

Seventh & Eighth Grades
Middle School
Classroom Handbook
2016/2017



Redeemer Lutheran School
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Welcome . . .
Seventh & Eighth Graders!

How blessed and excited we are to be teaching at Redeemer Lutheran School, and especially grades 7-8! We are looking forward to the 2016/2017 school year and the opportunity to get to know all of you.

We have prepared this classroom handbook to help you know what to expect. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please know that we are available and want to hear from you.

Our school's theme for 2016—2017 is *"Each One His Witness"*

With this in mind, we share the following Bible verse with you:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Peter 2 :9

As we grow in Christ, we pray that He will guide us by His Word and Spirit as we work and learn together.

In Jesus' Name,

Mr. John Driscoll	7/8 Literature
Mr. Joe Gerth	7th Homeroom
Ms. Julie Kuehm	8th Science
Mrs. Lori McKenzie	7th Math
Mrs. Mary Podeszwa	8th History, 7/8 Biblical Studies, 8th Math
Mrs. Carol Schumacher	7th Science
Mr. JW Snyder	Middle School Spanish & Social Studies
Mr. Jesse Bush	Music

An Overview for Parents and Students . . .

Redeemer Lutheran School's Middle School program is an educational program specifically designed to meet the unique needs of early adolescent learners. It is a comprehensive program that addresses the spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs of the students. Encompassing grades 7 and 8, it provides a bridge between elementary school and high school. The major goal of the Middle School program at Redeemer is to establish a curriculum and learning environment, which maintains a balance between the continued development of learning skills, the acquisition and application of knowledge, and the spiritual and personal development of the student.

Key elements of the Redeemer Lutheran Middle School program are:

1. A focus on the spiritual, social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development of the student.
2. A curriculum planned around the needs and interests of the learner.
3. A variety of learning experiences.
4. The development of skills for continuous learning.
5. The promotion of the physical well-being of all students.
6. An orientation to the community and the world surrounding the student.
7. To prepare students to participate and succeed in a global society.

Curriculum

Students in the Middle School will receive instruction in the following content areas:

Biblical Studies	Science/Health	Literature
Spanish	English	Math
Physical Education	History/Current Events	Art
Computer Applications	Writing/Composition	Music

Subject Areas

Biblical Studies offers an overview of the Bible with practical applications to challenge the student's spiritual walk. Early church history and a study of the Reformation will also be included. The objective at every level is that the students know Jesus as their loving, personal Savior. **Memory Work** includes various Bible verses, parts of *Luther's Small Catechism*, and hymn verses.

Language Arts include literature, English, writing, vocabulary and spelling. At both grade levels, literature will be integrated with writing responses and reflections. Students will also use their creative writing skills to generate work in various subject areas. Novels are studied in each grade, and outside reading, apart from class assignments, is required.

Mathematics instruction for the seventh grade will take a basic mathematics course with an introduction to pre-algebra, or a Pre-Algebra class. Class placement will be based on report card grades, achievement test scores, teacher recommendation and individual ability. Eighth grade students will take either Pre-Algebra or Algebra course, based on the course prerequisites and prior student performance.

Social Studies curriculum for the seventh grade focuses on World Geography, the study of various cultures and civilizations, and American History. The eighth grade curriculum focuses on American History from the foundation of America through the Civil War. Study will center on America's founding fathers, their fight for freedom, and the established government.

Science curriculum emphasizes a hands-on approach to the study of the world God created, redeemed, supports, and preserves for the benefit of humanity. Seventh grade study includes Life Science units focusing on Cells and Microbes, Heredity, Ecology, the Environment, Biological Diversity, and Health. Eighth grade study includes Physical Science units focusing on Matter, Energy, Chemistry, Motion, Electricity, Light, and Magnetism.

All science instruction is done with an emphasis on God as the Creator and Controller of the universe.

Physical Education involves all students 4—5 times a week. Habits for life-long fitness and exercise are encouraged, as well as an awareness of maintaining wellness and wholeness. In Physical Education classes, students are required to bring gym clothes to participate. Tennis shoes are part of the required attire for gym class. Students are graded on participation, sportsmanship, behavior and attitude.

Art projects are also assigned across the curriculum as part of projects and reports.

Computer skills are taught in order to provide valuable tools to enrich and enhance student learning. Students will be expected to have access to the internet either at home or at the local library to complete classroom projects. Each student will be given a school email account with an assigned username and password which may not be changed. This account will give them access to Google Docs to use for learning and assignments.

Music—Vocal skills are taught in a weekly music class two of the three trimesters. Students will participate in concerts and some events as part of their grade. Students may also choose to take individual instrument and/or piano lessons at an added expense.

Spanish classes will introduce students to the culture and language, completing one full course by the end of the eighth grade year.

Additional Programs

Redeemer has a dedicated special education teacher that works with students as needed; student need is determined by faculty and parents. A school counselor is also provided by the AIU, and parents, students, and teachers are able to request their services. The counselor will not see an individual student without parental permission. General remedial assistance for students experiencing learning difficulties is provided through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit for students based on availability.

Eighth grade students are required to participate in a Shakespeare competition each year. RLS also participates in a Christian Athletic League, and students can join various sports teams throughout the school year.

Expectations

As students grow, the standards for their academics and behavior must be raised in age-appropriate ways. Middle school is an important bridge between the elementary years and the high school years. It is our goal to assist our middle school students in preparing themselves to meet the many different demands of high school.

Students will be properly prepared for each period. They will have the necessary learning materials and will have their homework completed and ready to hand in. Students are expected to use good study skills in school and at home.

To gain the most from each class, they will want to exercise good listening skills and give their full attention to learning activities. They will properly follow directions, whether written or oral.

Students will exhibit Christian behavior in class, in the halls, in the restrooms, and on the playground. Pushing, shoving, cruel teasing, bullying, and “put-downs” are unacceptable behaviors and therefore are not tolerated at Redeemer. Such negative behaviors will not build a strong middle school. Consideration, kindness, and compliments will!

Supply lists are available to students before the start of school. Students should be sure to replenish supplies (i.e., paper and pens) as they are consumed. All hardcover books must be and remain covered throughout the year.

Assignments will reflect the student’s pride in their work. They will be done neatly and properly headed according to the *style guide*. All words should be correctly spelled, and sentences should be complete and grammatically correct. All work will be done in pencil, unless specified and all work is to be shown. Students are expected to do their best work on every assignment.

Homework

We believe that students can profit by developing the habit of home study. It is difficult to establish a fixed, rigid policy for the amount of homework that students should have each night. We find that some children will complete an assignment in a short amount of time, while others may take much longer. However, a common rule of thumb would be that a student may usually have about 10 minutes of homework each night multiplied by the grade level of the student (i.e., a seventh grader would have about 70 minutes per night, etc.). If the student is consistently working more than an hour and a half on homework, it may be wise to check for distractions such as TV, recreational computer use, cell phones, and other electronic devices. If the problem persists, parents should contact the homeroom teacher for suggestions and help.

Each Middle School student is required to purchase an assignment book to record the daily assignments from the school. They must be kept with them throughout the school day. Planners are used by Redeemer students each year beginning in first grade, so Middle School students should certainly be experienced in their use and benefits. These books are also a way to record reminders for upcoming class projects, field trips, etc.

Parents are strongly encouraged to check our online grading program in Educate. This will help parents to better understand their child’s grades, and assist them in staying current with assignments and projects.

Being Prepared

School can sometimes be very stressful, especially when homework is involved. It will make our day go much smoother if we all come prepared. Once or twice can be overlooked; however, if you are consistently unprepared, you will receive a procedural check mark.

Morning procedures begin at 8:05 a.m. Daily devotions will be held in the homeroom. It is very important that you arrive at school prepared by 8:05.

Each student is expected to come to class prepared. Each student must come to class with his or her assignment book, text book, notebook, folder, homework assignment, two sharpened pencils and any other materials requested by the teacher.

Grading

Student progress is reported as a letter grade in academic content areas on the regular quarterly report card.

A - 94 - 100

B - 84 - 93

C - 74 - 83

D - 64 - 73

F - 63 - or less

Other areas marked O for outstanding, S for satisfactory, P for progressing.

To keep parents informed regarding the progress of their child, grades can be accessed through the Educate database on a daily/weekly basis.

Honor Roll

To recognize outstanding academic achievement on the part of those students in Grade 4 and above, the following applies:

- Students earning a 'B' average or better will be eligible for the 'honor roll.'
- Students will be evaluated in the following subjects: Religion, Memory Work, Literature, Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, Spelling, Social Studies, Spanish, Music, and Physical Education.
- Music, Instrumental and Physical Education classes will each be weighted as a partial curriculum grade toward the grade point average.
- To qualify for honor roll, a student may not have a grade percentage below 78% in any subject area.

Students in Middle School participate in standardized testing in the spring.

Late or Missing Assignments

Learning to honor a deadline is a very important life skill. It is expected that students will complete assigned work on time.

There will, of course, be rare occasions when the homework is justifiably not completed (i.e., a family emergency). Any such occurrences should be communicated to the teacher in writing by the parent. Again, such situations would be highly unusual.

In any other situations when homework is not completed on time, the completed work **must** be returned the next day. The completed work will be credited with a **50%** percent deduction. If the completed work is not returned the next school day, the student will receive a grade of **0%** for the incomplete work and serve a silent lunch. If a student receives three incomplete assignment notifications within five school days, he/she will be required to serve an after-school detention for one hour.

It is our sincere hope that our middle school students will utilize their planners, listen in class, ask questions to clarify assignments ahead of time, use their in-school study time wisely, and exercise the good organizational skills that they have spent their earlier school years learning and practicing. Incomplete homework should be very much a "non-issue" by middle school. We look forward to the opportunity to praise our students for their responsible approach to their homework and for the success that will surely follow.

Absent Work

After an excused absence *following an illness*, a student has two days for every day absent to complete missed assignments. For example, if a student is sick for two days, he/she has four days to complete the work. Assignments made before an absence are due upon the student's return. For any absence, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain missed assignments and worksheets and to schedule time to make up tests and quizzes.

Middle School Style Guide

The style guide shown below is designed to explain the standards for written work that all middle school students will be expected to follow. This *standardized heading* is required on all written work that is handed in:

First & Last Name	John Doe
Teacher's Name	Mrs. Smith
Course	Math 8
Date	9/1/2020

All assigned work will be given one of the following three levels of quality. Each level has certain requirements. Due to the nature of the subject, math assignments are handled differently. They basically fit into the Standard Quality Level, but will always be done in pencil. Adjustments can also be made by the teacher to meet the needs of special assignments.

<u>ROUGH DRAFT</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>PUBLISHABLE</u>
pen, pencil, marker, or typed acceptable	dark blue or black ink	typed or word processed
any type of paper	loose leaf paper	typing or computer paper
spelling not counted	words spelled correctly	1" margin on top, bottom, sides
grammar not counted	paragraphs are indented	12 point font size, Times New Roman or Arial style
example – notes, first copies	capital letters, correct punctuation, good grammar example – most assignments	all words spelled correctly, no mechanical or grammatical errors example – final drafts

Addressing the Teachers

Teachers are to be addressed respectfully. Never shout across the classroom to speak to a teacher. Always go to them and address them, or raise your hand. Some students may know teachers on a first name basis; however, in school, they are to be addressed as Mr., Miss, Mrs. or Ms. and their last name, unless instructed otherwise. If a teacher gives a parent their cell phone number, the number is to be kept confidential. Students are not to have teachers' cell phone numbers.

Chromebooks

Students using Chromebooks need to view it as a classroom and a place of study and not as a place for social interaction. Any student abusing the privilege of using their assigned Chromebook or the Internet will not be permitted to use them. Students may not use another student's Chromebook without permission from a teacher. Much of our students' work will be done using Google Docs. All student work is to be printed at home. Students will not be permitted to print assignments at school. Fixing or replacing damaged or broken Chromebooks will be the responsibility of the parents.

Classroom Equipment

The equipment in the classroom is there for our students' benefit; however, students must ALWAYS ask permission to use it. If the teacher is busy, do not assume permission is granted. Chromebooks must be returned to the cart at the end of each class period. Lockers are expected to be kept relatively neat and clean, doors must close properly. Teachers may ask a student to clean their locker at any time, and teachers and the administrator will check lockers occasionally. Items are not to be stored on top of or underneath lockers. It is the responsibility of the students to keep the locker areas neat and clean.

Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices including cell phones, CD players, mp3 players, gaming devices, pagers, etc., are prohibited during school hours. Items must be left in the office upon arrival. Improper use of devices will result in confiscation according to the following chart.

1st offense: the device returned at the end of the day

2nd offense: the device is sent to the administrator, and parents will need to come to the office to retrieve it.

3rd offense: the device is returned to parents after a week

4th offense: the device is returned to parents after a week at a meeting between parents, administrator and student.

Procedures

Morning Procedures – Begin at 8:05 a.m. or upon earlier arrival

- Upon arrival students go directly to their lockers and unpack their belongings for the day.
- Unpack book bag, gather books, assignments & materials needed for 1st period classes, and go immediately to homeroom.
- Once you are in the homeroom:
 - Sharpen enough pencils for the morning, at least two.
 - Read silently
- Students may not leave the classroom without permission from the teacher.
- Only students purchasing breakfast may go to the cafeteria after arrival and check-in. Students must be back in their classroom by 8:15, or they are considered tardy.

Moving from Class to Class

When ending one class and beginning another, students will have 3 minutes to go to their locker and prepare for the next period. They are expected to do so without stopping to socialize. They are not permitted to leave one class period and go to the next without the teacher's permission to do so. Permission must be granted to leave the classroom between classes.

Afternoon Dismissal Procedures – Begin at 2:45 pm.

- Review assignment book
- When the bell rings, you will have 3 minutes to gather your homework and pack your book bag for dismissal.
- Empty your mailbox into your backpack
- At (3:00pm) dismissal will begin. Each student will go to their assigned area and will remain quiet so everyone can hear when their bus/ride is announced.

Privileges and Consequences

The Check System will be used as a consequence for not following classroom procedures. A procedural check will be given for the following: being late to class, being unprepared for class, chewing gum, not following the dress code, etc.

Homework checks will be given for missing and incomplete assignments. Checks will be given in the student's assignment book. One check is a warning, two checks is a silent lunch, and the third check will result in an after school detention and phone call home.

The students are not permitted to socialize at their lockers or in the hallways. If a student does not follow this procedure his or her locker privilege will be taken away.

Breaking school rules, which are listed in the school handbook, is a serious offense. The consequence for breaking a school rule will be at the teachers' discretion based on the rule broken, as well as a phone call to the parent/guardian.

Following classroom procedures and school rules is appreciated and does not go overlooked. Rewards and privileges will be given at the teachers' discretion.

Suspensions

Occasions may arise in which a student must serve an out-of-school suspension. For such an absence, a student is responsible for all missed assignments and tests, as well as for any additional work a teacher might deem necessary to compensate for missed class instruction and discussion. The student is responsible for getting the assignments while serving the suspension and the work is due the day he/she returns to school. Students will be given an adjusted grade, but not full credit, for all work missed during the suspension. The amount of grade reduction is up to the discretion of the teacher based on the "weight" of the grade in the context of the entire quarter. Tests may be taken at a later time with a 20% reduction in grade.

Trips — Middle school classes may take part in field trips throughout the year under the planning and direction of the faculty. Field trips coordinate with curriculum and other educational interests. Trip locations have included the Carnegie Science Museum, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Children's Theater, etc.

The middle school teachers also plan an educational class trip every other year (odd year in spring). Students in good academic standing with no failing grades and who have consistently followed school rules and procedures will be permitted to participate. The cost is typically around \$400—\$450 dollars and includes all travel and expenses.

Communication

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

(Ephesians 4:32)

Communication is so important in our relationships with each other. If you are having a problem with another student, a teacher, or someone at home, go to them and talk with them.

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.” Matthew 18:15

Forgiveness is necessary in a good relationship. We are all sinners, and we all make mistakes, including parents and teachers. Through Christ we receive forgiveness and are in turn able to forgive. When anger and hatred grab hold of our hearts, we put ourselves in a “prison.” Forgiveness is our release.

If you have a problem with someone, you speak to them first. If you cannot work it out, we will be more than happy to speak with you and provide guidance. If your problem is with one of us, please come to us in a respectful manner to resolve the conflict. Conflicts are not to be resolved through social media. It is wrong to share conflicts and concerns with anyone other than the person involved. Give your friends an opportunity to resolve a conflict and apologize privately, the same as you would want for yourself.

LUTHER’S MORNING PRAYER

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven,

Hallowed by Thy name.

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is
in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who
trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory,
forever and ever.

AMEN