

**Saint Mary's Catholic School**  
**Middle School Math Courses Sequencing**

Saint Mary's has adopted a sequence of course offerings for enrolled middle school students leading to eligibility for all students to earn a high school credit for Algebra I. Beginning with Mathematics – Grade 6, the student progresses to Pre-Algebra work in Grade 7. In grade 8, students prepare to complete the high school level course in Algebra I. The student must pass the course, as well as the final examination to be awarded the high school credit by the Diocese. For students with average ability and background in mathematics, this sequence is challenging, as content mastered in a typical seventh grade course is covered in grades 6 and 7, allowing for acceleration into Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students with less than average ability in mathematics are challenged to this accelerated pace, and may require additional support, including but not limited to extra help, tutoring, and summer practice.

Seventh grade students taking pre-algebra who demonstrate high levels of aptitude (final average of 93% or above) and motivation (as reported by the pre-algebra teacher) are offered differentiated instruction in Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Known as Algebra I Honors, this course receives the same credit as Algebra I offered in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but allows students with a history of higher achievement in mathematics to explore Algebra from a faster paced and less teacher directed perspective.

Students who have shown high levels of aptitude and motivation in mathematics are selected for participation in the elementary grades of 3, 4 and 5 accelerated mathematics program. Students who complete this sequence have mastered mathematics content at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level, and, upon recommendation of the teacher the students have had, take Pre-Algebra in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and another mathematics course (typically Geometry) in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students transferring into Saint Mary's are placed in this accelerated sequence upon recommendation of their elementary teacher and a high level of performance on a test of 6<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics. It is expected that the students have mastered the content of the Saint Mary's 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics course, as demonstrated by a 93% or above on a timed test of the content covered in the course. (See Test Summary)

Although rare, students who are not selected for the elementary accelerated mathematics sequence in grades 3, 4 and 5 may accelerate in their understanding of mathematical computations and content. In these rare cases, students may request consideration for placement in the accelerated sequence at the start of 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Placement in this pre-algebra course is contingent upon a very high level of performance on the material covered in Saint Mary's 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics course. A high level of motivation to succeed in this accelerated sequence is required for successful completion of the courses during the middle school years. Parents and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher must agree that the student is fully prepared to attempt placement in this sequence. Caution is urged, as it is rare that a student will not be identified earlier for their high level of ability and motivation in mathematics, and acceptance into the accelerated sequence is difficult. Avoiding the disappointment of failing to qualify for acceptance must be taken seriously by the teacher, student and parents, and setting the student's sights on qualifying for placement in the Algebra I Honors should be carefully considered. To qualify for acceptance into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade pre-algebra class, the student must score a 93% or above on a timed test of 6<sup>th</sup> grade skills and receive the recommendation of the fifth grade mathematics teacher.