

WHY WE LOVE THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

MRS. P (*PK- 7 Parent*)

Good books. Worms. Long vacations. Baseball seasons. (Go Cards!) Seven-course meals. Everything has a middle. It's the place where you look back and are amazed at how far you've come, and look ahead with trepidation, wondering what the future will bring. I can't believe we're here – middle school at Twin Oaks. Our daughter's pre-college education is half over. We've been blessed and are so thankful for the foundation Twin Oaks has provided, and we're continuing to see how her experience here is maturing her faith and preparing her for high school and beyond.

It starts with A-B-C days in 6th grade. More on the move than in the elementary years, the students travel between classes with one set of classmates on A days and with a different set of classmates on B days. This rotation enables relationship building with classmates your child may not spend time with regularly. Wednesday is C day, when all the girls are together and all the boys are together. I have heard Cathy Jones say C days give the students a "break" from the other gender and the students love it. I think she is right. C days also allow for more personal conversations when subjects like physical changes or conflict resolution come up.

You have likely heard about – or lived through! – the leaf project in 6th grade and the insect project in 7th grade. Each of these projects involves finding 15 different items (leaves or insects) to research. Our middle schoolers learn about the wide variety of insects and leaves God created, following specific directions for the research and presentation. They learn how to manage a project over the course of several weeks. They also have to manage their time overall to keep up with other homework, outside activities, and responsibilities at home along with the project. Project management and time management skills will be of great benefit to them in high school and beyond. I am impressed with the opportunities they have to develop those skills while in middle school at TOCS.

The 7th graders also completed a group project recently on another religion. Each group studied a religion and the country where it originated; they compared those beliefs to Scripture and used logic to identify the fallacies of the other religion. The project covered History, Bible, logic, teamwork, presentation writing, and public speaking. Once again they learned valuable lessons that will serve them well as they continue their education.

Every year at Twin Oaks we have been impressed with the teachers. This is certainly true in the middle school as well. The subjects become more complex, and they know how to build on the foundation laid by our great elementary school teachers. The hormones add a whole other level

of complexity to life, and they understand. They *get* middle schoolers. They challenge them and they love them.

We only have one child and she is in the 7th grade. I have heard great things about what is coming in 8th grade but I am in no hurry to experience it. I want 7th grade to last as long as possible! When she does start 8th grade, we expect another great year of learning in our daughter's last year at Twin Oaks. We know she will be well prepared for high school.