

## *Classical & Modern Languages*

In order to take advantage of the sensitiveness of the ear, the elasticity of the muscles of the throat and tongue, and the power of mimicry found in the very young, Agape Christi Academy introduces foreign language exposure as soon as children enter school. This exposure is particularly beneficial when learning spoken languages. Agape Christi Academy introduces Spanish in grades K-2. In order to avoid any confusion with English phonics in these grades, Spanish studies focus solely on the first two stages of natural language acquisition, listening and speaking, using the Gouin Series method. Spanish is also taught in grades 10 and 11 to provide a more comprehensive grasp of a modern language. This includes aural and written comprehension, conversation, grammar, composition, and cultural studies.

Latin study, from 3rd to 8th grade, is a defining feature of a Classical education because it is the foundational operating language for western civilization. A proper understanding of western culture cannot be achieved without knowledge of the culture's chief language. Latin has the added benefit of increasing students' English comprehension (as evidenced in higher verbal scores on standardized tests), as roughly fifty percent of English words are derived from Latin. Also, Latin students are able to learn other Romance languages (such as Spanish) more quickly as up to eighty percent of those vocabularies come from Latin.

## *Music*

At Agape Christi Academy, music is not an elective. The Lord commands that his people worship through song out of love for Himself (Psalm 66:1-2, Psalm 68:4) and love for others (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19). It is therefore imperative for Christian students to learn to sing, particularly the Psalms. The Bible tells of several men and women who were not musicians by profession and yet composed music unto the Lord: Deborah, Miriam, Moses, Hannah, Mary, and Paul. It is our goal then for all students to learn how to sing and compose with joy and skill for the glory of God and cultural transformation.

Lower school students will learn how to read music through solmization (do, re, me, etc.), rhythm-duration syllables (counting rhythms by chanting), and the Curwen hand signs. Following classical methodology, upper school students focus on musical analysis, composition, and performance. Students in all grades will be introduced to the great composers of music and follow the course of music throughout history.

## *Art*

The apostle Paul instructs us to set our minds on that which is true, noble, just, pure, lovely; we are to meditate on those things which are of good report, virtuous, or praiseworthy. Furthermore, because the invisible Word became visible, the pictorial expression of idea is a Christian concept, necessitating the study of art in a Christian education. As a Christian school, we seek to instruct our students to: glorify God in their handiwork, reject aesthetic relativism and nihilism, and make aesthetic judgments in humility.

Students begin with learning the elements of shape through imitation of beautiful artwork. As they progress, other aspects of drawing are introduced such as shading, perspective, and composition. Students in all grades analyze and discuss the works of classical and modern artists with an emphasis on identifying worldview themes in the upper grades.

## *Physical Education*

The scripture teaches that physical education has some value, but godliness has value for all things (1 Timothy 4:8). In light of this, we place priority on seeing the student transformed to the image of Christ rather than the image of the latest popular athlete. Learning how a Christian should respond to a win and a loss is more important than learning techniques to win a game. Other character traits we desire to see developed in students through physical education are perseverance, ambition, encouragement of others, and humility. Additionally, we desire to cultivate biblical masculinity through our boys' athletic program and biblical femininity through our girls' athletic program. This affects the students' speech, mannerisms, attire, and selection of activities. We do not abandon classical methodology in gym class, but intentionally seek ways to implement the trivium. Lower School students will learn the various rules and procedures of the activity or sport, while Upper School students focus on strategy, form, and leadership.

The curriculum is broken into nine units each year: basketball, soccer, volleyball, jump rope, dance, self-defense, gymnastics/aerobics, playground games, Olympic games. The national physical fitness tests are given three times each year. Basic nutrition and sports medicine topics are integrated throughout.

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# Curriculum Overview





Agape Christi Academy curriculum selections are made in keeping with our mission statement of providing an education that is Christian, Classical, Holistic, Challenging, Joyful, and Transformational. The aim of this education is for students to live faithful Christian lives, equipped to lead and transform culture through the gospel to the glory of God. We recognize that the academic subjects listed are each an interdependent part of a common body of knowledge revealed in the person of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:1-3). We therefore strive to emphasize the integration of these subjects which have only been segregated for logistical ease.

## *Bible*

We want our students to love the Word of God and also to know it. This means knowing the stories, people, and teachings (doctrines) as their own. The Bible is part of their own story, its people are their people, the teachings are for them. Students will learn this through study of all the books of the Bible, memory verses, and catechesis. Why catechesis? With this, they have a ready answer of what the Bible teaches, for their own understanding and to share with the world. As students grow older, they learn the teachings of Scripture as well as church history. With a formal Apologetics class, they learn how to defend the faith and also proclaim the faith, in grace and truth. Our distinct Bible classes provide foundational teaching for the rest of their classes all of which are taught from a Biblical worldview.

## *History*

We want our students to know the story of God's world with a focus on the people closest to them in history, beginning with their city, state, and country which descended from Europe, which was once the Roman Empire, which leads back to Egypt and then Creation. While we seek to teach the history of the world, our focus is Western History because this is the history of the Church and our faith. Western history also birthed America, *our* country. The value of narrowing our history focus brings the value of learning it more thoroughly, rather than shallowly. With this in mind, we briefly cover the history of the East, because we want our students to know what occurred simultaneously to the events of our Western History.

Beginning in second grade, students go through the sequence of Ancient, Medieval, and Modern histories three times in the duration of their study at Agape Christi with increasing depth each time in accordance with the development of the child and the classical methodology of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. For example, grammar school students memorize the major events along a timeline of history while logic school students are led in discussion of the cause and effect relationships of these events. Rhetoric school students are given practice in leading discussions and are evaluated more on the quality of the questions they ask and adeptness at formulating ideas rather than their ability to answer multiple choice quizzes.

## *Literature*

We want our students to love Story and to love Truth. Each piece has its own story which speaks something of the Truth. Are the characters faithful? Are they wise? Our desire is to have the student's imagination awakened to the time period of the book, often chosen to fit the time period of study. In addition, books are chosen because of their classical value at an opportune age of reading.

Logic and Rhetoric school students take an all-encompassing Omnibus course that integrates Literature, History, and Theology. Students engage with the best works that man has to offer to either emulate or refute as called for when held next to the Word of God. The purpose of a Christian school is not to shelter students from controversial and even blasphemous literature in such a way as to never allow exposure, rather, a shelter is created to practice battling with those ideas under the instruction of their teacher as preparation to dispel them from the public sphere. "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ..." (2 Corinthians 10:5)

The following is a sample listing of literature to be studied by Logic and Rhetoric school students:

The Codes of Hammurabi and Moses, The Odyssey, The Iliad, Introduction to Aristotle, The Aeneid, The Last Days of Socrates, Cicero, Josephus, Beowulf, Henry V, Divine Comedy, The Federalist Papers, The Pilgrim's Progress, Romeo and Juliet, Calvin's Institutes, Martin Luther, 1984, The Communist Manifesto, Mein Kampf, Wealth of Nations, Moby Dick, Brave New World, Citizen Soldiers, Othello, The Great Divorce, Paradise Lost, Perelandra, The Origin of Species

## *Composition*

We know that our words are important since God revealed Himself as the Word, giving His people His written Word and the Word made flesh. God communicated with us through His Word, and we also communicate with Him and others with our words. As Christians, we want to do this as faithfully as we can, using our words to build up His kingdom through praise, story, and a "word fitly spoken" and written in various circumstances. The tools towards this expression are Grammar, Logic, and the five canons of Rhetoric: Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory, and Delivery.

In the Lower School, we begin with the basics of language: phonograms, penmanship, spelling, English grammar (including sentence diagramming), and learning the mechanics and forms of writing through classical exercises. With these ancient beginning writing exercises, known as the progymnasmata, students in 4th-8th grades imitate through manipulating original writings by quality authors. By supplying young students with the content, the common sentiment of "I don't know what to write about" is removed, freeing the children to focus their efforts on formative skills. The way is then paved for creative expression during their "Poetic" stage of development (Rhetoric or high school years).

Rhetoric is the art of communicating ideas in the most effective and engaging manner. It is not enough for students to be skilled essay writers; they must be able to write essays that people actually want to read. The final test of the students' rhetorical skills is the Senior Thesis, a year long project requiring all of their previously acquired tools. Hopeful graduates develop arguments on a topic of debate. They must then defend their arguments before an examining board, where they will be evaluated on originality, reasoning, expression and overall competence.

## *Mathematics*

Mistakenly thought of as a "neutral" subject, the Christian view is that mathematics belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). Mathematics is the language of creation, spoken into existence by the mouth of God. To study math, then, is to study an aspect of God himself. The vision for the Agape Christi mathematics program is that students gain:

1. Mastery of fundamental concepts
2. Confidence in mental calculations
3. Practical understanding of mathematics (solving and creating word problems)
4. Understanding of math in the context of science and history
5. Recognition that everything must exist in submission to Christ

We are attempting to give students the tools to build calculators and computers, not just use them. To accomplish this vision, students in the Lower School master arithmetic through a multi-sensory approach of oral word problems, rote chanting, speed drills, manipulatives, and the soroban (Japanese abacus). In seventh grade, students transition from instruction in computation to thinking mathematically. Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, and Calculus are all discussed within their philosophical and historical backgrounds with an emphasis on life application, thus answering students' infamous question, "Why do I have to learn this stuff?" Most importantly, their eyes will be opened to the beauty and mysteries of creation, fostering a deeper reverence and awe of God.

## *Science*

Science is the study of God's creation. Part of loving God is to share an interest in what he cares about. Since "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." Christian students have a reason to be curious about the work God made and declared good.

Lower school students follow the Genesis account of creation with Astronomy, Geology, Botany, Zoology, and Anatomy. Logic School students move from learning names and definitions to asking questions and contemplating ideas. In seventh grade, students attempt to understand the discoveries of science as they unfolded throughout history and discover the role the church played in the development of science. Under the guidance of a teacher trained in the Christian worldview, a secular text is intentionally used to show students that the story of science varies with the vantage point of the narrator. Formal logic for eighth grade students trains them in the art of reasoning consistently and faithfully in the truth of God. The next year, students apply the skills of logic to natural philosophy, a survey of physics and western thought, discussing questions such as, "What role does the sovereignty of God play in quantum mechanics?" All students in 10th-12th grades then take the sequence of Chemistry, Biology, and Calculus-Based Physics with a preference towards guided independent and collaborative research over classroom lecture.