

Frequently Asked Questions

What is classical Christian education?

Classical Christian education is a program of study that combines ancient and medieval models of learning and brings them into the 21st century. It focuses on inculcating *wisdom*, *virtue*, and *eloquence* in students by directing their minds toward *truth*, *goodness*, and *beauty*. In order to do so, it uses several tools: piety, gymnastic, “musical” education (or an education in memory and wonder), the liberal arts (the language arts of the trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—and the mathematical arts of the quadrivium—arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music), history, the natural sciences, philosophy, and theology. While not all of these subjects are studied by all students each year, they all comprise the structure of a full curriculum.

Classical Christian education adheres to the belief that all truth is God’s truth, that He is the Creator of *truth*, *goodness*, and *beauty*, and that we are the *imago Dei*—we are made in the image of God. We recognize and celebrate that we are embodied souls, born in wonder and designed to love: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Through this *paideia*, this *curriculum*, we shape hearts, souls, minds, and bodies in the way we believe God intended.

Isn’t the “classical world” pagan? Why are we studying the pagans if we’re Christian?

Yes, most of it was, but the Hebrews also came out of the ancient world, as did, later, Christianity. Beyond this, what we call “classical education” is more realistically “medieval education”—and that era was broadly Christian, at least in Europe, where this style of education developed. Classical education is not at odds with the Judeo-Christian faith; indeed, the vast majority of the great minds of Christian civilization—from St. Augustine to C.S. Lewis—were educated classically.

How is classical Christian education different from modern education?

Modern education was developed in the 19th century in order to be pragmatic and, later, entertaining. It relies on innovation, tends to dismiss “useless” (i.e.—not immediately useful) subjects, and instead tries to train its students to become “productive” members of society. This involves making sure that they fit in (ideologically and intellectually) with the majority and have trained in “marketable skills.” It often teaches, as author and classical educator Martin Cothran writes, “*what to think* and *how to do*.” This is not to say that modern education has no value, but it is not the only way.

Classical education embraces rigorous mental training and looks beyond the instant gratification of “marketable skills” (which often become obsolete as soon as they are learned). Instead of reading just “fun books,” we read “great books” (which, if done well, also happen to be fun). Instead of “learning” modern languages to try to use in restaurants and on vacations (and how well does that work, really?), we spend years studying Latin and Greek, the building blocks not only of many modern languages but also of much thought throughout history, so that *all* our language skills develop, including those that make learning other languages easier. We learn through the liberal arts how to think in an orderly, clear way and how to express ourselves well. The emphasis on the humanities means that we constantly engage and wrestle with the deepest thoughts and most influential ideas. In the end, a classical Christian education produces the opposite of the progressive one. Instead of being trained in “*what to think* and *how to do*,” the classically educated Christian has learned “*how to think* and *what to do*”: that is, *wisdom* and *virtue*.

Are Latin, logic, etc., really required courses? Can’t we just take a “regular” curriculum?

As this is a classical academy, the classical languages and subjects are non-negotiable. This is who we are, and to lose these would fundamentally alter our program. As well, classical studies are quite rigorous enough without additional “elective” classes to distract from them. Finally, most “elective” classes are not particularly academic and are better suited for clubs and extracurricular activities, which we encourage.

What about STEM?

Mathematics and the natural sciences are important! In fact, mathematics and the earliest sciences were recognized as part of the core quadrivium as noted above. While classical education does emphasize the humanities to a greater degree than does much modern education, the classically educated student gains a deep understanding of the most important elements of mathematical and scientific subjects (as well as the progression of scientific thought) without concerning him or herself with broad, shallow coverage of innumerable concepts. In all things, we practice *multum non multa*.

What's *multum non multa*?

Multum non multa (sometimes phrased as *Non multa sed multum*) is a Latin phrase meaning, “Much, not many” (or, “Not many, but much”). It originates with the 1st century Roman scholar Pliny the Younger and is popular in classical education as a kind of shorthand for indicating our tendency to choose just a few subjects and go deep rather than broad. We do this by integrating subjects so that there are strong connections between them, which makes them easier to learn. We choose a few good books to study intently rather than a plethora of easy ones to rush through. We prefer mastery to “exposure.” We work until we understand and do it well rather than accepting poor performance and “letting it slide.”

Do students take a Bible class? What is it like?

CCA does not currently offer a Bible class, per se, although selections from the Bible may appear in other literary and historical courses and are treated more as literary/cultural studies than as devotional ones. We are aware that many aspects of Biblical interpretation vary widely among equally devout believers, and we do not wish to alienate our brothers and sisters in Christ by claiming that *one* interpretation is absolute truth and the rest is heresy, so our studies of Bible passages are not denominationally specific. Courses in basic theology and church history are offered to juniors and seniors as extensions and applications of our studies in history and logic.

Do you teach “old earth” or “young earth” in your science courses? What about creation? Do you teach evolution?

We teach from a creation-based, old earth perspective.

As for evolution, we feel that it is important for students to understand the scientific theory of evolution, whether the student/family chooses to accept it or not, as students will undoubtedly encounter it in future science classes and in everyday discussions. No good purpose will be served by willful ignorance, but we will not judge those who prefer to believe differently.

Why don't you require your instructors to have teaching licenses?

First, we are not a public or charter school, and we are not seeking accreditation from the state. This in no way suggests that licensed teachers are bad, nor that they cannot make good classical educators; in fact, some of our instructors *do* have teaching licenses and *have* taught in public schools. However, state teacher training is often based on principles that are quite different from the foundations of classical education, and so we have no requirement for state licensure.

In lieu of state licensure, many of our instructors—especially at the high school level—hold advanced degrees and have years of classroom teaching experience. Individual tutors may be college students or advanced high school students who have demonstrated mastery of certain studies.

How often do classes meet?

Normally, the academy is in operation from 8:00am-3:00pm four days each week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The Palaestra (3rd-4th grade) classes meet on Monday/Wednesday. The Gymnasium (5th-8th) and Academy (9th-12th) students have class options for up to four days each week in two-day increments. They may sign up for the Monday/Wednesday classes, the Tuesday/Thursday classes, or a complete four-day program. Friday is an optional day that is mainly reserved for clubs, social activities, common and fine arts classes, study halls, and personal tutoring.

How often are grades given?

Individual assessments are graded and returned periodically as they are submitted. Remember that while grades are representative of instructors' honest assessments of student work, parents are still legally “homeschooling” and are the teachers of record according to their umbrella school. It is the parents' responsibility to aggregate and enter grades for their students in accordance with their umbrella school's requirements; furthermore, it is their ethical responsibility to do so fairly.

What is CCA's position on diversity and inclusion?

Diversity is not only welcome but also desired. In this local area, it can be hard to come by, but we are eager to serve students of many different backgrounds. We also commit to showing respect, modeling openness, and listening thoughtfully to the lived experiences of all our students. In the interest of attaining a better understanding of creation, we are also actively working to reach beyond a narrow, Eurocentric, patriarchal focus—which can often dominate classical education—so that we can gain a broader and deeper perspective on the history of our world and of humanity.