2021-2022

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

CURRICULUM DESCRIPTIONS



MIDDLE SCHOOL

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

OUR MISSION

"The excellence of an institution is found in the class of students it sends forth each year to fight the battles of life"
Archbishop John Ireland, Founder of Saint Thomas Academy

It is our mission to help each student discover and develop his potential talents and abilities by providing an excellent college-preparatory education that instills qualities of everlasting value: leadership, a sense of brotherhood, a strong moral compass, self-confidence, a faith guided by the Catholic tradition, and an awareness of the importance of service to others.

OUR FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS

- College Preparatory
- Catholic
- Military/Leadership Training*
- All-Male

**Military classes do not begin until ninth grade.*



REGISTRATION PROCEDURE FOR 2021-2022

In order to ensure we have an accurate and efficient registration process we ask that each student follow the procedure below:

- Parents and students should review the graduation requirements and other information in this book, taking time to discuss next year's plans.
- Review course selections with your current instructors. Class time will be provided to make sure students receive advice about the most appropriate selections for next year.
- Unless otherwise designated, have current instructors sign the approval spaces on the Course Selection Form.
- Parents must sign the completed Course Selection Form.
- Current students bring the completed Course Selection Form to school April 19-23 for turn in to the Middle School office.

COURSE AVAILABILITY AND PLACEMENT

- Any course may be canceled if enrollment isinsufficient.
- Due to scheduling constraints, there is no guarantee that students will be able to fit all desired courses into their schedules.
- The Director of Academic Life, in consultation with department chairs, reserves the right to place students.

Note: As a college prep school, all students are encouraged to carry a full schedule. Approval is needed from the Director of Academic Life for a study hall to address learning accommodations or special circumstances.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Academic accommodations are intended to ensure access to educational opportunities for students with learning, cognitive, and sensory differences. Saint Thomas Academy is committed to helping students realize their full potential and achieve independence by providing reasonable services needed to accommodate individuals with Learning Differences. Based on the recommendations included in the documentation of disability provided by the student's parent/guardian, the Learning Specialist along with the Learning Plan Committee determines and arranges all academic accommodations for students with learning differences. Accommodations may include alternative testing arrangements (e.g., extended-time and oral clarification), assistance from peer note takers, and preferential seating.

ADDING OR DROPPING A COURSE

All core courses in the Middle School are year-long courses, unless otherwise noted. As such, a course may only be added during the **first week** of the **first semester**. Requests to add courses after the first full week of the semester are subject to instructor approval. Requests to drop courses must also be made within **one week** of the **first semester**. After the first week, requests to drop are decided by the Director of Academic Life and Middle School Director in consultation with the instructor.

COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Students who receive a grade of D+ or below in English, Math or World Language are strongly encouraged to improve weak skills over the summer in order to be ready for the next level the following fall. Students are encouraged to seek out tutorials or summer classes or sessions at learning centers to improve these skills.

GRADING

The following grading system is in use at Saint Thomas Academy:

A = 4 points	I (Incomplete)	= 0 points
B = 3 points	S (Satisfactory)	= 0 points
C = 2 points	U (Unsatisfactory)	= 0 points
D = 1 point		
F = 0 points		

INCOMPLETE GRADES

"Incomplete" marks must be changed to letter grades within two (2) weeks from the end of each quarter/semester, or the "Incomplete" will revert to the grade at that time. Any exceptions must be approved by the Director of Academic Life.

MAKING UP A CREDIT

A student who fails a course required for graduation must make up the credit. It is the parents or student's responsibility to arrange for making up a failed course. Prior approval from the Director of Academic Life is required for courses taken outside Saint Thomas Academy.

Failed courses may be made up in the following ways:

- Retaking the course during the next school year at Saint Thomas Academy. The grade replaces the previous grade on the transcript and in calculating the GPA.
- Credits earned for college-prep level courses in an accredited and approved summer school. Upon receipt of an official transcript, the grade replaces the previous grade on the transcript and in calculating the GPA. Please see the Director of Academic Life for a prior approval form.

COURSE OFFERINGS

ENGLISH

The English program at Saint Thomas Academy provides students with the opportunity to develop increasing mastery of skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Middle School classes emphasize language skills necessary for successful study in high school and at the college level. The underlying assumption of our program is that individuals who understand and can use language effectively will enjoy more fulfilling lives. Students will learn to:

- Read with understanding and critical insight
- Express ideas clearly in a variety of written forms
- Develop skills necessary for effective oral communication
- Improve listening skills
- Develop viewing abilities

ENGLISH 6 - Grade Level: 6
This courses stresses general language skills. Formal comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and public speaking instruction are introduced. Writing assignments focus on the composition of paragraphs and short multi-paragraph pieces meeting various benchmarks of organization and writing skills.

ENGLISH 7 - Grade Level: 7
This course builds upon the general language skills developed in sixth grade English. It continues to integrate a study of grammar and vocabulary in connection to composition, speech and literature. Writing assignments expand to various types of essays and creative works.

ENGLISH 8 - Grade Level: 8
This course expands on the advancing writing and language skills explored in seventh grade English. It continues to build on established grammar and vocabulary study in conjunction with composition, speech, and literature. Both creative and expository writing build on previously established skills.

ENGLISH ELECTIVE

INFORMATION LITERACY: TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH AND MEDIA SKILLS - Grade Level: 6-8
Throughout the class, students will learn about different tools available to them. This includes print materials and online resources. The goal of the class will be for the students to follow the research process from choosing a topic, narrowing it down, and completing a formal assessment (paper, presentation, etc.). We will focus on skills that include choosing proper sources effectively, accessing sources efficiently, evaluating quality of sources, and applying that information to support a topic. Within this framework, students will also engage with and examine other relevant topics related to technology use including, but not limited to keyboarding, digital footprint, tech wellness, creative design with digital tools, cyberbullying, and online privacy. If the schedule allows, this is a required elective for Middle School students in their first year at Saint Thomas Academy. Class graded A-F.

S.O.A.R. STUDY SKILLS - Grade Level: 6-8
SOAR is a curriculum designed to Set Goals, Organize, Ask Questions, and Record One's Progress. This study skills and executive functioning skills class teaches the critical learning, organizing, and communication skills needed to be successful in school. Lessons include how to set goals, schedule time, and organize papers. Speaking, listening, and note-taking skills are also emphasized. Class graded S/U.

FINE ARTS – ALL ARE ELECTIVES

Visual Arts - The art program is designed to give students a working knowledge of the tools and language of the visual arts so that they are able to think effectively, work creatively, and know firsthand the artistic experience. The offerings of the program are varied and aim to meet the individual needs of the student at any level of development and from any background of artistic experience.

Music - The music program at Saint Thomas Academy is designed to promote and direct musical growth, help members become proficient on their chosen instruments or with their voices, and provide a creative outlet for musical talent. The music department also serves as a support group for the Academy at athletic events, liturgies, parades, and concerts where the general public is invited.

Middle School Fine Arts I – Grade Level 6-7, Semester-based
Middle School Fine Arts I is an introductory course designed to give students a sampling of art projects that emphasize the elements (line, form, color, value, texture) and principles of art (balance, variety, harmony, emphasis). Understanding and appreciation of self and others through art history and culture is emphasized. A variety of media and techniques create an active learning experience. Class graded A-F.

Middle School Fine Arts II – Grade Level 7-8, Semester-based
Middle School Fine Arts II introduces students to a wide variety of art media; emphasis placed on the basic techniques of drawing, painting, and multimedia. Students will explore materials to create original works of art that will show basic understanding of techniques and traditions. Students will create and utilize a wide range of subject matter and creative ideas into their own original works. They will understand and apply art elements and principles of design into their original artworks. Students will learn not only how to reflect on their own work, but how to critique others work, giving constructive criticism in order to find ways to improve and move forward. Class graded A-F. Prerequisite: Middle School Fine Arts I

Middle School Digital Arts I – Grade Level 6-7, Semester-based
Middle School Digital Arts I introduces students to utilizing computer technology to produce artistic images. Student will learn computer illustration techniques, image manipulation, and graphic design principles. As students are introduced to the various fields in the digital arts, they will learn and apply the fundamentals of design with computer applications (Adobe Creative Suite). By the end of this course, students will have an introductory knowledge of Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. Class graded A-F.

Middle School Digital Arts II – Grade Level 7-8, Semester-based
Middle School Digital Arts II builds on knowledge and skills gained in MS Digital Arts I. Students will continue to apply the fundamentals of design while furthering their technical skills in the Adobe Creative Suite Programs. This course introduces students to the basics of motion media (film, video, and animation) and builds on their previous work in Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Class graded A-F. Prerequisite: Middle School Digital Arts I

BEGINNING BAND - Grade Level: 6-8, year-long
Students without any previous band experience may register for beginning band to learn to play a wind or percussion instrument. Students will learn the basics of playing an instrument and learn to play in an ensemble. Students who make enough progress will have an opportunity to move into Intermediate Band 2nd semester. Class graded A-F.

INTERMEDIATE BAND - Grade Level: 6-8, year-long
Band at Saint Thomas Academy is open to any student with at least one year of experience playing a wind or percussion instrument. The band rehearses 2-3 times per week in preparation for concerts and other school and community functions. Band is a great way to become more proficient on a musical instrument and to enjoy the participation and teamwork of ensemble playing. Class graded A-F.

INTRO TO MUSIC - Grade Level: 6-7, semester-based
The INTRO TO MUSIC class introduces students to the amazing world of music. Students will explore, create and experience a variety of fun music activities in class such as: Learn the basics about West African drumming, participate in rhythm game challenges, create music videos and iMovies, learn about form in music so you can compose a hit song, sing with your classmates, and take an acting lesson from a pro.
Class graded A-F.

SCHOOL OF ROCK EXPLORATION - Grade Level: 7-8, semester-based
The School of Rock Class offers each student a chance to discover their own talent and create music in different ways, while exploring music from around the world. This course begins with West African Circle Drumming. We have amazing djembe drums in all sizes, enough for everyone to use! Next we learn about Boom Whackers. These are musical tubes that have different pitches. Students learn how to create and compose music with them. This is a favorite activity, thanks to the world famous, “Blue Man Group”, who started playing with much larger tubes. Students also create music videos, work with iMovie, sing and participate in at least one concert during the semester. Students experience the value of working together as a team, while creating and exploring the world of music. Class graded A- F.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education – 0.5 credit required each year of Saint Thomas Academy Middle School enrollment. Inclusion of both Health and Wellness topics are included in middle school PE classes.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6 – Grade Level: 6
Middle School Physical Education will focus on developing personal motor skills and be introduced to strategies and concepts of playground games and activities. As a support to their social development, students will analyze the influence of family, peers and their culture including social media and technology in the context of their personal health behaviors. Class graded S/U.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH 7 (FIT & FUN)- Grade Level: 7
FITness and FUNction, is a course designed to be taught to Middle School students in grade 7, that provides foundation for developing character. The course enlarges the traditional Physical Education only approach and incorporates personal skill development, social awareness, interpersonal relationships and develops a healthy lifestyle that includes life-long physical activities and responsibilities. Being fit, physically, socially and mentally is the goal of the course. Class graded A-F.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8 – Grade Level: 8
Middle School Physical Education will focus on developing personal motor skills and be introduced to strategies and concepts of playground games and activities. As a support to their social development, students will analyze the influence of family, peers and their culture including social media and technology in the context of their personal health behaviors. Class graded S/U.

Health topics for discussion in Middle School will include:
Understanding emotional behavior swings and dealing with new stressors.
Awareness of unhealthy substances and conveying the impact of substance abuse.
Nutritional guidelines for food and beverages that promote a healthy life-style.

A Satisfactory (S) grade is recorded for successful completion of the Physical Education requirement and is not included in the overall GPA. Project-based learning and formative assessments will be used to evaluate Middle School Physical Education, health and wellness learning.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING – Grade Level: 6, 1st quarter
R.E.A.C.H (Relationships, Emotions, Academics, Character, Health) is an introductory course focused on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) for sixth grade students to help acclimate new students to Saint Thomas Academy. Through this course, students will better understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, adjust to Saint Thomas Academy's rigorous academic standards, and learn about various mental health topics and how they relate to their world. The class is taught during 1st quarter by the Middle School counselor as part of the social studies class.

MATHEMATICS

The mathematics program at Saint Thomas Academy is designed to challenge students with an enriched curriculum and to make appropriate courses available to all students. It is our objective that the students:

- Become proficient at basic arithmetic and algebra skills.
- Develop the ability to solve both routine and non-routine problems using a variety of strategies.
- Become familiar with the use of mathematical tools, such as compasses, protractors, and calculators. Grade level refers to the year(s) students typically take the course. Students with varying math backgrounds may take a course during different years.

FOUNDATIONS OF MATHEMATICS - Grade Level: 6
This course is the introduction to algebraic concepts with a strong emphasis placed on computations with fractions, decimals, and percents. Students will engage in an in-depth study of number theory, positive rational number computation, two and three-dimensional geometry and measurement, probability and statistics, and apply this learning to solve real-world mathematical problems. This course prepares students to be mathematically literate, as well as prepare them for future math courses.

PRE-ALGEBRA - Grade Level: 6-8
This course is the foundation for algebraic concepts. Students will engage in an in-depth study of equations and expressions, similarity, proportional reasoning, integers, measures of center and data variability, and apply this learning to solve real-world mathematical problems. This course prepares students to be mathematically literate, as well as prepare them for future math courses.

ALGEBRA I LINEAR - Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Instructor approval.
Algebra I – Linear topics include the structure of the real number system, the use of algebraic symbols; a study of first degree equations and graphs; systems of first degree equations; introduction to exponents and square roots.

ALGEBRA I QUADRATIC - Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Instructor approval.
Algebra I – Quadratic reviews structure of the real number system, algebraic symbols, and first-degree equations; it then moves quickly into the study of all aspects surrounding second degree equations and graphs; expanded systems of first-degree Equations; factoring second- degree functions and the quadratic formula; exponents and square roots; rational functions.

ALGEBRA I HONORS - Grade Level: 7-8
Prerequisite: Instructor approval; entrance exam score
Advanced Algebra I deals with the structure of the real number system, the use of algebraic symbols, a study of first and second-degree equations and graphs, systems of first-degree equations, as well as factoring, square roots, and the quadratic formula. Some uses of a graphing calculator are explored.

GEOMETRY HONORS - Grade Level: 8 *(weighted as a high school class of 1.1)*
Prerequisite: Selection based on instructor approval and grade of A in Honors Algebra I
This course first establishes the tools of geometry: methods of reasoning, construction, the coordinate plane, and types of measurement. Subsequently, it focuses on properties and applications of lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, similarity, right triangle trigonometry, circles, and transformations.

SCIENCE

The Middle School science program at Saint Thomas Academy is designed to develop the skills students will need for success in the high school science program. It is our intent that our students will:

- Be able to intelligently react to the role of science and technology in their lives and be able to make valid decisions in this area.
- Begin to value the potential they may possess as far as a career in science might be concerned.
- Understand the methods of science to enable them to become more effective learners.
- Be more sensitive to the global implications of our life-styles.

EARTH & SPACE SCIENCE 6 - Grade Level: 6 (In 2023, 8th grade Science will be Physical Science)
Topics covered in this class involve the earth and its place in the universe. Students continue to develop the laboratory and study skills begun in Life Science, with further emphasis on analytical skills. Specific areas covered include rocks and minerals, changes of earth's surface, global water, weather and climate, the solar system and the universe.

LIFE SCIENCE 7 - Grade Level: 7
Topics covered in this course are cellular structure, classification of living organisms, an overview of the domains and kingdoms, human anatomy, physiology, genetics, and ecology. All of this material is presented in an introductory manner, and emphasis is placed on developing learning, laboratory, and organizational skills.

EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE 8 - Grade Level: 8 - (In 2023 8th Grade Science will be Physical Science)
Topics covered in this class involve the earth and its place in the universe. Students continue to develop the laboratory and study skills begun in Life Science, with further emphasis on analytical skills. Specific areas covered include rocks and minerals, changes of earth's surface, global water, weather and climate, the solar system and the universe.

SCIENCE ELECTIVES

INTRODUCTION TO 2D AND 3D DESIGN – Grade Level: 8, semester-based

This class is designed to give students an introduction to two-dimensional and three-dimensional design with the use of the Innovation Center's computers and fabrication equipment. Students will be introduced to the engineering cycle and how it is used to design, fabricate, and test prototypes. Students will learn how to use Coral Draw to make their own vinyl decals and laser engraved/cut parts. The 3D printers will be used by students to fabricate parts that they design with CAD (computer aided design) programs TinkerCAD and Fusion 360. Students will leave the elective with a better idea of how the Innovation Center can be utilized for future projects during middle and high school. Need instructor approval to take this course a second time. Class graded A-F.

LEGO DESIGN AND ENGINEERING - Grade Level: 6-8, semester-based

In this course participants will work to solve open-ended problem-solving activities in a context that makes it fun and engaging to learn using science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These concepts are combined with soft skills, such as creative thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and communication following a design engineering process. Need instructor approval to take this course a second time. Class graded A-F.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies Department at Saint Thomas Academy designs its courses to provide a learning environment that promotes academic excellence and recognizes the uniqueness of each individual student. It is the objective of the Social Studies Department that the students will:

- Acquire geographical skills and be able to identify geographically major areas of the world.
- Acquire the ability to connect the past and the present by applying methods of historical research; use a variety of sources to demonstrate cause and effect relationships in history.
- Acquire basic economic literacy of U.S. economic institutions in order to effectively pursue citizenship responsibilities and to enhance personal economic decision-making.
- Acquire basic political literacy to enable students to effectively participate in the U.S. democratic process.
- Understand controversial issues and develop thinking skills through the use of position papers and position statement analysis on tests and in debates.
- Develop a multicultural awareness and sensitivity, recognizing that our judgments about people of different cultures are usually shaped and influenced by the standards and values of the culture in which we live.
- Develop the competency to acquire, organize, evaluate, and report information for the purposes of solving problems and clarifying issues.
- Emphasize study skills throughout the year in 6^{th}-8^{th} grades.

MINNESOTA HISTORY - Grade Level: 6

This course is designed for the student to gain insight and understanding of Minnesota from its physical features 12,0000 years ago to its current role in today's world. The student will identify themes involving indigenous people, war, industry, economies, industrialization, the common good, equality and social change through the lens of Minnesota while understanding how their learning applies to the United States and the world. Current events are integrated into the course. In addition, half of the first quarter will be devoted to R.E.A.C.H (Relationships, Emotions, Academics, Character, Health) -- an introductory course, taught by the MS counselor, focused on Social-Emotional Learning to help acclimate new students to Saint Thomas Academy. In December, all 6th, 7th and 8th graders participate in the National Geographic Bee.

GEOGRAPHY - Grade Level: 7

Geography tries to make sense of the world around us. It helps us understand how people, places, and environments came to be and how they affect each other. In this class, we ask where is something? Why is it there? How did it get there? How does it affect the natural environment in this area? Every world region is examined, including Canada and the USA, Latin America, Europe and Russia, Africa, Southwest and Central Asia, South and East Asia, and Oceania. Each unit seeks to answer an essential question that tackles a challenging social issue. There is a strong emphasis on working with maps and other related social studies skills. In December, all 6^{th}, 7^{th} and 8^{th} graders participate in the National Geographic Bee.

U.S. HISTORY - Grade Level: 8

This course is designed to show the students the growth of the U.S. in economic, political, and social areas. The students analyze the great changes in American life since the birth of the nation, as well as elements that have endured to build American's heritage. Students also study political and military conflict and evaluate the role of America in the world. Students continue to build and use skills in geography and learn historical writing and data analysis skills. All 8th grade students participate in the History Day competition, based on the topic of their choice.

SOCIAL STUDIES ELECTIVES

INTRODUCTION TO DEBATE - Grade Level: 6-8, semester-based
This elective will introduce students to the techniques and strategies used in academic debate. Students will learn how to develop arguments, create cross-examination questions, to look for flaws in their opponents' arguments, and how to think on their feet during a debate. Topics will range from fun and informal current issues to the official national debate topics. Need instructor approval to take this course a second time. Class graded A-F.

CHESS STRATEGIES/QUIZ BOWL - Grade Level: 6-8, semester-based
This chess class will instruct students in using skills such as logic, reasoning, visualization, planning and mental agility. The student will be able to learn the key tactical concepts, patterns, calculation, as well as strategic planning and thinking through the game of chess. This class is for both total beginners, and players that want to advance their playing abilities. An expectation for the course is that students are expected to play in at least one tournament. Class graded S/U.

This Quiz Bowl class is separate from the after-school co-curricular activity. Students learn the rules of competition, form teams, and compete in friendly matches. Assessment will be based on knowledge of the rules and strategies, sportsmanship, classroom behavior and effort. Class graded S/U.

MY FAMILY STORY: AN INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY THROUGH YOUR OWN FAMILY – Grade Level: 6-8; semester-based
This middle school elective will introduce students to new ways to think about their family's past. Students will learn what they can about their own family's story by utilizing oral history, artifacts and heirlooms, and historical sources to learn more about who they are and where they come from. Class graded A-F.

THEOLOGY

The mission of Saint Thomas Academy is to create Christian leaders. The Theology Department is an integral element in this educational process. As a department, we stress the moral dimension of leadership. We strive to help young men be capable, just, compassionate, and forthright citizens. In assisting students in their faith formation, we seek to develop a spirituality that encourages young men to desire personal holiness as well as to become servant leaders who welcome and care for each other. It is our hope that each student will come to know the mystery of God's abiding presence and the depth of God's love for all. It is our goal as a department to develop educated and informed Catholics who seek to be knowledgeable in their faith, who are willing to embrace the challenges of Christianity in the new millennium, and who are ready to work for the Church's social mission of justice and peace.
The following is a list of general curriculum objectives which identify what will be covered within the Theology Department curriculum:

- Students will possess basic Biblical interpretation skills and demonstrate a reverence for and appreciation of God's word found in sacred Scripture.
- Students will understand the basic teachings of the Church as articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (i.e. sacraments, creed, Ten Commandments, beatitudes, spiritual/corporal works of mercy, virtues, precepts of Church).
- Students will understand their obligation to act morally and ethically as responsible Christians according to the dictates of a well informed and formed conscience.
- Students will know and understand the Church's teaching pertaining to sexual morality and respect for life in all forms.
- Students will have a basic understanding of the history and theology of the Church.
- Students will have a knowledge and appreciation of contemporary religious and spiritual leaders.
- Students will be able to understand the nature of liturgy and prayer and the movement from liturgy and prayer to service.
- Students will explore Christ's invitation to discipleship and the call to personal holiness by exploring those lifestyles that are compatible with this common Christian vocation.
- Students will know the key principles of Catholic social teaching and will be able to identify these as central and essential elements of their faith.
- Students will learn to respect the diversity of religious traditions.
- Students will develop reflective and critical thinking skills; moral and creative imaging skills; and prayer and dialogical skills, which allow them to research and identify, assess and evaluate, discern, judge, and determine action in light of Gospel values and Church teaching.

FAITH IN GOD AND GOD'S CALL - Grade Level: 6

This course is designed for sixth graders and has as its primary focus the history and message of God in the Old Testament of the Sacred Scriptures. Students are encouraged to study God's call to us, God's saving action, God's invitation, God's reminder to do God's will, and God's promise of Everlasting Life. Students study the Old Testament and take part in weekly discussions of the Scripture's doctrine and morality. All students take part in the planning and celebration of prayer through prayer services and liturgies. Students also participate in Middle School service projects and will experience an annual retreat.

FAITH IN JESUS - Grade Level: 7

This course is designed for seventh graders and has as its primary focus the person, history, and message of Jesus Christ. Students are encouraged to not only study the life and times of Jesus, but to adapt His message to their daily lives. Students study the Gospels and take part in weekly discussions of the Scripture's doctrine and morality. All students take part in the planning and celebration of prayer through prayer services and liturgies. Students also participate in Middle School service projects and will experience an annual retreat.

FAITH IN THE CHURCH - Grade Level: 8

This course is designed for eighth graders and places its focus on the story of the Church. The first semester of the course serves as an introductory analysis of the Catholic Church from the Pentecost to the 21st century. The second semester is divided into several components: prayer, parish life, Christian art and music, and an introduction to social justice issues. Students will discuss life issues as adolescent members of the global church as well members of a local parish of faith community. Students also participate in Middle School service projects and will experience an annual retreat.

WORLD LANGUAGE

Our language program is designed to challenge students with classes in Chinese, French and Spanish. At the upper school level, we offer Honors, CIS or AP for many of these courses.

The goals of our department are to teach effective communication, language proficiency, and cultural understanding. To successfully communicate in a world language, it is important to understand the relevance of diversity and culture, and to have a true appreciation of the global society in which we live. At Saint Thomas Academy, our teachers are dedicated to creating high-quality, student-centered learning environments that prepare our boys for excel in college.

THROUGH THE STUDY OF WORLD LANGUAGES, STUDENTS WILL:

- Gain skills that enable them to communicate orally and in writing with speakers of another language.
- Develop a greater understanding about people across national boundaries by giving them insight into the ways of life and ways of thinking of the people who speak the language they are learning.
- Expand their understanding of how language functions, including their own language.
- Learn to read with comprehension so that they may keep up with current writing, research, and information in the studied language.
- Develop critical thinking skills by understanding perspectives, exchanging opinions, and presenting ideas.
- Be prepared to think and interact in a global community.
- Be inspired and prepared to study a world language and culture in college.

Note: Placement is determined by exam scores, satisfactory completion of a lower level course, and/or teacher recommendation. A student whose native language is other than English is encouraged to study a third language in the World Language Department.

Based on student interest and demonstrated proficiency, higher level language courses are available. Please refer to the Upper School Course Description Book for more information.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHINESE 1A - Grade Level: 6-8, year-long

Students begin to experience the language and culture of China, using everyday Mandarin Chinese in the classroom. They learn the core Chinese vocabulary and sound system while developing their listening and response skills and growing in their cultural understanding.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHINESE 1B - Grade Level: 6-8, year-long

Prerequisite: Must pass Chinese 1A or equivalent

Students continue to experience the language and culture of China, using everyday Mandarin Chinese in the classroom. They learn the core Chinese vocabulary and sound system while developing their listening and response skills and growing in their cultural understanding.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHINESE 1C - Grade Level: 6-8, year-long
Prerequisite: Must pass Chinese 1B or equivalent
Middle school students culminate their Level I experience of the language and culture of China, using everyday Mandarin Chinese in the classroom. They learn the core Chinese vocabulary and sound system while developing their listening and response skills and growing in their cultural understanding. Students who successfully pass this level are ready for Upper School Chinese II.

FRENCH I – Open to returning 7th Graders and all 8th Graders, year-long
The study of topics involving weather, time, and seasons; family and friends; the home and neighborhood; and items found in everyday life are the core of this year's curriculum. Through the use of the basic text and oral comprehension program, the student learns to express himself in the present tense and is introduced to the use and practice of progressive future and recent past tense. He also is introduced to the diversity of the French language and culture through units that present the French-speaking countries around the world.

FRENCH II - Grade Level: 8-12, year-long
Prerequisite: Instructor approval
The study of topics involving food and eating and nature and the environment are the core of this year's curriculum. Through the use of the basic text and oral comprehension program, the student grows to better express himself in the present, progressive future, recent past, and compound past tenses. At the end of the year, students imagine they are French astronauts and apply what they have learned into an interstellar project.

SPANISH IA – Grade Level: 6 or 7 (new or returning), year-long
This course introduces the skills of communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in Spanish. It also attempts to instill in students an understanding of persons belonging to social, cultural, and ethnic groups different from their own. This course is for students who have had very little or no previous experience studying Spanish. The course begins with the very basics; alphabet, numbers, colors, greetings, calendar, etc. It then moves into conversational Spanish and grammatical practices; noun/adjective/verb agreement, verb conjugations, etc.

SPANISH IB - Grade Level: 7 or 8, year-long
Prerequisite: Instructor approval
This course is for students who have studied Spanish but need to develop stronger foundational skills before advancing to a more rigorous Spanish 2. Prerequisites include: strong study skills as well as knowledge of basic vocabulary and communicative functions such as numbers, telling time, date, weather description, family, pastimes, food and likes/dislikes. Students should have knowledge of regular present tense verb conjugations and should be able to speak and write in simple sentences in Spanish. Students should be familiar with comprehension strategies and have a basic level of comprehension of written and spoken Spanish. In Spanish IB, students will reinforce their basic knowledge of Spanish communicative skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking while continuing to develop new vocabulary and grammatical concepts. Previously learned vocabulary and grammatical structures will also be reinforced.

SPANISH I - Grade Level: 8, year-long
This course introduces the skills of communication (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in Spanish. It also attempts to instill in students an understanding and appreciation of persons belonging to social, cultural, and ethnic groups different from their own. This course is for students who have had little or no previous experience studying Spanish.

SPANISH II - Grade Level: 8-12, year-long
Prerequisite: Instructor approval
This course offers the opportunity to continue developing and deepening the skills of communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in Spanish, to investigate and experience the richness of cultures, and to continue forming those study skills which help students become lifelong learners. There is an increased emphasis on grammatical skills at this level.