



MIDDLE SCHOOL

WELCOME TO THE
MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

2009-2010

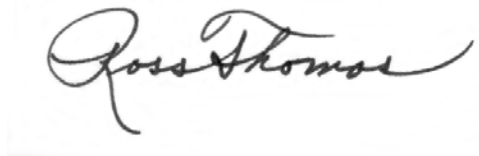
Welcome to Valley Catholic Middle School

We want to welcome your family to Valley Catholic Middle School not as to a large institution but as to your second home. We want you to feel known, valued, and comfortable.

More than ever before young people are watching rather than living. Our dreams, conversations, imaginations should be custom-made from our own experience, not – as is today far too common – mass-produced for us. A great education can be a base of a great life, and the best education is based on the thrills of our own adventures and accomplishments, the richness of imagination gained from our own reading and thought, the satisfaction we feel in our own hard-won skills.

A great school really knows all its students, takes them seriously, as individuals, thinkers, athletes, artists. Inactive spectators become jealous of the active...and unhappy. A great school educates its students' imaginations and provides every sort of activity that might make their dreams even nobler, more individual, more exciting...and true. At Valley Catholic we want every single student getting up each morning excited about his or her own day...his or her life. Active people happy with themselves support each other – this support of happy people for each other is true school spirit. There's no jealousy among people who have taken advantage of the opportunity their school gave them to earn their own respect.

Valley Catholic is not only personal – it's also hopeful, faithful, and happy. The most important thing we can say about education is that students need to be taught joys, not fears. This has always been true. Here at Valley Catholic we are able to laugh because we believe in the laughter at the heart of things, because we believe that life is ultimately a divine comedy, not an absurd tragedy. Our classes and our whole spirit are based on this belief.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ross Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

Principal



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WELCOME TO VALLEY CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Valley Catholic Middle School provides an outstanding Catholic education, enabling students to excel in scholarship, leadership, character development and service. Valley Catholic prepares young men and women to be lifelong learners and leaders in the 21st century. With an education that speaks to the whole person, Valley Catholic promotes a strong academic tradition of critical thinking, intellectual curiosity and active social responsibility.

Students attend classes at one of the loveliest campuses in Oregon. A friendly, caring atmosphere enables students to receive personal attention. Accelerated classes give Valley Catholic students the added edge to achieve at consistently high levels. Valley Catholic Middle School students score well above average on nationally standardized exams and are praised for their high school readiness.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Valley Catholic School promotes the development of lifelong learners and leaders by teaching and living Catholic values within a strong tradition of faith, service, and personal and academic excellence.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The college preparatory education at Valley Catholic School develops the whole person – physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and aesthetically. Valley Catholic School provides a Christian community in which the body, mind and spirit of each student can develop to full maturity and responsibility. By challenging students to think critically and discern prayerfully, a Valley Catholic education provides students with fundamental knowledge and encourages them to develop the understanding and wisdom to participate fully and positively in life.

TUITION

The tuition rate for the 2008–2009 school-year is \$6,850. For more information regarding fee or tuition assistance, please call the Finance Office at 503-644-3745. You may also fax information to 503-646-4054.

SCHOLARSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID

Scholarships are awarded yearly to returning students who meet the specified criteria. Financial aid is also available (by parent application) through the business office. Financial aid forms must be submitted in a timely manner in order for students to be eligible for consideration.

FACULTY

Valley Catholic is a campus school of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon and is affiliated with the Portland Archdiocesan Schools. The faculty includes Sisters and lay teachers. Students benefit from enriched course development taught by faculty in each department who are experts in their fields.

ADMINISTRATION

Principal	Mr. Ross Thomas
Dean of the Middle School	Mrs. Jennifer Gfroerer
Dean of Academics	Mrs. Sarah Lynch
High School Admission Director	Mrs. Claudia Thomas
Technology Director	Mr. Dale Goodno
Campus Minister	Mrs. Mary Donovan
Personal Counselor	Mrs. Mary Poulsen
CYO Director	Mrs. Kelly Alfieri
Fine Arts/Music Department Chair	Sr. Juliana Monti
Librarian	Mrs. Sue Osborne
Director of School Operations	Mrs. Jan Wilson
Secretary/Registrar	Mrs. Pat Joyaux
Cafeteria Manager	Mrs. Debbie Holloway
Maintenance	Mr. Ranil Jinadasa



ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Valley Catholic School is a college preparatory school with high academic and behavioral standards. In an effort to support each student's transition into Valley Catholic Middle School's program, we will begin our 2009-2010 school year with a full week of orientation.

The orientation program is an extra step in assisting students in the development of basic study skills. Many of these topics will be reinvestigated during academic classes as well as study skills classes. The orientation program lays the groundwork for the students to apply the techniques they learn to their daily assignments.

SELF EVALUATION

Students will have the opportunity to recognize and determine their individual learning styles. This will allow the students the freedom to choose a variety of study habits and project choices once academic homework begins.

GENERAL STUDY SKILLS

Students will learn time management skills, how to use the school-issued agenda/daily planner, how to fight procrastination and how to manage long-term projects.

ORGANIZATION

Students will receive guidance to help them start the year in an organized manner. Each student will learn techniques for organizing their locker, book bag, binder, agenda/daily planner, and even their workspace at home. Organizational techniques include taking inventory of supplies on a regular basis, as well as writing personal information (name and homeroom) in all textbooks and supplies, in case an item is misplaced during the year.

NOTE TAKING AND OUTLINES

Students will learn how to process information from a variety of sources. As they process the information, students will learn when and how to take margin notes, highlight information and transfer notes into note card and outline forms. In addition, students will be exposed to better note taking skills in a variety of settings: from a textbook, a classroom discussion, notes on the overhead or blackboard, and oral presentations.

IMPROVED ACADEMIC READING TECHNIQUES

Students will learn to distinguish different types of reading that are required for assignments. Students will learn the different ways to read text including when to skim and how to improve their retention of material. They will also learn the differences between reading textbook assignments, reading novels and reading for recreation.

WRITING BASICS

Students will review Valley Catholic Middle School's academic standards regarding homework quality. Specifically, topics will include how to research material without plagiarizing, how to write appropriate theses (topics) and conclusions, and the drafting and editing process.

STUDY TECHNIQUES

Many students have learned one or two basic study techniques. This class will expand on those techniques and include specific ways to study such as the use of mnemonic devices, word associations, visual symbols, acronyms and categorizing. The students will learn to analyze the styles of tests and gain an understanding of constant standards that exist on true/false tests, matching tests, and other short answer exams.

SCHOOL POLICY

Students will learn the expected code of conduct within the school, the uniform code, the extra curricular programs, and the academic enrichments at Valley Catholic Middle School.

TRANSITIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

Students will learn how to find their classes, memorize their class schedules, learn the differences in procedural practices within the nine different classes, practice opening their lockers, learn when and how to pack their backpacks and have time to adjust to the general day-to-day program.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Valley Catholic School is a college preparatory school consisting of grades 7-12. However, students in the seventh and eighth grades participate in a specialized program commonly referred to as Valley Catholic Middle School (VCMS). The program is designed to help prepare students for high school by offering an age-appropriate transition from the sixth to the ninth grade.

Valley Catholic Middle School's curriculum follows the requirements outlined in the Archdiocesan standards and the Oregon State Framework. The middle-school curriculum and policies were developed after thorough study of the Valley Catholic Elementary School program (our campus K-6 school), the Valley Catholic High School program, as well as consultation with area public and Catholic middle and high schools.

Teachers may add additional units in an effort to enhance the core curriculum. This information, along with any specific classroom procedures, grading policies, or class requirements, will be listed on each teacher's class syllabus.

**It is important to note that this Middle-School Guide complements the Valley Catholic Middle School Handbook. The overall goals and philosophies contained in the VCMS Handbook form the backbone of our Middle-School program. We encourage parents and students to familiarize themselves with the information contained in both documents.

AWARDS

Best Middle-School Science Research Program - Valley Catholic Middle School won the Best Science Research Program for 2008. Valley Catholic Middle School received the award from OMSI at the Intel Science Fair Expo for all middle-schools in Oregon and SW Washington.

CURRICULUM

Students at Valley Catholic Middle School are provided the opportunities to excel with an advanced curriculum that provides a well-rounded educational experience.

Courses include:

- Language Arts
- Science
- Math (Two levels – regular and honors)
- Social Science
- Physical Education/Health (daily)
- Religion
- Music (choice of band, choir, or orchestra)
- Art (a semester each year)
- Computers (a semester each year)
- Foreign Language: French, Japanese, Spanish (optional for eighth grade students)
- Study skills

CHOOSING CLASSES

Each middle-school student chooses a music class -- band, choir or orchestra -- and an exposure class.

DAILY SCHEDULE

School begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:05 p.m. every day.

Valley Catholic School publishes the daily class schedules in the student planner. Schedules (the exact time each class begins and ends) will change depending on the events that are scheduled for a particular day. In most cases, the order in which the classes occur will stay the same but the time of day may vary.

A typical middle-school schedule:

8:00 - 8:41	0 period class
8:45 – 9:30	1st period classes
9:34 – 10:19	2nd period classes
10:19 – 10:28	Break
10:32 – 11:19	3rd period classes
11:20 – 11:50	Lunch
11:54 – 12:38	4 th period class
12:42 – 1:25	5th period classes
1:25 – 1:35	Break
1:35 – 2:16	6th period classes
2:20 – 3:05	7th period classes

CLASSES

Students in the middle-school program attend eight classes every day. Classes are taught by different teachers in different locations. Each class lasts 40 minutes with a four minute passing break. Students will generally have a different teacher for seven of their eight classes. Those classes will be held in at least seven different classrooms each day. On average, the same group of students will attend five of their eight classes together until January. In January, all classes -- except math and music -- change and students will be with different classmates.

FINAL EXAMS

Students will be given a comprehensive exam two times during the school year for each subject. This time is commonly referred to as Final Exam Week. During the testing week, regular classes are suspended and a special schedule is followed for both the middle-school and high-school. This schedule allows for up to three tests per day, with dismissal for each student ranging from 10:30-11:30 a.m. depending on which classes each student is taking.

FINE ARTS

Known for its musical excellence, Valley Catholic Middle School Music Department features band, choir and orchestra. Music class is taught every other day throughout the entire school year. The department presents winter and spring concerts. The music classes are often invited to perform outside of the school, at locations including the State Capitol, the Grotto, Beaverton City Hall and Washington Square Mall. Extracurricular activities include the handbell team, honor choir, honors orchestra and jazz band. In addition, students enter competitions and make public appearances. Private voice and instrumental lessons are also offered.

The Art Department displays its art work periodically in the front lobby and the halls of the school.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Eighth grade students may choose to take classes in French, Japanese, Spanish, or study skills. The high school staff teaches foreign language classes. The classes are first-year courses offered by Valley Catholic High School. If a student decides to take a foreign language class in eighth grade, he or she may have the opportunity to take up to a fifth year of foreign language in high school.

HOMEROOM

Homeroom refers to the classroom where a student's locker is located. Periodically, the homerooms will have competitions, such as intramural sporting events and school spirit competitions, and will work on service projects together.

HOMEWORK

Valley Catholic Middle School students have 2 ½-3 hours of homework each night. This works out to approximately 20–30 minutes per class each evening. Students have opportunities to work on homework during their study skills class. In addition, students often receive opportunities to spend a few minutes at the end of class to begin their homework. It is very important to use this time wisely as the homework load **WILL INCREASE** beyond the 2 ½-3 hours if a student chooses to do something other than homework during those times.

Valley Catholic Middle School has a “no late work” policy. This means that any assignment that is not turned in when the teacher collects it will receive a 0% grade. Valley Catholic Middle School does not allow extra credit or the opportunity to “redo” assignments. For this reason, it is very important to have all work completed on time and organized in such a way that it can be easily found and collected.

RESEARCH AND TERM PAPERS

Each year’s studies include three major projects for seventh grade students and four projects for eighth graders. A major project is defined as an assignment that requires the student to research and produce a project (e.g. term paper, presentation, lab assignment) that would require, in theory, over three typed pages of information.

STUDY SKILLS

The study skills class is a required class for all seventh grade students and is an option for eighth grade students who do not wish to take a foreign language. The study skills class teaches students how to use the school-issued homework/assignment notebook, how to plan for long-term projects and how to study for exams.

TEACHER AVAILABILITY

All full-time Valley Catholic teachers will be in their classrooms or offices and available to students at the end of each school day for ten minutes after dismissal. The goal is to be available if a student has questions regarding an assignment, absent work, or wishes to discuss a disciplinary action. Since this is a time designed for the students, parents are asked to remain outside the classroom until after 3:15 p.m. on regular schedule days.

If a parent wishes to contact a teacher, they may call the school office and leave a message or contact the teacher directly by e-mail. All teachers are required to check their e-mail prior to leaving school for the day.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM - CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENTS

AMC8

The American Mathematics Competition for students in the 8th grade and below is a 40 minute multiple choice test. The problems are not routine, and their solutions often require creative ways of thinking about mathematics. The test is designed to enrich the mathematics experience of middle-school students. Valley Catholic Middle School students consistently score amongst the top participants.

FOREIGN STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Middle-school students from Shukutoku Junior High School in Japan spend two weeks each spring attending classes at Valley Catholic Middle School. Middle-school families have the opportunity to host students during their two-week visit. Azumano International Exchange Company sponsors this exchange program.

GARDENING PROJECT

All Valley Catholic eighth grade students participate in the Gardening Project. The Gardening Project allows students to participate in a range of activities including map scaling/plotting, land management, seed germinating, and vegetable growing projects. This project continues to evolve as resources and student ideas increase.

HONOR ROLL

Students are awarded honors according to the grade point average (GPA) they have earned at the end of each semester. First Honors are awarded to students whose GPA is 3.8 to 4.0. Second Honors are awarded to students whose GPA is 3.55 to 3.79. Third Honors are awarded to students whose GPA is 3.25 to 3.54.

MARYVILLE PROJECT

The Maryville project is an intergenerational program between Maryville Nursing Home and Valley Catholic Middle School. Maryville Nursing Home is a Sisters of Saint Mary of Oregon senior-care facility located on our campus. The program pairs a team of eighth-grade students with one Maryville resident. Students spend one class period per week visiting and interviewing their Maryville residents. Students then create biographies based on their residents' memories.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC BEE

Valley Catholic Middle School students participate in National Geographic Society's National Geographic Bee. This contest challenges the students' geographic knowledge. All students participate in the initial round via the social studies classes. The top two contestants per grade level compete in the school wide competition. The winner becomes the Valley Catholic representative at the state-level Geographic Bee. Valley Catholic is in its fifth year of participation.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Valley Catholic Middle School is a member of the National Junior Honor Society. The National Honor Society (NHS) and National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) are the nation's premier organizations established to recognize outstanding high-school and middle-level students. Students become members of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) by invitation only. They must receive and maintain a 3.75 grade-point average, participate in service projects, and maintain high standards of scholarship, citizenship, service, leadership, integrity and character.

NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

Depending on student interest, Valley Catholic Middle School students participate in the National Spelling Bee. *"The Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational promotion, administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company and sponsors in the United States, American Samoa, Canada, China, Europe, Ghana, Guam, Jamaica, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, South Korea, and the U.S. Virgin Islands."*

PENTAGAMES

Valley Catholic Middle School students participate in Pentagames. Teams of nine students from local middle-schools compete in a series of five mathematical contests, the last event being a math relay race. Pentagames has divisions for advanced and regular students.

PURPLE COMET EXAM

The Purple Comet Exam is an online math exam in the spring. Students form teams of six, and have exactly one hour after downloading the problems to submit their solutions. In the spring of 2008, the Valley Catholic team tied for third in the nation.

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE LEGISLATIVE HEARING PROJECT

The Valley Catholic Middle School Legislative Hearing Project is a mock congressional hearing on several controversial topics in areas such as agricultural, biomedical, and environmental science. Student groups research several topics from the perspectives of the multiple stakeholders and then make a recommendation for a mock government oversight committee.

SCIENCE FAIRS: VALLEY CATHOLIC'S ANNUAL FAIR

All middle-school students participate in our annual science fair which is typically held in February. Students present original research and create traditional three-panel posters to describe their process and results. The top students in each grade level and category, as well as any honorable mention projects, have the opportunity to act as the representatives for Valley Catholic Middle School at the regional science fair (hosted by Valley Catholic) as well as at the Intel Northwest Science Expo.

SCIENCE FAIRS: INTEL NORTHWEST SCIENCE FAIR EXPO

The NWSE encourages students to learn science, engineering and math by engaging in the activities that characterize these endeavors. Students compete in 17 categories encompassing all the scientific disciplines, engineering, computer science and mathematics. Participation comes from all parts of Oregon and from several schools in Vancouver, Washington.

SCIENCE FAIRS: VALLEY CATHOLIC'S REGIONAL FAIR

Valley Catholic Middle School hosts a regional Science Fair which is typically held in April. The top three contestants from each school, per grade level and category, are invited to participate in this annual event. Contestants from any private school (from Medford to Eastern Oregon to Southwest Washington) compete for trophies and scholarships that are applied to tuition at any Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Portland.

SPEECH TOURNAMENT

For over 40 years, Valley Catholic Middle School has hosted an Annual Speech Tournament in January. Over 400 students compete each year for trophies and scholarships that are applied toward tuition at any Catholic high school within the Archdiocese of Portland. Members of Toastmasters and members of the community serve as judges for elocution, extemporaneous reading and impromptu speeches. All Valley Catholic Middle Students compete in the Speech Tournament.

SSMO SISTERS PROJECT

The Sisters project is an intergenerational program between Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon and Valley Catholic Middle School. The program pairs a group of seventh grade students with one SSMO Sister. Students spend one class period per week visiting and interviewing their SSMO Sisters. Students are exposed to different enrichment opportunities including learning to knit, music appreciation, interviewing skills, and arts and crafts. Each seventh-grade student creates a final project based on the focus of their visits. Every seventh-grade student participates in this semester-long program.

SOLV

SOLV is a non-profit organization that promotes projects to enhance the livability of Oregon. Valley Catholic students have participated in SOLV's annual Down By The Riverside projects since 2002. Valley's restoration projects include a curricular unit on the restoration of Johnson Creek, the creek on the west side of the SSMO campus. Students learn about their personal impact on local watersheds while actively participating in invasive plant pulls and other restoration and beautification projects for Johnson Creek's banks.

In addition, Valley Catholic Middle School students are invited to join with our high school students to participate in The SOLV Great Oregon Beach Cleanups. These trips occur twice a year, depending on student interest. The SOLV Great Oregon Beach Cleanups are an Oregon wide program that involves thousands of volunteers who travel to the coast in an effort to clean every beach of litter and marine debris, from the California border to the Columbia River.

TUALATIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PROJECT

Each year Valley Catholic Middle School's eighth grade class participates in a project with US Fish and Wildlife at the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, located in Sherwood, Oregon. Students pilot newly written curriculum in areas of environmental studies, evolution and the national wildlife system. This has been an ongoing partnership with the Tualatin National Wildlife Refuge for the past four years. As the refuge becomes more established, our students continue to benefit from the partnership as the refuge provides an excellent outdoor laboratory for the environmental sciences.

VALLEY CATHOLIC EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL PROJECT

The Valley Catholic Early Learning School (VCELS) project is an intergenerational program between the children at VCELS (campus early-childhood facility) and Valley Catholic Middle School. This program places a group of seventh-grade students into a VCELS classroom (infants through kindergarten) for a semester. The middle-school students prepare and teach mini-lessons to their assigned classes. These lessons include age appropriate lessons in science, singing, games, art, reader's theater, and work with manipulatives. Every seventh-grade student participates in this semester-long program.



DISCIPLINE POLICY

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is our goal to guide our students in making behavior choices that reflect our values as a Catholic community. The Valley Catholic Middle School (VCMS) program seeks to promote growth in all students through the development of communication skills and personal responsibility. To best ensure student success, teacher-student-parent communication is an integral part of middle-school and all teachers follow a plan to promote positive behavior.

One way to do this is to make expectations clear. By doing so, we clearly mark boundaries and ensure consistent enforcement of the school rules. In addition, students are given the guidelines to help channel their behavior choices and make them aware of any consequences that occur because of their choices.

In addition to the statement made in the Valley Catholic Middle School Handbook regarding discipline, all VCMS students will be expected to:

1. Be at class on time and maintain a good attendance record.
2. Meet all the requirements of the dress code and take pride in their personal appearance.
3. Set an example for others by following the policies of Valley Catholic School as outlined in the school handbook.
4. Come to class with the required materials, including homework.
5. Pay attention in class, follow directions and work independently when required.
6. Work in a group and be tolerant of other's ideas when required.
7. Take pride in the appearance of homework, test papers, projects, essays, etc.
8. Be reliable and complete outside assignments on time.
9. Ask questions when they do not understand a concept, task, or discussion.
10. Try hard regardless of their capabilities.
11. Be active members of our school community. This includes showing respect and support for themselves and others during school-related events.

For a list of inappropriate behaviors and their consequences, please consult the school handbook.



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

VCMS LETTERING PROGRAM

Valley Catholic Middle School students have the opportunity to earn a school letter. Students may earn letters in all Valley Catholic Middle School extracurricular activities including participation in a CYO sport, music (handbells, honors groups and mass choir), service/clubs (such as yearbook, altar serving, Student Council), and academics (such as Math Counts, honor roll, NJHS, BETA). Letters are awarded at the end of each sports season as well as at the end of each semester.

ATHLETICS

Valley Catholic Middle School (VCMS) participates in Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) sports. Our students compete in football, volleyball, basketball, swimming, and track and field.

ACADEMIC PRACTICE PARTNERS

Practice partners are middle-school students who assist Valley Catholic Early Learning School students in grades K-3 in practicing flash cards and reading. The middle-school student supervises the child's practice after school in Valley Catholic's music practice rooms. Middle-school students do not teach lessons or do any remedial work with students. The practice partner provides a supervised practice time for the child.

ALTAR SERVER

Middle-school students serve as altar servers for each of our school Masses. Students who are experienced altar servers at their own churches are encouraged to sign up with students who are not experienced altar servers so that they can assist them with their duties during Mass.

BOOK CLUB

The purpose of Book Club is to promote reading for enjoyment and enrichment. Students read designated titles or within specific genres and meet monthly in the library while eating lunch to discuss these books and other titles that are of interest to club members.

CONFLICT MANAGERS - H.I.P. TEAM (HELPERS IN PEACE)

Conflict Managers are middle-school students who assist Valley Catholic Elementary students in grades K-3 and Valley Catholic Early Learning students to resolve conflicts constructively during lunch recess. The middle-school student's role is to encourage and teach peer-to-peer resolutions to common school-yard problems. Conflict Managers help with clear communication skills, problem solving and empathy skills.

DANCES

Each year, Valley Catholic Middle School students plan two dances for the seventh and eighth grade students. The dances are held on Friday nights in the school cafeteria. Students from schools other than Valley Catholic Middle School may not attend.

HANDBELL TEAM

Membership on the MS Handbell team is open to all seventh and eighth grade students who wish to join. The team meets weekly at 3:10 pm for forty-five minutes and learns to play music appropriate to their skill level. Valley Catholic MS has access to four-octaves of Schulmerich handbells. Students learn ringing technique and improve their music fundamentals while learning music written and arranged for handbells.

HONORS CHOIR

Honors Choir meets once a week during lunch and works on 2-pt and 3-pt music which is performed at both Christmas and spring concerts and at the Jr. OMEA (Oregon Music Educator's Association) Festival. Students who have a desire to improve their skill level and learn harmonies are encouraged to join. Auditions are not required.

HONORS ORCHESTRA

Honors Orchestra meets once a week, provided that there is enough student interest that an Honors Orchestra is an option. Students perform at both the Christmas and spring concerts and at the Jr. OMEA (Oregon Music Educator's Association) Festival. Auditions required.

JUNIOR TEACHER ASSISTANTS

Teacher assistants are middle-school students enrolled in a study hall or study skills class that volunteer one day a week at Valley Catholic Elementary or Valley Catholic Early Learning School. The middle-school student assists the classroom teacher in areas such as working with small groups or designing bulletin boards. Middle-school students do not teach lessons or doing any remedial work with students.

MASS CHOIR

Mass Choir rehearses weekly during lunch and is open to anyone who wants to take a more active part at Eucharistic services. Students learn to be cantors, sing traditional hymns and folk songs and learn how to hold harmonies. Auditions are not required.

MATHCOUNTS

Mathcounts is a national mathematics competition for middle-school students. Local competitions are held in February (Valley Catholic is in a Washington County group with about 15 other schools), and the winning teams and individuals are then invited to the state competition. Winners at the state competition go to the national competition. Each school can bring a maximum of eight students to the local competition, and these are selected from all those in grades 7 and 8 who are interested in preparing for the competition.

MUSIC PRACTICE PARTNERS

Practice partners are middle-school students with three or more years of lessons on the piano or violin who assist students in grades K-3. The middle-school student supervises the child's practice after school in Valley Catholic's music practice rooms. Middle-school students do not teach lessons or do any remedial work with students. The practice partner provides a supervised practice time for the child.

PCCMATH FEST

PCCMath Fest is held on a Saturday morning in April. The site rotates among the various PCC campuses. One-hour tests are given in all levels of math from Pre-Algebra through Calculus, and high-scoring students are invited to the Oregon Invitational Mathematics Tournament in May. All students are invited to participate, and information is given out through the math classes and in communications to parents.

PEP BAND

Middle-school students are welcome to audition for Valley Catholic High School Pep Band. As members of the Pep Band, students will be able to take part in school activities such as assemblies and sporting events.

SCIENCE BOWL

Students who have a love for science are encouraged to participate in the annual BPA Science Bowl. Students meet weekly to hone their science skills for the competition in January.

“The Bonneville Power Administration's Regional Science Bowl encourages students to excel in math and science and to pursue careers in those fields. By increasing the visibility and fun of academic achievement in the sciences, this program has succeeded in placing young people on par with peers who excel in athletics.”

SCIENCE CLUB

Students who have a love for science are encouraged to become a member of the Science Club. Initially the club focuses on training for the Science Bowl. After the Science Bowl, students plan and participate in monthly field trips to various science enrichment centers in the Portland area.

SCOUTS PARTNER PROGRAM

Scout partners are middle-school students who assist Valley Catholic Elementary School Boy or Girl Scout troop leaders and students in grades K-3 in learning pledges/information, in activities (on campus) and with other general meeting activities. Prior scouting experience is preferred but is not required.

STUDENT ASSISTANTS

Students enrolled in a study hall or study skills class may volunteer one day a week as a student assistant. The middle-school students have the opportunity to apply for a variety of student helper positions, including working in the convent gardens to helping in the school library. Positions are posted on a semester basis.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Valley Catholic Middle School Senate seeks to promote school activities, unify students, uphold school standards and promote the welfare of the school. It develops student responsibility, initiative, and leadership.

YEARBOOK

Students have the creative privilege and responsibility to bring the VCMS Annual Yearbook to life. Elements of photography, design, and layout characterize several phases of planning and construction. Students work as a team with peers, teachers, and professional representatives to fuse their talents and creativity into an exciting final product. An extracurricular time commitment is involved, as this class will require several after-school meetings throughout the year in order to complete the yearbook.



RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Jesus is the center of Catholic Christian life. Therefore, daily prayer as a means of communicating with God is a priority at Valley Catholic. At least once a month, the entire community of faculty and students celebrate the Eucharist, either on a holy day or for some seasonal event.

LITURGIES

As a Catholic community, the Eucharist is the most sacred expression of faith we have. Valley Catholic Middle School celebrates Mass at least once a month in the school auditorium. In addition the entire Valley Catholic School community, grades 7-12, celebrates Mass once a month in the gymnasium.

Throughout the year, the school offers prayer services for special occasions or liturgical seasons such as weekly services during Advent and Lent.

PASSION PLAY, SAVED, AND OTHER LENTEN LITURGIES

Every year, students reenact the traditional Stations of the Cross while reflecting on how Jesus' words and actions are relevant to us to day. This is the largest production created by Valley Catholic Middle School, involving all the members of the seventh grade class.

RETREATS

Retreats are an important part of Valley Catholic's educational program. A retreat is a chance for students to get away from everyday pressures and distractions to contemplate their lives and their relationship with God. Two retreats are held each year for middle-school students.

SERVICE PROJECTS

Valley Catholic School has a family service requirement of 30 hours per year. These hours can be served through a variety of activities by either the parent or student. This service can be accomplished at any of the entities on our campus, Valley Catholic School, Valley Catholic Elementary School, Valley Catholic Early Learning School, Maryville Nursing Home, and the convent.

Service project opportunities include tutorial programs for students currently attending Valley Catholic Elementary School and Valley Early Learning School; working on the Maryville Project; helping at Camp Howard (which is operated by the Catholic Youth Organization); assisting with our food drive, science fair, speech tournament, and campus auction; or helping at the school on a regular, semi-regular or as-needed basis.

If you are an employee of Nike or Intel, please contact the school. Both companies will reimburse Valley Catholic for your community volunteer hours.

CHAPEL

The chapel is located on the second floor. Students are encouraged to drop in for a brief prayer during the day.



PARENT COMMUNICATION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In an effort to continue the parent-student-school link, we post a schedule for the week, a calendar of events, daily homework, and any other pertinent information on our Web site. The on-line announcement page is our primary source of information. We expect both parents and students to read the information each week.

VALLEY CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL ON THE INTERNET

The Valley Catholic website (www.valleycatholic.org) features a special section dedicated to news, photos and events about the Middle School. In addition, our innovative School to Home Communication site (on the Valley Catholic Middle School home page) contains academic web pages for many seventh and eighth grades classes, announcements of special events, and a calendar of events.

TRIWEEKLY PROGRESS REPORTS

Valley Catholic Middle School teachers will be sending home a cumulative grade to date for all students at the end of the third and sixth weeks of each nine-week quarter, as well as any other information the teacher deems important.

WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORTS

Students on academic probation will receive a weekly progress report notifying both the student and their parents of the drop in scores for the week. These reports would include late or missing assignments since their scores would be 0% and thus below the 73% notification mark.

You may always request a grade update for any subject, regardless of the timing for progress reports. However, please provide at least two school days notice if your request does not follow the scheduled progress report.



GENERAL INFORMATION

BUILDING HOURS

The school buildings are open each weekday from 7:20 a.m. – 4:35 p.m. Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:05 p.m. The library is open daily from 7:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

FOOD SERVICES

Students may bring lunch from home or purchase a hot meal from the cafeteria. Four microwave ovens are available for student use, as well as two soda machines and one snack vending machine. Lunch tickets are available in the school office.

BOOKSTORE

All students purchase the majority of their textbooks from the bookstore on a specific date in late August or early September prior to the start of classes. New and used textbooks may be available. If a student keeps his/her textbooks in good condition, the school will collect and resell the books for the student.

LOCKERS

Middle-school students have a locker to store supplies instead of using desks. Each student is assigned a half-sized locker. The lockers are approximately 1' x 2 ½' x 1 ¼'. The locker comes equipped with a built-in lock. Locker combinations are distributed on registration day and are changed each year for security purposes.

Students may begin to decorate their lockers on registration/book buying day in September. Valley Catholic Middle School recommends that each student make or purchase a locker shelf to help organize their materials. Valley Catholic Middle School also recommends that students bring magnetic pencil boxes that can attach to the inside of locker doors so that pens and pencils are easily accessible.

BACKPACK/BOOK BAG

Since students will be moving to at least seven different classrooms each day, they will want to have a sturdy backpack or book bag. Each student will need to have supplies for at least two classes as they travel, since there will not be time to return to their locker between each class.

Valley Catholic Middle School recommends that students use books bags with wheels since supplies can become very heavy at times.

STUDENT ID CARDS

Students will be issued, free of charge, an identification (ID) card at the beginning of the school year. This card identifies the individual as a student of Valley Catholic School and may be used for admission to certain athletic and social events.

TRANSPORTATION

TriMet offers regular bus service to Valley Catholic School. The TriMet office will be glad to answer questions about current bus routes. Student bus tickets are available in the office.

Carpools can be arranged by signing up on a student/parent generated list that is posted in the school office at the beginning of the school year.

UNIFORMS

Students must wear uniforms each day, Monday through Thursday, unless special “no uniform” days are announced. Uniforms can be purchased at Dennis Uniform Company or Lands End Uniform.

Fridays are spirit dress days. Students should wear a t-shirt, sweatshirt or fleece (jacket or vest) that bears the logo of SMVS/VCES, VCMS, VCS or an SSMO approved/sponsored activity (Such as CYO, music camps, sports camps, etc.). Any pants, shorts, skirts, or skorts that are acceptable under the free dress guidelines are acceptable to wear in conjunction with a logo top on spirit dress days.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH YOU

We thank you in advance for your commitment to Valley Catholic. We look forward to working with you and your family in continuing our 100-year tradition of educational excellence through faith and action.



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CELEBRATING OVER 100 YEARS OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**Ross Thomas, Principal
Jennifer Gfroerer, Dean of the Middle School**