"Why I Teach in an Episcopal School"
by Ms. Kristy Castro 5th/6th Grade Math Teacher

"I am a child of God, created in his image. Therefore, I am respectful to others and myself. I am responsible for my actions, words and work. I am honest and above cheating, stealing and lying." These are the words that echo the halls of The Bishop Walker School each and every morning as our boys prepare to begin their day. Words that are filled with promise, consideration, and expectation. Words that are steeped in Episcopal values, words that resonate throughout the four walls of the building far after they are spoken. Words that have truly become the backbone of our school community.

Prior to beginning my work at Bishop Walker School, I taught at a non-parochial independent school, and although that experience was satisfying on many different level, it was not gratifying. As educators, we stated that we were on this mission to cultivate the "whole child." However, despite engaging curriculums, bold missions, and engaged students and teachers there still seemed to be something missing. For almost an entire year I couldn't quite put my finger on what that "something" was. Yet, the moment I realized what the community was lacking, I couldn't believe it took me so long to pinpoint. However, it came to me like an epiphany one afternoon as I sat in a division meeting. It was 4pm and as I sat around a table discussing curriculum, and how to create academic opportunities that fostered the development of the "whole child." Amongst all the suggestions there was no mention of spirituality, and that what was the missing link. It was at that very moment that I realized that I needed to be a part of a community where spirituality, and the values of Christ were woven into the curriculum in ways that not only challenged children academically, but also challenged them socially and emotionally to become better humans.

Before becoming a member of the Bishop Walker School family I was aiding in creating successful scholars. However, at this point, I'm equally aiding in creating successful citizens. Each week I watch students make spiritual and personal growth. Whether that's exhibited during weekly chapel service or community gatherings, during service projects, or classroom conversations, I consistently observe the boys exhibiting our school's pillars of: caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness. Each day the boys strive to make real life connections to the world outside of our school's four walls and have a sense of compassion, empathy, eagerness to help others, all of which derive from their understanding of the Episcopal faith, and what it truly means to walk in the light of Christ.

Although these teachings are in many ways immeasurable, we look to the actions, words and work of our boys to assess their growth. Despite the fact that in many ways this growth is not typically quantified, it is perhaps the most important. It allows students the ability to successfully navigate all other avenues of education, and life. Doing so with confidence and sense of belonging.

For these reasons and many more, I chose and continue to choose to work at an Episcopal school. After all, "the generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself." (Proverbs 11.25)