

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS 2005

I. ACADEMIC

1. List the subjects you are currently taking in High School.

Algebra II Trig	Integrated Science
Creed & Christian Life	Gym/Health
Business Communication	French
Writing & Literature	Study Hall
Spanish I	Freshman Choir
Old Testament	Honors Biology
Computer Applications II	Algebra
Art I	Concert Choir
Honors Geometry	Advanced Integrated Science
Band	Geometry
Civics/Economics	Foods/Cooking
Intro to Science	Latin I
Intro to Art	Spanish II
Honors English 9	Weight Lifting
Honors Writing & Literature	Newspaper
Extended Care	

2. Indicate how prepared you were for **test-taking** in High School
Check the appropriate box in the chart below for each test format.

Well Prepared ~ I'm doing well, few if any struggles
 Prepared ~ I do well most of the time, a few struggles
 Unprepared ~ I am having difficulty

	Well Prepared	Prepared	Unprepared
Short Essay	11	10	2
Long Essay	8	14	1
Fill in Blank/Matching	15	7	
Projects/Papers	15	9	
Multiple Choice	16	7	
Other	Time management	1	

Comments:

Not prepared at all for mid-terms or finals: No experience from St. Thomas. My mom made all the difference with writing me my self test. Pre-testing for mid-terms helped me prepare and do well.

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

3. Indicate how you are doing in the following **areas of study** in High School.
Check the appropriate box in the chart below for each.

Well Prepared ~ I'm doing well, few if any struggles
 Prepared ~ I do well most of the time, a few struggles
 Unprepared ~ I am having difficulty

	Well Prepared	Prepared	Unprepared
Homework	13	9	1
Organization	11	11	1
Tools/Technology	12	10	1
Note-taking	12	9	2
Religion	13	7	
Math	15	8	
Science	5	14	4
Reading	14	10	
Writing Skills	12	10	1
Social Studies	8	6	1
Foreign Language	10	7	5
Music	8	7	2
Art	10	5	1
Physical Education	13	6	

4. If you marked "Unprepared" in any row above, please explain. Please be as specific as possible.

I was very much into what I wrote and teachers at St. Thomas just corrected grammar and NO content...Science is very advanced at CC and didn't learn much through the movies at St. T. BORED!

Didn't do enough advanced stuff.

The level of homework in middle school was nowhere near the level in high school by most students. (I understand I receive more homework as an honor students, but all students receive much more at CC.) Though structured notes were taken, I was never prepared to take my own notes on lectures without being told what to write or given a handout. This skill is important in Religion, Spanish, Health, and Science, and may be used in other classes with different teachers.

I felt very unprepared in Science 1st Quarter. I had a hard time understanding what was going on. Spanish was not very helpful since it was only 2 times a week.

Foreign language-Senorita Bissi was good, but we didn't have her long enough.

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

I think that I was the most unprepared in Science, because I think that having kids watch movies day after day is just not helpful. Because the kids could be very tired, fall asleep, and they won't learn anything because the teacher is too busy watching the video.

Music-we do a lot of sight reading, and I'd never done that before (singing notes and rhythms)

I think we should have Spanish more than twice a week. It would be helpful.

Many times we have to explain how things in our reading relate to real life. We talk about it a lot, and you need to be able to discuss it.

I never was any good at organization. I'm not always a neat person.

I don't have a computer and I don't feel like we learn how to use the computer. We spent too much time typing. Only learned copying, I couldn't understand it.

5. What can St. Thomas do to better prepare its students academically for their Freshman year in high school?

In 8th grade do mid-terms and finals-even if they don't count on grades-for experience. Teach how to take notes and use note cards or experience learning. Labs for Science learning and different writing experience. Let's pick our own topics and books for learning from a list.

Better preparation in writing formal essays by having more frequent 1-2 page essay assignments would be very helpful. By requiring students to form more essays or paragraphs in a test environment, requiring students to take own notes on lectures, offering a homework level to better prepare students for high school assignments. Using a Science program less repetitive, and more reliant on teacher instruction, and less focus on videos (which no-one watches). 8th grade was better as material became more difficult and Mrs. Stegehuis did more explaining and direct teaching. I would also look into different English curriculum, as it was nearly the same every year, and good writing skills were not taught thoroughly (except research papers).

I did not feel prepared going into Science. I think that it would help students if the Junior High Science was more informative. We went over too much too fast.

Have a better Science program. I think that Mrs. Stegehuis is capable of more than the program allows her to.

I think spend more time on religion and change your Science program to where the teacher is more involved that would help.

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

In Spanish II I was able to catch up, but it was a bit harder for me than most of the other students. They'd all previously done the "preterite" tense of verbs, whereas I went in cold.

To tell them that it's not as hard as people say it is.

Our Science teachers expect us to know many things from grade school that we haven't learned and that makes it hard to keep up.

Possibly give the students a 10 minute break. More emphasis on 10 commandments. Learn more about the teachings/rules of the church.

I was well prepared for academics, except for Spanish. When I first came to City High I was put into 9th Grade Spanish. There was very little Spanish that I knew. Compare to other classmates, it seemed like I was speaking Spanish for the first time.

Have people take notes from someone reading things. Don't have them copy what the teacher is writing.

More independent work, and more quizzes.

You can better teach study skills in all subjects.

Have planner and material checks. Make students be prepared for every class.

I believe that you should spend extra time on materials that some students don't understand. Most students never share when they're having difficulty in their work, so have scraps of paper you can privately hand to the teacher so he/she understands that you need extra help, without getting nervous about speaking up.

Increase the amount of homework that is given. More practice with writing essays in English. Less reliance on calculator in Math.

Challenge them with lots of homework at once so they'll be prepared for High School.

Get a BETTER Science program. Sorry but the one you currently are using stinks. I think we could have a stronger art program-since I really love art, even though I love Mrs. Burns. And we need a broader language program-more than just Spanish-French or Latin to get us interested in taking another language besides Spanish. I think we should have a choice. Better teacher too.

Focus on note-taking skills so students don't struggle with it in High School. Also, back them up more the Religion area and actually follow a lesson guide.

Show them time management. Because there is a lot more homework in high school, and NO late work is accepted.

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

Help them better in writing and English. Some areas of science can sometimes be weak.
Religion some areas in high school aren't covered at St. Thomas.

I believe that all the teachers are already doing exactly what they need to be doing! Keep it up.

II. SOCIAL

- 1 List your extra-curricular activities (sports, clubs, drama, Music etc.)

Choir (4)	Spanish Club
Cross-country	Youth group
Track (2)	Football (5)
French Club(2)	Writer's Group (2)
Principal's Advisory Council (2)	JV Tennis
Varsity Lacrosse (2)	Women's Swim Team
Theatre	Piano
Volleyball (2)	Basketball (6)
Freshman Volleyball	JV Soccer Team
H.O.P.E. (2)	Peer Listening
Student Government	Soccer (3)
Drama	Baseball (3)
Ski team (2)	Civics
Band (2)	E.B.O.N.Y. club
Varsity Tennis	JV Volleyball
Pole-Vaulting	AAU Volleyball
Teens for Life	Challenge
Quiz Bowl	School Musical
Men's Swim Team	Boy Scouts
Golf	Hockey
Tennis (2)	School Plays (3)

2. Every freshman student experiences some anxiety before entering High School. Now that you've been there awhile, how comfortable do you feel?

Very Comfortable 16

Comfortable 9

Uncomfortable

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

3 How long did it take you to feel comfortable socially?

1-4 weeks 14 4-8 weeks 7 full semester 3 still not comfortable

4. List any experiences that helped you feel more comfortable.

Belonging to a group.

Playing football was a good way to meet people.

Joining a group/sport really helps you to feel comfortable.

Meeting new people while playing sports.

Meeting new friends and teachers. Just getting acclimated. It's really not that bad learning your schedule and after a while I got the hang of it. It wasn't stressful at all.

Meeting my new teachers and friends and playing sports.

Attending football games and dances.

Playing sports was the biggest help. Last summer we had basketball open-gyms and that really got me connected with girls so I knew someone on the first day. I really encourage going to things that you're interested in before school begins.

Getting and meeting new friends, be social.

I made friends in sports before school started and that helped a lot.

I think just being forced into a new place & being forced to make it work. Just talking to everyone & being nice, and letting people get to know me.

Being in the band helped because band is more of a community than a class. It was nice to have band camp so I could get to know people I didn't know, better.

I joined the E.B.O.N.Y. club, but that didn't really work. I kinda wandered around and talked to different people so I can get to know people better and stuff.

Sports, being friends with people on the team. Not being shy during the very beginning of the year. Let the 8th graders know this every year: High school is FUN, It's a whole new beginning. If you don't like who you are, people don't know your past. I knew a few people who have changed (for themselves) in High School and are so much happier.

Some things that made me feel more comfortable was being involved and in a sport when the year began. That way I had already met new people and made new friends when the year began.

I was fine going into the year. It helps to get to know people before freshman summer and year.

Having lunch and a few classes with people that I knew previously.

I think the first couple of days made me feel uncomfortable but the games that my teachers made us play made me feel more comfortable because then I started to get to know more people.

My friends are great.

Sports really helped. I would encourage future CC students to join a club or sport group. It really helps you to get to know other people.

Being involved with other students from other schools before entering CC.

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

5. I see or experience pressure to:

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Use drugs	3	6	14
Use alcohol	6	7	9
Be sexually active		9	14
Smoke	2	3	18
Use inappropriate language	14	6	2
Skip class	1	4	16
Cheat	8	12	5
Lie	5	11	6
Attend unsupervised parties	1	8	14
Fight		7	19
Discriminate racially		4	19
Discriminate socially	4	5	13

6. How would you advise incoming Freshmen to handle peer pressure? Indicate how helpful each of the following were in helping you deal with peer pressure.

	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not at all Helpful
St. Thomas friends	9	10	4
Other friends	12	10	
Family	11	10	1
Clubs	4	8	9
Teams	12	5	5
Peer Ministry	3	10	6
School staff	1	13	9
Prayer	10	10	2

7. What can St. Thomas do to better prepare its students socially for their Freshman year in high school?

Mix people up, try doing more stuff with other schools.

Maybe St. Thomas 8th grade class could meet during the summer before freshman year to continue their friendships.

Diversity-- in High School you see many different kinds of people, sometimes you don't know how to act around them which can be trouble if you're trying to make friends. Sometimes you can see yourself changing just to try to fit into the environment.

Let them know: Drinking is NOT cool, Don't be afraid to talk to a peer minister, Try a sport-even if you're terrible-you'll make a lot of friends. Make sure they know: It's crazy but you never know where you will be in your future. Almost all of my best friends are people I played against in middle school sports. Make friends with them now and High School will be SO much more fun.

St. Thomas does a great job of preparing us socially. They should stress how often the smaller sins happen too, cheating on small things, small lies, or bad language. It is easy to fall into those things

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

because they go on all around you all the time. Also St. Thomas should teach how important it is to go to your family and prayer in times of need.

Let the kids be more loose and have more freedom with each other.

Definitely NOT segregate guys and girls at lunch. They need to develop lasting relationships NOW to help them through.

I think that if you gave the kids a 10 minute break that would help.

Higher enrollment.

I think camp Blodgett was a good idea. It got people to be more social and accepting of each other. I would suggest more of these kind of activities starting in even lower grades.

I am unable to brainstorm ways the school could prepare students, as success socially is determined more by personalities and simply finding people that “click”.

Tell them to get involved with all or any Christian friends or family early—always network with lots of different people and family. Stay close to good, honest, people.

Try to have more events with other schools.

They’re doing a good job as it is.

Forcing students to work with different people in school makes them open-minded.

Participate in more activities as a whole class.

Nothing. People are how they are. You can’t change anything. I don’t hardly ever see anyone anymore. I see a few people-that I like and we talk-we’re still friends and stuff. But in my group of friends, they’re all new. No one hangs with the same people any more. High School helps us and teaches us socially, but grade school-no way!

Let boys and girls eat in the same room.

More activities involving other grade schools.

Hold more dances, mixers, lock-ins, and all that jazz with other schools. That way, you learn how to meet people-and you could make a new friend.

Have more social things to do. Mix up guys and girls.

Nothing. I was very well prepared for High School socially. I was fully aware of peer pressure and didn’t need as much preparation.

III. SPIRITUAL

1. Do you attend Mass every weekend? (Circle one) YES 19 NO 4

2. In which of the following ministries do you participate either at school or at St. Thomas parish (Check all that apply):

 1 Usher

 3 Donut Ministry

 6 Choir

 2 St. Thomas Community Dinners

 Lector

 13 Youth Ministry (ROC)

 Children’s Liturgy of the Word

 1 Students for Life

 1 Eucharistic Minister

 2 H.O.P.E. Volunteers

 1 Parish Nursery

 1 Peer Ministry

 10 Service Projects (specify): youth group, ROC projects, peer listener, Eagle Scout

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

___4___ Other (specify): Altar serving, challenge group, Ronald McDonald Christmas Drive

3. Indicate how often you use the Bible for any of the following (check all that apply):

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Rarely, if ever
Personal Prayer or Reading	6	4	1	6	5
Liturgy Planning		1		4	15
Bible Study Group	2	1	1	2	14
Class Work	6	5	1	7	3
Other					

4. How prepared do you feel to answer questions in the following areas of your Catholic faith?

	Very Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not at all Prepared
Baptism	15	6	1
Reconciliation	16	6	1
Eucharist	16	6	1
Confirmation	18	5	
Morality & Chastity	13	9	1
Scripture	9	10	3
Doctrine	2	11	9
Church History	5	10	7
Devotions to Mary & the Saints	3	16	4
Mass	17	6	

5. What can St. Thomas do to better prepare its students spiritually for their freshman year in high school?

I think they do a great job at preparation.

Have students participate in reading and helping out with Mass on Friday.

More emphasis on church history and church laws/teachings.

Start class everyday with prayer.

Nothing. I'm not spiritual at all and we learn most of our religion stuff that applies here at CC. I think what you guys do is fine. No assistance needed. There's really nothing spiritual about freshman year. Yes, they teach us in Religion but I think it's more personal what we experience than as a whole.

More spiritual retreats.

Nothing, Spirituality comes from within.

Now it is up to us!

FRESHMAN SURVEY RESULTS(Continued)

Have more religion class than history class.

Specifically cover all of the above topics in a more structured curriculum and create more class or smaller group open-ended discussion or reflection on current topics and the Bible. Better understanding on the Church's workings and history would be helpful. The Morality and Chastity presentations were overall uninformative and incomplete. In 5th grade concrete definitions of intercourse and masturbation would be appropriate and alleviate much confusion eliminating possibly inaccurate interpretations. Our 6th grade presentation applied no Church teachings to sexuality specifically, and did not follow up the 5th grade information. There was no morality or chastity presentation in 7th grade. Mr. Carr's presentation in 8th grade was much more fresh and contained more useful information, without avoiding any tricky topics (masturbation, homosexuality), and by 8th grade everyone has figured out most everything there was to know, but without church teachings or in a religious setting, which is not good. Chastity presentations need to be more coordinated with each other, more informational, and offering only one each year is mostly inadequate, the school should not assume all parents will have supplemental, or religion focused dialogue with their students. Allowing the students to have discussion in 8th grade with the book we were supposed to use, and Mr. Keller rushed us through would be much more meaningful.

Strongly encourage prayer/meditation. Adoration was a great way to start us off. It would be good to keep continuing it.

I think that if the teachers spent a little more time on Religion than other subjects that would help.

Familiarize students with scripture quotes according to various virtues.

A lot of freshmen don't have or use spiritual help.

Stress using the Bible everyday and going to Mass every Sunday.

Try to read the Bible at least three times a week. (Ever since Old Testament class at CC, I've really enjoyed the Bible.) Form a St. Thomas Peer Ministry. This would really form a good bond with students. Make people apply to be a peer minister. Make the teacher sign the slip to miss class if you do it that way, it also could be before school, after school, or during lunch recess. Make sure it's confidential (possibly the comfy room, or one of the rooms in the Ministry Center). This is just an idea. The only problem is that people may not leave their conversations in the room. They must keep what they say in the room.

Talk about the Church's history and scripture.

Take a little more class time for it, but really it's something you have to want to learn.