

FITTING YOUR LIFE INTO CHRIST

Paul writes in Romans 1:6, “And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.” Christ doesn’t want a place in your life; He wants it all. He doesn’t want you to fit Him into your plans; He wants to fit you into His. You’re called to belong to Him. You might think that this only applies to folks who are called into full-time ministry. We would like to challenge this thought because in a sense, every Christian is a full-time minister, whether ordained or not (I Peter 2:9).

God may want you to be ordained, then again He may want you to become an accountant. He may want you to become a missionary, then again He may want you to become a builder. The point is that whatever He wants you to become, He wants you to become wholly His (taken from J. Budziszewski, “An Interactive Guide to Keeping the Faith”, 1999).

While you are a student at South Christian High School, you will be given opportunities to discover, develop, and use your talents in an effort to build up God’s kingdom. This process will continue throughout your life whether you pursue a career immediately following high school, join the military, or begin college. Our goal in the Guidance Department at South is to support you, in partnership with your teachers and family, as you seek to know God’s will for your life in Christ.

Our mission is to help students identify and explore their God-given gifts and to prepare students for work and service in God's world.

Guidance Department Services

Our guidance department offers a variety of services for students at South Christian.

- **Classroom Guidance** – Counselors visit classrooms to share important information with students on how to succeed in high school and prepare for life after graduation.
- **Personal Counseling** – Student concerns can be discussed confidentially.
- **Referral Service** - Students can be referred to outside agencies for additional assistance or help.
- **Scheduling** – The counseling and registrar assist students in selecting classes. The counselors are informed about college requirements and recommend high school course work for careers.
- **Testing** – Counselors coordinate registration, administration and interpretation of PLAN (10th grade), PSAT (11th grade), Michigan Merit Exam (MME 11th grade), ACT (11th & 12th grades), SAT (11th & 12th grades) and Career Tests.
- **Post Secondary Educational Planning** – This includes information, applications, scholarships, representatives and college visits, financial aid, and admissions testing. Information is also available on all branches of the military.
- **Career Counseling** – The counselors and ECO volunteers work with students on career testing, career information, job shadows, and part-time job listings. Vocation Day, which brings in experienced speakers from the job force, is held every other year.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

Counselors: Mrs. Muller (A-F) available Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
Mrs. Turner (G-K) available Monday and Thursday
Mrs. VerMerris (L-Z) available Monday – Friday.

Please check out the Guidance Department at www.schs.org to view more of our resources.

The ECO Program at South Christian

What is ECO?

ECO stands for Exploring Career Opportunities. The ECO program at South Christian consists of a room full of resources, including the counselors and helpful volunteers who assist students in exploring the many career options open to them.

What kind of information can I get in ECO?

ECO has a wealth of information on careers and post-secondary training (colleges, technical and trade schools, and armed services). You can find out everything you need to know to plan for your life after high school. ECO can even help you to decide which high school classes are important to take based on your goals.

Here are some sample questions that can be answered at ECO:

- How much training does it take to be a physical therapist?
- What can I do with an English major?
- What jobs offer apprenticeships?
- How much will it cost me to go to college?
- What does a computer engineer do?
- What is the job outlook for nurses and how much do they make?

When you are a junior or senior, the ECO volunteers can set up a **job shadow**, which is a one-on-one visit with an individual in a specific field to find out information about a career you are interested in. They can also administer career tests and inventories to help you sort out your goals. You can also spend time by yourself looking through the books, pamphlets, and computer information ECO has to offer.

When can I use ECO?

The ECO office (Room #14) is open every day. You can make an appointment to come in during a study hall or other arrangements can be made. ECO is open to all students, and juniors will come to the ECO office at least twice. You do not have to be "called in" to ECO. You may make appointments to come in at any time.

Why should I use ECO's resources?

There is a wide variety of career options available, and your choices should not be limited to those you know about now. The more facts you have, the better choices you can make.

Guidance Website - On-Line Guidance Office Resources - www.schs.org/guidance

We have a collection of online resources available for students' use during study hall and/or at home via the internet. These resources are available to you whatever your plans are after high school. It gives you an opportunity to research careers that match your values, skills, interests and personality style, get information on military, look for jobs, practice for the ACT, SAT, MME or PSAT tests, and much more. Some sites include detailed descriptions of any career that you might imagine as well as college, scholarship, and financial aid databases. If you would like help navigating these resources, please contact a counselor at South.

WHAT CAN I DO IN HIGH SCHOOL TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE

It usually takes students a semester or two to adjust to college. You can hasten that adjustment by preparing yourself now--in high school--with a solid academic program, good study habits, and solid learning skills.

What Courses Should I Take?

"Take the most rigorous courses you can possibly handle in high school", advised the director of admissions of a private university in Texas. "Take four years of English, all the mathematics and science courses your school offers, and do not neglect foreign languages."

"If you do this, you will be far better prepared for college than someone who didn't," she said. "The stronger your high school curriculum, the better your study skills, and therefore the better your preparation to succeed in college."

"College admissions counselors want to see how well you respond to challenge. They don't want you to slide by on easy courses," she said.

A record of consistently high performance is good, but improvement counts in college admissions, too. If you did not do well in grades 9 and 10, don't give up. Work hard to improve your performance in grades 11 and 12, to show that you can succeed when you apply yourself.

What If I Hate Math?

Today, math avoidance will foreclose or limit careers in many fields. In addition to those in health, science, and technology, it will also limit your ability to understand what is happening in the world and in your community. Math is part of our language. It is the only language in which we can express certain important ideas and bodies of information. Hate it or not, every student needs to learn as much mathematics as he or she can.

If you are weak in math, ask a math teacher for advice: Is there an introductory or summer course you can take? A basic text you can study? A software program you can use?

What Skills Will I Need?

The courses you select today can provide a solid foundation for college, but success in college, as in high school, requires certain skills.

- **Reading skills** are important. One admissions director advises high school students to "turn off the TV and read for an hour every night." To get the most benefit from your reading, select materials that will stretch your knowledge by introducing you to new words and concepts.

While you read, make an effort to increase your speed and comprehension.

- **Writing skills**, too, are essential in college. The quality of your work and your chances for success will improve greatly if you can write with skill.

Before you start a writing assignment, develop a brief and logical outline of what you want to say. When you write, use precise, clear language. Avoid cliches.

- **Research abilities** are important also. In college you must know how to use library services, to synthesize information, and to prepare an outline.
- **Computer literacy** helps too. Take a word processing course and become proficient with computers in high school.

What Other Skills Will I Need?

In college, you will have to take good notes in your lecture courses--notes that make sense days and months later. To improve your **notetaking**, try to do more listening than writing. Wait until you have a complete thought; then summarize it in your own words.

To reduce the pressure of college, learn how to **manage your time** now. Develop a schedule for your regular class assignments, and schedule reviews at regular intervals weeks and days before a test. As soon as you receive a major assignment, break it into manageable tasks and develop a schedule for each one. Make use of an assignment notebook such as the **Agenda**.

What About Extracurricular Activities, Volunteer Work, and Jobs?

Don't neglect school and community activities in your desire to prepare for college work.

In addition to scholarship, colleges look for evidence of leadership, maturity, and special talents. Do what you can to increase the intensity and quality of your participation in extracurricular activities, summer programs, and volunteer activities.

Readiness For Life After High School

High school is a time to prepare you for further education and your vocation. This is a four year process that takes planning and effort in each of the following areas:

AREA	WHAT TO DO	WHEN TO DO
Grades	High school grades are important in college admissions, scholarships, and employment decisions. It always pays to do your best. In general, academic scholarships to colleges require a 3.5-3.6 or better GPA. Local community college study (GRCC) remains a possibility even if high school performance has been a problem.	Grades 9-12
Classes	The classes you take in high school are often as important as your grades. The harder the classes, the better your preparation for college and/or employment.	Grades 9-12
Activities	Involvement in activities enriches your high school experience and affects your admissions to competitive colleges and selection for some scholarships. Get involved in activities you like best and work toward leadership positions in later years. Keep track of your activities, leadership, and volunteer and service activities so you can tell about them on college, scholarship, and employment applications.	Grades 9-12
Career Choice	This is a long process which begins before high school and often lasts well into college and beyond. It is a process which is affected by the courses you take, the activities you are involved in, the information you acquire, and family values. The ECO Office has many career-related resources including interest inventories.	Grades 9-12 and beyond
Colleges	Start to get information from schools that you might like to attend. Go to College Fairs, visit campuses, etc. Talk to your counselor and parents about different kinds of schools. Find out about the academic programs offered, specific school admissions requirements and procedures, campus life, and costs. Talk with college representatives who visit South.	Grades 10-12
Standardized Tests	Preliminary college tests are given in grades ten and eleven so students can get some testing	Grades 10-12

	<p>experience and results before the actual tests in grades eleven and twelve. The PLAN is given in December of the <u>10th grade</u> and the PSAT/NMSQT is given in October of <u>11th grade</u>. The ACT (American College Test), should be taken at least twice during the 11th & 12th grades. It is offered free as part of the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), in March of the 11th grade and other testings are at a National ACT Test Center on a Saturday morning. The ACT is the qualifying test for the State of Michigan Competitive Scholarship Program, the Michigan Promise Scholarship, and is required by most Michigan colleges. The SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) is another college test that is an option, but not required.</p>	
College Applications	<p>Obtain them from the college, guidance office or on-line. Fill them out carefully and turn them into your counselor in time to meet deadlines. The Guidance Office will mail transcripts. GRCC health programs and military academies require application in the spring of the junior year.</p>	Usually Grade 12 (fall)
Financial Aid Applications	<p>Financial need is determined from information on the FAFSA which is filled out in the senior year. Financial Aid is awarded in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and work study if the family is determined to have need. Check www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information.</p>	Grade 12 (January & February)
Scholarships	<p>Scholarships are awarded by the colleges and private sources. Information on scholarships can be found in college catalogs and websites, scholarship directories, computer searches, and a listing distributed about once a month by the Guidance Office. Students should do a scholarship search on the computer.</p>	Grade 11, 12

Terms To Know

Academic Pin and Letter

An academic letter is awarded to the student who:

- attained a GPA of at least 3.5 for each of five semesters
- received no grade lower than a "C" as a semester grade
- acquired no more than one "C" a semester
- completed a minimum of six courses each semester
- received no more than two disciplinary points per semester

- received neither a probation nor suspension

An academic pin is awarded to the student who meets the above criteria for two or more additional semesters.

These awards are presented at the Academic Breakfast in the spring of your junior and senior year.

ACT Scores

The American College Test is required for college admission (with some exceptions). Scores range from 1-36, and the average score at South Christian last year was 23.7. The test is usually taken for the first time in the junior year and is offered free in March as part of the MME. You may take it as many times as you wish.

Credits

South Christian requires 23 credits for graduation. 18 are required credits and the rest are electives. Most students graduate with more credits than are required. Credits are as follows:

- 9 week class = 1/4 credit
- Semester class (18 weeks) = 1/2 credit
- Every other day class for one year = 1/2 credit

Electives

These are classes not specifically required by South Christian but offered to fulfill the 22 credits needed for graduation.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA is determined by dividing the total number of honor points by the number of credits taken.

A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D- = 0.67
B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33	E = 0.0

Since students are applying to colleges in the fall of the senior year, the grades from freshman through junior years are often the ones used to determine college admission and scholarships. However, if the first semester senior year grades show improvement, the new transcript can be send to colleges for consideration. Additionally, all colleges request that a final transcript of grades be send in June of the senior year.

President's Education Award for Educational Excellence

This is awarded the spring of the senior year to students who have at least a 3.5 GPA and who achieve in the 85th percentile or better in math or reading on the ACT or SAT. This award originates from the U.S. Department of Education.

Transcript

This is a written record of all the classes you have taken in high school with the grade you received in each class. It also includes cumulative GPA and standardized test scores. Colleges request a copy of this when you apply, and after you graduate from South Christian, your final transcript is sent to the college you attend. Copies of your transcript are kept in the Main Office.

Educational Development Plan (EDP)

The Educational Development Plan (EDP) is a form designed to assist students in exploring careers. The EDP is one tool among many available for your use as you continue to reflect on the next step following your graduation from high school. Our hope is that the information on this sheet will direct and focus your attention throughout the time you spend as a student at South.

College Admission Schedule

Grades 9-12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan high school classes to meet college requirements • Develop good study habits • Keep grades up • Make use of the ECO office
Sophomore year		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take PLAN (Preliminary College Test) • Take career interest inventory • Research careers and colleges • Complete Educational Development Plan (EDP)
Junior year	All year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Junior Interview ECO visit • Research colleges and narrow choices • Attend meetings with college representatives at school • Update EDP
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend College Night • Take PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary College Test)
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide your ACT test dates. Register for the February test if desired.
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Michigan Merit Exam (MME) given at SCHS, which includes an ACT plus writing, Work Keys, and Social Studies, Science and Math tests.
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select senior year classes carefully • Register with NCAA if planning to play Division I or II college sports • Take the SAT if necessary • Narrow college choices to four or five • Visit college campuses • Look into scholarships • Attend West Michigan College Fair
Senior Year	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit college campuses • Attend College Night • Attend college representative meetings at school • Apply to colleges - turn applications in to the Guidance Office or apply on-line and notify counselors • Look for scholarship possibilities • Retake ACT, (September or October)

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend Financial Aid Night• Fill out the FAFSA to reach processor by February 15
March, April, & May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wait for Financial Aid award letters• Decide on one college• Notify other colleges that you will not be attending