

# PDS Spirit

The Magazine of Presbyterian Day School



**BUILDING BOYS,  
MAKING MEN**  
Special Issue

SPRING 2019

**ERB Results**







# PDS Spirit

SPRING 2019

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## A Letter from the Headmaster



One of the most important things I do each week is to connect with the boys in my Mentor Groups. By the end of sixth grade, we have formed a special bond, one based on trust and developed through God's Word. Pouring into these boys is a special privilege and one I share with eleven of my colleagues. Together we seek to show and share God's love and to develop these boys in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. PDS' mission comes alive every time we meet together.

Five years ago I was called to PDS. The call came from a search committee, but I know it was God's plan. I felt certain that I was being called to participate in a school that valued high academic standards but also wanted to work on the spiritual development of each boy. Schools that concentrate on both academics and character are rare indeed.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to watch God at work in Howard Graham's life. The passion, humility, and entrepreneurial spirit that Howard brings to the position of Chaplain and Executive Director of the *Building Boys, Making Men* program is inspiring to me. The world would have told Howard not to make a move to PDS from a successful corporate career, but God had different plans. I know you will enjoy reading his story.

I am excited for the vision of how this program will continue to grow. We have great plans to create more content for boys and to encourage parents through programming. We know sharing the love of God will eventually bring the *Building Boys, Making Men* program to a wider audience. Please join me as I pray for this program and for God to reveal all he would have us do.

Sincerely,

Steve Hancock  
Headmaster



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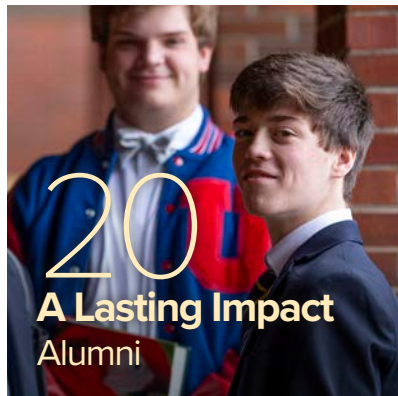
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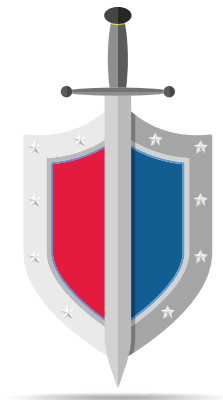
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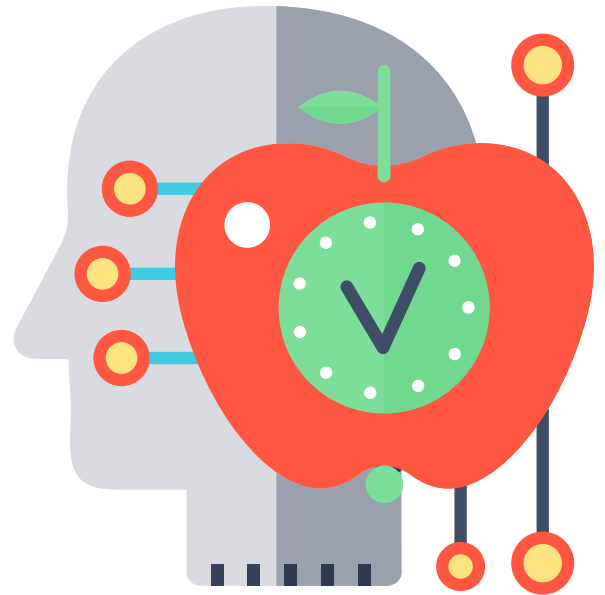


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# A Snapshot of Learning

PDS boys *outperform* other independent schools and the best public schools on ERB tests.



**M**ake sure your son gets a good night's sleep. Eat a hearty, healthy breakfast. Encourage your son to do his best. Suggestions like these usually mean one thing: It's ERB week at PDS.

We believe there are many ways to assess the growth of our students. One of those ways is through standardized testing, which helps to measure a boy's progress in certain parts of our curriculum. Of course, our mission and even our academic programs are much broader than what any standardized test can measure, but they can be a helpful—though limited—snapshot.

Every January, students in second through sixth grade spend approximately five hours in the span of a week completing the CTP 5 online. Developed by the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), the Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP) is a rigorous assessment for high achieving students in content areas such as reading, listening, vocabulary, writing, and math. Beginning in fourth grade at PDS, the CTP also includes reasoning subtests, both verbal and quantitative. While tests in younger elementary grades are untimed, fourth through sixth grade tests are given in a timed setting, ranging from 20 to 45 minutes.

PDS boys experience many benefits from taking the online version of the test. Online testing shows if a student skipped questions, and the student can go directly back to the missed question to answer. Whereas paper and pencil tests involve bubble answer sheets and #2 pencils, students can never get "off by a line" and have their answers skewed with the online version. Students are only able to see

one question at a time on the screen rather than a whole test booklet; as a result, they are less anxious and able to focus on one answer without looking ahead at what is to come. While testing, each student is able to see a timer in the top right corner of the screen thus making it easier to monitor his time.

Another reason we choose to give the online version of the CTP 5 is because we are able to have quicker access to score reports. ERB data is helpful to PDS' approach to teaching and learning. We have specifically chosen to be an ERB member school so that we can compare our students' progress with students at outstanding independent schools nationwide.

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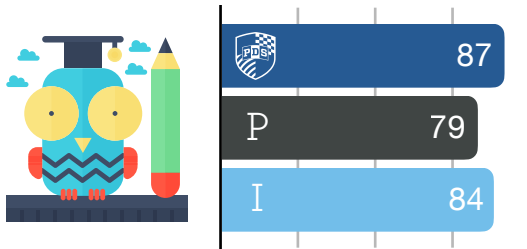
Year after year, PDS boys, as an aggregate, meet or exceed independent school norms in every subtest. We consider a PDS education amongst the best in the nation, and we are able to support this claim with test scores that few schools in the country could match.

When data is initially reviewed, we look for trends such as how well each grade is performing, and whether changes in curriculum have had any impact on overall scores. Strengths are identified, areas of concerns are discussed, and, if warranted, adjustments are made.

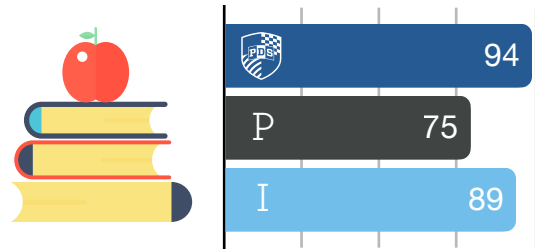
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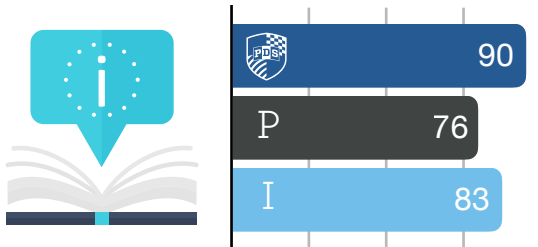
# How does PDS compare with other schools?



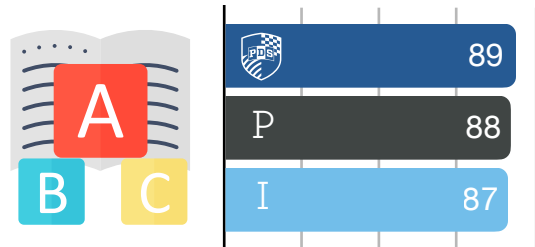
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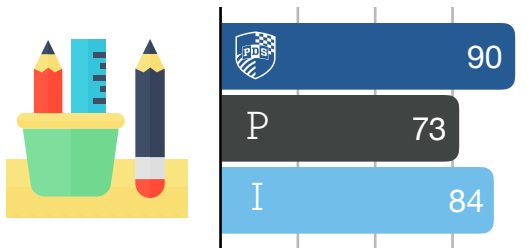
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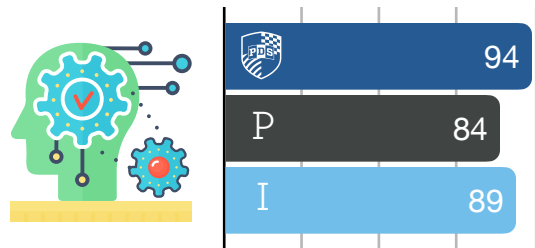
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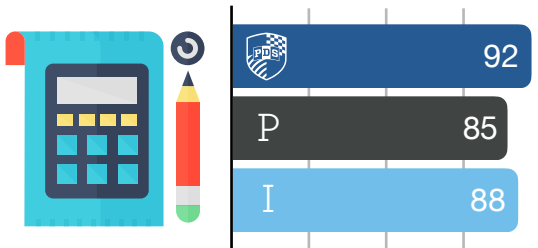
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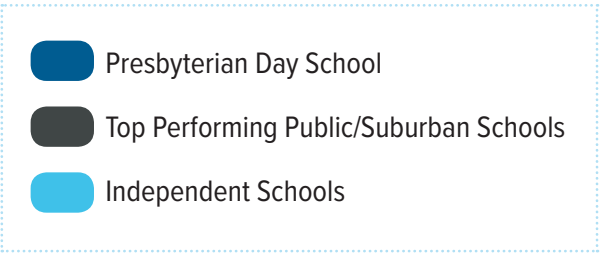
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QUANTITATIVE REASONING



MATH



\*These scores represent the National Percentile Rank of median scaled scores for boys at PDS in 4th-6th grade, the Suburban/Public school norm group, and the Independent norm group.



## A Snapshot of Learning

Working alongside teachers, data is also analyzed on an individual student level. While we don't design our curriculum around these tests, and we don't place undue significance on them, the test scores do enhance our understanding of each student's specific needs and provide us with an opportunity to customize our teaching to meet his needs. Regardless of where a student's test scores fall, we recognize that these test scores don't measure many types of important learning, nor do they measure attitudes and habits toward learning. We also recognize the limitations of standardized testing. Each individual subtest score represents one morning in the life of your son...a morning that might have left him feeling tired or rested, a morning spent rushing around or peacefully calm, a focused morning or a morning full of distractions. Because testing limitations cannot be avoided, it is important not to make snap judgments about student ability based on one year of testing data. Rather parents should view scores within the broader context of their son's overall learning and

personal development. Feedback on classwork, ongoing assessments, and class participation along with teachers' observations also contribute to the academic profile of the student.

Despite PDS' strong test scores, we care much more about bringing out the best in every boy. We are so grateful to serve a wide range of boys, with differing abilities and learning styles, whose many unique gifts and talents enrich the whole school community. ●

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Interpreting test scores can be complex. If you have questions regarding your son's test performance, please reach out to Laura Glenn. We want to make sure the snapshot of your son's learning is as clear as possible.



# Teacher Feature: Brooke Haley

## What brought you to PDS?

My early childhood through high school education was in a Christian school. Having chapel every week and Christian teachers and other students I could talk about the Lord and pray with was life-changing. I dreamed of becoming a teacher one day. Having a family of teachers in many areas of education naturally led me in that direction. It was unmistakably God's plan for my life. My twenty-year teaching career began in a private Christian school. I wanted to continue teaching in a Christ-centered school. However, I had a desire for a more challenging curriculum. PDS has the best of both—it has a strong Christian foundation, a warm, family atmosphere, and hands-on, advanced teaching and curriculum.

## How do you integrate *Building Boys, Making Men into your classroom?*

I weave the virtue of the month into our day while reading aloud or during teachable moments. Whenever there are issues, struggles, or challenges, we all talk about it together. It is not always a planned discussion, but those moments can have the strongest impact. Throughout the day, we remind the boys of our virtues—when they are walking down the hallway, at carpool, or even at lunch. Our best times are when a good conversation grows and becomes student-directed as opposed to teacher-directed. For example, I love to give a “virtue shout-out” to anyone in the room who has set an example with their actions or words that day. These shout-outs even motivate the boys to give “virtue shout-outs” to each other.

We also have the boys write reflections on how they think they have exhibited *BBMM* virtues in their personal lives. This has proven to be a helpful way to hold them accountable. As a recent example, we researched notable men and women that capture the true definition of real-world Noble Knights.

## What do you want a student to get from having had you as a teacher?

I hope to instill a love of reading and appreciation for books in each of my students. There are many pieces of the puzzle that fit together to create a

more meaningful reading life for these boys. I want them to know their book choices are valued by their classmates and by me. Allowing the boys to feel safe sharing their likes and dislikes and their struggles and successes in reading is key. I place importance on how often they read, and I share my own positive reading experiences to help them understand the impact that a love of reading will have on their future reading life. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing their eyes light up while sharing a book they are currently reading and can't put down.

## What character trait do you hope your boys develop?

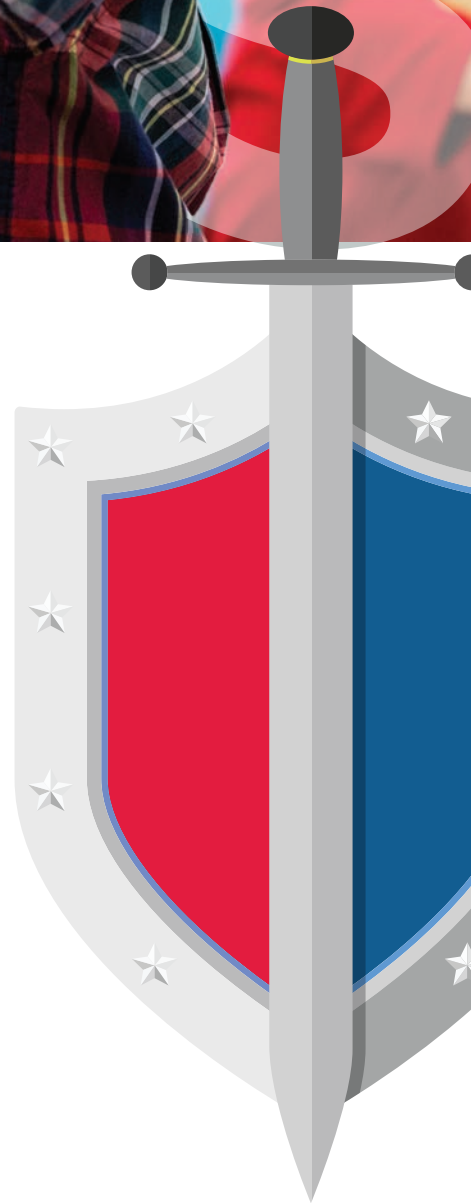
Empathy is the essential trait that permeates every aspect of a person's life. It allows students to make meaningful personal connections in life-changing ways. Standing in another's shoes is only possible with empathy. When children learn to be empathetic, they will be compelled to help others. Ultimately, this is a call to action for a lifetime. In an effort to guide children away from “it's all about me” to a deep sense of empathy, I repeat on a daily basis, “I want you to stop and think how you would feel if you had a friend say that to you or act that way.”





# A Mission that Matters

Howard Graham joined PDS in August of 2018 as Chaplain and Executive Director of the *Building Boys, Making Men* program. Howard offers insight into where the program is headed and why he left the corporate world behind to minister to the PDS community and to share the love of Jesus with the world.





### **Coming to PDS was a big change for you—it meant leaving the corporate world where you'd spent close to 30 years. What led you to make this switch?**

I made the change because I believe God called me to this role. I'd been on the PDS Board for five years, first as Trustee and then as Chairman. God used that time to show me both the need and the potential impact of teaching boys and men to know God's character, grace, and love.

It became clear to me that if more boys and men came to know God, and lived out their faith with boldness and love, the world could be a different place.

There are two sources that have really reinforced this for me. First, according to Vern Bengtson's book *Families and Faith*, a 35-year study found that kids' relationships with their dads were the most significant predictor of which kids will stay in their parents' faith and which ones will not. Of those who had a close relationship with their dad, 67 percent carried on the family's religious tradition.

Also, while I was in a digital strategy meeting in New York City, a CEO from another media company commented, "Content for dads is one of the largest white spaces in all of the internet." That reinforced what I was already noticing — that advice for dads online is a big unmet need. Think about it: Men go to the internet for health, financial, and all other types of advice. How much more important is it then to have advice for dads full of the wisdom of God's Word!

If I can help boys grow to know God and become men of character and faith and if I can equip dads to lead their families well, I think that is worth dedicating my life to.

### **The boys at PDS are pretty young — what kind of difference do you think a program for elementary-aged boys can realistically make?**

I think filling boys' hearts and minds with God's Word and giving them foundational habits of character can make a profound impact on the rest of their lives. These boys aren't too young to learn. They are in the exact right spot in life to learn important truth.

Proverbs 22:6 tells us, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." The fact that they are not too young is also reinforced by research.

In a 2015 survey, the National Association of Evangelicals found that 63 percent of Christians accepted Jesus Christ between the ages of 4 and 14.

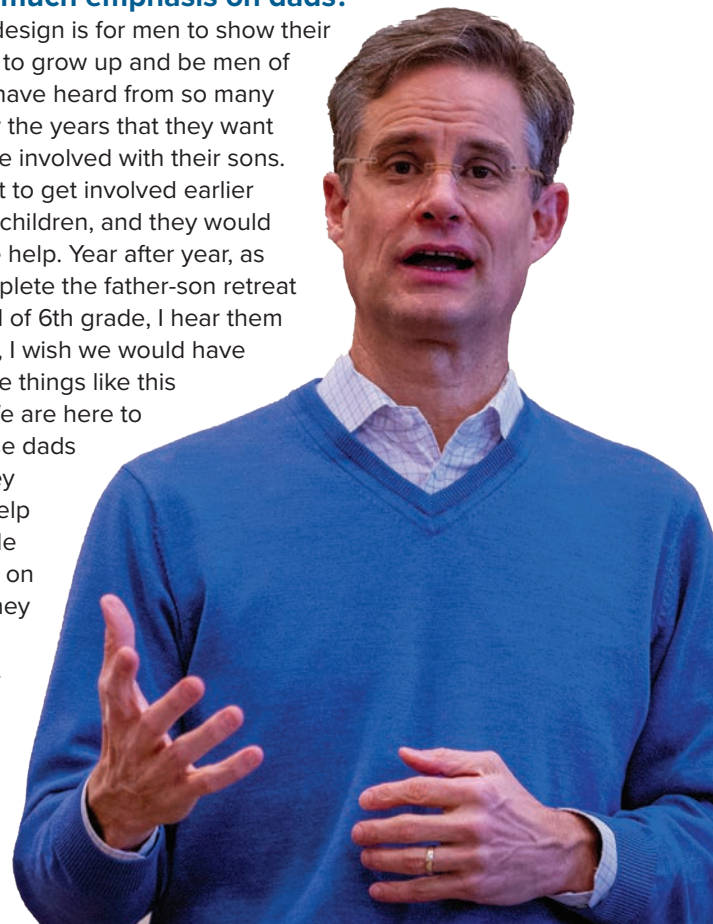
I believe that the boys at PDS are loved and nurtured well at school and at home. In the context of that loving care, we can show them God's character of holiness and grace, and they can start to understand God as the source of all love. Our greatest hope for these boys is for them to understand God's plan for their lives and fully accept God's love and grace.

### **PDS has a rich history of loving and nurturing boys. What do you think allows PDS to do that so well?**

What is remarkable about PDS is the 70-year history of consistently and intentionally infusing God's Word into everything it does. Under Steve Hancock's leadership PDS continues this legacy. You don't see many companies, or even non-profit organizations, stay on mission like PDS has. What a great mission it is—to glorify God by developing boys in wisdom stature and favor with God and man.

### **Why so much emphasis on dads?**

God's design is for men to show their sons how to grow up and be men of God. We have heard from so many dads over the years that they want to be more involved with their sons. They want to get involved earlier with their children, and they would like a little help. Year after year, as dads complete the father-son retreat at the end of 6th grade, I hear them say, "Man, I wish we would have done more things like this earlier." We are here to meet these dads where they are and help them guide their sons on their journey towards manhood.



# The Definition of Manhood We Teach Boys: A real man glorifies God by seeking an adventuresome life of purpose and passion as he protects and serves others.

There are few things God uses more in a boy's life than the example of love he gets from the men around him, whether from his earthly father, grandfathers, or mentors. I lost my dad when I was seven, but God provided other men to love me and be great examples for me.

In today's culture, the very definition of manhood is under attack, and that makes it even more important to model what it means to be a real man. The best way for boys to learn how to be a man is for them to watch men being real men.

## What about the role of moms?

Moms are of course equally important to a boy's development. The moms of the boys at PDS are some of the most engaged, supportive, and loving in the world. We know moms often are the ones who set the daily tone and help ensure the success of boys and dads, but we also know moms have more parenting resources available to them and are better at reaching out to each other for help.

We know moms play multiple roles in the home, and in some cases, they must play some or all of the roles of a dad as well. For that reason, everything we create for dads is available to moms. Our Strategic Parenting blog is written for both moms and dads, and as we grow and get feedback from moms, we will continue to enhance what we do based on the needs of all of our PDS parents.

## PDS views parents' roles as essential, but you also connect the boys with mentors. What is uniquely important about having a mentor at age 10 or 12?

By giving the boys mentors, we are building foundational rhythms and habits that will help them grow in their faith and character throughout their whole lives. They could build a strong relationship with their specific mentor that lasts a lifetime, or they may get a little coaching that is helpful for their current challenges. But whether the mentor experience is deep or just below the surface, it's still a great starting place to learn, share, and discuss God's Word and life's important challenges with someone who is a few steps ahead and with a group of peers.

## What is your vision for how BBMM will affect these boys' lives?

We don't just want to see our boys apply these virtues at school and at home—we want to see them start to share their lives and resources with the broader community.

On the one hand, we hope this happens organically. For example, when boys and fathers discuss servant leadership, we want them to be drawn to go serve someone who needs their help—maybe helping in a soup kitchen or reading to children.

But we also want to create programs that could encourage boys and their dads to live out these virtues in Memphis. We want to create systems and programs where boys are getting more involved in the city, and we want those programs to become as much a part of PDS as intramurals or after-school music.

How awesome would it be to see more fathers and sons, and even entire families, serving our city. That is what excites me! A vision of more than just character education. But of hearts and lives changed.

The most important goal of the program is to have them come to know Jesus as their Savior, realizing that he has covered their every sin by his grace and that they are loved completely and perfectly no matter what. Once they know that love, we want them to understand that God's perfect love came at a great cost (1 Corinthians 6:20). We want them to become so grateful for the sacrifice Jesus made for them that they will spend the rest of their lives in grateful service to their Savior and King. When they do that, God will continue to transform them to be more like his son Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18).

## To see God do that, how does the *Building Boys, Making Men* program need to grow within PDS?

We think reading books that speak truth and love to the boys when they enter YK will help build those healthy rhythms earlier. Then, as the boys start to read on their own, we want them to have books at each reading level with characters that are pointing to God's Word and plans for their lives. Devotionals for boys and dads are something else we think could be a great aid to help them learn the Bible.



## THE SEVEN VIRTUES OF MANHOOD

**TRUE FRIEND** | *Leaves No Man Behind*

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” John 15:12

**HUMBLE HERO** | *Uses Gifts For God's Glory*

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10

**SERVANT LEADER** | *Takes Initiative for Others*

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Philippians 2:3-4

**PACESETTER** | *Sets the Example*

“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12

**BOLD ADVENTURER** | *Goes Courageously*

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

**NOBLE KNIGHT** | *Lives Honorably*

“But the noble make noble plans, and by noble deeds they stand.” Isaiah 32:8

**FAITHFUL FOLLOWER** | *Is Loved by God*

“My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27

# Starting Early

The work of Christian character education begins with our youngest students in the Early Childhood division.

by Caroline Friday

On a cloudy February morning, I walked down the colorful halls of the PDS Early Childhood (EC) building, past paper snowmen, and into Sandy Kilgore's and Marlana Gruby's PK classroom. Carpool line was finishing up, and the halls were filled with tiny people lugging blue and red tote bags as big as they were.

This morning, Mrs. Kilgore and Mrs. Gruby had designated a little blond boy the "Greeter." He stood at the door and, although he spoke softly, he looked every boy in the eye and greeted him by name. As he walked into the classroom, each boy responded to him by name — a routine that starts every day.

As one boy walked in, Mrs. Gruby asked him, "Did you eat an apple last night?" Seeing my confusion, she explained, "Yesterday's bold adventure on the calendar was to try a new food. He hates fruit, so yesterday we decided that, when he went home, he would try an apple."

Once the chatty 4-year-olds had found their assigned squares on the carpet, the greeter stood up with a toy microphone and welcomed everyone to class. He announced, "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it," which opened up the floor for all the boys to sing.

After saying the pledge, it was calendar time. Mrs. Kilgore called on one of the boys, and he popped up, already knowing what to do. As Mrs. Kilgore cheered him on, he counted the days until he got to Thursday the 7th. Attached to the 7th square was the daily challenge from the Virtue Challenge calendar for February.

The Virtue Challenge calendar goes out to every student in the school from YK-6th. Each day on these calendars has an activity that supports personal and spiritual growth related to that month's virtue. February was Bold Adventurer month, so the boys are encouraged to dream big,





live their lives to the fullest, and have bold adventures at any age!

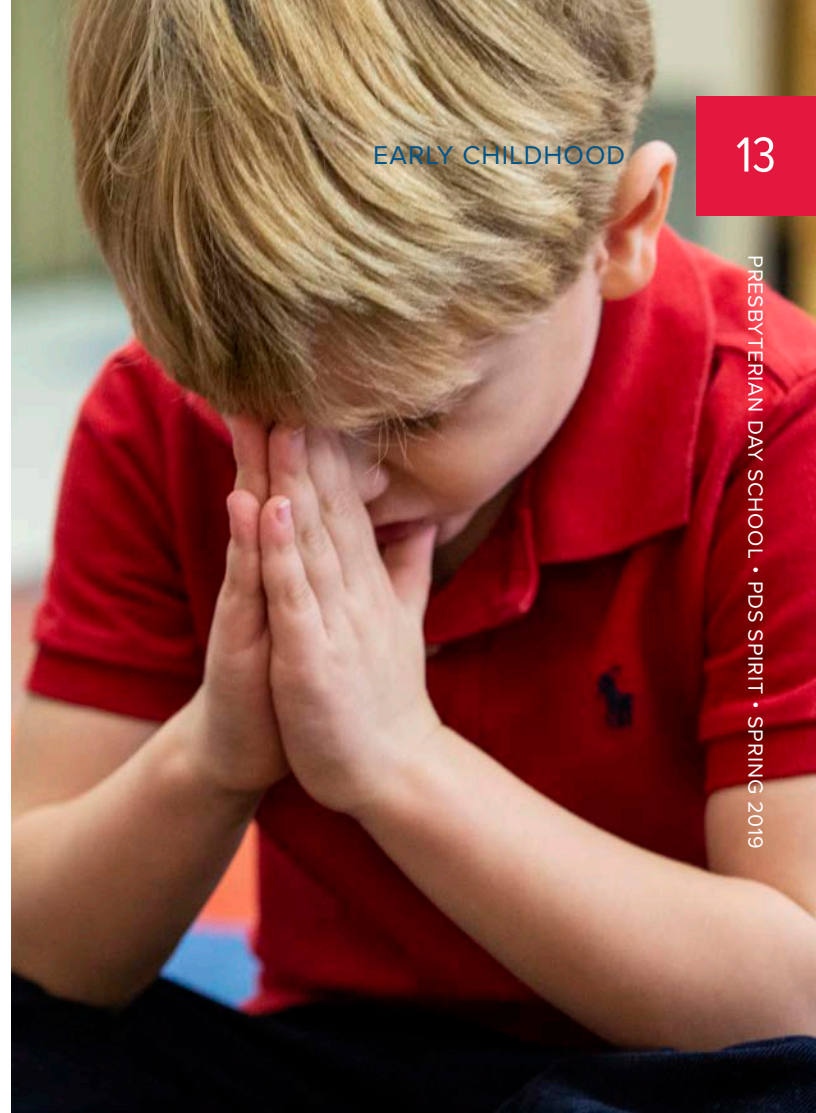
Today's adventure is to wear something you don't typically like to wear. The EC teachers adapt this for their young boys, turning it into a challenge to pick out their own clothes for school the next day and dress themselves in the morning. That might seem mundane to a grown-up, but to a 4-year-old, that is a bold and even intimidating adventure. The EC teachers know this and take time to encourage the little guys: "Tomorrow morning, if you find yourself feeling nervous about putting on your pants or shirt or shoes, if you feel like you aren't able to do it, I want you to remember that 'the Lord your God is with you wherever you are' and he calls us to be 'strong and courageous' just like our verse for this month."

The teachers in EC have high expectations for the boys in their care, and the boys rise to meet their expectations. Mrs. Kilgore sat in her rocking chair and turned her full attention to the verse for the month of February, Joshua 1:9. With Mrs. Kilgore leading the way, they all started to repeat a paraphrased version of the memory verse for February slowly and rhythmically: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified. Do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you are. Joshua 1:9."

To help these verses stick in the boys' minds, Bible teacher Darilyn Christenbury sets the words to a rhythm. That helps the young boys pick it up in no time, bobbing their little heads to the beat every time they repeat it. In addition, as the boys recite the verse, Mrs. Kilgore is prompting them with full-body motions to help them remember.

The virtues don't stop there — in Bible class, Early Childhood boys learn about Bible characters and stories that display the virtues they are learning about.

EC teachers know how important this age is, and they take the responsibility of teaching these young boys seriously. They teach them everything a YK-SK boy should know to be prepared for the coming years of learning at PDS. But the reason they came to PDS was so that they could teach these boys more about God. *Building Boys, Making Men* is designed for that same reason. Those involved in Early Childhood are establishing a foundation that will be built on for a lifetime. We are so proud that the foundation they are building is one built on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. 🟦



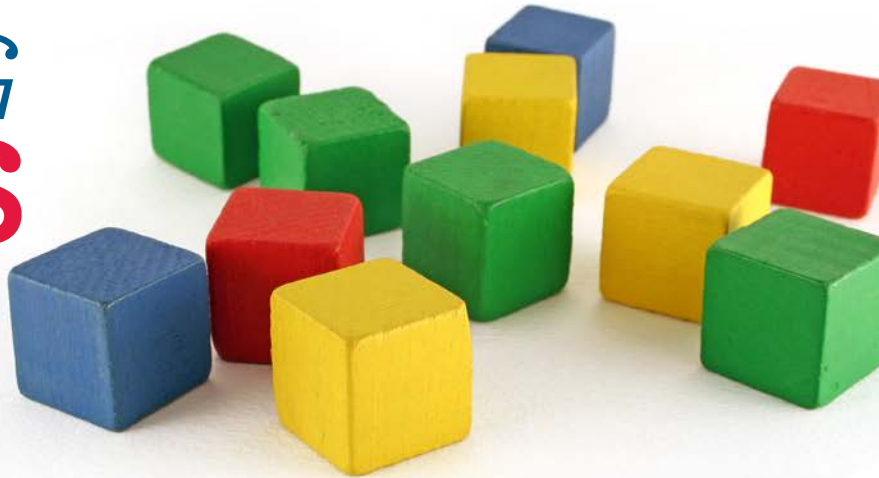
Each month parents receive a calendar filled with daily challenges that reinforce that month's virtue.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <b>February 2019</b> <b>Bold Adventurer</b> Go! 						
<b>"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened and do not be dismayed for the LORD your God is with you wherever you are" Joshua 1:9</b>						
3 Read Joshua 1:9	4 Ask a parent about a time they needed courage	5 Try a new food for dinner	6 Think about the biggest adventure you could ever go on - write it down	7 Pick out your own clothes for the next day	8 Find a story in the Bible about a great adventure	9 Go exploring in your neighborhood
10 Read Matthew 16:25	11 Ask a parent about the greatest adventure they have ever gone on	12 Ask your parents if you can ride your bike somewhere you've never been	13 Make your bed the very best way that you can	14 Initiate a conversation with someone several years older than you	15 Offer to be the caboose of the line at school	16 Wear something that you typically don't like to wear
17 Read Matthew 13:44	18 Try a new sport	19 Plant something in your backyard	20 Give thanks to God for making the world an adventurous place	21 Make and distribute blessing bags	22 Ask your parents about the next big adventure your family will go on	23 Plan and build an obstacle course with your friends
24 Read Matthew 28:19	25 Ask someone to build a challenge hunt for you/build one for someone younger	26 Go meet a neighbor you have never met before	27 Find shapes and animals in the clouds	28 Bake muffins or muffins...	1	2

# BUILDING BLOCKS

## *Building Boys, Making Men* isn't just a class or an event.

It's a complete program to teach every PDS boy what it means to be a man of God—beginning when boys enter PDS as two-year-olds and becoming more intensive as boys approach their teens and prepare to graduate from PDS. So what does that look like in practice?



■ We don't just want our students to say the right words or do the right things. We want to make sure every boy at PDS knows who God is, that God loves him, and what God wants for him. This starts with chapel, which every PDS student attends. All Early Childhood boys go to chapel once a week, and the older boys have chapel twice a week. Starting in first grade, the boys also have Bible class, where they learn about God, his commands, his love, and the heroes of the Bible.

■ We know that parents play a unique and essential role in shaping their sons' character, and we want to partner with them. All parents are invited to our weekly Friday chapels. They also receive the monthly virtue calendars, and 5th- and 6th-grade parents receive the discussion guides for *The 7 Virtues of Manhood* and *Flight Plan*. Finally, we also provide parenting advice on our *Strategic Parenting* blog.



In 6th grade, we have a father-son trip every fall and a father-son retreat in the spring. This spring retreat is the culmination of the *Building Boys, Making Men* program, a final send-off before boys graduate from PDS and move into their teens and on toward their next school.



■ *Building Boys, Making Men* shapes every part of life at PDS, and much of that happens through the 7 virtues. Each month, we teach the boys about a specific virtue with core verses and daily challenges. The virtues are woven into how we teach and redirect the boys as well, so that they learn what it means to live out the virtues day by day. In 5th grade, the boys read through *The 7 Virtues of Manhood*—a book written at PDS for PDS boys—and they discuss it with their mentor groups.





## MENTORS & ROLE MODELS

Boys need more than lessons about what it means to follow God—they need to see examples of what it looks like in real life, and they need relationships that will encourage them to follow God themselves.

This starts with our buddies program, where each boy in our Early Childhood program is paired with a boy in 4th, 5th, or 6th grade. This encourages the younger boys, and it teaches the older boys about leadership, kindness, and serving others.

Our 5th and 6th grade boys also have mentor groups led by men from the PDS community—coaches, teachers, and staff. (You can read all about those on page 19.)

We also focus on equipping boys with the real-world skills to live as men of God. In 4th grade, boys have a weekly seminar with the dean of students on being a true friend. In 5th grade, this seminar is on servant leadership, and they also begin monthly seminars on life issues. In 6th grade, the boys have a weekly seminar with the principal about being a man of God, as well as monthly seminars teaching life skills. With their mentor groups, they also read *Flight Plan*, which helps them think through what it looks like to follow God as they grow into men. ●

## PREPARING BOYS FOR ADULT HOOD



# Building Boys, Making Men

The truth of God's Word woven into everything we do

## All Grades

- ✓ Chapels
- ✓ Virtue of the month
- ✓ Calendars with daily virtue activities

## Early Childhood

- ✓ Verse of the month
- ✓ Virtues used in daily teaching and in Bible curriculum
- ✓ Buddies from 4th - 6th grade

## 1st - 3rd Grade

- ✓ Virtues used in daily teaching
- ✓ Virtues shown in heroes of the Bible in Bible Class

## 4th Grade

- ✓ Weekly seminar on being a True Friend
- ✓ Bible Class twice a week focusing on the life of Jesus
- ✓ Early Childhood buddies

## 5th Grade

- ✓ Mentor groups
- ✓ *The 7 Virtues of Manhood* (book & leader guide)
- ✓ Weekly seminar on being a Servant Leader
- ✓ Bible Class twice a week focusing on the life of Jesus
- ✓ Early Childhood buddies

## 6th Grade

- ✓ Mentor groups
- ✓ *Flight Plan* (book, leader guide, & parent resources)
- ✓ Weekly seminar on becoming a man of God
- ✓ Monthly seminar on preparing for teen years and manhood
- ✓ Bible Class twice a week focusing on Paul's life and letters
- ✓ Early Childhood buddies
- ✓ Fall and spring father-son trips



# Character for Life

Building a foundation that lasts

## Humble Hero

has big goals for doing good

## Bold Adventurer

takes risks wisely

## Learns From Others

learns from mentors and discusses big questions with others

## True Friend

speaks honestly and kindly

## Noble Knight

protects and cares for his community

## Faithful Follower

loves and trusts God

## Servant Leader

serves and sacrifices for others

## Pacesetter

sets an example for others



**Christ  
The Solid  
Rock**





# MENTORING



PDS believes in the power of mentorship and is blessed to have a strong faculty to look for developmentally appropriate ways to teach God's love to each individual boy.

#### **Our Mentors:**

- Are male faculty members who love Jesus
- Take time to affirm the gifts and uniqueness of each boy
- Are a guide for the challenges and opportunities boys face
- Are advocates for the boys and a source of encouragement
- Are able to meet one-on-one with boys as needed for guidance and advice
- Pray with and for the boys

#### **How Do Mentor Groups Work?**

Mentors meet with a group of 5 to 7 boys for 30 minutes every other week in 5th grade and for 30 minutes weekly in 6th. They lead the boys through *The Seven Virtues Of Manhood* (5th grade) and *Flight Plan* (6th grade).

This relationship in no way replaces the spiritual leadership of the boy's father or mother. It is designed to be an additional positive influence in the boy's life.

## **MENTOR PROFILE: TONY RUDZENA**

*A Memphis native, Tony Rudzena completed his undergraduate work at Crichton College in Memphis. After college he moved to Boston, MA to attend Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where he earned master's degrees in both New Testament and Biblical Languages. Since 2015, he has been at PDS teaching 4th, 5th, and 6th grade Bible. This is his third year as a mentor at PDS.*

#### **What do you teach at a Christian school?**

When I authentically began following Jesus as a senior in high school, I noticed a desperate need in the Church for teachers and mentors to help people understand how great God really is. So, I wanted to do whatever I could to help people learn about and see God for how great He truly is as our Father and King. These are the reasons I chose to spend my life's work helping people know who God is and how much He loves them.

#### **What are your goals for your group?**

My goal for my group is for the boys to experience a safe, authentic place where they can trust that I care for them deeply and want to do whatever I can to help them. This sets the context for boys to flourish in learning about who God is and what that means for their lives.

#### **What is the most important part of mentor groups?**

Prayer, trust, and encouragement/learning, in that order.

#### **Were you in any mentor groups growing up?**

I was both in a mentor group and led a mentor group when I was in college. These mentor/disciple groups had a profound impact on my faith and set the foundation for not only my faith, but also why I see mentoring/discipleship as a vital part of faith to grow and flourish.

#### **What is a key Scripture that led you to do this and keeps you going now?**

The apostle Peter wrote to a group of churches in 2 Peter 1:13 and says: "I think it is right to stir you up by way of reminder." This verse points out the necessity for all Christians to be constantly reminded of how much God loves them and has made them a new creation as members of God's kingdom.

#### **Can you give us some insight into moments with the boys?**

Our most encouraging and inspiring meetings are when the boys feel free to be vulnerable, share, and connect the dots on how to live out the seven virtues in their experience of the modern world, both at school and at home with their families.

#### **How can parents be involved and emphasize what the boys are learning?**

We know that parents are the most important people in the boys' faith and overall growth as a person. As we partner with parents, we encourage them to work through the *Building Boys, Making Men* curriculum each week with their sons. ●



# A LASTING IMPACT

## *Life and Faith after PDS*

The elementary years are where the foundations of faith and character are formed. We recently caught up with MUS students and PDS alumni McRae Dickinson '16, Bailey Keel '13, Henry Bridgforth '14, and McLean Meeks '15 to ask them about life and faith beyond the halls of Presbyterian Day School.

### **What does it mean to live out your faith in high school?**

**McRae:** “[It] begins with a love for Christ. In middle school especially, I was forced to choose whether I really wanted to live for the Lord when those around me were not. PDS told me what to do, but I had the freedom to make my own choices. By being intentional in seeking Christian friends, staying in the Word, and being involved at church, my relationship with God has continued to grow.”

**McLean:** “A lot of sinful things become so widely accepted during high school, and staying away from them is a challenge, but God promises to bless those who live a life for him. At the end of the day, God is all I need, and he fills me up more than anything in high school ever could.”

**Henry:** “Living out my faith in high school means showing no fear or doubt in what I believe in. I try to reach out to those who don’t know Christ.”



## What types of peer pressures or challenges do you face? How does your faith in Christ help you with these challenges?

**McRae:** “The best piece of advice I received in 6th grade was to begin developing a positive reputation. In high school, those who are known to have a strong character experience less peer pressure and are less tempted by others to make bad decisions. If everyone knows what you stand for, you are much less likely to be persuaded into making sinful decisions. By building a Christ-loving repute, you actually avoid social pressures because your classmates already know you will turn them down.

Also, there is a large misconception that Christians don’t ever have fun. High school is full of opportunity for fun for Christians even though my Friday night looks different from those around me. I feel that high school is more enjoyable if you understand how to really have fun without making decisions that displease God.”

**McLean:** “Faith in Christ has helped me with challenges related to peer pressure by keeping me focused on the fact that the temptations of high school only lead to a road that I know I don’t want to go down. Maintaining my faith is challenging at times, but I’m constantly reminded of the sacrifice God made for me, and that in itself is enough to keep me motivated to serve him.”

**Henry:** “I feel pressure to be like everyone else at school. It is hard to stand out as a Christian without fear of being judged.”

## What did you learn about Jesus, the Bible, and Christian Virtues at PDS that is helping you today?

**McRae:** “PDS helped to lay a spiritual foundation by painting a picture of what Christian living looks like as a teenager. Even with different temptations and distractions in high school, I feel rooted in the faith which became my own in 6th grade. PDS taught me what it looks like to love God at school, with girls, and on the athletic field.”

**McLean:** “I learned so much from PDS, and it played a significant

role in my development as a Christian. I learned that being a Christian is not just something you claim, but it’s something you live.”

## Did *Flight Plan*, your mentor, mentor group, and the *Building Boys, Making Men* seminars have a positive impact on you?

**McLean:** “I was impacted greatly by the *BBMM* seminars, *Flight Plan*, mentors, and mentor groups at PDS. It was always really cool to have older guys come into the *BBMM* meetings who had done a good job of living out their faith in high school. I remember looking up to those guys, and I saw in them an example of how I wanted to turn out.”

**Bailey:** “The *BBMM* program helped me to establish a firm foundation upon which I could continue to grow my faith. and it has been a guide to follow through the pressures of high school. It also provided me with a small group of friends who I could trust to hold me accountable, some of whom remain my closest friends.”

## What is God currently using in your life to encourage you and grow your faith?

**McRae:** “Right now, the Lord is growing my faith through an accountability group led by a PDS/MUS alumni and a leader at my church. In 5th and 6th grades, I learned how to be a part of an accountability group by meeting weekly with Coach Albertine and reviewing *Flight Plan*. Though the mentor group ended upon graduation, I recognized the importance of accountability in middle and high school. I began my current group in 6th grade, and it has brought much fruit into my life. I am very blessed to have such wonderful leaders and friends.”

**McLean:** “Currently, God is using adversity to grow my relationship with Him. High school is not easy at times, but I’ve learned that when I face adversity, I grow so much closer to him than I do when things are going well. I think He is trying to show me that He has control, and to trust His plan at all times, regardless of how little sense it makes at the time.”



# Father/Son Dinner

Our annual *Building Boys, Making Men Father/Son Dinner* was held on Tuesday, February 12, 2019. Speaker Kenn Kington reminded dads how important it is to spend quality time with our sons and say “yes” as much as we can. He talked about the truth in Ephesians 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

PDS dad Wilson Moore and his 6th-grade son Wils shared about the conversations that have happened through the *Building Boys, Making Men* program:

“These boys are growing up very fast... *Flight Plan* has given us a platform to engage with our sons about difficult issues. [Our one-on-one conversations] allow us to connect, to break away from the distractions of sports or whatever they may be, and to ask him about his heart.” -- **Wilson**

“I like that my dad and I get to have one-on-one time, so we can really bond. I get to ask questions openly about anything I need to know.” -- **Wils**

“I feel far closer to Wils as we’re going through this, because we’re talking about stuff that does not come up naturally on a daily basis. What comes from that is trust. He knows that I love him. He knows I have his back. He knows that I’m going to mess up ... but he trusts me and knows that I am going to be there for him.” -- **Wilson**









# The Future of the Program

We hope that what we do at PDS can be a model for other schools and churches around the world as they teach boys about God and what it means to follow him. We also want to create curriculum and resources for those people supporting boys whose dads are not around.

We particularly want to equip ministries in the inner city, where many boys are growing up without a dad in their home. There are wonderful ministries seeking to mentor those boys and provide healthy male role models, and we want to equip those mentors with the materials to shape a boy's life.

We also hope to connect with men across the country, helping them to experience God's love and lead their families in following God. The main way we are doing this is by building a digital online resource for dads and mentors across the country. We believe this resource can help men find practical, Biblical help for issues like how to partner with their wife in everyday parenting and how to think strategically about raising their kids.

It is a big vision, but all of these ingredients—books, mentoring, advice for dads, and partnerships with other organizations—are designed for a common goal of helping boys and men follow God. And we believe that, as we are faithful to what God is calling us to do, he will continue to guide us and make our work fruitful. We are excited to see what God might be pleased to do through us, since he “is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20).





# How You Can Get Involved

*Building Boys, Making Men* is designed to work in tandem with parents. Here are suggestions for how you can support your boys and the program — pick whichever ones work for you and your family:

- Pray for your son and all the boys at PDS
- Attend chapel on Friday (8:05–8:30)
- Visit the *Strategic Parenting* blog for resources and parenting advice — new blogs go up about once a week ([pdsmemphis.org/strategic-parenting](http://pdsmemphis.org/strategic-parenting))
- Feedback - let us know what you would like us to write about and address in our *Strategic Parenting* blog
- Lead and participate with your son on the monthly virtue calendars
- Facilitate one-on-one sessions for 5th- and 6th-grade boys using the discussion guides designed for *The 7 Virtues of Manhood* and *Flight Plan*, and ask them about their mentor group discussion
- Attend the trips, retreats, boy events, and the large parent meetings by grade level
- Help us share the program with others — visit [pdsmemphis.org/BBMM](http://pdsmemphis.org/BBMM)

## Not a parent but want to get involved?

Reach out to partner with us or help share *Building Boys, Making Men* with others:  
Email Howard Graham - [hgraham@pdsmemphis.org](mailto:hgraham@pdsmemphis.org)  
Visit [pdsmemphis.org/BBMM/feedback](http://pdsmemphis.org/BBMM/feedback)

*The Building Boys, Making Men* budget is funded totally separately from school tuition and relies on donations from individuals and organizations.







## Character for Life

**W**e know that character development doesn't stop at 6th grade. It continues through all of life. At PDS, we aim to build a strong foundation for the boys and to prepare them to meet life's challenges as they graduate from 6th grade.

While this foundation is built on the consistent, eternal truth of the Bible, that doesn't mean that we expect each graduate to match an identical cookie-cutter pattern. Instead, we aim to equip boys with the head and heart knowledge to be the unique person God made them to be. We want every boy to know that God knew their name before he created the heavens and the earth and that he made each of them uniquely in their mother's womb (Psalm 139:13-14; Ephesians 1:4).

### Knowing God

Our Bible teaching helps them know the character of God. We hope they will understand the power, holiness, and perfection of God and that they will be in awe of him their entire lives. We also hope they experience his grace and mercy and understand that his love is not dependent on their performance. We hope they will fully accept the sacrifice of God's own Son, Jesus, who paid for their sins so they can know their holy God as their heavenly Father.

### Developing Character

Teaching the boys about the 7 virtues helps them know what to do with the gifts they are given. We hope each boy will understand their unique gifts and use them to glorify God for the rest of their lives. We want them to live knowing that they are perfectly loved by God and that they have everything they need to spend their lives honoring God and serving others.

### Learning to Be Mentored

Our mentor groups help them discuss the challenges of life, and they help the boys figure out what it looks like to live for the glory of God. We hope this equips them to choose mentors and friends that will give them honest feedback and share the wisdom of God with them for the rest of their lives.

---

We want to see every boy at PDS grow to be a man who understands the Gospel deeply, lives it faithfully, and shares it boldly.





TRUE FRIEND  
VIRTUE 1

DEVELOP A  
**GOD**  
SIZED VISION

SERVANT LEADER  
VIRTUE 3

Set the  
Example

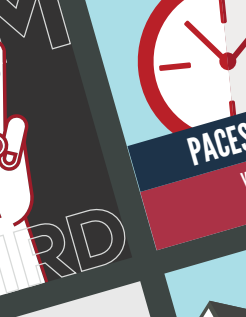
5



NOBLE KNIGHT  
VIRTUE 6



I AM  
THIRD



PACESETTER  
VIRTUE 4



6  
CALLED TO  
**DUTY**

LEAVE  
NO  
MAN  
BE-  
HIND

HUMBLE HERO  
VIRTUE 2



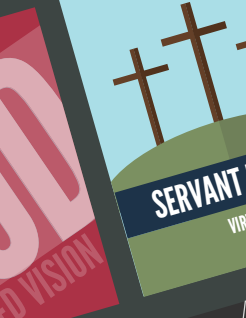
SERVANT LEADER  
VIRTUE 3



GO!

7  
FAITHFUL FOLLOWER  
VIRTUE 7

DEVELOP A  
**GOD**  
SIZED VISION



SERVANT LEADER  
VIRTUE 3



Set the  
Example



BOLD ADVENTURER  
VIRTUE 5

ND



I AM  
THIRD



PACESETTER  
VIRTUE 4



NOBLE KNIGHT  
VIRTUE 6

AVE  
O  
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HUMBLE HERO  
VIRTUE 2



DEVELOP A  
**GOD**  
SIZED VISION



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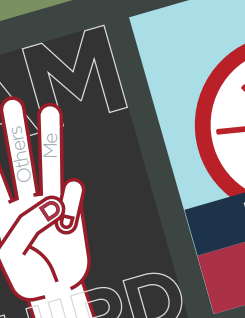
CALL TO  
**DUTY**



TRUE FRIEND  
VIRTUE 1

DEVELOP A  
**GOD**  
SIZED VISION

SERVANT LEADER  
VIRTUE 3



PACESETTER  
VIRTUE 4



LOVED BY GOD

LEAVE  
NO  
MAN  
BE-  
HIND



HUMBLE HERO  
VIRTUE 2

I AM  
THIRD



GO!

DEVELOP A  
**GOD**  
SIZED VISION



Set the  
Example



BOLD ADVENTURER  
VIRTUE 5



FAITHFUL F  
VIR



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## ★ THE SEVEN VIRTUES OF MANHOOD ★

