

2016-2017
Middle School
**Curriculum
Guide**



STUART
COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL OF THE SACRED HEART

English

English 5 - “Beginning a New Journey”

“We are a family on a journey to a place called Wonderful,” is the family’s motto in *The Mighty Miss Malone*, but also applies to the rising fifth graders, as they begin their Middle School “journey.” The Grade 5 English curriculum is meant to be a transitional year, as students are moved from the Reading Workshop curricula of the Lower School to whole class readings and literary discussion of various genres. Using novels, short stories, poems, and non-fiction texts, students will further develop reading strategies and critical thinking skills. As we begin the year, discussion of the summer reading book, *Wonder*, will provide opportunities for dialogue about the themes of friendship and kindness, in both English and Advisory periods. In the next reading unit, *The Mighty Miss Malone*, students explore themes of hope, courage, and independence, as they get acquainted with Deza Malone and her family. Later in the year, various mysteries will be read and discussed in literary groups. Linking with the History curriculum will be the classic, *D’Aulaires’ Book of Greek Myths*. Each trimester, students complete an Independent Reading Project based on novels of their choice. Writing instruction will focus on the planning, revising, and editing of narrative, informative, and opinion pieces. MLA formatting of documents and the use of Noodletools for the research process will be introduced. Throughout the year, several cross-curricular projects will be integrated with other subject areas; the first, involving bioluminescent invertebrates, links science, art, and English classes. The Project Based Learning (PBL) unit will provide opportunities for real-world English connections. Grammar and vocabulary instruction will aid in strengthening the complexity of each girl’s writing.

English 6 - “Someone Else’s Shoes”

Sharon Creech wrote, “Don’t judge a man until you have walked two moons in his moccasins.” In this course, students will practice critical reading, writing, and thinking skills as they engage in texts from a myriad of genres including short stories, novels, poetry, and drama, as well as non-fiction. While we build these skills, we will use the texts to help us understand what it means to be an empathetic individual, and to figuratively step into “someone else’s shoes.” As we begin the year, discussion of the summer reading book, *What the Moon Saw*, will provide opportunities for dialogue about this theme, as well as the topics of self-discovery, friendship, and cultural awareness. Subsequent novels will include Newbery Medal book, *Walk Two Moons*, and the classic, *A Christmas Carol*. *Catherine, Called Birdy* will connect with medieval studies in the History curriculum. *Tuck Everlasting* or *The Giver* will be read and discussed in literary groups. *A Long Walk to Water* will be read as part of the Project Based Learning (PBL) unit. Each trimester, students complete an Independent Reading Project based on novels of their choice. Writing instruction will continue to focus on the planning, revising, and editing of narrative, informative, and opinion pieces. Students will continue to practice MLA formatting of documents, and further develop their knowledge of Noodletools for the research process. Cross-curricular projects will be integrated with other subject areas, including Science and History. Grammar and vocabulary instruction will aid in strengthening the complexity of each girl’s writing.

English 7 - Inquiring

Students will read a variety of books from both the fiction and nonfiction genres. From learning about girls and their interpersonal relationships in Rachel Simmons' *Odd Girl Speaks Out* to the lives of teenagers in history through *Romeo and Juliet*, the girls will make connections with their own lives. We will also be reading *Fever 1793* in connection with the History curriculum. Traditional Middle School readings such as *The Outsiders* will also be covered as we work to develop the girls' ability to analyze literature and develop their reading skills.

A variety of class activities, both individual and collaborative, encourage critical thinking and in-depth analysis of texts. Writing is a daily practice; we use this medium as a means of questioning, cataloguing, analyzing, evaluating, reflecting and creating. Our focus is on crafting strong thesis statements, on analyzing the structures of various essay forms (persuasive, descriptive, expository, etc.) and on practicing those forms in our own writing work. Students also complete an interdisciplinary research paper and project. By becoming adept at these foundational formulas, we strengthen our academic and imaginative voices as critical readers and thinkers. Writing is treated as a process as well as a product and editing and revision are a major point of emphasis in this course. Finally, students engage in grammar and vocabulary study throughout the year using two separate texts. In sum, English 7 students reach the end of the year with new and stronger reading, writing, researching and speaking skills. However, they will also arrive at an expanded understanding of themselves and their peers, as well as at a new appreciation for questions and for the richness, the complexity and the interconnectedness that this inquiry can reveal.

English 8 - Voicing

What is a voice? What does it mean to have a voice in our world? Who is voiceless and what are the consequences of being so? How do we find and exercise our voice?

These are just some of the questions with which Grade 8 meets the study of literature. It is with these questions that students take on the challenge of unpacking the complex realities of our world through the lenses of literature, civics, theology, science, psychology, language study, art, theater and digital technology. Our rich interdisciplinary curriculum offers students a range of texts under this thematic umbrella. We take on fiction such as *A Raisin in the Sun* and *To Kill A Mockingbird* that illuminate the writerly as well as the cultural qualities of voice; we get to know the courageous women and men use their own voices as catalysts for transformation in profiles, personal essays, biographies and in memoirs such as *Warriors Don't Cry*; we ponder and perform the issues of voice and gender raised in enduring works such as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Nights Dream*, we analyze non-fiction texts and engage in the conversations that they provoke about the ever-evolving social and cultural landscape in which we live. In all of these dimensions, we discover not only the voices and stories of others, but we find our own voices between and around and inside of them.

Students in eighth grade read from a variety of genres and will continue their formal study of grammar and vocabulary throughout the year. In addition, they not only have opportunities to write and respond creatively, but they also continue to develop and expand upon the analytical writing skills learned in 7th grade, including a variety of essay forms. By the end of the school year, students feel confident and well prepared for Grade 9 English; they know how to think critically and have built a solid repertoire of writing skills. Additionally, by the close of eighth grade, students have become more insightful and introspective; each has developed a greater awareness of her own voice and of her role in society and as such is prepared to take on challenges beyond Middle School, going forward as an advocate and as an agent of positive change.

Science

Science 5 - Design and Engineering

In fifth grade, science students use the engineering design process to explore scientific concepts through hands-on building and experimentation.

Concepts in the areas of physical science, life science, computer science and robotics are explored. Each unit of study has three engineering projects that build upon foundational skills while at the same time allowing students to experience the real-world processes of brainstorming, designing, creating, testing and improving. The first project is designed to spark an interest and build skills. The second and third projects are more open-ended allowing for critical thinking and problem solving.

During the engineering process, students research and identify possible solutions to their real-world challenge and then create and test a prototype of their design, making improvements as needed. Students have many opportunities for creativity and innovation while carefully following the criteria and constraints of each project.

Science 6 - The Living World

The purpose of sixth grade science is for our students to develop an understanding of and appreciation of the living world, how that living world is influenced by and dependent upon the earth's physical environment and how their activities fit into and impact those relationships. The curriculum consists of the following major units of study: science processes, characteristics of living things, ecosystems and biomes, cells, bacteria and viruses, plants and flowers, and animals and their adaptations. Throughout the course, students will practice important science skills including: making observations, gathering data, developing hypotheses, designing controlled experiments, analyzing results and drawing conclusions including identifying follow-up work and sources of error and written and oral communication. Class activities stress the scientific method of problem solving and allow students to see how inquiry and experimentation are the foundations of scientific investigation.

Science 7- "Stewardship and Sustainability"

Seventh grade science is driven by several essential questions surrounding our main theme, conserving Earth's resources and promoting sustainability. This course is designed to give young scientists a greater appreciation of Earth's processes and a deeper understanding of how scientists think by becoming scientists themselves through exploration in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. Utilizing a blended approach of hands-on experimentation and digitally interactive technology, our seventh graders embark on a journey to enhance their prior knowledge of making observations and gathering scientific data into meaningful conclusions centered on personal and global responsibility. Student investigations are based upon the qualities and dynamics of Earth's waters; weather; climate and climate change; weathering, erosion and deposition of soil; plate tectonics; and an in-depth investigation of local wetlands habitats and systems. A variety of scientific skills are taught this year, such as gathering, utilizing, and analyzing data and observations; creating high quality graphs and tables; researching and designing experiments; creating collaborative lab reports; presenting their work in a variety of modes; and giving and receiving constructive feedback. At the end of seventh grade, students will have learned and cultivated some of the fundamental skills and techniques to "do" science by conducting experiments in class and performing long-term projects. These projects require student collaboration and help students develop their organizational skills. Throughout the year, students will gain an appreciation of Earth's natural forces and study their role as stewards of the environment. At the end of the year, students

prepare and present an independent research project focusing on a question of interest drawn from across their three years of Middle School science curriculum.

Science 8 - Physical Science

Science provides an active introduction to topics in physics and chemistry. Key areas of study are: motion, forces, Newton's Laws, energy and power, properties of matter, atoms, the Periodic Table, chemical bonding and chemical reactions. Featured STEM-related activities are design and construction of rockets, the use of oscilloscopes and a variety of chemistry and physics experiments. All activities emphasize the collection, calculation and reporting of scientific data and active use of the iPad to collect and share student work. An overarching goal of the class is the practice and development of scientific skills that provide a foundation for future academic pursuits in this area. These skills include: safe lab conduct, observation, data collection, analysis and graphing, cooperation and teamwork, creativity, problem-solving, inquiry, resourcefulness, organization, synthesis and communication. Both skill and content learning will emphasize authentic, hands-on activities and cross discipline connections, thinking and communication. At the end of the year, students prepare and present an independent research project focusing on a question of interest drawn from across the four year Middle School science curriculum.

History

Grade 5 - Ancient World

This course involves the study of Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Through their continued study of the ancient world, students come to appreciate the special significance of geographic places in the development of the human story. Additionally, students acquire a sense of the everyday life of the ancient people (i.e. government and religion), the tools and technology they developed, and the art and architecture they created. With this knowledge, students are able to develop an understanding of the contributions ancient civilizations have made towards current civilizations, leading towards a stronger awareness of our multicultural world. Throughout the course of the year, students learn and develop critical thinking, map, and timeline skills, nonfiction reading and writing skills, how to collaborate with their peers and express their creativity. Additionally, students are assigned a variety of hands-on and technology based projects throughout the school year. Our textbook is *History Alive! The Ancient World*.

Grade 6 - Medieval World and Beyond

This course will introduce students to the history of the European Middle Ages through The Reformation (400 C.E.-1648 C.E.) Students will study the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the three successor civilizations of classical Greece and Rome-- Western Christendom, Islam, and Byzantium, with particular emphasis on the former. The year will end with a study of the Renaissance and Reformation periods. By the end of the course, students will understand how Europe transformed from a collection of barbarian kingdoms into a sophisticated continent. Throughout the course, students will continue to develop their critical thinking, map, and timeline skills, read a variety of nonfiction sources, practice their writing/oral presentation skills, and collaborate with their peers and express their creativity. Additionally, students will research/present a specific topic relevant to the Middle Ages. Students will be assigned a variety of hands-on and technology based projects throughout the school year. Our textbook is *History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond*.

Grade 7 and Grade 8 - Citizenship- A Right And A Responsibility

This two year course serves as an introduction to American government and our political process, while offering opportunities to broaden the lens and understand our role as a global citizen in the wide world around us. Students will study the roots of the American political system and the modern application of traditional ideas such as civil rights, voting, civil dialogue, and community activism. We examine the three branches of government and how they check and balance one another. The course will involve significant research, writing, debate, public speaking, and civic involvement to make both our local communities and the world a better place.

Mathematics

Grade 5 - Developing Number Sense and problem solving

Fifth grade is a transitional year in mathematics where students begin to transition from Think Math curriculum used in the lower school to the pre-algebra program in Grade 6.

The year begins by developing algebraic reasoning using problem solving strategies, inverse operations, and pattern analysis. Students then develop their skills in understanding place value to help them develop fluency in multiplication and division of multi-digit numbers. Students develop fluency of operations with decimals and fractions as well. They are introduced to ratios, proportions, percents, data analysis, and geometry concepts in a number of different contexts. The focus throughout the year is for students to develop themselves as deep thinking mathematicians with a strong and thorough understanding of basic operations, number sense, and estimation skills as they apply to real world math contexts. Various resources are utilized throughout the year as we prepare students for Pre-Algebra.

Grade 6 - Pre-Algebra

This course develops confidence in mathematics and prepares students for the algebra curriculum. Students develop a complete understanding of the four mathematical operations involving integers, positive and negative decimals and positive and negative fractions. They learn how to use the mathematical properties and are able to solve basic algebraic equations. Students also become proficient in ratio, proportion, percent, measurement and estimation. Basic concepts in geometry, probability and statistics are learned. Much time is spent using mathematical concepts to solve real-life problems. A web-based system is used for additional practice and enrichment.

Grade 7 - Algebra I Part I (Regular and Honors)

Algebra Part 1 is a student's first experience with the power of mathematics as a language and tool designed to bring order to the chaos that is around them. Gone is the tediousness of guess-and-check thinking and the frustration of trial-and-error operations. Students work on real world applications of their mathematical skills. Through numerical, graphical, symbolic and verbal explanations of problems, students develop a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught. Students will be prepared to not only use these ideas in other courses, but will also be prepared for the more advanced study to come in Algebra Part 2. The web-based system remains active as the girls progress through Algebra.

Grade 8 - Algebra I Part II (Regular and Honors)

This course enables students to become proficient in algebraic skills, to make connections between mathematics and other curriculum areas, to use algebra to solve real life problems and to improve logical thinking. It emphasizes operations with rational numbers while working with equations, inequalities, powers, polynomials, factoring, functions, graphs, lines, slopes, systems of equations, radicals, number and set theory and the quadratic formula. The web-based system will remain active throughout the remainder of middle school.

Computer Science

Video Game Design (8th Grade)

What makes a good educational video game? Eighth grade students explore this question throughout the trimester. Students learn various strategies to help solve problems in this ever changing technological world. They learn how to build their own digital literacy as they explore an understanding of computers and the logic of programming. As a culminating project, the girls create educational video games which are entered in the STEM Video Game Challenge.

World Language

French and Spanish 5

Using cultural exploration as the point of departure, fifth grade world language students continue to develop the four language skills through communication of: greetings, expressing likes and dislikes, commands and varied themes of daily family and school life. Communication begins in a structured format and ‘scaffolds’ toward more complex and open-ended conversations. Hands-on projects and the use of authentic texts, internet tools and videos complement the world language program. Throughout the program, activities are aimed at engaging the students in discussion of relevant topics pertaining to our world. Students arrive at their own cultural comparisons and contrasts while acquiring a love for their respective language.

French 6

In French 6 students practice conversational skills, including asking and responding to questions. Many of the class activities and discussions surround the adoption of pet snails who act as our class mascots for the year. Collaboratively, students create a persona for the snails and are able to discuss their likes and dislikes, appearance and personality and favorite activities, while also learning to talk about themselves and others. Students share about the snails’ adventures throughout the year as we explore various themes about life in France and other Francophone countries. Students begin to write short compositions in French describing their own family members, friends, activities, situations and their daily routine and school life.

French 7

In French 7 students build upon the foundations studied during the past year. In addition to strengthening sentence structure, correct agreement and authentic intonation and pronunciation, students learn the past tenses (le passé composé and l’imparfait) and begin to speak and write about events in the past. Themes for the year include free time, foods, shopping, life at home and life in a city. Students work with variety of sources to compare and contrast life in the United States with several Francophone countries. Students will create a number of films to set their language skills in motion and enable them to look back how their progress over the course of the year.

French 8

Students in French 8 strengthen their understanding and use of the French language through the study of *Le Petit Nicolas*, a series of short stories about a French boy and his classmates. Students grow in their understanding of the plot, character development, vocabulary and grammar throughout the year. They will create a character and assume that character’s persona in certain projects over the course of the year. Students also study thematic units including family and friends, holidays and celebrations, shopping, school and education and daily routine. Class discussions often include cultural comparisons and links to current events. Simultaneously, students study the passé composé and the imparfait, the future tense and work on direct and indirect object pronouns.

Spanish 6 - ¡Nos Gusta Hablar Español!

In sixth grade Spanish, our girls start to participate in conversations during which they share who they are and what they like to do. Students become aware of the influence of the Hispanic cultures in the world around them. They engage in interactive activities while introduced to the countries that make up of the Spanish-speaking world. Students also begin to write

compositions in Spanish to describe family members, friends, activities, situations, their daily routine and school life. They are able to follow directions, ask for information as well as read short stories in Spanish and respond to questions from these texts. A variety of resources which include the comprehensive textbook *Español 1a* by Santillana Publishing, authentic articles, music, pop culture and multimedia, are used to provide opportunities for ongoing practice of the language. Vocabulary and grammar are presented in context of a thematic format with culture as the backdrop to reinforce application and strengthen the students' language skills.

Spanish 7 - ¡Adelante!

Students go deeper and wider in their mastery of language and cultures in seventh grade Spanish. Using a new textbook program, *Español 1b* by Santillana Publishing, culture is the framework for learning Spanish. Students explore the cultures of Spain, USA, Argentina and Chile, thereby helping the students to understand and better appreciate the cultural diversity across the Hispanic cultures.

While continuing to strengthen the fundamentals of the language, i.e. solid sentence structure, correct agreement and authentic intonation and pronunciation, the girls go on to the use of the past tense (preterite). Thematic vocabulary includes authentic conversations describing family and friends; the house; leisure activities; shopping and clothes; food, beverages and their corresponding stores; the body; the world of work; transportation; geography; numbers from 101 to 1,000; nature and the environment. The introduction of additional pronouns (direct, indirect and reflexive) as well as many Spanish idioms add to the increasing richness of the students' language repertoire.

As the students explore linguistic and cultural topics, the emphasis is on putting their knowledge into action by integrating the course's linguistic and cultural concepts in a communicative way. The other skills of listening, reading and writing are interwoven as well into each unit. In addition to the text, students acquire language mastery through a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines, websites, movies, songs, art and literature.

Spanish 8 - *El Mundo Hispanoparlante*

Eighth grade Spanish students advance in all skill areas of the language and delve deeper in their cultural explorations. Using McDougal Littell's *Avancemos 2* as the framework, along with a host of other resources, students expand their thematic vocabulary, including many Spanish idioms, resulting in both richer and more authentic communication. Beginning their cultural study by exploring Hispanic hubs here in the United States (e.g. Miami, New York and the Southwest), students are able to grasp the scope of influence of the Spanish language and cultures in our own country. Subsequently, they study the Hispanic countries and cultures of Costa Rica, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Spain and also the great ancient civilizations of Mexico, Peru, Central America and the Caribbean islands. Throughout this exploration they gain insight into the comparisons and contrasts of each culture's popular customs and celebrations with their own, all of which enhances student knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of the global Hispanic community. With all of this newly acquired knowledge, the emphasis is on communicating about the variety of topics that we explore in each unit.

Latin 8

This is a combined course with a mix of eighth grade and Upper School students. Students expand their knowledge of tenses and cases and also begin conjugating verbs. Translation is a big part of the course and the material becomes more complex. Students continue to be exposed to the history of Ancient Rome and take the National Latin Exam for the first time.

Theology

Theology 5

The goal of the fifth grade theology course continues to be an emphasis on the personal faith of the student as she engages the stories, symbols, teachings, rituals and witnesses of the Catholic/Christian tradition. Through the investigation of stories of faith in the Christian community and beyond, liturgical celebrations, art, music, prayer, Church history, social teaching and community service opportunities, students are introduced to new ways of understanding and participating in the practice of their faith. The course uses the Call to Faith (Harcourt) textbook. The specific areas of concentration are on revelation, God's covenant with humanity, the mystery of the Trinity, the human responsibility to be wise stewards of the earth, Jesus as both human and divine, the teachings and parables of Jesus, the theological and cardinal virtues, moral values and the commandments, the mission of the Church, the lives of some of the saints, an overview of the sacraments, liturgical celebrations and calendars. Additionally, students are introduced to Christian seasonal celebrations as well as the celebrations of other faith traditions such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, Diwali, etc. Students engage in thematic and topic specific activities designed to deepen knowledge and lead to a living out of the faith. Through writing, sharing reflections, group discussions, skits, drawings, independent research and in-class presentations, students engage the content and topics of the course in a way that allows them to deepen their understanding and appropriate the meanings for their own lives.

Theology 6

The sixth grade curriculum immerses students in a full year of scripture study in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Christian Old Testament.) Students learn and practice the skills needed to read, understand and appreciate God's inspired Word. By examining how God revealed Himself, students are able to investigate the history and faith stories of the Hebrew people. Sixth grade theology focuses on the covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel. Major topics include the following: Creation and the Fall of Humankind; the stories of Abraham and the other patriarchs; Moses and the Exodus (with particular attention paid to the Ten Commandments and their continuing role as God's law for the people); the period of the judges in Israel and also the prophets and their role in God's saving plan. Several small cross-curricular projects are planned which will link theology with social studies, world languages, art and science. Maps and timelines help students relate the Bible to its geographic and historic reality as interdisciplinary connections are made. Viewing of the related films, *Joseph, King of Dreams* and *The Prince of Egypt*, deepens understanding. The sixth graders are encouraged to illustrate and act out the stories of the Bible and to see how the meaning of Scripture informs their own present-day faith.

Theology 7 and 8

This Seventh Grade religion course is called Christology. Students study about the life of Jesus and the impact he had on the world. Emphasis is placed on studying the teachings of Jesus as well as the geography, culture, and politics of first century Palestine. Students will develop the skills needed in order to gain a deeper understanding of Scripture and how to apply it to their lives today. Skills that are developed in Christology include: creative writing, public speaking, teamwork, critical thinking and technology. The *Glo Bible* is an interactive Bible App used in class that helps students gain a deeper understanding of Biblical times through pictures, videos and virtual tours of important sites. Toward the end of the year, students work on a project where they research about St. Paul and early Christianity.

Theology 8

This course continues to explore the theme of expressing faith in prayer, concern, action, film, sacred art and architecture. It considers the lives of Saints Augustine, Catherine of Siena, Francis and Clare of Assisi, Teresa of Avila and that of the Dalai Lama. The project on Biblical prophets serves as an introduction to exegesis and reinforces their skill in research and collaboration. With clay figures and multi-media, students demonstrate their understanding of the symbols, message and historical context of their Biblical prophet. The news article project develops "world-mindedness," and a sense of seeing the world as God does; it attempts to discern God's call within our world. By analysis and presentation of current topics, students develop global awareness and understanding of ethics, justice and peace. Students develop ease in speaking and presenting with multi-media. This culminates in the third trimester when each student applies criteria to research and to write a "persuasive paragraph" about an important world need or about an agency that is very effective in responding to need. Note-taking on selected readings from *How Do You Spell God?* develops understanding of the world's major religions and facilitates sharing of faith. Students memorize one of the creeds central to Christian faith. Students of other religions present a statement of their belief. In the third trimester students preparing for Roman Catholic Confirmation in their parish may choose an elective which meets one day per cycle to help with this preparation.

Fine Arts

Art 5

The focus in Grade 5 art is a collaborative project with science and english. Students will study bioluminescent invertebrates through three disciplines.

The trimester will begin by exploring the difference between drawing from one's imagination and drawing from observation. Students will choose a BLI to study for the trimester. She will study it by drawing it in pencil, colored pencil and in a large fluorescent painting from an artistic point of view. Students learn to draw, sculpt and create a model with various materials. If time permits students will create a whimsical story board for their amazing creature.

Art 5

Students begin the year by drawing in various ways. 1. Drawing from direct observation. 2. Drawing from memory. 3. Drawing from one's imagination.

The next unit is a collaborative project with Science and English. Students will be studying bioluminescent invertebrates in all three discipline from unique perspectives. In Art, students will study a BLI by observing and drawing, painting and making clay and paper models. They develop drawing skills, use color pencil, fluorescent paint, work in large scale, and create a three dimensional model.

Art 6

Emphasis: architecture and design with a world view. Students will study architectural design from various countries, time periods and styles. They will design and build structures and sculptural forms inspired by this research. In addition to building, students will learn about perspective drawing, architectural terms and styles, colors and building materials. Imagination will be emphasized while learning some of the principles of architecture. A final group project is to design and build houses inspired by Southeast Asian Spirit Houses. Possible materials to be used during this trimester: clay, cardboard, boxes, packing materials, foam core, paper, fabric, mosaics, plaster, paper mache, wire mesh, plaster cast.

Art 7

Each student studies an animal of her choice through a variety of media including graphite drawing, watercolor, pastel and paper mache sculpture. Each student is directed to capture the gesture, proportions, textures and colors of her chosen animal. Girls use iPads and books to find visual resources from which to study. The skills that are developed in seventh grade include drawing from observation, research, painting and constructing. They develop skills while using materials such as watercolor, pastel, graphite and paper mache.

Art 8

Project 1: Selfies: Each student takes a selfie using her ipad. These images are printed out for reference. Girls use clear acetate to trace their selfies. They then explore locations in which to portray themselves.. Once chosen a watercolor painting is completed and sandwiched with her acetate selfie portrait. The skills that are developed in this class include understanding proportion, form and symbolism. Students use their imagination and explore materials such as watercolor, prisma color pencils and use principles such as spatial relationships.

Project 2: Surrealism and the self. Each student will use the springboard of Surrealism to create a mixed media self-portrait in a dreamlike setting.

Project 3: Found Object Head. Students look at what is essential to convey the idea of “head,” and gather found materials to construct a head that can be viewed 360 degrees, stand on its own and can be read as a head by the viewer. These whimsical, imaginative works are always a hit with the students.

Drama 5

Let's begin to Understand Theatre

The goal of this course is to empower students to engage on a personal level with the artistic experience. The course will cover three primary units of study, including improvisation, skits and performance and practical design implementation. Beginning the trimester with a study of improvisation, students will describe, produce and analyze stories of their own creation. Students will begin to implement professional practices; first, by utilizing constructive criticism through small “creator groups;” second, through formatting their own theatre portfolios. The focus will shift to the qualities and practice of theatre traditions as informed by early theatre and Fairy Tales. This allows students to implement concepts of design, namely, properties and costumes. We will explore Fairy Tales in collaboration with the World Language department. Live performances at Stuart enhance students’ understanding of fully realized professional theatre.

Drama 6

How to Create a Production

Drama class continues to include theatre vocabulary, stage movement, memorization, theatre history, performance opportunities, collaboration and leadership and group and self critique. Students learn the skills necessary for writing in a dialogue format, understanding characterization and plot. The class chooses children’s literature and adapts it into a play. The class also performs the adaptation and a short piece for the Lower School within class times. We expand our knowledge of plot, characterization and performance with improvised skits and the production of a short play. The class also explores theatrical history with a short collaborative project. The class focuses on group collaboration, improved verbal skills, self-confidence in performance and finding one’s own voice and creative problem solving.

Drama 7

Let's write a PLAY! Drama class includes the skills of theatre vocabulary, plot creation using problem- solution training, dialogue and structure in playwriting, technical theatre (lighting design, props, costumes design, set design, dramaturg, stage management), stage movement, motivated characterization, memorization and blocking. The class collaborates to create an original play and produces and performs the piece for the Lower and/or Middle School within class time.

Music/Drama 8

THE MUSICAL - Drama and Music are combined to create an appropriate musical. The entire grade learns the process of auditioning, theatre vocabulary, stage movement, theatrical dance, character development, singing techniques, memorization and rehearsal techniques. The final performances are at the end of a trimester. There is a performance for the Lower School and a performance for the general public. The performance is supported by an Upper School tech class, a choreographer and a small professional band. The show is fully staged. The cast has a group critique following the show. The class focuses on group collaboration, verbal skills, characterization, musicianship, dance movement, improved self-confidence, leadership skills and creative problem-solving.

Music 5

This music course is based on timbre and composition through the construction of an original instrument. We first explore instrumental timbre through the study of wind, string, brass and percussion instruments. The students then design and construct their own wind, string, or pitched percussion instruments. Throughout the trimester students learn/reinforce music theory and composition skills. The culminating project is to play a short original composition on their original instrument as well as an ensemble composition with other classmates and their instruments. Through these hands-on, STEM-integrated projects, students learn music theory and composition skills, sound quality and construction and the value of teamwork.

Music 6

This course is designed to build interest in composition by using critical listening skills, conducting and finally using GarageBand to compose their own pieces. The students will first review the basics of melody and rhythm with a focus on percussion instruments. Students continue their rhythm studies by learning conducting patterns and expressive conducting techniques. Using their multimedia textbooks and the internet as a guide, students listen and learn about the timbres of orchestral instruments. Students critically analyze examples of well-composed, artistic and expressive pieces of music. Finally, the sixth graders utilize their knowledge by spending the rest of the trimester composing pieces individually and in groups with the GarageBand app.

Music 7

This course reinforces music theory, music history and performance skills by focusing on basic guitar skills as the center of our music study. Students begin by learning the basics of tuning, resonance and pitch as related to the guitar. Students develop the skill of chord playing as they learn basic guitar chords. Appreciation for music grows as students simultaneously learn to sing international and popular songs with the accompanying guitar chords. Students work on their own and in pairs to carefully play each chord and rhythm accurately while simultaneously singing the melody. The final project is to successfully play and sing a song of their choosing that is appropriate to their level and abilities.

Chorus/Instrumental Music

Students have the option to choose either choral or instrumental music in each grade level. In this class students rehearse easy to intermediate choral or instrumental literature for performance at Evensong, Spring Concert and Middle School Prize Day. The objective is to reinforce music and vocal/instrumental skills and to build community by rehearsing and performing to their highest potential. Students have the opportunity to participate in instrumental group lessons. Families are responsible for providing their own instrument and can also take individual lessons on campus in addition to the group option. Students implement their music reading and notation skills throughout the year with instrumental play and choral performances and through these practices, enhance their understanding of musicality in action.

Physical Education and Health

All students acquire motor skills to perform a variety of physical activities, physical fitness knowledge and intrinsic motivation to pursue a healthy and active lifestyle in an increasingly changing society.

Physical education is an important and unique part of the daily instructional program. Not only does it contribute to the overall goals of education, but it also contributes to the development and maintenance of fitness, motor skills, social skills, health and brain development. Physical activity is the method by which learning takes place through team games and individual exercises. Quality instruction in physical education involves the "whole child" by providing psychomotor, cognitive and affective benefits.

Sports/Activities include low ropes course, physical fitness challenges, soccer, tennis, field hockey, football, basketball, volleyball/newcomb, rockwall, cooperative games, track and field, ultimate frisbee, and softball.

In Middle School, the formal health curriculum promotes behaviors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle and improved quality of life for all students through various areas. Lessons on basic emotional well-being cover topics such as: communication skills, manners, emotional intelligence, decision making, conflict resolution, goal setting, and relational aggression. Preventative measures include educating students about substance use, misuse, abuse, addiction, and developing refusal skills. Physical, emotional and social aspects of human relationships and sexuality are also explored. Sexual health is also part of the curriculum, which includes: puberty, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, maternal health, healthy fetal development and childbirth. Self-health promotion concepts and skills are also stressed and include body systems, basic hygiene, disease prevention, nutrition, boundary setting, refusal skills, and positive body image. Students are encouraged to apply to themselves the positive concepts studied for balanced health and wellness.

Flex Period Courses

Personal Guidance

During the pre-teen and adolescent years, the prefrontal cortex is still developing. The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain that helps to organize information, plan and formulate strategies, solve problems and make decisions. With this in mind, adult personal and socio-emotional guidance is essential for young people to develop resilience and to function at an optimal level. While counselors are available to provide individual and personal support, not every student seeks counseling and those who do seek counseling often wait until they are in crisis. In this course, students are guided through the process of their socio-emotional development using collaborative small-group discussions and exercises as well as relevant literature and films. A safe and minimally stressful environment allows for genuine student-designed discussions.

Study Skills

Study Skills is a fifth grade course offered during the first trimester. It is specifically designed to ease the transition from Lower School to Middle School. The faculty of the Learning Center, the Middle School librarian, and the technology integrator share the instructional time. Homework involves the application of what is learned in class to the student's academic life.

The Learning Center teacher focuses on organization and time management, learning styles, and strategies to maximize each student's ability to study and learn. The students are introduced to a variety of study strategies and then guided to match the strategies to their individual learning style.

The librarian introduces the students to the resources that are available in the library. Students learn how to research and how to electronically record information. The librarian teaches the students the research skills and the format that is used for their classroom assignments.

The technology teacher guides the students to make best use of technology as a learning tool, introduces new apps and teaches students the uses for the apps. The curriculum is matched to the demands and assignments of the Middle School courses.

Digital Citizenship

Every student takes digital citizenship one trimester each year while in Middle School. The course focuses on the ethical use of technology with an emphasis on understanding intellectual property, safety, security, etiquette and understanding your digital footprint. This is an ungraded course and is intended to keep the students updated on the ever changing digital landscape.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is a one trimester course taken by every student in the Middle School. The goal of the course is to ensure each student has a solid understanding of personal finances, interest rates and budgeting. It is an ungraded courses designed with many hands on projects to engage and excite the girls about finance and economics.

Leadership

Leadership is a one trimester course that is dedicated to the development of leadership skills with our girls. Students are exposed to different leadership styles, practice public speaking, and developing relationship skills as they are on their path to be leaders.