

# GET MIDDLE SCHOOL READY



- **Learning:** How your brain works and how it learns and remembers information best.
- **Organization:** How to be more organized and ready for additional responsibilities.
- **Communication:** How to be assertive in communicating with teachers and friends.
- **Character:** How to make good choices and be a student of good character.

# SET GOALS



Middle School is a time for growth, more responsibilities, new opportunities and making choices. Having goals in mind can help you stay focused this year. Goals can help you know what to say “yes” to and what to say “no” to. Goals can help you make good choices and stay on track for what you want to accomplish for yourself throughout this year as well as throughout your life. My advice is to always pray before setting goals and let God be your guide.

1. What are 2 goals you want to accomplish this year?

1.

2.

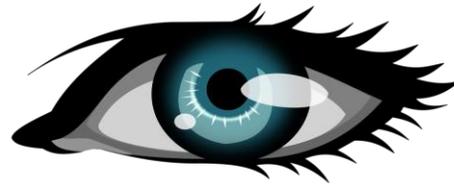
2. What career or job interests you for your future?

## LEARNING STYLES

Middle School is about learning...lots and lots of learning. Why not learn how to learn *your* very best? There are 3 ways that your brain remembers information. You can learn information in all 3 ways, but most people have 1 or 2 ways that their brain remembers information the best. Once you know this information about yourself, you will have a better understanding about how you need to study and what methods you need to use in your classes to get the information into your brain so you actually remember it.

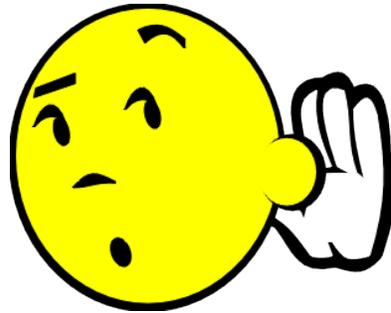
### Visual

*What you see*



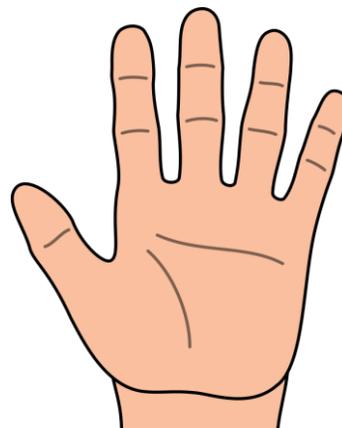
### Auditory

*What you hear*



### Kinesthetic

*What you do*



# WHAT IS YOUR LEARNING STYLE?

Directions: Circle the answer you feel most of the time. **You may circle more than one answer.**

1. When I learn something new, I will remember it best when:
  - V: watching a how-to video.
  - A: listening to a podcast or lecture.
  - K: figuring it out for myself.
  
2. If I were asked to describe an object to someone, I would enjoy:
  - V: looking at the object I was describing and talking for only a short time.
  - A: using a lot of details and talking for a long time.
  - K: using hand-gestures and moving around while talking.
  
3. When asked to spell something:
  - V: I see it in my mind when I spell it.
  - A: I remember the sounds of the letters in my head.
  - K: I have to write it down or “write it” in the air.
  
4. When reading a book:
  - V: I imagine the characters and scenery in my mind.
  - A: I read out loud and hear the words in my head.
  - K: I find myself moving along with what’s happening and can’t sit still.
  
5. I like it when teachers:
  - V: have pictures or a video to go along with the lesson.
  - A: tell stories to go along with a lesson.
  - K: have a hands-on activity to go along with a lesson.
  
6. I get distracted when I’m studying if:
  - V: there is too much of a mess around me.
  - A: there is too much noise around me.
  - K: if I have to sit still for too long.
  
7. When trying to remember someone, it’s easier for me to remember:
  - V: their face but not their name.
  - A: their name but not their face.
  - K: where we met and what we were doing but not their name or face.
  
8. When given directions on how to put something together, I would:
  - V: read the directions silently, try to visualize how the parts would go together and wish there had been a picture.
  - A: read the directions out loud and talk myself through it as I put each part together.
  - K: try to put the parts together first and read the directions if I needed to.

9. When learning math, it helps me to:

V: see pictures to count.

A: count out loud.

K: use my fingers to count or use objects.

10. While I'm waiting, I would enjoy:

V: looking at a book or magazine or just looking around the room.

A: talk or listen to others talking.

K: walk around, move/shake my feet, or fidget with something in my hands.

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Scoring: For each letter, add up your total number and write it below.

**VISUAL**

**AUDITORY**

**KINESTHETIC**

V=\_\_\_\_\_

A=\_\_\_\_\_

K=\_\_\_\_\_

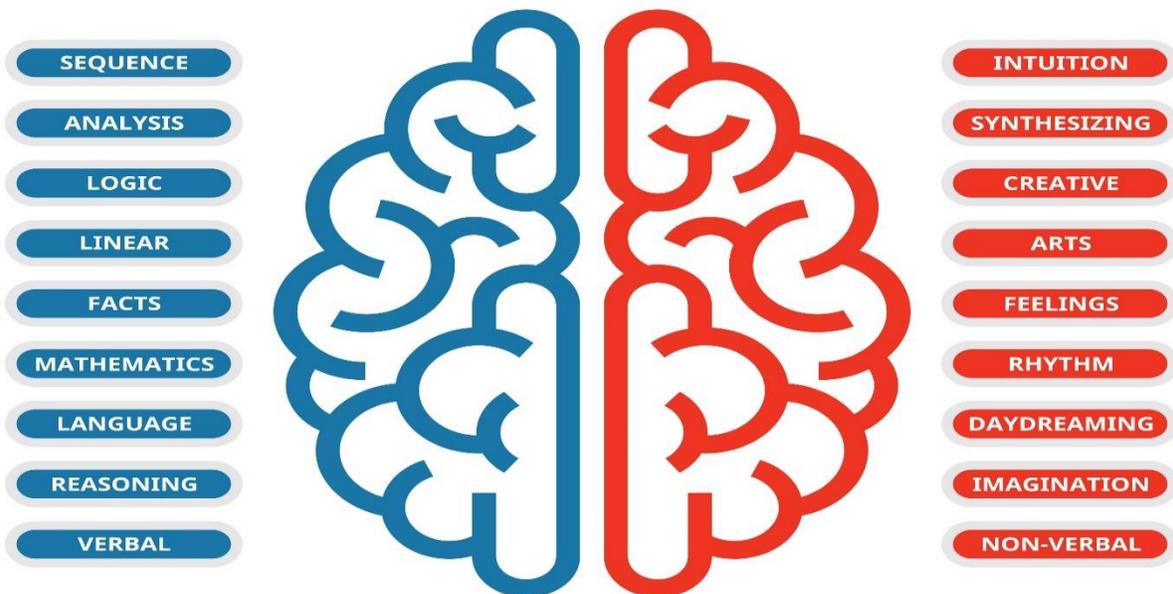
What is your strongest learning style? \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Learning Style</b>            | <b>VISUAL</b>   | <b>AUDITORY</b>   | <b>KINESTHETIC</b>   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Best Study Environment</b>    | Neat, organized   | Quiet, no music or TV   | Has order, allows for movement   |
| <b>Key Memorizing Strategies</b> | Draw pictures, use colors or shapes, write down information | Talk out loud, record yourself saying the information and listen to it over and over. | Move, take frequent breaks—study, stop and move, study, stop and move. |
| <b>Fun idea for learning</b>     | Create picture flashcards!                                  | Create a song or rhyme!   | Create a dance or body movements!                                      |

## RIGHT BRAIN VS. LEFT BRAIN

Middle School is about understanding more about yourself and how God created you to be. Different sides of your brain are “in charge” of different parts of learning, remembering, organizing, thinking and creating. Most people have a side of their brain that is dominant. That means that you tend to use the skills and ways of thinking from that side of your brain more often than the other side. Middle school is a great opportunity to work on using both sides of your brain and challenging yourself to find more of a balance in your brain. Knowing which side of the brain you use the most will help you know what will come easier for you in school and what you will need to work a little harder at doing. Read the descriptions for each side below. Which side of your brain do you use the most?

### LEFT BRAIN RIGHT



# ARE YOU RIGHT-BRAINED OR LEFT-BRAINED?

Directions: Circle the statements that best describes you most of the time.

1. At home, my room is:
  - L: organized. My drawers and closets are neat and tidy.
  - R: messy. I only clean up when I see a need or I have the time.
  
2. When starting something new:
  - L: I like using the "tried and true" method.
  - R: I like creating new methods.
  
3. When I build something or make something:
  - L: I follow directions carefully—I like to make it exactly as it is supposed to be.
  - R: I like to do it my way—making my own creation.
  
4. When working on several projects:
  - L: I complete one project at a time.
  - R: I like to start many different projects, but do not like to finish them.
  
5. When I am asked to write a report on a subject:
  - L: I am systematic. I research, outline, and organize my thoughts.
  - R: I am random. I work in many different directions.
  
6. When asked to come up with a new idea:
  - L: I get nervous. I want to do it right. I need help. I want an idea from a book or something that is guaranteed to work.
  - R: I love the challenge and enjoy producing a unique project off the top of my head.
  
7. I would rather:
  - L: write words.
  - R: draw pictures.
  
8. I like classes that are:
  - L: more structured.
  - R: more unstructured.
  
9. I often:
  - L: pay attention to the time and know what needs to happen next.
  - R: lose track of the time and get involved in what I'm doing.
  
10. I would rather:
  - L: work by myself.
  - R: work in a group.

11. I prefer:  
L: math class.  
R: art class.
12. I make decisions based on:  
L: facts.  
R: feelings.
13. For a science project, I would rather:  
L: do the experiment.  
R: create the display board.
14. I like to:  
L: sort things in a logical order.  
R: throw things together in any order.
15. When I study, I:  
L: think through the problem in front of me.  
R: I daydream about something else.

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Scoring: For each letter, add up your total number and write it below.

**RIGHT BRAIN**

**LEFT BRAIN**

R=\_\_\_\_\_

L=\_\_\_\_\_

What is your brain dominance? \_\_\_\_\_

## How to excel using your brain dominance...

| <b>LEFT BRAIN</b>   | <b>RIGHT BRAIN</b>   |
|---|--|
| Use auditory learning style strategies: repetition, saying things out loud, etc.              | Use visual and kinesthetic learning style strategies: drawing pictures, moving, etc.                                 |
| Work alone on projects if possible or volunteer to be in charge of the group so you can lead. | Work in groups on projects if possible but stay focused on finishing the project and set small goals to complete it. |
| You have a lot of opinions. Learn to share your opinions while respecting others.             | Organize your thoughts and make checklists.  |
| Challenge yourself to be more creative when needed. Learn new ideas from creative people.     | Challenge yourself to be more structured when needed. Learn new ideas from more organized people.                    |

# ORGANIZATION

Middle School is about learning to be more organized. As you gain more responsibilities, it's a great idea to gain more organizational skills. Organization isn't just a middle school skill though. It's a life skill. Try some of these strategies to help keep you more organized this year.

## 1. DEVELOP A ROUTINE:



Get into a groove of homework time, study time, reading time, and even play time, family time, and exercise or activity time. Find a good balance. At the same time every day, there should be time for study time—even if you don't have homework, you can read, work on an upcoming project or just get yourself organized and clean out folders. Work in the same study place and be sure to eliminate distractions.

## 2. USE CHECKLISTS:



Have a checklist for schoolwork, chores, and even a checklist by the door you exit from in the morning with what you need for that day. Checking things off your list can feel great.

## 3. COMMUNICATE:



Touch base with your family about upcoming tests, quizzes, homework assignments and projects each day. Talk to the teacher about deadlines and expectations. Study together. Work as a team. You can even write important assignments on the family calendar.

## 4. PLAN AHEAD:



Get things ready for school the night before. Put homework assignments in their proper place, lay out clothes, and reset for the next day. You can even make a list of what you need to do the next day. Try writing 1 or 2 goals that you want to accomplish for the next day before you go to bed at night.

# COMMUNICATION STYLES

Middle School is about becoming a better communicator, and learning how to respect yourself and others in how you talk and in how you behave. There are 4 main types of communication styles: Passive, Aggressive, Passive/Aggressive, and Assertive. Becoming more assertive is the goal. If everyone learned to be more of an Assertive communicator, the world would be a better place. Bullying would end. Kids would feel more confident. And everyone would respect themselves and others. Doesn't that sound great? The good news? Everyone can learn to be an Assertive communicator. In middle school and for the rest of your life, learning to speak your mind in a kind and respectful way while valuing yourself as well as others is a valuable tool to learn.

## PASSIVE

A **Passive** communicator would say, "Other people are more important than me."  
Everyone else wins.



## AGGRESSIVE

An **Aggressive** communicator would say, "I am more important than anyone else."  
I win.



## PASSIVE/AGGRESSIVE

A **Passive/Aggressive** communicator would say, "I am not important and neither is anyone else."  
No one wins.



## ASSERTIVE

An **Assertive** communicator would say, "I am important and so is everyone else."  
Everyone wins.

# WHAT COMMUNICATION STYLE ARE YOU?

Directions: Circle the answer that describes how you communicate most often.

P=Passive, Ag=Aggressive, P/A=Passive Aggressive, and As: Assertive

1. My friends would call me:

- P: shy
- Ag: loud
- P/A: sarcastic
- As: confident

2. I usually:

- P: don't share my opinions even though I have them.
- Ag: share my opinions in a demanding way.
- P/A: have opinions but don't share them and then become angry towards everyone involved.
- As: have opinions and share them with others while being open and respectful to the opinions of others.

3. I feel:

- P: that the opinions of others matter more than my own.
- Ag: that my opinions matter more than the opinions of others.
- P/A: that I will follow the opinions and ideas of others but talk badly about them behind their backs.
- As: that my needs are important and so are the needs of others.

4. When walking down the hallway:

- P: I hide my face in my books.
- Ag: I push people and yell at them to get out of my way.
- P/A: I push someone and then blame it on someone else.
- As: I smile and say "hi" to others and respect other people's space.

5. I often:

- P: ignore problems.
- Ag: cause problems.
- P/A: hide problems.
- As: solve problems.

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Scoring: For each letter, add up your total number and write it below.

**PASSIVE**

**AGGRESSIVE**

**PASSIVE/AGGRESSIVE**

**ASSERTIVE**

P=\_\_\_\_\_ Ag=\_\_\_\_\_ P/A=\_\_\_\_\_ As=\_\_\_\_\_

What communication style do you use the most? \_\_\_\_\_

**NOW PRACTICE:** How **should** you communicate in each situation below? Circle the Assertive communication method and see if you can identify the other methods of communication too.

1. In class:

- A. I'm too afraid to raise my hand even though I know the answer.
- B. I shout the answer because I always know them and no one else ever does.
- C. I know the answer but never participate and then get angry at other people who do.
- D. I raise my hand when I know the answer and give others the opportunity to do the same.

2. I am:

- A. bossy and intimidating towards others.
- B. afraid to state what I really feel because I don't want others to judge me.
- C. understanding of my limits and I don't allow anyone to push me beyond them.
- D. two-faced: I come across as pleasant and friendly, but actually I am very angry and resentful.

3. You got a bad grade on a test and you're not sure why. What do you do?

- A. You ask the teacher to talk after class. You respectfully explain your confusion about your grade and ask what you can do differently next time.
- B. You get angry at the teacher and shout how horrible he/she is.
- C. You don't say anything but you talk badly about the teacher behind his/her back.
- D. You don't say anything. It's not a big deal.

4. Someone cuts in front of you in line...

- A. Say nothing, but glare at them and "accidentally" push them a little.
- B. Say nothing and do nothing.
- C. Assume they didn't know you were in line; gently explain that you waiting before them.
- D. Yell at them and shout for them to return to their place.

5. Someone called you a bad name...

- A. You believe what they say and feel badly about yourself.
- B. You call them a bad name right back.
- C. You walk away and then write them a mean, anonymous note.
- D. You gently tell them that you don't appreciate nor deserve being called that name and walk away.

How did you do? CHECK YOUR ANSWERS: The Assertive communication answers are: 1. D, 2. C, 3. A, 4. C, 5. D

In what ways can you be more assertive at home and at school this year?

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## 4 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION REVIEW

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Passive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shy</li> <li>▪ Don't share opinions even though they have them.</li> <li>▪ Feel the opinions of matter more than their own.</li> <li>▪ Afraid to state what they feel because others will judge them.</li> </ul> <p>“OTHER PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ME.”<br/> “PEOPLE NEVER THINK OF MY FEELINGS.”<br/> EVERYONE ELSE WINS.</p> | <p><b>Passive-Aggressive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sarcastic</li> <li>▪ Has opinions but doesn't share them and then becomes resentful towards everyone involved.</li> <li>▪ Follows the opinions and ideas of others but talks badly about them or even sabotages their success.</li> <li>▪ Can be two-faced: comes across as pleasant, but actually is very angry and resentful.</li> </ul> <p>“I DO NOT THINK OF MY FEELINGS NOR THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS.”<br/> NO ONE IS GOING TO WIN.</p> |
| <p><b>Aggressive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Loud.</li> <li>▪ Shares opinions in a demanding, abrasive way.</li> <li>▪ Feels their opinions matter more than the opinions of others.</li> <li>▪ Often intimidates and bullies others.</li> </ul> <p>“I RARELY CONSIDER THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS.”<br/> I WIN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!</p>  | <p><b>***Assertive***</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Confident</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Has opinions and shares them with others while being open and respectful to the opinions of others.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Understands their needs are important and so are the needs of others.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Knows their limits and doesn't allow being pushed beyond them.</b></li> </ul> <p>“I CONSIDER MY FEELINGS AND THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS.”<br/> EVERYONE WINS.</p>                                    |

# COMMUNICATION STYLES GAME

Which cartoon character uses each of these communication styles? You can cut and past them below.

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Passive</b>    | <b>Passive-Aggressive</b> |
| <b>Aggressive</b> | <b>Assertive</b>          |



TOM



OLAF



SCAR



DORA



GRU



HOPPER



SID



WORD GIRL



SULLY



PURPLE  
MINIONS

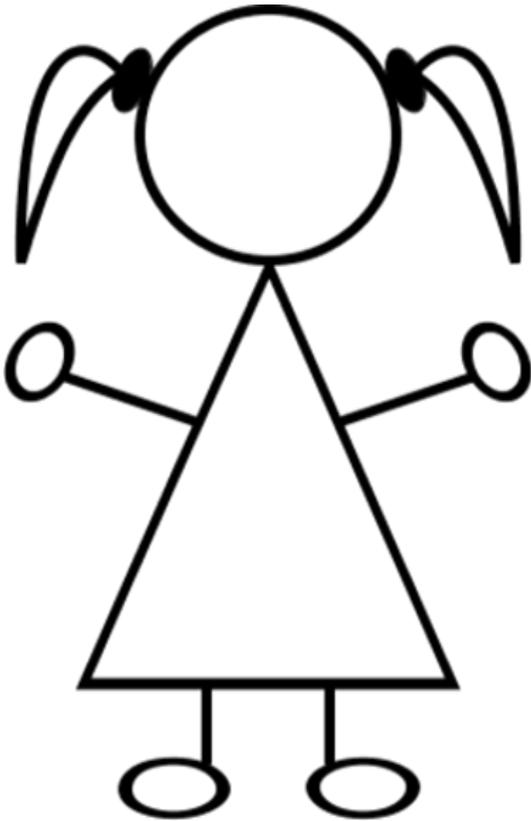


ANNA



OH

# Assert Like GURT



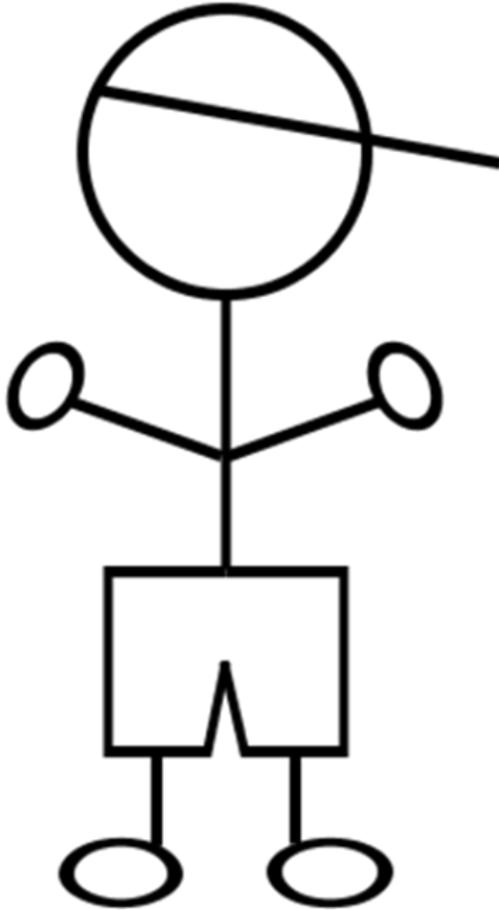
**G**ain confidence or **G**et a **G**rip

**U**nderstand the other person

**R**espect yourself and others with words and...

**T**one

# Assert Like BURT



**B** e **B**rave or take a **B**ig **B**reath

**U** nderstand the other person

**R** espect yourself and others with words and...

**T** one

## CHARACTER

In Middle School, having goals are important, learning is important, organization is important, assertive communication is important, but the most important part? Being a student of good character.

The choices you make for yourself can impact the rest of your life.

To help me make good choices, the most important thing I do is pray and say “Is this God’s best for me?” You can do the same, as well as ask yourself these three questions?



1. What are my goals?
2. What are the consequences of my actions?
3. Is this choice showing kindness and love to myself and to others?

And finally, this is the most powerful question to ask yourself every night:

## How did I show kindness and love today?

I always ask my kids this question right before bedtime and I think it’s a wonderful idea for everyone in the world to do the same. I challenge you to find at least 3-5 things that you can do every day that shows kindness and love. What a great way to show the world God’s love and light. I pray that this is your best year yet.