



Middle School Experience

6 TH GRADE	7 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
English Literature English Composition Earth Science Mathematics Religion Texas History Physical Education Art Latin Grammar & Culture *Robotics **Band	English Literature English Composition Life Science Pre-Algebra Religion US History I Physical Education Art Latin Grammar & Culture *Robotics **Band	English Physical Science Algebra I Religion US History II Physical Education Art Latin Grammar & Culture *Robotics **Band

*After School Elective

**Lunch Time Elective

Math

6th grade Math

Sixth Grade Math provides students with experiences necessary to become mathematically literate for the 21st Century. Focal points in mathematics at Grade 6 are numbers and operations; proportionality; expressions, equations, and relationships; measurement and data; and personal financial literacy. In addition, an ability to analyze mathematical relationships; to connect and communicate mathematical ideas; and to display, explain, or justify mathematical ideas using precise mathematical language is developed.

Pre-Algebra

Students have achieved solid knowledge and skills in arithmetic and will be introduced to abstract concepts in mathematics. At the end of the course students will demonstrate their ability and readiness to make meaningful connections among numbers, variables, equations, graphs, and patterns. Thus, they will be prepared to study Algebra I in Grade 8.

Algebra 1

Algebra I involves concepts, skills and properties associated with real numbers. Linear equations, inequalities and quadratics are developed with a functions-based approach and multi-representations. Additional topics include solving systems of equations, polynomials, probability and statistics, and geometry and measurement. Graphing technology will be used to explore and analyze problem situations.

Language Arts

Middle School Language Arts courses prepare students for a rigorous high school program. In these years, students continue their study of English grammar and sentence structure. They learn to recognize the various rhetorical patterns of writing and learn techniques for producing each. As well, students practice writing strategies that add clarity and sophistication to their finished works. Emphasis on spelling continues as does understanding denotative and connotative uses of words through regular vocabulary practice. The study of literature emphasizes interpreting, analyzing, and understanding different genres related to an overarching theme of study at each grade level: Journey/Adventure (6th); Coming of Age (7th); and Justice/Good vs. Evil (8th). As students progress from one grade to the next, they sharpen their analytical skills and deepen their understanding of universal themes and literature as an art.

Science

Earth Science

This science course introduces students to the broad workings and fundamental processes related to Earth and its functions. The components of this course span geology, oceanography, meteorology, and astronomy, integrating the challenges of our contemporary global environment, and learning positive measures of action. Built within this course are a variety of labs and hands-on experiences. Finally, students will delve deeper into the mysteries of science by cultivating an area of interest, which they then research, write a hypothesis, test, conclude, apply, and display their work in our Science Fair.



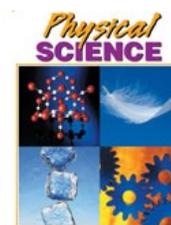
Life Science

This science course utilizes a systematic approach that intertwines labs with real life applications as students develop their knowledge and understanding in areas of life science with an emphasis on diversity, interdependence, and our God given responsibility for stewardship. Areas of study include life's cellular structure and function from single celled microorganisms to viruses, bacteria, plants, animals, and humans. Delving into the human person, students will explore historical findings for man, heredity, body systems, the importance of proper health, the nature of disease and its impacts. Lastly, Seventh Graders will develop and test an area of interest that they will work into a Science Fair project to be presented and judged at our Science Fair.



Physical Science

This course will introduce students to two main strands of Physical Science: Chemistry and Physics. Physical Science seeks to understand, through rigorous study, physical manipulation, observation, and reflection, the rules, laws, and behavior surrounding the nature of energy, forces, thermodynamics, electricity, magnetism, sound and light. In pairing Physics with Chemistry, students are opened to a richer experience of how things work as they study atoms and their behaviors with one another in elements and compounds, mindful of their place within the periodic table. Lastly, students will research, formulate, test and demonstrate their understanding of the scientific method through their participation in the Science Fair.



Religion

Following Christ – 6th

In the Sixth Grade students learn about their Christian life through study of the Ten Commandments and the Holy Mass. The lens through which the commandments are studied is how God's loving plan for our lives brings us to happiness and holiness. In the second semester, the students are brought to a deeper understanding of the Eucharist through the explanation of the Mass and its symbols. The course is taught in an interactive and experiential way, leading the students to a personal understanding of and living of the faith in their daily lives.

Our Life of Grace – 7th

Beginning with an understanding of God's loving gift of the revelation of Himself through Sacred Scripture and Salvation history, grace is understood as central to our relationship with God. The lessons emphasize the role of grace in uniting us to Him, sharing in His life, developing virtues, and on the transmission of grace through the seven Sacraments. The course is taught in an interactive and experiential way, leading the students to a personal understanding of and living of the faith in their daily lives.

Our Life in the Church – 8th

This course focuses on the nature and the history of the Catholic Church and the universal call to holiness of all her members. The goal of the course is to give students a generous and wholehearted love for the Church based on a clear understanding of her divine nature and the treasures she contains. The course is taught in an interactive and experiential way, leading the students to a personal understanding of and living of the faith in their daily lives.

Social Studies

Texas History

In the *Sixth Grade* students' focus is on the Lone Star State, a review of Texas history. While it is a survey course, there is understandably a special focus on the unique features of Texas' history such as its formation from various cultures and nations, its independence movement, its existence as a separate nation, its war with Mexico, its diverse geography and changing borders as well as its eventual incorporation into the United States.

Moreover, there is no shortage of peculiar stories. Take, for instance, the testimony of Congressman Abe Lincoln in the debate over the Spot Resolution, or the comments about the Mexican-American War in the diary of another future president, Ulysses Grant, or the monumental decision of Governor Sam Houston not to accept U.S. federal troops from President Lincoln. This led to his ouster as governor, but had Houston agreed with Lincoln, blood spilt in the Civil War would almost certainly have flowed copiously in the Lone Star State. Houston gave up his office to avoid that catastrophe. It is a fascinating history!

United States History, Part I

In the *Seventh Grade* middle school students draw on their study of Texas history and learn about the growth and development of the United States at large. The focus is on the experiment of our modern democratic republic from its infancy to the initial European, colonial expansion up to the beginning of post-Civil War Reconstruction. Students use the PEMC categories of politics, economics, military, and culture to contextualize and categorize their study. Students will especially familiarize themselves with essential map skills as well as the Constitution. In addition, they will examine the decisive, historical points of controversy and resolution of conflicts within the matrix of our governmental structure of the three branches of congressional, judicial, and executive power.

United States History, Part II

The *Eighth Grade* students in preparation for high school begin a more in-depth look at the growing complexities and conflicts of the United States of America. The students move from the beginning of Reconstruction up to the present and use the PEMC categories of politics, economics, military, and culture to analyze and evaluate the development and outward effects of the modern, democratic, republican experiment. They also utilize more sophisticated and widely available, internet tools such as primary and secondary sources and maps online. Now familiar with the Constitution, they begin to tackle the question of just how deeply should the United States be engaged in global affairs. For instance, are we to be the "policeman of the world"? Do we even have the financial resources to fill that role? Is such a task even hinted at in our Constitution or Declaration of Independence? Just what type of warning did President Eisenhower deliver in his Farewell Address about the military-industrial complex? Students need to understand the limits of U.S. power and to review the principles on which our nation was founded before answering such vital and controversial questions.

Foreign Language

Latin

Middle School Latin courses provide students a foundation in Latin language and culture. Students translate stories in which they learn Latin vocabulary, syntax, and grammar; the concomitant study of Latin derivatives builds the student's English vocabulary. Through reading and projects on Roman culture, centering on mythology (especially the Olympian deities and the mythological origins of Rome), theater (with emphasis on the Greek influence), history (providing a broad overview from Rome's transformation from kingdom to republic to empire), geography (including the various regions of the Mediterranean world), entertainment (such as chariot racing and other athletic events), politics, and daily life, students familiarize themselves with the origins of Western Civilization and its influence on our present-day world.

Art

The mission of the Middle School Art Program is to explore the seven elements of art in depth, and utilize various materials and resources in the creation of original compositions. Students will be introduced to relevant contemporary and historical artists and art styles and will learn to compare, analyze, evaluate, and discuss their own work as well as the work of others. Students will develop the ability to adapt and apply learned skills to other areas of their lives and will recognize the important influence of the arts on our daily lives.

Physical Education

The Physical Education program for Middle School students includes individual and team activities that focus on sports, fitness, and character building. Through class activities and instructions students are given the opportunity to learn volleyball, flag football, basketball, soccer, and track & field. This program develops an awareness and appreciation for activity and physical fitness through cardio, agility drills, and mini-games of fitness and focuses on character building by creating an environment that can showcase sportsmanship and team work.

Library

Middle School Reading Skills. At this stage students will be required to utilize the technology options that we have available for research, reference, and reading in general. Integration of technology into the daily usage Middle School students began two years ago and is in constant updating and development. Teachers from the various disciplines aim to challenge the middle school students with various research and reading efforts throughout the academic year. Ultimately, the goal is to encourage solid computer research skills, combined with creativity and purpose. Reading is the means to the various academic ends that aim at excellence in the preparation for high school and our college prep program.

1:1 Technology

Each student in grades 7 – 12, is issued a laptop for academic use. Students use higher level thinking skills like critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, research skills, creativity, leadership, collaboration, and cooperation authentically in learning. Laptops allow students to use various digital resources and applications fluidly and collaboratively as needed for classroom assignments. The courses at The Highlands School involve writing across multiple subject areas. Having a keyboard, a robust word processing and document creation program, and storage for accessing documents simplifies and enhances the student experience in our college preparatory environment.



Middle School Athletics



At The Highlands we host a wide variety of sports for our 5th – 8th grade students. As members of the Dallas Parochial League (DPL) our teams compete against students from other Catholic schools in the Dallas Diocese. One of the advantages of being a member of the DPL is, due to the size of the league, our teams can be aligned in divisions with teams of similar skill levels. This allows us to capitalize on all the lessons available through participation in athletics...including lessons in virtue like fortitude and charity, life lessons like commitment and responsibility and lessons in both success and failure. While we play to win we also strive to capture all the lessons that sports have to offer.

We strongly hold that these lessons are a crucial element to our integral formation. That is why participation is our first objective in the 5th through 8th grade level. Historically more than 80% of our students participate in athletics with over 50% of those athletes participating in more than one sport.

The DPL offers a wide variety of sports and we can participate based on the interests of our athletes. Sports offered through the DPL include:

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| Baseball | Golf | Soccer | Track | Basketball | |
| Football | Softball | Volleyball | Cross Country | Futsal | Tennis |



Middle School Student Life

Middle School is a critical time in a student's development. The environment one is in, and the experiences they have, have a long-lasting impact on the person who they become as an adult. That's why it's imperative that they be in a place that takes their character development seriously. At **The Highlands School** we believe that all the activities that occur within the **Student Life Department** provide a perfect environment to challenge students in ways that cannot be done elsewhere. We work with our coaches and moderators to focus on more than just competing, or fulfilling the requirements of the activity, but instead, take the student's experiences and turn them into opportunities for growth, both in leadership and in virtue.

During these three years, as the students enter adolescence, they are going through many physical and psychological changes. They become less egocentric and increasingly skilled at understanding logical and concrete information. As they mature in these areas, we help to guide them and provide opportunities for leading their peers and organizing major events. Through the school's personalized approach, we know each individual's needs and abilities and we help transition the students from being passive participants in the elementary grades, to active leaders entering into high school.

ORGANIZATIONS: Robotics – Instrumental Music/Band –Challenge– Conquest– Junior Ambassadors
Dancing Classrooms - Knights of the Altar – DECATS

INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITIONS: PSIA Academic Competitions – Competitive Speech Club – Junior Model U.N. – Spelling Bee

EVENTS: Clash of the Classes - Spring Musical - Talent Show - Field Day - Retreats - Holy Week Missions
Science Fair - 40-Days for Life - Theology Bowl - Homecoming Week

