



# Statement of Religious Expression

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Saint Mary's Hall is a school with strong historical ties to the Christian faith, the Episcopal Church, and Judeo-Christian values. Our school welcomes and respects students, families, faculty, and staff of all religious faiths.

In light of its history, Saint Mary's Hall maintains many Christian-based traditions, symbols, and ceremonies, but does not seek to promote or favor one faith over others. In keeping with longstanding traditions, Saint Mary's Hall will conduct Christian prayers and use selected readings from the Bible and other religious texts at school ceremonies where prayers and readings are customary or appropriate. Acknowledgement and celebration of Christmas, Easter, and major holidays of the faiths represented in our school is an acceptable activity at Saint Mary's Hall.

The school recognizes and promotes the importance of a strong religious faith and encourages its students and families to be active participants in their faiths. Saint Mary's Hall believes the guidance, direction, and strength derived from religious faith plays a large part in the fulfillment of our school's mission of producing ethical students with life-long moral and spiritual values. The Saint Mary's Hall educational experience is enhanced by a community with different religions and cultures. Our school is committed to ensuring that all students' and families' religious beliefs are respected.

In recognition of our beliefs regarding the importance of practicing individual faith, the school allows the exercise of religious faith in a manner that is consistent with Saint Mary's Hall's standards of citizenship, civil behavior, and core values. During free times students may gather for prayer, study of religious texts, or for discussion of religious topics. These discussions must be student led and initiated. These activities cannot be used to proselytize other students to join a specific faith or be disrespectful of any other faith. Such gatherings should be promoted through word of mouth and will not be publicly advertised or promoted through written school communications or posters.

A Protestant Chaplain will be employed on the staff of Saint Mary's Hall and will be available for consultation, support of special needs, and individual prayer.

Additionally, religious studies will continue to be an ongoing part of our Upper School curriculum either as a significant portion of a world studies course included in Saint Mary's Hall graduation requirements or as an independent course required for graduation. This study of the major religions of the world is required in order to support increased awareness of diverse religious perspectives and to promote respect for the beliefs of people of various faith traditions.