Below you will find possible topics that may be covered in grade 8.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- Develop and describe the structure and properties of matter including atomic composition and molecules.
- Describe and predict changes in matter as a result of particle motion, temperature, phase or the addition or removal of thermal energy
- Investigate and conduct chemical reactions
- Predict patterns of interaction among organisms in a variety of ecosystems
- Evaluate solutions for maintaining biodiversity and maintaining stability in an ecosystem
- Develop a model of the Earth-Sun-Moon system to explain the cyclic pattern of lunar phases, eclipse and seasons.
- Analyze and interpret data of fossils, rocks, continental shapes and seafloor structures that enable understanding of geologic history

Social Studies

In grade eighth grade, your child will complete the in-depth study of the United States from reconstruction to our current day. They will watch how our nation was shaped through its political process, the cultural integration resulting from migrations of people from our own hemisphere as well as the emerging alliances around the world resulting in irreversible influence on our economy, politics, as well as pervasive to our way of life. The program allows for the pulling of themes and patterns from the past to explain our present and predict our future. Serious research using primary and secondary sources will be an integral part of the program.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- Analyze evidence in terms of historical and/or social context, content using arguments, reality of bias and differing points of view to address various audiences
- Identify cause and effect using examples from current events, grade-level content and historical events
- Identify and describe models of historical periodization that historians use to categorize events and periods in U. S. history
- Characterize and analyze changing connections between places and regions using the sub-disciplines of economics, geography, politics, culture and history
- Examine different themes in United States and New York State history from post-war up to the present day, while exploring contemporary issues

Physical Education

Your eighth-grade child is experiencing a time of confusion, uncertainty, curiosity, awkwardness and experimentation. He or she needs room to experiment and make mistakes. He or she finds it difficult to express feelings, particularly to parents. Physical education classes include further

development of motor and movement skills as well as the relationship between physical activity and good health. Emphasis will be on participation with respect for oneself and others.

A Sample of What, Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- Invasion games: offensive skills, dribbling and ball control, shooting on goal, defensive skills
- Net and wall games: serving, striking, weight transfer, volley, two-handed volley, throwing, catching
- Creating space with movement, with offensive tactics, with width and length, by changing size and shape, transitions, variations
- Explains the connections between fitness and overall physical and mental health
- Responds appropriately to participants' ethical and unethical behavior during physical activity by using rules and guidelines for resolving conflicts
- Demonstrates respect for self by asking for help and helping others in various physical activities

Music

Eighth grade music affords your student the opportunity to refine their technical skills and knowledge of music. They also have many chances to experience how music is connected to personal experiences and cultures of the world.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- Performing music with technical accuracy, stylistic expression and culturally authentic practices
- Demonstrating understanding of relationships between music and other arts, varied contexts and daily living
- Showing and explaining how the music's intent is shared by their interpretation and expressive qualities such as phrasing, style and tempo

Art

During the eighth-grade art program your child will continue to refine his/her skills of analyzing artwork, communicating the meaning of artwork and creating works of art that convey new meaning to the viewer. They will work alone and with peers to present works of art in a formal show. Risk-taking and perseverance are reinforced.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 8th Grade

- Making art collaboratively to reinforce positive group identity
- Collaboratively prepare and present selected artwork for display and create exhibition narratives for the viewer
- Explaining how personal aesthetic choices are influenced by culture and environment and then impact the visual image of the work
- Demonstrating a willingness to experiment and take risks to pursue ideas and meanings that emerge in the art making process