Diversity & Equity: Middle School

Diversity and Equity are ever present in the curriculum of the Waldorf School of Atlanta Middle School.

In Grade 6 the students learn about the evolution of human consciousness by studying the Roman Empire through the Middle Ages as well as through the study of the Chinese Dynasties. Included are the history of the Christian and Islamic people. The students learn history from the perspective of those who have been conquered thereby guiding them to question the “right” to conquest.

In Latin/South American Geography the students learn about the grandeur of the indigenous cultures before encountering these continents through the Age of Exploration block in 7th grade.

Geology and Astronomy stretch their capacity for perspective in time and space; perspective about one’s context in the vastness of the universe opens the imagination to perceive the other in their wholeness (both equally tiny and equally vast as oneself).

The Grade 7 curriculum highlights the evolution of human consciousness from 1400 CE through 1700 CE including the Renaissance and the Age of Exploration. Through these time periods teachers try to portray the experiences of people including non-European explorers, astronauts, etc. to bring balance to the European conquistadors and missionaries.

To highlight the rich cultures and indigenous people of Africa prior to studying slavery in 8th grade, the study of the continent was intentionally moved from Grade 8 to Grade 7. We also speak about some challenges various African countries face and guide children away from “white savior” impulses.

The Algebra block includes biographies of middle-eastern people and honors their mathematical discoveries.

In the Creative Writing block, the students participate with and witness self-expression and being vulnerable together to cultivate empathy, curiosity, and understanding of the other.

In Grade 8 we study 1700 CE through modern times. We include the Haitian Revolution, the Harlem Renaissance, the Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Rights, Gay Rights, and the plight of Hispanic and Muslim people in America today. The class teacher takes every opportunity to speak on how human beings were treated or mistreated as a picture of the evolution of humanity. The students visit the Civil and Human Rights museum in Atlanta. They write papers on women and African-American people and their contributions to our civilization.
The study of Asian Geography includes learning about the land as well as modern Asian cultures and religions.

All of WSA’s phenomenological Middle School Science blocks build the students’ capacity to see what is before them rather than be clouded by assumptions.

The value of Waldorf Education is in learning to appreciate the beauty AND the difficulties in the evolution of humanity and to instill in each student the heart, the will and the thoughtfulness to make our world a more conscientious place to live.

- Lila Rubio