

After nine years of walking through the doors of St. Anthony on the Lake School it is hard for me to imagine going anywhere else. As I walk down the hallways and pass the classrooms a flood of memories rush into my head. I can remember my first year of school, when I was nervous, and didn't know anybody. I remember my first year of middle school, when all of the older kids were intimidating and I now only had one recess. Now, I am in my last year of middle school, and I am confident and comfortable, I know everyone in my class well and I no longer feel intimidated. Looking back after nine years I can see all the benefits that I received from going to school here.

One of the major benefits of coming to this school was that it was Catholic. For nine years I have begun and ended each school day with prayer. Another way I have grown in faith in my years at St. Anthony is having a mass every week. At mass we have the privilege to celebrate communion and grow closer to God with our school community. Another prayer opportunity that St. Anthony's has given me is walking the labyrinth. Walking the labyrinth allowed me to spend personal time in prayer with God, and reflect. We also received Reconciliation every year. This was definitely a benefit because if we did not receive this sacrament I wouldn't have had reconciliation at least once a year. The final benefit of this school being Catholic is that during Lent we participate in the Stations of the Cross. Even though we are going on Jesus' journey as a school, it is still personal for me. It helps me because I have learned that Jesus is walking my journey with me. Every year I have grown in faith immensely.

At St. Anthony there are more benefits than it just being Catholic. Another benefit is the friendships that come out of St. Anthony. Because St. Anthony is such a small school everyone knows each other. It is more like a second family than a school. This is definitely a benefit because everyday when I come to school I am surrounded by people that know me and that I trust. Also because of this I have friends in other grades that are younger and some that are older than I am. There are also friends that I will have through high school. Coming out of St. Anthony I know that I have made really good friends with a lot of people. This is definitely a benefit.

A third benefit of going to St. Anthony has been the great service opportunities. Throughout all of middle school I have done a different service project every year. We always clean up the school on Earth Day. In fifth grade you can get trained to altar serve, in seventh and eighth grade you get trained to become a cup minister. There are many other service opportunities that have been offered to me through St. Anthony. In fifth and sixth grade we visited a nursing home to play bingo and socialize. In seventh grade we went to Salvation Army and saw how many people need our help. It was really an eye-opening experience; we were able to see how many people are in need in our own community. In eighth grade we went to House of Peace. We were also given opportunities to help in our own parish. All of these opportunities have allowed to me to see how much I can make a difference in our own community.

St. Anthony has been beneficial in many parts of my life. In all of my years I have been at St. Anthony I have grown, spiritually, mentally and physically. Without St. Anthony who knows what kind of person I would be now. As I take a look back one final time to my career at St. Anthony I think about the shy little kindergartener that came into this school and now what a confident young woman I am leaving this school. St. Anthony will always be part of my life, and I will never forget my experience here.

By: MN