

WALKING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

Our 8th grade students recently participated in a creative and thought-provoking exercise designed to help them practice empathy, a central theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and a value deeply rooted in our Christian faith. For this activity, each student was given a random shoe and asked to imagine the life of the person who might wear it. They wrote stories and character sketches exploring who this person could be, what joys and struggles they might face, and how the world might look through their eyes.

The goal was more than just character creation, it was an invitation to step into another person's story. Scripture calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and to "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). Through this exercise, students were able to live out those teachings in a creative and age-appropriate way, connecting faith and literature in a meaningful experience.

As students shared their reflections, they discovered how imagination can lead to compassion. Whether picturing someone vastly different from themselves or someone whose life might easily go unnoticed, they practiced seeing the world through another's eyes. This process not only deepened their understanding of Harper Lee's timeless message but also helped them develop empathy and kindness, virtues essential for both strong character and Christ-centered living.

As one student beautifully shared, "It made me realize that everyone has a story, even if we don't see it right away." That realization captures the heart of both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the Gospel truth: every person is made in God's image, and every person's story matters.

