



# Christ at the Center

The first sentence of St. Hilary School's mission statement is straightforward: Our mission is to keep Christ at the center of all that we do. Yet, this humble and sincere sentence sets the tone for absolutely everything that is the foundation of the school. Christ is truly at the center of St. Hilary School in many ways, and faith makes the difference in ensuring that the values taught at home are reinforced at school. The school's teachers and educational staff are committed to transforming lives for Christ, nurturing students and building character by modeling love, kindness and compassion. The school community is a supportive, loving and loyal second family to its students, parents and staff, who are bonded through commonality of values.

## Simple Beginnings and New Events

Prayer is part of each school day, Mass is part of each school week, and a faith-based theme guides each school year. But from these simple beginnings comes so much more. Special faith-based programming occurs regularly, as well, with more being added each year. Early in the 2025-2026 school year, the school's Student Council sponsored a See You at the Pole prayer event. See You at the Pole is a global day of student prayer that began in 1990 as a grass roots movement with ten students praying at their school. Today, millions of students meet at school flagpoles on campuses across the country on the fourth Wednesday in September. All St. Hilary School students were invited to meet at the school's flag pole before school for a prayer rally to lift up to God their friends, families, teachers, school, and nation. This event - initiated, organized and led by students and brand new to St. Hilary School - drew a large group of students who came together to begin their day with Christ.



St. Hilary School's first See You at the Pole prayer service drew a large group of students.

## Practicing Christianity

Also new this school year was the school's Bible Enthronement ceremony. The St. Hilary Knights of Columbus purchased 350 copies of The Catholic Youth Bible (the same Bible used in classrooms), providing one for each student in grades 5-8. Because the Bibles were gifted to the students, students may write, highlight and annotate in them. During the ceremony, Fr. Brian Peters likened practicing Christianity to practicing sports or music, and noted that the more students grow in their relationship with Christ by reading their Bibles, the less tempted they will be to fall away from faith. As each student received the donated Bible, he or she received a blessing that urged keeping Christ close in mind, in word, and in heart. The Knights of Columbus have committed to purchase additional Bibles for next year's fifth graders and all new students entering grades 6-8 who did not receive a Bible this school year.



A student receives a blessing and a gifted Bible during St. Hilary School's Bible Enthronement service.

## Immersive Experiences

For the past several years, the school's sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have participated in three-day retreats at the Damascus Catholic Mission Campus, during which students are immersed in the Catholic faith. A part of the school curriculum since the 2022-2023 school year, the retreats have proven to be incredibly positive and transformative encounters for students. Sixth graders participate in a Faith and Science Retreat that immerses them in the beauty of the natural world and invites them to get to know its Creator. Seventh graders participate in a Leadership Retreat that focuses on a call to discipleship and is intended to foster a love of the Catholic faith that will extend beyond what students are exposed to in school and at home. St. Hilary School eighth grade students join eighth graders in the St. Hilary PSR program for the pinnacle middle school youth retreat at Damascus,

the Decision Point Confirmation Retreat, during which Confirmandi explore the meaning of the Sacrament and the choice to embrace the fullness of life in Christ. All retreats culminate with an opportunity for Eucharistic Adoration. Smaller scale retreats are held during the school day several times a year for the school's fifth grade students, to help them build relationships with Christ and with peers. During Lent, seventh and eighth grade students are invited to the school's Breakfast of Champions events, which begin with 7:00 am Mass and conclude with a faith-based speaker, featuring a home-cooked breakfast.



St. Hilary School seventh graders on retreat at the Damascus Catholic Mission Campus.

## Church is the Hub

All St. Hilary School students attend Mass weekly, beginning in kindergarten.

Masses are planned by grades 1-8, and feature students from the planning grade level each week as readers and gift bearers. Students attend Mass with their older or younger buddy classes, further reinforcing the community aspect of the faith. In addition, for school Masses, the choir and altar servers are comprised of students. Students also have the opportunity for Eucharistic Adoration with their classmates each Wednesday. During Advent and Lent, students in grades 3-8 participate in a Reconciliation service, as well.

## Special Programming & Family Involvement

Twice yearly, in May and October, students participate in a school Rosary service. Also in May, the school holds its May Crowning as part of a school Mass. Observing All Saints Day, students in third grade dress as saints and invite school and parish leadership to guess their identity based on costumes and clues. This school year, Bishop Malesic joined the panel in guessing the third grade saints' identities. During Lent the past several years, the school has also held a candlelit Eucharistic Adoration Procession, featuring the carrying of a Monstrance throughout the halls and into classrooms. Numerous programs that focus on Catholic teachings are part of the school's curriculum, including Choose Life, Life Act, Theology of the Body, and Virtus-Empowering God's Children. Signifying the power of a praying parent, school parents meet weekly before each school Mass to pray for intentions submitted by students in each classroom's prayer box. Students also have the opportunity to take home for a short visit their classroom's traveling prayer kit, provided by the Knights of Columbus, enabling families to set up a home altar.



Bishop Malesic joined the school for All Saints Day Mass and guessing the third grade saints.



The Rosary created by St. Hilary School students during the school's October Rosary service.



St. Hilary School third graders dress as saints for All Saints Day.

## Explore the School & Learn More

At St. Hilary School, living as Christ by being kind and caring, serving others and developing good moral character is as natural for students as learning their academic subjects. Each person is created in the image of God and the expectation at the school is that each person be treated with human dignity. Although grounded in Catholic teachings, St. Hilary School openly embraces students of all faiths whose parents desire that a faith-based education be part of their formation. If you would like your child and your family to experience the benefits of a Catholic education at St. Hilary School, now is the ideal time to begin exploring all that the school has to offer. An Open House on January 25, 2026 from 12-2 pm is open to all. Stop by to tour the school, visit classrooms and meet teachers. New Student Registration for 2026-2027 will begin online at [www.st-hilaryschool.org](http://www.st-hilaryschool.org) on January 5, 2026. For more information about enrollment, please contact Debbie Sinopoli, Director of Marketing & Admissions, at 330-867-8720, ext. 343 or [dsinopoli@st-hilary.org](mailto:dsinopoli@st-hilary.org).