



**6th, 7th, & 8th Grades
Middle School
Classroom Handbook
2025/2026**

**Redeemer Lutheran School
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Welcome . . .

Sixth, Seventh & Eighth Graders!

How blessed and excited we are to be teaching at Redeemer Lutheran School and especially grades 6-8!
We are looking forward to the 2025/2026 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 theme this year is: *Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth. Psalm 98:4*



In Jesus' Name,

Miss Abigail Milcoff, 6th grade homeroom

Mr. Eric James, 7th grade homeroom

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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 6th - 8th, 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	Language Arts	Mathematics
Social Studies	Science	Physical Education
Art	Computer	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 includes literature, English, writing, vocabulary, and spelling. At all 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 sixth grade includes numbers and operations, measurement, basic geometry and algebra skills, statistics and data analysis, probability, and problem-solving and reasoning. Students in 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, mastery test scores, teacher recommendation, and individual ability. Eighth grade students will take either Pre-Algebra or Algebra based on the course prerequisite.

Social Studies curriculum for the sixth grade includes the study of ancient civilizations, the Great Empires, the early Church, and the Middle Ages. Seventh grade students will study American history from the 1800s to the

present, including immigration, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, World Wars I and II, the sixties, and the Reagan-Bush era. The eighth grade curriculum focuses on the early Renaissance, Age of Revolutions, Victorian Era, the 20th Century, and modern communications.

Science curriculum emphasizes a hands-on approach to the study of the world God created, redeemed, supports, and preserves for the benefit of humanity. Sixth grade students focus on Earth science, including geology, earthquakes and volcanoes, water systems, meteorology, the environment, and astronomy. Seventh grade study includes botany (study of plants) and human anatomy and physiology. 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 encourages habits for life-long fitness and exercise, 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 preparation for class, participation, sportsmanship, behavior, and attitude.

Art projects are assigned across the curriculum as part of projects and reports. Art classes are held weekly.

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 with an assigned username and password which may not be changed. This account will give them access to Google Classroom to use for learning and assignments.

Music classes teach vocal skills and are held on a weekly basis. Students will participate in concerts and some events as part of their grade. Students may also choose to take individual piano lessons at an added expense.

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.

Being Prepared

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

Breakfast is available in the gym upon arrival between 7:45 - 8:10 a.m. During the 2024/2025 school year, breakfast is free to all students regardless of family income. Students should eat in their homerooms.

- Upon arrival students go directly to their lockers and unpack their belongings for the day.
- Unpack backpack; gather books, assignments & materials needed for 1st period classes.
- Once in the homeroom:
 - Sharpen enough pencils for the morning, at least two.
 - Talk quietly.
 - Sign up for lunch (if buying).

Students may not leave the classroom without permission from the teacher.

Each student is expected to come to class prepared with his or her assignment book, text book, notebook, folder, homework assignment, two sharpened pencils and any other materials requested by the teacher. This will ensure that all of the class time is used for instruction.

Moving from Class to Class

When ending one class and beginning another, students will have three (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 5 minutes to gather your homework and pack your backpack for dismissal.
- Place your belongings from your locker into your backpack.
- At 3:00 p.m. 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.

Homework

RLS believes that students benefit by developing the habit of home study and practice. 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 is that a student typically has 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 student's teacher for suggestions and help.

Assignments will reflect the student's pride in his or her work. They will be done neatly and properly headed according to the *Middle School Style Guide* (see next page). 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.

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

Assignment Books

Students are required to write down all assignments due in their assignment book and take it home daily. Assignment books should be shown to a parent to review assignments and to note any behavioral concerns indicated by a checkmark from the teacher (please see the section on privileges and consequences). If homework is late or incomplete on a regular basis, students will be required to stay after school to complete the work and have their assignment book signed by the teacher and a parent. Students are expected to write all important information in the assignment book - not just assignments. Assignments can also be checked by parents on Google classroom. This is especially helpful when a student is absent.

School can sometimes be stressful; it will make their day go much smoother if students come to school prepared and ready to learn and participate. Students engaged in their learning retain information and are able to use it to produce and/or apply it to other content areas. Practice work at home is needed to determine a student's ability to use new skills in and out of the classroom. Practice work is assessed and included in a student's course grade.

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.

Middle School Style Guide

The following style guide 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
Date	9/1/2022
Assignment	Math pg. 108
Teacher's Name	Mrs. Smith

All assigned work will be associated with one of the following three levels of quality: rough draft, standard, and publishable. Each level has certain requirements. Due to the nature of the subject, math assignments are handled differently. They align with 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

Classroom Equipment

The equipment in the classroom is provided for our students' benefit; however, students must ALWAYS ask permission to use it. If the teacher is busy, students cannot assume permission is granted. Chromebooks must be returned to the cart at the end of each class period. Lockers are expected to be kept neat and clean, and 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 under lockers.

Additional Programs

- **AIU Services** - Assistance for students experiencing learning difficulties is provided through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and/or in our resource room for students who need additional support or a slower pace.
- **Academic Resource** - Redeemer Lutheran School's resource teacher may be asked to assist with additional instruction for students who need curricula to be modified or adapted. The decision to enroll a student into a resource room class will be made with input from the parents, administration, and resource room teacher.
- **Athletics** - RLS participates in the Southwest Christian Athletic Conference, and students can join various sports teams throughout the school year.
- **Class Trips** - The middle school teachers plan an educational class trip every other year (odd year in spring). Students in good academic standing, 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.

Expectations

As students become older, 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 them to meet the many different demands of high school.

Students will be properly prepared for each class. 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 exercise good listening skills and give their full attention to learning activities. They will properly follow directions, whether written or oral.

It is our sincere hope that our middle school students will utilize their assignment books, 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.

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!

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.

Privileges and Consequences

When a student fails to follow the expectations set forth in the classroom, the teacher will document the incident on a Minor Incident Report (MIR). These reports will be handed over to the administrator for review.

- A procedural checkmark will be given for the following: late to class, unprepared for class, chewing gum, not following the classroom procedures, out of dress code, etc.
- Homework checkmarks will be given for missing and incomplete assignments.
- One check is a warning, two checks is a silent lunch, and the third check will result in an after school detention and a phone call home.
- 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. Parents will be notified.
- Students who exhibit blatant disrespect, or commit an act that disrupts the teacher's ability to teach, will be sent directly to the Dean of Students or Administrator for disciplinary action.
- Following classroom procedures and school rules is appreciated and does not go overlooked. Rewards and privileges will be given at the teachers discretion.

Chromebooks

Students using Chromebooks need to view it as a classroom tool, 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 it. Students may not use another student's Chromebook without permission from a teacher. Much of our students' work will be done in Google Classroom and require the use of a username and password which cannot be changed. All student work is to be printed at home. Students will not be permitted to print assignments at school. Repairing or replacing a damaged or broken Chromebook will be the responsibility of the students/parents.

Absent Work

After an excused absence *following an illness*, a student has one day for every day absent to complete missed assignments. For example, if a student is sick for two days, he/she has two days to complete the work. Assignments given 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 a time to make up tests and quizzes.

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.

Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices, including cell phones, wearable technology such as Smartwatches, mp3 players, gaming devices, etc., are prohibited during school hours. Items must be turned off and left in the office upon arrival. Improper use of devices will result in confiscation:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1st offense: | The device is 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, administrators and students. |

Grading

Student progress is reported as a percentage grade in academic content areas on their regular report card.

A - 94 - 100

B - 84 - 93

C - 74 - 83

D - 64 - 73

F - 63 - or less

Skills are marked as M for Mastery, P for Progressing, and N for Needs Improvement. Christian Character is marked as O for Often, S for Sometimes, and R for Rarely. Music skills are marked as S+ for Above Expectations, S for Meets Expectations, and S- for Below Expectations.

To keep parents informed of their child's progress, grades can be accessed through FACTS, our online communications system.

Honor Roll

To recognize outstanding academic achievement on the part of those students the following applies:

- Students earning an 88% overall average or better in core subjects will be eligible for the 'honor roll.'
- Students will be evaluated in the following subjects: Biblical Studies, Literature, Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, Grammar, and Social Studies.
- To qualify for the honor roll, a student may not have below an 84% in any subject area.

Students in Middle School are evaluated for progress in math and reading three times a year using MAP tests. Results are used to properly instruct students and determine placement in math classes.

Lutheran Junior Honor Association (LJHA)

Membership in the Lutheran Junior Honor Association is available to any student that meets chapter requirements, attends a chartered Lutheran school, and is in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade. The minimum standard for scholarship shall be meeting the requirements for RLS Honor Roll status. Candidates shall then also be evaluated based upon discipleship, service, and leadership.

- Membership in Lutheran Junior Honor Association is an honor bestowed upon deserving individuals.
- Selection for membership is by a Faculty Panel based upon discipleship, service, leadership, and scholarship.
- Selected members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate these qualities.
- Members placed on probation have one semester to meet chapter requirements.
- Members who are dismissed are never again eligible for membership in LJHA.

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 to our relationships with each other. If you are having a problem with another student, teacher, or someone at home, it is important to voice your concerns in a Christ-like manner.

Forgiveness is necessary in a good relationship. We are all sinners, and we all make mistakes - students, 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.

Property Care

We are very thankful for a beautiful building and campus. Students are asked to cooperate in maintaining this facility. Careless disposal of paper, cans, marking on walls, scratching and denting, together with a general attitude of disrespect for property, contribute to low morale and unnecessary expenses. Please cooperate in the care of our school property.

Phone Calls

Our phone system is designed to serve the needs of our school families and our staff. One of our highest priorities is to maintain classroom environments that are free from unnecessary interruptions. For this reason, we do not allow telephone calls directly to classrooms during the school day. Messages for students and teachers will be taken by our school office. To reach the school office, please call 412-793-5884.

Thank you for entrusting your child to us. We pray our partnership in their education, spiritual and academic, will create a strong and enduring bond between us.

RESPECT - At all times, in words and actions, respect God, others, yourself and property.

ATTENTIVE - Be ready to learn, be ready to help.

MISSION-MINDED - Share concern, love, and empathy for others.

SERVANT OF CHRIST

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

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 LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be 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