



# Culture Building

## The Potter's House School



### **5 Distinctives about Our Culture Building**

#### **The Distinctive of Prayer** “Pray without ceasing”

Prayer has been a foundation at The Potter's House since our beginning. Prayer begins our day and continues throughout in natural interactions in the classroom, office and hallways.

#### **Practices of Prayer**

We meet as a staff for worship and prayer each school day. Each classroom begins their day with prayer. Throughout the school year, students and faculty pray in a variety of settings.

#### **The Distinctive of Discipleship** “Follow me as I follow Christ”

The cross is at the center of our logo. We desire their primary identity to be followers of Jesus as they learn to be writers, readers, scientists and mathematicians.

#### **Practices of Discipleship**

Weekly Discipleship class for grades 4-8 focuses on Scripture study, small group mentoring and service. Daily Discipleship work happens K-8. Classroom and administrative discipline situations are done with discipling and formation in mind. Anchor Worship weaves the core values of SERVE regularly into the gathering.

#### **The Distinctive of Peace** “Blessed are the peacemakers”

We seek a consistent calm that sets the tone for engaged learning.

#### **Practices of Peace**

We prioritize teacher preparation with meaningful work to begin class independently; We value transitioning students in a quiet and orderly fashion. Teachers use common language and calm tone with students.

#### **The Distinctive of Hospitality** “This is our house”

We notice, make room for and honor students, parents and visitors when they enter our building.

#### **Practices of Hospitality**

Each student is welcomed with a handshake, a greeting by name and an exhortation for the day; teachers engage students each day with welcome and affirmation; Staff and student mindset is that every day is an “open house” and we are all prepared to welcome visitors.

#### **The Distinctive of Clean** “Leave it better than you found it”

Staff and students have a shared responsibility for the upkeep of our grounds.

#### **Practices of Clean**

Classrooms have student jobs focused on maintenance and upkeep; Students, staff and parents serve with trash collection and vacuuming; School colors and dress code helps build a focus on learning.

### **Some Exhortations We Remember For Culture Building**

“Every successful urban school that we have seen has an intentional and consistent culture.”

“Be firm, be consistent, and love kids more than they can imagine.”

“How do you take a cross section of urban kids and get them to and through college? High Expectations. High Level of Support.”

“I can’t let you get away with anything less than your best.”

“What parents want for their kids is what donors want to see and is what makes for good learning for kids. “

“The best classroom management is good planning”

### **Some Resources We Found Helpful in Culture Building**

Harry and Rosemary Wong’s *The First Days of School*. Unit C Classroom Management is particularly useful.

Flip Flippen’s *Capturing Kids’ Hearts*. Overall, this book helps us manage a classroom out of relationship. The Excel teaching model, the classroom social contract and the four questions are employed throughout our school in discipline conversation.

Sandey Corlette’s *The Young Peacemaker*-The Five A’s and the Slippery Slope for conflict resolution have proven effective over time.

Rafe Esquith’s *Teach Like Your Hair’s on Fire*. He brings Kohlberg’s levels of morality into classroom practice.

Ron Clark’s *The Essential 55*. Teachers have incorporated a number of his classroom rules into their protocols and procedures.