

January 2021

Eighth Graders Chart a New Path Towards High School

By Nancy Hopkins

Middle school can be challenging for many, even in the best of circumstances. Homework becomes more complex, students rotate to different classrooms and teachers, and they encounter new social situations. For Saint Peter's eighth grade class of 2021, these normal challenges have been compounded as they have had to adapt to distance learning while preparing for their next biggest transition – high school!



The class of 2021, like many classes, has had their share of disappointments. The unexpected transition to distance learning in the Spring of 2020 meant the cancelation of cherished school events including their final ballroom dance competition and spring play. As disappointing as these missed experiences are, the students have learned to adapt to new technical platforms, schedules, and ways to communicate with teachers and friends. They are developing critical life skills, such as flexibility, adaptability, organization, planning, self-accountability, resilience, and self-advocacy that will serve them well in high school, college and beyond.



The eighth grade students recently completed a Museum Project, which wove multiple objectives and technologies into a rich tapestry of learning. “Students selected a nonfiction book about a person or event they were interested in”, explains Mrs. Helene Redmond, middle school language arts teacher. “Then they created a tri-fold brochure that could be used in a museum exhibit on their chosen topic. Students considered design elements such as color and font choice to create a truly professional piece.” The next phase of the project incorporated skills of advocacy and influencing. “Students also wrote a business letter to persuade the director of a chosen museum to have the special exhibit. This project took several aspects of language arts--reading, writing, publication--to create a real-life product.” continued Mrs. Redmond.

Saint Peter's continues to build a strong foundation for critical thinking and practical readiness for the road ahead. While we mourn the loss of so many aspects of middle school this year and look forward to a return to a more traditional school environment, we should recognize how virtual learning has shaped, and will continue to shape, our children in valuable ways. We hope and pray for a joyous graduation, and a return to health for our community and the globe. The class of 2021 is ready to move forward!

[Our Parish Times](#), January 2021 Edition