

7TH GRADE ENGLISH: SOCIETY & JUSTICE

To conclude our Unit on Justice, 7th graders had to write an in-class essay that would apply their understanding of biblical justice to a current moral issue. The ability to write a 5-paragraph essay on a moral issue without the use of a computer provides students with a range of skills that are highly beneficial for college preparation, including critical thinking, writing proficiency, communication skills, research skills, time management, adaptability, and readiness for handwritten exams.

Recognizing their overreliance on technology, the class collectively acknowledged the need for a shift towards more balanced learning approaches. Motivated by a shared desire to reduce dependence on digital tools, they are all determined to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills through traditional methods.

Tensley Wolf said, “Not being able to use a computer helped me use my mind and work harder in order to put things into my own thoughts and words.”

While Novi Bosch stated “I learned how important the hook, thesis, and topic sentences are in creating a good foundation for essay writing.”



While writing, students found themselves grappling with moral issues and ethical dilemmas, exposing them to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding various topics. This reflective process not only honed their analytical skills but also prompted thoughtful contemplation on personal beliefs, societal values, and justice. They enriched their understanding of God, morality, and the pursuit of justice in a world shaped by diverse perspectives and experiences.

Kaylee Ton said, “Writing about a moral issue I learned about how sinful we are as a society and our need for the Lord in our life...”

Novi Bosch said, “Writing about moral issues helped me realize how unjust the world is and how we need to work on fixing it.” She noted that a lot of moral issues about biblical solutions and added, “ I think people today should use God’s word to avoid these moral issues.”



Tensley Wolf



Kaylee Ton



Novi Bosch

6TH AND 7TH GRADE MATH: AREA AND VOLUME

In the bustling Math classroom, 6th and 7th grade students discover the beauty and intricacy of shapes, spaces, and dimensions. Yet, beyond the equations and formulas lies a deeper understanding—one that embraces a Christian worldview. 6th and 7th grade students are learning all about area and volume, and are also uncovering connections between mathematical concepts and the Creator. Here are some examples of how critical thinking leads to the development of personal values, as illustrated by the insights of our students.

Question: How can understanding the concept of volume be used to make ethical decisions, aligning with Christian values?

Answer by Lily Hall (6th Grade):

"I can use volume and area to help make houses for people experiencing homelessness."

Explanation:

Through critical thinking, Lily recognizes that her understanding of volume can be applied to address real-world issues, aligning with the Christian value of compassion. By logically assessing the situation, she concludes that her mathematical skills can be leveraged to make a tangible difference in the lives of those in need.



Question: In what ways can we use our knowledge of area to promote sustainability and care for the environment, in line with Christian teachings about caring for God's creation?

Answer by Claire Shohmelian (6th Grade):

"Understanding volume and area allows hospitals to be made so that sick people can be helped."

Answer by Marcus Cowley (6th Grade):

"Area can be used to find the space in a National Park and the cost of preserving it (more area, more cost)."

Explanation:

By critically analyzing the implications of their mathematical knowledge, Claire and Marcus realize the potential impact on environmental sustainability and human well-being. Claire concludes that her understanding of area and volume can contribute to the creation of healthcare facilities, while Marcus shows his understanding about the relationship between space and costs. Both of these students are aligning with the Christian value of stewardship and care for God's creation.

Question: How can the concept of volume be used to make ethical choices about the use of resources and possessions, aligning with Christian values of gratitude and moderation?

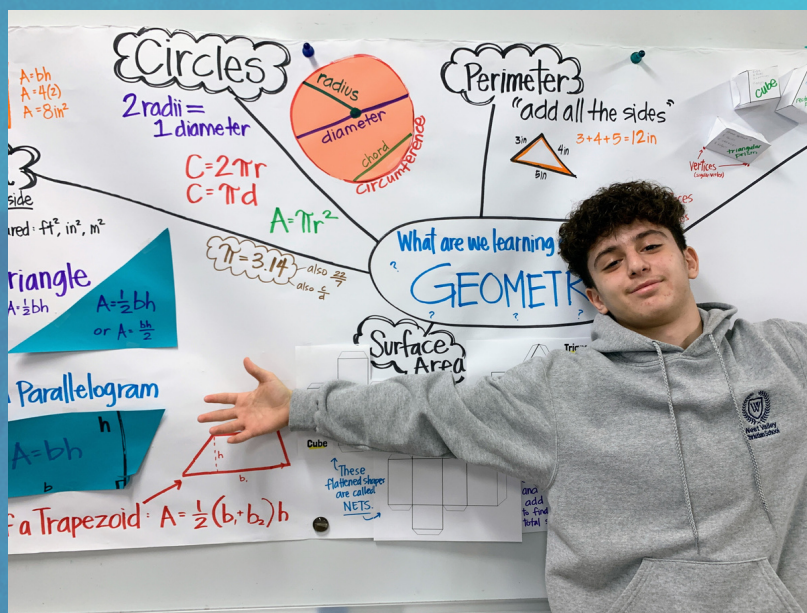
Answer by Liam Ozmolski (7th Grade):

"We can help feed homeless people by calculating the volume of food in boxes."

Explanation:

Through logical reasoning, Liam recognizes the practical applications of volume calculations in addressing societal needs, reflecting the Christian values of gratitude and generosity. By assessing the situation critically, he concludes that his mathematical skills can be used to promote ethical choices and serve others.

As evidenced by the insights of our students, critical thinking serves as a catalyst for the development of personal values. We empower students to connect their mathematical knowledge with their faith, leading to Christian principles. By posing thought-provoking questions and encouraging reasoned responses, students can develop a deeper understanding of their role as stewards of God's creation. Through this integration of critical thinking and personal values, students are equipped to make informed decisions, pursue justice and compassion, and live out their faith with conviction and integrity.



6TH GRADE: EARTHQUAKES

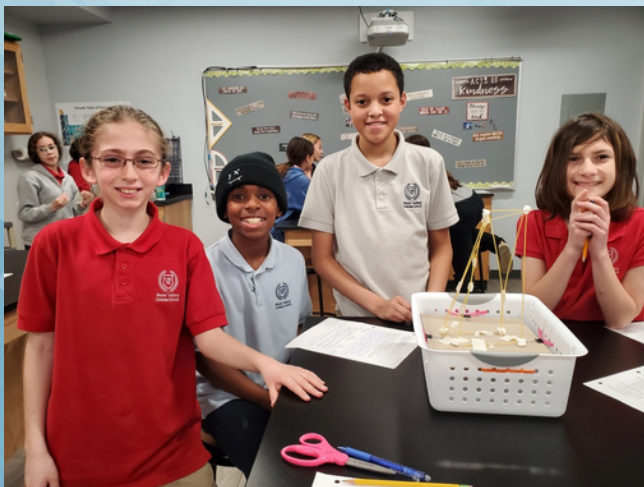
As Californians, we know what it's like to live with earthquakes. Sixth grade students recently completed a unit on earthquakes which culminated in a lab activity where they had to build the tallest, seismic-safe structure they could using only spaghetti noodles and marshmallows.

They implemented real-life engineering strategies such as cross-bracing and flexibility. Although most of their buildings survived a 10 second earthquake on the shake-table, a few did collapse. This led to a wonderful discussion about why earthquakes are often deadly. It's not the earthquake, but the collapsing structures that result in fatalities. Students realized that building seismic-safe structures matters because of the value of human life. It's a practical way to "love our neighbor" as Jesus commanded in Mark 12:31.

Sophie Flett believes that, "As Christians, we should care [about making earthquake-proof buildings] because the commandments of God say to love others, and we can love them by protecting them."

Anson Ballton noted that, "Christians should care about earthquake-proof buildings because God says to care for one another, and if we have earthquake proof buildings it can potentially save lives."

Joanna Hernandez pointed out that, "Human lives are very valuable because they are made in God's image." Chase Stewart summed it up well, "Earthquake proof buildings are important because it's to protect people during an earthquake. We should care because people are the most important thing to God."



CJSF: VISITING THE ELDERLY

On February 16th, 2024, the California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF) visited Varenita Senior Living Facility in Westlake. Their mission? To build connections with the residents, to learn about their life experiences, and share moments of joy together.

Thanks to the CJSF team the residents were brought back to when they were children in the game of Jeopardy led by Lucas Bruckner an 8th grade student at WVCS, who stated *“As the host of the game I noticed that the seniors greatly enjoyed the jeopardy experience and that it truly touched their hearts.”*

As the afternoon unfolded, young and old came together to exchange stories and answer one another's questions. This experience led to friendly competition and grew intergenerational bonds, leaving a lasting impact on the residents of Varenita but also helping our students find a deeper appreciation for the wisdom and experiences of the elderly.

The president of CJSF, Sherwin Sagadam, reflected, “It was fun...getting to learn new things and hear the memories they had to share with me. It was also nice to hear advice for our futures thanks to their years of knowledge.”

