

I was an active and proud member of Notre Dame High School's Speech and Debate Team for my four awesome years in high school (2002-2006). Being the co-captain of my team I enjoyed every minute of it, especially the friendship of my fellow teammates and the opportunity to travel and compete in wonderful tournaments around the country.

Speech and Debate was not only extremely fun and enjoyable but it was tremendously beneficial to me in terms of helping me to develop and sharpen my God-given gifts and talents. Speech and Debate greatly helped me to become a better, more confident and more effective public speaker and communicator. For many professional fields and occupations in the world, public speaking is an absolutely essential skill. In every facet of life, people desire and love good, engaging, and effective public speakers who can grab and keep their attention while communicating successfully. This is why listing Speech and Debate as an extra-curricular activity on college applications is a definite benefit.

And given that I was involved in Original Oratory, Declamation, and Student Congress, Speech and Debate enabled me to learn more about current events and the important public policy issues affecting our country and our world. Speech and Debate helped me to become an informed, responsible, and active citizen. Most importantly, Speech and Debate helped to teach me that all debate is inherently ordered towards the truth—something that all human beings naturally seek with every fiber of our being.

Lastly, as a newly ordained priest in June 2016, I can confidently and proudly say that Speech and Debate helped me to discern my vocation to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church as a priest and it has greatly benefited me given the central importance of public speaking and communication for the Catholic priesthood. I'm so grateful to Mr. Rizzo for his tremendous friendship, leadership, and support over the years and I simply wouldn't be where I am today without his hard work and selfless dedication to us when we were members of the Speech and Debate team. I would enthusiastically encourage any student at ND to join the Speech and Debate team!