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**School and Classroom Theory and Methods**  
**Introduction**

Ronald Kirk  
Created June 12, 1986  
Modified March 4, 2015

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## **Introduction**

For now, this guide remains a very rough work in progress. I have rushed to make it available to several ministries that wish to build upon my several decades of work in educational theory and methodology, based in Scripture, history and crafted evaluated practice. I will greatly appreciate any constructive criticism toward the improvement of this work.

A great many years of experience produced the content of this introduction to school and classroom theory and methods. In order to be as fully useful as possible, I suggest the reader study the ideas contained herein in detail, including providing mental or real examples to yourself. Also prove for yourself the Biblical origin of the ideas herein. With sufficient time and resources, I hope that I may add sufficient Scripture references and examples of every significant point toward assisting mastery within this work proper. As time and resources permit, we will make available the principles provided here applied to teacher training guides for specific subjects. In the meantime, careful study and pondering of this content should go a long way toward way toward a mature classroom practice for even the novice teacher. This has been our consistent first-hand experience.

### **A Biblical Philosophy of Education Needed**

Sound teaching methods begin with a comprehensive Biblical philosophy of education regarding the child, God's educational purpose, methods, subjects, and the process of learning itself—all centered in Christ. The best foundation of sound teaching methodology is to acquire the skill of thinking Biblically in a systematic way. Mastery of a few governing principles grants tremendous power for taking every thought captive to Christ. The capacity to think Biblically enables the teacher as learner wisely to choose materials and the teachers to whom they submit. The capacity to think Biblically gives the teacher power to *adapt any given curriculum* or set of methods to a Biblical framework. Otherwise, *Get Wisdom!* education system provides a sound basis for producing thoroughly Biblical original curriculum, and school and classroom practices.

This is one of the most powerful elements of *Get Wisdom!* Therefore, in spite of the understandable urgency to be *practical*, there is truly nothing more practical than to invest in the practical understanding of a Biblical philosophy of life in general, a Biblical theory and practice in particular. The teacher must understand Biblical requirements of the mature believer, and therefore the Biblical end and purpose of education. The teacher must understand how strategic life subjects serve to prepare a child for living on God's terms.

The danger always looms that, without good preparation, the teacher who learned a humanistic view of education will tend to reproduce that humanistic education in the child. With almost all contemporary Christian education deriving from materialist, behaviorist principles, if we are to be faithful, we must be extremely vigilant to acquire a thoroughly

Biblical view of education. This is the purpose of *Get Wisdom! Making Christian Heroes of Ordinary People* and *Thy Will Be Done: When All Nations Call God Blessed* (Nordskog Publishing). I highly recommend reading them, R. J. Rushdoony's educational works (Chalcedon Foundation), and the work of Verna Hall, Rosalie Slater (Foundation for American Christian History), and James B. Rose (American Christian History Institute) on education. A thorough knowledge of Christian history with many higher expressions of godliness serves alongside the Biblical root of all things to help guide the recovery of thinking and acting Biblically. The details of this presentation depend upon this broader and more fundamental foundation.

## **Teaching Goals: Knowledge, Wisdom, Skill, Character and Christian Liberty**

Good education must direct itself toward good goals. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10). Only the Bible can direct the learner and teacher to proper educational goals.

First, one must possess knowledge of literacy, the problem solving disciplines, and creativity. These give us the intellectual power to understand and apply the Scriptures. Every subject requires the acquisition of knowledge. At every point, the accomplishment of the ultimate educational goals requires accomplishment in the intermediate basics—literacy, problem solving, reflective reasoning. By reflective reasoning I mean, the ability to think from principle to particular application, and to derive principle from particular examples. What does it mean to love our neighbors as ourselves? What can we learn from the story of David and Goliath? God chose the creative architects of the Mosaic tabernacle by name. The creative God made us in His image. Improving the raw materials of life requires the ability see things before they are—to envision better and to do so in a practical fashion.

Wisdom is fine discernment between ideas, to keep the narrow path that leads to life. It is also the skill to choose wisely. Thus, nothing can substitute for clear Biblical thinking applied to specific things. There is no checklist for how to do this. It is a life-long quest. Every subject contributes to godly wisdom when approached from a Biblical point of view. When one becomes accomplished in wisdom, one has the capacity to wrestle with complex issues, reduce them to their constituent principles, and, yet by faith, make the difficult decisions among the choices life hands us. Bible, imaginative literature, and history are excellent subjects for the acquisition of wisdom. The problem-solving subjects of mathematics and science also represent opportunities to acquire wisdom.

Because mere knowledge is speculative, it must have a corresponding outlet in action to establish its truth. Action tests and proves learning. Skills result. Christ expects us to produce fruit. The good fruit of accomplishment requires skill. Every subject requires a set of skills, most in common with other subjects, but some unique. Thus, every subject contributes something

special toward acquiring the strategic life skills that serve no matter what the human endeavor. Literature assists in the listening and reading skills, for example. The teacher should never dumb down a subject, and thus remove opportunities for the student to acquire real skill. A sound approach to education will not resort to true/false and multiple choice questions, for example. In real life, there is little one can accomplish with the skill of merely choosing from among predetermined answers.

Character is the tested and proven quality of the soul that remains steadfast for righteousness in difficult circumstances. Again, character grows through overcoming difficulties by faith. School is one of the best places to learn Christian character as the learner constantly confronts by faith in Christ the difficulties of acquiring new knowledge and skill.

Christian liberty and justice are so fundamental to the needs of living—especially the kind of productive living Christ requires—that their negligence is criminal. It is because Christians in America have been relatively poor stewards for at least the last hundred and fifty years, that we suffer the potential loss of liberty and justice altogether. It is critically important to help the child to realize that when he controls his flesh, when he governs himself, he is most free, and that the discipline of the law is for the lawless. Giving him opportunities to serve his neighbor and to exercise leadership helps him learn the skills for the stewardship of liberty—going far toward making him a good and responsible dual citizen of Christ’s kingdom and his home country. In this sense, the generational reproduction of a godly culture through child education is essential to maintain a godly order sufficient to serve God unto potential. Education that equips with knowledge, understanding, wisdom, skill, character and faith is essential to the Great Commission and the Kingdom of Christ, His will done on earth as it is in heaven.

Equipping a child to learn how to learn develops overcoming faith in him. Inspirational teaching encourages the desire to learn. We know this from personal long experience. Teachers should always aim toward a self-motivation to learn, and to love learning as a life-long pursuit.

A well-educated child—one who masters the necessary higher educational goals—is one who has previously acquired the tools for learning.

The *Get Wisdom!* educational system develops seven fundamental principles of the historic, applied Christian faith. The teacher should always attempt to inculcate the mastery of these principles through classroom method. The following peculiar statement of these seven principles for our present purpose is:

- *Godly Individuality.* *Individuality* means personal responsibility and individual dependence on Christ for all accomplishment. Yet individuality also requires relationship. The student must learn to prefer his neighbor. Pride of knowledge, for

example, tends to make us feel superior over our neighbor. Such an attitude requires correction.

- *Christian Self-Government.* *Self-government* means not needing always to be told what to do and how to do it. New learning, of course, requires these helps from the teacher, but the goal is always self-possession that allows the student to be internally disciplined rather than externally disciplined.
- *Christian Character.* Because of sin, godly self-government is impossible without *Proven Character* (Romans 5:1-5, *experience* in the KJV is *proven character*). Again, character comes through overcoming measured difficulty that neither so frustrates the student, giving him an excuse to quit, nor such ease that the student develops an attitude of contempt for the subject.
- *Stewardship.* The student must realize that God requires *Stewardship* of everything he handles, as it all belongs to Christ (Matthew 25). Therefore, diligent maintenance of all materials and tools is important. One of our seven-year-old student's parents bought him a very expensive Mont Blanc fountain pen. Meeting him later as young adult, we found he still possessed that fine instrument. Students are rightfully responsible for the material condition of their classroom, and should contribute to its maintenance—as appropriate—home or school grounds in general as well.
- *Godly Expressions.* The student should learn that every endeavor has a better or a worse resulting *Expression*. Our most excellent God always produces according to the highest degree of excellence. He expects his children to do so as well. Students as a matter of course ought to study the Scriptures and history for the best expressions of every subject, and then reason the best expressions in contemporary terms. What constitutes a high expression of attire or manners? What are the characteristics of godly math, music, science, and literature?
- *Discipleship.* Students should recognize that their learning should be unto such mastery that they will be able to reproduce their accomplishments in others. We call this *Discipleship*.
- *Covenantal Union.* Students should learn that individual liberty is as equally important as *Covenantal Union*. If anything, we restrain our liberty so that we do not presume on our neighbors. Classroom conduct should reflect that godly love.

## **Principled Relationships—the Constituents of Teaching and Learning**

In God's Trinitarian universe, Christians should see all things as relational. This view presupposes meaning in everything. God created everything with purpose, and all things are for His glory (1 Cor. 10:31; John 17:4; Rev. 4:11). The Holy Trinity represents the ultimate in relationship, with perfect love between the Holy Persons, without diminishing individuality. The essential Law of God is to love Him and our neighbor as ourselves. Therefore, it should seem obvious that everything in the earth should be held in relational terms.

There are three kinds of human relationships: God to man; man to man under God; and man to the rest of creation—material things. This relationship with material creation is important, as part of our stewardship, toward the material provision to support life. Furthermore, economic endeavors serve God's eternal evangelical purpose by encouraging relationship.

When we begin to study any subject, we ought to ask, what does this subject require of me before God, to serve Him? How may I use this subject for God's glory? How should I handle this subject for the good of my neighbor? How can this subject forward the Gospel and Christ's kingdom? How do I relate to the subject? How may I handle it as an economic resource under the enterprise required by the dominion mandate (Genesis 1:26, 9:1; Psalm 8:6)? How do I organize it for study? How do I organize it from its rudiments to higher expression for learning and mastery? What arts (skills) should result from learning the subject?

Learning typically requires three minimal, fundamental relationships—the constituents of education—though there certainly may be others. At the least, we have parent, teacher, and student. The parent and teacher often are the same person. Yet the offices they represent are distinct and so require differing understanding. Separating our spheres of authority and responsibility are a part of the refinement of thinking required by wisdom.

### **The Parent**

The parent holds the fundamental authority and responsibility for the education of the student. According to the Biblical principles of representation and specialization (e.g. 1 Cor. 12), parents may properly delegate some specific authority to teachers. Yet the parent maintains the responsibility for the holy trust the child represents. Therefore, a sound parent-teacher relationship is covenantal, with very explicit understanding of the authority the teacher undertakes on the parent's behalf.

The parent in delegating authority realizes that the teacher will bring unique perspective that may vary by degrees from the parent's purpose. For the teacher truly to represent the parent, the parent-teacher relationship must hold a high degree of unity with regard to what constitutes godly education. But also, the parent must allow the teacher to bring her own

unique gifts, perspective, and, accordingly, a peculiar authority within limits. Thus, the parent and teacher, as in any relationship based in agapé, will practice good will toward one another, be honest, but not exacting, but rather forbearing. A micromanaged teacher is no teacher. (Likewise, a wantonly self-centered or self-determined teacher is no teacher.)

Jesus said that it is enough for the student to become like his teacher. This applies both positively and negatively (Matt. 10:25; Luke 6:40). Thus, a high degree of agreement and mutual trust must exist from the beginning. The parent must therefore choose his representative teacher very carefully. Parents must not undermine the classroom with home-life practices that contradict the Biblical teachings occurring in the classroom.

Ideally, God gave two parents to every child. Both parents—mother and father—must keep in touch, involved, and up to date regarding the educational process. Parents bear ultimate earthly responsibility for family education. They can delegate authority, but must not shirk responsibility.

### **The Teacher**

The teacher as a constituent in learning holds a distinct office. This office is comprehensive in its sphere, but limited to specific authority within that sphere, and with no authority outside it.

The teacher limits action by the pupil to things that pertain to the delegated teaching task. Though the formal classroom operates differently from the family, the only model that education knows is the family. Again, it is highly relational—person to person. Even programmed self-learning consists in the structured relationship between the content preparer (the teacher) and the learner. The student submits voluntarily to the program so that he may learn from the teacher/content preparer. Thus, a classroom is a special kind of family. It differs in certain important ways. It is limited in its intimacy. The teacher merely represents the parents, again within the specific covenantal purposes. For example, a music teacher ordinarily does not teach mathematics, except what might be incidental to the musical purpose. A teacher may forego teaching personal hygiene, if not a part of the agreed to curriculum, except as incidental to requirements of the classroom. Obviously, for a teacher to represent a parent, the two must keep a close relationship and on-going relationship.

Since a fundamental purpose of the teacher is to inculcate a love of godly learning, the teacher must love the work and take joy in it. Teaching requires a very high degree of self-sacrificial serving. One who undertakes such serving grudgingly does no one any good. Everyone has off days, but it doesn't do to be a crabby teacher. Rather, the joy of the Lord is our strength.

In a similar vein, the teacher must not expect validation from the student. Teachers and discipline would not be very much necessary if students automatically loved all kinds of learning and overcoming of difficulty. As the student is likely not to agree that every subject

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possesses the highest degree of enjoyment, the teacher must prepare to be the student's joy for him. Like a parent (though likely without many of the blessings of parenthood), the teacher must love the student, and lay down life for him. The student may trash the teacher verbally and otherwise. Again, the joy of the Lord must be our strength.

Learning is not cookie cutter and the classroom is not institutional as often constituted. Rather, teaching and learning is necessarily individual, though in a community context. To teach effectively, the teacher must know and understand the gifts and needs of the child, and must adjust the curriculum and teaching methods accordingly, as necessary.

Discipline—practice under the right level of government to the educational purpose—is the rule. The teacher must be a taskmaster, yes. But also, the teacher must be a friend, as winning the student's heart is as important as filling him with knowledge and skills. The teacher must, like the Holy Spirit, come alongside to help (John 16:7).

The teacher is an intermediate federal head over the child. In my schools, we advertised our services based in faith and character training as well as academics. We stressed Christian liberty and personal responsibility to the community as well as reading, writing and mathematics. Parents who select such a school to represent them, must expect their child to accept Biblical moral instruction and practice, again, within the sphere appropriate to classroom relational conduct and studies.

As the federal classroom head, the teacher must remember the Biblical educational goal—a mature, independent adult, capable of contributing economically and morally, as a husband or wife, a parent, a church member, a civil neighbor. Liberty with covenantal union is the rule. Liberty is the goal. Discipline is the means to the goal. Therefore, the teacher must constantly measure the degree of liberty or external discipline that is required for the good of the student and education's objective. Sometimes the student requires, momentarily, more discipline, pressing down in government. Yet the goal is ever more liberty. Discipline for discipline's sake, or for the mere convenience of the teacher is counterproductive. Of course, again, some discipline in the classroom community will always be necessary to accomplish the purpose. Structure provides the ability to manage numbers of spirited souls. The balance is difficult, and the teacher must be transparent enough to himself, students, and parents to confess lapses in discipline or into severity, and the need for correction of the classroom practice, including personal repentance by the teacher. Teaching is a very humbling and often overwhelming endeavor.

Remember always that the child is created in God's image, possessing inherent value and temporal and eternal purpose. The child is a child of the King. Ours is a holy trust on God's behalf. We must never think of our students as a problem or diminish them. With as much grace in our sin as we receive from God, so must we practice grace with our students.

As discussed above, the parent and teacher must walk closely together. The teacher must readily communicate with the parent a child's ordinary and special needs, accomplishments and joys.

Interestingly, upon the Biblical federal and sphere authority principles, the teacher also holds some authority over the parent. The teacher may say to the parent, and even at times *must* say, in order for me to be successful on your behalf, I must ask you to do this or that. Otherwise, the differential reality we create for the child will confuse and provoke him. Between the two spheres, he will choose the reality most pleasing to him, and the other sphere will become a joke to him, or worse. Usually this means that the sphere with the lax discipline will be favored. However, it is possible that a student will prefer a structured, safe, and loving classroom over a chaotic, confusing, or lax home, providing a safe harbor toward better things. However, neither alternative is at preferable to true unity between home and school.

With regard to the parent assisting his child's learning at home, it is proper for the teacher to ask the parent not to use methods that greatly differ from the classroom without teacher agreement. To do so can introduce confusion. Moreover, it can undermine the teacher's esteem and authority with the child. The parent should never say, "The way your teacher tells you is all wrong!" The teacher can barely do such a family any good. On the other hand, the parent may well have special insight into what the child learning patterns, for example. Teachers should always listen and consider the words of parents.

It is important to recognize that real education is a spiritual process, with spiritual implications, involving spiritual trials. We have hired teachers who promised to be excellent. Either from self-delusion or from ulterior motive, some would turn out not to be what we thought. Some had lied. Some tried to do the work on their own, without Christ as their true support. Eventually, as with trials in general and educational trials in particular, sin would surface and we could deal with the situation. We tried very hard to avoid these circumstances with various qualifying elements, but no system is perfect. These circumstances could cause damage, but the Lord brings His help and corrections. The point here is that we must do our best to choose our representatives wisely. As Jesus said, it is enough to become like your teacher.

### **Parent as Teacher**

If parent and teacher are the same person, it is important to practice prudence, understanding that the respective tasks of parenting and teaching each possess unique elements and requirements, and also similar elements and requirements. Varying degrees of governmental discipline often exist in these respective tasks. This is so because schooling consists in intense, relative short-term activities with definite short- and long-term goals. The intensity of learning new things and old things in new ways typical of classroom teaching typically means more structure, and greater external discipline, particularly in the early years. Parenting consists also in certain specific activities and goals, but also consists in ordinary living in more fluid

relationship. Classroom teaching tends to require more of authority, while parenting ordinarily allows more of merely loving being together or of doing customary chores already mastered. Self-consciously separating out the relative spheres of government for respective activity, while recognizing certain commonality can help the home school parent to maintain spiritual, mental and physical balance. For example, to continue the intensity of phonics drilling throughout a day's other activities will wear everyone out.

Nothing can replace thorough Biblical preparation and reflective experience yielding wisdom. Yet even more importantly God expects that both parents and teachers will typically tread water in a depth over their heads. God requires faith, trusting Him for specific insight and skill, but He also requires that we Him to bring fruit beyond our skills, capabilities and actions. Sometimes merely floating is enough.

### **The Tripod of Education**

It is not hard to identify Jesus' use of the tripod of education in the New Testament, nor God's use of it throughout the Scriptures. The tripod consists in *instruction*, *discipline*, and *inspiration* (or example). All three in due balance one to the other comprise complete education in any particular discipline.

### **Content and Instruction**

First, it should be obvious that education requires knowledge. Science—learning of facts and principles—comes before art—practice and skill. Knowledge informs the mind with facts, understanding, and wisdom.

There is no brute fact independent of God, His purpose, or authority (Hebrews 1:3; Acts 17:28). Therefore, we must understand all knowledge in terms of God's provision and expectation. God gave us the ability to know. He gave our minds abstraction and imagination. Abstraction is the ability to consider in the mind qualities of things separate from their reality. The number *one*, the basis of all mathematics, is an abstraction. Oneness is a quality that only exists in our minds. We may think of one chair or person, but no one can hand us a mere *one*. I have enjoyed asking my students for a *one*. After they try to give me one pencil, or even one dollar, they realize they can't give me a one without something real attached to it. Yet, I can know oneness, redness, or length. I can know joy or sadness by abstraction. We know things *analogically*—by comparison and contrast of qualities. We distinguish individuals by their likenesses and differences. That is, we know whole things because we assemble them in our minds by their special qualities. Johnny has brown hair. Judy has blue eyes. Even the very young mind is capable of understanding tremendous complexity. Only recently has technology translated ordinary analogical knowledge into a finer form we call *digital*. Now, we can create digital models of futuristic airplanes including all their structural and flight characteristics using

digital computers. Likewise, we can model great weather systems. All these are knowledge by analogy and abstraction.

Close in meaning to abstraction, imagination is the ability to form an image (picture) or thought (literate subject and verb) in the mind, though the thing conceived is neither visible nor even yet a reality. Thus, the imagination allows us to think of things as they will or might be, not only as they are. (See *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* regarding educational terms.)

It is important to realize that knowledge is not equal to the reality that knowledge represents. Spiritual and material reality exists beyond our physical reach to the world. We know it exists because God affirms the world we sense in His Word. Only Bible believers can have such confidence. Pagan and materialistic philosophers, when they begin with a godless void, must end with a godless void. They thus destroy the confidence of knowledge, not to mention any meaning. Thus, true and sure knowledge is available to us. The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7). On the other hand, we must realize that our perceptions may be wrong. We are finite. We are sinners and therefore can interpret facts wrongly. Thus, we must be humble when we assume knowledge. We must be careful to use tested and proved knowledge as sure knowledge. We must be correctible. We must be humble. Paul the Apostle says, "We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." (1Co 8:1-2).

We might differentiate between knowledge as facts, understanding or wisdom. A fact is what we know about a thing. We may say understanding is knowledge in its context, how things work together. Wisdom is the way things *ought* to work together, the righteous application of facts and understanding. Together we may say all three comprise differing aspects of knowledge. However, in a Biblical sense, we cannot separate sound understanding and wisdom from mere factuality. They all work together, because all things work together under God.

We call individual subjects *sphere topics*. By sphere topics, we mean identifiable individual focus of knowledge by individual characteristics. Because all individuals in the universe exist in some near or distant relationship with all other individuals, every sphere topic will expand according to the depth to which we pursue it. For example if we study color in the context of learning the skill of fine art painting, we might also study the spectrum of visible light—a topic of fundamental physics! It is with good reason Solomon notes that of the writing of books there is no end! Thus, each time we learn or teach a given subject, we consider the same major theme or sphere-topics to increasingly greater depth and breadth (in terms of related subjects) according to the present ability and time availability for the purpose.

In order for a teacher to teach well, he must first be a learner, a disciple. (This is true, of course, of all Christians who must learn of God, and then make disciples (2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 28:18-20).)

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Mastery of the school subjects must be the goal of the teacher, at least to the degree of accomplishment the teacher expects to teach. For the student, halting steps of learning by the teacher are better than no steps at all. I have watched fledgling teachers perform very well. I would rather have one humble teacher working for me—struggling with learning, but making the effort by faith—than five supposedly credentialed teachers indoctrinated by the university with atheistic principles of psychology and an incorrigibly secular pattern of thought.

The teacher must be as prepared as possible, organized, and disciplined. The ability to plan and prepare is a requisite gift for a professional teacher. Any mother is capable of such organization, because to some degree, every mother is a teacher. Diligence in effort and faith are the key, trusting God for the fruit. The most exquisite teacher preparation does not ensure the teacher will have absolute control over the subject every minute. For, such rigid planning does not account for the inspiration of God, nor the needs of the individual students, often revealed only moment to moment. Rather, exquisite planning gives the teacher such mastery over the content, scope of the subject and its sequencing as to give the teacher confidence to make course corrections and changes without undermining the general and specific goals of a course of study.

One way teachers must be self-disciplined is with respect to time. Five minutes of class time lost per day amounts to two whole school days by the end of the school year. I have been an effective teacher because I was very tough with myself regarding the use of classroom time. I enforced the rules that kept students from wasting time. Students must learn to anticipate the next step and be ready for it. They must accept the disciplined cadence of the classroom. As just one example of such discipline, when we recited phonograms aloud, I would not allow the students to drawl the sounds, but to articulate them crisply. It was not “the letter *a* says *ă ă ă ă*, *ā ā ā ā*, *ahhhhh*,” but “*ă, ā, ah.*” It is amazing how much more can be accomplished in a given time with thoughtful time management, including avoiding wasting time between activities. Yes, to a certain extent a good classroom teacher is a drill sergeant.

A positive side effect of such discipline ordinarily practiced is flexibility when special circumstances arise. We worked hard in my classes. When signs of fatigue appeared in the students or in myself, we might well take a special break, or go outside and study under a tree, or replace the scheduled topic with a special, light or *fun* one. Great liberty goes to the diligent, self-governed one, but the law is for the lawless (2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:9).

In order to ensure subjects are properly covered toward mastery, subjects should be taught from rudiments of the whole to depth and breadth according to the ability of the students and the time available. Thus, curriculum planning means laying out a subject for a year, a semester, a quarter, by the week and by the day. Properly organized subjects—from the whole to its parts, with due regard to the subtopics of the subject—will provide flexibility.

For example, grammar—the art of speaking and writing a subject with propriety and correctness (Webster)—consists first in the whole thought—the sentence. (This assumes a separate study of the more basic aspects of literacy such as phonics, spelling and word reading, and the basic speaking literacy of a school aged child, such as learned informally at home.) Therefore, we study the sentence first as a whole. We learn of the differing purposes of sentences, to declare a thought (declarative), to make a request or a command (imperative), or ask a question (interrogative). We distinguish between the two major components that form a literate sentence—the subject (or nominative) and the predicate. The first indicates the topic of the sentence. The second tells something of the topic. We then study the sentence in terms of the name—the whole subject, including its helping elements, and then the whole predicate—the verb—including its helping elements. After having dealt rigorously with the sentence as the sentence, we then go to the parts of speech—nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjective, etc. These special parts make sense because they arise in the context of the whole sentence already mastered to some degree. We take these special parts of speech in general order of importance and of need for understanding. First come the primary parts—nouns, pronouns, and verbs. Then come the secondary parts, the qualifiers—adjectives and adverbs. Lastly come the articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. Then we undertake the groups of words used as parts of speech—phrases and clauses. In approaching grammar in this way every time we teach it, we ensure that we teach the whole of the subject toward mastery.

For a subject such as literature, time must be budgeted to read a whole piece or the portions important to the lesson. For specific lessons, again, the whole to parts principle serves. The teacher identifies the most important leading ideas. The teacher emphasizes those that the students must learn for first tier success. Then, the teacher expands the subject to serve the most able students with as much content that time and student ability affords. This way, no one is lost or left behind. No one is held back.

In both of skill and content oriented subjects, constant review permanently establishes knowledge and skill.

We review (according to the need of the students), so that we do not presume upon the student's accomplishment. We thus close possible gaps in learning. And we pursue the subject to the breadth and depth of the subject according to the ability of the students within the constraints of daily and greater time periods available. For generally more able students, we can go faster through the review. However, we also go more deeply into each topic, even as we review, expanding the details of the specific topics from their whole to their parts. Likewise, we go more slowly for needful students. However far we may achieve in the depth and breadth of the subject, we know that we are building a firm foundation for future learning the *next* time we study the subject.

The teacher ought to teach the *whys* of the subject. We ought to understand and teach the purpose for the subject in Biblical terms. We ought, for example, to be prepared to demonstrate the relationship of math to homemaking, or art to running a business. Every subject yields unique ability, contributing to a full-orbed education. Math develops logic and problem-solving ability.

To become master teachers and let the Lord fully use the teacher's special gifts, he must eventually take dominion over the curriculum content. The fully developed teacher will bring his own unique understanding and special insight. Literature can teach hidden themes and motives, to give students discernment of good and evil. History teaches the Providence of God, his direction for man in general for various subjects in particular.

Godly education teaches how the consequences of different viewpoints and actions produce either humanistic or godly consequences. Teachers should learn, and then teach the ability to discern likely consequences. I believe that one of the most effective means of evangelism is the demonstration how godly conduct tends to produce blessings, while sinful, humanistic conduct tends to produce evil.

### **Discipline and Training**

Discipline, according to Noah Webster is a general term for education. It is more specifically government over learning. It is practice for learning under the right level of government to accomplish the purpose. The emphasis is on *practice, training*. One cannot master any subject until he masters the art of the subject. Mere knowledge is speculative. It tends to be idle and inflate the pride of its bearer. Godly knowledge finds expression unto the bearing of fruit.

Adam had instantaneous mastery of thought and language, without effort, a gift from God. Everyone since Adam has birthed into sinful souls and corrupted bodies. Our infant faculties arrive crabbed and scrambled out the gate. Accomplishment comes only with great effort over time. We can thank God that He gives the child the desire to learn and overcome difficulty. However, the sin nature also besets him so that the child will need help if sin is not to overtake him. Children not loved, nurtured, disciplined, and corrected can become monstrous in their sinfulness at a very early age.

Modern education often presumes upon the child. An environmentally determined child will be limited by his genetic conditioning. In this view, if he learns quickly, he is one of the gifted elite. If learning is difficult for him, he is likely inherently incapable. The Christian view, in contrast, says I can do all things through Christ Jesus and that by faith. Thus, I trust God to persevere until the Lord turns my effort into accomplishment.

Learning is thus not linear, but requires a complex working of the mind and body in coordination. Learning requires more than a one-time attempt, but rather ordinarily requires

repeated practice over time, with variable, intermediate results. On one day, mastery seems perfected. The next, it all seems lost. Perseverance by faith answers the learning process. Young childhood offers the greatest opportunity to teach a child to walk by faith in all things, for a lifetime (Proverbs 22:6).

Because of the sin nature with its natural short-circuiting of the mind, the teacher must not take any previous or would-be acquisition of knowledge or skill for granted. The needed foundational skills for the new learning must be firmly in place. Again, take nothing for granted. To do so may easily lead to frustration and self-defeat. If a child does not possess the foundational skills toward a particular new accomplishment, the teacher must reduce the lesson toward acquiring the more fundamental skill. Adamantly I say, retreating to establish fundamentals is not defeat, but rather ensures eventual victory.

If a task is beyond reach, the teacher may become, to some degree, discipline for the child. This can include the teacher's hand over the child's, so to speak, literally with respect to manual skills such as writing, and figuratively elsewhere. The teacher thus lays in the pattern of practice for the child, providing everything he needs to be successful, until the child can make an effort on his own. The teacher constantly tests the child's ability. Such careful discipline thus alternates with the child making an attempt on his own. The teacher only helping when necessary to help the child move toward real accomplishment. The teacher should encourage the young pupil that falling short is normal and that there is nothing wrong with it. Only giving up on otherwise accessible learning is wrong.

On the other hand, nothing should be too easy. The teacher should never merely hand anything over. The teacher always requires some effort by the child. Measured, micro-difficulty trains the child to expect some difficulty and to meet it by faith. Sometimes, a slight delay in answering a child's question may give him time to figure it out for himself. Thus, good teaching requires constant stretching of the child, evaluation of the results, and appropriate adjustment to keep the child in the learning groove.

The teacher should encourage, and even correct if necessary, any attitude or actions of defeat. These could include every kind of deflection from the task at hand. Children are ingenious at such. The teacher must develop a high degree of awareness of the child's ability to deflect from the task. The teacher learns to see every behavior, every attitude—and always correct it! Some of the untoward behavior may include shyness, loudness, worldliness, poor posture, lack of reverence or respect, neatness in work, diligence, goofiness, even cheating. Stomachaches may present. Such things as perfectionism, shyness, or babyishness may not be child's fault, but must be corrected. The professional classroom teacher may need to assist the parents in this regard. To bring the highest potential of success, the classroom and the home must be in synch. Respect of and the Lord's love for the parent are imperative, but so is the need for

fearless boldness. The teacher must fear the Lord and not men. And, yes, the teacher must choose her battles, working at the most basic level required by the student's condition.

Discipline, as practice, must consist in follow-through. For example, after a child takes a spelling test, he often receives nothing more from the teacher than a grade. Missed words then become a kind of permanent legacy. If I remember a word incorrectly, I will continue to misspell it. The solution is to provide the student with practice toward *correcting* the faulty memory. A simple weekend assignment to study the correct spelling and record it a number of times helps. The teacher can re-insert words that the class shows a tendency to misspell back into the next spelling study list.

Students often learn to *disappear in a crowd* to avoid responsibility. I have often used classroom discussions to draw out such a child, to correct the typical short-circuited, thoughtless, "I don't know." I will ask a simple question of the class as a whole, and call upon the *invisible* student. He, of course, has not been listening, and so cannot answer the question. I repeat it. He still can't answer because he still has not paid attention. So, I ask the class again and choose a raised hand. The student answers the question. I return to our previously invisible friend. He *still* cannot answer because, thinking he has been rescued, he has resumed his idling. By habit and clever obfuscating technique, he continues not to listen. I again ask the student who gave the answer previously, urging the wayward student to *listen*. Hearing the repeated answer this time, I ask once more. He gives me the answer. The class cheers and rejoices with him. (They have previously learned from the teacher to encourage each other.) The disconnected student has a little breakthrough. Repeating this process as necessary ordinarily will bring the student around eventually. If not, he likely needs greater intervention, usually involving double-teaming with his parents or special intensive tutoring.

All such are opportunities to bring Jesus to the situation, for resolving difficulties His way, on His terms. In such matters, the teacher must always do the right thing, in a restrained temper, though patience is exhausted, though it may be is the hardest thing to do! Continued effort in faith is all that matters, and the Lord will bring the increase in due season. A child taught in this manner will learn to stand firm in Christ in any circumstance!

Teaching must be balanced. Teaching methods must correspond to our holy mission and holy content. We must realize that everything we say and do teaches something, and it is ours as teachers self-consciously discern the likely lesson we teach. If we try to make everything fun, to bribe students into learning or compensate for them, we teach them they have no real responsibility, but are entitled. Imagine expecting one's employer to provide entertainment as an incentive to accomplish the assigned job. Remember, Jesus made every subject. That subject is inherently good, and it will bring great joy when we approach it rightly. Yes, the learning curve before a degree of mastery may not be very enjoyable, but it is worth the investment. Again, we walk by faith.

In a related sense, Biblically speaking, the ends never justify the means, but rather the ends and means must be in harmony (Ps. 32:8; Pr. 14:12). We cannot instruct liberty and practice tyranny without showing ourselves hypocritical. We cannot practice caprice, and then expect godly character to result. Rather, we must teach upon principle with consistency.

Again, the teacher must carefully measure the difficulty of the assigned task. To ask the child to persevere where he is not prepared with the proper foundations, overwhelming him, is counterproductive and cruel. In such a case, the teacher must be ready to provide intermediate tasks toward success. Great patience is required. The child must never feel a failure. The only failure is rebellious quitting. Thus, teaching requires knowledge of the child and wisdom in working with him. Remember, God has given us his soul and eternal condition as a holy trust before Him.

Repeated practice is key. Skill oriented subjects require rote learning. We desire a reflective mastery of the subject, yes, but some learning comes best with rigorous practice. We may know everything about baseball or volleyball from a book, but only practice yields real baseball or volleyball skills. The virtuoso classic musician continually practices, including scales. The professional athlete continually practices the basics. The ability for improvisation in music or sports depends upon absolute, reflexive mastery. I recall telling my primary-aged literacy students that we must practice the letters and phonograms until we are sick of them. We must know them when we are awake and in our dreams. We need to know them frontwards, backwards, sideways, and inside out. Then we must practice some more. After a year of such practice (in measured daily doses), in a class of five students, over the course of a year, our kindergarteners and first graders tested in literacy between the second and fourth grades. This included a four-year-old, and a child, pronounced dyslexic by her learning-professional grandmother. The two first graders mastered a reading book supposed to be of third through seventh grade level. If a secondary school student hasn't learned these basics, then he, too, must study applied phonics as a basis for true literacy. In this way, we never fear failure, except when a student absolutely refuses to try. And even then, we have the power of prayer.

### **Intervention and Correction**

Since the student will likely exhibit untoward, sinful response to the difficulties of learning at some time or other—if not habitually and at least in the beginning—grace must prevail. The teacher must always stand ready to exert evenhanded and self-restrained correction. The he must restore the fallen *culprit* to perfect relationship after correction. This is true no matter how often correction becomes necessary. The teacher must not hold a grudge, but love the student. In my schools, the only limit on working with any particular student was the expectation of success without hindering the success of other covenant students.

If a student is not responsive, the teacher must ascertain if the problem is a lack of foundational abilities or knowledge, or if the student resists learning—either self-consciously or

out of mere habit. Sometimes past failures or sinful inclination will habituate a student to give up without an effort. In any case, increased intervention is in order, with greater external discipline required. Such discipline—practice under the appropriate level of government—provides the forms that will guide the student toward progress. Such extra discipline is not for punishment, but for remediation. Though punishment may be in order in the case of rebellion, punishment is for correction, not for some sort of misguided satisfaction. Redemption in such situations requires closing the door on possible student deflections from diligent effort.

Parents should be involved in this. I like to call this double-teaming, borrowing a basketball term. Parents and teachers should form a loving but impenetrable force to guide the student's success. A closed loop of communication between home and school will help keep the student from slipping through the cracks. Parents must sign the homework assignment sheet and return it to the teacher. The parents must communicate difficulties with the student's completing assigned work—the teacher to the parents likewise. If a lack of proper foundations causes the misfiring of achievement, the teacher must be prepared to back up as far as necessary to find work which will yield a first level of success. This may be as fundamental as following instructions to label a paper properly, or follow a short sequence of simple steps. If rebellion is involved, appropriate directed practice may combine with corrective punishment, appropriate to the mission and the child's sensibilities. Correction should comport with the infraction and answer it.

### **The Teacher's Character**

To discipline well, the teacher must be self-disciplined. The teacher must be willing to undertake the same discipline as the student. A teacher must be humble and teachable. When faced with frustration, the teacher must make best of the situation, with an overcoming faith, just as we ask of the child. Transparency in our weaknesses is endearing to young people. When they know that we carry the same weaknesses as they do, they will likely be more willing to accept our authority. They should know that we need Jesus, too.

Part of the discipline of the classroom is a workman-like setting. A neat, formal setting, structured time, and structured methods will allow the greatest liberty in teaching and learning. Calm, gracious, and orderly communication trains calmness, grace and peace. Again, the formality and structure are not ends in themselves, but rather instruments of training leading to mastery with freedom of expression. The self-governed one deserves liberty. The law is for the lawless.

The student's discipline should include proper relational practice. Everything in sound education properly rest upon the Two Commandments of Christ. The child should make a proper request before the teacher responds to his need. "Teacher, my shoe is untied" is not a proper request. (We might reply to this presumptuous command, oh my, that is too bad! That would usually remind the student of the proper approach.)

In summary, accept nothing but the child's best effort. Learning by faith is better than particular success.

### **Inspiration**

The third leg of the tripod of education is *inspiration*. God inspires, breathes in His Spirit, such as the inspiration to record the divine Revelation of Scripture. While God inspires, men reflect His work through the making of examples. Examples provide inspirational content, thus giving influence to those around us. The Bible says, in this vein, we are to be *salt and light* (Matt. 5:13). We are to be good examples (1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Peter 2:21, 5:3). Men as thus examples are God's instruments of His inspiration. Bad examples give instruction as well, as something to avoid (2 Peter 2:6).

Inspiration, instruction and discipline work hand in hand. Instruction provides the means for good content, good examples. Discipline provides the means to bring the child's flesh under control toward acquiring real skills. An even very young child is capable of great inspiration if trained to self-government and liberty. To the degree the child's flesh is in control, to that degree he is incapable of inspiration, and therefore of little learning (Rom. 8:6-9).

Good and bad examples come from many sources. Who we are as teachers and parents provide some of the most powerful examples—for good or ill, depending on our own character and effective walk with Christ. Fellow students wield a powerful influence. Poor student conduct is almost always a negative influence, though a strong culture of goodness can help mitigate it. Potentially negative student influence a most important reason for the school to enroll students who can be taught and helped without their presence undermining the progress of others. Again, this requires a close relationship with a cooperative home. One disruptive student can destroy the morale of an entire classroom. Sometimes a school (or even family) must remove a disruptive student from the classroom. In my schools, we always tried to find alternative help for such a student, with the level of intervention needed to correct wayward conduct sufficiently to rejoin the class.

Returning to the teacher and parent, several basic qualities exert influence toward successful learning. One is a love of learning. We do not naturally enjoy the investment of learning. For one thing, our investment may not pay off. We may not well learn the subject we attempt. No one wants to feel a failure. Moreover, learning anything worthwhile is hard work. By faith, we hazard investment in a fallen world that naturally yields thorns and thistles. We, too, are fallen, which usually means, out the gate, we are lazy. Therefore, on behalf of our children, we apply external discipline. We make them do things they don't wish to do. Yet, because of the promise of God, we are willing to take the pains to teach them. We train them in the way they should go, and they do not depart from it. For the lifelong learning required by God of His people (Matt. 11:25), children must eventually learn to practice self-discipline. The greater the awe and

wonder of learning we can inculcate in the child, the more likely he will continue in this wonder.

It is possible to kill the love of learning in children through severity of discipline or poorly shared content. We must avoid the impatience we often feel over the lack of progress. Our own expressed impatience and frustration can discourage young learners—kill the love of learning. This ought not to happen. Because real life holds frustration and we all are sinners, honest transparency with our students over our own sinful lapses goes far in gaining sympathy. Since Christian learning is all about relationship, such transparency is extremely important. A good teacher will be ready to ask forgiveness of his pupils for lapses in temper or other displays of frustration.

### **Encouragement**

A danger to inspiration comes in the form of the natural steep learning curve required by anything worthy of learning. Accomplishment carries its own joy and inspiration. However, in the short run, the discipline of the subject can seem boring and useless. The wise teacher will bring the big picture into view, the power of mathematics or enjoyment of accomplished storytelling, for example. He will also magnify and praise small degrees of accomplishment.

God encourages His faithful servants, with “well done!” (Matt. 25:23). Yes, learning should be its own reward. And doing our job before the Lord does not entitle us to special reward (Luke 17:7-10). Still, the Lord encourages us. We should encourage our children. Even more, God promises *reward*. Praise is a good reward for ordinary work accomplished. Sometimes more may be appropriate. When for the moment a good effort produces less than satisfactory results, it is often well to say, “Good try. Keep it up, trust Jesus, pray, and He will make you able. Don’t give up.” This is particularly true of a student who tends to find learning difficult.

Contrariwise, we should avoid using as punishments those things we wish our children to learn to enjoy. Thus, “go write 500 times” may not produce the best corrective results. Rather, punishment should reflect the trespass. For example, if a student wastes class time, it may be occasionally appropriate to stay in to finish it during playtime. What we do always teaches something. We ought always to think through what precisely it is that we teach with our actions.

### **Inspire by Example**

Teachers must first be learners. Reflect upon how the demands of Scripture or the lessons of history apply to *me*. What does the subject require of *me*? How must I change to become an effective teacher, to become what I wish the child to become? Again, transparency while learning, being able to confess shortcomings, makes you a partner with the students in learning. It is more than a taskmaster-pupil relationship. Be diligent and serious, but also be patient and kind to yourself and others, forgiving. A teacher ought himself to love the

challenge of learning. A teacher who holds learning in contempt is no teacher. If the Lord calls one to be a professional teacher or parent-teacher, though without an obvious gift for a love of learning, prayer will yet take one far. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I have noticed that the most readily teachable children are those in homes that value learning and literacy. This is more than the parents loving learning, but regular practices that involve the children and help them to enjoy learning in practice. Regular Bible and literature reading with interesting discussions is one way. Family discussions over things seen, even in a movie or TV, helps form a disposition for inquiry. A parent can ask watching a movie, for example, "Was what that boy did a good thing? Why?" A teacher should always encourage the love of learning to the family.

### **Inspire with the Amazing Christian Subject**

Christ created every subject in creation. He designed the world to inspire wonder of His ways. For example, Psalm 19, verses 1 and 2, says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge." Thus, cause for wonder and awe lies inherently in every subject. Christ put it there. He loves His subject. When God created the heavens and the earth, He looked at His creation and declared it good. The better we understand God's creation, the better we may understand God, particularly in light of His Word. We teachers must learn to discover and then communicate the origin and purpose, with its providential Christian history, of every subject. Again, the teacher's own wonder and awe will tend to be contagious.

Individual gifting, of course, will make children prefer certain subjects. Understanding that all subjects are inherently related and that one subject will enrich another helps the child appreciate the need for all learning. For example, I have long been fascinated by the similarity between science and mathematics on one hand, and imaginative literature on the other. Both focus on some small aspect of life. With the one, we magnify to our sight some physical aspect. With the other, we focus upon and magnify some aspect of moral truth. Each has its inherent method to accomplish this end. In both, we learn something. Moreover, the material things offer moral lessons. The garden, a storm, the ant and the grasshopper all have something to teach the ready learner. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed...

My literature mentor Rosalie Slater taught me to turn the teaching of imaginative literature into the practice of mining golden nuggets. The last thing literature class should do is bore and discourage the student through uninteresting toil. This does not mean making the class overly easy, as that is boring, too. One of the best ways to inspire a Christian child is to demonstrate how the subject relates to God and to himself. Again, interesting stories are powerful engagers. Teaching in a way that magnifies the interest, such as a little dramatic flair, is helpful.

Boredom, that killer of the love of learning, is of two kinds. First, it is an attitude, the flesh in control. The teacher should correct such in the student. The second is a lack of interesting content. This should not happen in a Christian classroom. Inspiration is everywhere in God's creation, and all with God's great purpose. The teacher must provide rich and interesting content appropriate to the student's level of accomplishment, presented in an interesting manner.

In the end, the inspiring teacher is the one who takes dominion. This means he loves Christ, and lets Christ's creation inspire him. He invests in the skills of learning and teaching. He invests unto mastery to the degree possible to know what to do, how to do, and he determines to do by faith. He walks humbly by faith. And just as the teacher expects the child to do, he lets the Lord bring the increase in due season. Such a teacher will surely inspire the student.

### **The Student**

The student is the third of the three primary constituents of education.

God made the child in His own image. He has inherent value and dignity. He is a child of the King, a person in his own right. Thus, the child deserves the dignity of careful and polite treatment, as a person, a child of God. He also possesses a great purpose given him by God for contribution to the Gospel and Kingdom, and therefore tremendous potential.

However, the child is born into sin. Unbridled sin, unless dealt with Biblically, will destroy potential. He needs redemption. God's means of redemption includes preparation, as a vessel, ready to receive filling in due season, hence education. The educational process prepares the child not only for usefulness in this life, contribution, and ability economically to provide support to himself, but education also prepares him for eternity. It is a fundamentally and always a holy thing.

The student thus needs a schoolmaster, a teacher. The young student will have little to no character, discipline, or understanding. Because he may have little ability to fight sin, the parent and teacher must be his discipline.

### **Student Responsibility**

It is important to work toward making the child a partner in the learning process. He should learn how God's economy of redemption and life works. He should learn that instruction, discipline and inspiration comprise *Christ's* way of learning. He should understand that learning is difficult, but that he needn't worry about the results, but only continue to give effort by faith, because God will reward his effort in due season. It is a part of Christ's provision for his redemption. The student must accept the teacher's authority, love and care for him. We ask only of the child what Christ requires of us. The teacher will authoritatively pour out

knowledge, wisdom, and skill. The student must endeavor to reproduce his own version of these things for himself.

The student's responsibility, then, is to cooperate with the learning process toward excellence by faith as the only acceptable goal. The student does so by accepting the high standards of practice set by the teacher. Let God bring the increase. The student must not short-circuit the process—that is cheat—through any kind of deflection from true learning. Cooperation through obedient effort is all we can and do ask of the child learner. Again, we trust God to bring the fruit of accomplishment.

The student must learn and accept God's grace in learning and life. Without a relationship with Christ, nothing else matters much. With grace, we can accept our own shortcomings because we know every good thing comes from God. With grace, we can become accomplished without self-deceiving pride and the idolatry of self.

### **Scholarship Standards**

Scholarship standards are God's general standards of excellence applied to certain subjects. The student is a steward of himself, a temple of the Holy Spirit. The student must learn that he is a child of the great King and Savior. Therefore, he must learn to accept his nobility and conduct himself according to the highest standards. The ideal Medieval Christian, feudal king knew his son would one day accept the stewardship responsibilities of leadership and therefore the rigorous discipline to prepare him for that leadership. Just so, every one of Christ's students must realize that he, too, must rise to his office as Christ's emissary in the earth, his nobility, and therefore submit to his appropriate preparation.

Just so, the student must learn that he is a student of the tools of learning. He must take great care of his books, his pen, papers, notebook, desk chair, classroom, and campus. The student should understand his personal stake in his tools, and learn to take exquisite care of them. The student must not play with or abuse the tools of learning. All of God's resources for life, living, and individual contributions are holy instruments of God's purpose and blessing.

In like manner, the student is steward of his produce, the fruit of his labor. The student must learn to take care of all of his work. Neatness, quality and workmanship in everything befits the Christian learner. Even practice papers should be treated with respect. In front of the student, the teacher should even handle student papers destined for the recycling bin—because they represent something akin to batting practice—with great respect. Permanent papers should be filed neatly and in the correct place in one's notebook. Sloppiness is contrary to sound learning, stewardship, and our calling before Christ, who does nothing sloppily. Remember, everything teaches something! Let actions promote our goals.

Focused listening is a fundamental scholarship standard. It is a learned skill, from guided practice. Remembering what one hears or reads is also important. Diligent learning practices, such as the use of time for class work is an important scholarship standard. The formation and communication—verbally and in writing—of coherent thoughts is fundamental. Speaking with a good enunciation and properly modulated voice for the occasion is crucial. Whatever is worth learning, is worth learning according to the highest standards. Again, we represent the King in the earth.

An important element is to finish what one starts. The student should close the loop on his responsibility by reporting back to the teacher when he completes his assignment. If an effort is below standard due either to carelessness or inability in a new skill, the student should redo his work toward improvement and eventual excellence. The revising of work establishes the rule of success, as opposed to failure or otherwise poor results. Perseverance is the key!

While rote learning establishes facts and basic skills, the goal for any subject is mastery for usefulness, and the ability to contribute further to its development. Thus, the student should learn understanding of the subject at its root, in its context in the universe, including God's purpose for it. Thus reflective learning is important. The teacher should encourage the student to think, and ask questions. He should become aware of the mysteries God placed into the universe, and that there is much left to accomplish in every subject for His glory.

The seven, simple Biblical principles of Christ life and living, identified as examples in Providential history, offer a concise, yet comprehensive and expansive means of taking every thought captive to Christ. Once more, I recommend that the quickest and surest way to master understanding for both teacher and learner is to master these principles from theory to application. (Please refer to *Get Wisdom! Making Christian Heroes of Ordinary People*—[www.getwisdom.us/worldview-and-educational-resources-free/](http://www.getwisdom.us/worldview-and-educational-resources-free/).)

### **Discipline and Attitudes**

To begin, the teacher must learn to what degree the student needs external discipline. The youngest learners will need the most directed practice. Every task of learning rests upon a degree of foundational accomplishment.

At the least, a primary student must be able to sit still for a time, to listen, and to follow simple instructions. If a child has trouble following instructions, for example, the teacher may break down the instructions into smaller, sequential bites. The teacher may ask the student to recite the instruction back to the teacher, perhaps several times. Through such small tasks, practiced unto mastery, the student builds the foundations necessary for the next level of learning.

They need to be taught manual skills, attention and listening skills, verbal skills, workmanship, posture, everything. Students must learn spatial understanding and skills, such as top and bottom, and right to left. One of the most interesting insights into this need, for me, came when I found students, following my lead, breaking a line on their papers when I came to the end of a chalkboard line, even if at the beginning of their own line. Our schools would have students rewrite their arithmetic facts in neat rows and columns many times, until the papers were nearly perfect. It is interesting that according to the book *The Making of George Washington* and evidence in young George's own school notebooks now a part of the U.S. Library of Congress, this is exactly the approach his older brother Lawrence used in teaching him. I have seen copies of some of these. They are works of art in their craftsmanship.

Central to a complete education is well roundedness. Modern education caters to obvious interests or strengths in the child. Such tends to produce children of limited scope of ability, dependent on others who understand more than a very limited field of endeavor. It also produces elitism. If education prefers only the people who can master any area of endeavor and life, those gifted to earn it easily, then we created little kingdoms of elite accomplishment. Everyone else is destined to the waste heap, similar to ancient Greece where the elite ruling class dominated the vast majority of slaves. Contrary to this view is that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." With this view, and the character capable of an overcoming faith, even modestly gifted people can become highly accomplished and contribute greatly to the kingdom of Christ. This is exactly what we would expect in a faith where babes confound the wise, and where those not gifted are the most important (Psalm 8:2; Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21; 1 Corinthians 12:12-25). To ensure against these and other ungodly eccentricities, educators must teach to weaknesses as well as strengths.

Likewise, children will ordinarily favor certain learning pathways—aural, visual, or manual. In order to help children not to be dependent up a single approach, we emphasize engaging multiple faculties in learning, helping students to make use of means for which they are not naturally disposed. A multiple faculty approach serves both a child's strengths and mitigates weaknesses.

Often, older children will need remedial help with foundational skills. Here, the teacher must often address pride as sin. Pride keeps a child from learning. Sinful pride shuns anything that makes one look awkward, stupid or in any way bad. Desire for the appearance of success in teacher and student is thus one of the most debilitating factors in the defeat of real learning.

On the other hand, Biblical humility facilitates learning. To this end, it is important that the teacher and school also allow no teasing by fellow students. Rather, all the students need to learn that we all need Jesus' help. Transparency and humility are a key to accomplishment. Pride settles for appearances. Real learning requires dealing with our sinfulness. Thus, the teacher works to establish the character for learning in the student.

Formal and informal diagnostics will guide the teacher toward understanding the child's need, from the beginning of the relationship, and continually, as learning progresses.

### **Correct manners and habits of youth—Minutely teach what is required**

The term *train up* from Proverbs 22:6 likewise uses graphic imagery. The Hebrew word is *hanak*, which means to narrow. Hanak in turn is associated with the word *hanaq*—to throttle or choke. The Bible certainly does not encourage violence. What it does require is firm guidance in a narrow pathway of conduct and attitude toward righteousness. The parent and teacher thus minutely train the child in right conduct of every kind. Childish sin does not automatically go away over time. Rather when sin determines conduct, it becomes over time increasingly habituated, entrenched, and more difficult to correct. The greatest kindness to the child is to begin minutely to require right conduct and to correct wrong attitudes at the same time. If the parent refuses to do so in the ordinary and benign manner of Scripture when the child is young, the loving God will require it later in life through the trials and corrections of life. This latter direct correction of the Lord will be far more painful for everyone involved.

Connected with training is the individual counterpart. The passage transliterates approximately: "Articulate a boy from infancy to adolescence after the word in the road of the word." Lange and others comment that this term carries a definite individual element. Children have certain dispositions and sensitivities. They possess particular gifts and purpose. There are differences by sex. Thus, the same basic purpose of training requires Though Scripture requires training all children in the Biblical morality, ethic and conduct, children are different. Hence, Proverbs 22:6, requires training according to the individuality of the learner. Thus, we might treat the gifted but resistant learner with a stricter discipline than a compliant child. To whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48).

In this age of psychological environmentalism, many parents and teachers do not realize the great need for minutely correcting manners and habits of the young. The younger the child, the easier training better attitudes and habits is, given the level of understanding of the child. When a baby squirms out of a parent's hands, in danger of meeting a hard floor headlong, he is old enough to begin to receive and understand correction. Require effort (also expect non-performance, at first). The wise parent or teacher will lovingly say *no* to the child. Ordinarily the child will persist, at least for a time, in his willful actions. In order to train immediate obedience, the parent responds with a correcting sting after a single verbal command. In anticipation of a future dangerous situation, the parent must have already established immediate obedience. The spiritual connection between the behind and the heart is divine (Proverbs 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15; Ephesians 6:4—nurture here is *paideia*, from a root that implies the rod of correction).

### **Corrective Discipline**

Some students do not learn readily, either from native sinfulness (presenting as resistance to learning), organic limitations, or from damage due to previous poor education experience with its persistent habits.

Short-circuiting is common. Teachers must expect that the difficulty of learning might produce a sinful response of some kind—shyness, psychosomatic illness, crying, lack of effort, habitual quitting, silliness—the list is endless. Though common, God gave the teacher and parent an eternal trust of responsibility to ensure the teacher and parent correct these things to the extent possible, walking by faith.

Very bright young people are often the most vulnerable to habitual mental idling, surrender or compensation. The bright child becomes accustomed to things coming easily to him. He often early learns how to manipulate parents and caregivers to get his own way. Rather than work harder, the very intelligent child learns to work smarter—where *others* work harder for him. Sooner or later, no matter how intelligent and easy learning has been previously, every child will eventually hit a wall where quick accomplishment does not come. Frequently, parents and teachers will compensate for this young person, spoon-feeding him. This practice further weakens the young person's ability.

Thus, the very bright young person learns to be entitled and impatient. Often, if something does not come quickly and easily, he will not bother to make overcoming effort. Thus, he learns passivity in learning challenges, to be idle. If he experiences no corrective compensation for his dereliction, he will be satisfied to continue in this childish pattern. His parent's and teacher's must therefore help him by godly conviction and through the help of corrective disciplinary government. Teachers must help him practice better things.

Contrast this to a more modestly gifted young person who learns to trust God, apply faith, never give up, and assume overcoming is the expected and necessary norm. This young person will be the one who lives His life by faith for Christ and therefore will become truly accomplished. Our most fundamental purpose is to assist the child to an overcoming faith in God, leading to a work ethic that produces fruit.

As to remedy for the dysfunctional bright student, the same essential educational approach serves, though usually with greater intervention, supervising government, and patience required. If a child cannot accomplish an assigned task, the teacher walks him through the process, the hand-over approach. After several successes with heavy assistance, the student attempts the task on his own with teacher supervision. Several iterations of this approach, with various degrees of assistance and insistence to make an effort may be necessary before the student achieves success. Alternately lowering and lifting discipline is the essential pattern, until the student achieves the liberty of self-government and success.

**Get Wisdom! Teacher Training Series**  
**School and Classroom Theory and Methods**  
**Principled Relationships—the Constituents of Teaching and Learning**

Ronald Kirk  
Created June 12, 1986  
Modified March 4, 2015

Perfectionism deserves particular comment. Perfectionism is similar to the laziness found in very bright young people. In perfectionism, the child refuses to attempt to do anything they cannot do quickly and perfectly. Perfectionism is sin because it denies the divine disadvantage of faith required of all believers. Perfectionism is demanding, self-centered and circumvents the humble approach to learning required of all Christians. The just shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:2; Romans 1:17). Teachers must correct the attitude of perfectionism.

For those organically disadvantaged, though we may never see ordinary results, we similarly never give up, never place an artificial ceiling on their accomplishment, but always, patiently continue to work with them while they remain in our care toward whatever achievement God may grant them. And we remember that the not-strong, not-accomplished, and the not-pretty, are among the most important in Christ's church (1 Corinthians 12:18-25). Elitism is not Christian.

Never chasten for inability to perform, but rather only for manifest resistance to making an honest effort or for outright rebellion.

To practice godly correction, teachers must:

- Correct when effort is not seen, but with patience. Habitual sin may not correct all at once. Additional severity may be counterproductive. God gives us much time with children so that correct may not be severe.
- Paddle (use the rod) when not responding, but do not give verbal abuse. Do not yell.
- Think the best of the student, unless given clear evidence to the contrary. After correction, start over as if no need of correction previously existed. Give the corrected child the benefit of the doubt, until they once more demonstrate disciplinary need.
- Be gentle, even in correction. Ask forgiveness if you do not administer discipline with loving restraint. Teachers must be transparent, open, ready to confess sin. We teach more by what you do than what we say!
- Maintain a level of unconditional affection equal to or greater than the level of discipline necessary to effect change.
- Be eagle-eyed for every minute action of each student. Choose battles, but always try to be consistent.
- Be involved; take command over the individual. Find weaknesses. Do not compensate or allow the child to compensate for weaknesses. Rather, gently work with the student positively over time to correct the particulars before resort to corrective discipline.

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It is easy to dish out work, but far better to come along side to help. This is the pattern of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15). True education must bring a balance between the crucible of learning trials, and the encouragement of friendship. Pure authority, exerting only coercive discipline in learning, though possibly effective in learning certain skills, ultimately makes individuals weak in character and slavish. At worst, as in the authoritarianism of the old U.S.S.R., it kills the soul. Educators must remember that children are not animals, but created in God's image, with inherent value, and destined with temporal and eternal purpose. We must remember that their ultimate goal is Christian liberty in fundamental relationship with God and men. Therefore, the parental, relational aspect of teaching and learning, the fundamental establishment for the ability for relationship in authority and non-authority terms must remain a self-conscious, essential and perennial element of education.

Educational discipline must then always look toward the dual goals of independence of Christian liberty *and* the imperative of covenantal Christian relationship. In these there must be no diminishment of the individual or the covenant community, for the diminishment of one is the diminishment of the other. You cannot have a viable community without viable individuals. You cannot have viable individuals without a viable community. God designed and intends it so (1 Corinthians 12-13).

Additional wayward and compensatory habits to watch out for and to correct:

- Babyishness—crying, silliness, and other such typical forms of childish immaturity
- Shyness. Some children are naturally shy. However, it is love to help them enjoy the fruit of good relationship. Retiring isolation is the opposite of godly love.
- Misplaced goals e.g. seeking a grade or credential, rather than seeking true learning. Entertaining misplaced goals often leads to cheating.
- Diversions rather than earnest practice toward mastery
- Even good natured resistance to correction, which must also be corrected
- Any bad habits that undermine learning
- Tell-tale undercurrent of rebelliousness
- Overt rebellion

When teachers must discuss a student common between them with respect to the need for correction, or likewise between teacher and student, the student should be present. This is the requirement of Matthew 18. It prevents the common problem of gossip, and even possibly

inadvertent misrepresentation. Having the student present also helps the student toward understanding of his need and imposes a degree of personal responsibility for his own conduct.

### **The Difficult Student and limits of the classroom**

Not all young people are susceptible of formal learning in the context of a home or classroom. Heavily damaged children, as are sometimes found in adoptions from greatly dysfunctional families, may not be capable of a home or school culture. In our schools, we had essentially one rule for enrollment. This single rule had numbers of related elements such as the support of the home, likeminded, etc. These elements were always terms of the original association. Notwithstanding these pre-conditions, we often found ourselves stretched in serving particular young people. Sometimes the family had misrepresented—often unintentionally—their commitment or family circumstances. Thus, we must always have a single rule of association and the serving of any particular student. And this rule served extremely well: It is that we must expect for any individual, within the limits of the resources of the classroom, eventual success without hindering the success of others in the covenantal relationship.

Sometimes, we necessarily removed students from the classroom. Such might be young people who did not possess sufficient skills for formal learning, such as attention span or the ability to follow simple directions. They might be young people who resisted the learning process. When this occurred, we took every measure possible to find effective alternatives. We tried to train specialist volunteer tutors who could work one-on-one with the special needs student. Once we asked one older young man to leave our school because of a bad temper which he could not then control. After a period away from school, this young man returned, graduated, and lives as a Christian husband and dad to his growing family. In another case, the unwed mother of a young man about ten years old did everything for the boy, to the extent that he did not know how to dress himself. We found him very bright and when brought to attention in a one-on-one situation, he was capable of the tasks we asked of him. However, he had virtually no capacity for self-government in the classroom. We assigned one of our specialist tutors to work with him. In about three months of intensive retraining toward self-government, he was capable of returning to the classroom. Such experiences were common.

Any classroom, in a day school or a home school, has a mutual covenant of expectation of learning in the students. At least the teacher has a covenant with God in this matter. However, unless there is but one student in the teacher's responsibility, the teacher owes balanced attention to every student. If a teacher, then, begins to see a pattern where a particular student is demanding regular attention at the expense of others, the teacher has a responsibility to bring balance back into the classroom. The teacher either needs help in the classroom, or an alternative must be found for the demanding student.

### **Study habits**

One of the most important skills a child can learn is the ability for independent study. Good study habits will support a lifetime of learning and accomplishment. Why is this important? Godliness requires the ability to study, interpret by sound principles and apply the Word of God. In applying the Word of God in obedience to Christ, in exercising individual gifts and calling, much knowledge, skill and wisdom is required. God expects the greatest accomplishments our gifts and calling demand. Good study habits contribute to an overall work ethic. Work has from the beginning in the Garden been man's responsibility. God Himself brings the increase. Yet in our mysterious partnership with Him, He requires faithful exercise. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. It also appears that this life is essentially preparation for eternity—that is education. Education is central to God's purposes. God's people must be good at learning.

Good study skills develop through exercise and habit. As in all learning of youth, the good teacher provides the government over those not yet capable of self-government. Therefore, the teacher requires the student practice finding an appropriate time and place to study. The teacher helps the student to attend in longer and longer time-frames to concentration and study. We say the pre-schooler has a short attention span. Of course! He is gifted with native abilities, but sin clouds and obscures his faculties. The practice of good actions little by little overcome sinful crabbing of the mind and heart. Structure of study time and place helps to form habits that overcome natural mental handicaps. The lack of such discipline very early arguably contributes to or causes attention deficit symptoms, a mental trouble very difficult to overcome later in life.

Other aspects of study are organization of materials, the practice good stewardship of God's granted resources. The teacher provides methods of approach to the various school subjects according to the inherent nature of the subject. Penmanship, literacy skills, grammar, the orderliness of mathematics problem solving, manual skills and accurate lab reports in learning practical science, and many other practices all contribute to study skills.

As students mature, they should have opportunity to study independently. Thus a teacher does is student a disserve who spends too much time lecturing and insufficient time in independent practice. Teachers should provide modestly supervised self-study whenever possible. Assigning homework, of a kind for which the teacher has confidence that the student is already capable, serves well here in the practice of self-study. Parents are important in homework's oversight.

### **Constitution**

Biblically speaking, all relationships are properly grounded in covenant—agreement. God provides for covenants between Himself and men. This is the pattern men ought to follow, as exemplified throughout Scripture. Agreement is fundamental to the practice of loving your

neighbor as yourself. Applied to civil relationships, the covenant is sometimes called a *compact* or *constitution*. Constitution has become the mainstream term. Because we desire young people to master the principles and practices of covenantal relationship, we called our school and classroom agreements *constitutions*.

The overall school constitution served to provide the basis of association of the school with the family under the authority of the parents. Teachers can only properly represent the home when the school, the teacher, and the parents agree to a large extent the purpose, goals and practices of the school. Older children capable of exerting higher degrees of independent willfulness, must also agree to the general school rules.

We used classroom constitutions to provide a more particular basis of agreement with students, though we required parents also to agree and to sign them. Teachers would customize our model classroom constitution. This liberty allows for individual sensibilities, special gifts and special circumstances. Such elements go into the constitution as student notebook organization, and various classroom disciplines and procedures.

I recall reviewing the class constitution with a new young adolescent student. Within an hour of this review and his signing of the constitution, he violated it on a certain point. I reminded him that he agreed not to do what he had done. He replied, "I didn't know that's what it meant!" He did know. He was just not used to self-government and personal responsibility. Others had provided rules for the young man but did not expect compliance or enforce them. He had an attitude of outward or superficial compliance, with an underlying rebellion. It all worked out for this young man, as he soon realized the joy of liberty from true self-government and personal responsibility.

We have provided examples of school, parent-teacher fellowship and classroom constitutions in the Appendix.

## **Curriculum Planning and Time Discipline**

In any particular class or school, a well-designed curriculum will comprehensively cover the school subjects from their rudiments in the youngest learners to their greater and advanced expressions in the more accomplished scholars. These subjects provide a strategic foundation for life-long productivity in Christ. The curriculum is thus a necessary whole through the entire educational career. The teacher should therefore always be mindful of the goal, and teach so as to cover the whole curriculum comprehensively. Personal bias in the teacher for parts of the curriculum resulting in eccentric emphasis on one area or another is tantamount to stealing from a child's education. The teacher must carefully structure time accordingly, and practice sufficient discipline to accomplish all that is necessary. Give due time to all the major divisions of the content, so that none are left out or short-changed. Each year's work is important.

Yes, a well-designed curriculum and method can accommodate the variability of human learning. Yet, every moment is precious. Yes, great opportunity also exists within the structure of the basic curriculum for the teacher to innovate and to bring his unique gifts to bear on the subject. Thus, the operating principle for the successful classroom, as for all of Christian life, is *liberty under law*. The law is for the lawless (1 Tim. 1:8-9). Liberty abounds for the careful and diligent soul. Great opportunity exists for God to use the teacher's special gifts. Still, significant changes to the specifics of the curriculum should be considered carefully within context of the whole curriculum, its purposes and goals. Otherwise, educational gaps will tend to appear in the student.

We might note here as part of our preface on curriculum planning that we adopted a family model for our classrooms. This is the only model for education that we have identified Biblically. It is relational and not inherently structural or formal. Thus, we might well organize multiple age classrooms, as kindergarten or early primary one and two together, grades two and three together, fourth, fifth and sixth together and so on. Assignment to a grade is nominal and not strictly by age. It is important to keep students somewhat close in age to avoid the problem of age inappropriateness of subject content or of social interaction. Yet, the family concept encourages young people to look up to older students as role models. Likewise, older students to younger students as older siblings, ready to take the younger under wing to help or encourage them. Purposeful flexibility maximizes school success.

### **Notebooks**

All through history accomplished individuals have used a notebook approach to learning. In the notebook approach, the scholar records his learning—observations, research and personal expressions. Just as the Law of God provides for the king to record for himself a personal copy of the Law, for the committing of it to the heart, mind, and future reference, the notebook approach does so also for ordinary learning (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). Remember, properly undertaken, all learning is holy.

The Biblically-purposed teacher thus chronicles his own learning, curriculum development, and administrative planning in personal notebooks. The teacher notebook provides either primary or supplementary content for the curriculum. The content should include what the teacher as learner believes, according to his practiced Biblical worldview, what is important in the subject, upon what we call the *Four R's*. Look for special and important possibilities to add to the curriculum. Briefly, the four R's are 1) *Research* unto 2) *Reasoned* conclusions, 3) *Related* in a Biblical viewpoint to real life, and 4) *Recorded* for future use. Research includes collecting the philosophical development of the subject from basic definitions (using the *1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* by Noah Webster—America's Christian, philosophical dictionary—paraphrased for personal understanding, the subject's Biblical background, the Providential story of the subject, and conclusions upon all the above. Then, research includes

the scientific development of the subject from its rudiments, expanded to the level appropriate to present learning ability and the subject's educational purpose. Finally, the teacher re-organizes the subject according to a logical development for learning—from the simple basics.

Here is a brief overview of the Four-R's scholarship approach:

A. Research the Vocabulary

First define the vocabulary and expand the definitions by defining in turn the defining words. Draw conclusions regarding what the subject is (know and understand), how to break the subject into its first most important parts (organize), and what character and skill is demanded by the subject (practice).

B. Research the Bible

Next, research the vocabulary scripturally and draw conclusions as to the purposes of the subject and as to the principles that rightfully govern it.

C. Research the Christian History

Research the Christian history of the subject. Draw conclusions from its past Providence for present application. Judge from the successes and failures how the highest expression of the subject might be developed. Were there any grand expressions? Can they be restored or built upon?

D. Organize the Rudiments

Summarize your best conclusions for the subject from the vocabulary, Scriptures, and history as to the meaning of the subject. Note, once more, basic definition, organization, and character demanded for right handling.

Practically speaking, any subject can be organized in two fundamental ways. One way is the scientific view, viewing the subject from the whole to its parts. Another manner of viewing the subject is the pedagogical or educational view. This view considers the subject as an art learned step by step. In the educational organization, the teacher simplifies the complexities of the subject into appropriate learning steps from rudimentary to more advance, in a linear fashion. This organization constitutes one of the most important teaching accomplishments.

Upon entering a new subject topic, the teacher as student and the student in turn often must accept apparently useless learning for a time. He does not initially understand because he cannot see the assembled whole. The new content appears as an obscure piece of a jigsaw puzzle. The student accepts an evolutionary development until he sees how parts combine with

other parts. This is difficult to avoid, particularly in complex skill oriented subject such as math or grammar. For the independent scholar, a sound philosophical view of the whole subject mitigates the problem. Applied Biblical scholarship reduces considerably the danger of going down a wrong path. For both the independent scholar and the pupil of a teacher, the subject requires faith to pursue the unknown territory.<sup>1</sup>

All research should be carefully footnoted as to sources. Original sources should be used whenever possible. Secondly for Christian era history, nearly contemporary sources should be used, to avoid the implications of the heavy secular history re-writing of the late 19<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Always consider the peculiar bias of the historian.

If the teacher seeks to design curriculum, the teach notebook provides the raw material. The teacher documents his own path to learn the subject, and then translates it into a form accessible and appropriate to the student according to present level of accomplishment. My curriculum development approach has long consisted in taking my own learning in outline form, and translating it to a vocabulary and complexity appropriate for high advanced school level students. Then, I reduce or distil this outline for middle level students, again for upper elementary, middle elementary and finally for primary students. Each level should include a list of essential leading ideas required for basic through advanced masterly, in order. The teacher notebook should include personal inspiration—special thoughts and possibilities for teaching or classroom activity. From *Get Wisdom!*:

Wisdom knows the right use of knowledge. Investigation is the minute searching for truth, facts or principles. Laws or principles are rules which govern, or the causes, sources or origins of any thing.

Biblical scholarship requires, in part, interpretation or drawing just conclusions from true premises. It is not enough merely to put someone else's sentence into one's head. Understanding carries with it the ability to express that understanding in new forms for further purposes. One idea suggests another. This may be called a *leading idea*. Leading ideas are those which assist in putting a true proposition into a useful form for some purpose. Careful rephrasing

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<sup>1</sup> An introductory treatment of the 4-R's as a method of Christian scholarship can be found in an article for Chalcedon Foundation "Learning Any Subject Biblically" (<http://www.getwisdom.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Learning-Any-Subject-Biblically.pdf>). An in-depth and expanded treatment can be found in *Get Wisdom! Making Christian Heroes of Ordinary People* (<http://www.getwisdom.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Get-Wisdom-complete-ms.pdf>). This method should include consideration of the Seven Principles, also expanded in *Get Wisdom!* A concise expanded outline from seminar presentations on 4-R'ing can be found in the Appendix here.

thus facilitates effective learning and can lead to applications which both reflect God's reality and are practical.

Learning has a way of overwhelming and swamping the novice (which humbling makes us more merciful teachers). The new teacher-as-learner must learn to limit how much research and data collecting he does, so that the subject does not become unwieldy and out of reach of the immediate purpose—which is to teach children. Since the Lord only brings the increase, and usually far beyond our investment, the wise teacher only endeavors to 4-R as far available time with the immediate purpose allows.

Just as for subject notebooks, the teacher should prepare the administrative aspects that account for planning, timing, depth of the subject, teaching methods, etc.

The student notebook is a distilled version of the teacher's notebook, appropriate to the present ability of the students in the classroom. This does not mean diluting the subject or over-simplifying it. It does mean using perhaps simplified vocabulary and reduced number of words. It means giving the important and primary principles, with appropriate discussion of details, but to a lesser depth. Again, individual subjects are *sphere topics*. Also once more, each time the subject is taught, we consider the same major theme or sphere-topics to increasingly greater depth and breadth (in terms of related subjects) according to the present ability and foundational skills of the students.

### **Contents of the Teacher's Notebook**

Upon the philosophical foundation established by 4-R'ing, the teacher's notebook ordinarily includes subject content. Content differs between subjects which are essentially content and idea oriented as opposed to skill oriented. Typical content and idea subjects are Bible, history and literature. Typical skill subjects are literacy and grammar, mathematics, foreign language, physical fitness, and music. Natural science is a content subject with a high degree of skill orientation. We typically organize it in terms of the Days of Creation. However, much of its unfolding emphasizes increasingly demanding skills.

Content for the content and idea subjects include essentially *leading ideas or principles* and *supporting facts*. Leading ideas are those that suggest important life-lessons, positive or negative, in terms of Biblical requirements. Leading ideas suggest: How should we then live? The facts are the Biblical texts, documented history, products of literary endeavor, scientific empirical facts, etc. Content for skill subjects also include leading ideas or principles and facts, but their respective organization will differ.

Organize content subjects according to carefully defined and coherent whole subtopics to be covered over specific periods. These periods of importance are variously the entire primary and secondary school curriculum, a given school year, a given school term, a week, a single day's

lesson. The teacher identifies the subject in terms of its whole to its most fundamental parts. For example, we subdivide imaginative or exploratory literature in its major components by essay, short story, novel, drama, and poetry.

As another example, we divide history first into major contribution theme areas such as:

The Whole Chain of Christianity Moving Westward (overview of important historic individuals)

Creation and the Nations	Medieval Europe	Pioneer Movement
Geography of the Continents	The Reformation	Civil War, Modern Era
Moses and the Law	Exploration and Discovery	Local History
Greece and Rome	American Colonies	Current History
Christ the Center of History and the Early Church	American Patriots	American Economics and Government
	The U.S. Constitution	
	U.S. Early Republic	

We suggest the study of European and American history *not* to glorify them. For example, the America's Civil War Era highlights America's increasing secularization and therefore its degradation. In particular, America had lost (and we still have not regained) the once apparently common notion that men must take God's truth in its natural tension, which requires faith. Thus we accept One God, Who is Elohim—multiple Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We accept faith *and* works. We accept Law *and* Grace. Here we emphasize that early Americans accepted the Biblical proposition that in covenantal agreement, the Individual and the covenant Community are of equal value and importance. To diminish or hinder the individual in his liberty is to harm the community, because it hinders his individual contribution. For the individual selfishly to diminish the community is to harm himself, because God requires love of our neighbors and will not countenance or reward the selfish exercise of liberty, which is rather license. The American Civil War arguably highlights a collectivist eccentricity by the North, and selfish liberty in the South. Historically, once more, we lost the need for the godly tension between liberty and union, with the greatest exercise of both needed.

Thus, we emphasize America's historic eras to demonstrate the struggles of emerging Christian expression (or lack of it) in various periods of history. Though far, far from perfect, English and American histories identify relatively high expressions of godly purpose and the problems of growth in it. America's own infancy in general Biblical Christian liberty, justice, accomplishment

and generosity provides of positive examples to emulate and negative ones to avoid. The point of history is to learn from its lessons.

Ultimately, our emphasis is the Chain of Christianity, which appears to be God's Providential hand leading men to an ever increasing expression of Biblical godliness, leading to the present, in every location, for all peoples.

I would urge including the documentation of the local and national history of anyone seeking to discern God's providence in their own heritage. In every place, evidence of God's hand and divine purpose is in evidence. Our job is to find each our own relative place in the unfolding of Christ His Story and align ourselves with it according to particular providence.<sup>2</sup>

Each of the content subjects require similar thinking and organization.

For skill subjects, record all of the important new elements: definitions, explanations, examples, charts, etc. Organize skill subjects according to carefully defined whole topics, but in terms of increasing skills, with each new skill rooted in previously established foundational skills.

For the sake of classroom content and presentation proper, the teacher produces a refined version of her scholarship. This work, in turn, because the master for producing the student notebooks for the various levels of accomplishment. We might consider the teacher's own refined notebook as a post-secondary or post-graduate expression. In order to fit the time available and the accomplishment of secondary students, the teacher may reduce the teacher notebook to a produce a secondary student notebook. A further reduction produces an upper elementary or primary notebook. Further reductions produce lower elementary, early primary and kindergarten versions. For each reduction, the teacher aims at maintaining the nugget, the essence of the subject, maintaining the quality of its expression, while only reducing the scope, complexity and language appropriate to the target student.

Over time, the teacher's notebook becomes central. In the short term, when the process is young, whatever 4-R'ing and notebook production the teacher can accomplish, it will inform the teacher for taking some degree of mastery over the subject and its teaching. By faith, we do not despise the day of small things (Zechariah 4:10).

Lastly, it is important to note that every subject comes with naturally occurring associated skills. The complex of these skills in all the school subjects taken together provides the overlapping opportunities for skill acquisition that makes the school subjects appropriate, strategic subjects

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<sup>2</sup> Expansions of history and all other subjects are available through the Get Wisdom! Program ([www.getwisdom.us](http://www.getwisdom.us)). Teacher Guides for the development and organization of each school subject will become available as resources permit.

for learning life's skills in general. It is the formal learning basis for a lifetime of continued learning, personal growth, and accomplishment.

### **Curriculum Planning and Scheduling**

Once the overall content is determined for a subject and particular set of students, the teacher plans the sequencing of teaching, depth of each topic, time for each topic etc., for the day, week, term, year, and school career. Each subject has a different approach for this. Generally speaking, for content-oriented subjects, such as literature, history, elementary natural science, and Bible, we teach the most important material first, and then expand the subject to the depth and breadth of its details according to the ability of the most able student in the class to absorb it in the time allotted. The teacher subdivides each course into its logical topics and sub-topics, allowing for sufficient calendar time for each, according to the daily allotment of class time for that subject.

For skill-oriented subjects such as mathematics and grammar, organize the subject according to the most basic and fundamental concepts and skills to the increasingly advanced, revisiting subtopics over time in expanding spiral cycles toward mastery of each part. Organize the subject according to increasingly greater and more demanding skills. Skill builds upon skill. This is a learning or practice organization, as opposed to a merely scientific categorization. Evaluation of accomplishment is at least partly upon the basis of the level of content absorbed and re-articulated.

Because learning is not linear in its accomplishment, but the mind suffers from various vagaries in its functions—memory, motor skill control, etc.—the teacher must plan accordingly. The student may show every sign of mastery for the moment. He may repeatedly demonstrate apparent mastery. Then suddenly everything has gone out the window. Total collapse. This is normal. The mind is not a programmable machine, but a living soul in a fallen world of sin. The curse of the Fall includes imperfectly functioning minds. The educational process, including regular review, accommodates the reality of our condition.

Review of any topic necessary as a foundation for other topics should continue until the student demonstrates an *instant ability*. Review should never serve as mere make-work, which destroys the love of learning. Neither should the teacher shortchange or hurry review due to impatience on the part of the student. Noah Webster says that remembrance is instant recollection without effort, such as with one's name.

The proof of mastery is then instant ability without hesitation or labored thought to accomplish a given task. This should be true even when the topic occurs outside of immediate context of learning, such as in a final exam of many topics intermixed. Real life does not organize itself for our convenience. Mastery requires ability outside of comfortable context.

For all subjects, the teacher presents the subject, emphasizes the cardinal points for the present level of accomplishment, and assigns study or practice to drive the rudiments home. For either content or skill subjects, a certain minimum level of accomplishment represents the minimally acceptable base line for future study toward mastery.

For any subject, the teacher must balance the time available against the goal of a degree of mastery. In other words, at a given moment and time available to concentrate on a specific subject, a specific child may be capable of a limited but necessary level of mastery. Variables include the competing demand of other subjects, and the age and present level of accomplishment of the student. The teacher holds the responsibility to ensure that in a given period, the student accomplishes a reasonably minimum of level of accomplishment to justify the expenditure of the time. Wasted time is not acceptable. If a student is not responsive, the teacher must take additional measure, as failure is not acceptable. (See the section below on *Intervention and Correction*.)

The teacher knows that the student will revisit the subject in the future, building on present foundations, and expanding into the subject's depth and breadth. The teacher thus again discerns what the student must master now, push the presentation of material somewhat beyond that basic level. This is to stretch the student. Then the teacher must be content to trust God to build in the student a greater understanding and mastery in the future. The teacher must find this balance for every subject at every level of accomplishment, with a general advancement toward specific goals always in mind. The class should provide content according to the need of the most able student.

Always take into account the maturity and accomplishment of your student. A beginning student has much to absorb. Godly growth seems always to be organic, that is exponential. Growth starts very slowly with a very flat line against time. However, just as with compound interest in a bank account, suddenly the curve steepens. This is a sign of maturity of savings and of accomplishment. Therefore, for the beginner in any subject or mere youngster, teaching requires much patience, and the curriculum must account for a natural pace, with flexibility for special students who require a slower or faster pace.

The classical approach to education rightfully works from the view that children are more apt to learn certain skills at various ages or degrees of accomplishment. Noah Webster agrees on this point that young children possess the greatest ability for memorization, possibly not even possible in later age. Hence, the Classic view assigns the categories of grammar, logic, and rhetoric for each subject. Each level of accomplishment depends upon mastery of the earlier one. True enough. However, rigid adherence to this notion can inhibit growth. One means to ultimately faster accomplishment is to start work early on the fundamentals of topics ordinary considered advanced. This is doable on the grounds that every topics is based in simple

principles, principles that become more complex and demanding as they unfold. The teacher can introduce such advanced topics casually and incidentally to their related topics in earlier development of the subject. For example, I have successfully taught rudimentary topics in geometry and fractions to four- and five-year-olds. Sometimes a mere passing comment in simple terms is sufficient to plant the seed for later formal introduction. One of my own teachers called this pre-introduction. The technique serves to make the learner comfortable with ideas in anticipation of formal treatment.

For content- or topic-oriented subjects, divide the course into its major topics. Then divide the school calendar into appropriate divisions by those topics. This sets the time available for each topic. Topics themselves may receive longer or shorter times depending on their relative importance. Further divide the calendar for the subtopics according to increasing depth, including time for topic presentation, student activities, review, testing and follow up.

To schedule skill-oriented subjects—such as literacy, math, grammar and music—balance level of mastery against time availability. In skill-oriented subjects, every new skill rests upon a previously acquired, more fundamental skill. The key here is to organize the subject into the most basic skill requirements, then the next, and then the next. The teacher must ensure he covers the basics before the available time runs out.

We cover the organization of these basic skills or rudiments as part of our teacher preparation courses for each subject. For now, consider two examples. Mathematics essentially deals with *one* or a whole of some kind in relation to other ones. Thus, the student must master numbers and counting to the extent that the arithmetic operations make sense. Addition is a more powerful way of counting. Likewise, words form our basic unit of literacy from infancy. To reading and writing, one must attain a degree of mastery of spoken language. To master reading and writing, one then masters spelling—the practice of which guides the mastery of both of reading and writing words. When a student stumbles at reading a word, he breaks the word down into its constituent parts so as to make out the sounds of the word, until those sounds together reveal the identity of the word as a whole. Thus reading skill at the most fundamental requires the ability to *phonify* the letters. Phonics are fundamental. Such reasoning guides the teaching and learning development of every subject unto mastery at the highest degrees. Each additional floor of the building requires a sure previous foundation under it. Eventually, the lower level skills become second nature, so that they require little to no learning attention, except to refine higher order skills or to correct an impediment.

As people ordinarily do not acquire skills in a linear fashion, the teacher provides a balance between pushing ahead into new material, practicing the present material unto mastery, and regular review and practice of previous topics.

Maturity of the student guides the level of instruction required. Teaching ought never to be undertaken in a rigid, graded fashion. In so doing the teacher risks losing presently weaker or immature students to overwhelm, and risks losing more accomplished or able students to boredom. Such rigidity is a great evil common to modern, graded schooling practice.

A key principle to classroom design where there are more than one student is to direct the front edge of new material to the most able student. As a student ages, it will become increasingly difficult to return to the basics (though such may sometimes be necessary). In general, we minister to the older and more able students, as our time with them is relatively limited compared with that of younger children. Younger students will have a chance at the material again. Also, it is amazing how much learning can happen when a student feels the urgency to keep up. Once, more, it would be cruel to push this concept as educators have in past eras. Always strive for the godly and benign balance.

Good teachers must resist the natural, maternal inclination to abandon everyone else to the needs of the weakest or youngest babe. In a single classroom situation, such as a home school, this means striking a balance of attention, and giving much more individualized instruction. A good curriculum ought to be designed to accommodate this individuality. In a multiple classroom setting, the need for advanced material may mean matriculating a younger student to a more advanced class in order not to overwhelm the greater number of students. Likewise a student with more basic needs may need move to a lower level class, perhaps only for a single subject. A Christian teacher, trusting in Christ, will know that there are always techniques available to exercise successfully in any circumstance. We rarely receive ideal situations. The teacher must be ready to accept the humbling effects of learning, just as she requires of her students. Flexibility goes with faith. The ability to adapt to individual needs or special circumstances is a key to godly educational craftsmanship where trusting God is everything.

Casual or pre-introduction of concepts in skill-oriented classes helps the student jump into new learning territory. For example, many consider the advancement from arithmetic to algebra an impossible leap. On the contrary, the wise arithmetic teacher will casually toss out algebraic concepts to arithmetic students. Moreover, the early teaching of a subject *wholistically*—that is with constant reference between the special *parts* and the root *whole* of the subject—will mean easier grasp of advanced concepts later.

The teacher should articulate specific objectives for each topic. Self-consciously identifying knowledge, skill, and wisdom goals will guide the teacher's efforts. Some or all of the goals may be presented to the students according to their maturity and appropriateness of this particular knowledge. Teachers should identify multiple levels of teaching goals. Multiple goal levels will ensure appropriate content availability for more able students. Objectives should be simple and realistic. The teacher should be prepared to adapt to more or less time available, or

to a more or less able set of students. That is, with proper organization from most important and fundamental to more detailed and elaborate, any stopping place might suffice for a complete effort—for now.

With personal and classroom discipline, it is amazing what a teacher can accomplish in a given period of time—drills, note taking, discussion, review, testing. Think of ways to eliminate wasted time in moving from one activity to another. Have students plan ahead with their materials. Teach them automatically to move to the next subject. Teach them not to raise hands to speak, until called upon to do so. The thoughtful teacher will discover many ways to make the classroom more efficient and effective. On the other hand, never be a slave to a schedule. Children and teachers are living souls, children of the Holy Father God. The Law is for the lawless (1 Tim. 1:9). Where diligence has been the rule, liberty and flexibility reigns for the good of the constituents of learning—parents, teachers, and students alike.

In our schools, the time allotted for each subject varied by the priority of the subject at a particular level of learning. For example, our primary students might study literacy—phonics, spelling, reading and grammar for two hours a day. Early in the school year most of that two hours would concentrate on phonics. Little by little, phonics instruction and drilling would give increasing time to spelling and reading as they master the phonetic building blocks. Eventually in-depth grammar study proper would almost entirely occupy the literacy schedule, and then its time allotment would be reduced compared to other school subjects, limited to say forty-five minutes. Secondary school students would spend time on basic literacy only when a specific need existed in a particular student. When once a skill is mastered, we spend time in it only to maintain that skill or to build upon it. Think how a master musician practices scales or a professional athlete practices basic techniques. (Typical classroom schedules by subject are appended below. The subdivisions of the literacy schedule are given likewise.)

Thus, the school schedule is flexible according to fulfilling particular needs at particular times. Rigid classroom schedules with a fixed pace are counterproductive, tending to lock-stepping students—hindering some and overwhelming others. Teachers must master the classroom schedule according to student need. Administrators must likewise master curriculum scheduling through the school careers of particular students, including flexibility to accommodate changes in the student population from time to time. Mastering these structural demands gives a school great power in meeting the particular needs of real students, rather than requiring students to conform to some theoretical mainstream or statistical mean.

This might be a good moment to mention that our experience taught us that diligent use of time meant less time working overall. Our school years varied from around 160 to 165 days, with liberal breaks between terms. Also, terms ended before a major break so that we did not disrupt learning by taking off mid-term breaks, and then trying to regain momentum to finish

an arbitrarily scheduled term. Such often occurs in schools that hurriedly finish the first semester in January after a major Christmas break in December. Such interruptions in learning hinder student progress, and by example teach a kind of lawless anarchism.

The teacher should spend a little time each day after class to evaluate time usage. Similarly, the teacher should evaluate a unit of instruction for making schedule adjustments for future teaching.

### **Using Textbooks**

The curriculum is a means of getting from here to there. It is a vehicle, from the Latin word to run. It derives from the idea of a course for a race. Mechanical bearings, such as automotive wheel bearings, run in a *race*. Thus, the curriculum includes all of the content, methods, and activities of education. Textbooks are not the curriculum! They may be used as such, but if so, they diminish the unique power and utility of the classroom teacher. The teacher ought to be master over the course of study. The teacher ought to be master, in particular, over the textbook.

Ideally, even if the classroom uses textbooks, the curriculum should primarily derive from the teacher's own research and development, the teacher's notebook, of the subject as we define here. The teacher should do everything possible to take command over any textbook.

On the other hand, textbooks intend to make the learning process more effective through the presumably greater expertise of the textbook writer. Often this is the case, and textbooks can be very useful. Witness the power of the original *McGuffey's Readers* and *Ray's Arithmetics*.

However, these fine examples were written from the mainstream Christian worldview of their day. Every textbook writer will represent their own worldview. The Christian teacher must be particularly aware, discerning the spirits. One can use marginal material from a pagan or alien worldview. However, it is incumbent upon the Christian teacher, to break it out, to use such material, in such a manner that its paganism does not usurp the Christian view. The teacher must point out where it is flawed, helping the students thereby to become more discerning themselves. In the end, it is always wise that the Christian teacher teach, taking dominion and authority over textbooks.

Even the best text, written from the most godly point of view will have limitations. In the ideal, the master teacher assumes authority over the curriculum. Any resources the teacher uses are instruments in her hand. She rules them.

The best textbooks will account for use at several levels. Seek textbooks that support the Christian purpose of education, its philosophy and methodology. Thus, for example, textbook

design ought to respect and consider the importance of the classroom teacher. Of course, the text should be eminently readable. , organized for sound development—again from the whole to the parts., and develop the subject in an orderly fashion allowing the teacher to adapt it to her own purposes.

Typically, this is not so. Rather, many textbooks, particularly those for skill subjects are hopelessly scrambled and fragmented, making the taking of proper dominion over the subject next to impossible. Such textbooks make the teacher and student their slave, and ought to be avoided at all costs. Yes, programmed self-studies do have their usefulness, but Christian educators ought to consider them means of last resort. The best programmed studies will have loops built into them for more review and remedial practice where needed, and a fast-track for the quicker advancement of the more able student.

The textbook should provide distinguishable leading ideas. A good textbook will likely contain summaries and review or study questions to test and prove various levels of attainment.

As most texts written in our age provide material for a very narrow range of ability development, the teacher should interpret suitability for particular students. For some, the content of the textbook may be below the student's readiness for accomplishment. In others, the content may be out of reach. The best texts will provide a range between basic and advanced treatment of its topics to provide appropriate materials to a range of present student ability. In given class may require several levels of textbook for the subject.

A possibly ironic use of graded textbooks is the quick diagnosis of a new student's level of accomplishment, to establish a starting place for his instruction.

Often textbooks can be used as the mere content for an otherwise teacher-designed course of study. A good text can serve as a reference or resource for special readings or instruction. A good textbook may highlight leading ideas. Other helpful uses of textbooks are the provision of practice exercises. A particularly well designed text can provide reference utility or provide a model for the teacher to use in other areas.

If at all possible, the teacher should understand the Biblical implications and goals of the subject, and qualify and superimpose them over any published or otherwise prescribed content or system. The godly teacher ought always to seek or develop better materials to supplement or provide the mainstay. The teacher should not hesitate to supplement the text in order to establish the curriculum's purpose. Again, the textbook is a tool of the curriculum, not the curriculum itself.

Until better materials become available, the godly teacher must make the best use of the materials and situation at hand. Equipping oneself with the salient principles of godly

worldview and educational principle will allow some degree of dominion over the curriculum. Whatever can be done, however small the activity, ought to be done. God will multiply the small effort by faith unto great results. It is the faith of the mustard seed. I have found that mastery of the Seven Principles of America's Christian history and government, identified by Verna Hall and Rosalie Slater, and expanded in the Get Wisdom! program, including the primary *Get Wisdom! Making Christian Heroes of Ordinary People* manual, present the teacher with the best means of evaluating and choosing prospective textbooks and other such educational tools, as well making the best use of them.

The notebook approach to education intends largely to displace the textbook as the central component of learning. Even where we use textbooks, students ought to prepare their own learning notebooks for present and future use. My own children and students have used their notebooks to teach their own children. Even with the use of textbooks, students should develop and maintain their own notebooks as their own best expression of the subject.

Textbooks are a part of student stewardship. They ought to be treated with particular honor as divinely provided instruments and resources for the student's education. Evidence of poor stewardship must be corrected, as poor stewardship here indicates a general attitude of poor stewardship, or possibly a sinful bastion of resentment or other problem. It is important to find the root of such sinful outworking and correct it.

## **Classroom Presentation and Practice**

Classroom presentation is merely one element of the good teacher's responsibility, but a critical one. Depending upon resources available or the ages of students, a teacher's presentation to the class may be the primary source of content. Since the very young student requires a maximum of supervision and guidance, the primary teacher's presentation will indeed be the primary source of content presentation, as even the very recording of subject notes requires skills that cannot be assumed of any child, but rather must ordinarily learn by well governed practice. As we have discussed, since the ultimate goal is the self-taught scholar, spoon feeding of content, as it were, should be limited to that necessary to guide younger students, be according to the nature of the subject, or compensate for the lack of printed content resources.

### **Content**

The importance of subject content in itself appears obvious. Course content provides facts of knowledge (research), the means to understanding the significance and application of facts (relating), and skill in handling literate or mathematic information.

The learning of content strengthens memory, listening, abstraction skill, and reasoning and inventive skill—the cultivation of practical imagination.

Recording of notes represents a primary means for acquiring content, the requirement of a king under the Law of Israel that the king record a copy of the Pentateuch for himself, as insurance that he would not be ignorant of God's requirements (Deuteronomy 17:18).

Recording of notes from a chalk or whiteboard helps to ground and perfect reading, writing and organizational skills. Additionally, we early learned that the repeated focusing to the distance of the chalkboard, to one's paper, and back to the chalkboard, provides beneficial exercise to the eye, at least relieving the stress of constant close work.

### **Lecture and Discussion**

Pure lecture does help the student learn listening skills. It takes concentration to *hear* diligently. As with any skill, the more one practices it, the more proficient one will become. With limited resources, lecture may necessarily be the primary means of imparting knowledge. However, pure lecture may also be one of the least effective means of learning. One of the problems with lecture is engagement, holding the active attention of students, especially very young ones. Dramatizing content with stories, as is readily accomplished in the teaching Bible, history and literature helps maintain student engagement. God used drama to enhance His prophets' message to the people (e.g. Isaiah 20:2-4; Ezekiel 4-5).

However, remember that everything we do teaches *something*. Using artificial devices such as humorous entertainment or singing lessons may help in the short term to acquire information, but it may also create a dependence upon these devices. Since part of our task as educators is to prepare young people toward responsible maturity for every kind of accomplishment, anything we do that might create dependence should be avoided.

### **Discussion**

Discussion greatly enhances the effect of lecture. Through discussion, the teacher learns of the interests of his students, so that she can relate the subject to those interests. Likewise asking leading questions effectively guides the student's thinking so that he actively relates the content of the subject to himself.

In asking leading questions, only fill in answers when the students cannot. Asking additionally questions to further define and narrow the need of the child may help the child realize he knows what he thought he did not. Be patient with shy or weaker students. Do not allow them to disengage. We discussed a technique above for reaching the student who habitually tunes out classroom activity. Altogether teach, expect and require active listening, reasoning and participation.

In encouraging directed discussion, do not ordinarily allow students to show off with exhibitions of that which they already know, particularly things they learned outside of class or in another subject. One, this encourages vanity and pride in them, something we should help them avoid. Two, it is a way for children to avoid the present task of learning new things. It wastes time. I would often say, it doesn't help to concentrate on what we already know. Our job is to learn new things and old things in new ways. This is not to say the students should not relate the present learning to other learning. The difference requires discernment and wisdom of the teacher. Learning is the point. Likewise, I would ask students not to raise their hands to offer comment unless asked to do so. This helped to avoid rudeness in seeking attention. Likewise, we banned vocal exclamations, hand waving, leaning over the desk, etc. Learning good manners is a part of a good education.

### **Active Participation**

One of the most important elements of teacher classroom presentation is demonstration or providing examples. As educators, we do not take for granted that any particular student may be able to do what we ask them to do without assistance. Therefore, with technical or theoretical explanations, we lay in the forms toward practice by making demonstrations. For example, if we are teaching the diagramming of sentences, we would give examples of various kinds of diagramming. The students record these as reference models for their own use. In math, we might likewise demonstrate problem-solving approaches for various kinds of problems.

My favorite example for the power of demonstrations is this: Early in my educational career, I had a student ninth grade (early secondary) whose brother had died in the fourth grade (middle primary). This young man missed instruction on fractions during the time of his morning. Indeed, the entire fourth grade was lost to him. Yet, the school passed him on to the next grade. Consequently, he never learned the basics of fractions, and no one ever attempted to help him catch up. This treatment caused the young man to think he was stupid at math, that he could not learn it. In fact, he was quite bright, but his poor educational treatment disadvantaged him. When he came to me and his deficiency quickly showed up, I engaged him for about a half-hour a day for one week. I presented a lesson from the most basic terms and concepts to more advanced techniques such as finding lowest common denominators, greatest common factors, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing fractions. For each concept, he recorded for himself from the chalkboard detailed demonstrations with the steps for accomplishing the various techniques for working with fractions. After completion of his self-made fractions mini- *textbook*, we began to undertake some exercises together on the chalkboard. I asked my student to tell me what to do. His immediate response born of long habit: "I don't know how. I can't do it." I said, "Use your notebook page. Just scan down it to

find an example that shows you how to do what we are trying to do here." The light came on. He gave me the correct instructions. I said, "See? You do know how to do it!"

For skill subjects such as grammar and math where the students in a class can be at wildly different levels of accomplishment, when I had a demonstration to make to one or two particular students, I would call to attention all students who could nonetheless benefit from that demonstration. They could commit it to their notebooks for future reference. Many such like techniques can enable a teacher to serve a diversity of students without lockstep.

I encourage teachers to buttress their efforts at engaging the class while making presentations of content with walking the aisles. This helps keep everyone attentive. It also gives opportunity to observe student practices in note recording and other elements of workmanship, in order to correct or help them improve.

The Principle Approach® of Verna Hall and Rosalie Slater which founds much of the work we consider here, introduced to me the idea of *reflective learning and reason*. This means essentially that the acquisition of mere knowledge is completely insufficient in itself. Thus, reflective learning stands in opposition to the pagan notion of mere animal-like training. Rather, students must *understand* the content toward just *application* of it. They must be able to make sound decisions based in sound knowledge and Biblical reasoning, by faith. We take this as axiomatic toward a complete and true Biblical Christian education. However, the Principle Approach has by emphasizing the contrast between reflective and rote learning inadvertently created a prejudice against rote. We say that children need both. Some kinds of learning simply require extensive drill and practice. Children are eminently capable via rote practice of mastering such fundamental educational building blocks as phonograms, tabular arithmetic facts, irregular verbs conjugations, music scale notes and many others. There is no better means to master them. Therefore, rather than play rote learning against reflective learning, we give great place to *both* in the godly Christian curriculum.

Everything within ability that a teacher can do to engage and maintain the engagement of students, we ought to do. We must observe our students closely. We must know them. We must provide individual attention. We must engage particular students in discussion, leaving none outside the discussion. In all things, our children must do! They must practice. They must develop skills associated with the acquisition and use of knowledge. We must not let them or ourselves fall into the trap of thinking that if I can pass a test or appear successful that I am successful. We must rid ourselves of the contemporary pagan view of education that the mere acquisition of knowledge to pass a test is sufficient. It is not. But the man or woman of God is one who is thoroughly furnished for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### **The Student Notebook**

As above, the student notebook is a distilled version of the teacher's notebook, appropriate to the present ability of the students in the classroom.

Typical for inclusion in the skill subject notebook are all new, important elements such as definitions, explanations, methods, examples, charts, etc.

Tests, quizzes and essays are appropriate to include in the notebook. These represent the practiced expression of the student's accomplishment to the present point.

Some of the goals in preparing content for the student notebook include:

- Mastering leading ideas
- Mastering content
- Learning to outline
- Learning to take notes
- Training eyes to near and far as content is recorded from the chalkboard or whiteboard
- Training the mind to discern spatial characteristics—right-left, up-down, start-end
- Training habits and skills of workmanship, neatness orderliness, stewardship

Content for student notebooks should become increasingly detailed with accomplishment. Primary students should record a very few short sentences of leading ideas and important facts, briefly stated. (See Appendix for an example. More examples for specific subjects will become available as we are able to publish them.)

As students mature, they should learn to make structured sentence outlines from topical outlines provided by the teacher. Advanced students add sentence leading ideas with support added, taken from their own class notes from lecture or discussion, or personal research. Ordinarily, the advanced student organizes his informally gathered notes on his own time, in independent classroom time or for homework.

Sometimes, as when a subject is new to the student and he is capable, his notebook should include an extended outline of the subject, complete with appropriate student activities and personal expressions. A complete outline approach might consist in a statement of leading idea as a major head, with facts or story, in topic or sentence form, following as structured sub-headings.

For some subjects, more highly structured notebook pages may be appropriate. For example, even young students should learn to develop a proper, structured lab report including a

statement of leading idea or hypothesis, research findings, data recording from observation or experiment, data collection in to interpretable form, and the conclusions of the student, including what he learned. (See Appendix for an example.) Again, every subject tends to require its own form, and as the Lord provides, the Get Wisdom! program will publish teacher guides accordingly.

Workmanship in assembling and maintaining the notebook represents an important aspect of skill-training. The notebook is a stewardship. The notebooks of students who lack such skills are obvious. Even the physical appearance of the notebook will reveal care or neglect. A bulging notebook that pops open due to ruffled papers is not acceptable. The student must learn to remove old practices no longer needed as references, for example. Sometimes, even midyear a notebook may need to be supplemented with an additional notebook or notebooks. Parents and teachers alike should regularly assist needy students in this regard. We must not assume ability, but rather where necessary we must structure learning and habit formation.

Rewriting is a way of life for the good workman. As students' knowledge and skill grow, they should learn to update expressions of their own work, within the natural limits of present ability and time.

We asked students not to keep all practices in their notebooks. We do not require the students to achieve the highest quality of work that they may not now be able to produce. An athlete's performance statistics go into the record books only for the competitive game on the field, not necessarily for performance during practices or while learning new skills.

Though not necessarily retained in the notebook, practices should ordinarily (almost always) represent complete expressions of the present subject endeavor, so that *final* expressions will be well practiced. Again, we learn what we practice. Printed hand-outs should be re-recorded in the students own hand, whenever feasible. This is not busy work, but represents due practice and helps the student to learn the material. By complete expression we intend that the notebook contain:

- Complete headings and labels.
- Complete written-out assignment or at least the task implied in the work itself, such as in an essay.
- All work needed for an answer to be clearly written in sentences or in an otherwise orderly and readable pattern.
- A parent or teacher should not have to look outside of an assignment paper to determine what the assignment was, the record of its solution or thought development.
- The final answer should be obvious in reading.

Certain drills, especially those where speed is important, may not be so well organized.

Overall, the student notebook should represent a sound organization of the subject, and an orderly record of the student's advancement in the subject.

Usefulness of the student notebook continues beyond its use by the student in the classroom for a given school year. We have long encouraged our students to maintain their notebooks for use with their own children in due time. My own daughters have used their school notebooks in this manner. In the meantime, the student notebook is useful as a tool to communicate to parents progress in work ethic and skills, as well as specific progress in specific subjects.

We found an interesting side use of the student notebook as a sales instrument to show what our students were capable of and often how much advanced they were compared to students of like age in other schools. We know that children are far more capable than often expected or even allowed, and seeing a child's obviously cheerful, personal, high expressions of learning make a deep impression on people skeptical of what a good and godly education can produce.

### **Field Trips and Special Projects**

Field trips are a mainstay of the American home school movement, too much of a mainstay in my view. Too much emphasis on mere experiential learning diminishes the importance of the simply hard work required to form a complete mind and ability. Nonetheless, field trips are important. Mainly, they can inspire the student with additional desire to pursue a given area of endeavor.

One of my favorite regular fieldtrips was to the zoo as part of our study of our eighth grade (upper primary) scientific taxonomy around the biography of the great Christian botanist and founder of the modern classification system Carl Linneaus. We studied classification of plants of animals according to the contemporary version of the Linneaus taxonomy. Our final was a light-hearted visit to the local zoo where children chose a give number of animals to identify and classify within the system.

Another favorite was our trips to the science discovery museum. Another was the environmental testing laboratory owned by one of our student's parents. Another was the microscope manufacturer. Art museums, concerts, manufacturing facilities, botanic gardens are all possible candidates. We limited our field trips to one or two a year so that they would be truly special when we took them, and to avoid imposing too great an imposition on the regular study curriculum.

To help broaden the notion of education in the student, to encourage learning, and indeed to broaden knowledge and skills, we also included special projects. Certain special projects are well associated with particular subjects. We suggest consideration of debate presentations, science fairs, dramatic presentations, research projects, art works, musical works. These special projects would of course be scaled according to the age and ability of the students. We recommended teachers working together to coordinate special projects so as to share the load. We would limit special projects, as with field trips to one or two a year.

### **Class Work**

Much of learning occurs when students work on their own, studying or practicing. Every skill comes to perfection with good practice. Independent class work also presents the opportunity to the teacher to work individually with students who need help. Once more, the teacher can thus correct practice and work ethic.

Sometimes students become stuck with a problem or question they cannot seem to answer for themselves. I found that if I was busy with another student and asked the question asker to keep trying, that by the time I got back to him, he would have discovered the answer himself. The point is that children will tend to take the easiest path available. A wise teacher will thus encourage him to overcome by faith.

If a student has a question he cannot resolve while the teacher is busy, he should find an alternative task to work. No student should be idle during class time—ever! One of the most important character traits we can inculcate is diligence. Webster defines diligence, from the Latin *to love earnestly*, "Steady application in business of any kind; constant effort to accomplish what is undertaken; exertion of body or mind without unnecessary delay or sloth; due attention; industry; assiduity."

Ordinarily, students were required to raise their hands during class work time to gain attention. But so that children would not sit idle if my eyes were directed elsewhere, I gave my students permission to speak out once time, "Mr. Kirk!"

Sometimes, as with reading aloud groups, I would assign those not a part of the particular group to do class work on their own. In this case, I tried to assign work I was confident they could accomplish without my help or with minimal help. If a student became stuck, they had permission to interrupt the group. Yes, it is a balancing act!

### **Topic Review, Practice and Expansion toward Mastery**

We highly structure learning for efficiency of acquisition. Concentrating on a subject means learning without so many distractions. However, such concentration introduces a weakness. The weakness is that when we focus and concentrate on a specific topic—such as

multiplication or fractions in math, or a certain historic period—we isolate the topic out of the greater context. Again, we do so with good reason—to make learning of a single topic more efficient. However, when we re-introduce the topic back into the greater world, the student loses the comfort of isolated, concentration on it. The re-introduction of the subject into a greater and general context, as we ordinarily do in a final exam, we easily overwhelm the student.

The remedy for this inherent challenge is true mastery. That is, such complete instruction and practice that the student knows the subject almost without effort. Such mastery must include the individual topic understood in the greater context of the general topic. For example, the student must be able to understand a phoneme in terms of a spelling word. An arithmetic student must know how to choose the correct operation to solve a real life problem given in literate words. Ultimately, the student must know how to utilize his topic knowledge in the context of the world and all its subjects. In this, we refer again to the notion of sphere-topics—focus on a single topic out of its real context and relationship with all the rest of the universe. Being able to sort out and narrow a topic for consideration is an essential skill in solving problems and inventing anything new in the real world.

One element of mastery then is regular review. We have already commented on the concept of learning that says in order to meet stretch all learners to work hard but also to ensure we do not let any fall into that cracks that we always push ahead with new material, but constantly review and practice old learning. Mastery requires constant review and practice.

In math, for example, we know we that limited time exists for practice and review. Therefore, we practice newly introduced material on the order of 20 to 30% of available time, and 40% to 60% of available time on review of recent to older topics still in need of mastery. Among review topics which have been largely mastered will occupy 20 to 30% of available time.

Little by little, through the incorporation of previously studied material, we similarly develop content oriented subjects.

### **Homework**

As we mention above, homework is an ideal circumstance for students to learn the discipline for independent or minimally supervised work.

However, it was fundamental for us that the school not burden the home with the job we were supposed to do during the day. Consequently we limited homework in the following important ways:

**Basic principles are:**

**Get Wisdom! Teacher Training Series**  
**School and Classroom Theory and Methods**  
**Classroom** Presentation and Practice

Ronald Kirk  
Created June 12, 1986  
Modified March 4, 2015

- Don't burden the home with our lack of accomplishment.
- Don't dominate the home with school.
- Self-restraint upon devoted, earnest teachers, so as not to play God.
- Parents have absolute veto authority over homework, with notification to the teacher as to the reason.
- We depend on parents to help gauge the amount of homework.
- Homework should be limited to two or three subjects a night.
- Homework should be limited to practice of work which the student already knows how to do, not new material which forces the parent to become the teacher.

As to this latter matter, aside from the sheer imposition on the home to do the school's job, the school should not ask the parent to teach specific subject matter unless the parent understands the school's and teacher's specific teaching approach. Otherwise, we may confuse the student with competing methods. This is not to say that a different method is wrong in itself, but only that the individuality of the school and teacher require approaches adopted by them. A parent can easily undermine a teacher and school with the telling the student that "The school's way is wrong. Do it this way instead."

**Time limits:**

- Primary (grades k, 1 or early primary): 15 minutes to one-half hour
- Elementary (grades 2, 3 or middle primary): one-half to three-quarters hour
- Upper Elementary (grades 4-6 or late primary): 3/4 to one hour
- Junior High School (grades 7-9 or early secondary): one to 1 1/2 hours
- High school (grades 10-12 or late secondary): one and a half hours to 2 hours or more.

The higher numbers are occasional. Students college bound ought to be encouraged to go beyond these guidelines. The more they study, the better prepared they will be. Teachers and parents together may set up a voluntary, flexible, more ambitious homework schedule for the college bound students or students with particular vocational goals.

Parents and students should be encouraged to structure homework time sufficiently toward success. A regular place and helps to establish workmanlike habits. A parental eye helps to ensure the student stays on task.

For students who are habitually negligent or otherwise incapable of workmanlike conduct regarding homework, we practice a closed loop of authority with parents. The student keeps a homework log, prepared while at school under the teacher's supervision, and signed by the teacher before the student goes home. Parents understand that they must review the teacher-initialed homework sheet and supervise each assignment, including reading to ensure general quality of workmanship and completeness. The parent initials the homework log for satisfactorily completed assignments. If a parent does not initial the homework log, depending on the school's correction policy, the teacher corrects the student or the parent corrects. In either case, the teacher should inform and strategize with the parent the next step in assisting the student to better things.

### **Extra Credit Work**

Since the curriculum represents the best effort of educators to give every child a complete education, extra credit work *is* by definition *extra*. No student should experience a dearth of content according to the ability of the student. Therefore, if extra credit work or reward of accomplishment is given at all, the student must earn the privilege with due diligence, cheerfulness, and excellence. For such a student, extra credit is a way of saying, as Jesus does, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in small things. I give you greater. Come, enter into the joy of your master. Indeed, a human teacher's goal is always to aim for the student to surpass the teachers.

### **Missed Work**

As our approach constantly works from the whole to the parts in every subject and each time we present a subject, a particular day or week will never make or break a student's career. Accordingly if a student missed school from illness or family activities, we did not require making up of all work for the school year. It is difficult enough to return to school after being sick, without feeling the overwhelming burden of making up everything, especially after a long illness. We always tried to be reasonable in assigning any make-up work. In a prolonged period of absence, we would require students to retake the curriculum missed.

### **Free Time**

Free time is the finest opportunity to practice godly manners and habits in self-government. Parents should work diligently to help students to practice godly manners and decorum when not under structured government as in school. Teachers should be aware of students in free time and counsel them and guide them toward the best conduct and attitude. Often we have seen children presume upon their parents, treating them with disrespect or conducting themselves under their parents oversight inappropriately to our mutually agreed upon educational goals. In such cases, we encouraged our teachers to reprove the student. We might say, "You must obey your parent!" More than once the parent would respond, "Yes, that

is right!" Our willingness to intervene was an assistance to beleaguered modern parents perhaps not yet good at the kind of parenting they desired.

### **Testing**

Testing is the proving of learning, the child's personal statement of accomplishment. The main value of testing is bench-marking present accomplishment as a means to determine what of remedial work or new material the student should next pursue. Is the student ready to advance or not? What needs work?

In order to test a range accomplishment of a single student, or a group of students of differing ability, the teacher tests from the simple, most basic and necessary to more advanced levels accomplishment. Though a complicating factor approach can add to the power of the evaluation over mere averaging of numbers. Using this method, students of various abilities may be tested using the same exam. The more able students are required to take more of the test. The teacher requires the more mature and able students to take more or all of the exam, while limiting the younger or less able to the simpler parts. Then the teacher evaluates the according to the expected ability of the student given the teacher's knowledge.

The results of testing reveal weaknesses in accomplishment. An extremely important aspect is that if a child remembers answers incorrectly for an exam, unless he applies himself to correct himself, he will tend to retain the wrong answer, the wrong understanding. Therefore, it is important to leave time for correcting wrong remembrance or understanding. The student should practice, for example, writing missed spelling words correctly.

Appropriate classes of test elements include:

- Definitions in the teacher's words, that is as given to the student
- Definitions in the student's words
- Facts (as in multiplication facts) or story (such as in history or literature)
- Analysis in reading, Bible, grammar or natural science
- Simple expression of a leading idea
- Defense of a leading idea, using the facts of the subject
- Problem solving
- Synthesis (student's expression, especially invention, or creativity) of a principle. For example, in grammar, being able to write a sentence with an indirect object, or a bit of verse in a certain meter
- A summary essay or essay of logical conclusions and implications, with support

### **Proving Learning: the Student's Expression of Accomplishment**

Grades as the result of evaluation and testing represent milestones of student present accomplishment or remaining educational need. The purpose of testing and grading is to inform student, parent and teacher of how to proceed next in the educational process, or to document the reality of accomplishment to interested third parties, such as potential colleges or employers.

Grades reflect the proving of a student's accomplishment through various trials of his ability. Grades are nothing more or less than an approximation of progress and accomplishment at a given moment. They may not even be reliable at a given moment. Therefore, it is imperative that we do not inflate grades in importance. Grades reflecting a high degree of accomplishment are the result of *application* and *diligence over time*. Lower grades may reflect nothing more than a lack of maturity or development in the foundational or subject skills. What is important is progress. Therefore, grades, during the course of a student's career are of value primarily as milestones. Teachers should take past evaluations into consideration in present evaluations.

Teachers should never use grades as a means of either special reward or special punishment. They ought to be used for what they represent—a mark of accomplishment now—the fruit of a given effort over time. Even a high school graduate does not need to be stuck with the evaluation of a completed high school career. Indeed, if he does not give up on learning, he still has opportunity limited only by Providence, including native ability, circumstances, and most importantly, diligence and faith. Just so, the accomplished individual ought not to rest on past accomplishments, for to whom much is given much is required. Pride or laziness has no place.

It is clear that accomplishment is the fruit of diligence and faith, and that God brings that fruit in due season, after all the possible tending of the field or orchard for a given season is finished. Then again, there may be another season. God must be trusted.

### **Categories of Evaluation: Science or Art**

It is well to distinguish between the science of a subject and its art. The science of a subject is the knowledge of the facts of the subject and the understanding of the principles which bind the respective facts into the whole known as the subject. The art of the subject is both the wisdom and skill of applying the facts and principles of the subject to a given end.

In education, both the art and science of the subject are important—one builds upon the other. We may appropriately consider therefore both individually for evaluation in a student's progress.

For most subjects, in school and ultimately, the *art* of the subject is the greater goal and is therefore more important in evaluation.

Every subject lends itself to developing and therefore evaluating certain skills —incidental skills as well as the obvious and more major skills associated with the subject. History, Bible and literature are excellent subjects for the teaching of listening and memory skills, based as they are in the idea of story or narrative. Moreover, they lend themselves to training the reasoning ability, as theological and philosophical conclusions must be drawn from these subjects in order to be useful. They also train literacy, along with grammar rudiments proper, for greater communications ability. Math trains the ability for bringing a simplified order out of natural and bewildering complexities, and therefore of solving problems methodically. Math and the natural sciences train the ability to learn from nature for the purpose of greater power in rightly handling God's creation for its stewardship. Natural science, properly taught, builds the skill of using one's hands to accomplish certain specific purposes. Lastly, by way of example, all the above subjects lend themselves to developing creative skills, that is, the ability to take seemingly unrelated elements and to combine them in new ways for use or appreciation.

In order better to communicate some of the nuances of student evaluation, the Master's School has adopted the practice of assigning sub-topic grades to major school subject grades. In the same vein, comments, each term, are a very important vehicle to communicate subject evaluations. In fact, the comments may be more important than the letter grades proper.

With respect to the sub-topic grades, the teacher chooses entries to reflect appropriately the inherent skills to expect from the subject.

We traditionally provided specific records of reading and mathematics progress for each student so that the next teacher knows precisely the last level of accomplishment for the student in those subjects.

### **Grade Standards**

This present essay represents considerable innovation in grading of students derived, we hope, from a more Biblical outlook on the nature of evaluation (judgment). Justice is the key. Honesty is justice's necessary consort.

First of all, purely objective evaluation is an impossible myth. Grading will never be purely scientific. Widening criticism of standardized testing is a case in point. Accordingly, therefore, results of standardized testing have very, very limited value in a just evaluation. Truly, education is the reproducing of a teacher in the mind, heart, and ability of the student. It is a matter of relationship. Jesus said, "It is enough to become like your teacher." Therefore, historically never has there been a pretense of objectivity when a student submits to a teacher.

The importance of submitting to a teacher, incidentally, stresses the corresponding importance of choosing the teacher carefully, so that proper submission is possible.

Rather than pure objective analysis, a more proper approach to evaluation, is to define a set of standards or principles of evaluation which will serve as a structural framework for the communication of evaluation. In other words, a well defined set of standards, often represented by letters or numbers, will be meaningful when communicated to another. After the standards have been established, the evaluating teacher, the one who is attempting to reproduce his scholarship, must attempt to make evaluation within a given school's evaluation framework, so as to give meaning to the values communicated.

In my school's we began with what amounts to a first and basic grade of success. The first **successful** grade implies, not an average degree of accomplishment within a given group, but individual success with respect to certain minimum rudiments. This is the **C** grade.

Working upward, the **B** grade is the standard reflecting a more diligent effort, expected in due season to produce a higher standard of excellence. It represents the fulfilling of a higher degree of accomplishment than the basic rudimentary level, due, of course, to the greater investment of work. Therefore, the **B** is a **superior** grade. It is a mark of progress toward excellence. The **B** grade allows for a more personal, that is, subjective evaluation. The more subjective evaluation considers effort, ability, circumstances, existing foundational abilities upon which to build, etc.

The **A** grade represents a more objective standard of **excellence** within certain limits. These limits include the scope of the course, and the foundational limits of the student, including such factors as maturity of the understanding, maturity of the motor movement, and the base of accomplishment. An even moderately experienced teacher will know a degree of excellence.

Working downward from the more successful grades, the **D** represents a lack of sufficient accomplishment to be considered minimally successful and able to progress because of sufficient foundations being laid. The **D** grade is distinguished from the **F** or failing grade in that the failing grade implies a lack of effort. Thus, the **D** grade may be applied to the student who is trying to be diligent, but because of formerly developed bad habits or lack of training, he is not yet capable of the foundational skills and habits to support success. In other words, the **D** grade is not a condemnation, but rather an indication that **improvement is needed**, but the remedy is being addressed by the student. For the **D** grade, we expect the good fruit of the effort in due season.

The **F** grade then is the representation of **failure** because of insufficient effort. The Master's School assumes that the younger students do not yet have the force of will developed to fail

self-consciously, and so the **F** grade is not used for grades kindergarten through two. This cut-off is admittedly somewhat arbitrary, but as is often the case, a distinguishing point or watershed is necessary somewhere. Even with an **F** grade, where character is the primary element of evaluation, there is room for improvement and growth. The key is to reach the heart of the student to impress upon him the command of God to work as the appropriate answer to His provision for us, and to trust God to make the effort worthwhile. Certainly, and particularly with younger students, an **F** grade is no reason for despair. Rather it ought to be the cause of prayer and re-doubled diligence on the part of teacher and parent to help the student overcome his poor character. It should be noted that there is, in a classroom setting, a necessary limit of resources expended to help a failing child. If such is the case, the school recommends a more concentrated and personal effort on the child's behalf.

More capable students should be graded according to their individual abilities, as determined by the teacher. Again, Scripture provides that to whom much is given much is required. At the opposite end, where a student may be more slow of learning, the converse is not necessarily true. The **B** grade serves to indicate the slower student's greater diligence. But the **A** grade is reserved for those where excellence is the reality. Otherwise, we inflate the value of the **A** grade and it becomes worthless as a standard of excellence. This approach represents the virtual opposite of grading on a curve, where a bright student may slip by without effort because of the accomplishment of the crowd surrounding him. The normal distribution curve is not just.

This grading system is not simple nor easy, necessarily. As with many other areas of concern, it represents a challenge to our character to walk the narrow path with God in faith. In other words, while not simple, this grading program is quite practicable, and not as difficult as it seems without having the first hand experience of trying it.

### **How to Quantify Grades**

The approach to quantifying grades for students rests on the definitions of the standards of evaluation, and numbers are merely representations of the personal application of the standards to a given student in a given circumstance. By way of negative example, a raw percentage, an 80% from eight out of ten correct answers, should generally **not** apply directly as a basis of evaluation. For a given class, say kindergartners just learning to read and spell, an 80% raw score of correctly spelled words on a spelling quiz may be an astounding and phenomenal success! Excellence indeed! If the student spelled no words correctly in the beginning, but indicates a phonetic sense of the words by the spelling, this alone represents sound reason to consider the child's efforts at least minimally successful. Any other approach, pretending to be objective, is likely cruel and unjust.

Therefore, we separately evaluate as a whole or complete expression in itself each individual effort of expression of knowledge or ability as if it is the *sole* expression in evaluation. In this

way, the teacher takes each part of the testing effort as a complete whole. Then, when each of the individual efforts have receive their respective evaluation and grade assignment via numbers, the teacher tallies them by use of simple or weighted averages. The final result may or may not reflect the teacher's overall evaluation, and therefore the teacher may replace the numerical average by one the teacher believes is more appropriate.

In this fashion, the teacher evaluates the evaluation process itself all along the way, aiding the goal of justice in grading.

Because of its simplicity, this writer uses a scale of 50% to 100% to evaluate each question. The percentages correspond to letter grades by the school-defined standard.

The teacher, knowing the precise educational expectations of the course, will define standards. The teacher asks himself, "What knowledge or skill or reasoning ability represents success, the lack of success, or excellence?"

I have traditionally used 50% as the lowest possible assigned score, so that the cumulative totals are not unjustly skewed downward. A marginal range of failure from 0 to 50% is a formidable and unfair weight against the other grades which bear only 10% each of the range. Let us keep failure in perspective, with its due weight, but not more. One effort of failure should not outweigh three efforts of excellence, which is surely the result if zero marks the lowest score possible.

The system of 50-100% range for scores avoids the problem of using a normal distribution curve based on the performance of a particular group at a particular time. The obvious failing of the normal curve is that a given group may or may not be indicative of the possibilities of success or failure, creating an unrealistic setting for evaluation, possibly favoring either the very bright or endemic laziness. Such relativistic standards are not just.

### **Plus and Minus Refinements to Letter Grades**

For kindergarten and elementary grades through grade eight, we traditional assigned letter grades without pluses or minuses to the overall grade for a course. However, it is fine to assign pluses or minuses to reflect finer grading for the sub-sections of the overall subject. Assigning the pluses and minuses to sub-topics communicates that much more information to the parents.

For high school students, grades nine through twelve, plus and minus refinement of grades is permitted, according to the correlation given in this document under "Grade Breakdown for High School." This exception in the grading policy for high school students is, again, for the

purpose of interface and good communication with the standard typically used in mainstream schools.

### **Grade Breakdown for High School**

Not to dictate, but rather as an example, we offer the following: Below are the nominal grade-average breakdowns for high school grade (9-12) students for the purpose of assigning a grade point average (gpa). These numbers correlate the percentages used with the letter grades and the gpa (on a 0 to 4+ basis) used by institutions to evaluate the high school career. The gpa's are based upon the University of California distribution, but modified slightly. These numbers are expressly designed to be used by institutions and businesses which require a summary of a student's work in high school.

Many schools have adopted a bonus grade point assignment for A grades for college preparatory course. Accordingly, the Master's School, where all courses are designed as college preparatory and an A grade is considered a more or less objective standard of excellence of accomplishment for that subject, has adopted a premium grade point assignment of 4.50 for A+ grades. (Many California high schools have adopted an across-the-board additional point for college preparatory classes.)

The grade assigned for each class is assigned a weighting-factor for averaging according to the workload of the individual course. The traditional basic courses each have a weighting of one unit, while certain classes, necessarily lower in priority, are assigned some fraction of a unit according to their individual workload.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentages Used for Averaging</b>	<b>Grade-Point Assignment</b>	<b>Range for the Letter Grade (0-4.50)</b>
A+	97-100%	4.50	4.26-4.50
A	93-96	4.00	3.91-4.25
A-	90-92	3.80	3.66-3.90
B+	87-89	3.50	3.26-3.65
B	83-86	3.00	2.91-3.25
B-	80-82	2.80	2.66-2.90
C+	77-79	2.50	2.26-2.65
C	73-76	2.00	1.91-2.25
C-	70-72	1.80	1.66-1.90

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**Brief Comments on Early Childhood**

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D+	67-69	1.50	1.26-1.65
D	63-66	1.00	0.91-1.25
D-	60-62	0.80	0.66-0.90
F	50-59	0.00	0.00-0.65

Note: Since all our courses were mandatory and considered integral to the high school course of study, course unit values are not used to determine graduation qualification, but only in determining gpa.

Again, 50% is the lowest statistical grade because a lower numerical score unjustly skews the entire grade average downward. So, for example, a grade which is the result of complete non-effort, a 50% is the appropriate grade. It still represents a failing, but within the same weight of grade as each of the others. Again, this is important because often failures are lapses in a student's pattern and not the norm. Otherwise, the lapse can represent an insurmountable obstacle to overcome, tending to produce discouragement and to encourage more failure. On the other hand, the grades of the student who exhibits a pattern of failure will nonetheless reflect that pattern by the numbers he has earned.

It is important to emphasize that the numbers and letters used to represent a grade are the result and reflection of a well-defined standard as interpreted individually by the teacher. Objective grades are mythical and therefore numbers are never used to evaluate a student's ability or performance. Rather the numbers simply represent and account for the grade established by the teacher's prayerful and careful evaluation. It is at the teacher's discretion, even, to overrule the numbers produced by averaging if it is his belief that in some real way they do not accurately reflect the student's accomplishment.

## **Brief Comments on Early Childhood**

Three years old is young for formal two-hour long teaching stints. However, three-year-old formal schooling is not unheard of. Naturalist John Muir began his education when 3-years old. When he was nine or ten, he had learned his native Scottish, English and one other language. He received no more formal education after he moved to the U.S. at age ten, I think, until he went to university at age 18 to 20. In other words, his formal education was all while he was very young, but it was very thorough.

My counsel regarding early childhood education:

Mother and family in the context of the home are the best teachers.

Since we learn all useful and mature skills, and since we are born with scrambled faculties (due to the Fall and sin-nature), we must necessarily build slowly, one brick at a time, and on a well establish foundation.

When we are babies, everything is new, even moving our limbs. It takes a great deal of repetition to get control, taking a good year of voluntary effort to learn to crawl or walk, for example. Higher order skills such as speech are harder and take longer.

The key is to have a foundational skill and capacity laid before trying to require greater ones. Most people do not learn anything instantaneously. We invest in skills, and invest, and invest. Then suddenly God brings the increase. We cannot make the crop grow, nor learning success. We receive them both after faithful investment. Often, learning breakthroughs are sudden and dramatic, after sometimes long periods where we had seen no progress.

The important thing is to keep investing. The question is how much effort to expend at a given time. As a parallel, it is premature to plant a seed in the ground, if that ground is choked with weeds or stones, or if no water is available.

In my view it is wrong to try to force young people with naturally short attention-spans to pay close attention for extended periods.

It is also wrong to neglect teaching ever-greater capacity for sitting still and paying attention, etc. Proverbs 22:6 says we must train (from the idea of articulation, from a word that means to choke to death. The same verse says to do so according to the "way he should go," which essentially means according to his individuality (according to both Dr. Dobson and R. J. Rushdoony, interestingly). The word translated "way he should go" is peh in Hebrew. Its literal translation is mouth. It comes from a word meaning blow away. Peh is then taken as speech. It is translated variously as according to, appointment, assent, command, mouth, sentence, wish, and word.

The conclusion is that we train and we pay attention to the disposition and specialness of the child. This takes wisdom and understanding on the part of the teacher.

Practically, it means pushing the child a little to keep trying, and not be lazy, but also being sensitive to when the external discipline of learning is too much.

Much learning can happen informally. In a given lesson for example, I might pre-introduce an advanced concept informally, while formally working on a more basic one. If you keep doing this, when you get to the formal lesson, it will likely be easy for the child to learn, because you are not hitting him with it cold. (You have also already taught all the basics needed to master the next step.)

Many informal means of teaching young children are available. Children not yet capable of speech can learn sign language for simple words such as please, thank you, all done, etc. We have often seen pre-school children learn the seventy phonograms in informal settings. Young children can learn to carry a tune and sing the words to hymns. They can learn to sit still long enough to dine together, listen to a story, or even listen to a sermon in church.

Two important principles are always push ahead, and always review, and practice older things unto mastery.

In my classes, we used to practice "the law is for the lawless," and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This meant I pushed not to waste a minute of class time. Five minutes a day, loses two school days in a year. However, when I sensed the class was feeling fatigued or even if I felt tired (since I suspected if I was tired, they might be, too), then I would back off, and we would do something enjoyable and not trying. We would go outside for example, and I might read to the class, or we might just take an extra recess.

Two of the worst things we can do is 1) Not discipline our children and let them grow up weeds, and 2) Overdo, wear them out, and make them hate learning and us. Somewhere in between is walking with Christ by faith, wisdom and liberty.

## **Appendix**

### **Constitutions and Covenants**

The following are the text of constitutions actually used in schools. The name of the school used is, however, hypothetical. Certain portion having merely practical application, such as the details of snow closures have been deleted. As it should be, these are the product of particular circumstances and covenantal agreement among particular constituents. The reader should understand that these constitutions are examples. Any new school constitutions based in these presented here should reflect careful application to Scripture and requirements of particular association.

### **School Handbook**

Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come

might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments (Psalms 78:1-7).

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).

Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In (Isaiah 58:12).

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17).

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Biblical Covenant Christian School. God has called this school for the distinct purpose of helping families to produce Christian journeymen, ministers, leaders, and statesmen. The product of Biblical Covenant Christian School should be a young person thoroughly prepared to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every area of life, "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Restoring Christian nobility and leadership in the home, church, community, and nation by faith is our goal.

We are pleased to serve you who have determined to make true Christian education a way of life for your family.

We pray and trust God for a tremendous blessing to the children and families this year as we work together according to the gracious historical and Biblical pattern of education, which is our true Christian heritage.

Note that this *Handbook* represents our *formal covenant*, in spirit and deed, to work together for the education of the children, the school and home—each contributing its appropriate part.

## **Our Calling**

We believe the Lord has called Biblical Covenant Christian School to minister to families who are convicted that their children ought to be brought up in the Lord for all of His purposes, to be filled with godly character, knowledge, wisdom, skill, and anointing to live in the real world, but on God's terms and all for His glory. Biblical Covenant Christian School is a day-school ministry.

The means of our effort, known as the Principle Approach, is a rigorously Biblical and practical view of life and education in which basic, historical doctrines of the faith are applied to every aspect of the program, from administration to classroom methods and the content. The Principle Approach, with the many familiar qualities of traditional education, has taken those traditions back to their Scriptural roots for correction and refinement.

Biblical, historical, and personal experience make us convicted that this approach promises to be the very best means available to reverse the trend of decline in education. It replaces failure with a trend of increasing godliness, citizenship and true accomplishment among those who desire to follow Jesus in all His ways—spiritual and practical.

## **Distinctives and Promises of the Principle Approach**

- The Lordship of Jesus Christ in every aspect of human life
- The American Christian Philosophy and Method of Biblical and historical scholarship—an approach to repentance in particulars, which results in a comprehensive life for Jesus—“taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ”
- Education for Effecting the Gospel purpose of America and other nations
- The Excellence of Christ expressed through His people in all areas of life
- Replacement of Secularism—worldly thinking and practices, the result of godless, modern cultural influence—with Biblical thinking and practices which have proved themselves over time
- A Love of Learning Kindled for the foundational subjects of life which God created for His people to handle: literacy and literature, math, history and geography, the natural sciences, the arts, etc.
- Biblical Wisdom to combat corrupted, humanistic, modern approaches to contemporary issues and worthily to handle every resource in this life

- Practical Decision Making for every area of life and every subject from the principles of God's Word
- Christian Principles to Govern Human Relationships which allow for the greatest expressions of "love your neighbor" in every sphere, from the personal to the laws of civil government
- Christian Principles for Handling Material Resources as tools for the Gospel and for personal and public increase
- Preparation for the works which the Lord established beforehand for each of us to walk in, no matter the individual calling. Mastery and excellence through the excellence of Christ in us result
- The ability to Walk in Christian liberty and maintain it in the community and nation
- Training of the Christian Character necessary to a godly life, resulting in:
  - Faith, steadfastness and cheerfulness in all circumstances
  - Individual responsibility and Christian liberty
  - Skill, industry, and productivity in one's calling
  - Voluntary love and care for one's neighbor
  - Christian liberty under law as a unifying principle of life

### **Statement of Faith**

1. We believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God;
2. We believe in one God, eternally existent in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
3. We believe everything in the created universe is revelational of God's infinity, God's diversity, God's individuality. God created distinct individualities and, at once, maintains the identity and purpose of each, while He relates all into one purposeful whole; God created man as a moral individual in the image of Himself;
4. We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His resurrection from the dead, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory;
5. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace, through faith, are we saved;

6. We believe in the present activity of the Holy Spirit in power to comfort and enable men in the work of Christ; Biblical Covenant Christian Church is a Bible believing church which believes in the gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12.
7. We believe that the Gospel planted in men's hearts is the seed of every good work of God through men; the purpose of this work is both to build an eternal Christian character and for the spread of the Gospel; Christian character is God's means of conserving the human institutions which support the continuing ability to spread the Gospel; careful stewardship of all resources upon a sound conscience is essential to the work of the Gospel;
8. We believe the power of the Holy Spirit is the means by which the law of the Gospel is fulfilled in our hearts, freeing us from the bondage of sin and allowing us to govern ourselves among men;
9. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers and therefore in the principle of union, in good conscience, with others in the accomplishment of the work of God in every area of life;
10. We believe in practicing the Biblical covenant principle before God and among men where the internal Two Commandments of Christ are given outward form in our daily individual and community lives;
11. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost—they that are saved unto resurrection of life and they that are lost unto resurrection of damnation.

### **Course of Study**

According to Connecticut State law, parents are responsible for ascertaining that their child is in attendance of a school with the equivalent of a public school curriculum. Biblical Covenant Christian School offers a rigorous, scholarly course of study in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and United States history and citizenship, including a study of the town, state, and federal governments. Additionally, Biblical Covenant Christian School will also offer, either immediately or as resources permit, studies in Christian history, higher mathematics, natural science, economics, music, art and foreign language.

We offer a single track college preparatory program to all. Completion of the college preparatory program depends on the ability and effort of the individual. This approach assumes that all may be capable and should have the opportunity to prepare for college. Those who do not complete the entire college preparatory program may be well assured that in whatever progress is made, it consists in thorough training in the foundational skills and knowledge. Our approach is Jesus' approach: Meet the student where he is and work forward from there. Thus, we hold no one back or nor leave any behind!

Biblical Covenant Christian School offers these subjects upon the ground of that Biblical view of reality, historically discerned, which led to the great accomplishment of early America. Through such a Biblical view of reality founding every subject, we can expect godly character, wisdom, mastery and excellence.

### **Subject Overview**

- Reading is a fundamental area of concentration as the basis for literacy and for all other subjects. In the primary grades, literacy is the foremost area of study beginning with basic phonics. Literacy training continues through the grades.
- English Grammar gives proper command of the language which helps to develop the thinking and reasoning capacity, and is therefore useful in all endeavors. Good communication is central to the work of the Gospel and every area of relationship and accomplishment.
- Literature presents lively examples of historical character and thought and facilitates mastery of the language. Good literature glorifies God and His providence.
- Penmanship represents an opportunity for personal achievement and excellence. The character built through the habit of excellence in writing will be carried to all areas of effort.
- Composition. Writing proves the learning and fixes it in the mind. Composition is applied in all academic subjects.
- Geography and History provide a road map to God's plan for this earth. We glorify God through the remembrance of His providential works. Studying *Christ His Story* cultivates an understanding of our place in His plan, while it teaches lessons from others' lives.
- Mathematics provides practical skills for success in a technological age, but moreover teaches the student to think logically and to solve problems upon principle—a powerful ability. Mathematics glorifies God as it represents His order and authority.
- Natural Science introduces the student to the wonders of creation and a proper appreciation for the Creator. Applied science furnishes tools for the works of God through man, which is Christian dominion. Foundations for further study are established.
- Foreign Languages provide a useful skill, especially as a tool to spread the Gospel in other cultures. Furthermore, study of a foreign language undergirds skill in the English language.
- Music and the Fine Arts help us to know God's grace and His provision for the whole man. In particular, music and art give us means by which to glorify God as we focus on and express the beauty and truth found in His creation. Our goal is the beginning of creative mastery in these disciplines.
- Physical Fitness, including physical skill and development and the right use of the body, are important for the growth and character of the whole person. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Strength, courage, modesty, leadership, and grace are emphasized.
- Bible supplies the source and origin, and end and purpose for every subject, as well as the basis for teaching methods. Expository study of the Bible additionally develops an understanding and appreciation for the whole counsel of God, especially who He is, what are His provisions for us and what He requires of us in turn. The Bible contributes our sole rule of faith and practice for every aspect of our lives.

### **Mandatory Parent Class**

A parent orientation class will be held for new families at Biblical Covenant Christian School. Attendance of this class is mandatory for all custodial parents and guardians. We give this class is for the purpose of educating parents to the Biblical principles upon which the school is based, and so that we may be of one mind in our task of raising God's children. See the School Year Calendar for dates.

### **Parental Participation**

The witness of true Christian education shines throughout the community. We hope that Biblical Covenant Christian School and the families we serve will be a light to the community, as a result of having done our respective jobs to be committed and effective parents and teachers.

It is essential for the parents to support us in carrying out the purposes of the school. We urge the teaching and practicing of the rules of the Student Constitution at home, as a way to help build Christian love and respect. If school rules apply only to school and not at home, we create an artificial world which many young people will reject as irrelevant because the same principles are not practiced at all times.

We ask parents to supervise homework and to be interested and up-to-date on the student's studies. We ask parents to review and initial all homework assignments. Please call upon the teachers if there are any problems or if you desire to discuss any matter.

Other parent involvement is encouraged. Consider in prayer such roles or activities as class aid, field trip helper, school yard supervisor, car pool/trip transportation, library worker, assistant fund-raiser, athletic leader, leader of special parent-sponsored activities or outings. The list is long. The Parent-Teacher Fellowship will be a particularly apt arena in which to get involved. The BCA administration will offer our assistance and encouragement to the Parent-Teacher Fellowship each new school year.

### **School-Year Calendar**

See the *Handbook* insert for the current year. Biblical Covenant Christian School has designed the school-year calendar to accommodate the Biblical principle of work and rest in due season. We will work hard and so true breaks between terms are important.

This approach has produced many benefits where it has been practiced. However, it is important that you honor your commitment to the whole school year. Withdrawal of a student before the end of a term is harmful in several ways. First, the student comes to believe that completing a commitment is not important. Second, the teacher's ability to properly evaluate the student's work is hindered. Third, an improper burden to the teacher's work is added. Thank you for your cooperation in this regard.

### **School Day**

School begins at 8:45 sharp each morning. Please arrive at about 8:35. Each minute is precious; so as not to disrupt classes, please be sure students are *on time*. Chapel time is not expendable. Repeated tardiness will call for disciplinary action.

School will be closed on heavy snow or dangerous weather days. The morning of the snow day, television broadcast channels 3 WFSB, 8 WTNH, and cable channel News 12 CT, and radio stations WEZN-STAR 99.9 fm, WKSS 95.7 fm, WEBE 108 fm, WICC 600 am, and WELI 960 am will announce when BCA is closed. Also, when Milford public schools are closed, BCA will close. Check the above broadcast media for possible mid-day closings of BCA. Parents must then pick up their children as soon as possible. On moderate snow days (when Milford schools announce 90-minute delays), BCA will operate on a normal schedule, with no penalties for tardiness due to travel difficulties. Nor will penalties accrue for those who are absent because of living in heavier snow areas. Our first concern is the safety of our families. Snow closure days may be made up at the discretion of the school at the end of the school year.

Only absences for medical reasons, bereavement or true family emergencies may be excused. However, absences due to family outings or vacations, though formally not excused, will not ordinarily prejudice the student's record of accomplishment if the student otherwise maintains progress without unduly burdening the teacher. Parents must provide either a written or an oral explanation of an absence to the office or teacher.

School ends at 3:15 p.m., 12:30 p.m. for kindergarten. Please deliver and pick up your child promptly so that your hard-working teachers may focus their efforts on their rightful duties. Children must be picked up on-time by their parents or by other persons designated in writing by their parents.

BCA has no provision for extended care. However, we will attempt to assist in finding private extended day care from within the Biblical Covenant Christian School family if needed.

Parents who cannot pick children up on time agree to and must make alternative arrangements ahead of time for transportation and emergency care for their children. Similarly, in the case of weather closings, illness, busing problems, discipline situations, or other emergencies, parents must arrange ahead of time for alternative transportation and care. Indicate those you so designate on the yellow Registration card. The school cannot and does not accept responsibility for children who do not have alternative transportation or care when it is needed.

### **Student Drop Off and Pick Up**

Students' safety is our foremost concern. A second interest is that parents regularly consult with teachers about the progress of their child. Therefore, we encourage parents to bring their children personally into the classrooms or main building in the morning. In addition, we require that parents or their representatives personally pick up their child directly from the appropriate school building. Due to safety concerns, please do not allow any

children, students or siblings, uncontrolled access to the parking lot or driveway. Unsupervised children are not allowed outdoors before or after school, and such are subject to correction.

Please observe the utmost caution and courtesy when arriving and leaving. Slow down, and park properly! Limit speeds to no more than ten miles per hour in the parking lot. Honor the one way direction of the driveway; that is, enter on the classroom-building-side driveway. Please find a proper space to park. Do not stop in the driveway, particularly near the street. Doing so puts others in serious danger, which is not conscionable among Christians.

### **Busing Policy**

Milford public schools are required to furnish bus service to students of private schools who reside within the city. We understand that transportation is difficult for some. However, families who avail themselves of the bus service ought to be aware of certain potential problems. First, BCA has no authority over the bus service or schedule. Therefore, any problems which may arise must find redress through the bus company or the Milford School District and not BCA. The bus company offers no supervision over riders other than that of the bus driver. Second, parents still are responsible for prompt arrival and departure, though the bus service suffers from schedule irregularities. Students must accept tardies caused by the bus service, and parents may be called to retrieve students who are not picked up by the bus in a timely way or who miss the bus. BCA lacks the resources to absorb busing problems. Third, we miss the regular, informal meetings with parents upon which we depend to maintain our relationship with you on behalf of your children. Therefore, if at all possible, we recommend avoiding use of the bus. BCA cannot and does not accept any liability or responsibility arising from your election to use the bus.

Families who avail themselves of the bus service must acquire a copy of the Milford School District bus rules from the BCA office and agree to follow them. Students using the bus must promptly obey BCA bus monitor instructions at all times. Parents whose children use the bus agree to make alternate emergency transportation arrangements in the case for any reason that bus service is not available, particularly for pick-up from school. Failure with respect to these policies may result in the suspension of bus privileges.

### **Enrollment and Admissions**

Acceptance to Biblical Covenant Christian School is based on our reasonable expectation of student success with respect to the Gospel, scholarship, and character development. Acceptance to BCA rests essentially on the expectation of success with these factors with any student, without hurting the progress of others. Our success largely depends on parents' outlook, home practices, and active cooperation in achieving school purposes. Each applicant is considered in prayer individually on the basis of a complete application form and a family interview.

We seek to serve families who share our vision of true Christian education. Enrollment is always contingent upon the parents' commitment to the same Biblical Christian *view* and *practice* of education in the home, as the rightful ground for our success with your child. Practically speaking while we are prepared to assist in this area, parents must be willing to take whatever steps are necessary to fulfill their covenant with us. We make such a requirement because we know that the home is the key to our success on your behalf. School can only *support* the work of the home, but never replace it.

Acceptance to BCA is conditional. Because we do not conduct an exacting screening process, we reserve the right to dismiss a student at any time when the faculty agrees that the school's purposes with the individual are generally impaired or when an individual by his conduct negates the progress of others in the classroom. Thus, the student, an older one especially, must realize his personal responsibility, in the form of cheerful cooperation, for his own continuing enrollment and success in this character-based, educational endeavor.

Enrollment of new students will be restricted to 10th grade or lower. A diploma from BCA represents a carefully defined degree of character development and accomplishment. Thus, we reserve these last three years of school to give sufficient time to ensure a complete and true high school education.

Upon acceptance, a registration packet will be sent out for completion and return by the applying family. Registration packets for the following year will be sent home with students as early as February. Tuition accounts must be current before the student may register for the next year. Returning students are given enrollment priority. Re-enrollment must take place by the date given with the registration material in order to retain your enrollment priority.

### **Non-Discrimination**

Biblical Covenant Christian School has a racially nondiscriminatory policy for its students. This means that BCA admits students of any race to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at BCA and the school does not discriminate on the basis of race in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships and loan programs, and any other school administered programs.

### **Tuition and Fees**

See the *Parent/Student Handbook* insert for the current year requirements and fees. A nonrefundable, annual, one-per-family registration fee in addition to tuition is payable upon registration. Registration fee is waived for official Biblical Covenant Christian Church members as determined by church records. Note that payments for a specific individual's tuition, no matter who actually pays, may not be counted as gifts but rather must be counted as tuition according to federal law.

Tuition for the entire year is payable in advance. However, as a convenience to parents, BCA has adopted the FACTS monthly tuition payment program. All families must choose one

of the following payment plans. Each family's preferred manner of payment must be submitted each year at the time of student registration. Families with more than one student may combine options, choosing different ones for the different children. Options for payment include:

### **Full Payment Option**

Under this plan the entire amount of the annual tuition is payable on or before July 1<sup>st</sup>. A \$100.00 per student discount is offered if tuition is paid in full prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Monthly Tuition Payments**

Choosing monthly payments, means parents must pay FACTS directly through automatic electronic funds transfer from a personal bank checking or savings account. Under this plan the entire amount of tuition is paid monthly over a ten (10) month period through the FACTS Tuition Management Plan. Parents may choose to authorize payments to FACTS on either the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, beginning July, or the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, beginning June. The FACTS Company will charge an annual fee of \$38.00 for those choosing to use this option.

### **Late Enrollment or Early Withdrawal**

Tuition for enrollment through the first month of school is payable upon a whole year basis. Otherwise, if your child enrolls late or leaves school during the school year, you will be charged or refunded for the actual number of days attended as calculated from the total annual tuition cost. Be sure the school is formally notified of early withdrawal to ensure proper credit.

For registration after July 1<sup>st</sup>, two months tuition and registration fee are due prior to enrollment.

### **Past Due Tuition Payments**

Biblical Covenant Christian School is a stewardship of the Lord's resources and is dependent on the character of its member families. Tuition is a particularly sensitive issue. We wish to have a clear understanding that we would wish no one to be excluded because of the lack of funds. However, each of us has a personal walk of faith with our God and is responsible for one's own commitments. God is the provider for each of us and He deals with us as individuals. Please make every prayerful effort to fulfill your commitment. We will do the same. It shall be the responsibility of each school family to keep the school office informed of the need to make any changes in their preferred tuition payment plan or adjustments in the amount of tuition expected to be paid. Without such information, and approval of the Board of Facilitators, the following policy will apply when tuition payments are received late.

Tuition accounts are considered in arrears unless they are paid at least two months ahead, as described under "Monthly Tuition Payments."

Children of school families who have missed two monthly payments and have not paid the amount due to the school or have not made suitable arrangements within fourteen (14) calendar days after the second missed payment date may be withdrawn from enrollment, until the account has been made current. Moreover, until accounts are current or suitable arrangements are made, students will not receive further report cards.

Delinquent payments are to be made directly to the school. If payment is not possible, suitable arrangements must be made, and approved by the Board of Facilitators before students can be re-admitted.

For the sake of your family's security and peace of mind and for the general financial stability of our school, we encourage parents or guardians to contact us as soon as possible when there are economic difficulties. Such circumstances are often unpredictable. We always desire to work out these arrangements with families on an individual basis rather than asking the family to leave the school.

### **Scholarships**

Although this is a private endeavor, dependent on tuition fees, we will make every effort to assist those who truly need financial assistance due to special circumstances beyond their control. No full scholarships will be awarded. Alternatives to scholarships, including help from church or extended family, must be individually pursued as a prerequisite to consideration for a scholarship award. Volunteer work in the school may be required.

Criteria for the award of a scholarship will also include merit, meaning the child's discernible *progress* in school, both in character and in scholarship. Other minimal criteria include a determination of need based upon a completed application, previous tuition payment history, and fulfillment of any previous scholarship award conditions. Funds for scholarships are limited. Depending on the number, size and timing of scholarship requests received, it may be necessary to establish a waiting list for applicants.

Scholarships are awarded on an annual basis. A previous award does not ensure a new scholarship. To ensure timely enrollment, scholarship applications should be made as early as possible, at least a month prior to registration. This includes re-registration deadlines for returning students. Each application will be considered in prayer by the school's governing Board of Facilitators. The Facilitators consideration of scholarship applications will be made by June 15th for the following school year. For a scholarship application or information, contact the school office.

### **Materials and Facilities**

The materials and facilities at Biblical Covenant Christian School are dedicated to God in His service. Each individual is responsible for what he or she is issued. Lost or damaged school

materials and damaged facilities must be repaired or replaced, at the discretion of the school, by the person responsible for the loss or damage.

Biblical Covenant Christian School shares its facilities with the program of Biblical Covenant Christian Church and we are the church's guests. Particular attention must be paid to the proper use of the facilities and every courtesy extended to all who share them.

Textbooks will be provided by the school when used. All students must provide their own 1 1/2" or 2" wide three-ring loose-leaf binders with labeled dividers. Please do not substitute other styles or sizes of binder or folders. At least two notebooks per year will likely be needed.

Kindergartners and first graders must supply their own standard three-hole, wide-rule notebook paper. Second graders and up must supply their own college-rule standard three-hole notebook paper.

All students must supply their own pens, ink and pencils. Pens for all grades must be the fountain type (not ball point or fiber). We use fountain pens in order to help develop the best handwriting and to encourage excellence in effort and work which is more free from mistakes because of the greater care required since it cannot be erased. In addition, it is a *fine and valuable tool* which teaches good stewardship. Please, emphasize to your children its importance. Children will need perhaps a dozen or more packages of *blue* ink cartridges for the year. Pencils will be used to supplement only. Provide your child with a 12-inch ruler. Students in grades one and up must provide a complete *New King James Version Bible* for school use. Please be sure your child *is prepared* in these materials. We recommend keeping backup pens and extra ink at all times. Spares should be replaced in advance of need.

When available, a Biblical Covenant Christian School T-shirt and shorts or sweats will be required for those students who change their clothes for physical fitness class. Properly fitting and tailored shorts may be worn for physical fitness class. No sloppy, torn, overly tight, or otherwise ill-fitting physical fitness clothing is acceptable. Acceptability is at the discretion of the faculty.

### **Personal Belongings**

Nonessential belongings should be left at home. Inappropriate use of personal belongings may result in confiscation requiring parent retrieval. Potentially dangerous items such as knives, lighters, and matches are prohibited at school. Small pocket knives are exempted, but should not be out of the pocket except in supervised use. Cell phones and pagers, unless parents specifically establish to the school's satisfaction that they are necessary, shall be considered nonessential and ought not to be used at school. Visibility of inappropriate or potentially dangerous items will constitute grounds for confiscation and possible disciplinary action.

Tobacco is not allowed at school and its use on the school grounds or in the neighborhood of the school is strictly forbidden. Evidence of drug use or possession of any contraband will be grounds for immediate expulsion.

Buying and selling or trading of personal property is not allowed at school except under the direct and immediate supervision of the parents of all students involved.

### **Emergency and Health Procedures**

Sick children must not be sent to school. Children with elevated temperatures should be kept home until 24 hours after normal temperature has resumed or upon doctor's okay. BCA, in order to provide the healthiest school environment for all, must reserve the right to send children home for suspected infection. We will make every effort to exercise this right judiciously. Your cooperation in keeping sick children at home will aid us tremendously.

We discourage the taking of medication during school hours unless there is a special or serious problem. *Both* physician and parental permission are required by State law. Please contact the administration for communications on this matter. Medication must be carried in its proper container and must not present a hazard to other students.

All students must comply with the State of Connecticut's requirements for immunizations and health assessment. All forms to be completed will be included in the registration package or otherwise are available at the school office.

Record of immunizations are required upon school entry and again in the 7th grade, except upon certain conditions. Please contact the school or the local health department for questions regarding these exceptions.

Health checkups are required by the State for first graders and entering junior high and high school students in public school. While not required by Biblical Covenant Christian School, such checkups are *highly* recommended, especially vision and hearing exams.

In case of natural disaster, your child will be kept at school and supervised until you come for him or her. Children will not be released to anyone but their legal guardians or adult *previously* designated in writing by the legal guardians.

### **Nutrition**

The Bible teaches that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. *Please* provide only nutritious snacks and meals for school. High-sugar treats and caffeinated drinks, such as colas, affect the students' abilities in school. Do not send such drinks or snacks to school. Contact the school for alternative suggestions.

Students may not share their food. Food brought from home and not eaten at school must be taken home, not thrown away, so that parents are aware of what the child is and is not eating.

No school-prepared lunches will be offered. Please provide your child of elementary grade or higher with an adequate lunch time meal.

Meals or other food may be offered to students for special classroom or school-wide events by individual parents or teachers. Such meals or snacks must be viewed as private, voluntary and taken only upon the mutual agreement of the individuals involved. The school

assumes no liability for such private and individual arrangements and assumes no responsibility to oversee or restrict such activity for a given student unless specifically requested by the parent.

### **Class Visitation**

We *encourage* classroom visitation by school parents, and prospective parents and students. Although not absolutely necessary, please arrange classroom visitation through the school office prior to the date of visitation in order to avoid schedule conflicts and possible inconvenience to you.

However, if your child forgets items needed for school, please do not take them directly to the classroom, but to the office so as to minimize disruption. We will make sure the item gets to its owner in a timely way.

Custodial parents or guardians of prospective students who wish to have their child visit the school must *personally* file a permission form with the school office before leaving the child. We cannot be responsible for young people left without written permission, and accept no liability for such.

### **Transportation**

We hope that parents will be available for car pooling and helping with transportation for field trips. Contact the school office if you can help.

Bicycles are acceptable transportation to school. If bicycles are ridden, courtesy and safety shall be exhibited. Bicycle laws must be taught to the children and observed by them. Bicycles should be licensed and provided with a good lock. Biblical Covenant Christian School cannot be responsible for any theft or damage to student bicycles. The above applies to the use of skates and other similar transportation means as well.

The use of personal transportation devices must not become disruptive to school function or they will not be allowed.

Students may drive to and park vehicles at school. However, BCA is a closed campus. Minor students must not leave campus during school hours without permission expressly communicated to the school office by the custodial parent or guardian *and* permission of the school. No other permission is acceptable. Student automobile commuting is a privilege. The school reserves the right to revoke this privilege.

### **Dress Code**

The dress code is specified in the student constitution. Biblical Covenant Christian School reserves the right, in the case of questionable or immodest dress, to remove the student from class and call upon parents to retrieve the student. A parent conference may be called to discuss and to determine appropriate Christian school attire.

Our purpose in the dress code is to inculcate Biblical modesty. We should not attract undue attention to ourselves, but rather Christians should set the standards for the rest of the world. Rather than be a cause for stumbling, our dress should inspire a sense of virtue and honor.

Attitudes toward life practices are begun early. One cannot expect a child to acquire modesty at once when mature; but habits of attitude formed early will prevail. For example, short skirts are not modest when the girls play; children grow so quickly that soon the short skirts make it difficult to be modest in the best of circumstances.

Consider the example of the Pilgrims. Living in a ribald age where morals were languishing, the Pilgrims undertook to live the Biblical standard “without tarrying for any.” In dress, modesty was the rule, but with grace and style. Not in dead drabness as they are often pictured, they wore colors and styles that reflected their abundant life in Christ, but understated and refined so that they were elegant and *modest*.

Please remember the goal of the rules is to help train the *heart* so that our outward lives will please and glorify our God.

### **Governing Principles**

In a school which emphasizes *principle* as the necessary premise of Christian education, we often find difficulty handling the various issues which come our way because of certain seemingly competing principles. However, we are confident that Biblical principles are never competing, but rather must be balanced to find the narrow path which the Lord would have us take.

Self-government on the part of those seeking to find the Lord’s will in a given situation is one of the key ingredients for Biblical principle to prevail. If an individual or group of individuals presses against the spirit of a law, the only recourse is to impose the letter of the law. The letter of the law completely undermines our purpose—namely, to *teach* the *spirit* of the law for real life, so as to be internally self-governed, which is Christian liberty. In a word, this is a critical issue and requires a high degree of cooperation for us to be successful in our educational mission.

In order to help you maintain the spirit of the law with respect to dress in the school, we offer the following:

1. We grant that many factors are at work here: the cost of clothing, availability, and what we refer to as *wineskins*—the various convictions and perceptions we each now possess which color our understanding of the rules. Thus, we will attempt to be sensitive.
2. Our goal is education of the student *toward* the ability to see differences in refinement, beauty, grace, love of one’s neighbor, leadership quality and in summary the highest expressions of the excellence of Christ. Based upon the understanding of the above, the

next goal is to see the student practicing them, to become prepared for whatever office of leadership to which the Lord might bring him or her.

3. Fashions change. Change of fashion in itself is not necessarily good or bad. The best contemporary expressions which reflect the Biblical principle must be our starting place.
4. The following is our best effort to explain the intent of the dress code in a qualitative and specific fashion:
  - a. The terms *Oxford*, *Ivy League*, and *Prep* represent a good style model.
  - b. Perhaps a slightly different representation of our goal lies in the terms *business office attire*, *conservative*, or *traditional*.
  - c. Any attire that tends toward the casual or play is less acceptable, and any that tends toward clothing of leadership in business or other public or leadership sphere is more acceptable.
5. We are a Principle Approach school. Living upon principle demands wisdom. Wisdom means weighing competing principles and ranking them and balancing them in a just manner. A principled dress code will teach godly wisdom. On the other hand, a completely detailed and *absolute* dress code amounting to a uniform enslaves one to the letter of the law, which in turn encourages a mindless and slavish conformity. Such is not acceptable to our educational mission, because it relieves one from the responsibility to use godly wisdom.
6. In general, we believe the best authority for judging appropriateness is the classroom teacher. This allows for a personal understanding of the child, age and sex differences, family background and cultural differences, differences in Christian maturity, etc. When needed, the school administration will make the final judgment in consultation with the parents.
7. We believe that training taste and perceptions is to a degree an individual consideration for the reasons stated above. Therefore, parents or students may notice variations in the practical application of the dress code. What we ask of you in your response is to instruct your children that it is their own consciences and training which are at issue, not others'. If all are willing to restrain themselves, then the school will have the power to educate—to help form and direct. If even a few press against the limits here, we will be reduced to the letter of the law, and again, our purposes will be defeated. Our goal in making individual determinations is to put the good of the student (and other students) foremost. We wish to be sensitive. Such a policy is difficult to administer, but will result in better accomplishment of our educational mission in this area.
8. If we must speak to a student regarding attire, ordinarily we will privately explain the principle of our objection and ask that if possible the student not wear the garment again or replace it as soon as possible without imposing hardship on the home. In less self-governed cases, we will take stronger measures as required.

9. We recommend that students *and* parents practice the dress code outside the school. If glorifying God in our dress (appropriate to our activity) is good, why not practice it as a way of life?
10. Though we wish to establish reasonable limits, according to the Biblical principle of Liberty under Law, we must nonetheless enforce a minimal dress code. Ordinary determination of acceptability of dress or grooming shall remain with the homeroom teacher, and final determination with the headmaster. See the "Student Constitution" for details.

The conclusion then is this: please try to keep the spirit of the law, knowing that resistance is debilitating to those who are trying to serve you and it confounds our goal—which is education. Work to raise the standards with us, not to lower them. In addition, please be forbearing with those whom you perceive are not conforming. On our part, we will diligently continue to work toward our educational goal of a consciousness and practice, in every student, of Christian nobility in dress—and in every other area of life—even while we give due heed to individual circumstances.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Biblical Covenant Christian School requires that all who participate with us practice Christ's approach to conflict resolution. This Biblical approach has long served well to cut short disputes or even stop them before they begin. God's way works! The issue is trust and mutual respect! As adapted to school use, we understand Matthew 18:15-20 to apply as follows:

Among adults if there is any cause for offense, any sin, or any conflict between us, we must lovingly confront the other involved. For example, if a parent has a problem with a teacher, the parent must first go to the teacher and not the headmaster or pastor. If the teacher does not listen, the parent may appeal to the headmaster, but without gossip, that is, without speaking of the offense. A meeting is then arranged so that the headmaster can witness the dispute and help resolve it. If the issue is still not resolved, the matter may be taken to the Facilitators Board or the Pastor.

Among children, if a rule is broken or there is a personal offense of any kind is given, the student must go to the person involved and speak to him before going to a teacher. If a school rule is involved, the offender must report to a teacher on his own. If he does not, it is the responsibility of the other child to go to a teacher to bring him as a witness for further confrontation.

If the issue involves a teacher, it is appropriate for the child to go to his parent first, but not for the parent to listen to the child's story and take sides. Side-taking at this point is tantamount to judging the teacher as unfit. Such judgment will undermine the teacher's authority with the child and thus his respect, and with it the teacher's ability to teach. Rather, the parent should go as a witness, while the student confronts the teacher. Our teachers are selected for their transparency and teachableness. Please give due respect to the ones you have chosen as your representatives and we will endeavor to do the same toward you.

Because every fact, according to Scripture, must be determined by two or three witnesses, certain problems may not be immediately resolved. If sin is involved, we trust Providence to uncover it in due season. "Witch hunts" are forbidden us. Nonetheless, loving confrontation is usually all that is needed to uncover sin and produce reconciliation.

The only exception to this pattern would be in the case of an immediate danger to an individual or property, then taking the matter immediately to the pastor or headmaster, for example, would be appropriate.

Not practicing Matthew 18 leads to humanistic approaches which can do great damage. Allowing sin to continue is not love. Breaking relationships and running away is not love and teaches children the opposite of Christ's way. *Please practice Matthew 18.*

This is a difficult process for those not used to it. Yet it is a gloriously wholesome approach and it works because it is Jesus' system. If there are any questions about this policy, please call on the school administration. Communication is the key to our good relationships!

### **Dating and Coed Romance**

We find no warrant in the Scriptures for contemporary dating practices. Even a brief consideration should reveal that dating fosters a sampling mentality which in turn fosters selfishness and superficial and temporary relationships. In addition, the temptations of pairing off often result in inappropriate emotional and physical attachments. Such emotional attachments often result in broken hearts and subsequent conscience hardening, as false hopes and expectations are raised and dashed. Physical attachments often result in obvious disaster for young peoples' futures. Clearly, romantic preoccupations compete with our educational goals. For some, romance will completely eclipse the educational process. Lastly, such relationships will tend to tempt other young people in the group to emulate their peers.

The Biblical alternative to dating is courtship. However, courtship is only for those who are *now ready* to make a lifelong commitment to marriage, the Biblical idea of betrothal. Until the time for courtship arrives, wholesome friendships in the context of a properly governed social group ought to be the norm. At BCA, we rather wish to promote supervised, innocent, healthy and Biblically grounded coed friendships—brother and sister-like relationships.

Thus, coed romance (boyfriend/girlfriend relationships) among students is not permitted and any manifest expression will be cause for corrective action. Expressions subject to correction include but may not be limited to pairing off, holding hands, lengthy or frequent embracing, or kissing.

On the same grounds, parents of enrolled students shall agree to enforce these principles in and out of school, as a ground of enrollment in BCA. At the same time, parents are encouraged to supervise closely healthy coeducational friendships in a social setting.

We understand that this, too, may be rather a new and difficult concept. BCA wishes to encourage you and therefore offer our assistance toward understanding and implementing a Biblical view of male and female interpersonal relationships.

### **Christian Self-Government**

We teach the children at the Biblical Covenant Christian School to be self-governed. This is entirely realistic even for the youngest students. The classroom is generally a cheerful place *because* the children learn to be self-governed and do not need a taskmaster, a facilitator, or an elaborate reward/punishment system to externally manipulate behavior as is the practice of atheistic psychology. Rather, a loving parent-like relationship prevails which is true Biblical education. True discipline is first a matter of the attitudes of the heart with corresponding outward actions following. Praise God for once more teaching His people these marvelous Biblical principles of government to achieve His purposes which are to our blessing (Galatians 5:22, 23; Proverbs 16:32).

### **Christian Character**

For the child to be self-governed, he must have the internal strength of spirit to rule over his flesh. We call this strength *Christian character* (Romans 5:3-5; KJV: *experience*). In our secular age, the Christian must be tough against the temptations to sin. This sturdy character manifests itself in faith and steadfastness, brotherly love and Christian care, diligence and industry. These are perfected in the devout child of God who has practiced unto habit of the heart the ways of God in every thought and action. Thus, Christian character is the only foundation for success in school or any of the higher deeds of God's callings. More importantly, Christian character allows us to walk in the grace of Christ in liberty without abusing His grace. Christian character *is* the spiritual and practical goal of Biblical Covenant Christian School.

### **Discipline**

We are thus brought to the issue of discipline. For the very reason that the child's character is not yet formed, we must, as parents, be discipline for him. Every worthwhile activity demands preparation. Christian life demands comprehensive training of the attitudes, habits, and manners (Proverbs 22:6). Discipline is a general term of learning denoting *practice under the proper level of government*. Children are instructed, shown, and helped to do what they are supposed to do. The Christian parent necessarily asks more of his child to more thoroughly prepare him for life (Luke 12:48). This training is very detailed and is directed toward the many specific traits of character needed for the whole person (II Timothy 3:16,17). The Word and experience tell us the results will be glorious and full of joy manifested in the Character for Christian liberty (Galatians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18).

But at any time the sin nature gets the better of the child, when he chooses his way instead of God's way, difficult though God's way may be (James 1:2), the child needs to be corrected. The Scriptures give us two basic approaches to correction: rebuke and chastisement. These are the means we use at school. Rebuke is verbal correction. When a gentle but firm reminder

does not do its effective work in the heart and outwardly in action, even for the small things being trained, chastisement is the next resort. Chastisement is punishment for correction and for the child is necessarily a spank (Proverbs 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15; 19:18; 29:17; 20:30; Hebrews 12:6,7; Ephesians 6:4 (*nurture*=*paideia*, from strike or sting). Swats are administered when we have determined insufficient effort to self-correct. Spanking should be seen as a positive good for our *good* children, not retaliation against *bad* children.

In practice, we have found that usually little chastisement is necessary. We teach Christian self-government. As a result, children understand their part in a happy and successful classroom. Most children cheerfully work hard at their subjects and at proper deportment so that gentle reminders are all that are usually necessary to correct classroom problems. When discipline is first trained in the heart, children will love to do right. Therefore, we find they love school.

However, we find that some young people do not respond to verbal reproof and gentle reminders. Corporal correction is the policy of the school, so that we may help children who need the greater assistance. Parents, by enrolling their child, agree to this practice. Corporal correction will be applied under controlled conditions. If a spanking is deemed necessary by a teacher after other corrections have failed to achieve their purpose, the student will receive swats with a paddle. We will use all discretion and care in this practice, since, of course, our purpose is to benefit the *child* for God's glory.

For the most part, we trust that parents will be diligent to correct character flaws as they arise in the course of learning, so that little will be required at school.

Most correction should be accomplished by parents. However, in our day, many parents do not have well developed skills in godly correction. The school offers to assist the home in this regard by providing an example. Moreover, the school functions as a partner with the home to support the Biblical way. Where a home is already skillfully practicing godly correction, the school will have little to no need to administer correction at school. The primary reason we offer Biblical correction at school is so that we may serve the more needful child and assist the more needful home. Our principle rule for admission to this school, in order to fulfill our covenantal obligation, is to accept students where we may expect success without hindering the progress of others. Without a resort to Biblical correction, we could not offer the services of this school to children who have a greater need to establish self-control.

As an extreme last resort, as stated in the admissions policy, we may require student withdrawal from the school, although we trust that the mutual commitment between parents, child and school will make this unnecessary.

## **Specific Chastening Policy**

### **Preamble**

In many corners, a humanistic condemnation to the Biblical injunctions for corporal correction of children has led to great confusion and concern over such a practice. In light of

real abuse caused by the absence of Biblical correction, such confusion and concern is plausible. Therefore, Biblical Covenant Christian School offers this policy to attempt to document and define a sound and wholesome Biblical treatment of corporal correction and its corresponding Biblical principle of *in loco parentis*, the authority of parental representatives to act on behalf of parents for the good of the child.

In a school which aims at godly and wholesome standards, standards of conduct must be maintained, as attitudes and conduct are infectious, for good or bad. Where standards must be maintained, the one alternative to corporal correction for the student who needs it would be his expulsion from school. A discipline policy which excludes corporal correction must produce an elitist institution able to serve only those who are already accomplished and not those in most need of Biblical discipline. Biblical Covenant Christian School seeks to be a ministry. We seek, like Jesus, to meet people where they are, then to help them along to where they ought to be. Just so, Jesus takes the humble and babes to confound the worldly wise.

This policy generally follows a standard for corporal correction which has been adopted by the Association of Christian Schools International based upon certain legal principles which protect both the student and the school in these litigious times.

### **Policy**

1. The school Board of Facilitators is responsible for establishing, reviewing, and providing final oversight of Biblical Covenant Christian School's correction policy.
2. This policy rests upon the Biblical injunction as found in Proverbs 22:15;23:13,14; 29:15; 19:18; 29:17; 20:30; Hebrews 12:6,7; and Ephesians 6:4 (nurture=paideia, from strike or sting).
3. Correction of any kind must be given solely for the good of the child.
4. When a child has formed a habit requiring correction or erupts with unbecoming conduct, corporal correction will be considered due. Thus, corporal correction shall be reserved for:
  - a. Habitual and willful conduct for which over time ordinary verbal instruction and correction have been shown to be ineffective in assisting the child to grow in character or accomplishment; note that even passive behavior may fall under this category;
  - b. Overt misconduct such as but not limited to lying, cheating, fighting, damaging property, using profane language, or insubordination.

According to the Biblical mandate, every such matter is to be confirmed upon the testimony of two or three witnesses or other sure evidence. Where reasonable doubt exists, students should be given the benefit of that doubt. Also, Matthew 18's reconciliation process will be administered where the matter warrants.

5. An important key to this policy is communication with the home over areas of conduct. For category *4a* situations, prior to administration of corporal correction, parents will have been informed of the need as it becomes apparent and finally that correction may be

imminent. For either *4a* or *4b* situations, parents will also be informed as soon as possible after corporal correction.

6. Corporal correction must never be administered in anger or with a raised voice.
7. Classroom teachers will ordinarily administer corporal correction themselves in order to establish their proper authority with the student. Teachers are asked to assume parental responsibility in a limited fashion *in loco parentis*, and accordingly must have the corresponding authority to accomplish the parent's and the Lord's purpose on behalf of the child. Otherwise, teachers are being asked to make bricks without straw (Exodus 5).
8. In cases where the teacher deems the situation to require additional weight of authority, parents may be asked to come to school to administer correction. If parents are not immediately available for such correction, the student may be withdrawn from class and sent home until the issue is resolved. Parental correction at school should be viewed as a final resort before expulsion. It indicates a special need in the child which may not be appropriate for the school, with limited authority, to undertake.
9. Parents must understand the limited resources available for the massive job of forming a child's character. Without the parent's assuming the primary responsibility for correction of a child in need of it, the only recourse for the school is expulsion. The success of the child's education largely depends upon the home's consistent and minute commitment to character training.
10. Correction shall be administered as soon after an offense is committed as possible.
11. Students should understand exactly why they are being corrected. For example, a student should know that he is not being corrected for forgetting homework, but for willfulness, that is, the unwillingness to make an effort to correct the habit of negligence with respect to the homework.
12. Correction must consider the dignity of the child as created in God's image. While certain limited humiliation is inherent in the principle of correction (Hebrews 12:11), purposeful public humiliation should not be considered a part of Biblical correction of the child in the context of the school.
13. Teachers shall be instructed in the use of the paddle to produce an effective sting without doing injury.
14. An enrolled child whose parents for any reason have forbidden the school from administering corporal correction shall not be so chastened. However, such child is subject to immediate expulsion.
15. A child must not be handled or shaken in any way in conjunction with correction. If a student refuses correction or otherwise will not hold still and submit, the teacher will not use the paddle. Rather, the student shall be suspended from class until the parents can assure the school to the school's satisfaction that the issue is resolved.
16. Particularly with respect to older students, teachers will carefully consider whether corporal correction will be effective for the student's good.

17. Paddling shall be limited to no more than three swats.
18. Corporal correction shall be given by a regular classroom teacher or administrator in the presence of one other adult.
21. Girls shall be corrected only by a female faculty member.
22. Faculty should ordinarily pray with and otherwise comfort and encourage a corrected student. Students should know that they have unconditional acceptance as a person by their God and their teachers. We correct their *conduct* and *manifest attitude*.
23. A student should be allowed to compose himself before rejoining classmates.

In order to accomplish the family's and the school's educational goals for the child who has more pointed and critical character training needs, we may find that we need both a closer partnership between the home and school and a degree more freedom in the school to correct the child.

Therefore, the school may request parents to sign a special permission to grant to the ordinary classroom teacher, beyond the ordinary correction policy:

- a. The authority to correct a child corporally without advance notice.
- b. The authority to correct the child without an additional adult witness.

These measures will allow the more direct and quick correction needed for special areas of character training which ordinary measures have failed to correct. These measures will also allow the classroom teacher to make needed corrections while minimizing disruption to the classroom. Such an extension to the ordinary correction policy may be the only alternative to expulsion of students with a greater need for discipline.

The following *Student Constitution* is a covenant between the school and the student, meant to help the child know what is expected of him so that he will be able to govern himself well.

## **School Student Constitution**

### **I. Preamble**

All our actions should glorify God as an expression of His love. The Student Constitution is a set of rules which will help us to express God's love to each other. These rules, based on God's principle of "Train up a child in the way he should go" and other Biblical principles, will be taught and observed in the school. Parents should teach and practice the rules at home to make them effective.

### **II. Modesty and Dress Code (parents—see "Dress Code" section of the *Handbook*)**

- A. Modesty is the rule. Do not attract undue attention to yourself in dress, word or action.
- B. Do not think too much of yourself or brag.

- C. School is a businesslike activity and dress should reflect this. Ivy league or business style represents the model for the dress code.
- D. Clothes should be kept clean and neat.
- E. Shoes should be maintained in good condition. Please do not wear very worn or raggedy tennis shoes. Do not wear open-toed shoes or sandals, or spiked or high-heel shoes for safety reasons. Hosiery must be worn.
- F. To avoid fashion contests, please avoid latest-fashion clothing. Avoid fads.
- G. Avoid a too-casual, sloppy appearance.
- H. Do not wear clothes which advertise products.
- I. Biblical moderation reflecting the individual work of the Lord in us should be the guide.
- J. Play clothes, abbreviated or baggy clothes, beach-wear, cutoffs, pants or sleeveless tops are not permitted. Do not wear sweatshirts, except for physical fitness class.
- K. No pierced jewelry is allowed, except for modest, single, traditional, earlobe earrings for girls.
- L. Recognized dress uniforms of the Royal Rangers, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other similar organizations are acceptable.
- M. *Girls*
  - 1. Wear dresses or skirts with slips and blouses. Girls' skirts and dresses must cover the knees when they are in a normal, comfortable sitting or standing position to be modest. This last gesture is a clear statement of love toward the boys and men.
  - 2. Refined denim skirts are acceptable.
  - 3. Tights and other additional undergarments, long skirts, etc. are acceptable for warmth during cold weather.
  - 4. Tops should be minimally sleeved or capped. Spaghetti straps are not acceptable.
  - 5. Femininely-cut knit shirts are acceptable. However, square-cut, boy's-style t-shirts are not.
  - 6. Girls through 7th grade should avoid adult decoration such as makeup, heavy jewelry and sheer nylon hose. Older girls must exercise restraint in makeup and ornamentation.
- N. *Boys*
  - 1. Wear long pants which are well kept and fit properly. Corduroy, stay-pressed or polished denim and slacks are appropriate. Do not wear blue jeans or other more casual denim.
  - 2. Wear a belt or suspenders.
  - 3. Sport or dress (buttoned front) style shirts with neckties are required.
  - 4. Shirt tails should be kept tucked.
- O. Keep hair clean and neat. Boys' hair should be kept neatly trimmed. Severe, faddish hair cuts for both boys and girls are not acceptable. Mustaches and beards are not permitted. Sideburns must be moderate.

- P. Students may wear traditionally styled hats according to traditional etiquette. Hats may be worn as protection from the elements and only so long as there is no "fad" being started. Boys may not wear hats inside the classroom.

### **III. Speaking and Listening**

- A. Avoid interrupting another's conversation.
- B. If you *must* interrupt, say, "excuse me," and wait to be acknowledged.
- C. Have your listener's attention before you begin to speak. Call by name to get the person's attention and then wait patiently.
- D. Look at the person with whom you are speaking.
- E. Listen carefully when another speaks.
- F. Speak loudly enough to be heard, but not too loudly.
- G. Answer adults by saying "Yes, Mr..." or "No, Mrs..."

### **IV. Courtesy**

- A. Always say "please" and "thank you."
- B. Obey cheerfully; do not talk back.
- C. Accept correction with thankfulness.
- D. Always be respectful to adults.
- E. Address adults by Mr., Mrs., or Miss and their last name.
- F. Yield your path to those older than you.
- G. Be kind to others. Never push or hit.
- H. Do not tease, be mean to, or make fun of another.
- I. Help one who is hurt. Be more concerned about the person who is hurt than your getting into trouble for causing the hurt.
- J. Do not say mean things about others.
- K. Do not be bossy.
- L. Do not be quick to defend yourself.

### **V. Table Manners**

- A. Do not eat or drink until finished praying.
- B. Eat slowly and carefully.
- C. Do not talk while chewing.
- D. Remain seated while eating.
- E. No matter where one eats, use manners as if seated at the table.
- F. Excuse yourself before leaving the table.
- G. Never trade or share food unless with teacher permission.

## **VI. Other Department Rules**

- A. Speak, sing, and laugh quietly indoors unless told otherwise.
- B. Do not run except outdoors, during sports or free time, and then with restraint so as not to hurt someone or ruin your clothes.
- C. Stay within the given boundaries.
- D. Treat school facilities and other's property with care and respect.
- E. Keep bicycles and other modes of transportation in the designated area. Keep bikes locked while at school. Ride courteously and according to the laws.
- F. Do not chew gum at school.
- G. Help keep the school grounds, rest rooms, and classrooms clean. Pick up after yourself. Also, with a servant's heart, please pick up trash wherever you see it.

# **Parent-Teacher Fellowship Constitution**

## **Preamble**

### **P.1 Introduction**

Under the authority of Scripture and in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His Gospel purpose, we covenant together for the establishment of the Biblical Covenant Christian School Parent-Teacher Fellowship (PTF).

### **P.2 Reasons for the Constitution**

As Biblical Covenant Christian School grows in numbers, a certain danger arises: the vision of the school could be easily undermined in our success if we are not diligent to keep faith with our Lord who brought us into existence, just as biblical Israel was undermined at certain points. In any move of the Lord, there is a spirit of adversity working against it. The Parent-Teacher Fellowship, as an arm of the school, can be a powerful support of our vision or could inadvertently undermine it. Therefore, the Parent-Teacher Fellowship establishes this governing Constitution of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship (Constitution) as a proper governmental foundation for its activities. This Constitution should help facilitate a long-term preservation of the present spirit and work of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship and of the school.

### **P.3 Purposes Of The Parent Teacher Fellowship**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship has as its purpose the support of Biblical Covenant Christian School in its efforts to assist the families in preparing the children for a thoroughly Christian life. A further purpose of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship is to encourage the fellowship of the school's families in order to learn from and encourage each other as we serve the Lord as

parents.

## **Article 1--General Provisions**

### **1.1 Members**

Membership of Biblical Covenant Christian School Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall consist of both the parents or guardians of children duly enrolled in the school and the faculty of Biblical Covenant Christian School.

### **1.2 Biblical Covenant Christian School**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall uphold the purposes of Biblical Covenant Christian School as stated in the Parent/Student Handbook.

### **1.3 American Christian Philosophy of Education And Government**

Inasmuch as Biblical Covenant Christian School is grounded in and has as its purpose the propagation of the Principle Approach to American Christian education and government as our sound heritage of Christian life, the Parent- Teacher Fellowship acknowledges and embraces the Principle Approach as foundational to its policies and activities.

### **1.4 Christian Republican Form of Government**

Because the Principle Approach to American Christian education and government identifies Christian Republicanism as the highest expression of biblical principles of government, the Parent-Teacher Fellowship commits to applying these principles to its activities. These principles particularly include Liberty under Law, the Federal Principle of real but limited authority, Representation, Suffrage, and the Covenant or Constitution Principle all as documented in the *Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America*, in *Teaching and Learning America's Christian History*, in *Get Wisdom! Making Christian Heroes from Ordinary People*, and taught and practiced by Biblical Covenant Christian School.

This provision most importantly includes the biblical Principle of Authority for Serving. Authority is necessary to serve but must be limited to serving. Conversely, those under authority must be ready to submit to rightful authority. It is understood that one in a certain sphere of authority, though seemingly "lower", may necessarily require others in authority to submit. This approach to authority is Christ's Himself and should be ours no less. It is, indeed, the fulfillment of the Two Great Commandments of Christ.

### **1.5 Pastor, Biblical Covenant Christian Church**

Because the Parent-Teacher Fellowship of Biblical Covenant Christian School possesses no separate legal corporate existence or power, the PTF necessarily falls under the government of

Biblical Covenant Christian Church. Therefore the PTF submits itself to the governing requirements of the Biblical Covenant Christian Church Pastor (Pastor), Deacons, and Board of Facilitators (Facilitators). In particular the Pastor as representative head of Biblical Covenant Christian Church shall have veto and policy authority over any of the activities of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship.

### **1.6 Headmaster**

As primary caretaker of its vision and practice, the Headmaster of Biblical Covenant Christian School (Headmaster) is its chief executor. Therefore, the Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall submit itself to the Headmaster's veto authority over Parent-Teacher Fellowship activities and to his general leadership.

### **1.7 Banking and Accounting**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship accepts the responsibility to administer the Parent-Teacher Fellowship bookkeeping accounts and checking account in order to carry out its legitimate activities under the supervision and final authority of Biblical Covenant Christian School and Biblical Covenant Christian Church.

Reports of the financial status of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall be made to the school at the end of each month.

## **Article 2--Officers**

### **2.1 Qualifications**

An officer shall be a head of household of a Biblical Covenant Christian School family. Married couples shall work as a team in the office with appropriate representation of the wife by the husband. A single parent or guardian may serve as an officer.

An officer of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship must be a mature Christian, specifically one who subscribes to Biblical Covenant Christian School statement of faith and policies and demonstrates it in his life. An officer, especially must be in good control of his own family. An officer must be ready to serve in his leading. Officers, both husband and wife in joint office, as they represent Biblical Covenant Christian School and the Parent-Teacher Fellowship, must be instructed in or make an active commitment to learn the Principle Approach to America's Christian Education and Government during their tenure and to use it in making decisions on behalf of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship.

### **2.2 Terms of Office**

Terms of office for all Parent-Teacher Fellowship officers shall be for one year. Elections to

choose new officers shall be held immediately upon ratification of this Constitution and thereafter in the last month of school each year. Tenure of office shall begin upon election.

### **2.3 Election**

Officers shall be chosen by election as described in section 3.1.3.

### **2.4 Officers**

#### **2.4.1 President**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall have a President.

The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship. The President shall be the chairman of Parent-Teacher Fellowship meetings. He shall direct the activities of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship and be responsible for the oversight of them. The President shall be responsible to the Pastor and Headmaster regarding Parent-Teacher Fellowship activities. The President and Secretary together shall execute checks for Parent-Teacher Fellowship expenses.

#### **2.4.2 Vice President**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship may elect a Vice President if it is deemed appropriate by the Parent-Teacher Fellowship at large. The Vice President's duties include the performance of the President's duties in his absence. He otherwise shall assist the President in executive duties as they are delegated.

#### **2.4.3 Treasurer**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship may elect a Treasurer if it is deemed appropriate by the Parent-Teacher Fellowship at large.

The Treasurer shall administer and oversee the finances of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship. The Treasurer shall maintain an accounting of all of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship's financial activities and prepare monthly financial status reports accordingly. The Treasurer shall be prepared at all times to present records of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship accounts to the Parent-Teacher Fellowship, Pastor or Headmaster.

If no Treasurer is elected, the duties of the Treasurer shall fall to the President.

#### **2.4.4 Secretary**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship may elect a Secretary if it is deemed appropriate by the Parent-Teacher Fellowship at large.

The Secretary shall maintain minutes of meetings and records of other activities of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship. He shall also publish notice of Parent-Teacher Fellowship meetings. He shall maintain a copy of this Constitution for the inspection of any member of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship.

In the absence of the Secretary, the duties of the secretary shall fall to the President who may appoint a temporary assistant to conduct the actual work.

## **2.5 Vacancies**

Vacancies of any office may be temporarily filled by appointment by the Headmaster. Special elections may be held at the discretion of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship to fill any vacancies for the remainder of the official term.

## **Article 3--Activities**

### **3.1 Conduct of Meetings**

#### **3.1.1 Chairman**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship President shall be chairman of Parent-Teacher Fellowship meetings. In the absence of President, the Vice President shall chair. In the absence of the Vice President, the Treasurer shall chair. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Secretary shall chair. In the absence of all officers, the members present at the meeting may elect a temporary chairman for the conduct of the meeting.

#### **3.1.2 Rules of Order**

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard of conduct for Parent-Teacher Fellowship meetings. However, the chairman of any meeting shall have discretion as to the specific invocation of Robert's Rules.

#### **3.1.3 Suffrage**

In the ratification of this Constitution, amending the Constitution, election of officers and at other times deemed appropriate by the President, the expressed will of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall be recognized by the vote of the membership. Elections regarding this Constitution and for officers shall only be held at duly publicized Parent-Teacher Fellowship meetings. Referendum elections may be held at any meeting of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship.

Suffrage is limited to one vote per family. The family member voting will be considered the representative of the family.

A vote shall be indicated in person at such meetings as elections are held or by the written proxy of those members who cannot attend.

#### **3.1.4 Quorum**

A quorum for elections shall be the number of members in attendance plus the number of written proxies in hand of the meeting chairman at the time of the election.

#### **3.1.5 Majority Action**

A majority of both those in attendance at the election meeting plus the written proxies in hand of the meeting chairman at the time of the election is necessary to carry an election decision. A greater percentage may be necessary for special elections as indicated herein.

#### **3.1.6 Duly Advertised Meeting**

A duly advertised meeting is one where a circular announcement has been mailed or sent home with students at least one week in advance of the meeting.

Other meetings not requiring due advertisement may be called more informally or upon shorter notice.

### **3.2 Committees**

Certain committees designated by the Parent-Teacher Fellowship may have authority to act according to that granted by the Parent-Teacher Fellowship at large from time to time.

### **3.3 Fund Raising and Expenses**

The Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall have the authority to raise or spend funds for its own activities or on behalf of Biblical Covenant Christian School within the limitations of this Constitution, and the under the authority of Biblical Covenant Christian Church. These limitations include as indicated herein the veto of either the Pastor or the Headmaster. This is important as all activities of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship should reflect the spirit, character and purposes of Biblical Covenant Christian School.

### **Article 4--Ratification of the Constitution**

This Constitution for Biblical Covenant Christian School Parent-Teacher Fellowship shall be activated upon its ratification by two-thirds of the quorum of the duly advertised meeting held for this purpose and by the Board of Directors of Biblical Covenant Christian School.

### **Article 5--Amendment**

Amendment to this Constitution may be made by both the vote of two-thirds of the quorum of the duly publicized meeting held for that purpose and by the approval of the Pastor and

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Headmaster.

Witnesseth

This Constitution for the Parent-Teacher Fellowship of Biblical Covenant Christian School was ratified by the assembled body of the parents of Biblical Covenant Christian School Children and the Board of Directors of Biblical Covenant Christian School on the evening of November 6, in the YEAR OF OUR LORD, the ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVENTH and of the year of the INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA the TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-FIRST.

IN WITNESS THEREOF

---

President  
Parent-Teacher Fellowship

---

Secretary  
Parent-Teacher Fellowship

---

Headmaster  
Biblical Covenant Christian School

---

Pastor  
Biblical Covenant Christian Church

## **Faculty Covenant**

In the name of the Lord, we the faculty of Biblical Covenant Christian School mutually covenant ourselves together for the good of the children, their parents, and body of Christ at large, and the purposes of the Lord for His Church and our nation. We enter into this trust as a member of the faculty of Biblical Covenant Christian School according to the following particulars. I understand and agree:

1. To the Statement of Faith of Biblical Covenant Christian School; I therefore commit to live a disciple life, both devotionally and practically;
2. To the philosophy and methods of Biblical Covenant Christian School with respect to the Principle Approach as it is taught, as published in school documents and as it is practiced in the classroom, inasmuch as the Principle Approach represents our best understanding of biblical faith and practice;

3. To the current Biblical Covenant Christian School employment policy in all its aspects;
4. I am a spiritual parent with many of the responsibilities of and all of the love required of a Christian, natural parent;
5. I am to be a biblical example of a teacher, which includes giving of instruction, example and practice under the proper level of government; all three of these aspects of education will be practiced;
6. To the commitment to the highest professional and personal standards: I freely undertake to examine my habits regularly with respect to my devotional life, expressed attitudes, posture, speech, promptness, courtesy, kindness, cheerfulness, dress, and hygiene; I understand that the Christian life is first a matter of the condition of the heart which is then manifested in every area of life;
7. I commit to Biblical moral standards as represented by the Ten Commandments, which specifically, but not exclusively, excludes extra-marital sex, use of contraband drugs, and illegal practices of all kinds;
8. With respect to dress and grooming, that modesty, grace, and a sense of appropriateness should prevail; adherence to the letter and spirit of the student dress code sets the proper example; for business positions dress should be business-like: a suit is recommended, and slacks, and shirt and tie should be worn by men; and loose-fitting skirts and dresses, length below the knee, should be worn by women;
9. To uphold school standards with respect to students including those in the latest Parent/Student Handbook and the Classroom Covenant;
10. The classroom will be maintained by the teacher in a neat and presentable manner, including class exhibits; the teacher is responsible for daily cleaning-up of trash from floors and waste baskets, chalkboards, desks;
11. To diligently maintain proper records with respect to attendance, student academics, personal scholarship and curriculum development and review;
12. To maintain high standards, firmness and fairness in grading students;
13. I am to make a serious commitment of time in addition to the classroom day for

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preparation, scholarship in the subjects and in the Principle Approach, extracurricular activities, and regular corporate church worship;

14. To commit myself to participation in Biblical Covenant Christian School Parent-Teacher Fellowship with the understanding that parents will have primary responsibility;
15. To be available for and disposed to parent and teacher conferences as needed and to personal ministry to students' families;
16. To annual teacher-training and personal scholarship in order to advance in professional abilities; scholarship endeavors minimally shall include a scholarly investment in professional training such as completion of a BCA Principle approach course, an approved external Principle Approach course, an approved personal scholarly study or curricular project, or other approved endeavor roughly equivalent to a three credit-hour college course; approval shall be obtained from the Headmaster; an appropriate token of completion of the annual project shall be provided;
17. To share original curriculum development for the school's use; I understand recognition will be given for my contributions; in all other ways, ownership of original work remains with the faculty member;
18. To regular observation and evaluation; I am willing to accept instruction, submission to authority and constructive criticism;
19. To make a commitment to teach for a full school year upon acceptance of a position offer;
20. However, that the school reserves the right to dismiss a faculty member during the school year for cause with respect to this covenant and to stated policies;
21. To renew my Covenantal commitment annually; faculty positions are subject to offers renewal each year;
22. I understand that Matthew 18 is the pattern for resolving grievances and achieving reconciliation. If any grievance arises which I am not able to resolve first, with the school administration, and second, with the school Board of Facilitators, I shall not resort to civil redress. Rather, I shall submit to arbitration of such grievance to one or more local, Scripturally based churches agreeable to all parties involved; I understand this is clearly the biblical pattern and that this ministry is strictly a biblical and Gospel ministry which rightfully falls under the jurisdiction of the church (I Corinthians 6:1-11);

23. In principle and practice to assist in the training of teachers as an outreach ministry of Biblical Covenant Christian School, as mastery, experience and local and personal priorities allow.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Headmaster

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Primary Classroom Constitution**

### **Preamble**

Our purpose is to grow and learn in Jesus. To do this, we must learn self-government and obedience with cheerfulness. If we will do this, then the teacher can conduct the class in a way which will make us able to learn and grow. A class governmental constitution helps children to know their part for a happy class that will please God.

### **Student Constitution**

All of the rules of the school's Student Constitution apply in the classroom.

### **Promptness**

Students will go to their seats immediately when called to begin class. Class begins at 8:15. Students will be marked tardy if they are late. If late without direct excuse from parents or without an otherwise acceptable reason, students will be given an un-excused tardy.

### **Preparation**

Have all needed pens, pencils, notebooks and papers ready for use. Pencils are sharpened at other than class time. Habitual forgetfulness will be corrected.

### **Rest Room Use**

Except for illness or emergency, rest rooms will be used only before class, at recess or lunch, or after school. Do not play or meet in the rest room.

### **Speaking**

1. In class, students must only speak when called upon. Raise your hand if you wish to speak. Everyone will have an opportunity to participate in class.
2. Think before you speak!

### **Notebooks**

1. Three-ring binders with dividers and wide-ruled paper are required. Two will probably be necessary through the year. Have a zipper pouch for pen, pencils and a twelve-inch ruler.
2. Parents should label dividers as follows in order:
  1. Bible
  2. Spelling
  3. Reading
  4. Grammar
  5. Math
  6. History
  7. Biology
  8. Literature
  9. Composition
  10. Physical fitness
  11. Music
3. Care for your notebooks well. Keep only those papers required by the teacher. Always keep the notebook in proper order: no loose or out-of-place papers. Your notebook is your textbook and your very own accomplishment.

### **Penmanship and Writing**

1. All work is written in blue ink using a cartridge fountain pen unless otherwise specifically instructed.
2. Errors are corrected with one or two lines crossing out the error and rewriting the whole word. Single digits or letters, or short words should have two lines through.
3. Pages with many errors should be rewritten.
4. Use a ruler for underlining, markings, and cross-outs.

### **Late Work**

1. Homework is always due the next class time for the particular subject, unless you are otherwise instructed. Late work must be completed.
2. Late work caused by excused absence is made up without penalty according to a schedule worked-out between teacher and student.
3. Late work caused by difficulties in learning will receive a grace period determined by the teacher. The teacher must be informed of learning difficulties.
4. Likewise, extended absence due to illness should not cause unnecessary concern. The Lord only expects our best, in faith. Your teacher can expect no more from you.
5. Un-excused late work must be completed but will receive a grade penalty.

### **Classroom Conduct**

1. Students are to be quiet as they enter the classroom.
2. Sit still and with god posture, both feet flat on the floor and hands still, except when working. Girls sit with knees together.

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3. Love your neighbor by being a good example.
4. Treat all school furnishings and materials with great care.
5. Keep desks neat always.
6. Have permission before you move from your seat.
7. Do all things carefully. Think before you do!

We have read the Class Constitution together and agree to work together to keep it provisions both in our home and in school.

---

Student signature                      date

---

Parent signature    date                      Parent signature    date

Accepted by

---

Teacher signature                      date

## **Secondary Classroom Constitution**

### **Preamble**

The philosophy of this class is that Jesus Christ has a preeminent right to reign in every aspect of our lives. Our goals in this class are to prepare the student in the character and ability needed for the highest expression of Christian living, leadership and liberty.

The purpose of this constitution, then, is to assist the student himself to become the more successful, and to help him to contribute to the success of the class and school as a whole.

Accordingly, as a student in Biblical Covenant Christian School, I accept and undertake the following:

### **Student Constitution**

I will keep all of the rules of the school's Student Constitution in my classroom conduct.

### **Character Training**

Character is the key to Christian living. I accept Biblical Covenant Christian School character training approach to accomplish its goals. Learning means change from my present character and ability toward a new and more godly character and ability. This kind of change is difficult. I understand I will continuously need to learn new things and old ones in new ways. Therefore, I wholeheartedly submit to the biblical methods of learning of this school and class. I am willing to be patient and to work for improvement, just as all true Christians must.

Inspiration, practice and correction are the keys to learning.

Inspiration is the result of the heart being inclined to Christ and His ways through the Holy Spirit. In other words, the student who loves Christ, will love to learn of His magnificent ways in all parts of life. I undertake to let Christ inspire me and excite me to learn and grow in character and ability.

Learning comes through practice. I accept my work and the rules of conduct which will correct my character and increase my knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and skill. To meet this challenge, I will necessarily submit to the discipline of the class and the authority of the teacher.

The character for liberty demands the practice of Christian self-government, diligence, and cheerful obedience. The less the student works to grow in character, the more discipline the teacher must impose and the less liberty the student will enjoy. I promise to apply myself to learn the difficult lessons of school and life, so that I might experience great liberty. I expect to learn to *enjoy* the work of learning and of living and will work toward that end.

Students who do not apply themselves to learning instead subject themselves to correction. Correction is good and little is needed for the student who wishes to grow in Christ. However, students who resist the efforts of the school will find themselves more frequently corrected. Frequent correction because of rebelliousness leads to antagonism which discourages everyone. Therefore, habitual resistance to teaching efforts will not long be tolerated. Biblical Covenant Christian School is for those who desire God's best and are willing to cooperate and work for it. On the other hand, those who need more correction and cheerfully accept it will find rapid progress and less and less need for correction. I accept the challenge to make the goals of this school my own. I promise to accept all correction necessary to help me to grow in character and ability.

### **Promptness**

Class begins at 8:15. Students will be marked tardy if they are late. Tardies without direct excuse from parents or without an otherwise acceptable reason will be marked *un-excused*. I will be seated and ready for work *before* class starting time.

### **Preparation**

I will have all needed pens, pencils, notebooks and papers ready for use. I will sharpen pencils and obtain needed texts, pen, cartridges and paper at other than class time.

I understand that habitual forgetfulness will be corrected.

### **Notebooks**

Three-ring binders with labeled dividers and college-ruled paper are exclusively required. Backup notebooks will probably be needed through the year. Everyone, in addition, needs a twelve-inch ruler (a metric side is also desirable).

Dividers should be labeled as follows in order:

- |             |               |                      |
|-------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 1. Bible    | 5. Math       | 9. Composition       |
| 2. Spelling | 6. History    | 10. Music            |
| 3. Reading  | 7. Science    | 11. Foreign language |
| 4. Grammar  | 8. Literature | 12. Physical fitness |

One or two additional dividers may be needed during the year. Order work by date with new work at the back of a section.

I will care for my notebooks well. They represent my personal record of accomplishment and textbook. Therefore, notebooks ought to reflect the diligence and excellence in maintenance. They ought to be kept always because:

1. They might be useful in the future as information to you or another.
2. They might be useful as a teacher's notebook for students of your own.
3. They might be important to posterity in a historical sense.

Keep only those papers required by the teacher.

I promise always to keep my notebook in proper order as above and to leave no ***loose or out-of-place papers***.

### **Rest Room Use**

Except for emergencies, I will not expect to use the rest rooms during class, but rather before class, at break time, lunch, or after school. I will not loiter or meet in the rest room.

### **Speaking in Class**

Students ought generally only to speak when called upon. I will raise my hand if I wish to speak.

Everyone will have an opportunity to participate in class. I will not raise my hand in the middle of the teacher's speaking or when another student has been asked to speak. I will not waste class time asking questions which will likely be answered by the teacher in due course anyway. I will participate in class discussions as required, but not in a disruptive manner.

Because I am older and presumably more self-governed, I understand more liberty for speaking to fellow classmates will be allowed under the above rules. I will use restraint and avoid inappropriate or unnecessary conversation.

If a student is not self-governed, this privilege may be taken away from the individual student.

In public speaking, I will speak out loudly enough and clearly so as to be understood.

### **I will think before I speak!**

### **Classroom Manners**

I will govern myself by God's command to love my neighbor and to practice good manners. I will love my neighbor by being a good example.

I will be quiet as I enter the classroom. I will show courtesy to any following me through the door. I will leave the door in the position I found it. If I am unsure, I will close the door beyond me.

I will sit still and with good posture. Good posture means keeping both feet flat on the floor and hands still, except when working. Good posture means keeping the back and neck straight. Girls should sit with knees together for modesty.

I will get permission before I move from my seat. Prior permission may be granted for many circumstances to those who give evidence of good self-government.

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I will keep my eyes on a speaker and otherwise focus my attention to listen to and remember oral class work.

If the teacher makes an error which affects the class and doesn't seem to realize the mistake, I will ask a polite question as to what the teacher intends to help remedy the situation.

I will do all things carefully.

**I will think before I do!**

**Stewardship of Property**

I will treat all school furnishings and materials with great care. Our texts must last. I will treat them with the utmost respect. Otherwise, I will replace them at my own expense.

I will keep my desk neat always.

**Penmanship and Writing**

I will write all work in blue or black, not turquoise ink using a fountain pen unless otherwise specifically instructed.

I may use my own style of penmanship as long as it is legible and I make my best effort to improve my hand. Sloppy writing may be call for the teacher to impose a certain style for the sake of instruction.

I will correct errors with one or two lines crossing out the error and rewriting the whole word, sentence, etc. Single digits or letters, or short words should have two lines through. I will always use a ruler for cross-outs. I will rewrite pages with many errors.

I will use a ruler for underlining and markings.

Only neat work, carefully executed--my best--is acceptable.

**Homework and Assignments**

Excellence of workmanship is an important part of learning. I commit to excellence in all my work. I understand that only work which can stand on its own, completely labeled according to the teacher's specifications is acceptable.

Homework is always due the next class time for the particular subject, unless you are otherwise

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instructed. I will complete late work.

Late work caused by excused absence may be made up without penalty according to a schedule worked-out between teacher and student.

Late work caused by difficulties in learning will receive a grace period determined by the teacher. The teacher must be informed of learning difficulties. Likewise, extended absence due to illness should not cause unnecessary concern. The Lord only expects our best, in faith. The teacher can expect no more from you.

Un-excused late work must be completed but will receive a grade penalty.

I understand that redos are important in learning. I will faithfully complete redo assignments. For redo-work, I will turn in both the last marked-up original and the redo together.

**Example of the Older Students**

This class represents the "senior" students of Biblical Covenant Christian School. Because I am older, I have a responsibility to be a good example to the younger students. I must be on guard to exhibit the best manners, speech, dress, sportsmanship, love for God, and love for my neighbor. I must resist idle chatter, gossip, or conversation in subjects not appropriate for Christian people. I undertake to become a Christian leader.

I have read the Class Constitution and agree to be governed by it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature                      date

We have read the Class Constitution and agree to encourage and support my child in its provisions in our home.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature                      date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature                      date

Accepted by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher signature                      date

## **4-R Your Way to a Practical, Godly Personal Reformation!**

(Given at the 1996 Regional Conference of the American Christian History Institute, Sacramento, California)

- I. Heroic Christianity and the Great Christian Adventure.
  - A. A heart for Christian scholarship produces conviction.
    1. "Go to the ant, you sluggard."
  - B. Conviction produces repentance of the heart and a change in conduct.
    1. Oh, no. I *have* been lazy, haven't I.
  - C. The change in conduct requires heroic courage and faith as godly change is not easy.
    1. I stayed up too late.
    2. Too hard to get out of bed.
    3. Yes. But I am no sluggard, so here I go.
  - D. This constant pattern produces the Christian adventure--dangerous and good and ultimately rewarding.
    1. Dangerous, because sometimes conviction will come to no one else but me.
    2. Clothing for example. Or manners.
- II. Human Institutions and the Gospel.
  - A. The human heart produces human activity. (Hard work.)
  - B. Human activity produces human habit. (Rise every day early.)
  - C. Human habit becomes human institution. (Puritan work ethic.)
  - D. Human institutions: Institutionalized sin or institutionalized godliness, always renewed by the activity of the Holy Spirit.
- III. The Principle Approach: A method of Scholarship for true Biblical *change*.
- IV. The Four R's:
  - A. Historical Christian method of scholarship
  - B. Research: Content
  - C. Reason: Just Biblical conclusions
  - D. Relate: Apply what we learn
  - E. Record: permanent learning for ourselves and others
- V. The Process
  - A. The Webster's 1828 Dictionary philosophically defines the subject
  - B. The Scriptures govern our view of the subject
  - C. History tests previous efforts to apply the subject.
  - D. Draw *personal* conclusions at each point and overall.

E. Yields a God's eye view of the subject.

VI. Example:

A. Farming: The business of cultivating land.

1. Cultivate:

- a. To till; prepare for crops; to manure, plow, dress, sow and reap; to labor on, manage and improve in husbandry; as to cultivate land; to cultivate a farm.
- b. To improve by labor or study; to advance the growth of; to refine and improve by correction of faults, and enlargement of powers or good qualities; as, to cultivate talents; to cultivate a taste for poetry.
- c. Tilling improves.
- d. What is corrected on the farm? (Weeds, soil condition, water, etc.)

2. Sow:

- a. Scatter on the ground for the purpose of growth and the production of a crop.
- b. Scattering on the ground ruins the grain which could have been eaten.
- c. Sowing is investing; it is an act of faith!

3. Husbandry:

- a. The business of a farmer.
- b. Conclusion: Farmer is a husband.

4. Husband or husbandman:

- a. From *hus*, house and *band*, dweller.
- b. Though perhaps not historical etymology, band suggests tying the land and home together!

5. Conclusions: (Ask yourself many questions to identify individuals and to draw relationships between things.)

- a. A farmer *must* work to improve soil so as to increase the likelihood of a crop.
- b. Question for farming success: How is the land refined and corrected to improve increase.
  - i. Plow, manure, according to Webster. How did he know?
  - ii. Where else do we look?

B. Bible references.

1. Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.--Genesis 2:15

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2. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return"...Therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.-- Genesis 3:19,23
  3. "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, -- Exodus 23:10
  4. 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. -- Leviticus 19:9
  5. 'You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.-- Leviticus 19:19
  6. 'And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the LORD your God.-- Leviticus 19:25
  7. Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and attend to your herds; for riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations. When the hay is removed, and the tender grass shows itself, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered in, the lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field; you shall have enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household, and the nourishment of your maidservants.--Proverbs 27:23-27
  8. In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good.-- Ecclesiastes 11:6
  9. For she did not know that I gave her grain, new wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold; which they prepared for Baal.-- Hosea 2:8
  10. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.-- Matthew 9:37
  11. And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head."-- Mark4:26-28
- C. History.
1. This could be a long term project.
  2. I suggest that for first stabs and exercises for proficiency in the Principle Approach, you should use an encyclopedia for the history part.
  3. One example: Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver.
- D. Conclusions.
1. Farming is close to God's heart.
  2. It is found in every part of the Scriptures from the beginning.
  3. God uses it to govern the conduct of men.

- a. Men must work, and work wisely to eat.
  - b. While working so hard and making investments in faith, they are not so likely to be sinning.
4. Farming furnishes a primary way for God to communicate spiritual reality.

## **Example of Primary Course Leading Ideas Outline**

### **Primary American History—Leading Ideas for the Pilgrims**

1. The faith and steadfastness of the Pilgrims showed in many trials and victories.
2. The Pilgrims learned “under ye able ministrie of and prudente governmente of Mr. John Robinson.”
3. William Brewster gave up much to be the Pilgrim church elder in the New World.
4. God saved Squanto to help the Pilgrims and for his own blessing.
5. God always provided for the Pilgrims in answer to their trust in Him.
6. Learn from John Robinson and William Brewster, William Bradford governed the Pilgrims and wrote their history.

### **Primary Literature—Leading Ideas for Little House in the Big Woods**

1. The Little House was safe in the wild and scary Big Woods. How?
2. *Season* stands for the timeliness of the Ingalls’s family happenings.
3. *Season* also stands for preparing the family for life.

### **High School Literature—Introduction to James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Deerslayer***

Theme: The firstfruits of the Republic

- I. The Revolutionary War concluded, people began to return to the business of living and working.
- II. Forming a government for the new nation was a major part of that work.
  - A. The men of the constitutional convention would forge a new form of government no where else known.
  - B. It was unique, even in America, as it took all the experience and wisdom which the Lord had Providentially supplied in the past, and applied that wisdom to new ends.

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- C. In this way, the new national government was quite different even from the existing state governments.
  - D. The work of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 was this: Make a government which will protect the life, liberty and property of the individual both through union, for strength, and through decentralization to balance that strength and answer inevitable corruptions.
- III. Thus, America now emerges as “a separate and equal” nation, with the individual exploring every field of interest.
- A. Now that the institutional foundations are established for a peaceful and free nation, people very willingly applied their character and abilities, formed through conflict and pioneering, to the work of building America.
  - B. With its new found peace and protection of its rights, America grew exceedingly quickly and likewise became prosperous very quickly.
- IV. This quick and prosperous growth brought problems of its own.
- A. For one matter, prosperity and peace captured the hearts of people who had formerly been zealous for the Lord.
  - B. America, therefore, entered into the like turning away from seeking the sound theological ground for the way to live that the forefathers had sought.
  - C. In so doing, the process of secularization began which would send Americans to England and Europe more than ever before, seeking to replace American ways with the fashions and (often pagan) ideas of Europe.
  - D. In some ways, this brought some pleasant and good changes, such as our early professional writers.
  - E. In many ways, this move toward secularization would make the first steps toward decline, the decline which always accompanies a turn away from the Lord.
  - F. An important idea then, is for the Christian to learn to give his prosperity to the Lord to use as capital for the Gospel work in every field, and not to spend wealth on the lusts of the flesh.

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- V. James Madison, known as the Father of the United States Constitution, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay were the three architects of the Constitution, who wrote the Federalist to promote the Constitution's approval.
  - A. The new Constitution represented a new and complex form of government.
  - B. Accordingly, it had many detractors, even among people of good will.
  - C. Therefore, the three men wrote a series of essays to promote the approval of the new Constitution.
  - D. The essays were published in New York newspapers.
  - E. New York had a particularly strong opposition party and was strategic to the Constitution's ultimate approval.
  - F. The Federalist Papers, as this series of essays was to be named, is one of the greatest pieces of philosophical literature on government ever written.
  - G. Every Christian should study the Federalist and be ready with a Biblical defense of its principles.
  
- VI. Washington Irving became our Ambassador of good will to England, but, discovers his own talent and ability as a member of the American delegation in Spain.
  - A. Irving is our first professional writer.
  - B. Through the writings of Irving we see the unfolding of our nation during the 19th century.
  - C. We can see both its strengths and weakness.
  - D. Irving himself represents a transition of writing style between the formality of the Classic Era and the budding Romance of the early nineteenth century.
  - E. Though he wrote mainly essays and short stories, Irving was befriended and influenced by Sir Walter Scott.
  
- VII. James Fenimore Cooper adds a new dimension to literature by the creation of Leatherstocking, the American Christian man in the wilderness of America expressing Christian principles of character and government, contrasted with humanistic and heathen ways. At the same time, Cooper attempts to paint the American Indian, and properly so, as

people of certain inherent virtue and fundamentally human, with humanity's flaws as well as potential for good (but ultimately only through the salvation of Jesus Christ).

- VIII. William Cullen Bryant creates a new American poetry. Bryant adopts the Romantic style of Wordsworth and Byron, but exemplifies the unique virtues of America.
- A. Christian spirit and world view (if not orthodoxy).
  - B. His patriotism.
  - C. His love of American nature, and his correcting the Transcendentalist (Emerson, Thoreau) corruption into nature worship.

## **Template for a High School Science Lab Report**

### **Model Lab Conduct and Report Form**

#### **Goal**

- Write a scientific want as a goal or question.
- Teacher explanation:

Students write simply and briefly what they hope to demonstrate or learn.

#### **Prelab research**

- Give important background information.
- Teacher explanation:

From notes the teacher gives, from reading, or from independent research, give information that others have provided about the scientific want we are investigating. Be brief.

- Form an hypothesis (What do you think will happen?).

#### **Procedure**

- List equipment in detail.
- Make detailed list of activities.
- Teacher explanation:

Someone else should be able to reproduce your experiment from your description. Include even seemingly unimportant steps. Take nothing for granted.

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- Safety must come first!
- Teacher note:

Every precaution must be made to preclude injury or damage. Study a lab safety overview such as the one in Physical Science Labs Kit or the Bob Jones University Press high school lab manuals.

**Collect data**

- Put the factual results of your observations into a usable order.
- Teacher explanation:

The Lab Manual will usually provide the form. If not, the teacher will provide, or for advanced work the teacher may require the student to use an appropriate data collection form.

**Analysis and Conclusion**

- Teacher explanation:

Teacher should do the following and put into a simple statement of conclusion for students. Ordinarily a sentence or two should suffice.

- Analysis: In this step you *interpret* (make sense of) the data you collected.
- Conclusion:
  - Answer: Did you answer your question?
  - Why or why not?
  - Be strictly honest!
  - We even learn from seemingly total failures.

This step is extremely important. Knowledge is useless unless you can do something with. What lesson have we learned? If we ever become accomplished learners, we will need to know how to report the results of our experience to others--whether in science or any other subject.

## Typical Daily Classroom Schedules by Grade Level

Actual times would vary

### Primary: Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> Grades (Early Primary)

(Time given in Minutes)

Classroom Worship and Pray (Chapel)—10  
Bible—15  
Literacy—85  
Math—50  
Literature—30  
(Kindergarten dismissed)  
History—35  
Music/Foreign Language—20  
Physical Fitness/Natural Science—45

### Elementary: 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Grades (Lower Primary)

Classroom Worship and Pray (Chapel)—20  
Bible—15  
Literacy—85  
Math—45  
History—35  
Literature—45  
Music/Foreign Language—20  
Physical Fitness/Natural Science—45

### Upper Elementary: 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grades (Middle Primary)

Classroom Worship and Pray (Chapel)—20  
Bible—15  
Literacy—50  
Math—45  
Literature—45  
Grammar--30  
History—30  
Music/Foreign Language—20  
Natural Science/Physical Fitness—30  
Penmanship—15

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**High School: 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades (Secondary)**

Classroom Worship and Pray (Chapel)—20

Bible—15

Literacy—60

Math—45

Natural Science—35

Grammar--30

History—30

Literature—30

Music/Foreign Language—20

Physical Fitness—30

**Typical Primary Literacy Schedule**

**through the School Year**

(Reference to weeks gives week of the term to start the topic which then continues until it is finished or replaced by another topic)

**Terms I & II**

- Introduction to Reading and Writing (week 1)
  - Language
  - Bible teachings
  - Christian history
  - Beginning rules of posture and conduct
- Introduce phonograms (week 1)
- Teach capitals (week 4)
- Begin Ayres spelling (week 4)
- Teach spelling practice method (week 4)
- Grammar: begin transcribing good sentences (week 7)
- Begin reading course (week 8)

**Term III**

- Begin standard spelling tests (week 1, once per month)
- Dictionary: alphabetical, word meaning order (week 3)

**Term IV**

- Continue above--practice each new introduction continuously
- If ready, begin grammar through the Sentence as a Whole

**Typical Elementary Literacy Schedule**

**through the School Year**

(Reference to weeks gives week of the term to start the topic which then continues until it is finished or replaced by another topic)

**Terms I & II**

- Introduction to Reading and Writing (week 1)
  - Language
  - Bible teachings
  - Christian history
  - Beginning rules of posture and conduct
- Start diagnostic spelling tests (week 1)
- Introduce phonograms (week 1)
- Begin reading curriculum (week 1)
- Begin Ayres spelling (week 2 or 3)
- Teach spelling practice method (with first spelling lesson, for 2 weeks)
- Begin Spelling rules instruction (week 5)
- Teach dictionary use (week 9)

**Term III**

- Begin standard spelling tests (week 1, once per month)

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- Introduce cursive writing (week 1)
- Grammar: begin instruction (week 4)

**Term IV**

- Continue above--practice each new introduction continuously

**Typical High School (Secondary) Literacy Schedule**  
**through the School Year**

(Reference to weeks gives week of the term to start the topic which then continues until it is finished or replaced by another topic)

**Term I**

- Diagnostic test of complete extended Ayres list (week 1)
- Teach/review phonograms/spelling rules (weeks 1)
- Begin reading (week 1)
  - Individual reading at desk
  - Periodic individual teacher review of lessons
    - Vocabulary
    - Content and theme exercise
    - Aloud reading ability and elocution
  - Group aloud reading in other subjects for practice
- Teach/review use of dictionary (week 2)
- Begin Ayres list according to diagnostic results (week 2)
  - Give missed words first--100 at a time
  - Give spelling words phonetically & define
  - Practice words, write sentences for meaning

- Those not needing study, take quiz only
- Teach spelling practice method (week 3)
- Begin weekly spelling lessons (week 3)
- Review principles of penmanship (week 3)
- Teach spelling rules (weeks 4)
- Begin grammar (week 5)

### **TERM II**

- Administer Standard spelling test (week 1, then monthly)
- After Ayres list, use McGuffey's for Spelling and vocabulary
- Continue grammar (week 1)

### **TERMS III & IV**

- Continue vocabulary and grammar (week 1)

## **A Form for Curriculum Development Documents**

What follows is an organizational outline for curriculum development documents, given for convenience as a possible template. The General Curriculum and each subject includes a list of materials needed for the subject. In each section, the Index file will list all the curriculum and support materials ordinarily included in that section. Not all subjects have all elements.

### **Each curriculum development consists of several parts:**

#### **Course Overview**

A detailed outline of topics for the courses through the grades. May include teacher references and general notes to teachers. Maintain in the subject Overview Sub-Directory (File name suffix: \_\_Overview).

#### **Course Development**

Specific Course Scope and Sequence, with Teaching Approach, Course Plan by Topic or Theme, Class Activities, Quizzes, and Final Exams. The Teaching Approach section may include general

course Goals, Theme, Scope, Plan, Schedule or other Teacher Background and Resources (File name suffix: \_\_Development).

### **Course Notes**

A detailed set of notes on the subject, usually in outline form. Reference should be made to these in the Course Development. Course notes may include detailed Class Activities for an individual topic. (No file suffix)

The goal is to organize the Notes so that the major topic headings are outline labels. First subdivisions should be in Roman numerals using outline mode. Subdivisions of the outline should be placed into the content area of the appropriate Roman numerated outline section. Teacher notes may be separated if the file becomes too large (File Name Suffix: \_\_Teacher).

### **Typical Headings for the course note sections:**

1. Course Resources
2. Teacher Notes
3. Student Notes (possibly each with a section of leading ideas):
  - a. High School
  - b. Junior High
  - c. Elementary
  - d. Primary
4. Teaching Goals
5. Class Activities
6. Quizzes
7. Special Topics or Content, such as writing of other authors.

### **Course Schedule**

An outline of the topics by school term and week within the term. Maintain in the subject Overview Sub-Directory.

### **Course Notebook Index**

An outline which indicates the materials to be included in each subject notebook for specific nominal grades

### **Course Record**

The standard Course Schedule modified to show the course as actually taught in a given school year. Maintain in the Overview Sub-Directory.

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Consult the individual Course files for each of the above. If they are small, the individual sections may be placed in a single file called \_\_\_Development (or \_\_\_Dev), with the subject name in the blanks, otherwise they will be in files called \_\_\_Ovr, \_\_\_Sch, \_\_\_Idx, or \_\_\_Rec respectively. Course notes will be labeled with the name of the specific subject only.