



SIXTH GRADE



Sixth graders are a unique bunch of kids. I call sixth grade the “Cupcake Year.” At the beginning of the year, just like in fifth grade, the students with fall birthdays are glad to have their parents bring cupcakes to class and celebrate. But by the end of the year, the students with spring birthdays are not so sure they want their parents bringing birthday treats to school—it’s a little too elementary for them. This is the journey that sixth graders take in a year, and it reflects the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual development happening within each child. It’s a great and exciting year, and it takes a special educational plan to teach these children-going-on-adolescents well.

That’s why sixth grade at Trinity has always been a transitional year, a hinge year between our Lower School and our middle grades. We have worked hard to create a special faculty, space, pace, and curriculum for this unique grade of children at Trinity.

Since 2007 the sixth grade has been the crowning year of our Lower School program. Trinity’s sixth grade year looks back toward the lower grades and forward toward the middle grades. We look forward to exploring this vision of education for your sixth grader.

Chip Denton

Sincerely,
Chip Denton
Head of School

**TRINITY
SCHOOL**
of Durham and Chapel Hill

*"Sixth grade is good preparation for Middle School. We have more work and tests, and the teachers are focused on us learning what we need to be successful."
—Trinity sixth grade student*

LOOKING BACK TOWARD THE LOWER GRADES

Trinity's sixth grade students are still children (albeit growing children), not pushed out of childhood, but enjoying who they are. At Trinity, we desire to give these students time to grow.

Trinity's well-paced day includes a generous lunch period and daily recess, providing ample social and recreational time for students.

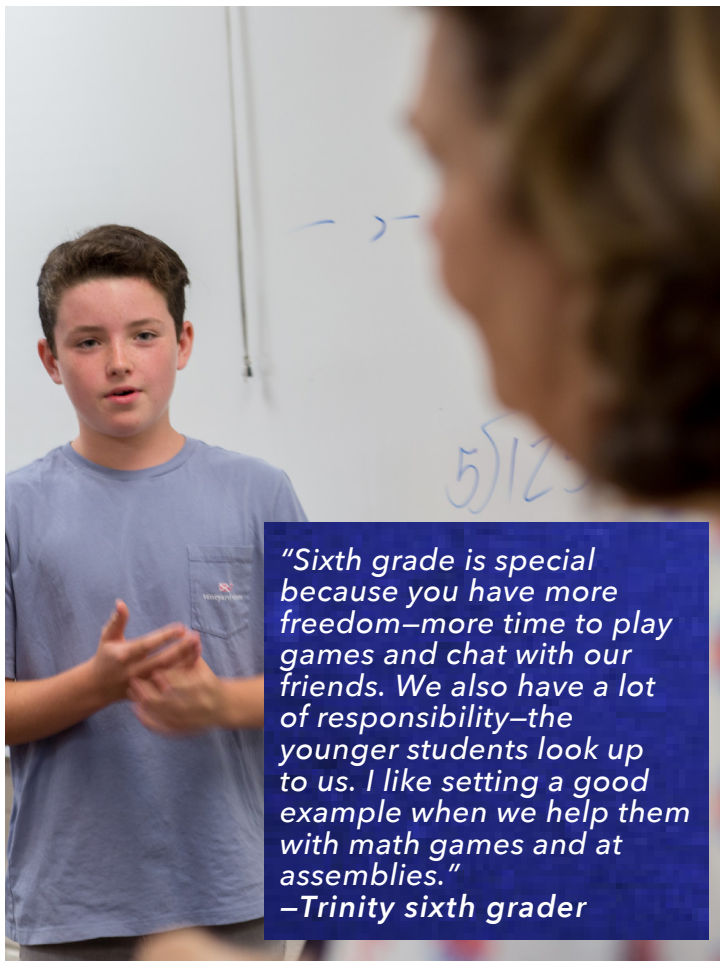
LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MIDDLE GRADES

Trinity's sixth grade offers the stimulus of a rich and thoughtful academic curriculum, exposure to deeper thinking through discussion, and a focus on study and organizational skills.

Students learn to balance the new freedoms of adolescence with new responsibilities. As the leaders of the Lower School, our sixth graders have the opportunity to develop leadership skills through athletic teams, community service, reading to younger children, and leading assemblies.



There exist many paradoxes within our sixth graders' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors: pleasing authority, but discovering themselves; showing excitement, but also bewilderment; accepting authority, but also questioning. Although these traits seem to oppose each other, they provide wonderful opportunities for teaching students about their world, their friends, their God, and themselves. Listening, talking, learning, and laughing describe the Trinity sixth grade classroom. These can be very rewarding years for both the students and the teachers.



*"Sixth grade is special because you have more freedom—more time to play games and chat with our friends. We also have a lot of responsibility—the younger students look up to us. I like setting a good example when we help them with math games and at assemblies."
—Trinity sixth grader*



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Trinity's sixth grade year offers...

- Small classes of no more than eighteen students
- Reasonable homework allowing for outside activities
- Organizational and time-management skills to establish good lifelong habits
- An intentional shift toward more responsibility in the second semester
- An atmosphere that encourages kindness among classmates and helps build community through service to others in the Lower School
- Study hall/tutoring sessions daily which allow teachers and students to meet one-on-one
- An iPad for home and school to access digital content, organize coursework, manage class assignments, and share technology in the classroom

ATHLETICS

Trinity sixth grade students have the opportunity to compete on middle school interscholastic sports teams. In the words of Athletic Director Steve Efir, "At Trinity we are building a program that teaches our athletes that success is not measured solely by wins and losses. Make no mistake—we play to win! But we have the wonderful opportunity to teach our athletes that there can be victory in every endeavor. We are blessed with coaches who teach the skills to compete well and who model and encourage personal and spiritual growth."

Last year, 80% of Trinity sixth graders competed on at least one Middle School team, and 50% competed on two or more. Our Middle School Athletic Director, Sophie Smith, works specifically with these sixth grade and middle school athletes.

Trinity offers the following Middle School sports: Baseball, Basketball, Cross-Country, Golf, Soccer, Tennis, Track and Field, and Volleyball.



ACADEMICS

Language Arts

Sixth grade literature studies are integrated with the historical study of the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Writing skills are emphasized, as students learn to compose tightly knit paragraphs, which are foundational for composition writing. Spelling, vocabulary, and grammar skills are stressed in both reading and writing classes.

History

Sixth grade history begins with the close of the Roman Empire and continues through the expansion of Christianity, the Byzantine Empire, the rise of Islam, the Middle Ages, and the early Renaissance. Timelines, map studies, and projects help students connect historical and modern places.

Bible

Sixth grade Bible is a conversational, in-depth study of the Old Testament story, focusing on who God is and His relationship to creation. Students gain an understanding of the Old Testament narrative and its major figures and learn about the character of God. Memorization of scripture is an important element of Bible class.

Math

Sixth grade continues developing math concepts and process skills which enable students to formulate, apply, and solve problems. Topics covered include whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages, conversion ratio of measurements, and geometry.

Science

Students in sixth grade explore topography, earth chemistry, climatology, and astronomy in class and through research projects, field trips, and experiments. In the spring, they participate in Trinity's Science Expo.

Special Subjects

- **Latin** Building on 4th and 5th grade Latin, this class emphasizes Latin grammar and vocabulary. It is designed to accommodate new students who have not previously studied Latin.
- **Art** Art integrates the study of famous artists and hands-on student experience with art concepts and techniques from the Byzantine through Gothic eras.
- **Music** Music studies focus on music theory, history, and performance, particularly the music and composers of the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Students may also participate in co-curricular band or string ensembles.
- **P.E.** Twice-weekly P.E. classes feature activities to improve students' cardiovascular endurance, strength, and sport-specific skills.

What Our Families Say About Trinity's Sixth Grade

Sixth grade parents

“Trinity School’s sixth grade model creates a perfect transition between lower school and middle school. My sixth grader enjoyed the opportunity to change classes and experience three different teachers, who brought their individual strengths and teaching styles to their particular courses. The three teachers worked closely as a team to guide the students through the emotional and social ‘joys and challenges’ that often accompany sixth grade. My sixth grader also enjoyed the opportunity to grow in independence, responsibility, and leadership before moving to the middle school. Last, but not least, sixth graders get to enjoy one last year on the playground!”

“We have watched our son thrive in the sixth grade at Trinity. He has been challenged by the curriculum but guided and coached by the wonderful team of teachers who have helped him grow in his confidence to handle the transition into middle school. We are thankful for this deliberate approach and encouraged by how his sixth grade experience has prepared him for next year and beyond.”

Sixth grade students

“I really like the atmosphere at Trinity. My friends are so nice; you can talk to people and participate in class and not be criticized. The teachers care a lot about the students and are like counselors too.”

“We have smaller classes at Trinity, so you get a lot of attention from your teachers. You know everyone in your class plus the other grades. I also like having students all the way from TK to 12th grade here.”

