

## PROVIDENCE CLASSICAL ACADEMY...

teaches according to the Trivium, the classical method of education. This type of education is literature based, and involves how you teach your students, as well the subject matter. In Grammar School—Kindergarten through 6th grade—students focus on learning basic skills: reading and math, basic facts about many different subjects including History, Bible, English, Math and Latin grammar.

### Grammar School

Grammar school students have a remarkable ability to memorize all sorts of information, and in vast amounts. So we teach them the grammar of each subject, and have them memorize many parts of the subject matter, so they have them in their arsenal of information. By grammar, we mean the basics of the subject. The grammar of math includes the multiplication tables, counting by 2s and 5s and 10s, memorizing math facts. The grammar of history includes names of people, events, and dates. The grammar of Latin includes conjugations, declensions, vocabulary, and endings. Of course the grammar of English grammar includes punctuation rules, identifying the parts of a speech, rules for capitalization. We instruct and we reinforce by means of songs, chants, jingles, and repetition. We teach the main events, characters, and dates of the Bible, beginning with a formal study of Genesis in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grades and ending with the New Testament in 6<sup>th</sup>, the other grades covering everything in between. During the Grammar years we study history, beginning with Ancient Egypt in 2nd grade and ending with modern American history in 6<sup>th</sup>. This study prepares them for the Dialectic Years when they begin again to study the Ancients, but with a fresh perspective as older students. The thought of studying Plato will not intimidate them because he is already familiar to them.

In Kindergarten and First Grade students learn the phonetic sounds as the basic building blocks of learning to read. They all will be capable readers by 2nd grade, but will be reading well even in Kindergarten.

They learn the basic spelling rules that govern the English language, like “when two vowels go walking, the first one often does the talking,” and also the words called “rule-breakers” that do not obey these principles.

They learn and can identify the basic parts of speech in 1st grade, i.e., noun, verb, adjective, adverb, prepositional phrase, the complete subject, and the complete predicate.

Throughout Grammar School our students focus on learning Latin grammar and their study of Latin begins in 3rd grade. As Dorothy Sayers noted in *The Lost Tools of Learning*:

“Latin should be begun as early as possible--at a time when inflected speech seems no more astonishing than any other phenomenon in an astonishing world; and when the chanting of "Amo, amas, amat" is as ritually agreeable to the feelings as the chanting of "eeny, meeny, miney, moe."

“I will say at once, quite firmly, that the best grounding for education is the Latin grammar. I say this, not because Latin is traditional and mediaeval, but simply because even a rudimentary knowledge of Latin cuts down the labor and pains of learning almost *any other subject* by at least fifty percent.”

The acquisition of Latin is an extremely profitable method of teaching precision, vocabulary, English, and disciplining the mind, in addition to preparing students to master Greek (during the Dialectic years) and any modern Romance languages based on Latin.

As well, in math the students learn the basic facts of addition and subtraction in Kindergarten and begin to memorize their math facts. Building on this late in 1st grade they start memorizing their multiplication tables. In 2nd grade times tables are mastered and division introduced. By 6th grade's end they have completed Pre-Algebra and are ready to start Algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

The secret to retaining what has been memorized is review, review, review. For students of the Grammar School age, repeating facts they know is no trouble, and actually fun for them. Beginning in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade we incorporate a portion of the day called Memory Period. During this time the students review the things they've memorized that year and in years past, so that they never have the opportunity to forget what they've learned. During Memory Period we review or learn history facts, poetry, Bible verses, science facts, and other items the children need to have committed to memory.

### **Dialectic**

In the Dialectic years, grades seven through nine, students learn how facts relate to each other and how to think clearly and argue well. They are developing their logical thinking skills during these years and are becoming acquainted with good reasoning and with the logical fallacies so evident in our culture today. Providence Classical Academy and classical Christian education changes its approach to students during the Dialectic years because students grow and change during these years. In Grammar School students loved singing songs, chanting chants and learning by memory. By the time they are 7th graders this method can become tiresome. So the classical Christian educator changes his approach. Students at this age love to argue and to catch others in inconsistencies. If you have a student this age you'll recognize this tendency. We teach them to argue quite well, politely and graciously.

To improve the students' critical thinking skills the Dialectic student studies formal logic for two years, as well as logical fallacies. Here the students learn to argue forcefully and winsomely with each other, and to defend themselves against the fallacious thinking that passes for sound argument in our culture. He also completes his Latin studies and launches into two years of Biblical (Koine) Greek—the original language of the New Testament. This helps them with their study of the scripture in both Greek and English. Math during the Dialectic years consists of two years of Algebra and one of Geometry. Some may question the wisdom of teaching Algebra in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. However, the well-prepared student is ready to handle Algebra at this stage, having completed pre-Algebra in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He is ready to take all the math information he's memorized and internalized and see how it all fits together. This is a perfect fit for the Dialectic years.

A large chunk of the day of the Dialectic student will be devoted to Omnibus, the Latin word meaning "everything." Omnibus is an extended class that encompasses theology, history, and literature. The students read and learn and discuss Great Books of Western Civilization. They learn how to think through the great issues that have faced Western civilization and to think through these issues. Students consider free will and predestination as they read Luther's *On the Bondage of the Will*, and they ponder what it means to venture toward the Celestial City as they read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. They also read Lewis and Tolkien, Rousseau and Jefferson, Sophocles and Aeschylus—learning from and arguing with all of them and with each other.

Providence Classical Academy's study of science begins in 7th Grade. Students study general and physical science as well as biology during the Dialectic years.

All of these classes focus on learning the art of thinking, so students are encouraged to debate, question assumptions and to think biblically for themselves.

## **Rhetoric**

As we plan to grow into our Rhetoric School, these are some of the goals and plans we have for our students of this age. Rhetoric polishes the student, preparing them for further studies and adult life. During this time students develop their rhetorical skills, learning to communicate persuasively and winsomely. They do this by speaking, debating and writing on many different topics. Students this age start to desire to present themselves well and to demonstrate that they are no longer children, but young adults. So, at Providence Classical Academy we will teach them to present themselves well in person, in speech, and in written work.

The focus of these years is on the study of rhetoric. Students will take a year of formal rhetoric in which they sharpen their ability to speak and write. The art of rhetoric is simply learning to present yourself and your argument well. They also will study Christian apologetics and learn to defend the Christian faith.

We plan for students at Providence Classical Academy to continue their Omnibus course that was begun in Dialectic School. They dig into the depths of glory, as Pericles gives his funeral oration during Thucydides' Peloponnesian War. Reading *The Divine Comedy*, they trek along with Dante, Virgil and Beatrice from hell to heaven as they consider justice, mercy and "the Love that moves the sun and other stars." They grapple with villains like Ahab, Marx and Nietzsche. They applaud heroes like Augustine, Calvin and Aeneas.

Students also complete studies in chemistry and physics during the Rhetoric years.

In language studies, students will be required to complete two more years of language studies. Students can complete this work by learning modern foreign language or continued study in classical language.

In math, students will be required to complete a year of trigonometry. Many students will continue on through at least Calculus I. We also plan to give the students opportunity to complete Calculus II by the time they leave Providence Classical Academy.

Students also will start taking more electives during these years.

All of these classes will challenge the students to express their thinking clearly, a valuable commodity in this day and age.