



# 8TH GRADE: WASHINGTON D.C. TRIP

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The middle school trip to Washington, D.C. was a transformative experience that combined education, exploration, and excitement for the WVCS 8th graders. Over the course of five days, students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich history, vibrant culture, and dynamic politics of the nation's capital.

## **Day 1: Arrival and 9/11 Memorial**

Upon arrival in Washington, D.C., students were greeted with a sense of anticipation and wonder. We were also welcomed by beautiful cherry blossom trees! Our first stop after dinner was to the 9/11 Memorial, the tribute to the many lives lost in the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Located outside of the Pentagon, the memorial honors each life with a bench inscribed with the deceased name. Our students felt the gravity of the event as well as the strength and unity that occurred in our country as a result of tragedy.

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## **Day 2: The White House, Historic Monuments and Memorials, and Community Service**

The second day began with a visit to the White House! Then we visited the American History Smithsonian Museum where we saw the flag that inspired Francis Key Scott, Abraham Lincoln's top hat, as well as many other iconic items from all the decades of American History. We took a mid-day break to pack several hundred meals for a food shelter that distributes nutrition to local families. This event was a special feature of our DC trip because it allowed students to contribute positively to the city they would be exploring. After dinner, we took the metro to the National Mall, where students marveled at iconic landmarks such as the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Korean Memorial. Our guided tour provided historical context and insight into the significance of each monument and memorial, allowing students to gain a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices and achievements of past generations.

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### **Day 3: Arlington National Cemetery, The Capitol Building, Ford's Theater and the Tidal Basin Monuments**

On the third day, students and parents traveled to Arlington National Cemetery. Among the many points of interest there are the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, where the changing of the guard is a solemn ritual, and the gravesites of notable figures such as President John F. Kennedy and his family. Standing amidst the quiet dignity of Arlington, we could not help but feel a sense of reverence and gratitude for those who gave their lives in service to their country. In the afternoon, we sat in Ford's Theater, and, while seeing exactly where he was shot, we listened to a ranger describe the moments that led up to the assassination of President Lincoln.



Next in our line-up was a visit to the Smithsonian Presidential Portrait Gallery, which showcased a painting of each president in order of his presidency. After a delicious dinner at an Italian restaurant, we took a nighttime walking tour of the Tidal Basin Monuments. Encircling the tranquil waters of the basin are monuments such as the Jefferson Memorial, dedicated to the author of the Declaration of Independence and champion of liberty; the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, honoring the president who led the nation through the Great Depression and World War II; and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, commemorating the civil rights leader's legacy of equality and justice. As students strolled along the Tidal Basin, they were enveloped by the beauty of cherry blossoms and the timeless symbolism of these monuments, which serve as reminders of the ideals that unite us as a nation.



## **Day 4: Capitol Building, Supreme Court, Holocaust Museum, and the WWII Monument**

The fourth day was dedicated to exploring the Capitol Building and Supreme Court building. Our guided tour from the office of our local representative, Congressman Brad Sherman, offered a firsthand glimpse into the workings of the U.S. government, enriching students' understanding of American history and democracy. Our next excursion was to the Holocaust Museum, a somber testament to the horrors of the Holocaust. Through powerful exhibits, artifacts, and survivor testimonies, we were confronted with the stark realities of genocide, fostering reflection, remembrance, and a commitment to never again allow such atrocities to occur. In the evening, we visited the World War II Memorial, a majestic tribute to the millions of Americans who served and sacrificed during these significant moments in history. Situated on the National Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, the memorial features granite pillars and arches representing each state and territory of the United States. Inscriptions and quotations throughout the monument honor the courage, resilience, and unity of the American people during this time.

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## Day 5: Museum of the Bible, Smithsonian Natural History Museum, and Reflection

The final day of the trip brought us to the Bible Museum where parts of the Bible came to life. The museum offered us an immersive experience with the Bible and its ongoing impact on the world around us. Our faces were inches away from artifacts used during the time that Jesus walked on the earth. After the Bible Museum, we were even able to squeeze in time at yet another Smithsonian museum - the Natural History Museum - where we saw the Hope Diamond (the largest diamond in the world) as well as many other impressively large gems and other natural wonders in the world God created. On our way to the airport, we stopped to see the famous Iwo Jima memorial, the memorial of soldiers hoisting up an American flag. The only rain of the trip came down on this final day, but it did not stop some of us from getting out of our bus to see the memorial up close.



Overall, the middle school trip to Washington, D.C. was an unforgettable journey that broadened students' horizons, fostered a deeper appreciation for history and civic engagement, and created lasting bonds among classmates. Our trip was enhanced by our tour guide who integrated Biblical connections throughout D.C. As students returned home, they carried with them not only souvenirs and photographs but also a newfound sense of pride in their nation's capital and the democratic ideals it represents.

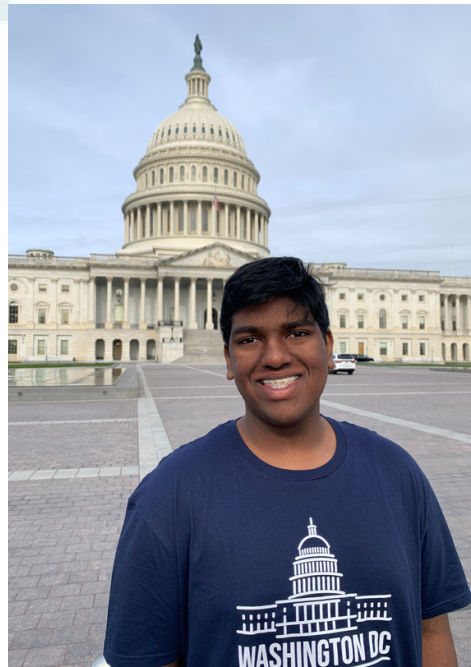


# WHAT OUR YOUNG TRAVELERS HAD TO SAY

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“Washington DC was a life changing experience for me. I learned many details of things that I’ve known and I got to learn about new things as well. Some of the places I saw included the White House, Captiol Building, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and many more. I also got the new experience of taking the Metro around the city.”

-Sherwin



“My favorite part of going to Washington DC was learning about the history behind the monuments and traveling with friends to the east coast. I love traveling and being able to do it with my friends and my dad was so much fun!”

-Selah

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# WHAT OUR YOUNG TRAVELERS HAD TO SAY

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“The trip to Washington DC opened my eyes to a whole new world. Our tour guide gave us an incredible tour and a breathtaking view of the Captiol of the world’s most powerful nation. The buildings, people, museums, the metro, and even the food were far different from those in LA, but in all ways they displayed God’s glory.”

-Lucas



“DC was an awesome trip that I recommend to everybody. We got to learn a lot of new things, as well as see new things. I especially enjoyed the Smithsonian Natural History Museum because they had a great exhibit on animals in Africa.”

-Cadence

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