

VOICES & VIEWS

PARISH EPISCOPAL SCHOOL'S 9TH ANNUAL UPPER SCHOOL CONFERENCE ON BELONGING & INCLUSION

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Advisory Activity 9:00-9:25

Session One 9:30-10:25

Session Two 10:30-11:25

Debrief Activity 11:30-12:00



Biases: How Strong Are Yours?

Daniel Brown, Upper School Faculty Member

We all have and need biases to help us understand and navigate the world around us. Come learn how we form our biases and how some biases can create gaps in understanding for us that cause us to miss things that are perfectly obvious to everyone else around us. We will also be taking a short online quiz at implicit.harvard.edu to measure some of our own implicit biases. Please bring a laptop with you if you sign up for this session.

Building Your Basket: Using the Things We Love to Know Ourselves Better

Chris Burns, Lower and Middle School Librarian

This session will ask patrons to identify things they love in pop culture: movies, music, books, podcasts, and other media, which will help them build their basket of things they love. Using this basket, patrons will reflect on why they love them, and use this to better understand how they grow and change over time.

Cognitive Roots of Prejudice

Craig Savage, Upper School Faculty Member

Are our brains prewired to recognize difference and default to prejudice? Has evolution shaped us to be discriminatory? In this discussion we will investigate the evolutionary development of cognitive predispositions humans have for prejudice. We will explain the principles and discuss why they may have held an advantage for our early ancestors. Then we will discuss the implications for our modern culture including how we can recognize these tendencies and learn to counteract them by seeing the value in diversity and recognizing the similarities we all share.

Communication Styles

Whitney Hutcheson, Upper School Learning Specialist

This is an interactive session with role play, video, and lecture to build awareness and practice with different communication styles. We will explore Passive, Passive Aggressive, Assertive, Aggressive, and Manipulative styles. Through this session, we will learn how to appropriately set boundaries and communicate more effectively.

Community or Cult? Thinking About High-Investment Groups

Dr. Courtney O'Dell-Chaib, Middle and Upper School Faculty Member, and Kolby Kerr, Upper School Faculty Member

This session will lead students in a nuanced discussion about high-investment social groups. We will think about: why do people join and remain in high-investment groups? How do we recognize patterns of behavior within high-investment groups that could cause harm? What kinds of supports do people need when thinking about exiting a high-investment group?

Creative Calm: Macramé & Mental Health

Skye Walker '27

Parish Sponsor: Caroline Kaleigh, Assistant Head of Upper School for Student Life

This session will cover the mental health benefits of macramé. Macramé isn't just a fun craft—it's a way to relax. The simple, repetitive process of knotting helps reduce stress and anxiety, allowing focus. It encourages creativity and provides a sense of accomplishment, boosting self-esteem and emotional balance. It can also just be a break from the pressures of daily life. So, after a lightning quick lecture, WE CREATE!

The Criminal Justice System and Its Effect on Youth

Noah Knobler '26

Parish Sponsor: Shannon Longfield, Director of Community Service and Leadership Institute

The Criminal Justice system is a very harsh and merciless institution. Even more so, the system decimates the lives of youth with its continued severity and lack of understanding. On any given day in the United States, up to 60,000 youth under the age of 18 are detained in juvenile jails or prisons (Momentum Advisory Col.). In detention facilities, youth's social and emotional growth is stunted and, as a result, their mental health is severely impacted. When released, youth tend to struggle with re-entering society, oftentimes resorting back to crime and ultimately prison, the only thing they have known. In this session we will explore the criminal justice system, juvenile incarceration, and its specific effects on the lives of youth, short and long term. Additionally, we will look at ways communities and organizations try to curb this national crisis and how you can get involved.

Defer, Delay, Deny: The State of Gender Affirming Care for Adult Transgender Americans

Katie Wall, Class of 2018, Upper School Faculty Member

While it is illegal for most insurance companies to exclude gender affirming care from coverage plans, transgender Americans still face many barriers when seeking timely and effective life-saving medication and procedures. Medical professionals can defer treatment. Wait times for surgeries can be delayed years. Insurance companies can use deceptive language to deny federal protections. But transgender Americans are not the people who benefit from gender affirming care. Many cisgender Americans take medication or undergo procedures to affirm their gender identity without the same obstructions. This session investigates this discrepancy for American adults in the 21st century. Come learn about gender affirming care, the barriers transgender patients face, and how advocates are fighting to fix it.

Dialogue Workshop

Rita Obelleiro, Upper School Faculty Member

For this session students will share what they know about dialogue, learn about different ways of viewing dialogue in both Eastern and Western traditions, and then engage in dialogue exercises. We will close by considering ways these exercises could be applied to interactions in and outside of school.

Evil Incarnate: Religious Scapegoats throughout History

Oliver Olund '28

Parish Sponsor: Stephen Hackett, Upper School Faculty Member

Religions have long dominated all aspects of human life, and religious perspectives have often determined social conceptions of morality throughout history. Their various definitions of evil have at times been assumed as fact, leading to the persecution of different minorities across the globe. In order to obtain a knowledge of the modern world and the geopolitical sphere, we must first understand the past and present scapegoats of religion as they appear time and time again, blamed for everything wrong in the world.

From Brazil to the USA: A Journey of Immigration

Mariza Barbosa, Lower School Curriculum Coordinator

Did you know that the foreign-born population of the U.S. is estimated at nearly 14% of the total population? This session will explore the journey of immigrating to the United States through the lens of our speaker, a native Brazilian who became a naturalized American Citizen at the age of 16. Through vivid anecdotes, photos, and interactive activities, we will explore the cultural challenges, joys, and cultural adjustments faced during the immigration process and beyond. This session aims to foster understanding, empathy, and engagement by delving into the complexities and nuances of the immigration experience. While much of the content will remain the same as last year, this session will include more interactive elements.

The Future of AI: A Just and Equitable Vision

Alissa Cornelius, Director of Libraries

Is it fair for generative AI tools to use information protected under copyright law when responding to prompts? Is it fair that people who pay for a subscription to generative AI tools get better information than people using the free version? How can AI do better at respecting your intellectual property and provide equal access to its product? Join this session to share your thoughts and learn more about generative AI.

Gender Equity Through History: Women in War, Sports, and Society

Michelle Lyon, Associate Head of School

A thought-provoking talk that explores gender equity through the lens of history. In

this session, we will dive into the pivotal roles women have played in war, sports, and society, with a focus on the novel *Canary Girls*, which tells the story of women working in munitions factories during World War I. We will also discuss the fascinating history of women in soccer, from their rise during the war, the Football Association's ban in 1921, and the eventual lifting of the ban in 1970.

Healthy Masculinity

Courtney Joyner, Assistant Director of Strategic Marketing & Communication, Digital Content Specialist

What does it mean to be masculine? This session looks at traditional stereotypes and expectations as well as the broadening of the definition in a move towards "healthy masculinity." Healthy masculinity could be as simple as asking for help but also, a willingness to embrace traditionally feminine qualities (nurturing, compassion, caring) in order to build healthy relationships. Examples of how media and peer groups enforce both healthy and toxic masculinity will be looked at and discussed. This session is open to any student interested in the topic.

How Dance Benefits Society

Jessica Robinson, Middle and Upper School Faculty Member

Forms of dance may vary across cultures, but dance as a whole is universal because most human movement is universal. Even if two people don't speak the same language, it is likely that they will be able to understand each other through non-verbal communication. It can unite people who normally would not have the opportunity to verbally communicate.

Another way that dance unites people is through the interactions that happen in partner dances. In these types of dances, the dancers (usually the leads) have to use non-verbal signals in order to tell their partner what moves to do. Getting people to move in unison without talking to each other can be difficult, but once they get the hang of it, it can be a wonderful way of communicating and working together without using words. All in all, the process of dancing gives people the opportunity to move in unison and have shared moments which unite them.

How Textbooks Are Made: Power, Politics, and Perspective

Dr. Ann Morgan, Director of The Academy and Upper School Faculty Member

Have you ever wondered how history textbooks are created? In this interactive seminar, we'll explore the political decisions behind what stories are told—and which are left out—using the New York Times' investigation of social studies textbooks in California and Texas. Through discussion and critical analysis, students will uncover how history is not set in stone but shaped by those in power. Together, we'll examine how education can influence how we see the world, each other, and

ourselves. Join us for a dynamic conversation about the politics of education and the contested nature of history.

My Phone and I: Who's in Charge?

Cezar Araujo, Juniper Networks

In this session, participants will engage in group discussion on how to take control and avoid the harms of excessive phone usage: social isolation, lack of focus, and addiction. Participants also will discuss how to help friends and family struggling with unhealthy relationships with their phones.

Nice and Kind, Kind of Nice

Micah Hughes '25

Parish Sponsor: Michael Flickinger, Upper School Faculty Member

Do you think you're a kind person? How do you know? As adolescents slowly transition into adulthood, there seems to be a struggle in knowing the difference between being "nice" and being "kind" on top of all the other social norms we are expected to follow. However, with the excess of hatred and violence going around in the world within this day and age, knowing what a kind person is and how to be that kind of person is spectacularly important, now more than ever.

Power, Privilege, and Positionality in Organisations

Dr. Sharbari Dey, Geisinger Health System

This session explores how power and privilege positions individuals and groups for change. Participants will be part of two interactive activities including a simulation as we understand how power is created and maintained, and we will use healthcare organisations and health equity as our central constructs. We will have a conversation about how we can develop as equity-minded leaders with some strategies and resources to get us started on this journey.

Setting Healthy Boundaries

The Grant Halliburton Foundation

Healthy personal boundaries lay the foundation for maintaining healthy relationships as well as physical and emotional security. In this presentation, students will explore the importance of establishing personal boundaries, what those boundaries may look like, and how to maintain them when there is push-back.

Sex Trafficking 101

Avery Hammer and Priscila Torres Ortiz, New Friends New Life

Sex Trafficking 101 will cover the basics regarding trafficking and sexual exploitation. We will discuss what trafficking and exploitation is, how it happens, and some ways to help and be part of the solution. We will also share some statistics and information about our program as well.

Sportswashing: An Issue of Perspective

Waylon Charles '25

Parish Sponsor: Rick Dunn, Upper School Faculty Member

Sportswashing describes the use of sports by countries, companies, or people to improve their global reputation and brand. Companies selling potentially harmful products, dictators accused of horrible atrocities, and countries who don't follow "Western culture" have been accused of sportswashing. Sportswashing isn't just a simple matter of right or wrong. Using sports to deliver a bigger message is something that everyone influential does – from big and small countries trying to influence geopolitics to companies selling products to consumers. Whether or not someone is guilty of sportswashing is a matter of perspective. Sportswashing isn't just something "evil empires" do; sportswashing is a strategy employed by countries and companies to improve their image through sports, helping them create a distraction from negative actions or unethical policies.

Table Talks

Facilitated by Kevin Ash and Cathy Morris, Upper School Faculty Members

Table Talks are discussions where people across the Upper School can listen, share, and understand one another better. Students will choose from different questions to practice civil discourse in sharing their responses and listening to others, building community along the way.

Through Impaired Eyes: Learning the Real Impact of Alcohol on Judgment and Reaction

Matthew Day, Upper School Faculty Member

This engaging and interactive session will explore the profound effects of alcohol on driving ability, decision-making, and physical coordination. Participants will experience firsthand how alcohol impairs balance, vision, reaction time, and judgment—without consuming a single drop—using the innovative Fatal Vision Alcohol Impairment Simulation Goggles.

Through guided activities and simulated sobriety tests, attendees will compare their performance while unimpaired versus "impaired," gaining an eye-opening perspective on the dangers of driving under the influence. This safe yet impactful exercise highlights the risks of alcohol consumption, making it a powerful learning tool for addressing impaired driving, underage drinking, and substance abuse.

Join us for an unforgettable lesson in responsibility and safety that could save lives.

Tulsa Race Massacre

Todd Abronowitz, Upper School Faculty Member

This session is an in-depth study of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 and why you

have never heard of it. We will examine the causes and the legacy of this event and how it continues to shape Tulsa, Oklahoma, to this day.

What You Can Learn from Name, Image, and Likeness: An Overview of NIL in High School and College Athletics

Greg Zugrave, Athletic Director

In this session, participants will explore the laws and rules relating to name, image, and likeness (NIL) in high school and college athletics.

When Yes Means No: Understanding Consent and Dismantling Rape Myths*

Emma Coleman, Class of 2016, LMSW

Understanding consent is an essential component of any healthy intimate relationship. While the topic of consent has various components, at its core, consent is an ongoing conversation of boundaries within an intimate relationship. Phrases like no means no and yes means yes are commonly used in the media as a means of highlighting the importance of consent. However, understanding consent goes beyond such phrases. In this session, we will explore the meaning of consent and examine what consent looks like and what it doesn't look like. As we explore this topic, we will also discuss myths surrounding consent and sexual violence to prompt greater critical thinking around these topics.

**This session is reserved for Juniors and Seniors.*

Why Are You Like That? A Brief History of Episcopal Identity

Rev. Alina Williams, Midway Chaplain

This session shares history of the Episcopal Church in the United States, including divisions it has experienced over the centuries, such as views on the Civil War stance, women's ordination, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and more. We will explore the context for why Episcopal Schools are places that welcome all people; thus helping to explain how Parish's Episcopal Identity still plays a crucial role in how we function today.

YogaFlow: Empower Yourself

Beka Johnson, Upper School Faculty Member

Welcome to "YogaFlow: Empower Yourself," a specially crafted yoga class designed exclusively for students seeking balance, strength, and tranquility amidst the challenges of high school. This unique yoga experience is not just about physical postures; it's a holistic journey that nurtures the mind, body, and spirit.