Middle School Course Guide
2024-2025

MIDDLE SCHOOL
FIFTH – EIGHTH GRADE

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Middle School division is to provide a supportive environment that allows students to explore and develop their intellectual, creative, and physical abilities with confidence. We encourage students to think independently, to love learning, and to act with moral and social responsibility within a life guided by faith.

The Middle School of the Episcopal School of Dallas is an institution in which each student is given the opportunity to develop superior academic skills within an environment girded by expectations of honorable conduct and self-discipline. We believe that students learn best when they are challenged by passionate teachers who are determined to convince young people that learning is a joy. We believe that developing qualities of integrity, tolerance, character, and kindness are as important as educating the mind. We believe that each of these traits is best learned in a faith-centered environment in which each student is considered to be made in the image of God.

Upon completion of Middle School, ESD students are well prepared to meet the challenges of the Upper School — academically, creatively, physically, and socially.

GRADING SYSTEM

The Episcopal School of Dallas operates on an academic semester calendar. In-class grades are determined on a numerical scale. Quarter grades are reported on a letter basis. Grade Reports are issued at the close of each quarter. The Grade Report provides an evaluation of the student's academic performance, effort, and behavior. Additional information is provided through the teacher's comments.

Letter Grade	**Numerical Value**	**Letter Grade**	**Numerical Value**
A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	93-96	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	65-66
B-	80-82	F	64 or below

ACADEMIC HONORS

To qualify for the Headmaster's List, a student must receive an "A" in all courses. To earn Honor Roll status, a student must receive a "B" or above in all courses.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM OVERVIEW by GRADE

FIFTH GRADE

Classical and Modern Languages (Spanish or Latin)
Computer Science & Engineering (Design Lab)
English
Fine Arts
- Art
- Band
- Choir
- Sculpture
- Strings
- Theatre (Mime)

History (Ancient Civilizations)
Mathematics
Physical Education
Religious Studies
Science (General)

SIXTH GRADE

Classical and Modern Languages (Spanish or Latin continued)
Computer Science & Engineering (Design Lab)
English
Fine Arts
- Art
- Band
- Choir
- Sculpture
- Strings
- Tech Theatre
- Theatre (Original One-Act Play)

History (United States)
Mathematics
Physical Education
Religious Studies
Science (Life)

SEVENTH GRADE

Classical and Modern Language Electives
(French 7, Latin 7, Spanish 7, Arabic, Chinese)
Computer Science & Engineering
- Scratch
- Design Lab/Robotics

English
Fine Arts
- 2D Art
- 3D Art
- Band
- Choir
- Sculpture
- Strings
- Tech Theatre
- Theatre (Improvisation, Readers' Theatre)

Health
History (Global Studies)
Mathematics (Pre-Algebra or Algebra)
Physical Education/Athletics
Science (Earth and Chemistry)

EIGHTH GRADE

Classical and Modern Language Electives
(French 8, Latin 8, Spanish 8, Arabic, Chinese)
Computer Science & Engineering
- Python
- Design Lab/Robotics

English
Health
History (US History)
Mathematics (Algebra or Geometry)
Fine Arts
- Art
- Band
- Choir
- Sculpture
- Strings
- Tech Theatre
- Theatre (Scene Studies)

Physical Education/Athletics
Science (Earth and Physics)

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS by DEPARTMENT

CLASSICAL & MODERN LANGUAGES

Teaching students about languages and cultures other than their own is the primary focus of the Classical and Modern Languages Department. Students explore linguistic structures through the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing at all levels. As students progress, they seek to foster an appreciation for literature, daily life, arts, and sciences in the cultures of the language of choice. At the fifth and sixth grade levels, Latin and Spanish are offered as language options. Students select their language option (Latin or Spanish) at the fifth grade level with a commitment to continue in their language of choice through their sixth grade year. Beginning in seventh grade, students may choose between French, Latin, Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese with a commitment to continue in their language of choice through their eighth grade year.

FIFTH GRADE *(A yearlong course that meets 4 days per cycle.)*
When students enter fifth grade, they choose between Spanish or Latin for their fifth and sixth grade language courses. Over these two years, students are exposed to large amounts of input in the target language. The goal is to offer comprehensible input which elicits the emulation and reproduction of output. In other words, students hear the language constantly and gradually begin producing language themselves. For Spanish, the foundations of the language (phonetics, graphemes, basic syntax) are introduced in the first semester of the year. Afterwards, students are encouraged to produce simple utterances about their lives, such as the physical appearance of themselves and others, to talk about their surroundings, the objects and supplies they use everyday, and to describe their preferences and vacation plans. For Latin, students hear, and gradually use, the language to learn about the ancient Romans, their traditions, way of life, and beliefs, as well as draw comparisons to their own lives.

SIXTH GRADE *(A yearlong course that meets 4 days per cycle.)*
Sixth grade is a continuation of Spanish or Latin as students continue to develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in the target language.

SEVENTH GRADE (*A yearlong course*)
At the seventh grade level, students may choose between French, Latin, Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese with a commitment to continue in the language of choice through their eighth grade year. The seventh grade language curriculum is designed for students to begin their language study toward Upper School graduation requirements.

EIGHTH GRADE (*A yearlong course*)
At the eighth grade level, students continue their study of either French, Latin, Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese. Students who demonstrate proficiency can advance to level 2, level 2 Honors, or beyond in the Upper School.

COMPUTER SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

The goal of Middle School computer science and engineering instruction is to help students develop the necessary technology and design thinking skills to be effective and productive in an increasingly complex world. It is guided by the six strands of the ISTE National Educational Technology Standards: Creativity and Innovation; Communication and Collaboration; Research and Information Fluency; Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision-Making; Digital Citizenship; and Technology Operations and Concepts. Computer science and engineering instruction happens through both formal computer and design classes and integration into subject area courses. The following courses introduce students to computer science and engineering topics that are not covered through technology integration in the regular classroom.

FIFTH through EIGHTH GRADE DESIGN LAB *(A semester course)*
Students apply the design process to solve problems and understand the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They work in teams to design a playground and furniture, capturing research and ideas in their engineering notebooks. Using Autodesk® design software, students create a virtual image of their designs and produce a portfolio to showcase their innovative solutions.

SEVENTH GRADE INTERMEDIATE CODING APPLICATIONS: *(A semester-long course)*
Scratch is a free visual programming language developed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a means of introducing basic computer programming concepts. Students gain an understanding of the fundamentals of programming with Scratch and often move on to other programming languages. This course will focus on learning the basics of the language, including the use of variables, loops, and conditional statements. Students will write and modify Scratch code to develop coding skills, manage input and output, and to create interactive programs. Students use engineering and programming knowledge to create and print artifacts using 3D printing. Students will also explore robotics and learn to program the robots using several different types of sensors.

SEVENTH OR EIGHTH GRADE ROBOTICS *(A semester-long course)*
This course will introduce concepts in computer programming through robotic activities, using the Lego system. Students will be required to be on the ESD Middle School Robotic Team and compete at the First Lego League competition in early December. Students also agree to meet outside school hours as needed. Students will build robots and program them using feedback from touch, light, sound, and ultrasonic sensors. This is a hands-on class, and while the computer programming strand is important, students will also have opportunities to experiment with engineering design and research and development of a project to be presented at competition. Teamwork and communication are important aspects of the class.

EIGHTH GRADE COMPUTER SCIENCE AND CODING (PYTHON) *(A semester-long course)*

Students will build their programming fluency with Python, a modern programming language used by YouTube, NASA, and many other high tech organizations. This class will focus on learning the basics of the language, including the use of variables, loops, and conditional statements. Students will write and modify Python code to develop coding skills, to manage input and output and to create interactive programs and visualizations.

ENGLISH

The primary focus of the English Department is to help students achieve the ability to read and think critically, and communicate effectively in a variety of written and spoken modes. As students progress through the scope and sequence from Pre-K through the senior English curriculum, their skills in recognizing the elements of literature, appreciating the complexity and coherence of good writing, understanding the major periods in literary history, and reading works that challenge their perspectives and philosophies should also evolve. They learn to apply the rules of standard usage to their own writing and speaking, experiment with various modes and styles of writing, synthesize materials from a variety of sources, and gain confidence in literary analysis. Students in the Middle School build vocabulary through reading and discussion; teacher-generated lists related to lesson content; and ongoing, individualized self-study. They should become acquainted with the most common roots, prefixes, and suffixes; develop their vocabularies; and learn to make appropriate word choices. By understanding the fundamentals of grammar and style, students focus on strengthening and developing their skills with both writing and revising.

FIFTH GRADE ENGLISH
In this course, students focus on self-discovery by actively engaging with a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts and by using the writing process to compose a wide range of essays and journal entries. Emphasis is placed on reading comprehension and the development of analytical reading skills. Through intentional instruction and support, students learn to generate questions that reflect inference, synthesis, and evaluation. Writing encompasses opinion, informative, and narrative essays along with a concentration on mechanics and revision. Time spent on grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary help students to express their ideas with accuracy, clarity, and precision. Students are expected to select and read additional books throughout the year and to reflect on their reading in a variety of ways, concentrating primarily on evaluating the story elements.

SIXTH GRADE ENGLISH
In sixth grade, English students focus on an active engagement with texts through a variety of inquiry-based approaches: collaborative discussions, activities, and projects help to create an educational framework for questioning and discovery. Students read and analyze a range of writing including informational texts, short fiction, novels, drama, and poetry. Students explore how structure, point of view, and literal and figurative language contribute to the reading experience.

These activities encourage the development of analytical reading skills as well as the acquisition of a larger vocabulary to help express reading comprehension. Writing in sixth grade English helps students exhibit an increased sophistication in the coherent organization of ideas as well as the depth of the support for those ideas through example and evidence. Students use technology to compose and publish documents, find resources, and gather information. A collaborative peer group structure encourages the ongoing development of a sense of audience to whom the students write with intention. Students practice descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.

SEVENTH GRADE ENGLISH
In this course, students hone their writing skills using a variety of analytical and creative modes; reinforce communication skills through an ongoing review of grammar, spelling, usage, and mechanics; build vocabulary by working through texts and by examining essential words found in their reading; and apply the elements of literary analysis to works in several genres. Students read nonfiction, drama, novels, and outside reading as well as short stories, poetry, and vignettes. The course requires students to engage in experiences of inquiry to discover meaning and understanding, which then serves as a foundation for writing. Writing experiences in seventh grade English continue to help students exhibit an increased sophistication in the coherent organization of ideas as well as the depth of the support for those ideas through example and evidence. Students use technology to compose and publish documents, find resources, and gather information. Students continue to practice descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive writing, developing further a sense of audience to whom the students write with intention.

EIGHTH GRADE ENGLISH
This inquiry-based course includes vocabulary development; grammar review; literary analysis, with emphasis on essay development, organization, and revision; creative writing inspired by the course literature; and oral presentations. Throughout the year, students participate in comprehensive and inquiry-based studies of various texts, focusing on discussions of theme; conflict; character development; and author's craft (style, rhetoric, purpose, and audience) with a focus on issues of Self-Awareness and Social Justice. Students learn to develop their critical-thinking skills and to craft well-developed essays, choosing quotations based upon larger ideas, blending those quotations within a paragraph, and writing commentary for those quotations to support a clear thesis idea. Students also learn that collaboration is necessary to expand upon ideas and to engender the creation of new ones. In addition, students use the library and their own devices for research, note-taking, project development, essay writing, and revision.

FINE ARTS

In accordance with the Mission Statement, the Fine Arts Department provides an environment for an increased understanding of self, artistic and creative talents, and our relationship to other people and the world. Middle School Fine Arts classes are offered in fifth through eighth grades. These courses are based on the development of artistic technique, creativity, and perceptual skills in a variety of media, highlighting the role of self-assessment. Courses are semester-long with options for some classes to be taken for multiple terms.

2-D ART: DRAWING, PAINTING, & PRINTMAKING

2-D studio art courses teach the "language" of visual thought and expression using a variety of techniques, materials, and mediums. Students produce drawings, paintings, and prints with a focus on the fundamentals of composition, design, color theory, the modeling of form, and the illusionistic creation of space. The classes are designed to enrich student appreciation for their own and others' artistic achievements. Art history is also explored at each grade level and integrated into the curriculum by the applied project that is presented. When appropriate, field trips are taken in collaboration with coursework.

3-D ART: SCULPTURE & CERAMICS

3D art encourages students to develop art skills through three-dimensional design and spatial awareness. Using a variety of materials, students will create work based on self reflection, observation, and creative problem solving. The majority of class time will be spent creating three-dimensional work, but students will also develop their two-dimensional skills using sketching to ideate, plan, and research. Students will learn studio safety expectations and procedures as they apply to different tools and equipment. During class critiques, students will learn to talk about their work and the work of their peers as well as how to receive and apply feedback to their work to help each other grow as artists.

BAND

Middle School Band courses are performance-based studies of woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments and **repertoire from a range of styles and historic periods.** The courses emphasize reading music, development of musicianship, performance techniques, solo performance, and ensemble performance. Each year of instruction serves as preparation for the subsequent year, including participation in Upper School Band. Performance opportunities may include public concerts, playing in chapel, All-Region honor band, and Solo & Ensemble competition. Students are financially responsible for their own instruments and supplies. There are no prerequisites for **middle school band in any grade, and it is highly recommended that a student enroll more than one semester. Every semester and every grade-level is a new and different class filled with new learning, new music and fun.**

CHOIR

Middle School Choir classes focus on making music together with the best choral sound possible. We learn vocal warm ups, we sing in many languages, we sing in unison and in harmony, and we continue to develop fluency in sight singing and general music proficiency. Performance opportunities include Fall and Spring Concerts, Lessons and Carols, community service singing trips, and singing for Chapel. Students are also encouraged to audition for TPSMEA and TCDA Honor Choirs.

STRINGS

There are no prerequisites at any level in strings, just willingness and a desire to learn. Students will learn the basics of their chosen instruments and basic musicianship through a variety of musical

genres and historical periods. They will also be presented multiple opportunities for performance throughout the term and school year. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the after school strings club that meets once a week throughout the year to enhance their learning. Students are financially responsible for their own instruments and supplies though ESD will help to arrange instrument rental. Prices will vary depending on the instrument.

TECHNICAL THEATRE

Technical Theatre in the Middle School is a basic introduction to the four main areas of technical theatre production: Scenery, Lighting, Costumes, and Sound. In the sixth grade, students are introduced to basic theatre terminology and the design process for each of the four main areas. Construction of all elements is introduced and practiced in conjunction with the Sixth grade theatre class. In the seventh grade, students build upon previous knowledge by applying what they know to theatrical literature. Intermediate projects in design in the four main areas of technical theatre are included as well as practical application during the seventh grade theatre class performances. The eighth grade class is focused on shop skills and mastery of tools and production techniques. Those skills are applied to the eighth grade theatre class performance.

THEATRE

Middle School Theatre courses focus on learning through active participation for an increased understanding of self, development of artistic technique, creativity, communication, and collaboration, while broadening a perspective of curiosity and looking to find joy in the journey. Fifth grade theatre curriculum focuses on physical theatre skills through Pantomime and Shadow Theatre. Students will also learn Mime make-up application and beginning elements of design. Sixth grade theatre curriculum focuses on creativity and collaboration through Devised Theatre. Students will learn playwriting, acting and beginning elements of design. The semester concludes with a performance of the class's original one act play in collaboration with the sixth grade Tech Theatre class. Seventh grade theatre curriculum focuses on creativity, comedy and vocal expression through work in Reader's Theatre, improvisation and comedy. Units of study conclude with performances in Comedy/Improv and a Reader's Theatre show. The Reader's Theatre show is developed in collaboration with the seventh grade Tech Theatre class. Eighth grade theatre curriculum focuses on the development of artistic technique utilizing established scripts of both comedic and dramatic literature, leading to deeper work in scene studies, character development, Shakespeare, stage combat 101, and beginning elements of design. Eighth grade performances are developed as an outgrowth of their studies and done in collaboration with the eighth grade Tech Theatre class.

HEALTH

The Middle School Health Education Program is a comprehensive two-year course spanning 7th and 8th grades. In 7th grade, students will explore the science of nutrition, understanding the impact of food choices on overall health, and acquiring practical skills for making informed dietary decisions. Emotional wellness takes center stage as students explore strategies for recognizing, understanding, and managing emotions effectively, fostering positive mental health and interpersonal relationships. Health communication skills are honed, emphasizing the crucial role effective communication plays in personal and community health. A comprehensive study of the human

reproductive system rounds out the year, emphasizing responsible decision-making and reproductive health. Moving into 8th grade, the focus shifts to drug and alcohol prevention, the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, and stress management. Students will engage in critical discussions, exploring evidence-based prevention strategies and developing practical stress management skills applicable to various life situations. This program aims to equip students with not only a wealth of health-related knowledge but also essential life skills, preparing them for the challenges and choices they will encounter in high school and beyond.

HISTORY

The goal of the Middle School History Department is to help guide students to think like historians. Students will approach the study of history by using various reading strategies including close reading, sourcing, and contextualization. They will learn to evaluate the trustworthiness of multiple viewpoints to fully understand issues, as well as making connections between the past and present. Writing skills include being able to analyze primary and secondary source documents and to make historical claims supported by evidence. Throughout the Middle School History curriculum students will explore themes such as culture, power, authority and governance, global connections, civic ideals and practices and individual development and identity.

FIFTH GRADE

In this course, students will explore ancient civilizations from different areas of the world, including Africa, Asia, and Europe. Students will focus on the elements that are common to all civilizations: geography, government, religion, language, economy, arts, and daily life. Students will focus on the theme of culture as they learn to appreciate how it shapes their lives and society, as well as the lives and societies of others. Another main focus will be on people, place and environment as students compare and contrast the different civilizations studied. Simulations, primary source analysis and interdisciplinary projects will provide students with a rich understanding of how societies have developed since ancient times and how they influence our lives today.

SIXTH GRADE

The sixth grade course is designed to provide students with an overview of United States history from pre-Colonial times to modern day America. The goals of the course are to create an understanding of the major forces that have shaped the history of the United States, examine the relationship of American history to the history of the world, and understand how that history continues to influence our current understanding of the nation. The curriculum covers important events, geography, and key turning points as they relate to the development of the United States of America. Key topics include Colonial America, the Founding Documents, American Revolution, Civil War and major events of the 20th Century. Students utilize and analyze primary source documents, develop research and expository writing skills, make connections between cause and effect, and are challenged to further develop their critical thinking skills. The emphasis on research culminates with a documented essay including thesis development and the use of multiple primary and secondary sources.

SEVENTH GRADE
Students explore diverse areas of the world in their global studies.The framework of the course is geography and its five themes: location, place, human/environmental interaction, movement, and region. In addition to current issues in countries of these areas, the study focuses on the individual elements that are essential components of every ancient and modern civilization, including economics, religion and philosophy, political science, sociology, fine arts, and daily life. Students learn to read and draw conclusions from a wide range of data portrayed in maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, symbols, and a variety of primary source materials. The examination of a variety of topics will automatically incorporate an interdisciplinary approach with clear connections to English, science, and other academic disciplines. A variety of individual and collaborative projects provide students with opportunities to refine research skills, practice note-taking, engage in critical reading, and articulate ideas during oral presentations.

EIGHTH GRADE
The 8th-grade history curriculum builds upon students' middle school history studies from 5th-8th grades. 8th graders study U.S. History from Reconstruction to the present, with a special focus on human rights. Students learn that events in U.S. history did not happen in isolation - they have historical foundations that go back hundreds of years. For example, in order to understand the U.S. Constitution and how and why it has changed over time, students will go back to the Middle Ages to learn about the Magna Carta and the evolution of individual rights. Students also go back to understand the history of slavery and serfdom, as well as the history of antisemitism. In conjunction with the 8th-grade English classes, we have an in-depth, cross-curricular unit on the Holocaust, culminating in a field trip to the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum.

MATHEMATICS

The Middle School curriculum is designed to develop an understanding of the real number system and the application of that system in solving problems, including those considered "real-world." Students learn to communicate mathematical thinking verbally, visually, and in writing. All middle school students enroll in Algebra 1, either in 7th or 8th grade, which lays the foundation for more advanced mathematical studies in Upper School.

FIFTH GRADE
This course builds on the skills and work habits of students by reviewing and then expanding on topics covered in previous years. These include place value concepts; recalling basic math facts quickly; the four operations with whole numbers (with emphasis on multiplying and dividing by two-digit numbers); graphing; customary and metric measurement units; the concepts of and the four operations with decimals and fractions; and such topics from geometry as perimeter, area, circumference, volume, angles, triangles, quadrilaterals, and other two- and three-dimensional figures. There is particular emphasis on utilizing reliable study skills, honing computational skills, developing math confidence, and working cooperatively in small and large groups.

SIXTH GRADE
This course encompasses several basic topics such as operations with whole numbers, decimals and fractions, percents, geometry, measurement, and pre-algebra. The study of data and graphs, patterns,

variables, number theory, ratios, proportions, probability, and integers is also included. The course emphasizes the ability to communicate mathematically. Some concepts are presented using manipulatives, thus providing a bridge between the concrete and the abstract, and cooperative learning takes place as students work in pairs and teams. These methods are combined with traditional teaching to provide a variety of learning experiences for each student.

PRE-ALGEBRA
This course includes the study of a wide variety of topics that form the foundation for algebra and geometry courses. Such topics include variables, exponents, mathematical properties, order of operations, using transformations to solve equations and inequalities in one variable, whole numbers, integers, rational numbers, operations with signed numbers, operations with fractions, decimals and percents, ratios, proportions, geometry, area and volume, and probability. Word problems illustrate practical applications of topics.

HONORS PRE-ALGEBRA
This course includes the study of the following: variables, positive and negative exponents, mathematical properties, order of operations, using transformations to solve equations and inequalities in one variable, integers, rational numbers, operations with signed numbers, operations with rational numbers (including algebraic fractions), decimals, percents, ratios, proportions, geometry, area and volume, graphing linear equations, probability and statistics, and the application of algebra to right triangles. Topics are covered with a greater degree of sophistication than that found in the pre-algebra course. The problems are more difficult, and the pace is faster. Problem solving is emphasized throughout the year.

ALGEBRA I (Prerequisite: Pre-Algebra)
This course begins with the study of operations with real algebraic expressions (constant and variable). The algebraic properties are introduced early in the course and prove valuable for the duration of the course. Students solve equations and inequalities of various types, including linear, quadratic, radical, and absolute value. They also study linear and quadratic functions, both analytically and graphically. They work with expressions of higher degree later in the course and encounter worded problem situations throughout the year. This course (or its Upper School equivalent) is required for graduation.

HONORS ALGEBRA I (Prerequisite: Honors Pre-Algebra)
This course begins with the study of algebraic properties, applying them to simplify algebraic expressions. Students solve equations and inequalities, including those involving absolute value. Operations with polynomials lead to factoring and solving quadratic equations. These equations are also solved by completing the square and by using the quadratic formula. Within the Cartesian coordinate system, students analyze and graph both first- and second-degree functions. Word problems serve to stress application and reinforce concepts. Because this is an honors course, emphasis is placed on the concept of a function and the functional nature of the equations studied.

GEOMETRY OR HONORS GEOMETRY (Prerequisite: Algebra I and department approval)
This course is a traditional study of Euclidean geometry, with significant modeling using various technologies. Students learn how to construct logical proofs and utilize elements of discovery in learning about the geometric world. Topics to be studied include lines, angles, polygons, parallelism, perpendicularity, similarity, introductory right triangle trigonometry, circles, area, volume, and coordinate geometry. The honors course covers the same topics listed under Geometry but in greater depth and intensity.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

FIFTH GRADE AND SIXTH GRADE
Fifth and sixth graders participate in a wide range of activities to enhance the development of skills and knowledge necessary for each student to create lifelong habits of physical activity and wellness. The program is movement based. Physical fitness, motor-skill development, learning to play, and implementing basic game strategies remain the primary focus and class objectives.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE
Seventh and eighth graders are offered a variety of individual and team sports in the hope of encouraging an active lifestyle. Students not participating on an athletic team participate in a physical education class that is fitness and movement based. Fitness training and functional movements are emphasized so that students will improve their performance in any sport or fitness activity.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Middle school religion classes meet two days a cycle for the entire year in the 5th and 6th grades. These courses are designed to provide a broad overview of the basic stories, people, history, ideas, and values found in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. These include the Biblical Story before Christ, including creation, the Hebrew patriarchs, the Exodus, and the history of the Jewish Kingdom. It continues by looking at the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and how His message was carried forward by the early Christian Church. While this course teaches what is common to all Christian traditions, it also touches on traditions of the Episcopal Church. Finally, the 5th grade class aligns with the students' historical study of ancient history while the 6th grade class aligns with their study of American history and the colonization of the New World.

SCIENCE

The Middle School science curriculum is designed to promote and sustain the students' natural curiosity and develop, in the classroom, the outdoors, and the laboratory, the ability to explore, discover, and investigate some of the fundamental truths of nature. Fifth and sixth grade students carry on experimental activities and watch demonstrations in the general and life sciences. The seventh grade Environmental Science and Chemistry and eighth-grade Earth Science and Physics

courses are lab-oriented, with much emphasis placed on learning earth processes while practicing safe lab procedures and interpreting data; Chromebooks are a major learning tool.

All of the Middle School science courses continue to develop each student's understanding of the practices associated with scientific inquiry and engineering design. These real-world practices combine skills and knowledge that involve students in asking questions and defining problems; developing and using models; planning and carrying out investigations; analyzing and interpreting data; using mathematics and computational thinking; constructing explanations and designing solutions; engaging in argument from evidence; and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information. Additionally, teachers draw upon a set of recognizable cross-cutting concepts that unite all of the scientific domains. While studying the life sciences, physical sciences, or earth and space sciences, students will identify, use, and evaluate patterns, similarity, and diversity; cause and effect; scale, proportion, and quantity; systems and system models; energy and matter; structure and function; and stability and change.

FIFTH GRADE: GENERAL SCIENCE

This course will encompass physical science, life science, and earth and space sciences. The class design will be inquiry-based and explore the nature of science while using technology. There will be labs and activities to enhance the students' learning. Also, the use of the quarry and greenhouse will be incorporated into various lessons. The students will develop a strong foundation for all sciences.

SIXTH GRADE: BIOLOGY (LIFE SCIENCE)

This course investigates living processes and the types of organisms that occur on Earth. The course covers the following broad topics: cell physiology, classification of living things, virology, microbiology, and genetics. The activities and laboratories help provide an awareness and appreciation for science through observation, hypothesizing, classification, measurement, interpretation of data, and conclusions emphasized through a field exercise conducted at Dinosaur Valley State, Super Science Special Programming, and the Outdoor Experimental Science Field Day. Students gain a base of scientific facts and concepts that enables them to continue to learn and develop a style of logical thinking through collaboration to build a cross-curricular understanding of the interrelationships between different fields of study.

SEVENTH GRADE: ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND CHEMISTRY

This course uses chemistry and projects to explain major Earth processes, including the formation of minerals, rocks and fossils, weathering, and erosion. Geologic time and the use of topographic maps also will be investigated. Chemistry topics covered include the periodic table, properties of matter, atoms, elements, compounds, chemical bonding, and chemical reactions. This year of science also explores topics in environmental science, including water, soil chemistry, and energy, and includes a field exercise at Wolf Run.

EIGHTH GRADE: EARTH SCIENCE AND PHYSICS
This course uses physics to explain major Earth processes, including climate and weather, astronomy, plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanoes. Physics concepts covered include motion and energy, forces and motion, heat, magnetism, wave motion, sound, and light. The course makes use of collaborative and experiential learning exercises. One of these exercises includes researching and then creating and giving a presentation to the class on an advanced topic in astronomy. Another involves creating a model building to be tested on an earthquake simulator and then researching a historic earthquake to learn about what engineers are doing to minimize destruction caused by earthquakes.

ADVISORY

Middle School Advisory at The Episcopal School of Dallas is a place of belonging for each child within the larger middle school community and is strengthened by the relationship between the advisor and advisee. Within this space, the advisor is a trusted guide, and all advisees feel valued for their uniqueness and know that their voices are heard.

Grade Level	**Monday** 9:35-9:55	**Tuesday** 9:35-9:55	**Wednesday**	**Thursday** 9:35-9:55	**Friday** 9:35-9:55
5th Grade	Nuts/Bolts	Study Hall	Eucharist	Advisory	Check-ins
6th Grade	Nuts/Bolts	Advisory	Eucharist	Study Hall	Check-ins
7th Grade	Nuts/Bolts	Study Hall	Eucharist	Advisory	Check-ins
8th Grade	Nuts/Bolts	Advisory	Eucharist	Study Hall	Check-ins

ATHLETICS

FALL
Cross Country (boys and girls), Cheerleading (boys and girls), Field Hockey (girls), Football (boys), Volleyball (girls)
WINTER
Basketball (boys and girls), Soccer (boys and girls), Wrestling (boys)
SPRING
Baseball (boys), Golf (boys and girls), Lacrosse (boys and girls), Softball (girls), Tennis (boys and girls), Track (boys and girls)

LIBRARY

The Gill Library, an information center for students and faculty, strives to meet both curricular and recreational resource needs. Librarians and classroom teachers work collaboratively to design and prepare integrated lessons that incorporate research skills into the curriculum. The library embraces

the philosophy that research is a process. It is the thinking process, which benefits the students, not just the ultimate "find." A special link to research steps, located at www.esdallas.org/library is posted to facilitate all research endeavors.

Currently, the Gill Library houses 25,000 items. The collection can be accessed on campus or online from home. The web-based catalog allows users to locate, cross-reference, and retrieve desired information. The library also has access to a collection of e-reference books and subscribes to 16 online databases, such as JSTOR and Proquest, that support research and curriculum goals.

The Gill Library's latest online acquisition is OverDrive, a digital library that allows 24/7 access to a growing collection of eBooks and audiobooks. Students and faculty can download the OverDrive collection to all electronic devices, including smartphones, eReaders, tablets, laptops, and computers.

The Middle School library program guides students through all steps of library skills. Each year, the basics are reinforced and new tools, both print and electronic, are introduced. Topic conceptualization and definition techniques lead to quality research projects that are planned by the classroom teacher and the librarian. Emphasis is given to locating and documenting information, as well as processing and evaluating sources. Literature reading and discussion activities happen regularly in the library. Outside reading book projects and independent reading challenges promote and foster a love of reading in the Middle School. All Middle School grades participate in the annual ESD Battle of the Books.

ENRICHMENT

As a part of the Middle School experience, our students and faculty members are immersed in enrichment opportunities outside of the traditional classroom. All Middle School students and teachers have opportunities to participate in the following activities on a recurring basis:

- Community Service Program
- Daily Chapel
- Vestry
- Visiting Artists & Authors
- Writers' Forum
- Outdoor Education

In conjunction with our Outdoor Education Program, students participate in numerous activities for self-exploration and discovery. The basic goals of all of these learning and leadership trips are for students to learn about themselves, others, and the world around them; as well as to work together and to care for each other in an environment outside the traditional classroom.

FIFTH GRADE

In mid-February, students travel to Galveston for a three-day trip of exploration, learning, and fun. The purpose of the trip is to learn Texas history, features of the Texas Coastal environment, and lessons in science and engineering through museum visits and experiential educational topics. This overnight trip continues the students' progression in Outdoor Education, which will continue to expand throughout middle school. The trip includes visits to NASA John Space Center, Moody Gardens, The Bryan Museum, The Oceanstar Museum, and Seawolf Park; two nights at Victory Camp; and a water study project conducted at Galveston State Park.

SIXTH GRADE

After an in-depth focus on American History, sixth-grade students travel to our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., with their advisors. This highly-anticipated trip includes visits to the White House, Jamestown, and numerous American History landmarks. Many ESD alumni remember this trip as a turning point for their class as they become their own community. Students experience patriotism and government in first person, solidifying their importance as both American and global citizens.

SEVENTH GRADE

Our seventh graders explore the Texas Hill Country at Camp Champion in November, once the Texas weather cools off a bit. Team building is interwoven into the four-day and three-night trip filled with science and history curriculum. A day trip to Enchanted Rock is a fun mountaintop experience for students and their advisors. Students return with a sense of bonding that is nurtured for the remainder of the year. Shared stories of camaraderie through travel stories contain memories that last a lifetime.

EIGHTH GRADE

Students in eighth grade embark on an adventure to Buena Vista, Colorado, during the first week of school to better foster a sense of community for their "senior" year of Middle School. Our Outdoor Education Department and advisors work closely together to provide programming for this 5 day/4 night retreat focusing on an overarching theme of Looking Beyond Ourselves with the following themes:

- Know Thyself
- Witness to Others
- Act Ethically
- Leave Legacy

Students sleep in platform tents by the Arkansas River after days filled with high ropes course, group initiatives, rock climbing and rappelling, and hiking the surrounding mountain area. But these principles are not left behind in Colorado. Our faculty continues to build on the Looking Beyond

Ourselves theme throughout the school year, both in the formal curriculum and the Code of Conduct which guides all we do at ESD.