

# *The* MANUAL TO

# MIDDLE SCHOOL



*The*  
**"DO THIS, NOT THAT"**  
Survival Guide for Guys

**JONATHAN CATHERMAN**

*and sons Reed and Cole*

## 100 DO'S and DON'TS for navigating middle school

By the time you left your elementary school, you knew the ropes. You were the oldest, the smartest, the top dog. But the minute you enter middle school, everything changes. You have more teachers and harder classes. Your friendships change. And suddenly the girls you thought you knew are acting like totally different people! How do you know what's expected of you now? And how do you keep from embarrassing yourself as you figure it all out?

With insight from three guys who have been there, *The Manual to Middle School* is your "Do This, Not That" guide to nearly everything middle school can throw your way, including

**lockers • bullies • test taking • cell phone use  
homework • gossip • leadership  
respect • sports • and more**

With real-life hacks, humorous illustrations, and tons of true survival stories, Jonathan Catherman and his sons, Reed and Cole, will get you through middle school like a pro.



**JONATHAN CATHERMAN** is the author of the best-selling *The Manual to Manhood* and is a leading education trainer committed to assisting young men in the making to experience success and significance as they mature into manhood and lifelong leadership.

Middle school master **Reed Catherman** is a musician and aspiring stage performer who is committed to earning good grades, building quality relationships, and developing his talents.

Middle school survivor **Cole Catherman** is an explorer, Boy Scout, and ambitious young engineer who brings fresh insight into the concerns and questions guys have about moving up to middle school.

The Cathermans live in North Carolina. Learn more at [www.jonathancatherman.com](http://www.jonathancatherman.com).

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# Introduction

## Middle School Madness

Congratulations you've made it to middle school! Gone are the elementary days of line leader's bathroom buddies and running from girls infected with a sure fatal case of the cooties. Ahead of you are the middle school ways of changing classes, herd-like hallways, lockers, homeroom, studying, clubs, sports, dances, parties and yes.... girls.

Maybe you're one of those guys who thinks he is totally prepared for middle school. Umm, you're not. Could be you're question if you even have a snowballs chance in August of surviving. Yeah, you will. No matter how you see yourself right now it's best to learn this fact. From the dawn of time guys have made it through similar coming-of-age stages in life. This just happens to be your first really big one.

Back in ancient history, guys about your age might have set out into the wilderness on a solo walkabout to prove themselves. Consider this; the original *Survival Man* series was exactly that. Can a young man-in-the-making survive in the wild, kill a beast with sharp teeth, fashion clothes from hide, carve weapons from the bones, receive some spirit name and then return home to take a wife? As cool as this may sound, let's face the facts. Most middle school guys today wouldn't last an hour under those conditions. Worse than the dangers of death by wild animal, there was no Wi-Fi way back then. The middle school jungle you were about to enter is totally wired in ruled by class schedules, bells, test, homework, hormones, cliques, jocks, geeks, and a few bullies. As wild as this may sound, survival is pretty much guarantee. Want proof? It's called high school.

Your family may be saying stuff like "You're growing up so fast" or "Why can't you stay my little boy just a little longer?" They know that that's impossible and you don't really want to keep the baby face you had back in elementary school. Nope, you're moving up to middle school, and to be totally truthful, it's not going to be all fun and games. At the same time, you don't want to resist the advancement. If you try to avoid the changes and challenges ahead, you'll hear family and teachers start to say stuff like "It's time to grow up and start taking responsibility for yourself."

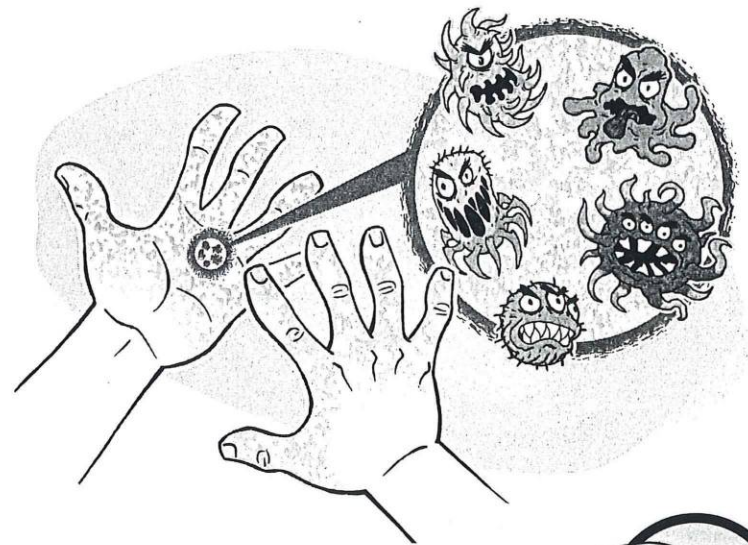
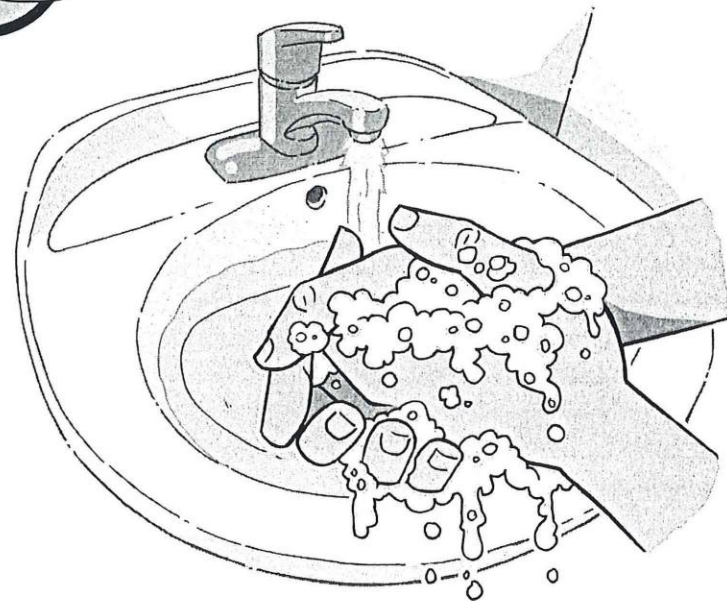
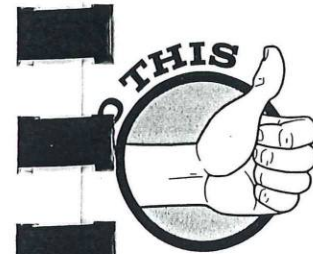
Ready or not, it's best to move into middle school and with some good advice from a few good guys. That is what this book is all about. Good advice from good guys who know what they're talking about. How much do they know you ask? Well, the three guys who wrote this book all made it through middle school alive. All our major organs are still tucked neatly inside our bodies and we graduated up to high school a bit smarter, thanks to our teachers and parents. We wrote this book as a father-son team of middle school survival expert. Reed and Cole have the most recent experience, while Jonathon can say the eighth grade was the best two years of his life. Seriously. You will read more about that fun fact later in the book. To his benefit, Jonathon eventually made out of middle school and went on to become a best author and a professional psychologist with an expertise in teens, student leadership, and character development.

# HAND WASHING

**T**hink about all the stuff you touch at school. Your mitts grip door-knobs, handrails, seats, lockers, desks, hall walls, gym floors, and countless other sticky surfaces. Then with filthy fingers you dig around in your bag for a sharp pencil. One minute later you stick that putrid pencil in your mouth. Without thinking about it, you just chewed on a yellow #2 stick of germs, bacteria, and microscopic viruses. One way to combat self-contamination is to wash your hands a couple times a day at school. For sure wash them after every visit to the bathroom, science class, gym class, and trips through the locker room. Think you can handle it?

## True Story

Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis was the first to wash his hands before operating. He scrubbed in chlorinated limewater to “remove all adhering cadaverous particles.” The year was 1846.<sup>11</sup>

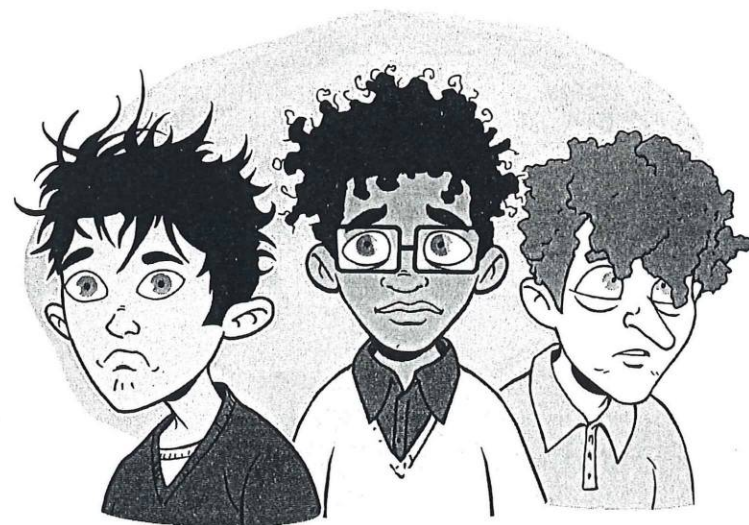
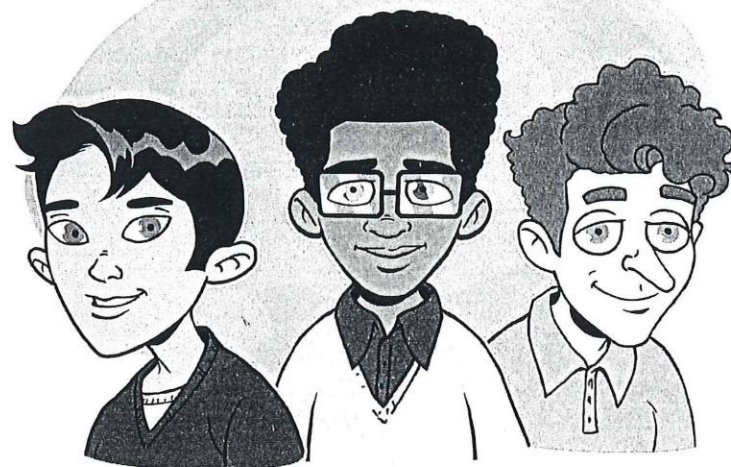
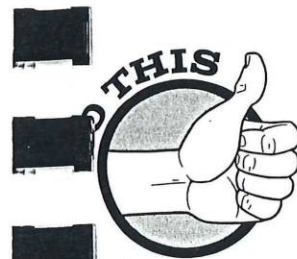


# HAIR

**M**iddle school is filled with unexpected challenges and more than a few frustrations. Finding a hairstyle that works shouldn't add stress to your life. Yet for some guys it does. Either they don't care that their head looks like a dirty mop, or they spend more time than Miss America directing each and every follicle into sculpted perfection. Don't be either of those guys. Instead, work your style until you find a 'do that works for you. Don't be afraid to try a few different looks before deciding on what rests best on your head. Next, find a barber or stylist who knows how to cut your hair the way you like, and stick with them. After that, use good hair products to keep your style looking right. And please, for the sake of the noses that surround you in class, never, never, ever apply fragrance-scented hair gels, pastes, sprays, or other trendy smelling goo to your 'do.

## Strange but True

Hair is strong. A single strand can hold 100 grams or 3 ounces in weight, but combined, the hair of a whole head can hold 12 tons, or the weight of two elephants.<sup>10</sup>



# FACE WASH

**L**et's just face the facts. The zombie apocalypse will never happen, but a true zit invasion is headed your way. So stop obsessing over neutralizing a fictitious herd of grunting corpses and start planning how to defend your face from a puberty-planned pimple occupation. When it comes to fighting the effects of oily skin and acne, your best defense is a good offense. Start your day by washing your face in the shower. Wash again before bonding with your bed at night. Always use a clean washcloth, face soap, and warm water.

## How To . . .

### Wash Your Face

**STEP 1**—Make it routine. Wash every day, morning and evening.

**STEP 2**—Wet a clean washcloth with warm water.

**STEP 3**—Hold the warm washcloth to your face and neck for a minute. This loosens dirt and opens your pores.

**STEP 4**—Apply mild soap to your face and neck. A nonirritating and alcohol-free skin product works best. (You can buy this kind of skin cleanser at most grocery stores or pharmacies. Ask your parent or a store clerk for help picking one that will work for you.)

**STEP 5**—Rinse your skin. Use warm water.

**STEP 6**—Don't touch! Your hands are covered in bacteria, and bacteria love to make zits on your face.

**STEP 7**—Eat and drink better. Avoid greasy foods high in saturated fat, sugar, and salt. Drink lots of water.

