



# Teacher Feature

Middle School Mathematics Teacher  
Cheryl Torborg

**Where did you attend college and what subject is your degree in?**

*I have a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from the University of Minnesota-Mankato. I have a master's in education from Hamline University.*

**Who or what motivated you to become a teacher?**

*As a child I thought I would enjoy being a teacher, but it wasn't until high school, when I really connected with one of my math teachers, that it became something I truly thought about doing. He made the subject come alive while still seeing each child.*

**How many years have you been teaching? How long have you been at Visitation?**

*I have been teaching middle school mathematics for 26 years. I have been teaching at Visitation for 10 years.*

**What do you like about teaching in the Middle School at Vis?**

*I love the welcoming atmosphere here at Visitation. The students here are so respectful, motivated and creative; they are such a joy to teach and interact with. There is something very special about Visitation. It is more than a school; it is a community that cares about its members.*

**How do you see an all-girls Middle School as a benefit to students?**

*I have been fortunate to have taught in both coed and single-gender classrooms at the middle school level. I have observed that an all-girls math class allows the girls to take more risks. They are more likely to ask questions and more willing to try an activity or problem without worrying about others' perceptions of them. Girls also tend to work cooperatively and like to talk out the problems together. This attitude usually results in better understanding and increased confidence in themselves.*

**How has your teaching philosophy changed over the years? Why?**

*When I first starting teaching, I focused more on how to teach the content, but now my focus is more about how to teach each child. I believe every child can learn, and I always strive to find the best way to help that happen. Seeing the moment when the student makes those connections is what makes teaching so rewarding.*

**How do you keep growing as a teacher?**

*Students continue to come to the classroom with new skillsets, and they bring their experiences into the classroom. As a teacher, I need to continue to adjust, enhance and relate the content so it feels genuinely relevant to the students.*

**What is the most important lesson that your students have taught you?**

*The greatest lesson is that one can bring joy and enthusiasm to all parts of life. Middle schoolers do this so naturally, and it is a beautiful thing to observe—and it serves as a great reminder of how to live your life. The other day I saw two middle schoolers skipping down the hall, and I thought, "That right there is why I love middle schoolers."*

**If you could try any other job for a day, what would it be?**

*If I could do another job for a day, I think it would be fun to be a professor at a university – teaching, helping and working with new teachers as they enter the workforce.*

**What's the name of a book you have read and enjoyed in the past year?**

*Extraordinary Ordinary Lives by Elsa Thompson Hofmeister.*

**Tell us a fun fact about yourself.**

*I enjoyed waterskiing for many years, and I once was a part of a waterskiing pyramid. I still continue to enjoy water activities and boating. I love to spend time with family and friends on the lake.*