

## UPPER SCHOOL (GRADES 5-8)

---

*The goal of the Upper School is self-advocacy in a Christ-centered learning environment. Successful students will be academically and socially competent, strive for virtuous character, and work collaboratively. Students switch classes, have advisors, choose clubs, develop a strong work ethic, and grow increasingly comfortable in their own ideas and opinions. Dedicated and experienced faculty members provide strong guidance and prepare students for high school. Leadership, community, respect, and service are cornerstones of the Upper School.*

### HIGHLIGHTS BY GRADE

#### **Fifth Grade**

With several years of spiritual preparation and a year of serious study skills under their belts, fifth grade students are ready to take on challenges and meet higher expectations. Growing in maturity and self-reliance, students take an active role in their education by switching classrooms for some subjects, participating in class, practicing moral virtue with other students, and exercising self-discipline in managing schoolwork. Fifth graders' growing intellectual and spiritual independence from parents provides an opportunity for them to trust in their own critical thinking skills and trust in their faith.

#### **Sixth Grade**

Sixth grade students switch classes for core subject areas, and there is an increased focus on time management and personal academic responsibility. At an age when many children are drawn away from faith and family, Saint Agnes students have daily religious instruction focusing on the Old Testament as part of the academic program, and they engage in frequent service projects.

#### **Seventh Grade**

Greater academic demands and preparation for Confirmation are the hallmarks of the year. Seventh grade students continue their religious studies as an academic topic as they study the New Testament. They prepare for Confirmation (which occurs in the fall of Eighth Grade) by mastering the basic tenets of the Catholic faith and learning to incorporate faith into daily life through prayer and service. Academic highlights include studying the stock market in math and life sciences in science.

#### **Eighth Grade**

Eighth grade is the culmination of many events in a young person's life and a key transition time. Highlights of the academic year include participating in the Science and History Fairs and the Diocesan Shakespeare Festival. Eighth graders lead the school in religious activities such as the Christmas Prayer Service and the Living Stations of the Cross. Saint Agnes graduates have the moral grounding necessary to guide them into adulthood as well as the tools to thrive academically in local high schools, including Bishop O'Connell, Bishop Ireton, Paul VI, Oakcrest, The Heights, Georgetown Visitation, Holy Child, St. Alban's, St. John's, Gonzaga, Georgetown Prep, Yorktown, and Washington & Lee.

### HIGHLIGHTS BY SUBJECT

#### **Language Arts and Literacy**

*The focus is on finding one's voice as a writer and reading for both pleasure and information. Students participate in literature circles, focus lessons, and assessments. Eighth graders compete in the Diocesan Shakespeare Festival. A consistent writing approach is taught, but students differentiate for long-term assignments, using podcasts, plays, and art. Basic study skills, note taking, and organization strategies help develop independence in learning.*

#### **Math**

*Differentiated instruction in the Upper School allows each student to achieve mastery. Topics include number and numeration, percents, ratios, geometry and basic algebra with an emphasis on real world application and problem solving skills. Many eighth grade students study Algebra 1.*

#### **Religion**

*Students are challenged to live their faith by showing respect for self and others. Religious instruction focuses on the Old Testament, social justice, and receiving and living the vows of Confirmation. Students mature as prayer partners, altar servers, and lectors. Eighth graders lead the school in the Nativity Christmas Prayer and Living Stations of the Cross.*

#### **Social Studies**

*History comes alive as students dress as Roman plebeians, create a Civil War memory box, and attend a Roaring 20's party. Students develop critical thinking skills while learning about geography, ancient cultures, US history, and current events. Learning strategies include Cornell outlines, foldables, Reader's Theatre, collaborative groups, Socratic Method, journal writing and incorporation of the fine arts. The History Fair in March allows students to show their ability to gather, organize and interpret data, and communicate their thoughts about local businesses and landmarks.*

#### **Science**

*Students develop skills in the laboratory using scientific method and experimental design. Topics include life, earth and physical science and basic concepts of chemistry. Technology, cooperative groups, long term projects, and work in the greenhouse augment classroom study. Students in seventh and eighth grades participate in the Diocesan Science Fair.*

