

THE POTTER AND

The Clay

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Isaiah 64:8 reminds us that "Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay; you are the potter." Viewing finished works of pottery reminds me of the beauty and uniqueness of each piece. There is unlimited variety within the work of the expert potter. He starts with something unlovely and common, a lump of dirt, and through his diligence, skill and creativity, designs a functional and pleasing vessel. Mrs. Jean Hinn has taught middle school at CCS for more than eight years. She writes, "God uses our elementary teachers to help start working the 'clay' that makes up our young students. As a middle school teacher, it is such a blessing to be able to pick up this work with students as they go through CCS middle school. They are so ready to be shaped and molded; life excites them. They are eager to learn, and they are not too old to 'be amazed' at all that God has done. In middle school we get to see only a little of what God is doing to shape them, but it's a thrill to know that God will use what is poured into them to shape them into the young men and women He wants them to be."

Another powerful metaphor to describe the growth of our middle school students is the seed. Certainly

everything needed to produce a beautiful Texas pecan tree is in one seed, but that seed will not grow without proper nutrients and care. It is critical that the proper environment is maintained for optimal growth and health of the tender plant. We need only to look around us to know that there are many types of seeds that compete for the hearts of our children. At Cypress Christian, the seed that is sown is the Word of God. Teachers have the freedom to use history, science, math, sports, language and other subjects to plant the seed of God's Truth. Mrs. Marilyn York has been teaching sixth-grade science and Bible classes at CCS for over ten years. She explains, "Even though I don't always get to see the fruit from the seeds that have been planted, the times when I do get to hear about how God has worked in a student's life as they have grown up makes it so rewarding!" Mrs. Lisa Baldwin, a middle school English teacher, shared this anecdote with me recently. During a unit the class read the classic fairy tale "Elves and the Cobbler." Mrs. Baldwin challenged students to consider less obvious truths in the fable. One student commented on how the elves saw a need and met it in secret – they didn't want any recognition for their deeds and how they performed their kindness joyfully. This led to a discussion on how loving others brings joy.

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Mrs. Baldwin was able to connect this idea to John 15:10-12 which encourages us to love one another so that our joy may be made full.

The final metaphor to help understand what happens each day at Cypress Christian is the builder and His building. In I Corinthians 3:10 Paul writes, "Like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it." The rapid changes that are apparent during the middle school years indicate that there are great opportunities to make sure that the walls are straight, the corners true and the dimensions accurate. Miss Daniela Lazar, who teaches seventh grade English, recently shared a poignant story. Her student has come so far this year, from the person who wouldn't even look up when Miss Lazar talked, to the happy, bubbly teenager who volunteers answers in class and even chapel. Miss Lazar continued, "while some middle school students

come to us with the frame of their construction already set, and our part is to continue with the fine details inside the 'building,' in this case, our student had major parts of the 'frame' missing." But this year, we accomplished so much by finishing

out the frame and even working on some interior decorating. Miss Robyn Cloutier, eighth grade Integrated Physics and Chemistry teacher, ends each test by asking students to explain a way their current area of study demonstrates God's character. Recently the unit was about motion and the student responses reveal that our middle schoolers have a strong grasp of eternal truth: "If we change direction from Him, we can always turn back. He is our reference point in life," (JT Tackett) and "Feelings (observation) are not reliable, so God is the only true thing that is always true and trustworthy" (Colin Davis).

Mrs. Iva Nell Rhea | Middle School Principal



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