



KNIGHTLY NEWS

Middle School
Aug/Sept 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Critical Thinkers	1
Mexico Trip	1
Solar Project	2
Student Council	2
Donations	3
Volunteers	3
Fall Conferences	3
Parent Meetings	3

How to Develop Critical Thinkers

**By Adam Rasmussen,
Principal**

The mission statement of GCS middle school is:

To transform students into effective communicators, critical thinkers, and servant leaders who will impact the world for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Our parents meeting on September 12 was entitled "How to Develop Critical Thinkers". Here is a synopsis.

First of all, teenagers don't naturally think critically. They typically "feel-do-think". Consider the young man in this picture. Not a lot of critical thinking going on here (plus, he really needs a belt!). Because teenagers often "feel-do" many times when you



Not a lot of critical thinking going on here.

ask them, "Why did you do that? What were you thinking?" they might answer- "I wasn't." That is a perfectly honest answer. They weren't thinking. How do we develop critical thinkers?

Here are five practical ways you can develop a critical thinker.

1. MAXIMIZE HOMEWORK

Remember our 60/70/80 guideline. At GCS in 6th grade homework should be around 60 minutes a night, 7th grade would be 70 minutes, and 8th grade 80 minutes. Homework is to reinforce concepts already learned in the class not to introduce new concepts. Ask to see your student's subject notebooks and planners. If things are not up to par maximize homework by improving note taking and planner utilization.

2. ASK HIGHER LEVEL QUESTIONS

You get what you ask for. If you ask, "How was your day?" expect a lame answer like "fine, good, or ok." Ask better questions, higher level questions to develop a critical thinker.

(Continued on page 3)

Mexico Trip Update

By Quinn Anderson

Way to GO, GCS!

The Juarez buzz around campus has been incredible. Thank you for your overwhelming support of the ministry and of the team going to Mexico on October 12. We are already so excited to report back

and share pictures and stories from the trip.

Through the amazing efforts of STUCO, you all gave and raised more than \$1,000 for the cause! Combined with a jaw-dropping personal gift from a staff member, GCS contributed \$2,500 to this mission trip. Not to

mention the diapers, formula, clothing, toiletry items, etc. My goodness! Thanks to your generosity, two families in Mexico will have shelter, two food outreaches will be held, many babies will be fed and wearing clean diapers, and the clinic will be open for women and children.

(Continued on page 2)

Mexico Trip (continued from page 1)

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming

age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

The families at GCS exemplify these verses from Paul. Some of you are going on October 12,

some of you are praying, some of you are giving, and some of you are already making plans to go with us to build a home in March. We are beyond excited to see what God has in store next.

The Mission of GCS Middle School

“To transform students into effective communicators, critical thinkers, and servant leaders who will impact the world for the glory of Jesus Christ.”

Kaitlyn Patterson

Meet K8 student council president, Kaitlyn Patterson.

What church do you attend? Mission Community ☺

What is your favorite GCS memory? Last year’s varsity basketball away game with my friends. Fun!

What is one thing you are proud of your mom and dad? The love they show us in not only their affection for us but their actions.

What are your plans after high school? Get accepted into a successful school and study journalism and creative writing.

What are your plans after college? Get married (eventually) and become an author or artist or teach those subjects.

“Pop” or “soda”? SODA!!!

If you could have your dream car, what would it be? Black Camaro



What are your hobbies and pastimes? Sports: Volleyball, Soccer, basketball; Writing

Describe yourself in 3 words. Majorly over-dramatic! ☺

Solar Project



GCS K8 Solar Project

The GCS K8 campus will be generating electricity for the SRP grid beginning in early November.

The solar panels can be seen on the middle school side from the courtyard.

There are also hundreds of panels on the roof of

the gymnasium. Science classes are anticipating the day the project goes “live”. Students will learn the process and monitor output via a computer based readout.



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Champions for Christ



We're on the Web!
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Donations

Would you like to contribute towards a technology upgrade in middle school classrooms? Contact the office for details.

Volunteers

Calling all parent volunteers to help with SALT on October 18. We need certain items donated for this event. Contact the office for details.

Fall Conferences

Signups for fall conferences begin October 6th for families with multiple students at GCS. Signups for families with only one student at GCS are on October 7th.

The fall conferences on Thursday night and Friday morning October 20-21 are wonderful opportunities to meet the teachers and learn more about the school. **Parents AND students** are expected to attend the 1st and 3rd quarter conferences.

Parent Meetings- NOVEMBER 7!

Excellent communication is central to our educational philosophy. We want parents to be informed of the direction and details of school life. We have parent meetings once a quarter to share valuable information. Please mark your calendar for these important gatherings.

~~August 8~~ 7:00pm
~~Pie and Praise~~
~~-Servant Leaders~~

~~February 13~~ 7:00pm
~~-Science!~~

~~September 12~~ 7:00pm
~~-Critical Thinkers~~

~~April 16~~ 7:00pm
~~- Sneak Peeks into Next Year~~

November 7 7:00pm
- Effective Communicators

Critical Thinkers (continued from page 1)

Following Bloom's Taxonomy all the way up from Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, to Evaluation you can ask questions that force higher level thinking. "Can you design...?", "What do you see as other possible outcomes?", "Can you defend your position...?"

3. LEVERAGE MUSIC AND MOVIES

Movies and Music provide incredible opportunities for critical thinking and discipleship.

- What is the theme?
- What is the message?
- What is the worldview? (Naturalistic, Transcendental, Theistic)
- How should a Christian respond to this?

4. TEACH LIFE SKILLS THROUGH PROJECTS

i.e Meal Preparation- Develop a menu, a budget, and shopping list. Students buy the groceries, prepare the meal, lead a family devotion, and clean up afterwards. Imagine the critical thinking involved in this exercise.

5. MAKE CHURCH INVOLVEMENT COME ALIVE

Debrief the Sermon- In church both the parent and student record the content of the sermon by taking T notes/Cornell notes. Afterwards, together to summarize, discuss relevant points, bring in other Scriptures, applications, questions, and concerns.

Join us on November 7 as we look at "How to Develop Effective Communicators".