

GENEVA ACADEMY

KNIGHTLY NEWS

11146 Ponder Rd., Lincoln, DE 19960

302.424.2166

www.genevaacademyofde.com

THE CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN METHOD AT GENEVA AND AT HOME

The three roads of the trivium offer three insights for pedagogy according to these developmental stages of learning. First, every discipline has a grammar (that is, a set of rules and vocabulary to explain those rules), a logic (organizing principles and standards for evaluation), and a rhetoric (its stories, discourses, and its applications). Secondly, any topic can be taught in a way that includes its grammar (what is there – factual knowledge), its logic (cause and effect, scope and sequence, and rationale), and its rhetoric (implications). Third, the trivium affirms– that is, children develop in stages, and we should tailor our pedagogy to each stage.

SO HOW DOES THIS PLAY OUT IN THE CLASSROOM? HOW CAN I REINFORCE THESE PRINCIPLES AT HOME?

In the **grammar stage (k-5th grades)**, young children have a natural fondness for memorization and repetition, so students begin by learning the fundamental facts and rules of each subject, including Latin. Teaching methods such as singing, memorizing, chanting, and recitation are emphasized. To give a concrete example of how a grammar student thinks, observe the following class discussion questions, appropriate for 4th grade:

Grammar of Abraham Lincoln -

- Where is his hometown and state?
- What was his wife's name?
- Why did he wear that stovepipe hat?

Fall/Winter 2010

Upcoming Field Trip:

Thursday, November 18,
A Christmas Carol

Friday, November 19,
Late start: School begins
at 9:45 a.m.

Thanksgiving Break:

November 24, Half Day
November 25-26, Closed

Christmas Break:

December 20 - January 2,
Closed

Reminders:

- ◆ You can keep up to date on your child's quarterly progress at Engrade.com
- ◆ Semester I ends January 14th. Report Cards will be out January 21st.



- Against whom were his famous debates?
- Why is he so important to Americans?

The **dialectic stage (6-8th grades)** brings the grammar of disciplines into ordered relationships. During this time, children's capacity for abstract thought expands rapidly. They become attracted to argumentation and abstract ideas; therefore, at this stage students are taught how to analyze, reason, question, evaluate, and critique. Logic, the art of arguing correctly, is taught as a core subject. The introduction of formal logic shifts the focus from mere facts to understanding relationships. Students learn to reason as they identify critical assumptions, logical fallacies and inconsistencies. Observe these example questions for the dialectic student:

Logic of Abraham Lincoln -

- How did his upbringing influence his worldview?
- Why did he see the value in maintaining the Union?
- Why is his Gettysburg Address so enduring?
- What value assumptions compelled him to end slavery?
- How did his assassination affect Reconstruction?

In the **rhetoric stage (9-12th grades)**, students advance in their abstract thinking and begin to express their opinions about themselves and the world. Debate, apologetics, speech, essay writing, and drama are emphasized during this stage as a means to equip students as effective communicators. The rhetoric stage is built on a foundation of accumulated knowledge and is the capstone of the trivium. To complete the example, observe the following questions, appropriate for a 12th grader:

Rhetoric of Abraham Lincoln -

- After reading Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, discuss the effect it had on both domestic politics and foreign relations.
- Research Lincoln's debates with Stephen Douglass; analyze how the debates propelled Lincoln and the Republicans to national prominence.
- Given your understanding of Lincoln's ten percent plan, how did his assassination strengthen the position of Congress in controlling Reconstruction?
- How did Lincoln justify his restrictions on the Bill of Rights during the Civil War? How does this relate to Presidential powers today?

Besides the addition of subjects such as Latin, Logic, and Speech/Debate, the classical curriculum emphasizes the "Great Books" of the past and present and the chronological study of historical periods, beginning with ancient times and progressing to the present. Ideally, history, literature, and theology are not divorced from one another, but are overlapped and intertwined for a rich, interdisciplinary educational experience. As an example, a 2nd grader might study hieroglyphics and mummies in history, discuss the Biblical account of Moses leading the Hebrews out of Egyptian slavery in Bible class,

read a book on the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in literature, imitate Egyptian paintings in art class, and even parse sentences about Queen Hatshepsut in grammar class!

It is important to continue the classical Christian method at home. These types of questions (according to the stage of your child) can be included in your discussions at home.

HOW CAN WE TEACH AS CHRISTIAN TEACHERS AND PARENTS?

As Christian teachers and parents, we want our children to develop a Christian worldview. This means that we want them to approach every subject in submission to God and to His Word – to progressively build a mental “grid” through which every thought must pass as it's brought captive to the obedience of Christ. While this is true as we study the Bible and history, it is also true as we study subjects like math and science. In these subjects we discern order and truth that demonstrate the wisdom of our Almighty Creator. The consistency, order and structure of the world point decisively to the God of the Bible as their Maker. There would be no order in things such as math had the world not been made by the God of the Scriptures.

Our commitment to a Christian worldview does not, however, force us into a narrow inquiry into the world around us. On the contrary, our faith in Jesus Christ and in the Bible helps us to confidently examine and affirm truth wherever it is found, for we know that all truth ultimately comes from God. So, well-educated Christian students should certainly read broadly in the original source writings of Christians like Dante, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, but they should also develop an ability to read the works of influential pagans such as Homer, Virgil, Marx, and Nietzsche. In this way, we can prepare our students for a life-long love of learning and nurture them in their ability to stand for Christ against every idea and philosophy that might oppose Him.



As J. Gresham Machen has stated, “A Christian boy or girl can learn mathematics, for example, from a teacher who is not Christian; and truth is truth however learned. But while truth is truth however learned, the beginning of truth, the meaning of truth, the purpose of truth, even in the sphere of mathematics, seem entirely different to the Christian from that which they seem to the non-Christian; and that is why a truly Christian education is possible only when Christian conviction underlies not a part, but all, of the curriculum of the school.”

Introducing the Geneva Academy Crest

What does it all mean?



Looking at the crest from top to bottom:

The top of the crest shows the “helm” of a knight. This representation is taken from the passage in Ephesians 6 that speaks about the armor of God. ¹³ *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.* ¹⁴ *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,* ¹⁵ *and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.* ¹⁶ *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* ¹⁷ *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Illustrated in this crest is the helmet of salvation and shield of faith.

Upon the helm is a crown, reminding us of the continuous reign of Christ in creation and in the life of the believer. In the center of the crown is a flower with three petals symbolizing the Trinity. To the left of the helm is the year that Geneva Academy was officially registered as a private school in the state of Delaware.

Looking at the shield, we see a banner at the top displaying the school’s name. On the front of the shield there are four symbols. Clockwise: An **open Bible** symbolizes the Word of God, next a **ship**, reminding us that the Church sails unharmed through all perils (the word, “Nave” comes from the Latin word for “ship”), a **cross & crown** which symbolize the reward of the faithful in the life after death to those who believe in the crucified Savior, *“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the Crown of Life”*, Rev. 2:10, and last a **flaming torch** that symbolizes witnessing for Christ. *“Let your light so shine.”* Matthew 5:16

Below the shield is the phrase in Latin “post tenebras lux”. Post Tenebras Lux is a Latin phrase which means “After Darkness Light.” The phrase was taken up by the followers of Luther and Calvin to describe the gratitude they felt toward God for the recovery of the gospel. The saying rings true for Christians today, as we are in a spiritual struggle to reclaim the truth of the Gospel and awaken from a great darkness, experiencing a revival of a Christian worldview. Not only for ourselves, but for our children as well, and generations to come. The goal at Geneva is to do its part in making this goal a reality in our community and culture today.

The picture to the right is the central panel of a monument in Geneva, Switzerland, honoring Farel, Calvin, Beza and Knox.



Finally, to the right and left of the Latin phrase is a bursting pomegranate, which symbolizes the Resurrection and the power of our Lord, who was able to burst from the tomb and come forth.