



**ST. MARY'S**  
An IB World School

# **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **Language A (Sixth Grade)**

In Grade Six Language A, students continue along the life-long path of mastering English. They select one book per trimester for independent reading. In addition, they read between four and six novels during the school year, as well as mythology and poetry. Students write across genres, composing a memoir, poetry, a myth, business letter, and a variety of essays. Students move through the steps of the writing process, including brainstorming, pre-writing (drafts), self-editing and peer-editing, revisions and final copy. Vocabulary building and correct grammar are stressed. Students are asked to incorporate the Six Traits of Writing into their writing: Ideas, Word Choice, Organization, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Voice.

## **Language A (Seventh Grade)**

In seventh Grade Language A, students explore humanity's enduring questions through the study of language and literature. This course provides students a language-rich environment in which they continue to develop their language arts skills in order to explore ideas about identity, relationships, culture, and the environment and to articulate clearly what they believe to be true. To strengthen critical reading, listening, thinking, and writing skills, students examine diverse texts and discuss them according to the conventions called for by the community or audience. Through journal submissions, writing workshops, peer reviews, Socratic Literature Circles, and reflection papers linked to students' Independent Reading, students experience the recursive process of writing as an indispensable tool for discovery. Their writing portfolios illustrate their journey of developing, testing, redefining, clarifying, polishing, and, ultimately, sharing their writing as a social action.

## **Language A (Eighth Grade)**

Eighth Grade Language A is workshop-centered course that provides students with the tools and practice they need to become independent learners, ready for transition to high school. Students study such concepts as truth and consequences, using literature, outside research, and award-winning films. The Writing Workshop Program, based on Nancie Atwell's *Lessons That Change Writers*, is utilized. The curriculum is enriched with novels and it includes a focus on spelling and vocabulary acquisition. Strong emphasis is placed on students' reading with more sophistication, engaging in meaningful reflection and developing critical analysis. Students enhance their skills to brainstorm ideas, draft, structure, revise, engage in meaningful peer conferences, and self-edit their writing. This course is designed to provide students with a strong background for any type of writing they may encounter in life.

## **French 600**

This course is designed to introduce students to the beautiful French language. Students acquire basic expressions for greetings, introductions, family members, friends, time, money, food and beverages, allowing simple but meaningful communication. The concept of gender is presented, and accent and pronunciation are stressed. Students create a Family Album, which they present to the rest of the class, in French.

## **French 700**

Second year French logically follows and builds upon the first year study. Students review and reinforce the concepts, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation presented in the first year of French. Students also learn gender agreement, verb conjugations, sentence structure in the affirmative, negative and interrogative, and many useful common expressions. Topic areas include daily activities, school, recreation, entertainment and holidays. Students explore French culture by researching the French school system, and reporting on a French-speaking country. These advanced students enjoy an outing to a local French restaurant.

## **French 800**

This class provides the opportunity to build on the second year skills already acquired and prepare for more challenging high school Language B classes. Students solidify their command of regular *er* verbs, and the useful irregular verbs *être*, *avoir*, *faire*, and *venir*, in present, future, and simple past tense. Students research a Parisian monument which they present to the class, in French. The study of colonial America in Humanities is augmented by research into the life of a French explorer of the Americas. These advanced students also enjoy an outing to a local French restaurant.

## **Mandarin Chinese 600**

This course is designed to introduce students to Mandarin Chinese. Students acquire basic expressions for greetings, introductions, numbers, months, weather vocabulary, family members, and adjectives. The four tones are presented and emphasis is placed on proper pronunciation. Students learn the pinyin system along with simplified characters. Students create a Family Album and present it to their classmates.

## **Mandarin Chinese 700**

Second-year Mandarin Chinese follows and builds upon the first year of study. Students review and reinforce tones, vocabulary, and pronunciation presented in the first year. Topics include daily activities, school, recreation, food and cultural traditions. Students explore Chinese geography through visuals, reports, and presentations. These more advanced students enjoy an outing to a local Chinese restaurant.

## **Mandarin Chinese 800**

Third-year Mandarin Chinese provides the opportunity to build on the second year skills already acquired and prepare for more challenging high school Language B classes. Students continue practicing their listening, speaking, reading, and character writing skills on a daily basis. Small group and whole group activities require students to understand and speak Mandarin Chinese more often in and outside the classroom. These advanced students enjoy an outing to a local Chinese restaurant.

## **Spanish 600**

This course is designed to teach beginning grammar and basic vocabulary with an emphasis on meaningful communication. There is also a cultural component which exposes students to the geography and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Class discussions and activities allow students to reflect upon guiding questions and the areas of interaction while exploring the target language.

## **Spanish 700**

This class provides students the opportunity to build on the skills acquired in previous years. Students practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students steadily increase their language range, and increase their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and conventions. Class discussions and activities allow students to reflect upon guiding questions and the areas of interaction while exploring the target language. Students expand their evolving cultural awareness by studying the various communities in which Spanish is spoken.

## **Spanish 800**

This class provides the opportunity to build on the second year skills already acquired and prepare for more challenging high school Language B classes. Advanced grammar structures are explored and students practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills on a daily basis. Students increase their language range, and their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and conventions at a more accelerated pace. Class discussions and activities allow students to reflect upon guiding questions and the areas of interaction while exploring the target language. Small group and whole group activities consistently require students to understand and speak Spanish more often in and outside the classroom. Writing submissions demonstrate the breadth and depth of second language acquisition. Students expand their evolving cultural awareness by studying the various communities in which Spanish is spoken.

## **Math 6**

In Math 6, students focus on addition, subtraction, division and multiplication with whole numbers, fractions, decimals and integers. In the process they gain the ability to do the following: recognize and understand the relationships between fractions, decimals, and percent equivalences; solve ratio and rate problems; calculate basic percent problems using mental and written methods; begin to use the operations involved in algebraic expressions; translate word problems into algebraic expressions and solve corresponding simple equations; interpret data and utilize different mathematical representations including graphs, tables, charts, and formulas; analyze data using statistics and probability; develop an understanding of ratio and proportion and look at how it relates to 2-D shapes; investigate 2-D shapes and 3-D forms and their properties; and, apply general rules and patterns to solve problems associated with 2-D shapes and 3-D forms.

## **Pre-Algebra**

In Pre-Algebra, students reinforce their understanding of rational numbers and integers and their operations; apply what they have learned to manipulate and evaluate algebraic expressions; begin to solve multi-step equations and understand and use formulas; review the relationships between fractions, decimals, percent equivalences and utilize an algebraic method to convert from a repeating decimal to a fraction; represent numbers in terms of exponents and as products of prime numbers; use their knowledge of squares and square roots to investigate the Pythagoras Theorem; apply the Pythagoras Theorem to problem solving on the Cartesian plane; extend their knowledge of ratio and proportion and measure and apply their knowledge to scale drawings; review percent and apply what they know in percent increase and decrease problems and simple and compound interest questions; study linear, quadratic and cubic functions and begin to understand the relationships between the equation and the graphical representation, including the slope of a line; study areas, perimeters and properties of quadrilaterals and circles; investigate the surface area and volume of a cylinder; and, investigate 2-D shape and 3-D forms and their properties and apply general rules and patterns to solve problems associated with them.

## **Algebra**

In Algebra, students focus on more abstract concepts. Symbolic reasoning and calculations with symbols are developed. Algebraic skills and concepts are developed and used in a wide variety of problem-solving situations. In addition, students learn to identify and use the arithmetic properties of rational, irrational and real numbers; understand reciprocals, integer exponents, and fractional powers; use the rules of exponents; analyze and represent linear functions; solve systems of linear equations and inequalities; use operations to manipulate polynomials, rational expressions and functions; factor polynomials using different methods and learn how to choose the appropriate method for an expression; solve quadratic functions using graphing and a range of other methods; analyze the concepts of a relation and a function; identify the range and domain of dependent variables; and, know simple aspects of logical argument and be able to apply this.

## **Algebra Honors**

In Algebra Honors, students build on the more abstract concepts learned in the previous year. They apply what they have learned to word problems and everyday Math so that they can see the connections between Math and the real world. Emphasis is placed on using a wide variety of problem-solving situations. Symbolic reasoning and calculations with symbols continue to be developed. Students learn to manipulate matrices using the four operations and solve systems of equations; demonstrate understanding of reciprocals, integer exponents, and fractional powers and use the rules of exponents; focus on analyzing and representing linear functions; solve systems of linear equations and inequalities; use all four operations to manipulate polynomials, rational expressions and functions; factor polynomials using different methods and learn how to choose the appropriate method; solve quadratic functions using a range of methods including graphing; demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of a relation and a function; identify the range and domain of dependent variables; demonstrate knowledge of simple aspects of logical argument and utilize this; apply what they have learned about the Pythagoras Theorem to 2-D and 3-D problems and use the theorem to calculate distances between points on a Cartesian plane; investigate similar triangles and solve a variety of problems using them; extend their knowledge of angles to find angles in any polygon; investigate transformations of 2-D shapes and look at the effects of enlargements on area and volume; study the relationships between different systems of measure and convert between them; apply their knowledge to map-scale problems; study rate problems, speed and density; and, review the concepts in number, algebra, geometry, and data handling learned at earlier stages of Middle School.

## **Ancient History (Sixth Grade)**

Sixth Grade Humanities integrates the subjects of history and geography, and covers the time period from the discovery and development of early man, to the amazing advancements and contributions of the empires of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. Students are shown the connections between the past and the present through a deep study of three or more major civilizations.

## **World History (Seventh Grade)**

In Seventh Grade Humanities, students investigate the story of human beings through eight unit focuses: Medieval Europe; the rise of Islam; West African culture and kingdoms; Imperial China; Medieval Japan; the Americas; the Renaissance and Reformation; and, the modern age as represented in the age of exploration, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment Era. The purpose of this course is to provide students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of world history and the connections between the historical past and today's world. In the process the objective is to provide students an enriching experience, in which they enjoy learning for its own sake; they strive to understand their own and each other's perspectives; and, they take risks in the process of growing, learning and improving.

## **United States History (Eighth Grade)**

In Eighth Grade Humanities, students look at the history of our nation through many different lenses and they evaluate a variety of historical writings. Students develop their own historical perspectives based on information they analyze. Culminating with this eighth Grade course, the aim of Humanities in the Middle School is to encourage students to gain and develop knowledge, conceptual understanding, research skills, analytical and interpretive skills, and communication skills that contribute to the development of the student as a whole. In this course students are encouraged to respect and understand the world around them and to develop a skills base to facilitate further study. This is achieved through the study of individuals, societies and environments in a wide context: historical, contemporary, geographical, political, social, economic, religious, technological and cultural.

## **Earth Science (Sixth Grade)**

This course is designed to introduce students to the structure of Earth including its surface, waters, weather, and resources. Thematic units expand upon National and State Science Standards. Specific concepts covered include plate tectonics and Earth's structure, topography and weathering, heat transfer, energy in the Earth's system, ecosystems, and the development of scientific inquiry skills. Students participate in a Catalina field study and document their experiences while creating Microsoft PowerPoint presentations. Students integrate reading, research and field-based applications with labs, models and summative projects.

## **Life Science (Seventh Grade)**

This course focuses on Life Science, with particular emphasis on understanding the adaptations that animals, plants, virus/bacteria, and genes make to survive in their respective environments. Two guiding questions explored in this course are, "Does everything change for the better?" and "How does adapting help a species survive?" Students also consider ethical questions related to genetics, evolution, and the environment. In the process, they learn to support their opinions with researched facts and personal knowledge. Students develop their data processing and critical thinking skills through charts, data tables, statistics, and graphs; and, they determine the best ways to utilize information to prove understanding. A key objective in this course is to have students reflect on life on the planet and how we all impact one another.

## **Physical Science (Eighth Grade)**

This course focuses on Physical Science with a strong emphasis on hands-on learning. Students develop skills to conduct labs, solve problems and write lab reports. Students engage in developing hypotheses that lead to conclusions. They analyze, organize and present data and observations. In the process, they learn how to identify and use controlled variables, manipulated variables, and responding variables. The content areas addressed in this course are connected to motion, forces, and such physical examples as rockets. The students investigate important scientific principles and laws including Bernoulli's, Pascal's, Archimedes' and Newton's Laws of Motion.

## **Technology (Sixth Grade)**

In this course students study the “Digital World” and learn to navigate their computer environment with purpose and integrity. Guided by the question, “What inspires us to create?”, students establish their log-in accounts, submit assignments through email or an online drop box and practice keyboarding skills. Course content includes the study of basic components of computer hardware, and how these technology systems work together. Students complete a summative project at the end of the course which follows the IB Design Cycle for Technology. Students are guided through the investigation process, which culminates in their planning and creating a PowerPoint presentation on a topic they choose and present to the class.

## **Technology (Seventh Grade)**

In this course students are guided through the serious issues of cyber bullying and its effect on health and social issues. Students are exposed in age-appropriate ways to real-life case studies, video testimonials, and informational cartoons regarding the anti-social behaviors of flaming, outing, exclusion, trickery and cyber-stalking. In the process, students learn how to identify these behaviors and how to react to them in a healthy way. This course concludes with students following the planning and creation processes of the design cycle to design an educational poster on a topic they choose to investigate. Students use software from edu.Glogster.com to create on-line presentations which demonstrate their appropriate on-line social skills.

## **Technology (Eighth Grade)**

In this course students participate in a program to teach Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) concepts utilizing LEGO Mindstorms NXT Robots. Students work collaboratively in teams to learn how to program basic robot behaviors using motors and rotation, sound, light, touch and ultrasonic sensors. Following the planning and creation steps of the Design Cycle, students program the robots to complete multiple challenges based on real-world robots. In a final project, students design their own new challenge and present it to the class.

## **iFalcon**

iFalcon is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which students maintain an online school newspaper. Two editors are chosen to oversee the publication, and other students serve as reporters. As a staff, the class develops an interest in writing and reporting on subjects that they believe are pertinent to the school. Human interest, sports, product and movie reviews, editorials, and international news coverage are just some of the stories covered. The course teaches key concepts associated with legitimate journalism: the importance of accuracy, the need for integrity and responsibility in reporting, and the significance of online security.

# PERFORMING ARTS

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## **Chorus**

Chorus provides an opportunity for students to develop their voices within a large ensemble. They develop their abilities in music reading, vocal technique, theoretical knowledge of music, and their ability to work as a team. The choir performs several concerts during the year for the School and may have the opportunity to attend at least one choral contest. This class is offered to students who want to sing for enjoyment while continuing to develop their musical knowledge and vocal skills.

## **Musicology**

Musicology includes the study of music through history, theory, composition, and technology. Students become familiar with historical eras including Early Music, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern. Students engage the elements of music theory through composition and analysis, and they learn music technology technique through sequencing, sampling, and soundtrack creation.

## **Orchestra**

Orchestra includes the study of ensemble and instrumental techniques and musical performance. Students become familiar with ensemble techniques including listening, intonation, counting, and playing in sections and as a whole. Additionally, students become familiar with instrumental techniques including tone production, counting, and instrument maintenance. Students perform at the Christmas and Spring Concerts.

Through a variety of trimester-length Visual Arts courses, students are encouraged to find their own voice in Art. They have had Art History incorporated into their Art classes for many years. Learning from the masters has helped students to see the process artists use and give them a chance to replicate their styles. Students build upon these references by developing and understanding one's own aesthetics.

The aims of the teaching and study of MYP arts are for students to understand how the arts play a role in developing and expressing personal and cultural identities; appreciate how the arts innovate and communicate across time and culture; become informed and reflective practitioners of the arts; experience the process of making art in a variety of situations; explore, express and communicate ideas; become more effective learners, inquirers and thinkers; develop self-confidence and self-awareness through art experiences; and, appreciate life-long learning in and enjoyment of the arts.

The Visual Arts objectives interrelate with each other and form the basis of each student's experience in the arts. Personal engagement surrounds the student at the center and connects directly with each of the other objectives.

## **Ceramics I and II**

Ceramic I and II courses include exposure to a variety of hand-building techniques, including pinch pots, coil pots, and slab construction. Students gain an understanding of the firing process and different glazing techniques.

## **Drawing I and II**

Drawing I and II courses focus on learning to draw what we see. Students explore different types of drawing media and learn to create several pieces that highlight the elements and principles of design. Students study the use of light and shade, the foundations of perspective, and drawing form while using pencil, pen and ink, and pastel.

## **Painting I and II**

Painting I and II courses focus attention on investigations of color, application, and space in specific areas. Course work is predicated on the perspective that in order to accurately express emotion about the subject being painted, one must understand the foundation essentials of painting, drawing, color, value and composition.

## **General Art I and II**

General Art I and II courses include inquiry into the Art elements and principles of design. Students learn how to describe the elements of art and the principles of design, which contributes to the expressive qualities of their own work. Students focus attention on creative expression and exploring the use of different media to communicate meaning and intent in works of art. Additionally, students study the history and various cultures of art, and they complete projects related to early art such as cave paintings and Egyptian friezes.

## **Photography I and II**

In Photography I and II students are encouraged to venture into all forms of Art with their imaginations and the many ways it touches their lives and is utilized in the world around them. Learning from professional photographer examples helps students see the process an artist uses and gives them a chance to replicate expert techniques. Students are given the opportunity to open up their experiences by developing and understanding the full scope of Art through photography.

## **Set Design**

Set Design is a two-trimester course in which students work with a wide variety of mixed media to bring the sets for the school's dramatic productions to life. They learn about about such noted artists as Marc Chagall, who painted fantastic, dreamlike pieces reminiscent of his childhood in a small Russian village. All of Chagall's paintings reflect memories and display a clear Cubist influence (as well as Surrealist qualities). Students acquire knowledge of stage terminology, particularly that which relates to set design. They also create original gray-scale intaglio engravings which become Playbills for the show, and they craft mixed media, watercolor-based posters in order to effectively advertise the play.

## **Studio in Drawing I and II**

In Studio in Drawing I and II students are exposed to the techniques and masterpieces of the world's great draughts men. They experiment with a wide variety of media including charcoal, pastel, Conte crayon, and engraving materials in order to create a series of sketches and complete drawings and engravings. The overall theme for this workshop is exploration of the way that symbols have been used by artists throughout art history in order to add layers of meaning to the communication of their pieces.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

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(Sixth – Eighth Grade)

The Personal, Social, Physical Education & Wellness Program is designed to inspire students and to foster within them an appreciation for and understanding of healthy, active, life-long habits. The focus at each Grade level of this course is to develop skills and understanding necessary to participate successfully in a variety of physical activities. In the process, students are encouraged to learn, practice, refine, adapt, think, and interact with others. This course consists of physical activity as well as classroom instruction on Health topics.

## RELIGION

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### Religion

The one-trimester Religion courses at the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade levels are aimed at encouraging students to gain and develop the knowledge, conceptual understanding, analytical, interpretive and communication skills that contribute to the development of the student as a whole. Course content and activities are designed to encourage students to respect and understand the world around them. This is achieved through the study of the Bible and supplementary materials and a focus on family and the daily lives of historical individuals and groups, from the creation story through today.

Students study the spread of ideas, cultures, and belief systems that impact our world. Natural connections across the curriculum allow students to develop a richly stratified understanding of history, culture, people, groups and belief systems. Students, through critical thinking, explore why and how to study Biblical history; and, through inquiry, they gain understanding in how the past has molded our current society. A significant goal of this course is to help students become global citizens. Class discussions and research assignments encourage understanding and tolerance of other cultures, religions, and faith communities.

# LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

(Trimester courses unless otherwise indicated, Sixth – Eighth Grade)

The St. Mary's Leadership Program is seamlessly integrated into regular academic studies with projects, discussions, student involvement, and practical application. In Middle School, it is designed to be a three-year, in-depth study into the principles and practices of developing strong leadership qualities in the students. The program begins in Grade Six, utilizing the International Baccalaureate's Learner Profile to illustrate how these traits can be reflected and demonstrated in daily practices. Grade Seven explores societal issues which directly affect adolescents with the objective being to equip students to make educated decisions based on an awareness of their surroundings. Grade Eight actively plans a vision for their educational and professional future by researching careers and professions which match the students' demonstrated leadership skills and personal interests. By exploring various programs of study at colleges and universities, students are able to select appropriate means by which to fulfill and complete their leadership vision.

## Challenge 20/20

Challenge 20/20 is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective, sponsored by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), in which St. Mary's students engage with students from the International School of Milan to study and address select global problems. Students maintain an online presence with their partners in Italy and participate in local field studies. Through a class blog, students engage in on-going discussions of topics from J.F. Rischard's book, *High Noon*, as well as NAIS categories Sharing our Planet, Sharing our Humanity, and Sharing our Rule Book. Additionally, when the assigned topic was marine debris, students visited the Pacific Marine Mammal Center in Laguna Canyon and Scripps Institute of Oceanography in La Jolla. These and other activities encourage students to seek solutions to vital global problems. Students design brochures that alert the school community to particular global problems and they help to educate the school community through email correspondence and surveys.

## iFalcon

iFalcon is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which students maintain an online school newspaper. Two editors are chosen to oversee the publication, and other students serve as reporters. As a staff, the class develops an interest in writing and reporting on subjects that they believe are pertinent to the school. Human interest, sports, product and movie reviews, editorials, and international news coverage are just some of the stories covered. The course teaches key concepts associated with legitimate journalism: the importance of accuracy, the need for integrity and responsibility in reporting, and the significance of online security.

## Model United Nations

Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulation of the United Nations (UN), where the countries of the world send delegates to act as representatives of those countries' governments. In this course, students participate as either members of the General Assembly (GA), Security Council, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), or International Court of Justice (ICJ). Much of the work of the MUN is done in the preparation phase, where students research the countries they are representing and prepare background and position papers. Each student's primary role is to give the government's views on the issues in front of the UN. Students need to pay special attention to the economic, religious and educational issues of their country. Once they have developed

these papers, delegates present and debate resolutions or hear court cases. Students have the chance to speak out, let the world know what they think about today's most important issues, and help others to find their political voice.

## **STAR**

STAR (Students as Teachers and Resources) is a one-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which Middle School students gain experience interacting with younger students in the Lower School. This course teaches and practically applies the *Best Practices in Classroom Management & Organization* and the basics of the IB Primary Years Programme in the Lower School. STAR students are assigned to Lower School classrooms, where they assist teachers and interact with younger students in a supportive fashion. STAR students participate in related online discussion board conversations throughout the trimester, which concludes with a written reflection about personal experiences in the classroom.

## **Yearbook**

Yearbook is a two-trimester Service and Leadership elective in which students are required to be highly organized, motivated, and technologically capable. The first trimester is centered on learning the "Year-Tech" software as well as learning how to navigate the website, [yearbookavenue.com](http://yearbookavenue.com). It is on this site that students plan, organize and create the St. Mary's Yearbook. Each student has specific pages that they are responsible for contributing to the Yearbook. Individually and collaboratively, students create lay-outs; take and upload photos; insert photos on Yearbook pages; write and proof read; and, ultimately print pages.

# FIELD STUDIES

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## **Catalina Island (Sixth Grade)**

Sixth grade students spend four nights and five days at beautiful Camp Emerald Bay, on Catalina Island. While there, students experience the local environment through laboratory activities, such as contact with aquatic species in touch tanks, microscopic analysis, and dissections. In addition, plenty of time is reserved for swimming, kayaking, snorkeling, and hiking. Through this field study, students experience life in a rustic setting which encourages them to adapt to their environment, share with each other and work for the common good. While this is happening, they are visited by affiliates of the Catalina Conservancy. These scientists describe their research activities on the island that are aimed at environmental preservation.

## **Pali Institute, San Bernardino Mountains (Seventh Grade)**

Seventh grade students participate in a five-day, four-night field study program at Pali Institute for Outdoor Science and Leadership, in the San Bernardino Mountains. The staff at Pali Institute pride themselves on innovative curriculum that helps to bring textbooks to life through hands on experiments, activities and leadership activities. The courses that students participate in have been carefully selected to reflect the curriculum of the St. Mary's seventh grade, including connections to Science, Leadership, Math, and Physical Education. In Science activities, St. Mary's students gain a basic understanding of the Scientific Method, the importance of site preservation and how their decisions impact the environment and their futures, ecosystems, energy resources and the importance of recycling. Leadership activities emphasize group cooperation, goal setting, and embracement of other people. Orienteering activities emphasize physical fitness and help students understand map skills and how they relate to math. In sum, the experience at Pali Institute is designed to help students grow as individuals and as a class.

## **Williamsburg, Virginia and Washington, D.C. (Eighth Grade)**

The eighth grade field study to Williamsburg, Virginia and Washington, D.C. is a memorable six-day journey designed to heighten students' awareness of the nation's historical past. During the course of this trip, students follow a historic trail from the first capital of English America, Jamestown, Virginia, to the national capital, Washington, D.C. In between, students visit many famous sites, such as Williamsburg, William and Mary College, Yorktown, Jamestown Settlement, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello estate, and the University of Virginia. Once in Washington, D.C., students visit the White House, Supreme Court, National Capitol, Union Station, the Air and Space Museum, and the American History Museum. Likewise, students tour the Roosevelt, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, Ford's Theatre, Washington Monument and the Vietnam Wall. The field study reaches a peak of poignancy at the Changing of the Guard and Wreath Laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns, at Arlington National Cemetery.

# INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

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**International School of Milan, Italy**

For the past seven years, St. Mary's has partnered with the International School of Milan (ISM) in Milan, Italy to provide an exchange program for our Middle School students. This partnership offers St. Mary's students an opportunity to become host families and welcome an international student into their home, in addition to journeying to Milan, Italy to reconnect with ISM students at an exchange hosted in Milan. The International School of Milan is a K-12 IB World School located in Milan and Monza, Italy. The school is the largest international school in Italy today, and the first one in the country to offer the complete cycle of International Baccalaureate Programmes for learners from three to eighteen years of age.

Students from ISM visit California in the fall, spending a week with St. Mary's students and families and experiencing life in the United States. St. Mary's students then visit Milan later in the year, living with host families for one week while attending ISM classes with their student hosts. Students and chaperones then travel throughout central and northern Italy to further explore Italian culture, customs and the people.

The ISM exchange supports the aim of the IB programme to develop internationally minded people by providing students the opportunity to travel abroad. This international field study prepares students for positive interaction in a global setting through experiencing another cultural perspective. Students gain in-depth knowledge of the Italian culture, customs and people and create friendships and memories that last a lifetime.

# ADVISORY PROGRAM

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The St. Mary's Advisory Program is designed to meet the unique needs of our Middle School students during a time of significant change and growth in their lives. Each student is assigned to a St. Mary's faculty member who serves as an advisor to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of the student. With Advisory's emphasis on communication and relationships, students are supported in their growth and development throughout the three year Middle School experience with the advisor and the small, co-ed, grade specific group of students. Weekly meetings between the advisor and advisee group will allow students to set goals, develop service learning projects, practice leadership and social skills, and advance personally and academically with close guidance. Mid-year conferences consisting of advisor, advisee, and advisee's parents holistically evaluate the progress of the student. By focusing on the developmental growth of our Middle School students, a strong relationship and partnership develops between the teachers, parents, advisors, and students.

## Elements of the Advisory Program

- **Goal Setting:** Students will learn how to set and obtain goals to develop and understand their responsibility and ownership of social, emotional, and academic objectives.
- **Social Contact:** A smaller community for more individualized communication is created and supported by the teachers, parents, student, and advisor.
- **Weekly Reflection:** Meetings will allow for assessment of progress to demonstrate growth and progress toward goals.
- **Behavior Modification:** Students are able to discuss with their advisors ways to demonstrate behavior which make them a positive member of their school community.
- **Service Learning:** Students will develop a greater knowledge of their surrounding community through ongoing planning, leadership opportunities, and problem solving in developing their own service learning project.

## Structure of the Advisory Program

Meeting time will be scheduled on a weekly basis to allow for the following focuses to be covered and addressed on a monthly basis.

- **Care/Share Meetings:** Students will openly and freely discuss topics and current events directly affecting them and their surrounding communities.
- **Academic Review:** Students will evaluate and discuss their academic progress with their advisor.
- **Guided Discussion:** The advisor will provide the group with a developed discussion topic involving leadership and the I.B. profiles.
- **Service Learning:** Students are able to coordinate with their advisor in the development of their service learning project.