



PRINCE Leadership MONTHLY

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Learning Outside the Classroom

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Some of the primary goals of education are to help students learn valuable information that will increase their knowledge; prepare them to be successful, contributing citizens; and to hopefully inspire them to dream and pursue passions within a given content area in a way that is honoring to God's call on their lives. Whether they teach history, English, science, Bible, or math, teachers desire to cultivate a love of their content within their students and to help them understand how the content is relevant and meaningful in everyday life. While hours of planning, lecturing and hands-on activities in the classroom enhance student learning, one of the best ways to help students make meaningful connections to the content is with out-of-the-classroom experiences. When students move beyond the classroom and see how ideas and concepts are being used every day, they gain insight into the relevance of the information and make connections they may not otherwise make. By affording students the opportunity to interact with history, science, or literature outside the classroom, students develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and may be inspired in new ways.

In this effort to enhance student learning, PACS gives middle school students the opportunity to participate in overnight field trips designed to further their understanding of various subject matters. In the spring, sixth-grade students will travel to Savannah and Tybee Island where they will explore US and Georgia History firsthand. Tours of historic homes, churches and battle sites in Savannah give students an opportunity to experience what life was like long ago. Instead of stories in a book or dates on a page, students can see and interact with history. Students also visit the Tybee Science Center where they can collect and examine the local marine life, as well as take part in dissecting specimens. This type of hands on, experiential learning increases student knowledge and engagement in a way lecture cannot.

Our seventh-grade students will travel to Kentucky to the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter. Here, students develop a deeper appreciation for the Biblical account of creation. In class,

seventh graders learn about creation and evolution, and at the Creation Museum, they gain greater insights and are provided with the tools necessary to anchor their faith. This encounter is an important part of building their understanding of the Bible and helping them learn how to defend their beliefs. In addition, the ability to walk through a replica of Noah's Ark makes the Bible come alive and encourages students in their study of God's Word.

The eighth-grade trip to Washington D.C. is filled with memorable experiences for students. Our goal is to help students gain a greater appreciation for our history and our government. In a world that is often politically divisive, this trip allows students to appreciate the wonder of democracy and realize how blessed we are to live in a free country, even with its flaws. Whether in the Capitol building or one of the various memorials, students are constantly reminded of the sacrifice for freedom. Students also have the chance to see many historical artifacts at various museums and locations throughout D.C. Many students make lasting memories that will impact them in the future and inspire a greater love of history.



Research shows these types of field trips and out of the classroom learning experiences not only help students recall factual information, but they also increase their ability to think about topics critically. Further, these experiences make students more empathetic and willing to try to understand topics from differing viewpoints (Bowen, Greene, Kisida, 2014.). When students engage with content outside the classroom, they are also more likely to take a personal interest in the topics and may be inspired to pursue learning. While we strive to give students a superb education in the classroom, we also understand the importance of giving them learning opportunities beyond the school walls.

Reference:

Bowen, Daniel H., Greene, Jay P., Kisida, Brian (2014). The Educational Value of Field Trips. Retrieved from <https://www.educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/>