

Middle School



FROM THE
**Middle
School
Principal**

MRS. IVA NELL RHEA

*Mission
Impossible*

The music is cued, a phone rings, and then there is a cryptic message. The world stands on the brink of destruction, save for a small band of operatives who are hopefully up for the impossible task. Well-known words end the call: "The mission is yours if you choose to accept it." A seemingly formidable task, a talented but trifling group of resistance fighters... sounds like a day in middle school!

What is the mission that drives our middle school teachers and staff to daily slog through raging hormones, frequent social upheavals, an organizational abyss, and a perspective that focuses on the day at hand rather than the prize? It is to give our young teenagers God's perspective as they question and learn about the world around them. It is to provide a sound, developmentally appropriate academic base from which they can launch toward high school. It is to build into them the value of Kingdom service in a world which values serving self.

Among our students in middle school, we have several who have already weathered significant storms in their young lives. Our middle school Bible teachers, Marilyn York, Lubega Frankio, and Rachael Lechman, are uniquely equipped and positioned to guide students into a deeper understanding of God's Word and then intentionally look for God's time to apply the truth of Scripture to questions, discussions, distress, and even

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anger that students might reveal concerning hard life issues. Having dedicated time each day to dig into the Bible and focus on what God has to say is a precious distinctive of our school.

Each member of our middle school teaching team believes that young people passing through a period of rapid physical, emotional, and social growth are indeed able to understand, analyze, and evaluate as they learn about the world around them. Jean Hinn works diligently to prepare seventh and eighth graders for the biology, chemistry, and physics classes that await them in high school. She has taken on the mission of making sure that every student that passes through eighth grade understands the scientific process and applies that knowledge in an experimental setting. Julie Crozier and Alison Ivey believe that every middle schooler can organize ideas in a way that clearly communicates. Thoughtfully crafted poems, speeches, research papers, letters, summaries, and essays may seem impossible, but these teachers lovingly encourage their young writers to push toward the goal of excellence. Math teachers Beth Beach and Karen McGrath are convinced that eleven to fourteen year olds can move from concrete math to abstract algebraic processes. They use games and real-world math to bring the challenging concepts alive for their students. Greg Bretz, Dia Moore, and David Horn develop the talents of young artists as they use their passion for art, drama, and music to lead their classes to greatness. Middle school is an exciting time to explore a second language. Spanish is first introduced in a unique way by gifted teachers in sixth grade. Who knows what interest and talent will be ignited by these great teachers?

Teachers expand the world of our sixth through eighth graders by providing off-campus experiences throughout the year. Tim Kooiman and Karen McGrath spend hours planning every detail of a five-day trip to Washington, D.C. for students and a few blessed parents and chaperones each May. This year, history teachers made sure that their students understood the price paid by Americans of the past by organizing trips to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to experience the Civil War exhibit. Sixth graders loved their visit to the aquarium in Galveston after their unit on oceans and waves. The Alley Theater's annual production of *A Christmas Carol* was an exciting trip for eighth graders who had just completed a study of the Dickens' classic in English class.

Occasionally a student will return to a teacher to say "thank you for helping me stay the course," but a middle school teacher understands that he or she is one who waters the seed and patiently removes weeds that may keep the plant from reaching maturity and ultimate usefulness. Middle school teachers at Cypress Christian have God's eyes to be able to see a season of life that might look impossible to some and boldly say "I accept the mission."

Mrs. Iva Nell Rhea, Middle School Principal