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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 2011–2012 school-year is \$8,250. 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 Finance 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 Archdiocese of Portland 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

President	Mr. Bob Weber
Principal	Mrs. Jennifer Gfroerer
Technology Director	Mr. Dale Goodno
Campus Minister	Mrs. Mary Donovan
Personal Counselor	Ms. Kelsey MacIntyre
CYO Director	Mrs. Kelly Alfieri
Fine Arts/Music Department Chair	Sr. Juliana Monti
Foreign Language Department Chair	Mrs. Nenita Navarro
Math Department Chair	Mr. Kipp Johnson
MS Health/PE Chair	Mr. Herb Lommen
MS Language Arts Chair	Mr. Joe Manning
MS Science Department Chair	Mrs. June Poling
MS Social Science Department Chair	Ms. Courtney Ferrari
Religion Department Chair	Mr. Ed Braun
Cafeteria Manager	Mrs. Debbie Holloway



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 2011-2012 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.

AGENDA BASICS

Students will learn how to use the agenda planner to organize assignments, plan long-term projects, and prioritize assignment tasks. Students will be taught how to prioritize, highlight, and color-code assignments. Students will also learn how to maintain the agenda for when they are absent from school as well as how to navigate the make-up work once they return to school.

BECOMING A SELF ADVOCATE

Valley Catholic Middle School believes parents to be the primary educators of their children, and throughout their children's lives they have been the primary supporters for questions and concerns. In the middle school years, students will need to take a more active role in speaking up for themselves. As part of the middle school program, students will learn the skills necessary to become strong self advocates, preparing them for success in high school. Students will learn how to express their individual needs with their teachers. Although parents remain an active support system for the students, middle school students will now be responsible for taking a proactive role in their learning experiences. The foundation for becoming a self advocate begins with orientation week and continues throughout the middle school program.

GENERAL STUDY SKILLS

Students learn time management skills, how to use their locker and backpack efficiently, how to use the school-issued agenda/daily planner, how to fight procrastination, and how to manage long-term projects. In addition, students will learn the importance of an organized work space for completing daily homework assignments.

IMPROVED ACADEMIC READING TECHNIQUES

Students will learn to distinguish between 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.

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, the overhead or blackboard, and oral presentations.

ORGANIZATION SKILLS

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.

OVERCOMING TEST ANXIETY

Middle school is often the first time students are exposed to a variety of teaching and testing styles. The complexity of the exams also increase in both content difficulty and amount of knowledge that is tested at any given time. These changes can lead to test anxiety with students who are not yet confident in their learning style or who need to further develop a variety of study techniques. Students will learn to recognize the symptoms of test anxiety as well as some basic strategies to address and alleviate their anxiety.

PRESENTATION BASICS

Students will learn what the expectations are for middle school presentations. This will include everything from creating an appropriate visual to oral presentation skills. Students will learn proper posture, eye contact, voice quality, body language, and oral reading skills.

In addition, students will learn how to make the best use of a poster – or any other visual display –to gain an audience’s attention and to enhance the presentation. Students will learn to make displays that are relevant to the topic, how to use the space provided for maximum effect, and how to balance text with illustrations, cut-outs, drawings, graphs, and charts.

SCHOOL POLICY

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

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.

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.

TRANSITIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

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

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 how to make use of the five-step writing process.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Valley Catholic Middle School is a college preparatory school and consists of students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. The middle school program is designed to help prepare the students for an academically challenging high school program by offering an age-appropriate transition from the fifth to ninth grades.

Valley Catholic Middle School's curriculum follows the requirements outlined in the Archdiocesan standards and the State of Oregon Content Standards. The middle school curriculum and policies were developed after thorough study of the Valley Catholic High School program, and consultation with area public and Catholic middle and high schools. In addition, Valley Catholic Middle School has several capstone projects that follow the standards of the *IB Middle Years Programme*.

The individual classroom 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 individual 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.

PROGRAM AWARDS

Mary Omberg Award 2011

In appreciation for outstanding dedication to students excellence in science, mathematics and technology, student research at a middle or high school in Oregon and SW Washington

Middle-School Social Studies Teacher of the Year 2009-2010

Valley Catholic Middle School social studies teacher, Courtney Ferrari received Teacher of the Year award from the Oregon Council for Social Studies at the statewide conference on October 8, 2010 in Eugene, Oregon.

Outstanding Science Teacher (Regional and State) 2009

Valley Catholic Middle School science teacher, June Poling received the Outstanding Classroom Teacher Award at the Oregon Science Teachers' Association's Annual Conference - a state chapter of the National Science Teachers' Association - on October 8, 2010 in Colton, Oregon.

Best Middle School Science Research Program

Valley Catholic Middle School won the Intel and OMSI *Outstanding Research School of the Year* in 2008 and was a finalist in 2009

Valley Catholic Middle School Ties for Third on National Math Exam

Valley Catholic Middle School students tied for third in the nation on The Purple Comet Exam, a national online math exam in the spring of 2008.

CURRICULUM

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

Courses include:

- Language Arts
 - Latin (and Greek Roots)
 - Speech
- Science
- Math (two levels – regular and honors – for each grade)
- Social Studies
- Physical Education/Health (daily)
- Religion
- Music (choice of band, choir, orchestra, or music appreciation)
- Art Exposure (for seventh grade students)
- Computers
- Foreign Language: French, Japanese, Spanish (optional for eighth grade students)
- Study Skills

DAILY SCHEDULE

School begins at approx. 7:50 a.m. and ends at 3:10 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:

7:50 – 8:00	Homeroom
8:00 - 8:41	0 period
8:45 – 9:30	1st period
9:34 – 10:19	2nd period
10:19 – 10:28	Break
10:32 – 11:19	3rd period
11:20 – 11:50	Lunch
11:54 – 12:38	4 th period
12:42 – 1:25	5th period
1:25 – 1:35	Break
1:40 – 2:20	6th period
2:25 – 3:10	7th period

CLASSES

Students in the sixth grade attend five or six classes each day while seventh and eighth grade students attend eight classes daily. Classes are taught by different teachers in different locations. Most classes last 40 minutes with a four-minute passing break. However, sixth grade language arts and humanities classes are taught in 90 minute blocks. On average, the same group of students will attend five of their eight classes together until January. In January, all classes -- except music and foreign language -- change and students will be with a different mix of classmates.

FINAL EXAMS

Seventh and eighth grade 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 early dismissal for each student ranging from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. depending on which classes each student is taking.

FINE ARTS

Known for its musical excellence, the Valley Catholic Middle School Music Department features band, choir, orchestra, and music appreciation classes. The music 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, pep band, and jazz band. In addition, students enter competitions and make public appearances. Private voice and instrumental lessons are also offered.

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 begins the first ten minutes of their day. Periodically, the homerooms will have competitions, such as intramural sporting events, school spirit competitions. Additionally homerooms will work on service projects together.

HOMEWORK

Valley Catholic Middle School students can expect to have approximately 20 to 30 minutes of homework per class each evening. Sixth grade students, and selected seventh and eighth grade 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 2 ½ to 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 make a practice to 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 major projects for the middle school students. 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. In most classes, major projects are cross-curricular projects involving two or more academic subjects (for example a student may receive a grade in social studies and in English for a report on the feudalism.)

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 3:20 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

These options are available to the students during the regular school day.

AMC8

The American Mathematics Competition for students in the eighth 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.

ANIMAL ZOO PROJECT

The Animal Zoo Project takes place within the eighth grade science classroom as part of the zoology unit. Students transform their classroom into a zoo while they study life forms such as invertebrate, and insects.

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.

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 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 National Geographic Bee. Valley Catholic has been participating annually since the 2002-2003 school-year.

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 given in the spring. Students form teams of six, and they 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.

ROCKETS

Middle school students study, build, and launch rockets in the spring as part of their course of study.

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 (NWSE)

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 45 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 year-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 sixth-grade students into a VCELS classroom (infants through kindergarten.) 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 manipulative. Every sixth-grade student participates in this year-long program.



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

These options are available to the students as after school 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 Government), and academics (such as MathCounts, honor roll, NJHS). 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, lacrosse, 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 SERVERS

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, problem solving and empathy skills.

CROSS COUNTRY CLUB

The Cross Country Club meets after school during the fall season. Members of the club will run on campus and in the Tualatin Hills Nature Park across TV Highway. Because cross country is an endurance sport, developing a routine of running is extremely important to achieving success.

Students will have the opportunity to participate in cross country meets with other school clubs.

DANCES

Valley Catholic Middle School students plan two dances for the sixth, 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 sixth, 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 Middle School 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 Junior 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 Junior OMEA (Oregon Music Educator's Association) Festival. Auditions are 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 School or Valley Catholic Early Learning School. The middle school students assist the classroom teacher in areas such as working with small groups or designing bulletin boards. Middle school students do not teach lessons or 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 seventh and eighth grades 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.

PCC MATH FEST

PCC Math 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's 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 and 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 after-school meetings throughout the year in order to complete the yearbook.



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.



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.

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 6-12, celebrates Mass once a month in the gymnasium.

Throughout the year, the school offers weekly prayer services written and lead by VCMS students, prayer services for special occasions, or prayer services for liturgical seasons such as 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. At least two retreats are held each year for middle school students.

SERVICE PROJECTS

Valley Catholic Middle School students are encouraged – and required in some case such as National Junior Honor Society members – to complete 12 service hours per semester. 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.

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 teacher-student-parent link, we post a schedule for the week, a calendar of events, and any other pertinent information on our school's web site. The online 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, the Valley Catholic Middle School home page contains academic web pages for many sixth, seventh, and eighth grades classes, announcements of special events, and a calendar of events.

ONLINE GRADE BOOKS

Valley Catholic Middle School teachers use an online grade book called PowerSchool to post current grades for both students and parents to access using an individual password. The PowerSchool portal provides access to current grades and attendance through the internet. Students and parents can access grades anytime at <http://ps.valleycatholic.org>.

ACADEMIC WEB PAGES

Students and parents may see web pages constructed by individual faculty members on classes taught at Valley Catholic School. Look to these faculty pages for the most up-to-date information offered by each teacher.



GENERAL INFORMATION

BUILDING HOURS

For the 2010-2011, 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.

The 2011-2012 schedule is still being developed but hours will match the opening of the elementary school and take into consideration that MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS (Grades 6-8) are not eligible to attend Valley Catholic Early Learning School's after care program. Several extra-curricular programs will be planned after school for middle school students. Many of these activities will be free of charge with a handful of others carrying a minimal registration fee (approx. \$15.00).

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 high school office.

BOOKSTORE

Seventh and eighth grade 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.

For the 2011-2012 school year, sixth grade students will purchase only a portion of their books, mainly the items that are consumable such as workbooks and paperbacks. Main textbooks will be provided for their use.

LOCKERS

Middle school students have lockers 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.

BACKPACK/BOOK BAG

Since students will be moving to at least six different classrooms each day, they will want to have a sturdy backpack or book bag. Students will need to have supplies for at least two classes as they travel because there will not likely 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 high school office.

UNIFORMS

Students must wear uniforms each day, Monday through Thursday; unless special “no uniform” days are announced. Specific uniform pieces can be purchased at Dennis Uniform Company or Lands End Uniform. See uniform guidelines section of the handbook for specific details.

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.