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How a Faith Centered Education Has Changed My Life

Going into high school is a big change for any student, no matter which high school they attend. So I knew that I had to make an important decision in choosing where I wanted to go. My life was completely transformed when I became a Catholic school student in ninth grade. I chose to attend Our Lady of Lourdes High School. Before coming to Lourdes, I received my education from a public school in my hometown. I can attest to the tremendous difference between private Catholic schools and public schools. They both provide an adequate education to prepare students for their future, but what really distinguishes the two is the influence that a faith based education has on a student.

Faith is important to incorporate into one's education. Faith guides students through their hardships and gives them the comfort of knowing that they are not alone. At my prior school, there was practically no structure or faith. Without those elements, I felt out of place. I seemed to be one of the few who took their education seriously. Many of my peers indulged in certain activities that God would be rather discontent with. The overall lack of faith resulted in a negative learning environment for me. In addition, I felt like I was not progressing the way I should have been; I did not feel challenged enough in my classes. Despite my best efforts to advocate for myself, I was not receiving enough support from my educators to fulfill my academic potential. So I knew it was time for a change.

After going to orientation, I got the feel for the place and instantly I could tell that Catholic school was where I needed to be. The atmosphere was completely different. I felt less out of place, surrounded by people with similar morals and goals. I noticed that the administration provided better support and was enthusiastic regarding the success of the students. Teachers recognized what their students were capable of and made it their goal to push them to be the best versions of themselves. That was exactly the type of encouraging learning environment that I lacked in previous years.

Attending a catholic school has not only influenced my education, but it has influenced my faith as well. At Our Lady of Lourdes we are required to take four years of a religion class. From taking only three years of religious education at Lourdes, I have become much more enriched and involved in my faith. Before coming to Catholic School, I knew the basics of what I learned from my confirmation preparation classes and before that, years of religious education classes at the church. That was a great foundation, however, Catholic school education has provided me with a much deeper understanding of my faith. It has demonstrated how faith impacts my life as a teenager and how it will continue to influence my decisions as I shift from adolescence to adulthood. As Catholics, we take the law that God has communicated to us and we are able to apply it to how we should be living our lives in the faith. At school, we begin and end each day with a prayer. Beginning each school day with a prayer is helpful to relieve any feelings of apprehension regarding upcoming assessments or my day in general. Prayer allows me to feel closer to God, providing me with the comfort to face any struggle that I may encounter. Ending the school day with a prayer is beneficial because it gives me time to reflect on my day before going home.

The prospect of having a faith based education is an opportunity that adolescents should not overlook. I am so grateful that I was able to attend a catholic high school; as it impacted my spiritual, social, and academic life in more ways than I could have imagined.