



*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul.” (Mt. 22:37)*

When Jesus uses the words “heart, mind, and soul” in this Gospel passage, it shows how He seeks nothing less than the whole person. It also sums-up the WHY of our existence as a Catholic School: whole child formation. The Church calls it the *“integral formation of the human person.”*

Imparting such a formation requires a correct understanding of the fundamental doctrine of the Catholic educational tradition: the Catholic philosophy of human nature. Often referred to as the **“Mind of the Church”** regarding the human person as created in God’s image and likeness for an eternal destiny, it is the philosophy called **Christian anthropology**. When a Catholic school gets this right, it gets Catholic education right. Where this philosophy is neglected, education goes wrong.

In her countless documents on Catholic education, the Church has continuously put forward this doctrine as the basis for calling her schools to be first and foremost places where saints are made, places to encounter Christ, places to form joyful disciples, that is, flourishing human beings aimed at heaven, fully equipped and truly free to become the best version of themselves that God intends. This is the Church’s **Supernatural Vision** for Catholic education.

In recent decades this vision has ignited a nationwide movement to restore the true purpose of Catholic education in Catholic schools, a recommitment to the fullness of the Catholic educational tradition. Hundreds of Catholic schools in numerous dioceses have joined this renewal, convinced that each child is endowed with an awesome set of natural and supernatural faculties of the heart, mind, and soul, faculties we are duty-bound to cultivate for their own sake.

**St. Thomas More Academy** has proudly embraced this renewed vision for over two decades as the premier Catholic Classical school in Western Maryland. With the approval of His Excellency, Archbishop William Lori, we are proud to respond to his call for everyone in the Baltimore Archdiocese to do their part in “revitalizing the Church’s life and mission”. In the

heart of Middletown, Maryland, our families have found a refreshing oasis for joyful whole child formation in the Catholic educational tradition.

In contrast, secular, progressive, utilitarian views of education have prevailed in many schools, holding views that reduce the aim of education to college and career readiness. Instead of seeing each human person as God's masterpiece called to eternal friendship with Jesus Christ and called to bear fruit in this life for the sake of the next, the progressive, pragmatic views of education, guided by secularism, truncate human nature, undermine freedom, and deprive children of their blessed birthright. They subvert the Church's intent.

*“To perceive education to be merely an instrument for the acquisition of information that will improve the chances of worldly success and a more comfortable standard of living, is an impoverished vision of education which is not Catholic” (Archbishop JM Miller's The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools).*

## **Formation in Genuine Happiness**

Catholic Classical education is aimed at forming saints. On a more philosophical level, it is often defined as cultivating wisdom and virtue by nourishing souls in all that is good, true, and beautiful. So, what is the point of Goodness, Truth and Beauty in Catholic education?

- As they relate to human formation, these words are household terms in Catholic classical education, indeed they are the “stuff” of genuine human happiness and human freedom, for we are truly happy and free insofar as our will is in tune with Goodness, our intellect with Truth, and our imagination with Beauty. In short, we are wired for Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, our noblest aspirations are rooted in them, we have a natural desire for them, because they ultimately reside in God, and He made us for Himself.
- Goodness, Truth, and Beauty are essential aspects of the Catholic educational tradition because they are primarily fundamental aspects of reality. The three terms (along with Oneness) refer to the timeless and universal attributes of all that exists, which Scholastic philosophy calls the transcendental properties of being.
- Catholic educators are called to cultivate true freedom in students, to nurture the natural human desire to perceive and love all that is good, true, and beautiful. Teachers are duty-bound to develop the natural and supernatural faculties in students which enable them to perceive and love all that is good, true, and beautiful.

## **Defining Goodness, Truth, and Beauty** (From the Cardinal Newman Society)

**Goodness:** When exploring issues of goodness with his or her students, a Catholic educator is fundamentally asking them to consider questions of how well someone or something fulfills its purpose. Goodness is understood as the perfection of being. A thing is good to the degree that it enacts and perfects those powers, activities, and capacities appropriate to its nature and purpose.

We have to know a thing's purpose, nature, or form to engage in an authentic discussion of “the good.” When addressing questions of what is a good law, a good government, a good father, or a good man, the discussion quickly grows richer, deeper, and more complex.

Catholic educators pursue the goal of helping students to become good persons. Among those qualities deemed good are wisdom, faithfulness, and virtue. Virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good.

People are free to the extent that with the help of others, they have maximized these goods, these proper powers and perfections as man. Such efforts raise fundamental questions of what it means to be human, and of individuals' relationships with each other, the created world, and God. The Church teaches that God, through reason and revelation, has not left humanity blind on these issues, nor has He left man to his own subjective devices. It is a fundamental responsibility of the Catholic school to teach and pass on Catholic culture, a Catholic worldview, a cultural patrimony, and truths about the good and what constitutes the good life.

Particularly, in this and all their efforts, Catholic educators build the foundation of the good on Jesus Christ, who as the Incarnate Word is the perfect man, who fully reveals man to himself.

A Catholic educator might accomplish this by asking, "What is this thing's nature or purpose?" or "What perfections are proper to this thing in light of its purpose and how well does the example fulfill its proper potentialities?"

If the issues under consideration touch directly on the human person's relationship with self, others, or God, a question might be, "How does this measure up in terms of a Catholic worldview and values?" The Catholic educator poses such questions with confidence that reason, the natural law, and divine revelation can all assist in reaching conclusions as to the nature of the good.

**Truth:** A simple definition for truth is the correspondence of mind to reality. Catholic educators seek always to place their students and themselves in proper relationship with the truth. Nothing they do can ever be opposed to the truth, that is, opposed to reality, which has its being in God.

Catholics hold that when their senses are in good condition and functioning properly under normal circumstances, and when their reason is functioning honestly and clearly, they can come to know reality and can make true judgments about reality. Through study, reflection, experimentation, argument, and discussion, they believe that an object under discussion may manifest itself in its various relations, either directly or indirectly, to the mind.

Building on Jesus' words that "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," Catholic schools also understand that truth is a Person: Christ. One's relationship with the truth, and with all that is real, is also intimately tied to one's relationship with Christ. There is a divine aspect to reality tied to love, tied to one's very being, and tied to one's relationship with God.

The Church teaches that man tends by nature toward the truth. Even though due to man's fallen nature he may sometimes seek to ignore or obfuscate the truth, he is nonetheless obliged to honor and bear witness to it in its fullness. Humans are bound to adhere to the truth once they come to know it and direct their whole lives in accordance with its demands.

Catholics believe that reason, revelation, and science will never be in ultimate conflict, as the same God created them all. They oppose scientism, which without evidence makes the metaphysical claim that only what can be measured and subject to physical science can be true. They oppose relativism, not only because its central dictum “there is no truth” is self-contradicting, but also for a deeper reason: because removing objective truths from any analysis also removes the possibility of gauging human progress, destroys the basis for human dignity, and disables the ability to make important moral distinctions such as the desirability of tolerance and the wisdom of pursuing truth, beauty, and goodness as opposed to their opposites of ignorance, ugliness, and privation.

**Beauty:** Beauty can help evoke wonder and delight, which are foundations of a life of wisdom and inquiry. Beauty involves apprehending unity, harmony, proportion, wholeness, and radiance. It often manifests itself in simplicity and purity, especially in math and science.

Often beauty has a type of pre-rational striking force upon the soul, for instance when one witnesses a spectacular sunset or the face of one’s beloved. Beauty can be understood as a type of inner radiance or shine coming from a thing that is well ordered to its state of being or is true to its nature or form.

Beauty pleases not only the eye or ear, but also the intellect, in a celebration of the integrity of body and soul. It can be seen as a sign of God’s goodness, benevolence, and graciousness, of both His presence and His transcendence in the world. It can serve as re-enchantment with the cosmos and all reality and assist in moving students to a rich and deep contemplative beholding of the real.

## **Evaluating with Goodness, Truth, and Beauty**

It is also through the lens of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty that we continually evaluate all that we do and teach as a Catholic school: from choosing curriculum content and resources, aligning our pedagogy with a Christian anthropology, instilling a Catholic world view, to living out an authentic Catholic culture and community life, prioritizing prayer, Sacramental life and formation in virtue.

*St. Thomas More Academy shares the conviction that a love for Goodness, Truth, and Beauty is to be nurtured for its own sake. In light of that conviction, we utilize the following litmus test which St. Jerome Academy has developed the following set of questions for Catholic schools’ on-going assessment of their activities, programs, policies, methods and proposals:*

- 1. Is it beautiful?*
- 2. Are we doing this because it is inherently good, or as a means to an end? If the latter, what end?*
- 3. Does it encourage the student to think of education itself as a high and noble enterprise, or does it cheapen education?*

4. *Is it excellent? Does it demand the best students and teachers have to offer, and hold them to the highest standard they are capable of achieving? Or does it give in to the gravitational pull of mediocrity? Is excellence the highest standard, or is excellence subordinate to lower standards such as convenience, popularity, or marketing considerations (i.e., consumer appeal)?*
5. *Does it encourage reverence for the mystery of God and the splendor of His creation?*
6. *Does it encourage reverence for the mystery of the human person and respect for the student's own human dignity?*
7. *Does it encourage him to desire truth, to understand such virtues as courage, modesty, prudence, and moderation and to cultivate these within himself?*
8. *Does it help the student to see what difference God makes to all the facets of the world, or does it make God's existence seem irrelevant, trivial, small or private?*
9. *Does it assist in passing on the received wisdom of the Christian tradition, or does it create obstacles to reception of the tradition?*
10. *Does it encourage real searching and thinking? Does it provoke the student to ask 'why?' Does it stir up a desire for understanding?*
11. *Does it encourage conversation between and across generations or does it hinder it?*
12. *Does it help to develop to the fullest extent what is uniquely human in the student: the powers of attending, deliberating, questioning, calculating, remembering, and loving?*
13. *Does it encourage the student to become patient, to take time, and if necessary, to start over in order to achieve excellence, or does it subordinate excellence to speed, ease, and efficiency?*
14. *Does it encourage the student to value rigor and discipline?*
15. *Does it deepen the role of the family in the life of the school and the role of education in the life of the family, or does it erect a barrier between family and school?*

## **Part Two: WHAT we Teach**

As a Catholic school true to its purpose and to the “Mind of the Church”, our WHY governs our WHAT at St. Thomas More Academy. Since our WHY is whole child formation, our WHAT is

the best proven, time tested system of education ever known to achieve that end: an education in the **Catholic Classical Liberal Arts and Sciences**.

## Some Definitions

### What is Classical?

The word Classical refers to the time and cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. As Martin Cothran (Memoria Press) explains, the Greeks are considered the “archetype of the philosophical, literary man”, while the Romans are considered the “archetype of the practical, political man”. Combined with Hebrew culture, which gave us the “archetype of the spiritual man”, these ancient civilizations became the foundation of Western Civilization which reached its perfection in the Christian culture of the Middle Ages known as Christendom.

### What is Classical Education?

Classical education is the cultivation of wisdom and virtue. It became the system of education aimed at passing-on and preserving Western Civilization, that is, the modes of thinking and the cultural heritage of Western Christian Civilization, rooted in the Classical cultures. Its two key components are the **Liberal Arts** and the **Sciences**.

As Cothran notes, James Pycroft (1847) called the Liberal Arts the “forming” of the mind, and the Sciences the “filling” of the mind.

*"Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another."*  
*G.K. Chesterton*

### What do we mean by Liberal Arts?

The word art comes from the Latin noun *ars* and refers to any developed human capacity or skill. The Manual Arts, Fine Arts, and Liberal Arts form the traditional division of the human arts.

The Liberal Arts are a set of seven academic skills aimed at forming the faculties of the human mind, a training in basic thinking skills.

Three skills related to **language** were known as the “**Trivium**”: grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and four skills related to **number** were called the “**Quadrivium**”: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. This system made-up the academic training for “free men” of the ancient world, an education in liberty or freedom from the mundane. It was essentially the pursuit of wisdom and virtue by means of training or “freeing-up” all the faculties of the human person, the powers of the mind.

The Latin adjective *liberalis* means pertaining to freedom, to being noble, genteel, good natured, as well as gracious, generous and kind. Freedom in this sense was primarily the freedom to live in the happiness that comes with virtue or self-mastery. This echoes the ancient message passed on since the time of Aristotle, Cicero, and Moses, *the virtuous life is the happy life*.

Sister Miriam Joseph (1898) left us a more updated description of the point of a Liberal Arts education:

*“The Liberal Arts teach one how to live; they train the human faculties and bring them to perfection; they enable a person to rise above his material environment, to live a free life an intellectual, a rational, and therefore a free life in gaining truth.” She adds the words of Jesus saying, “You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8:32).*

***“The Liberal Arts prepare the soul for virtue.”***

***St. Thomas More***

## **What do we mean by Sciences?**

The word “Sciences”, from the Latin noun *scientia*, refers to any organized body of knowledge. The traditional division of sciences is three-fold: **Moral sciences, Natural Sciences, and Theological Sciences**. While forming minds is the work of the Liberal Arts, filling minds with “the best of all that has been thought and said” is the job of the Sciences.

**Moral Sciences** are also called the **Humanities**, as they pertain to human concerns, ideals, and aspirations, and these are divided into literature, history, and philosophy. Literature and history are the primary focus of humanities at the elementary/middle school level.

The Humanities serve a distinct purpose in education. They “*teach human beings their true nature, their dignity, and their rightful place in the scheme of things*” (Russell Kirk). Or as Martin Cothran puts it, the purpose of the Humanities is “*to learn, not to become a welder or an accountant or a computer programmer, but how to become a human being--which, incidentally, also makes you a better welder or accountant or computer programmer.*”

## **The Structure of Classical Pedagogy**

### **The Classical Trivium**

The seven Liberal Arts are divided into the three arts that pertain to language, the **Trivium**, and the four arts that pertain to number, the **Quadrivium**.

The word “trivium” means “three paths”, that is, the three-fold route to follow to arrive at the chief academic goal of the classical elementary school, namely, the mastery of the structure and use of language. These paths to language mastery are **Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric**. Sr. Miriam Joseph calls these language skills the “fundamental arts of education.”

Grammar focuses on how language is structured, Logic (also called “Dialectic”) refers to how we use language to construct valid arguments, and Rhetoric refers to how we use language to persuade. (Cothran)

### **The Trivium as Learning Phases**

Since Dorothy Sayers’ 1947 essay “*The Lost Tools of Learning*”, the classical Trivium terminology has also been applied to developmental stages of learning that correspond with a child’s age and aptitude level.

### **Summary of Learning Stages** (from Lourdes Classical, Denver)

**Grammar Stage:** Students in grades PK-5 start with learning the grammar of all subjects, and classes focus on memorizing vast amounts of information through drill, chant, song, and recitation.

**Logic Stage:** The logic stage gives middle school students a chance to sort out this information, or assimilate the facts into a unified, organic whole, as they begin to wonder why, how, and how come? With a natural disposition to argue, classes focus on debate, analysis, testing, and explanation across all disciplines.

**Rhetoric Stage:** From middle school into high school, students become naturally more concerned with how they are coming across, so classes in the rhetoric stage emphasize presentation and polish, writing and speaking beautifully and persuasively.

*In short, students progress from remembering the truth to synthesizing the truth to persuasively sharing the truth, all the while stretching their capacity to live in conformity with the truth. Although these stages tend to be broken into specific grade levels, they also naturally flow throughout all grade levels.*

## **Knowledge, Skills, and Aptitudes**

At each stage there are things we want children to know, things they ought to be able to do, and habits, dispositions, or aptitudes they ought to have acquired or be acquiring. The **St. Jerome Academy Educational Plan** outlines “**Objectives**” for the **Knowledge, Skills, and Aptitudes** recommended for each learning stage. *These objectives are listed on pages 36-66 in this document.*

## **Historical Timeline**

We anchor our curriculum content to the context of a rotating historical timeline, leading students through the coherent story of fallen but redeemed humanity and helping them see history as the unfolding of God’s redemptive plan with the Incarnation as its central, pivotal point. We do this with a structure adapted from the Educational Plan of St. Jerome Academy in Hyattsville, MD.

### **Early Grammar Stage**

- First Grade: Ancient Civilizations
- Second Grade: The Medieval Year
- Third Grade: Early Modern World History

### **Upper Grammar Stage**

- Fourth Grade: Exploration and Maryland
- Fifth Grade: Ancient Greeks and Romans

### **Logic Stage**

- Sixth Grade: Christendom Year
- Seventh Grade: Early American History
- Eighth Grade: Modern American History

## **Catholic Classical Content**



## **The Most Important WHAT: A Thirst for Learning** *(from St. Jerome Academy)*

Very few people teaching today are the beneficiaries of a classical education, and nowadays even those with some classical training have holes in their knowledge of the tradition. But the most important ingredient in teaching a classical curriculum is not command of the tradition, though this is a worthy and desirable goal and should come with time. Rather the most important thing is that ‘you become like this child’, that teachers begin to think of themselves as students, that they fall in love with thinking and are gripped by the same fundamental human questions that animated our forebears in the tradition and created the greatness of Western and Christian culture.

Regardless of what ‘information’ a student may acquire, classical education has only truly succeeded when this desire, having become contagious, is passed from teachers to students. When this happens, teachers and students are incorporated into the ‘great conversation’ together and bound by a common love and common desire to discover the truth and make it one’s own.

## **Another Essential WHAT: The Catholic Worldview**

*“He made us, we belong to Him. We are His people, the sheep of His flock.” (Psalm 100)*

This Psalm verse sums-up another household term in the Catholic educational tradition: *a Catholic Worldview*. This term is one of the five essential “Marks” of Catholicity in a Catholic school which Archbishop J.M. Miller, CSB outlines in [The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools](#). It is a critical WHAT in Catholic Classical education and must permeate all of our content.

One’s worldview in general is comprised of how one thinks about reality, about God, man, and nature. The **Catholic Worldview** is all these elements of thought springing from the Catholic philosophical tradition, the “Mind of the Church”.

*“Catholicism is a comprehensive view of life that should animate every aspect of a school’s activities and its curriculum.” (J.M. Miller).*

This sheds light on the full, complete meaning of the commonly used phrase “**Catholic Identity**”. Our pursuit of Catholic Identity must never be reduced or limited to what we do for the school’s environment and spiritual life. These are certainly essential, but Catholic Identity is truly genuine and complete only to the extent that the school draws from the Mind of the Church regarding the human person, how he is made and how he learns.

### **Key Elements of the Catholic Worldview:**

1. The basic Truth of the Catholic Worldview is echoed throughout Sacred Scripture and simply stated in the Baltimore Catechism: 1) Who made you? *God made me.* 2) Why did God make you? *To know, love, and serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in Heaven.*

The Catholic Worldview thus embraces the “Mind of the Church” regarding human nature, human dignity, and human destiny, the same authentic Christian anthropology which guides the WHY, the WHAT, and the HOW of genuine Catholic education.

2. The Catholic Worldview is rooted in the Church’s understanding of the nature of Truth:
  - a) that it exists, b) that it can be known, and c) that it can be communicated.

***“Human beings can know the truth of things,  
and in grasping the truth, can know their duties to God,  
to themselves, and their neighbors.” (Pope St. John Paul II)***

3. The Catholic Worldview sees Jesus Christ at the center of everything. He is the Eternal Word, the Logos, by Whom all things were made and by Whom all things are held in existence.

***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
All things were made through Him,  
and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (Jn. 1:1-3)***

His becoming man is the pivotal moment in human history; everything before it prepared the way for it; and everything after it, reaches back to it. With the "Fiat" of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Word became flesh at the Incarnation. He is the center of a school’s life, just as the Incarnation is the central point in human history.

4. The Catholic Worldview holds the conviction that the primary mission of a Catholic school is to be a “place for saint making”, and it recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children.
5. The Catholic Worldview allows the absolute inseparability of Faith and Reason to prevail throughout its entire curriculum.
6. The Catholic Worldview considers the school to be a place where “faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony.”
7. The Catholic Worldview, by uniting faith, life, and culture, inspires an authentic Catholic culture in the life of the school community, and calls a school to nurture a common love for and commitment to that culture.

## **Content Essentials**

Content essentials are the “must have” ingredients and the “must meet” standards and principles for all that we teach across the curriculum, with age-appropriate applications. Many of our “WHAT we teach” essentials are adopted from the Cardinal Newman Society’s “**Catholic Curriculum Standards**”, as well as from the **St. Jerome Academy “Educational Plan”**.

### **Religion (Theology)** (From St. Jerome Academy)

- Religion is not just one subject within the curriculum, but the key to its unity and integration. The cosmos is an ordered, unified whole because it is created in Christ, “in

whom all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). Belief in God as our Father and in the world as His beautiful and rational creation binds faith and reason, nature and culture, art and science, morality and reality into a coherent and integrated reality. This unified view reaches its summit in worship, which is the highest form of knowledge and thus the end and goal of true education. This understanding should be made explicit in religion as a subject, in the curriculum as a whole, and in the life of the school. Most of all it should be reflected in the Sacred Liturgy and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the source and summit of the school’s life. Religious education should therefore have as its ultimate goal the life of prayer and a deep reverent participation in God’s own life through the Sacrifice of the Mass.

- “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8). This is at the heart of what it means to say that God is Trinity, a communion of persons. If God is the source of cosmic order, then that means love is at the root of this order, a key to its meaning, and essential to our meaning as persons. Students should come to a deeper understanding of the meaning of love, both divine and human. They should begin to understand that love is at the root of reality and what this implies for civilization and for the meaning of their own nature as embodied persons.
- Students should understand that God’s love in the Incarnation gives rise to a distinctive Christian civilization which is their birthright. Students should learn Scripture and be familiar with the treasures of Christian culture, art, architecture, music, literature, and great deeds, all of which give expression to a Catholic view of reality. Students should begin to learn the ‘symbolic language’ of these treasures and learn how to ‘read’ religious paintings and architecture. And they should understand how a true civilization of love reaches its summit in the Mass, where our desire for God is anticipated and surpassed by God’s love for us.
- Students should understand how the vocation to love informs our very meaning as persons, soul and body. The curriculum should reflect on how men and women live out this vocation differently in marriage, religious, and consecrated life. Upper school religion courses should therefore contemplate the ‘theology of the body’, The goal here is not to moralize, but to provide students with a beautiful, more compelling vision of life and love that they can desire and appropriate as their own.
- The study of religion should fulfill the role of basic catechesis, conveying what the Church teaches. By approaching catechesis in light of a broader vision of God and the human person students are helped to understand not only what the church teaches but why this teaching is true. Students see what these teachings have to do with the basic questions of the human heart, how they matter to their lives, and how they have mattered in the lives of whole cultures.
- The study of religion is both the conveying of a definite body of knowledge and the cultivation of habits and qualities in the soul of the student. It should incorporate silence, adoration, mystery, and the experience of beauty through adoration, music, and the school’s observation and study of the liturgy and the liturgical calendar.
- Religious instruction, above all, should seek to draw the student more deeply into the life of God. Liturgical observances should stress the mystery by emphasizing “the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2). They should seek to draw the child ever more deeply into this

mystery by appealing to the student's natural wonder. They should be child-like without being childish.

## **Authentic Catholic Culture**

*“Ubi caritas gaudet, ibi festivitas” St. John Chrysostom*

*“Where charity rejoices, there is festivity.”*

- An authentic Catholic culture in a Catholic school is the bed rock for catechesis but most especially the soil for growing saints, and saints are joy-filled. It makes it possible for children (and grown-ups) to breathe freely as disciples in-the-making.
- Catholic culture is authentically Catholic when it animates the entire life of the school. It unites the school family to the Liturgical Calendar, inviting all to participate in and be sanctified by the mysteries of Christ and His Church.
- Catholic culture is authentically Catholic when it connects the entire life of the school to its identity as a place for making saints. Certainly, the prayer and sacramental life of the school must be Catholic, as well as how we foster a Catholic environment with beautiful, edifying art.
- But equally important are the community and social celebration aspects of school life which should always reflect who we are as children of God, gifted with a beautiful heritage of Catholic festivity rooted in Gospel charity.
- Fostering an authentic Catholic culture necessarily includes being intentional about music, and in a similar way, for dance. Far from being merely an add-on or extra nicety to accompany recreation, or as something having a neutral effect on human behavior and growth, music is an essential component of human health and flourishing, having an enormous effect on a person's natural development through both its content as well as its rhythm. Our choices regarding music (and dance) should be made accordingly both within the curriculum and without.

## **Sacramental Life**

The sacramental life of the Catholic school is its highest priority.

### **The Holy Eucharist**

The life of the Catholic school is Jesus. He wants to nourish the life of the Catholic school with His Word, but especially through His Eucharistic presence in the Most Blessed Sacrament. *“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you have no life in you.” (Jn. 6: 53)*

An authentic Catholic culture prioritizes the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Eucharistic adoration, and frequent chapel visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

### **Confession**

Students have frequent access to the Sacrament of Penance in an authentic Catholic culture.

## **Literature: The WHY and the WHAT**

The why and the what of reading good literature in a Catholic school are interwoven because literature instruction is primarily about filling souls with Goodness, Truth, and Beauty.

- As to the WHY, “*The purpose for reading literature is not literary, it’s human.*” G.K. Chesterton. While linguistic analysis in literature has its place, it is generally not in an elementary school.
- We read a good book so we may “*enter imaginatively into a moral universe, a world of wonders, the imaginative world of the author, to learn about the world and man’s place in it.*” It must be an “*immersion in the human situation.*” (CNS). This view of literature is seen as good in-itself in a Catholic school.
- In the Catholic educational tradition, fostering a MORAL IMAGINATION is the primary motive for leading children through the world of beautiful literature. By Moral Imagination we mean how we exercise the faculty of imagination in the pursuit and attainment of Truth, and how Truth applies to good and evil, to the “good guys” and the “bad guys”.
  - *Our imagination is one of the “defining marks of God’s image in us (image-ination) to do as God does with His own imagination.” (Joseph Pearce)*
  - *Our imagination has an immense capacity for Truth. Great literature puts our imaginations in touch with the best and the worst examples of man’s engagement with Truth, the truth about himself, the world, and God.*
- The Western Canon of literature is packed with ancient stories that teach timeless truths about fallen but redeemed human nature, truth about virtue and vice, and truths related to how men think about and respond to in the archetypal situations of life. Christ Himself used countless stories to reveal the deepest truths about God and what He wants of us as His children.
- Consequently, regarding our WHAT, we choose from our literary heritage “high, imaginative quality literature that embodies the moral and spiritual ideals of the Western Tradition” (Andrew Seeley).
- In the great works of literature, “we find ourselves in the presence of almost three thousand years of genius. We find ourselves in the company of the *illustrissimi* of civilization. Such works are good companions for the journey of life and excellent guides. Like the *lembas* which sustained Frodo and Sam on their journey through Mordor to Mount Doom in *The Lord of the Rings*, great literature is manna for the mind and food for the soul.” (Joseph Pearce)
- These points reveal the vital connection between good literature and the study of history.

## **Literature and the Capacity for Wonder** (from The Cardinal Newman Society)

Of paramount importance in literature study in a Catholic school is fostering a sense of wonder.

Wonder is that engagement of the whole person, body and mind and soul, in the surpassing goodness or beauty of something beyond the workaday world. Wonder is not a mere flurry of the emotions. It is, as Aristotle says, the beginning of philosophy, the love of wisdom. A creature incapable of wonder is less than human.

A human being incapable of wonder is worse than such a creature: a cynic, a drudge, a functionary, a calculator of advantages to himself.

That's at the best.

Let Shakespeare describe him thus: *The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treasons, strategems, and spoils. The motions of his spirit are dull as night, And his affections dark as Erebus. Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.*

And the worst?

The spiritual organ of religious sensibility is precisely the capacity for wonder. A parent who depends upon religious instruction for his or her child's spiritual development and who ignores the humanities and the arts is like someone who would prepare a soldier to go forth to war by giving him a military handbook, and nothing more. He will know, in a notional sense, what he is supposed to do, but it will be an abstract and bloodless thing. He will not have the knowledge in his muscles and bones.

The same is true of what Catholics believe about God and man. A child's imagination is going to be formed one way or another. It will either be formed by the great art and literature of our heritage, or it will be formed by the world of Hollywood and mass entertainment.

## **Literature Lists for School and Home**

### **The Cardinal Newman Society Recommended Reading List for Catholic Schools in the United States**

Catholic school students in the United States should be familiar with most of these core works and authors. The recommendations on this list are minimal by design so as to make it possible to introduce students to the "great conversation" of both Western and Catholic culture. These works provide for basic cultural literacy and offer examples of excellent writing and storytelling. Schools will no doubt add significant additional texts to their curricula drawn from the hundreds of excellent works not on this short list.

#### **Grades K-4 Recommended Literature**

Critical Bible Stories

Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes

Aesop's Fables

Adapted Greek and Roman myths

Selected fairy tales from Grimm

Selected fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen

Folk tales

Other stories that reflect classical Western archetypes, teach morality, and/or emphasize fantasy and creativity

Extensive age-appropriate poetry

### **Grades 5-8 Recommended Literature**

*A Christmas Carol* (Dickens)  
*A Wrinkle in Time* (L'Engle)  
*Adam of the Road* (Gray)  
*Amos Fortune, Free Man* (Yates)  
*Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery)  
*Around the World in Eighty Days* (Verne)  
*Beowulf: A New Telling* (Nye)  
*Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad* (Lee)  
*Charlotte's Web* (White)  
*Cyrano de Bergerac* (Rostand)  
*Death Comes for the Archbishop* (Cather)  
*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Stevenson)  
*I, Juan de Pareja* (de Trevino)  
*If All the Swords in England* (Willard)  
*Johnny Tremain* (Forbes)  
*Journey to the Center of the Earth* (Verne)  
*King Arthur and His Knights* (Green)  
*Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (Irving)  
*Little House in the Big Woods* (Wilder)  
*Little Women* (Alcott)  
*My Antonia* (Cather)  
*My Side of the Mountain* (George)  
*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Douglass)  
*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (Verne)  
*Our Town* (Wilder)  
*Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* (Taylor)  
*Sarah Plain and Tall* (Wilder)  
*Swallows and Amazons* (Ransome)  
*The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Green)  
*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Doyle)  
*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Twain)  
*The Bronze Bow* (Speare)  
*The Call of the Wild* (London)  
*The Chronicles of Narnia* (Lewis)  
*The Crucible* (Miller)  
*The Hobbit* (Tolkien)  
*The Innocence of Father Brown* [or others] (Chesterton)  
*The Jungle Book* (Kipling)

*The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien)  
*The Pearl* (Steinbeck)  
*The Railway Children* (Nesbit)  
*The Red Badge of Courage* (Crane)  
*The Red Keep* (French)  
*The Song at the Scaffold* (Von le Fort)  
*The Story of Rolf and the Viking Bow* (French)  
*The Swiss Family Robinson* (Wyss)  
*The Trumpeter of Krakow* (Kelly)  
*The Wanderings of Odysseus: The Story of the Odyssey* (Lee)  
*The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (Speare)  
*The Yearling* (Rawlings)  
*Treasure Island* (Stevenson)  
*Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Stowe)  
*Wind in the Willows* (Grahame)

## **History** (From St. Jerome Academy)

- Students should understand human culture and history itself as the lived answer to fundamental human questions and the human desire for God.
- Within history, “Christ has reconciled all things to himself” (Col. 1:20, see also Col. 1:16, Rom. 11:36, Heb. 2:10, I Cor. 8:6, Rev. 4:11). Students should understand that the coming of Christ is the decisive act of God in history and that this has enormous historical and cultural ramifications.
- As the opening epigraph from Hugo Rahner states, the coming of Christ and the Church is central to history. As Christ reconciles all things to himself, his Church and the culture to which it gives rise takes up and transforms all that is beautiful, good, and true in pre-Christian culture and becomes a decisive reference point for all world cultures thereafter. Understanding the human person as a creature and seeing all of history and all cultures as expressions of the human desire for God and as lived answers to ultimate human questions, students should learn to appreciate the great cultures of history on their own terms, seeking to understand them as they understood themselves and resisting the prejudice that equates the newest with the best.
- However, they should understand history neither as a story of constant progress culminating in the present, nor as a series of disconnected events lying side by side in time, but as the story of the world’s anticipation of and longing for the truth and happiness revealed in Christ and the events his incarnation sets in motion.
- They should therefore have a special understanding of those classical cultures—Greek, Jewish, Roman—which became ingredients of Christian culture. They should read those portions of the Bible that are contemporaneous with the historical period they are studying and appreciate the window that the Bible provides into the development of this history.



- Students should thus come to understand American history as a chapter in this larger story. American history should be studied in the same spirit of love for truth, goodness, and beauty that animates the rest of the curriculum, and American history and culture should therefore be viewed through the same lens as other historical cultures: as a lived answer to these fundamental human questions. American history should therefore form in students a love of their country and its ideals, but it should also encourage them to subject that love and those ideals to the still higher love for the truth of God and the human person revealed in Jesus Christ and through his Church. In this way, the study of history should prepare students to become both virtuous and responsible citizens and faithful Catholics and begin to equip them with the tools of discernment necessary to live deeply Catholic and deeply human lives amidst increasingly challenging times.
- The study of history in these terms is central to “incorporating our students into the wisdom of two thousand years of Catholic thought, history, culture, and arts.” Students are incorporated into the received wisdom of the Christian tradition in two ways: first, by understanding themselves as products and heirs of a culture which represents the deepest of human longings, the highest of human aspirations, and the most profound of human artistic and cultural achievements; and second, by making the desires and questions that have animated and propelled that history their own—Who am I? Who is God? How am I to live? What is goodness? What is truth?
- The proper presentation of history should therefore further cultivate the art of questioning, as an expression of their innate desire for the happiness found in God.

## **History Study** (From the Cardinal Newman Society)

Catholic-school students are expected to understand the relationship between God and history.

They should be able to relate how history begins in God and ends in God and how history has and serves a divine purpose. They should be able to demonstrate a general understanding of the “story” of humanity from creation to present day through a Catholic concept of the world, and man from a Catholic perspective.

They should be aware not just of secular dates, events, and people, but also of critical Catholic events and people and how they influenced history. They should encounter and discuss the thoughts and deeds of the great men and women of the past so as to develop their perspective, reasoning, and understanding of the complexity of the human condition. They should be able to identify the motivating values that have informed particular societies, how they correlate with Catholic teaching, and to what effect. They should be able to evaluate individuals throughout history in terms of how they measure up to Catholic ideals and norms.

They should also ponder events and people in history in order to become more reflective on their own values and behaviors so as to enlarge their understanding of themselves and others.

They should explore what is true, good, and beautiful in other cultures and in other times so as to increase their understanding of themselves and others and join in the larger human conversation

about what it means to be human and how ought they best to live with others according to God's plan and the longings of their hearts.

In pursuit of the common good, historical inquiry can help students discriminate between what is positive in the world, what needs to be transformed, and what injustices must be overcome.

As a result of this holistic approach, Catholic school students will come to view history not as a mere chronicle of detached human events or isolated texts, but rather a moral and metaphysical drama having supreme worth in the eyes of God so as to help the student appreciate the eternal consequences of his or her individual life and personal history.

A study of history will assist the student to recognize and reject cultural counter-values that threaten human dignity and are therefore contrary to the Gospel.

### **The Study of Mathematics** (From St. Jerome Academy)

- The study of mathematics should instill in students an ever-increasing sense of **wonder and awe** at the profound way in which the world displays order, pattern and relation. Mathematics is studied not because it is first useful and then beautiful, but because it reveals the beautiful order inherent in the cosmos.
- Mathematics stands in a unique position at the intersection of induction and deduction, and as it flowers, it enables the student not only to appreciate more deeply its own subject matter, but also every other discipline since it lends its own intelligibility to their study. This is readily apparent in logic and analytical reasoning, but is no less true for art, music, poetry, history, sports, experimental science, philosophy, and language.
- Mathematics can engage all the senses, particularly in the early years, with the direct manipulation of simple objects that illustrate number and counting, similarity and difference, belonging and exclusion, progression, proportion, and representation. Along with this direct experience, students can be coached in observation and taught not only to recognize but to question the relationship of countable to uncountable, unity to plurality, and repetition to progression. They can gradually be introduced to ways in which we quantify the world by applying dimension, magnitude, duration, measure and rank, and ways in which the world may be analyzed and modeled through mathematical representation, including geometric and algebraic expressions. To the extent possible, students can be encouraged to 'construct mathematics' (such as building Platonic solids) as well as work it out on paper, and come to understand that the symbolic writing of mathematics enables us to describe accurately and therefore to predict the outcomes of many real-world events.
- The study of mathematics should emphasize its foundational contribution to aesthetics (the study of beauty). The "mathematics of beauty" can be discerned in every subject.
  - *In history, for example, students can begin to understand the meaning of the architectural design and sacred geometry of classical buildings, in which not only shape, pattern and placement convey meaning, but number also is used to encode philosophical and theological truths.*

- *The mathematical foundations of music can be introduced from the mono-chord to tone relations, and then to the understanding of harmonics and series. In the upper grades, students can be introduced to the mathematics of the fugue and the canon, and taught to hear the voices in their relationship.*
- *In the study of visual art, students can be trained in the geometric and numeric relationships that are at the basis of representational drawing, particularly for creating the illusion of depth through the application of transformation and projection, and can be taught the visually pleasing and dynamic ratios that appear in great art and photography. This visual training can be extended to a broad discussion of dimensionality in the context of iconography and non-representational art.*
- *In the language arts, the mathematics of rhyme and meter can be discussed and practiced, at first through recitation but eventually through imitation. Also, the discovery of the numerological meanings written into great literature can begin with the Bible and advance historically through the various periods studied.*
- *In nature studies, the mathematics of nature can unveil the mysterious occurrences of transcendental constants such as pi and the natural logarithm, the recurrence of biological geometry such as the spiral of Archimedes, and the myriad ways in which relation is communicated in the branches of a tree, the strands of an orb web, or the convergence of streams into a river. Individual plants and animals can be introduced as the basis for understanding growth, and direct observation and measurement can be the basis for understanding numerical and visual representation of change through time. Individuals and populations can be used to illustrate the concepts of rate of change, large numbers, and eventually infinity. Measurement and the mathematical representation of natural systems can become the entry point for a discussion of estimation and precision, order and entropy, probability, and eventually chaos. This can include a discussion of how to represent things numerically, which presupposes an understanding of Aristotle's four forms of causality, and can culminate in understanding that mathematically representing and quantifying the world depends on philosophical choices.*
- A love of mathematics naturally leads not only to the development of analytical and critical reasoning skills, but deep creativity. Most importantly, it fosters a sense of profound reverence for the cosmos and our place within it, and the infinite depth of intelligibility woven into creation. This love is a spontaneous response that arises when a child first discovers math in the world, and must be nourished so that the work of solving math problems does not become tedium. Puzzles, codes, riddles, games, and the direct observation and experience of mathematics in our world are important ways to keep the intrigue and enchantment of mathematics alive while building necessary skills.

**Nature Studies (Science)** (From St. Jerome Academy)

- The study of nature must be integrated into a comprehensive vision of reality as God's creation. Otherwise, the human person, who is at the foundation of the curriculum, becomes unintelligible and the truth about him becomes a matter of private opinion.
- The study of nature therefore begins from the presupposition that all of reality is God's creation, though the implications of this are easily misunderstood. The act of creation is not an alternative to natural processes; nor is the doctrine of creation an alternative to natural explanations. The act of creation is not something done to the world, since prior to creation there is nothing to act upon. The doctrine of creation therefore does not explain how the world came to be, but what the world is. And to treat nature as creation is not to confuse science with theology or to divert attention from nature to prove God's existence, but to behold nature differently in a way that is at once deeper and more comprehensive, but no less rigorous, than modern scientific materialism.
  - *It is to recognize that we do not arbitrarily impose meaning upon a meaningless material world, but that meaning is inherent in the world itself. It is reflected in a rational order that penetrates to the depths of the natural order and can be apprehended by reason.*
  - *It is to see the infinite generosity of God reflected in the mysterious uniqueness of every living thing.*
  - *It is to recognize that this mysterious uniqueness can never be exhaustively explained or understood and can only be fully appreciated through the eyes of love.*
  - *It is to recognize that what things are is not exhausted by how they work or how they came to be. Therefore, living things are wholes, irreducible to the interaction of their parts or the history of causes that produced them. They are wholes that transcend their parts.*
  - *It is to recognize that living things differ essentially from non-living machines because:*
    - *Unlike a machine that acquires its identity only at the end of a manufacturing process, living things have a nature, and therefore a unity, that precedes and guides their development. (This is partly what is meant by soul. It is also why a fetus is a person from the moment of conception and why it eventually matures into an adult: because it is already human.)*
    - *Unlike a machine, an organism is not a means to an end and its purpose is not imposed from the outside. An organism's end or 'good' is internal to it and is that for the sake of which it develops and acts. Maturity and health are the ends for which organisms ordinarily develop and grow as they do.*
    - *Machines and other inanimate objects have an environment which surrounds them but is basically external to them. Living things have a world which they assimilate to themselves through metabolism and within which they move themselves and act. This world is not just the organism's physical surroundings, but the whole order, including past, future, and other creatures, which makes up the organism's 'action space'.*

- *Higher organisms are characterized by having a larger world in this comprehensive sense. Man has the largest world of all, since he can deliberate about his future, since his world includes God, and since he can respond to God's call.*
- *There is therefore an essential difference between the living and the non-living, between procreation and mechanical reproduction, between what is born and what is made.*
- *It is to recognize that science alone, which is preoccupied with the causal history and mechanical aspects of the natural world, is not sufficient to understand what nature, living things, and human persons are. Philosophy and ultimately theology are also required.*
  - The study of nature should train the student above all to see nature through the eyes of love and to respect its inner integrity. This must be the foundation on which all further specialized study in the sciences is based. Coursework should emphasize the observation, classification and rendering of living things (as in a nature notebook). Students should consider the unique characteristics of different kinds of plants and animals and their ways of life, be able to recognize and appreciate the unique characteristics and classify them accordingly. They should understand what distinguishes human beings from other animals and the relation between human biology or morphology (e.g., upright posture, primacy of sight, opposable thumbs, etc.) and the uniquely human way of living.
  - From the study of living wholes, students should then move to the study of their parts through the study of anatomy, physiology, and related disciplines.
  - From this foundation students should proceed through the relevant sub-disciplines in science—chemistry, geology, astronomy, etc., with special attention to how these various aspects of nature combine to make Earth a home suitable for life, but also in a way that prepares the student for the study of these subjects in high school.
  - Students should have experience in both inductive and deductive methods and know the difference between them.
  - Students should complete their study of nature at St. Thomas More Academy with a keen eye for nature, a deeper wonder and love for the natural world, a greater awe at the mystery of living things, and a deep appreciation of how the world, in providing a home fit for life, reflects the wisdom and generosity of its Creator.

### **Music** (From St. Jerome Academy)

- The study of music should be to the sense of hearing what the study of art is to the sense of sight. It should cultivate the power of that form of attention known as listening.
- The study of music should complement the study of history, e.g., in the movement from Gregorian chant to polyphony.

- Children should learn the ‘aesthetics of number’ and learn to ‘hear number’ through learning harmony and measure.
- Students should learn and experience how music expresses the mystery of God, and the spirit of adoration should be cultivated through acquaintance with the tradition of sacred music, chants and hymnody. Students should be able to sing the Salve Regina, the Regina Caeli, and other prayers that are appropriate to different liturgical seasons.
- Students should learn the language of music, both in terms of musical notation and the ability of different instruments and notes to ‘tell stories’.
- If possible, students should participate in a schola cantorum and, if possible, learn to play an instrument in order to internalize music, appreciate its beauty, and foster creativity and discipline.

### **A Culture of Singing**

- A natural fruit of the school’s music program (and from the faculty in general) should be a school culture of singing. Practically speaking, this would look like/sound like kids breaking into song spontaneously on their way across the playground. From spirited patriotic, folk, “marchy” (martial) songs to triumphant poetry, to religious, sacred hymnody, kids joyfully singing on a whim, the air should ring and the halls be alive with the sound of music.

### **Art** (From St. Jerome Academy)

- The study of art should focus on both art appreciation and rendering, preferably in different media (chalk, paint, charcoal, etc.), since art is tactile.
- Art study in both senses should foster an appreciation of beauty, not merely as a subjective preference, as pretty or pleasant, but as an objective feature of reality that expresses the deep truth of what things are. Students should understand this objective beauty as desirable for its own sake. They should be able to identify its features and think about its effect on the soul, for example, why it is desirable or how it can be profound. Students should be able to explain this with respect to certain works of art (e.g. by being able to say why Cezanne’s apples are important).
- Art studied in both senses should therefore be understood not as amusement nor as individualistic creativity, but as aiming for a real, objective beauty. It is, though, appropriate to study how changed understandings of what art is (away from this notion) are reflected in works of art themselves and reveal differing cultural attitudes about the nature of the human person and the objectivity of truth, goodness, and beauty.
- The study of art should therefore complement the study of history and be a part of it. It should consider how the art of a culture provides that culture’s answers to the deep human questions and how changes in art reflect changed understandings (e.g., by appreciating the differences between Byzantine iconography and the paintings of Giotto). The study of art and the practice of rendering should be used to train children how to attend closely to detail, to study shape and proportion, in short, how to see both art itself

and the objects depicted by it. The study of art is also training in the art of attention and adoration.

### **Physical Education** (From St. Jerome Academy)

- Play, like joy, is its own end. In the sheer joy of play and playing well, one becomes an ‘amateur’ in the true sense, that is, a 'lover'. Developing this sense of 'amateurism' is perhaps the most important contribution that physical education makes to classical education. This is because the amateur, though he always strives to play well, plays out of love and delight for the game itself. Genuine amateurism thus reinforces the classical conviction that there are things worth doing well simply because they are good.
- But physical education is vital to classical education in other ways as well. Physical education offers students an opportunity to train their minds, hearts, and bodies into unified expressions of gracefulness. Accordingly, the physical education program should strive to train the minds, hearts, and bodies of the students.
- Students should develop concentration, self-discipline, and mental stamina through repetition, practice, and competitive play. They should come to recognize the excellence and gracefulness of beautiful physical achievements. They should also learn the rules as well as the proper techniques and strategies for playing all major sports.
- Students should practice sportsmanship and fair play; they should learn to win and lose with grace. They should participate in games and sports in which they can both lead and be led, subordinating their own role to the good of the team. A spirit of healthy competition as well as an attitude of perseverance, commitment, and excellence should be the norm.
- Students should participate in a variety of physical activities that promote strength, agility, coordination, speed, and endurance. They should be encouraged to form healthy living habits, which include getting the appropriate exercise, diet, and rest.

## **Part Three: HOW we Teach**

Does **HOW** we teach, or the way we teach, have bearing on a Catholic school’s Catholicity? Is a school’s Catholic identity to be measured according to its pedagogy and methods of instruction? Yes!

In The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools, Archbishop JM Miller states that “*all instruction must be authentically Catholic in content and methodology across the entire program of studies.*”

To be authentically Catholic in this context means we must connect our teaching methods to the “Mind of the Church” regarding the human person, i.e., how humans are wired for learning and formation. In other words, the same Christian anthropology that guides our WHY (our purpose) and our WHAT (our content) also governs our HOW, our pedagogy and methods. We need to choose the right tools for the work at hand.

In our daily methods of teaching, St. Thomas More Academy is committed to being true to what we know about human nature, that is, how children are wired for learning and what we are striving to accomplish in whole child formation. We choose our teaching tools accordingly. The Catholic educational tradition figured this out long ago, and genuine “Catholic Identity” in a school demands it.

## The Pedagogy of Catholic Classical Education

### What is Pedagogy?

The word Pedagogy has two Greek root words: “paidos” (child) and “agogos” (leader). The work of a Catholic educator is to lead a child in the development of all his dimensions as an image of God.

*“The focus is not solely on facts, skills, or even truths to be imparted. Equally, if not more, important is the development of the child’s God-given capacity to observe, to wonder, to discover, to attend, to speculate, to calculate, to communicate, to reason, to contemplate, etc., and especially to love.” (E. Sullivan-ICLE)*

Pedagogy at St. Thomas More Academy is mission driven for the whole child. Given our true purpose, what we know about human nature, and how children are wired for learning, we naturally embrace certain guiding principles, essential elements, of Catholic pedagogy which we call the “Four Cardinal Virtues” of classical pedagogy.

### Four “*Cardinal Virtues*” of Classical Pedagogy

Certain elements of pedagogy have been the cornerstone of education for almost all of recorded history. These elements or habits of pedagogy are like the *Cardinal Virtues* in that they act as “hinges” to almost all we do in education. They are at the heart of authentically Catholic pedagogy and part and parcel of the work to restore it in Catholic schools.

#### 1. Imitation

In its effort to prioritize student self-expression and creativity, modern education has forgotten (at best) that human beings, be they infants or the most creative geniuses in history, have learned by means of imitation.

Elizabeth Sullivan, with the **Institute for Catholic Liberal Education (ICLE)**, provides the following defense of imitation as an essential aspect of authentic pedagogy:

*“Modern education scorns imitation—copy work, dictation, recitation, retelling, rendering, and re-enacting—and prizes originality instead. But this is a rejection of human nature itself. Ancient and medieval thinkers recognized that imitation is the first step in all learning. Think of a baby learning to walk or speak. Think of the great masters of the Renaissance who learned first in the ateliers of other masters. Fundamentally, this is a theological concept: we are by nature imitators because we are made “in the Image.” It follows that we need excellent models to imitate in the spiritual, moral,*



*intellectual, and physical life—saints, heroes, poets, mathematicians, great sportsmen, and the like.*

*A teacher leads a child to active discovery by embodying truths or ideas through concrete examples, such as the concept of heroic virtue in the lives of the martyrs or the distributive property of multiplication in a variety of problems. A student makes the connections and imitates that idea, grasping it in his own mind. Thus, the very form of teaching is theological: the embodiment or incarnation of each small truth or logos, all of which ultimately connect and point to the one Logos.*

*The very act of learning is the imitation or re-presentation of the fact, skill, or idea to be known. This means that a teacher must create that gap, that wonder, that desire to know, so that a student's mind will actively grasp what is to be known."*

## **2. Repetition**

As anyone who has mastered any skill knows, be it with a musical instrument, a sport, or anything else anyone can mention, the Latin phrase "*Repetitio mater studiorum*," -- "repetition is the mother of learning", is a point that bears emphasis, even repeating. Mastery of anything related to one's self, especially virtue, is never automatic, but requires practice, and practice means repetition.

*"Repetition is what makes memorization possible. Adults find repetition dull, but the child does not. Try to recall a child learning something new, perhaps a new song on the piano or a new skill like riding a bike. Children delight in doing a new thing over and over and over again. But the satisfaction is not complete until they show us. "Watch this!" they shout. Repetition and recitation (presentation) are the methods the child naturally uses to learn. These are the tools he naturally employs to practice and then to seek correction and praise. Chesterton, as always, says it more beautifully, pointing to the Source of this natural disposition:*

*... grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon.*

*Repetition is a necessary part of life that should be prepared for and embraced. Through repetition and discipline, we learn to do well what is expected of us. And, importantly, we learn to do our work well, not just once, but consistently.*

*Repetition helps us with individual tasks, but it also adds comfort and routine more broadly. Repetition offers order, and freedom itself is born of order. (Leigh Lowe, Memoria Press)*

## **3. Memorization**

Memorizing "stuff" has been another architectonic feature of authentic education, ever since Adam first gave names to everything around him. Its resurgence in today's

classical school's movement gives back to children yet another piece of their educational birthright, indeed, the very foundation of their growth in linguistic aptitude.

The very science of memorization warrants attention, for memorization stimulates brain growth.

*“Neurons make connections through frequency, intensity, and duration. When children memorize (and maintain the ability to recite) interesting poems, all three of these variables are involved in a powerful way, strengthening the network of neural connections that build the foundation of raw intelligence. In short, the more neurons we have connected to other neurons, the more “RAM” we have in the CPU of our brains.”* (Andrew Pudewa, *Institute for Excellence in Writing*)

Memorized poetry, excellent prose, and Sacred Scripture are essential daily fare in the Catholic classical school. These furnish the heart, mind, and soul with Goodness, Truth, and Beauty.

In an age when a daily abundance of weak, sloppy, disordered language patterns bombard children's minds from every direction, the school (and parents) must be extra vigilant and intentional in providing strong, beautiful, language patterns for the young brains in their charge.

Pudewa explains that memorizing abundant quantities of poetry, prose, speeches, and Sacred Scripture fills students' minds and hearts with *“reliably correct, sophisticated language patterns.”* These language patterns form the language database which children can draw upon for their own language development and their ability to think and communicate. The language patterns become the *“linguistic marble for a lifetime.”*

*“We use memorization to build a foundational base of knowledge and to fill the hearts and heads of our students so that they may write, speak, and think with clarity, truth, and beauty. The facts, Scripture, poetry, song, and literary passages memorized by students are formative and life-giving. They become the truths to which they cling, the stories to which they will allude, the resources to which they will refer, and the facts with which they will persuade throughout the whole of life. The well-educated person, who has a head and heart full of meaningful knowledge, is a better writer, speaker, thinker, and servant because he or she has an overflowing font of resources within, ready for access at any time.”* (Leigh Lowe, *Memoria Press*)

#### **4. Recitation**

The benefits of practiced recitation cannot be overstated, which is why it has held pride of place for centuries in schools committed to genuine education.

*“Recitation consummates the learning experience for students. Memorization and recitation naturally go hand in hand. Recitation is the fruit and the proof of memorization. It is both the test and the triumph.”*

*Previously the sole method of testing in schools, recitation requires mastery of a subject like no other testing mechanism can. It reveals gaps or flaws immediately. Students know instantly and independently when there is still work to do. But recitation also reveals victory clearly.*

*Recitation is unique in that it fosters the kind of confidence and pride we want our children to have—the kind earned by accomplishing a challenging feat, the kind that enables them to humbly believe they can learn anything. On a practical level, recitation encourages clear, articulate, meaningful communication. It promotes interacting with others with poise, accuracy, and consideration.*

*But more importantly, recitation teaches the importance of sharing our lights with others and using the knowledge that we hold in our hearts to delight and serve.” (Leigh Lowe, Memoria Press)*

Recitation develops not only the child’s ability to present language with fluency, but also his ability to process and comprehend written and spoken language.

*“Correct phrasing, precise pronunciation, and nuance of expression are skills in the use of language that not only convey and enhance comprehension, they also create the subtleties of usage necessary for truly excellent written expression. Memorization and recitation are essential for developing the deep, internal, core sense of language.” (Andrew Pudewa)*

## **The Four Arts of Language**

The basic end-goal of teaching the Language Arts or “Arts of Language” is to form students who can **THINK and COMMUNICATE**.

As Sister Miriam says, "Communication involves the simultaneous exercise of the Trivium arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric." These arts govern the four basic activities of communication: *listening, speaking, reading, and writing*.

*(this section to be developed)*

## **Grammar Instruction**

**Inherent Grammar:**

**Applied Grammar:**

**Analytical Grammar:**

*(this section to be developed)*

## **Latin Study**

*“I can tell, nine times out of ten, whether a student has studied Greek or Latin simply by reading his English.” Dr. Peter Kreeft, Professor of Philosophy, Boston College*

St. Thomas More Academy prioritizes Latin study as a core subject which is fundamental to our efforts to form kids who can think and communicate.

## Why Latin?

The following is an article quoted in its entirety: “**3 Reasons to Study Latin**” by **Martin Cothran, Memoria Press 2015**. Mr. Cothran presents a clear, succinct explanation for why Latin has a prominent place in the classical curriculum.

### Reason One: Vocabulary

Over 60 percent of academic English is Latinate. That means that the words, although part of the English language, originally come from Latin.

As I write this, I am picking up an academic book I happen to have on the table near me. I have opened it up to a random page and am looking at a random paragraph. Here are a few of the words I notice immediately: “century” (from *centum*, meaning “one hundred”), “order” (from *ordo*, meaning “row,” “rank,” “arrangement”), erode (from *erodere*, “to gnaw away,” “consume”)—and that’s just in the first sentence.

There are some longer, harder words too: “predecessor” (from *prae*, meaning “before,” and *decessor*, meaning “retiring official”), “evolution” (from *evolutio*, meaning “unrolling [of a book or scroll]”); and “envisage” (from *in*, meaning “in,” and *videre*, meaning “to see”). All of these are from the second sentence.

These Latinate words are accompanied by a few mostly Greek and Anglo-Saxon words (these latter mostly from the French). A knowledge of Latin will help you not only to know many complex English words you have never seen before—as may be the case for a student with a word like “envisage”—but it will also help you to see deeper into the meaning of words you already know—as may be the case with a word like “evolution.” Did you know before reading the previous paragraph that “evolution” had anything to do with the unrolling of a book or scroll?

Most of our vernacular language—the language we speak everyday—is Anglo-Saxon. Why not learn Anglo Saxon? Wouldn’t that have greater practical use? The problem is that Anglo-Saxon words don’t carry meaning with them from word to word. Words like “light,” “bright,” “night,” and “sight” all have the Anglo-Saxon “igh,” but that doesn’t help you from word to word. These four words have no relation in meaning to one another. If you learn the meaning of the root word for “bright,” in other words (*berht*), you will be learning nothing about the meaning of the English word “bright.”

Learning the Old Saxon *berht* will only give you insight into “bright,” but not about any other word with “igh” in it. Learning one Anglo-Saxon word will only help you with one English word. But learning one Latin word will help you with numerous English words. If you learn the meaning of the Latin word *pater* (“father”), you will know something not only about the English word “father,” but about the words “patriarchy,” “patrician,” patriot,” “patronage,” “paternal,” patristic,” and so on.

Latin, then, is the most efficient method of studying English vocabulary.

## **Reason Two: Grammar**

The second reason to learn Latin is that a study of Latin grammar is the best and easiest way to learn English grammar.

Now on the surface this doesn't seem to make much sense. Why wouldn't studying English grammar teach you English grammar better than studying Latin grammar? There are several reasons for this.

First, it is hard to learn the grammar of your own language. By the time you are ready to study grammar (which you can't do to any great extent until at least the third grade), you already know how to speak English and write it at a rudimentary level, so you tend to look right through it. This is why it is always better to study grammar in another language: because it prevents you from assuming too much. The unfamiliarity of a new language forces you to look at every word and think carefully at every step about how sentences must be put together.

Despite having been taught English grammar repeatedly over a number of years, the only grammar I knew when I graduated from high school was what I had learned after taking two years of Spanish and two years of German.

Second, English is very irregular and idiosyncratic. It has a hidden grammar, but you have to fuss around with it and reorganize it in order to see it. There are five main functions of nouns, represented by the five main Latin cases: nominative, objective, dative, possessive, and vocative. They are entirely hidden in English, but you need to know them in order to know such things as whether to use "who" or "whom," and whether you should say, "It was he" or "It was him." This is why we use sentence diagrams to teach English grammar. The process of learning English grammar is just too abstract and cumbersome, which is why most students never learn it very well.

It would be far better to teach grammar in a language in which the grammar isn't hidden, in which you don't have to turn the language this way and that in order to see the grammar in it. But not all languages are this way. In Spanish, for example (and this would go equally for French), it was easy for me to understand the grammar of verbs, but since Spanish, like English (and French), has little noun inflection, nouns were still a mystery to me.

And by the way, "inflected" just means adding endings to show noun functions. In English, if I say, "The boy loves the girl," "boy" is in the nominative case (the case of the subject—the boy is doing the loving) and is spelled b-o-y. If I say, "The girl loves the boy," "boy" is now in the objective case (the case of the direct object—the boy is now receiving the loving), but it is spelled the same way: b-o-y. The only way I can tell that it is in the nominative or objective case is where it appears in the sentence. I cannot know, just from looking at the word, what case it is in.

In an inflected language, I don't need to know where the word is in a sentence in order to know what case it is in. I can just look at the word. In German, the word itself changes: In "*Der Junge liebt das Mädchen*," "Boy" is "Junge." It is in the nominative case, since it is the subject. But in "*Das Mädchen liebt den Jungen*" ("the girl loves the boy"), notice that "boy," which is spelled J-

u-n-g-e in the first sentence, is now spelled J-u-n-g-e-n. Why? Because that is the spelling in the objective case, since the boy is now the direct object, and the case of the direct object is the objective case.

This is because German is an inflected language: Its nouns change their endings depending on their function in the sentence (what we mean by “case”). One of the things studying German does, therefore, is force you to learn noun cases—cases you don’t see in English. English assumes noun cases but doesn’t show them to you—nor does Spanish or French. But German doesn’t just assume them—it shows them to you. And so you learn noun cases by learning German declensions, the lists of noun forms according to gender, number and case. So why not learn German rather than Latin? After all, German has the advantage that people still actually speak it. Well, for one thing, although there are a few German words in our language, it doesn’t even compare to Latin in this respect.

But more importantly (and the third reason we use Latin grammar to teach English grammar), Latin has something that German doesn’t: regularity.

Like most languages (and English may be the worst example), German has a lot of exceptions in it. The rules usually apply, but there are too many times when they don’t. In Latin, however—particularly at the basic level—there are very few exceptions. You can almost always count on getting the right answer by simply applying the correct rule. This provides students with a safe grammar world in which to operate. There is regularity and order—like the Roman people themselves.

### **Reason Three: Thinking Skills**

The study of Latin grammar is an unparalleled study in critical thinking. This is because of its complex grammar.

Think about it. What do we do in terms of a systematic, organized study on the language side of our curriculum that matches in complexity and sophistication what we do on the science side of our curriculum in, say, mathematics? Every homeschool parent can tell you how nervous they get when breaking open the 8th or 9th or 10th grade math text and trying to prepare to teach it. This is why everyone thinks that mathematics helps you learn how to think critically. What language subject matches algebra for organization and complexity? Is there anything on the qualitative side of our curriculum (as opposed to the quantitative, math-science side) that matches geometry?

Unless you are studying Latin, the answers are probably, “Nothing,” and “None,” and “No.” Again, you could do this in German or Russian or Greek, or any number of other inflected languages, but when you consider the problem of the irregularity of these languages, you lose some of the similarities with math, which, like Latin, is very regular. Math is a good thinking skills subject, not only because it is complex, but because it always follows the rules. There are two basic thinking skills: analysis and synthesis—contrast and comparison—making distinctions and seeing similarities. Like math, Latin is full of it. Matching a Latin adjective with the noun it modifies means you have to identify the declension of your adjective and the declension of your noun. Then you have to match them in case, gender, and number. Just count

the number of distinctions you have to make in order to do this one thing—distinctions which must be made to bring the two words grammatically together.

*“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 medieval, but simply because even a rudimentary knowledge of Latin cuts down the labor and pains of learning almost any other subject by at least 50 percent.” Dorothy Sayers, Author: “The Lost Tools of Learning”*

## **The Socratic and Mimetic Methods** *(from Lourdes Classical Denver)*

You will not see our lesson objective spelled out on classroom walls. Classical education does not seek to give answers to a question that was never asked. In order for students to behold a truth, they must first be led to behold an intriguing question. Then through a series of additional questions, a Socratic-style teacher can draw the answer out of students, sitting back and watching the “light bulbs” go on naturally.

Students are also led to own a truth via mimetic instruction, where the various “types” are put before students, allowing them to naturally differentiate and come to know something new. For example, rather than asking students to simply copy down and memorize the definition of *covenant*, students are given examples of similar types – a promise, agreement, contract, covenant – and after a careful examination and discussion, students are able to construct the correct definition of covenant on their own, giving them a much better chance of retaining and applying the information.

Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen once lamented that education often becomes “the transferring of information from the teacher’s manual to the student’s notebook without passing through the mind of either.”

The following is from the **Circe Institute** on the **Mimetic and Socratic** Methods of Teaching:

**MIMETIC INSTRUCTION** applies the Christian classical idea that humans learn and become virtuous by imitation. However, in classical theory imitation is a far cry from mere aping. When we learn by imitation, or mimesis, we experience four stages:

- Perception of the idea through the senses (i.e. hearing or seeing beauty in a great work of art)
- Absorption of the idea into the soul through the “common sense.” The common sense is where the physical senses meet the soul — it puts all the other senses together to identify the thing perceived as, say, a work of art instead of merely the lines, colors, etc that the senses perceive individually).
- Apprehension of the idea with the mind, or understanding. How well this is done depends largely on how well the idea was absorbed into the soul, which depends in turn on how well the observer perceived the idea, all of which depends on the observer’s attentiveness.

- Re-presentation of the idea in the student’s own manner. Here the student incarnates the idea in a new form. He might, for example, perceive justice in the way a teacher treats a student and then apply the principle of justice in the way he treats his sister.

Mimesis is an imitation, not of the outward form, but of the inner idea — not ultimately of an action, but of the idea expressed in that action. Every art and skill is mastered through these stages, whether in school or out. It is a modified inductive form of instruction in which students are led to understand ideas by contemplating models or types of them. These models can be found in literature, history, mathematics, the fine arts, music, other human arts and activities, and nature.

When the teacher practices Mimetic instruction, she naturally progresses through seven stages:

- Preparation (raising to the student’s awareness what he already knows about the lesson)
- Gap creation (provoking the question in the student’s mind that the lesson will answer)
- Presentation of types
- Comparison of types
- Understanding and expression of the idea
- Application of the idea
- Confirming comprehension of the idea

When the student learns through Mimetic instruction, he naturally progresses through the same seven stages but understood from his perspective:

- Gathering (the student reviews the knowledge that is prerequisite to learning the new lesson)
- Wondering (the student asks the question, often only in his mind, that the lesson will answer)
- Attending (the student pays attention to the types the teacher presents)
- Contemplating (the student looks for similarities and differences among the types that will determine what is essential to the lesson and what is not)
- Defining (the student either describes the idea or describes the steps that make up the skill taught in the lesson)
- Mastering (the student practices by applying the idea)
- Resting (the student receives confirmation from the teacher that he comprehended the lesson)

Mimetic instruction is rooted in the idea that humans can only learn by moving from the particular (specific, concrete things) to the universal (general, abstract ideas). Since this is so, it is best to teach people “with the grain,” as Dorothy Sayers expressed it.

**SOCRATIC INSTRUCTION** is the dialectical process of examining an idea by “deconstructing” it to find weaknesses and inconsistencies in one’s understanding, and then “reconstructing” it to clarify or purify one’s understanding. These two stages are accomplished by engaging in reflective discussion (dialectics) with the student, not to destroy, but to purge, his



understanding. This reflective discussion is accomplished through the use of penetrating questions by the teacher.

The first stage of Socratic instruction is called the “Ironic” stage because it is attempting to gently reveal the errors contained in the participants understanding of the idea (for example, he might conclude that Achilles was a sissy for crying to his mommy. The teacher would not correct him by telling him the truth about Achilles, but would guide the student to reflect on his assumptions by asking him questions). This stage often includes identifying a brokenness in the student’s soul (the organ of truth perception) that may be preventing his accurately perceiving the truth, and then uses the reflective discussion and penetrating questions to begin healing that brokenness.

The second stage of Socratic instruction is called the “Maieutic” stage because in it the teacher attempts to “midwife” the birth of an idea in the student’s mind (*maieutic* means mid-wife). This stage can only begin when the student acknowledges his error in the first stage (*metanoia* — repentance). At that point, the teacher can continue to ask questions, guiding the student to see the truth he thought he knew earlier. The clearest instance of this process is found in the Plato’s *Meno*, in which Socrates teaches geometry to a slave boy. We highly recommend a close analysis of that short exchange to the teacher who wishes to teach Socratically.

Both teacher and student move closer to an accurate understanding of an idea through this process. Socratic instruction is rooted in the idea that truth is knowable, but that usually we are careless about how we go about knowing it. We draw conclusions too hastily and then apply them too widely. To mature in our reasoning, we must purify our thinking through a critical [Socratic dialectic](#).

## **St. Thomas More Academy and Educational Trends**

### **Technology as a Means, Not an End** (*from Lourdes Classical Denver*)

We are not opposed to using any tool that helps us achieve our mission. Digital technology is one such tool, but its usefulness is limited. We reject the modern notion that the computer is on its way to replacing the teacher. We also reject the movement towards, as [Martin Cothran](#) put it, burying students further “under the modern avalanche of disordered information” by handing out iPads to every student.

Our focus is equipping students with an ability to order things correctly, including an ability to put science and technology at the service of man (and God), not the other way around. Again, technology can and does serve our purpose, as evidenced by the digital screen you are reading right now, and our teachers utilize it in a limited number of ways. But studies reveal an inverse relationship between technology use and student well-being and performance. (Even Time Magazine calls screens in schools a “[\\$60 billion hoax](#).”) So we avoid screens as much as possible and do not teach technology as an end itself.

### **Humanizing Technology** (*From St. Jerome Academy*)

Education develops what is most human in students: the capacity for wisdom and love which requires insightful reading, depth of thought, and the autonomy that comes from virtuous self-

command. These, in turn, require disciplined habits of patience, attentiveness, memory and concentration and a desire for what is truly good and beautiful. The role of computers and information technologies should be critically assessed in light of these goals, and prudence should govern their use in instruction and the completion of assignments. These technologies are both a fact of contemporary life and a wonderful resource, providing access to sources of knowledge otherwise unavailable. They should be utilized when appropriate and students should be taught to use them responsibly.

However, premature or excessive use of these technologies undermines the very qualities and skills education seeks to cultivate: it inhibits the development of reading comprehension, alters the very processes of composition and calculation, and creates dependence on the technologies themselves. It also hampers the transmission of tradition by isolating students from previous generations and instilling the prejudice that new equals better. Furthermore, it isolates students from one another.

Real education therefore requires a space where children can experience a measure of freedom from these technologies and develop independently of them. Our pedagogy should help create this space by stressing personal interaction in instruction and ‘manual labor’ (e.g. handwriting) in the completion of assignments. We should encourage students to take time, attend patiently to detail, and correct mistakes. We should prioritize the insightful reading of books over the collection and manipulation of data and should use ‘instructional videos’ and other media sparingly after evaluating their quality and their effect on school culture.

Lastly, we should promote communal activity over computer games or movies during leisure time. The truly liberating answer to the problem of children's immersion in technology is not just a more responsible use of technology; it is to give them something better to love.

### **Coming Soon:**

- STEM/STREAM Education
- The Place of Standardized Tests
- The Place of Homework
- Gender Separate Education
- De-Stigmatizing Mistakes and Failure

## **Sample Objectives**

### **History**

#### Kindergarten: Our Community

##### *Knowledge:*

Understand what it means to be a good citizen

Identify your home address and know your county and state

Discuss community helpers and their work

Know basic geography to include continents and where the United States of America is on the globe.

Identify and discuss major holidays and the culture and customs of the community and the Catholic Church related to those holidays.

Understand history and culture as human desire for goodness, truth, and ultimately God

### **History**

#### Grade 1: The Ancient Year

##### *Knowledge:*

Understand history and culture as human desire for goodness, truth, and ultimately God

Develop basic knowledge of ancient civilizations in the ancient Near East and their relationship with one another

Develop basic knowledge of history of Israel through the Bible and in context of ancient Near East

Develop basic knowledge of the geography of the ancient Near East, including Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt

Develop an understanding of Greek civilization: people, places, geography, religion, government, economics, art, architecture, music, technology, and culture

Discuss how Greek civilization contributed to Christianity

Develop an understanding of Roman civilization: people, places, geography, religion, government, economics, art, architecture, music, technology, and culture

Discuss how Rome became the home of the Roman Catholic Church

Develop an understanding of how Christianity transformed the Roman Empire

Develop an understanding of Greek and Roman contributions to culture

Identify the basic geography of Greece, Rome, and their neighbors

## **History**

### Grade 2: The Medieval Year

#### *Knowledge:*

Understand key figures and events of Medieval history

Appreciate how the lives of the saints shaped the respective historical periods

Know how people in the Middle Ages understood God and man

Recognize how Medieval culture exhibits an understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty

Know that Christianity has shaped the world and that the expansion of Christianity has brought increasing liberty, reason, and culture

Distinguish how the Modern period differs from the past in its understanding of God and

man, and truth, goodness, and beauty

Understand difference between Medieval and Modern political forms

Understand key technological developments of the historical periods they are studying

Recognize basic geography (major world land masses and bodies of water)

Memorize songs and chants for relevant kings, queens, and ancient figures

Recognize major periods of history using timelines

Understand how the differences between these periods and cultures are reflected in Art

Understand history and culture as human desire for goodness, truth, and ultimately God

*Skills:*

Memorization of key historical facts

Beginning map reading and recognition

Use a globe

Understand a timeline

Ability to narrate historical stories

Begin to see connections between historical events and themes

Begin to have the ability to formulate and discuss philosophical questions

Artistically render historical scenes from imagination

*Aptitudes:*

Develop memory

Develop an ability to listen and recall

Develop an interest in history

See relevance of past to present

Appreciate Greek philosophical ideals

Begin to see an integrated conception of the world on which the beliefs of Western Civilization are based.

**Religion**

### *Knowledge*

Begin to recognize how Christianity becomes incarnate in culture through art, music, architecture, literature, and the liturgical calendar

Appreciate the historical setting of the Bible

Learn the traditions of the Church and the mysteries of the faith through beauty, beautiful liturgy, and adoration.

Become acquainted with the tradition of sacred music as a form of prayer.

Acquire basic catechetical instruction in the meaning of the Incarnation, the Creeds of the Church, familiarity with the Old and New Testament and the difference between them, the meaning of the Mass, the liturgical calendar, basic prayers and practices of the church.

### *Skills:*

Memorize and recite Scripture, bible facts, catechism, prayers and hymns

Learn to pray liturgically, intercessory, and contemplatively

Learn to regard and participate in sacred music as a form of prayer

### *Aptitudes:*

Cultivate longing for God

Develop habits of stillness and adoration

Begin to develop a habit of prayer, a love for the mysteries of the faith, and a desire for God's beauty and truth.

Develop a habit of noticing the presence of God

## **Art**

### *Knowledge:*

Learn how to look at and begin to interpret paintings

Study and give rudimentary explanations of Christian art and iconography

Study and give rudimentary explanation of art related to Egypt, Greece, and Rome

Begin to know the properties, characteristics, and qualities of beauty

Begin to recognize how art expresses cultural ideals

*Skills:*

Learn how to look at, examine, and see a painting and other works of art

Learn to tell the story of a painting

Begin to render as well as draw imaginatively

Learn to copy according to established rules

*Aptitudes:*

Acquire habits of attending, noticing, sitting still, and concentrating

Learn discipline from following simple projects through to completion

Begin to develop eye and appreciation for beauty

Begin to question art works for their meaning

**Language: Literature, Grammar, Composition, and Drama**

*Knowledge:*

Alphabet

Phonics and Reading

Spelling

Beginning writing/handwriting/print

Beginning grammar

Beginning poetic understanding

Early vocabulary, phrases, prayers

*Skills:*

Learn to read proficiently

Develop reading comprehension

Employ correct grammar in writing and speech

Learn good penmanship, using proper technique and beginning cursive

Recognize and write complete sentences

Understand the parts of speech

Say and write the days of the week, seasons, months of the year, their home address, titles of respect, abbreviations, dates

Understand and use beginning punctuation, contractions, capital letters, synonyms, antonyms

Be able to order simple ideas, form paragraphs, and copy the final work

Narration: retell stories in detail, with vocal clarity, poise, eye contact

Act out stories with other students as characters

Develop ability to identify the main idea

Answer comprehension questions about a reading passage in complete sentences

Copy work: copy sentences from works of history, the Bible, or literature

Recitation: recite poems, psalms from memory with vocal clarity, poise, eye contact

Conversation: "Socratic" discussions should teach students to begin questioning and discussing stories, pictures, fables, or proverbs according to four rules: 1. Read the text carefully. 2. Listen to what others say and don't interrupt. 3. Speak clearly. 4. Give others your respect.

Perform a play and memorize lines

#### *Aptitudes:*

Develop a capacity for listening

Develop memory

Appreciate playfulness in language

Develop the habits of concentration, stillness, memory

Learn to ask questions about the moral or meaning of stories and symbols

Learn to speak directly and confidently

### **Nature Studies**

#### *Knowledge:*



Understand the difference between certain animal groups

State and catalogue animals of certain species by their differences

Recite key characteristics of the way of life for certain animals or animal groups

Understand the basic divisions within the plant kingdom and the distinguishing characteristics of each.

Learn to identify flora, fauna, and wildlife indigenous to the region

Begin to develop an elementary understanding of the human body

Begin to understand the body-soul unity of the human person and the specific characteristics that distinguish humans from other animals

Understand the basic regional geography and seasons

Recite the planets of the solar system

Develop an understanding of vocabulary related to universal bodies

Learn about the Sun and its connection to life on Earth

*Skills:*

Be able to narrate knowledge of science

Develop skill of observing, rendering, and cataloging this knowledge in a “Nature Notebook”

*Aptitudes:*

Develop a capacity to attend to and notice nature

Develop a wonder and appreciation for the natural world

## **Mathematics**

*Knowledge:*

Acquire basic numeracy

Understand equivalent forms of the same number using diagrams, objects, and numbers

Recognize basic geometric shapes and parts of shapes

Solve word problems

*Skills:*

Count, read, write, and compare numbers up to 1,000 both symbolically and through physical construction

Acquire facility with basics of place value

Perform basic addition and subtraction functions of one- two- and three-digit numbers

Understand basic fraction concepts

Count by 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 10s

Identify and construct circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, ovals, cubes, tetrahedral pyramids, cylinders, cones, spheres, and rectangular prisms

Recognize and describe the appearance of basic patterns in nature

Recognize equivalency in number, shape, pattern, and other physical characteristics

Construct basic sets and groupings of objects in the environment and nature and be able to articulate inclusion and exclusion criteria

Recognize and solve simple replacement codes

Solve simple geometric puzzles

Take linear measurements and be able to articulate changes in measurement over time

Tell and record time in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years

Recognize basic currency, introduce coin tossing scenarios as an introduction to probability

*Aptitudes:*

Recognize the ubiquity of number and shape in the world around us

Develop a sense of wonder at recognizing how the world can be expressed mathematically

Develop a love for constructing math, numerically and geometrically

**Music**

*Knowledge:*

Know elements of music: melody, harmony, rhythm, pitch, tone

Begin to think about what music means and why it is or is not beautiful

Know instruments of the orchestra by sight and sound

Be introduced to the tradition of sacred music

Begin to understand symbols in music

*Skills:*

Begin to read music

Begin to acquire some musical skills singing and playing elementary instruments

Begin to be able to concentrate on, listen to, and discuss a piece of music

*Aptitudes:*

Begin to develop a love and appreciation of beautiful music and its power

Begin to understand the relationship between music, prayer and liturgy

Acquire the habit and develop their powers of patient, attentive listening

## **Physical Education**

*Knowledge:*

Understand their bodies and physical abilities as a gift

Begin to learn the rules of major sports and races

*Skills:*

Begin to acquire facility in throwing, catching, hitting, and kicking

Begin to learn basic dance steps

Begin to deliberately coordinate body to physical activity

*Aptitudes:*

Practice teamwork and good sportsmanship



## **Upper Grammar Stage Objectives**

### **Third Grade: Early Modern Year**

### **Fourth Grade: Maryland / Modern Year**

### **Fifth Grade: Ancient Greeks and Romans revisited**

#### **History**

##### **Third Grade: The Early Modern Year**

###### *Knowledge:*

Understand key figures in events of the Early Modern time period

Appreciate how the lives of the saints shaped respective time periods

Know how people of the Early Modern time understood God and man

Recognize how Early Modern culture exhibits an understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty

Know that Christianity has shaped the world and that the expansion of Christianity has brought increasing liberty, reason, culture and enlightenment

Understand key technological developments of the Renaissance

Recognize basic geography

Memorize chants and songs for relevant kings and queens, states and capitals

Recognize major periods of history using timelines

Understand how differences between these periods and cultures are reflected in art

#### **History**

##### **Fourth Grade: Maryland/Modern Year**

Understand how American culture exhibits an understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty

Understand how America understands God and man  
Appreciate the novelty of America in relation to its European origins  
Understand what it means to be a good citizen  
Understand the differences between political forms of the Early Modern and Modern times  
Understand key technological developments of the Industrial Revolution and the Modern era  
Recognize basic geography (U.S. states, Maryland counties, cities, bodies of water)  
Memorize chants and songs for relevant kings and queens, states and capitals  
Recognize major periods of history using timelines  
Understand how differences between these periods and cultures are reflected in art

## **History**

### Fifth Grade: Ancient Year

#### *Knowledge:*

Understand the Incarnation as the decisive act of God in history  
Appreciate how the coming of Christ transforms history  
Understand history and culture as the human desire for goodness, truth, and God Himself  
Understand themselves as part of the Israel, Egypt, Greek, Roman, Catholic story  
Understand how the differences between those time periods and cultures are reflected in their civilizations, religion, philosophy, government, economics, art, architecture, music, technology, and culture  
Understand key figures and events in ancient history  
Understand how the lives of the saints shaped the respective historical periods in which they lived  
Know how Christianity has shaped the world and how the expansion of Christianity has brought increasing liberty, reason, and culture  
Recognize basic geography  
Recognize major periods of history using timelines  
Acquire familiarity with primary sources from ancient times

#### *Skills*

Compare and contrast the essential characteristics of cultures, governments, and figures in different historical periods

Memorize significant dates and be able to build timelines from them

Recognize correlation between secular history and Bible/Church history

Explain the cause/effect of historical events

Discuss philosophical and theological questions which arise from history

Narrate historical stories

Read and recognize symbols on a map

Recognize how geography contributes to historical events

Write biographical reports and do basic research on important figures in history

Understand the contribution of major historical figures

### *Aptitudes*

Continue to develop an interest in history

See the relevance of the past to the present

Develop a love of country

Develop a desire to be both a good citizen and a faithful Catholic

Continue to develop curiosity to know how things came to be and why people acted as they did

Appreciation of the beauty of saints and integrity and courage of heroes

Cultivate a desire to imitate the good qualities of these saints and heroes

## **Religion**

### *Knowledge:*

Begin to recognize how Christian culture of the Middle Ages is reflected in art, music, architecture, literature, the liturgical calendar, structure of cities, organization of labor, and the code of chivalry and how this transformed in the Modern age

Begin to understand the importance of the Trinity and Incarnation

Know they belong to God's chosen people and are part of His family, the Church

Know they are made for heaven and that creatures and the created world help to get them there

Memorize books of the Bible important verses, Apostles, Beatitudes, basic prayers of the Mass in English or Latin, sacraments, major events in salvation history

Know the parts of the Mass

Know the major moments of salvation history from creation to Pentecost

Understand basic teachings on Confession and the Eucharist

Understand sin, grace, and the sacraments

Know the Creed and understand each of its tenets

Know how to pray the Rosary

Know the lives of the major saints of the periods of history they are studying

*Skills:*

Give more advanced theological discussions of Church doctrines

Learn how to “assist” at Mass through acolyte training

Memorization and recitation of Scripture, Bible facts, catechism, prayers, and hymns

Learn to pray liturgically, intercessory, and contemplatively

Learn to regard and participate in sacred music as a form of prayer

*Aptitudes:*

Cultivate longing for God

Develop personal relationship with Christ as friend and Mary as mother

Begin to value silence

Have favorite saints and relationships with them

Examine conscience, go to Confession, “offer up” a sacrifice

Strengthening of the conscience to begin to love God’s will and wish to avoid sin

Take responsibility for faults and failures and learn to apologize sincerely

Acquire a spirit of service, collaboration, and genuine friendship

## **Art**

*Knowledge:*

Understand the significance of the Christian contribution to art

Begin to appreciate an art history perspective in addition to a cultural history perspective

Study and give explanations of art of relevant time periods

Begin to give more complex explanations and interpretations of works of art

Continuation of rendering

Develop an understanding of and be able to apply the following principles in artistic work: line, shape, texture, color, value and form

Recognize and employ basic elements of space and perspective

*Skills:*

Continue to learn how to examine and see a painting and other works of art

Learn to tell a story of a painting

Learn how to justify why something is beautiful or not

Begin to reflect on the experience of beauty

Develop drawing, painting, sculpting skills

Copy more complex images according to rules

*Aptitudes:*

Deepen the habits of attending and noticing

Sit still and carefully observe art and whatever is the subject of rendering

Deepen love and appreciation of beauty

Begin to look at art contemplatively

Deepen appreciation of art and beauty in the life of faith

Be able to question art works for their meaning

**Language, Literature, Grammar, Composition, Latin, and Drama**

*Knowledge:*

Acquire familiarity with classic folklore, and the literature of the historical periods they study

Begin to master grammar

Write complete sentences and paragraphs

Acquire facility in spelling and vocabulary



Have a repertoire of light verse, psalms, ballads and historical mnemonic devices committed to memory

Memorize the fundamentals of Latin, vocabulary, primary declensions

Memorize basic prayers and phrases in Latin

*Skills:*

Be able to use prefixes, suffixes and root words as clues to meaning

Be able to read chapter books independently

Recognize plot, theme, symbolism, and other literary elements

Evaluate characters in stories

Ability to identify the main idea of a story

Write complete sentences and construct coherent paragraphs

Read and write summaries of readings

Practice good penmanship, especially cursive

Write paragraphs and recognize topic sentences

Identify conflict, climax and resolution of a story

Write an organized multi-paragraph composition in sequential order with a central idea

Research a topic using multiple books

Construct simple stories

Narration: retell complex stories in detail

Be able to read aloud with good inflection and diction

Recitation: students recite poems, speeches, psalms from memory with vocal clarity, poise, and eye contact

Conversation: "Socratic" discussions should teach students to begin questioning and discussing stories, pictures, fables, or proverbs according to four rules: 1. Read the text carefully. 2. Listen to what others say and don't interrupt. 3. Speak clearly. 4. Give others your respect.

Perform a play and memorize lines and help design costumes/props

*Aptitudes:*

Listen attentively to peers and instructor

Read and concentrate for long periods of time

Learn to ask questions about the moral or meaning of stories and symbols

Learn to speak directly and confidently

## **Nature Studies**

### *Knowledge:*

Recognize the study of nature as part of the human endeavor to understand the world

Understand science as one aspect of the study of nature which must be integrated into a more comprehensive vision of reality as God's creation and thus behold nature in a different way

Recognize persons and animals not as historical accidents or the sum of their mechanical parts, but as living wholes that transcend their parts and are irreducible to them

Understand that nature is hierarchically arranged

All organisms exhibit some sort of metabolism that relates them to the world through appetite

Animals have a capacity for self-movement and awareness through the senses.

Human beings in addition to the above move and transcend themselves through reason and will, are able to contemplate God and the world and can offer themselves in love.

Through the study of living things students should be able to

Render detailed observations of different organisms

Distinguish between genera in the plant and animal kingdom

Specify difference between species

Identify unique characteristics in different forms of animal life

Students should study the interior world of plants and animals through Botany, Anatomy, and Physiology

Students should develop an understanding of the external world through the study of chemistry and the hierarchy of the Periodic table.

Understand the differences in states of matter and how to transform between these states

Construct a basic reasoning for the laws of physics and how God created the world with rules and laws that are universal and consistent.

### *Skills:*

Continue to develop the skill of observing, rendering, and cataloguing knowledge in a "nature notebook"

Narrate scientific knowledge

Begin to ask philosophical questions of nature

Follow directions carefully when completing an experiment

*Aptitude:*

Acquire reverence for God's creation

Have a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world

Have an enthusiasm for examining the physical world and acquire the habit of curiosity regarding nature

Acquire a desire to experiment with what is being studied and observed

## **Mathematics**

*Knowledge:*

Deploy numeracy/counting whole numbers to the millions, decimal place value

Recognize geometric shapes and calculate perimeter and area

Have facility in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division – whole number operations

Add, subtract, multiply, divide decimals to the thousandth place

Use fractions (simplify, add, subtract, multiply, divide)

Measure accurately using customary and metric units

Estimate measurement when tools are not available using comparison of the surroundings/familiar objects

Solve word problems

Count money – basic decimals

Acquire basic Algebra skills

Begin to understand proportions

Comprehend basic averages – mean, median, mode

Introduce classical geometric design

Recognize and construct fundamental shapes in plane geometry: points, lines, rays, angles, parallels, perpendiculars, quadrilaterals, and regular/irregular polygons

Construct Platonic and Archimedean solids

Use Euler's formula for the number of vertices, faces, edges of a polyhedral

Solve more complex codes such as single replacement and translation code

Apply numeric methods in describing natural phenomena – for example estimate the number of leaves on a tree by modeling the splits on a branch

*Skills:*

Memorize and master addition/subtraction facts (0-10)

Memorize and master multiplication/division facts (0s – 12s)

Use mental arithmetic

Multiply single- and double-digit numbers

Divide multi-digit numbers by one digit

Tell time to the quarter, half hour, and to five minutes and one minute

Add and subtract decimals, compare decimals and fractions

Multiply multi-digit numbers by two-digit numbers

Find the area of two-dimensional shapes

Use problem solving strategies for real world problems

Reason mathematically orally and in writing

Add and subtract fractions and decimals

Solve simple probabilities, including independent and dependent events and simple truth tables for conjunctions, disjunctions, negations, implications

Count back change to \$100

Read and use line, bar, and circle graphs

*Aptitudes:*

Acquire a foundation for logical reasoning through math

Be attuned to the relevance of number and shape

Begin to appreciate the aesthetics of number through the recognition of patterns

## **Music**

### *Knowledge:*

Understand the concepts of melody, harmony, and rhythm

Be able to recognize beautiful music and be able to explain why it is beautiful

Recognize instruments by sight and sound

Be able to sing, and if possible, play an instrument

Be able to read music

Memorize lyrics and know how to sing liturgical music

Sing carols, ballad, authentic folk music from the time period they are studying

Sing the Hail Mary and Our Father in plain chant

Recognize forms of music from the periods of history they have studied

### *Skills:*

Acquire musical skills singing and/or playing a musical instrument

Be able to concentrate, listen, and discuss a piece of music

Begin to learn how to sing/play various parts of a musical piece (applying their understanding of melody, harmony, and rhythm)

## **Physical Education**

### *Knowledge:*

Understand their bodies and physical abilities as gifts

Learn the rules of major sports and races

Recognize the importance of discipline for achieving bodily excellence

Understand the dynamics of competition

### *Skills:*

Acquire facility in throwing, kicking, hitting, and catching

Learn to work as a team in order to achieve a goal

Compete against other students of similar skill level

### *Aptitudes:*

Practice teamwork and good sportsmanship

Aspire to physical gracefulness

Admire excellent athletic performances, especially their aesthetic qualities



## **The Logic Stage Objectives**

### **Sixth Grade: The Christendom Year**

**Seventh Grade: American Year- Colonial times to Civil War**

**Eighth Grade: American Year – Civil War to Current**

## **History**

Sixth Grade: Christendom

### *Knowledge:*

Understand the Incarnation as the decisive act of God in history

Understand key figures in events of the Christendom time period

Appreciate how the lives of the saints shaped the time

Know how people of the time understood God and man

Recognize how culture exhibits an understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty

Know that Christianity has shaped the world and that the expansion of Christianity has brought increasing liberty, reason, culture and enlightenment

Understand key technological developments of the time

Recognize basic geography

Memorize chants and songs for relevant kings and queens,

Recognize major periods of history using timelines

Understand how differences between these periods and cultures are reflected in art

## **History**

### Seventh and Eighth Grade: American Years

#### *Knowledge:*

Understand key figures and events in American history

Understand the formation and processes of the American political system

Understand saints and their influence on the Americas

Understand history of America in the context of Catholic and world history

Understand the novelty of American in relation to its European origins

Recognize basic geography

Recognize major periods of history using timelines

Acquire familiarity with primary sources from this time period.

#### *Skills:*

Acquire facility in reading primary sources of various kinds

Discuss philosophical and theological questions that arise from history

Recognize the correlation between secular history and Church history

Explain cause and effect of historical events

Compare, contrast, and explain the essential characteristics of cultures, governments, and figures in different historical periods

Think and write imaginatively from within the midst of different historical periods

Analyze the importance of significant new ideas as they emerge in history

Memorize significant dates and be able to build a timeline around them

#### *Aptitudes:*

Deepen appreciation of history as an expression of man's desire for God and his pursuit of goodness, truth, and beauty

Evaluate world events and historical characters from a Catholic perspective

Draw on past ideas to evaluate present assumptions and deepen self-knowledge

Appreciate the beauty of saints and the integrity and courage of heroes

Develop a desire to be both a good citizen and a faithful Catholic

Develop a sense of inquiry

Develop a comprehensive and ordered sense of the world

Cultivate a desire for wisdom

## **Religion**

### *Knowledge:*

Know that God made us for Himself and that our hearts are restless until they rest in Him

Understand history as oriented to Christ before his Incarnation and flowing from Christ after his Incarnation

Know the major moments of salvation history from creation to modern day

Recognize the competing claims about God (or the gods) offered by pagans and philosophers and how the Christian understanding of God is radically different

Recognize how Christianity transforms the classical inheritance

Recognize how the Christian culture is reflected in art, music, literature, architecture, liturgical calendar, structure of cities, and organization of labor

Begin to understand the Trinity and Incarnation reveal both God and man

Know the teachings of select books of the Bible

Begin to understand the claims of the Protestant Reformers, modern atheists, and moral relativists and how the Church defends the truth in the face of these claims

Begin to understand the Mass, its structure, meaning and place in God's plan for the world

Understand the basic teachings on the sacraments, especially Confirmation

Begin to understand and appreciate that a person is a unity of body and soul, created in God's love and called to love and truth, and thus to understand the true personal meaning of their own bodies

Begin to understand the Christian vision of love and Catholic sexual morality flow from the truth about God and man



*Skills:*

Give more advanced theological explanations of Church doctrine

Defend the tenets of the faith against heresy and atheism as well as the major moral teachings against confusion

Begin to think theologically

Memorization of Scripture and scriptural arguments

*Aptitudes:*

Cultivate and reflect on longing for God

Deepen the habit of contemplative prayer

Deepen the familiarity with and participation in the liturgical life of the Church

Deepen appreciation of silence

Examine conscience, go to Confession, “offer up” a sacrifice

Strengthening of the conscience to God’s will and wish to avoid sin

Heed the double commandment to love God and one’s neighbor

Cultivate friendships based on virtue

**Art**

*Knowledge*

Begin to understand how truth is expressed in the beauty of art

Understand the significance of the Christian contribution to art and how art reveals the depth of the Christian mystery

Compare and contrast pagan and Christian art and how Christians incorporate or transform pagan themes in their art

Appreciate the development of art in its historical, philosophical, and stylistic dimensions

Give more complex explanations and interpretations of works of art

Understand how art is the expression of culture’s desire for truth, goodness, and beauty

Continue rendering

Deepen the understanding of the principles that constitute a work of art

*Skills:*

Continue to learn how to look at, examine, and see a painting and other works of art

Give more complex explanations of artworks  
Learn how to justify if something is beautiful or not  
Reflect on the experience of beauty and its relation to longing  
Develop drawing, painting, and sculpting skills  
Develop creativity on the basis of imitation, tradition, and discipline

*Aptitudes:*

Deepen the habits of attending and noticing  
Sit still and observe carefully works of art and the subjects to be rendered  
Deepen love and appreciation of beauty  
Deepen reflection on the experience of beauty and its effect on the soul  
Deepen appreciation of art and beauty in the life of faith  
Be able to question artworks for their meaning

**Language Arts: Literature, Grammar, Composition, Logic, Latin, and Drama**

*Knowledge:*

Understand literature as a reflection of history and culture  
Understand literature and poetry as vehicles for the revelation of truth  
Understand literature as culture's way of seeking and manifesting truth, goodness, and beauty  
Learn to think poetically  
Know the elements of good speaking in order to speak truthfully, persuasively, beautifully, and well  
Possess a command of English grammar  
Recognize a variety of writing styles and how to employ them  
Understand the elements of argument  
Acquire a basic facility in reading, praying, and translating Latin  
Ponder the relationship between the Word of God (Christ), the Word of God (Scripture) and the words we use

*Skills of Literature*

Make connections to related topics, especially history and religion

Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of tone, style, and use of language

Analyze the effects of elements such as plot, theme, characterization, style, mood, and tone

Discuss the effects of literary devices such as figurative language, dialogue, flashback, allusion, irony, and symbolism

Analyze and evaluate themes and central ideas in literature

Recognize the relevance of literary themes to contemporary problems in one's own life

Analyze the relationship between characters, ideas, and experiences

Discern an implied main idea, draw an inference, and recognize how different texts address the same fundamental human questions

Deepen the ability to question the texts and characters

Develop ability to discuss literature intelligently and insightfully with proper grammar and diction

### *Skills for Grammar and Composition*

Master all facets of English grammar

Properly express the relationship of ideas in a sentence, paragraph, essay

Recognize and correct stylistic errors such as sentence fragments and run-on sentences

Narrative writing-

Write original and descriptive passages

Write coherent and logical prologues, epilogues, sequels, dialogues, or alternative endings for fiction and nonfiction

Incorporate effective narrative techniques into a short story focusing on the following

Point of view

Setting, including time and place

Character development

Elements of plot structure

Descriptive writing -

Write descriptive passages focusing on one of the following: person, place, object, event, works of art, plants, animals

Use evocative imagery (vivid words, active voice words, colorful modifiers)

Use figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, allusion)

Persuasive writing-

Develop rhetorically persuasive logical writing style

Develop a thesis that makes a disputable claim

Support a thesis with logically organized and relevant evidence

Develop and logically support a position addressing the reader's concerns and counterarguments

Analytical/Expository Writing

Develop interpretations exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight

Organize interpretations around several clear ideas, premises, or images

Develop a thesis that makes a disputable claim

Make an argument for the thesis providing reasons, details, and examples

Write a response to literature demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the text and justifying the interpretation through use of examples and textual evidence

Write a character analysis

*Skills for Logic*

Learn the basics of logical reasoning

Learn and identify logical structures, fallacies, and biases in speech and various non-fiction texts

Express own arguments logically and clearly through speech and written word

*Skills for Latin*

Master basic declensions, conjugations, and simple grammar

Possess a solid vocabulary

Memorize Latin prayers, hymns, and liturgical responses

Know how to translate complex sentences and short stories from Latin to English

Compose sentences in Latin

*Skills for Drama*

Study a play –preferably Shakespeare or Greek tragedy

Analyze and discuss characters and their motivations

Design costumes, props, and set

*Aptitudes:*

Develop a love of reading and language

Appreciate the beauty, playfulness, and logical possibilities of language

Explore own ideas through writing

Draw on literature for deeper self-knowledge

Deepen habits of stillness, concentration, and memory

Nurture the habit of listening

Habitually look to poetry and literature as vehicles of truth

**Nature Studies/Science**

*Knowledge:*

Name and employ the Four Causes of Aristotle in the explanation of nature

Understand more deeply the relation between science and philosophy in the study of nature

Recognize the study of nature as part of the human endeavor to understand the world

Understand science as one aspect of the study of nature which must be integrated into a more comprehensive vision of the reality of God's creation

Understand the Earth as home for life through the study of ecosystems, Natural processes which support life (weather, soil, water cycles, atmosphere) and Geological processes (volcanoes, plate tectonics, erosion)

Acknowledge Earth's place in the solar system and the finely tuned astronomical factors necessary to support life

Develop an understanding of the basic principles of matter.

Examine the basic building blocks of matter

Utilize the laws of physics to explain natural phenomena

*Skills:*

Ask philosophical and scientific questions of nature

Describe various objects using Aristotle's Four Causes

Employ scientific methods

Explain the distinction between animate and inanimate

*Aptitudes:*

Appreciate the natural world and develop wonder for the mystery of God's creation

Recognize the beauty of creation

Develop enthusiasm for examining nature and acquire the habit of curiosity regarding the physical world

## **Mathematics**

### *Knowledge*

Master arithmetic necessary for algebra: order of operations, fraction, decimal, and integer operations

Develop more advanced number sense (integers, irrational numbers, percentage, scientific notation, absolute value, exponents, roots and radicals)

Understand factors and multiples, find greatest common factor and least common multiple/denominator

Understand measurement concepts

Read and use a coordinate plane

Master developmentally appropriate algebra and geometry

Recognize mathematical and geometric patterns in art and nature

Begin to understand the philosophical and theological history of mathematical symbolism

### *Skills*

Think algebraically and geometrically

Use logic and hands on experience to solve problems

Convert fractions, decimals and percents

Rewrite fractions using factors and multiples

Solve problems using rate, proportion, common formulas, and percentage applications

Use estimation techniques

Use mental arithmetic

Use and convert customary and metric measurements

Solve developmentally appropriate functions, equations, and inequalities and graph them on a coordinate plane

Calculate slope

Write and use formulas to solve problems

Combine like terms

Add, subtract, multiply, divide, factor polynomials

Represent quadratic functions

Identify properties of congruency between angles, parallel lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, other polygons

Calculate area, perimeter, circumference of two-dimensional figures

Calculate surface area and volume of three-dimensional figures

Use the Pythagorean theorem to solve problems

Use the coordinate plane to reflect, rotate, and translate figures

Calculate simple probability

Read and create bar graphs, line graphs, circle graphs, stem-and-leaf plots, and make predictions

Analyze musical compositions for mathematical properties – particularly Baroque music

Recognize sacred numbers in art

*Aptitudes:*

Appreciate mathematics as one way humans give account of reality

Appreciate the relevance of math to music, art, science, and architecture

Acquire a foundation for logical reasoning through math

Enhance logical reasoning

Be attuned to the relevance of number and shape

Begin to appreciate the aesthetics of number through the recognition of patterns

## **Music**

*Knowledge:*

Understand the elements of music

Understand the essential difference between genres of music, especially within classical and sacred music

Appreciate the theology inherent in sacred music

Recognize the characteristic differences between different composers

Be able to recognize beautiful music and explain why it is beautiful

Be able to sing and if possible, play an instrument

Be able to read music

Memorize lyrics and know how to sing liturgical music and traditional Catholic hymns  
Appreciate carols, ballads, and authentic folk music from different historical periods and cultures  
Sing plain chant in Latin and English  
Deepen understanding of the math of music

*Skills:*

Acquire some musical skills singing or playing an instrument  
Be able to concentrate on, listen to, and discuss a piece of music  
Sing or play various parts of a musical piece – applying an understanding of melody, rhythm, and harmony

*Aptitudes:*

Deepen love and appreciation for beautiful music and its power  
Appreciate the profundity and playfulness of music  
Understand the contemplative and mystical dimensions of sacred music  
Acquire the habit of patience, attentive listening, and active participation

### **Physical Education**

*Knowledge:*

Understand embodiment and physical excellence as a gift  
Recognize unity of psychic and physical powers in playing well  
Know and be able to regulate the rules of major sports and races  
Recognize the importance of discipline for achieving bodily excellence  
Understand dynamics of competition

*Skills:*

Achieve facility in throwing, catching, hitting, and kicking  
Be able to transfer these skills to new sports and activities  
Learn to work as a team in order to achieve a goal  
Compete against other students of similar skill level

*Aptitudes:*

Practice teamwork and good sportsmanship  
Aspire to physical gracefulness



Admire excellent athletic performances, especially for their aesthetic qualities