

## Sixth Grade at Lorien Wood



# THE WATERSHED YEAR

Lorien Wood's Biblical Worldview distinctive informs our belief that God created the world and everything in it, and He created it for good purposes. At each age level, Lorien Wood students and teachers are exploring the varied elements of God's world. By the sixth grade, this exploration takes on a distinct and exciting focus as students engage their minds and bodies in the study of our regional environment.

### The Sixth Grade Watershed Year

Watershed is a unique year at Lorien Wood. Sixth graders break from the Form structure as a grade set apart, embarking on a year-long study of the watershed region surrounding the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. As with each year of instruction at Lorien Wood, the integral curriculum in the Watershed Program blends history, science, literature, art, music, and geography into this regional theme.

### Philosophy behind Watershed

As the word "watershed" implies, this period in a child's life is a crucial developmental point between childhood and adolescence. In this year, children are turning "from" the early dependence of the elementary grades and turning "to" the increasingly independent and complex world of adulthood.

Sixth graders' physical growth causes them to often feel restless and clumsy. Some children have stopped "playing" outside, and many are increasingly drawn to sedentary amusements. They have few avenues, other than organized athletics, to become confident in their own skin and to become aware of both the capacities and limitations of their bodies. They benefit

from encountering challenges both physically and intellectually.

### Areas of focus in Watershed

A significant portion of instructional time in Watershed is spent "in the field" as sixth graders explore and study first-hand the ecology of our local streams and rivers. Through numerous projects, students gain a better understanding of God's design for watersheds and how we can fulfill our call as stewards in cooperation with that design. The curriculum also makes connections between local and national environmental issues both in the past and present. Watershed students study the unique history and culture of our watershed region, and parts of North America, as they survey significant historical events. From an exploration of Native Americans around the Chesapeake, to the rapid growth and development of our modern world, the Watershed curriculum highlights the deep interconnectedness between the land, people, and water.

Watershed students undertake many different challenges throughout the year—from producing a food garden on school grounds, to entering a national wildlife art contest, to raising trout in the classroom for



A "watershed" is the geographic region that drains into a specific body of water. Watershed students directly engage with God's creation to study our local waterways and geography.

release in the spring. Students also engage in challenging topics of discussion, examining viewpoints generally held within the Christian community and the culture at large. Examples of these topics include environmental ethics and creation care; approaches to participation in local, state, and national government; and environmental and social policy issues. Watershed students continue to use the Socratic Seminar method to lay the groundwork for the rigorous explorations of the Journey World History Survey (7th-8th grades).

Continued on reverse

### CLASS ACTIVITIES

- school vegetable garden
- monthly water testing at Wolfrap Creek
- raising brook trout
- map and compass navigation
- nature journaling
- native flora and fauna study
- campus restoration project
- folk music and dance performance and more!

### PLACES WE GO

#### DAY TRIPS

Camp Highroad  
Virginia Arboretum  
Great Falls National Park  
Manassas Battlefield

Huntley Meadows Park  
Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Facility  
Patuxent Research Refuge and other area sites

#### OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Camping in the foothills of the Shenandoah  
Residential Program with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation



For more information about the sixth grade Watershed Year at Lorien Wood, please visit [www.LorienWood.org](http://www.LorienWood.org) or call the school at 703-854-1640.





**W**atershed units highlight the relationships between the land, the people, and the water during our survey of significant events in American history. Each unit title emphasizes a particular theme related to our understanding of place when it completes the “A Place...” statement. Within the framework of this place-based curriculum, students engage complex ideas and apply their understandings during discussions, experiential activities, and culminating projects.

1st TRIMESTER	Unit Title	Historical Timeframe	Focus
	<b>A Place Known</b>	Prehistory – 1600s	Introductory ecology; land and water basics; developing a sense of place; nature study; indigenous people of the Chesapeake region before 1600.
	<b>A Place Discovered</b>	1600s – 1700s	Settlement of Jamestown; native/colonist interactions; early American nature study; settler/wilderness interactions; establishment of agricultural practices in Virginia.
	<b>A Place Transformed</b>	1700s – 1800	Development of North America as an independent country; founding documents; early revolutionary concepts; Virginians becoming Southerners; effects of agriculture on land and water.

2nd TRIMESTER	Unit Title	Historical Timeframe	Focus
	<b>A Place Growing</b>	1800s – 1850s	Westward expansion; developing agricultural practices and new cash crops; Industrial Revolution; the spread of slavery; formation of states.
	<b>A Place Torn</b>	1850 – 1880s	Conditions leading up to the American Civil War; using natural resources; agricultural advancements; abolition of slavery; and Reconstruction.
<b>A Place Remade</b>	1880s – 1940s	Effects of urbanization; creation of National Parks; Conservation movements; prominent American naturalists; Appalachian culture; the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression.	

3rd TRIMESTER	Unit Title	Historical Timeframe	Focus
	<b>A Place Interconnected</b>	1940s – 21st Century	Conservation movements; contemporary environmental issues in the Chesapeake Bay; waterman culture; and growing awareness of the interconnectedness of environmental and social issues of the 20th century.
	<b>A Place With You</b>	Present Day	You (the student) in Virginia, as a citizen; personal watershed moments; the citizen’s role in modern Virginia; complex ecological concepts; discernment and preparation for campus restoration project.
<b>A Place Restored</b>	Present Day	History of restoration efforts in the U.S.; responding to God’s call as stewards in modern times; our role in the restoration of environments and relationships; culminating with a campus restoration project .	

### Sample Unit Literature

*The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien • *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor  
*My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George • *Rascal* by Sterling North  
*Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt • *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse  
*The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway • *Tangier Island* by Rick Parks

