

Preparation for Life Through a Catholic Education

By: Virginia Girsch

In the fall of 2012, I will be attending Peoria Notre Dame High School. It is an honor to be able to further my Catholic education, for it is very important to me. My father attended the Academy of Our Lady / Spalding High School. My three older siblings also attended St. Edward's and Peoria Notre Dame. Because of their continuation of their Catholic education, they have had successful lives in the work force and in their family lives. When my siblings graduated high school, they all hugged my parents and thanked them for sending them to Catholic schools. At these schools, they learned so much and gained a lot of respect towards others and the knowledge to help them in life.

A Catholic centered education can instill a lot of things in you, but the most important thing is its moral values. It not only teaches you the difference between right and wrong, it goes much more into that. In seventh grade, we actually have a morality book, and it really enlightened me on a lot of aspects. It taught me things that I may never have learned, and those things will continue to help me. The knowledge that I have gained during my time at St. Edwards is absolutely amazing and bountiful. I am always learning new things and have something to think about. The teachers truly care about you and are never bothered if you need help. One of the most wonderful aspects of St. Edwards is its discipline. All the adults and supervisors keep all the children in line and tell them how to act correctly without being harsh and mean. They not only tell us to stop, they tell us how to act better by being like Jesus. Jesus was nice to all people and never judged. That is how we are taught to be.

This year we got a new priest, Father Walder. He is a wonderful person, who has taught me quite a lot. When he gives his homilies, especially at the children's masses, he makes them so that everyone can understand them. He walks around and keeps everyone in focus on what we should be, God. It's so cute when the preschoolers answer his questions by just blurting out "God" and "pray" for every answer. One time this one little boy wanted to answer Father's question of "Why is Halloween important and what is the meaning of it?" He answered, "Because we get candy!" Another influential person in my life was my basketball coach, Mr. Duvall! He always motivated us to do our best and never gave up on us. Even though he did get frustrated with us sometimes, he still had faith in us! One game, we were down 15 to 32 at halftime. We were all down and gave us a talk that really changed me. He told us that, yes, they may be bigger, and taller, and faster, but we believed more, and he believed in us. He changed the way I played the game. From then on, I never ever gave up and always gave 110%. We ended up coming back and winning that game. Along with these two wonderful people, my class has also helped to prepare and strengthen me. Every day I come to school and I see my class with smiles on their faces. This always brightens me up and makes my day better. We have been through a lot together, ups and downs. The hardest thing that we have ever been through was when a fellow classmate lost his sister. She was a dear friend to all of us. We stuck together and comforted one another throughout it all. This experience taught me that you should cherish every moment God gives you, because you never know what he'll bring tomorrow.