



Hogwarts Trip Itinerary
Friday, Nov. 10 & Saturday, Nov. 11

We're so excited you're coming to Harry Potter Wizarding World, which extends across two parks and is connected by the Hogwarts Express. We will begin at Universal's Islands of Adventure to explore Hogsmeade and Hogwarts. There, we will ride the newest roller coaster in the wizarding world and explore Hogwarts Castle. After lunch, we'll take the Hogwarts Express over to Universal Studios' Diagon Alley. There, we will ride Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts first, then visit the shops. Don't worry if you don't get candy, a wand, robes, or butterbeer in Hogsmeade. All of these products are sold in Diagon Alley (and at the entrance to Universal Studios).

Before you leave home: Download the [Universal Studio Resort app](#) where you can check on show times, ride lines, and order lunch. Click on the Map > View Park Maps > Universal Islands of Adventure > hit the Search icon in the lower right side of the screen, then start typing in part of the name of the ride (Hagrid or Flight or Gringott), the restaurant (Broomsticks), or the name of the show (Triwizard or Frog), then click on the link.

To do before Saturday:

Bring something to eat for breakfast unless you want to get up very early to eat out. We want to be at the park when it opens at 8am.

Use the Universal Studio Resort app to "mobile order" your lunch at the [Three Broomsticks](#) and check out. They won't prepare your food until you click "prepare your order" in the app when you're ready to eat.

Friday, Nov. 10

leave for Orlando after school

check into Universal Endless Summer Resort – Surfside Inn and Suites,
7000 International Blvd., Orlando, FL (407-503-7000; check-in after
4pm; reserved under Elise Whitley)

Dinner on your own; explore the resort's water park

Saturday, Nov. 11

6am - wake-up, pack up, check out and leave luggage in cars
Breakfast on your own

7am - take the hotel shuttle to park for early admission at 8am

Ride Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure (the line for this ride can be 75-90 min in the morning, so go straight there if you want to ride it)

or

if you want a gentler roller coaster or are not 48" tall, ride the Flight of the Hippogriff (riders 36-48" must ride with an adult; ~15 min wait)

10:30am – meet up outside Honeyduke's sweet shop

ride Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey at Hogwarts castle

(it's worth waiting in line to see inside the castle, then you can exit before the ride)

or

if you are not 48" tall, there is more to do in Hogsmeade: Ollivander's wand shop, Honeyduke's, try butter beer, or watch the Triwizard Spirit Rally at 11am/Frog Choir at 11:30

12:00 - gather at The Three Broomsticks for lunch

If you arrive early, try to save tables. We'll need 17 seats.

After lunch, take the Hogwarts Express over to Diagon Alley

Go straight to ride Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts (expect a long wait—over an hour, but there is stuff to see in line; 42" height minimum; 42-48" must be accompanied)

or

Buy or use an interactive wand and map to practice spells, visit Knockturn Alley,

or

the Weasley brothers' joke shop, the Magical Menagerie, Madam Malkin's to buy souvenirs.

3:00pm – meet up at Florian Fortescue's ice cream parlor near Gringotts

We eat our ice cream on the stairs by the bank and take a group photo. That will be our last activity together, but we can wander around together. Just outside Diagon Alley, remember to stop by the Knight Bus and the Order of the Phoenix HQ.

The parks close at 7pm. Most likely everyone will be leaving at a different time. It gets crowded after closing time, so some may want to leave early to take the shuttle back to the hotel and drive home.

If you are returning home on Saturday night, Gina & Mike White will look forward to seeing you at 9am Sunday morning at the Truthseekers' class.

However you travel home—by enchanted car, hippogriff, broom, thestral, floo powder, portkey or apparate—keep an eye out for Death eaters and have a safe trip back.



November 10, 2023

Dear First Year Students,

Congratulations on finishing St. Thomas' special course on "Learning Faith with Harry Potter"! This epic story echoes our Christian faith. In the first class, we learned about the importance of gifts, like Harry's boldness and courage and willingness to listen to his loyal friends, and to love them. In Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Ron and Hermione's gifts helped Harry prevent Voldemort from getting the Sorcerer's Stone — something Harry could not have done by himself.



Hermione used her book learning and cleverness to save Ron & Harry.

Hermione watched in horror as the two boys fought to pull the plant off them, but the more they strained against it, the tighter and faster the plant wound around them.

"Stop moving!" Hermione ordered them. "I know what this is -- it's Devil's Snare!"...

"Devil's Snare, Devil's Snare... what did Professor Sprout say? -- it likes the dark and the damp---"

"So light a fire!" Harry choked...

"Oh, right!" said Hermione, and she whipped out her wand, waved it, muttered something, and sent a jet of bluebell... In a matter of seconds, the two boys felt it loosening its grip as it cringed away from the light and warmth. Wriggling and flailing, it unraveled itself from their bodies, and they were able to pull free.

"Lucky you pay attention in Herbology, Hermione," said Harry as he joined her by the wall, wiping sweat off his face.



Ron was loyal, willing to sacrifice himself for his friends.

"Yes..." said Ron softly, "it's the only way... I've got to be taken."

"NO!" Harry and Hermione shouted.

"That's chess!" snapped Ron. "You've got to make some sacrifices! I take one step forward and she'll take me--that leaves you free to checkmate the king, Harry!"

"But--"

"Do you want to stop Snape or not?"

"Ron--"

"Look, if you don't hurry up, he'll already have the Stone!"

There was nothing else for it.

God has given you gifts which make it possible for you to do more with others than they or you could accomplish alone. What are your gifts? What gifts do you see in those around you?



In the second class, we watched Neville Longbottom's story. When he was little, he was accident-prone and forgetful, afraid of strict grown-ups like his grandmother and Professor Snape. Draco bullied Neville by stealing his Rememberall, which Harry got back for him.

By the end of the series, Neville was transformed. He became an unlikely hero by working hard at school and mastering spells in Defense Against the Dark Arts practice, and by joining Dumbledore's Army to finish his parents' work. Neville stood up to his friends when they were about to break the rules, and he stood up to a boggart after it shaped itself into the intimidating Professor Snape. SPOILER ALERT: At the end of the last book, Neville stood up to Voldemort. Without Neville, Harry could not have defeated Voldemort.

The little story in the first book about the three first-years defeating a mountain troll is retold on an epic scale when all the Hogwarts professors and students together defeat Voldemort, who wanted power: "There is no good or evil. There is only power...and those too weak to seek it."

Jesus was also an unlikely hero. He was not rich or famous. He saved people, not by defeating their enemies in battle, but by healing them and by teaching them how to live. Jesus taught us that love can overcome even death. He showed us that an intact soul has the power to defeat death. Souls are made whole through goodness and love. Jesus taught us how to be good by loving God and each other.

We hope you enjoyed our time together. We will be hosting a 20-hour Harry Potter movie marathon and sleepover at the church, starting at 4pm on Tuesday, Jan. 2, in the parish hall. If you stay for the full marathon, it will end at noon on Wednesday, Jan. 3. We will not break between films. The movies get darker and scarier, so if you'd like to go home on Tuesday after the first or second film, you may! Please do dress up, bring your favorite movie snack or maybe something that the House elves might serve up at Hogwarts.

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Anne Hartley



November 10, 2023

Dear Fifth Year Students,

Congratulations on completing St. Thomas' special course on "Learning Faith with Harry Potter"! Early on, we made pouches, like the one that Hagrid gave to Harry on his 17th birthday. In his, Harry carried the Marauder's Map, which reminded him of Hogwarts, his home, and of his father and godfather. He carried the snitch that Dumbledore gave him. Most of his pouch items were passed down to Harry or given to him. Harry carried his broken wand also, which he was later able to repair.¹ Harry hoped that the things he loved would be repaired, especially that he would see his parents, Sirius, and Dumbledore again.

In class, many of you shared things that bring you love or hope. These are things you care about deeply—symbols of God, reminders of beloved pets or gifts from family members and friends. Thank you for sharing them.

When Harry became worried that he might be bad, like Voldemort, Dumbledore explained that Harry and Voldemort's differences were more important than their similarities. Harry's ability to love, his pure heart, and his untarnished and intact soul were the reasons why Harry would never become like Voldemort or be killed by him.

"You are protected, in short, by your ability to love!" said Dumbledore loudly. "The only protection that can possibly work against the lure of power like Voldemort's! In spite of all the temptation you have endured, all the suffering, you remain pure of heart, just as pure as you were at the age of eleven, when you stared into a mirror that reflected your heart's desire, and it showed you only the way to thwart Lord Voldemort, and not immortality or riches. Harry, have you any idea how few wizards could have seen what you saw in that mirror? Voldemort should have known then what he was dealing with, but he did not! But he knows it now. You have flitted into Lord Voldemort's mind without damage to yourself, but he cannot possess you without enduring mortal agony, as he discovered in the Ministry. I do not think he understands why, Harry, but then, he was in such a hurry to mutilate his own soul, he never paused to understand the incomparable power of a soul that is untarnished and whole."

- J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter & the Half-Blood Prince

Voldemort never knew love, so his heart was hard, and he split his soul into pieces by murdering people, even family and his followers. Breaking a commandment stains and injures a person's soul (read the ten commandments in the book of Exodus, Ch. 20).

¹ When Harry got the elder wand, he used it to repair his own broken wand, then he destroyed

Harry Potter's story teaches us that the ability to love protects us from evil. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for God to "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." When we love God, the source of all love and goodness, and all living things, our souls are "untarnished and whole," and our lives are saved.



In the first class, we talked about Dementors — dark, gliding creatures which suck every good feeling, every happy memory out of a person. Dementors feed on human happiness and cause despair. The "Dementor's kiss" leaves a person without a soul, like an empty shell. The only defense against Dementors is the Patronus Charm. A wand-bearer produces the patronus by concentrating on a single, happy memory, then says, "*Expecto Patronum!*" *Expecto* means "I wait for" and *patronum* means patron, advocate, defender, or protector. If the memory is strong enough, a shining silver, ghost-like animal guardian or shield emerges from the wand, which repels Dementors. Harry's patronus was a stag, like his father's patronus.

What happy memories do you have that could protect you from soul-emptying or soul-injuring experiences? What are the sources of love and joy in your life? Do you know that talking to God in prayer, being spiritually fed at communion, and coming together in a loving, supportive community will also strengthen your soul?

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Starting in January, the Truthseekers class' focus will shift to apologetics. Gina and Mike have been writing down your big questions for the group to explore together. They are Harry Potter fans, too, so bring any remaining questions you have to these classes.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Mother Anne" followed by a small cross symbol.

Mother Anne