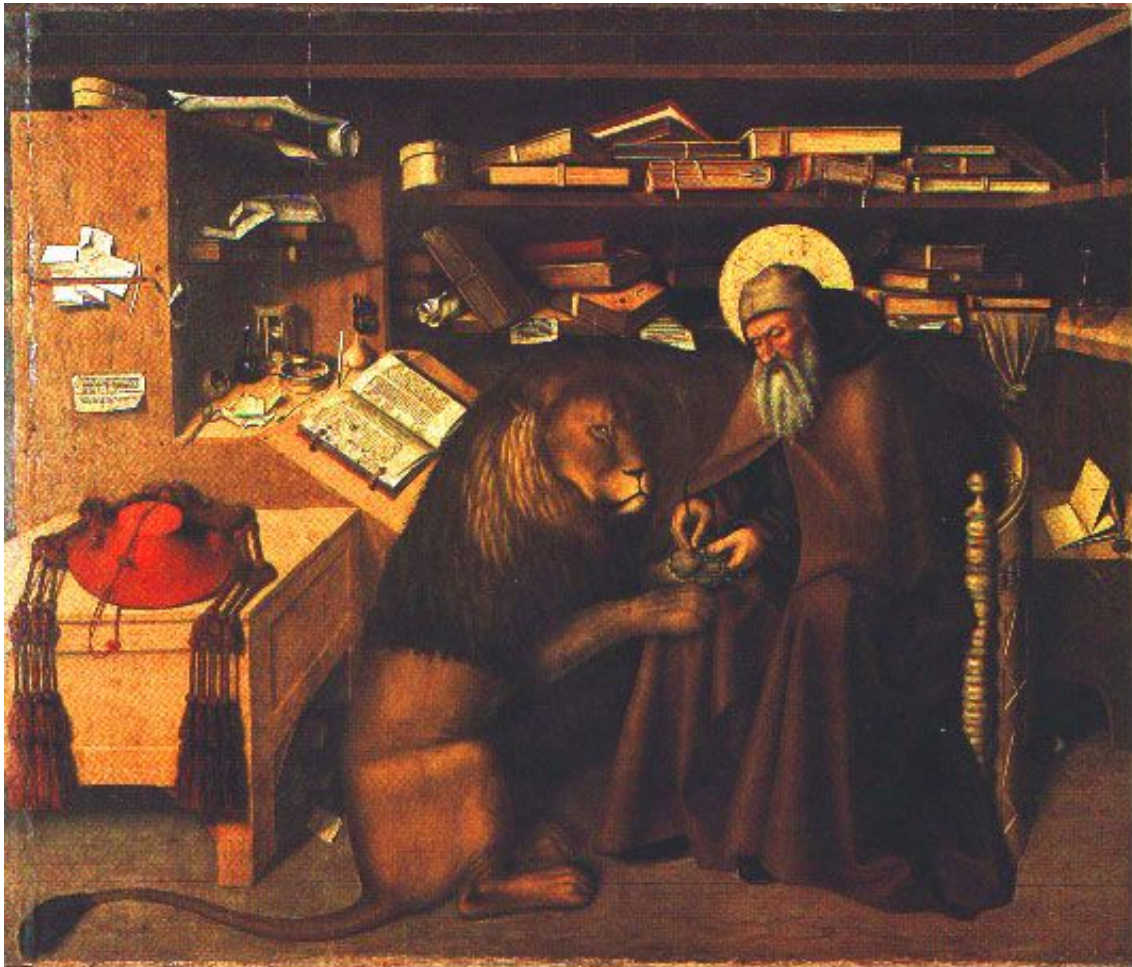


Introduction to The Educational Plan of St. Jerome Academy



The Archdiocese of Washington's Classical School

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The very fact that it is the flesh of the Word become man that ultimately defines the limits of Christian humanism contains the possibility of almost explosively extending those limits to what is really a limitless degree. Now we may dare—indeed dare we must—to take up with an all-embracing gesture into this pattern of the Christian man whatever in the long perspectives of history or in the depths of his soul is true and noble in thought and deed. All that is good and true has proceeded from the Word and has its homing point in the incarnate God, even though this be hidden from us, even though human thought and human good-will may not have perceived it... For the humanist Christian there is only one possible attitude that he can take towards the world: he must love. Yet one can only love a person, and that is why the Christian humanist loves the human in every shape and form but only in him of whom St. Paul says “all things were created in him.” Here is the meaning of those words written by an ancient Christian... “Christ is the Word, in whom the whole human race has a portion, and all who have lived according to this Word are Christians, even though, like Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks, they are accounted godless.”

- Hugo Rahner, S.J.,
citing Saint Justin Martyr

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

- Saint Paul

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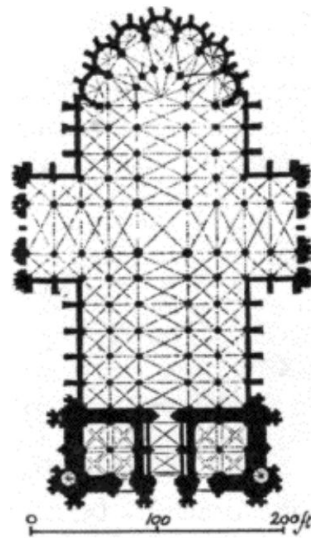
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Part I: Blueprint



Cologne Cathedral Floor Plan

Building a New St. Jerome School: A Blueprint for the Vision

With every building and every work of art, there is a sense in which the finished product or the completed work *comes first*. The builder or the artist starts with a blueprint, a plan, or a picture of the finished work in mind. Sometimes the builder modifies the plan in the course of the work, but he cannot modify it entirely without creating something entirely different or destroying the work altogether. By keeping this picture firmly in view, the builder can ensure that each step in construction occurs for the sake of the next, and he can see how all the steps combine to build up the whole. If this blueprint does not guide his work, then the end result of his labors is not a building, but a heap of stones. Education is like this. Without a clear sense of what education is and the end it serves, we may expend a great deal of effort ‘piling up stones’ instead of truly educating.

This outline is like a blueprint. It begins with the end product: the sort of person we hope would emerge after nine years at St. Jerome’s. The actual content of the various subjects within the curriculum are like the foundation stones of the educated person. The skills, aptitudes, and habits we hope to cultivate through pedagogy and through the culture of the school are like the tools of learning. And of course the teachers are the builders who bring their art and experience to bear on the construction of the building. We proceed from the vision, first through the core subjects that would comprise the St. Jerome’s curriculum, and then with increasing detail through the specific stages in the teaching of each subject to show how each stage builds upon the next and these combine with the labors of St. Jerome’s teachers to contribute to the building up of the whole.



Christ Leading Adam and Eve Out of Hades, Hosios Lukas Monastery

Vision Statement

St. Jerome Academy educates children in the truest and fullest sense by giving them the necessary tools of learning and by fostering wonder and love for all that is genuinely true, good, and beautiful. We emphasize classical learning because we want our students to read well, speak well, and think well and ultimately because truth and beauty are good in themselves and desirable for their own sake. We seek to incorporate our students into the wisdom of two thousand years of Catholic thought, history, culture, and arts so that they might understand themselves and their world in the light of the truth and acquire the character to live happy and integrated lives in the service of God and others. Education in this deep and comprehensive sense extends beyond the classroom and is more than just the acquisition of skills. It encompasses the whole of one's life. For this reason, St. Jerome's seeks to involve families ever more deeply in the life of the school and in the education of their children.

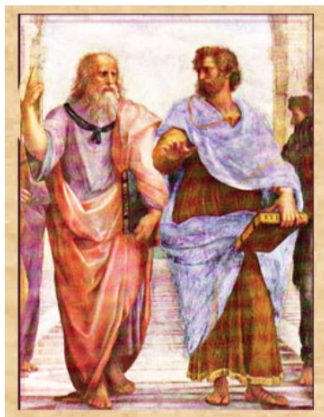
True education has always rested on two presuppositions. The first is that truth is desirable for its own sake. It is good not for what it *does*, but for what it *is*. The second is that knowledge consists not in bending the truth to ourselves, but in conforming ourselves to truth. We can only conform ourselves to truth by freely embracing and loving it, and we can only love truth if we are enticed by its beauty. Love of beauty has therefore always been integral to the discovery of truth and true education has always sought to form the heart and mind, reason and will, desire and knowledge. In short, education forms the whole *person* in light of truth, beauty, and goodness.

The Vision Statement seeks to root a comprehensive understanding of education in a compelling and beautiful vision of reality worthy of students' love. This vision is intended to govern every facet of the school's life. Its aim is twofold: first, to communicate a certain body of knowledge; and second, to cultivate a certain kind of person, *to develop as far as possible what is uniquely human in him*, and so to equip him with the skills, habits, and aptitudes necessary to embrace truth and to become the person he was truly created to be. Immediately it becomes clear that no aspect of a school's life is truly 'extra-curricular' or falls outside of its core mission of education, because every aspect of its life—from the way the school prays, to the dress code of students and staff, the arrangement of furniture in the classroom, the paint and posters on the wall, the activities during recess, the way technology is used, and the songs the children sing—reflects the school's judgments and priorities about the meaning of its educational mission. *Everything a school does teaches something. Everything a school does is education of some sort.* The important thing is to be sure that it is good and coherent education and that policies, procedures, pedagogical methods, and the culture of the school are not at cross purposes with the vision.

Curriculum, pedagogical methods, and all the details of the school's life should therefore be constantly assessed both in light of the conviction that knowledge and love of truth, beauty, and goodness are ends in themselves and in light of the twofold goal of the Vision Statement. Every activity, program, policy, method, or proposal should be tested by the following criteria, which

follow from this vision, though not all are equally applicable to each of these facets of the school's life.

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



Plato and Aristotle from School of Athens, Raphael

Part II: Tools



God as Architect of World
Paris Bible, c. 1220

An Integrated Curriculum: The Building Blocks of Learning and the Shape of the Soul

As the Vision states, the goal of education is the student himself, to form his mind and his character in such a way that he can live his whole life, so far as possible, in a way that is consistent with the truth about himself as a human being created in the image and likeness of God. We often say that we aim to achieve this through an integrated curriculum. But what does this mean? And how is the curriculum integrated?

Just as there were two complementary dimensions to our vision of education—conveying a definite body of knowledge and forming certain aptitudes, qualities of character, and habits of mind in the student—so too is the curriculum integrated in a similar, twofold way.

The first is through *the content of a historically based curriculum*, rooted in an understanding of the human person as a creature, created in the image and likeness of God. From this starting point, the curriculum presents history as a coherent story propelled by the human desire for God and God’s coming to meet, inflame and satisfy that desire in Christ. This is what the Vision Statement means by “incorporating our students into the wisdom of two thousand years of Catholic thought, history, culture, and arts.” This means placing special emphasis on the Greek, Roman, Jewish, and other ancient Near East cultures that make up the Western tradition. This understanding of the person as a creature provides a basis for exploring and appreciating these and other pre-Christian cultures in their own right, for seeking to understand them as they understood themselves.

But rooting history in the understanding of the human person as a *creature* with a natural desire for God also orients those cultures toward the coming of Christ, after which they are taken up, transformed, into a new Christian culture in which the deepest of human longings and the highest of human aspirations are met by a gift from God which surpasses all these. Other subjects such as literature, art, and music and even math and nature studies complement this understanding and deepen it. For instance, a class studying Greek culture in the Grammar stage might read and discuss stories from Greek mythology to think along with the Greeks ‘from the inside’. A class studying the Middle Ages in the Logic stage might learn Gregorian chant in music, or consider the symbolism of Gothic architecture in art or the symbolism of shapes in medieval stained glass in conjunction with their introduction to geometry.

The students will twice cycle through the history of the world. In grades K-5, they will devote one year of study to Egypt and the Ancient Near East, Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, the Modern Age, and America respectively. In grades 6-8, they will recapitulate this history by studying the ancient civilizations, then the Middle Ages, and ending with the Modern Age and America. By completing these two cycles, students will reinforce what they have previously learned as well as penetrate the meaning of history more deeply.

The second dimension integrates the curriculum *in the student himself*, by cultivating in the student aptitudes, habits, and qualities that shape his approach to all subjects, and bind them together into a unity in what the Vision Statement calls “wonder and love for all that is genuinely

true, good, and beautiful.” For instance, the curriculum emphasizes observation and rendering in subjects as varied as art, music, and nature studies. The purpose of this emphasis is also to cultivate within the students habits and powers of *looking, seeing, and noticing*, the development of which makes us most human and most alive. These, in turn, imply a capacity for concentration, whole-hearted attention, silence, and stillness of both body and soul. The study of music seeks to cultivate the same power of attention and understanding with the sense of hearing as observation does with the sense of sight. In this way, the qualities and habits needed to read beyond the surface level of a story, to notice mathematical patterns in nature, to distinguish one bird from another, to hear parts of a harmony in music, or to recognize how shadows are effected in a painting by lines, geometrical shapes, and gradations of color are not unlike the qualities needed to recognize the presence of God which, like light, always invisibly surrounds us. Approached in this way, the study of nature, music and art is a kind of preparation for contemplative prayer or adoration, and these in turn, prepare the student to study the world and to live in it in a fully human way.

In these two ways this approach to education forms a unified whole. The core subjects studied at each stage of the curriculum each have peculiar objectives which, taken together, combine for building up the whole. We will look at each of these in very general terms, asking in each case what skills, aptitudes, and knowledge we want our students to come away with at the end of their time at St. Jerome’s, in order to see how each subject combines with the others to serve the overall vision and its twofold aim.

History

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

those portions of the Bible that are contemporaneous with the historical period they are studying and appreciate the window that the Bible provides into the development of this history. And they should seek to understand the birth of modern culture as an event within Christianity, as simultaneously a development of Christian culture and a reaction against a Christian view of reality.

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

Religion

- Religion is not just one subject within the curriculum, but the key to its unity and integration. The cosmos is an ordered, unified whole because it is created in Christ “in whom all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). Belief in God as our Father and the world as His beautiful and rational creation binds faith and reason, nature and culture, art and science, morality and reality into a coherent and integrated unity. This unified view reaches its summit in worship, which is the highest form of knowledge and thus the end and goal of true education. This understanding should be made explicit in religion as a subject, in the curriculum as a whole, and in the life of the school. Most of all it should be reflected in the Sacred Liturgy and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the source and summit of the school’s life. Religious education should therefore have as its ultimate goal the life of prayer and a deep, reverent participation in God’s own life through the Sacrifice of the Mass.
- “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8). This is at the heart of what it means to say that God is Trinity, a communion of persons. If God is the source of cosmic order, then that means love is at the root of this order, a key to its meaning, and essential to *our* meaning as persons. Students should come to a deeper understanding of the meaning of love, both divine and

human. They should begin to understand that love is at the root of reality and what this implies for civilization and for the meaning of their own nature as embodied persons.

- Students should understand that God's love in the Incarnation gives rise to a distinctive Christian civilization which is their birthright. Students should learn Scripture and be familiar with the treasures of Christian culture, art, architecture, music, literature, and great deeds, all of which give expression to a Catholic view of reality. Students should begin to learn the 'symbolic language' of these treasures and learn how to 'read' religious paintings and architecture. And they should understand how a true civilization of love reaches its summit in the Mass, where our desire for God is anticipated and surpassed by God's love for us.
- Students should be introduced to such treasures as we have here in Washington: e.g., the National Shrine, St. Matthew Cathedral, the Franciscan and Dominican monasteries, and paintings in the National Gallery. They should be made to understand and appreciate that St. Jerome's is a part of this rich Christian heritage and that this heritage represents the very height of *human* culture and aspiration.
- Students should understand how the vocation to love informs our very meaning as persons, soul *and* body. The curriculum should reflect on how men and women live out this vocation differently in marriage, religious, and consecrated life. Upper school religion courses should therefore contemplate the 'theology of the body', not primarily from the point of view of 'sex education' or even sexual morality (though both of these remain important), but from the truth about the human person as a sexually differentiated unity of body and soul created in and for love. The goal here is not to moralize, but to provide students with a beautiful, more compelling vision of life and love that they can desire and appropriate as their own.
- The study of religion should fulfill the role of basic catechesis, conveying what the Church teaches. By approaching catechesis in light of a broader vision of God and the human person students are helped to understand not only *what* the church teaches but *why* this teaching is true. Students see what these teachings have to do with the basic questions of the human heart, how they matter to their lives, and how they have mattered in the lives of whole cultures.
- The study of religion is both the conveying of a definite body of knowledge and the cultivation of habits and qualities in the soul of the student. It should incorporate silence, adoration, mystery, and the experience of beauty through adoration, music, and the school's observation and study of the liturgy and the liturgical calendar.
- Religious instruction, above all, should seek to draw the student more deeply into the life of God. To that end, the school's liturgical observances should not condescend or 'speak down' to children in order to 'reach them where they are'. Children who are given an infantile form of the faith are not likely to grow in it. Rather these observances should stress the mystery by emphasizing "the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2). They should seek to draw the child ever more deeply into this mystery by appealing to the student's natural wonder. They should be *child-like* without being *childish*.
- For this reason, students should come to understand the meaning of the parts of the Mass and given the opportunity to be trained as acolytes.

Art

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

Language Arts

- We want students to “read well, speak well, and think well.” This means that we want them to understand and internalize how language works both at the level of individual words (their roots, conjugations and declensions), but also the parts of speech. These are the building blocks of argument.
- Reading well therefore means reading *efficiently*, but it also means reading *insightfully*. The study of language and stories is therefore an introduction to basic human questions. Students should learn how to question a story and be questioned by it. With the right literature, even young students can be made to consider the ‘worthiness’ of a character's choices, the consequences of their actions, and the importance of truth. They can be asked to consider whether a story or a character is fair or just, whether it is beautiful and why. What are the elements of this and its effect? Does it make the student happy or sad? Can a story be beautiful and sad? They can begin to recognize the significance of symbols and foreshadowing.
- The study and recitation of poetry should be used to cultivate memory and the skills that go along with recitation, but poetry should also be treated as a form of vision and a window into truth.
- The study of language and literature should complement the study of history and culture by providing a window into them, e.g., in showing how the theme of life as a dangerous

journey 'home' in Homer and Virgil is decisively taken up and transformed in Christianity and expressed in a millennium of Christian literary and visual art.

- The study of Latin (and Greek, if possible) should complement the study of history, religion, and English grammar.

Nature Studies

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

world which they assimilate to themselves through metabolism and within which they move themselves and act. This world is not just the organism's physical surroundings, but the whole order, including past, future, and other creatures, which makes up the organism's 'action space'.

- Higher organisms are characterized by having a larger world in this comprehensive sense. Man has the largest world of all, since he can deliberate about his future, since his world includes God, and since he can respond to God's call.
- There is therefore an essential difference between the living and the non-living, between procreation and mechanical reproduction, between what is born and what is made.
- No aspect of the human body or of human biology is ever *merely* material or *purely* biological, but personal. All human biology is personal biology, the biology of persons.
 - It is to recognize that science alone, which is preoccupied with the causal history and mechanical aspects of the natural world, is not sufficient to understand what nature, living things, and human persons are. Philosophy and ultimately theology are also required.
- The study of nature should train the student above all to *see* nature through the eyes of love and to respect its inner integrity. This must be the foundation on which all further specialized study in the sciences is based.
- Coursework should emphasize the observation, classification and rendering of living things (as in a nature notebook). Students should consider the unique characteristics of different kinds of plants and animals and their ways of life, be able to recognize and appreciate the unique characteristics and classify them accordingly. They should understand what distinguishes human beings from other animals and the relation between human biology or morphology (e.g., upright posture, primacy of sight, opposable thumbs, etc.) and the uniquely human way of living.
- From the study of living wholes, students should then move to the study of their parts through the study of anatomy, physiology, and related disciplines.
- From this foundation students should proceed through the relevant sub-disciplines in science—chemistry, geology, astronomy, etc., with special attention to how these various aspects of nature combine to make Earth a home suitable for life, but also in a way that prepares the student for the study of these subjects in high school.
- Students should have experience in both inductive and deductive methods and know the difference between them.
- Students should complete their study of nature at St. Jerome's with a keen eye for nature, a deeper wonder and love for the natural world, a greater awe at the mystery of living things, and a deep appreciation of how the world, in providing a home fit for life, reflects the wisdom and generosity of its Creator.

Mathematics

- The study of mathematics should instill in students an ever-increasing sense of wonder and awe at the profound way in which the world displays order, pattern and relation. Mathematics is studied not because it is first useful and then beautiful, but because it reveals the beautiful order inherent in the cosmos.
- Mathematics stands in a unique position at the intersection of induction and deduction, and as it flowers, it enables the student not only to appreciate more deeply its own subject matter, but also every other discipline since it lends its own intelligibility to their study. This is readily apparent in logic and analytical reasoning, but is no less true for art, music, poetry, history, sports, experimental science, philosophy, and language.
- Mathematics can engage all the senses, particularly in the early years, with the direct manipulation of simple objects that illustrate number and counting, similarity and difference, belonging and exclusion, progression, proportion, and representation. Along with this direct experience, students can be coached in observation and taught not only to recognize but to question the relationship of countable to uncountable, unity to plurality, and repetition to progression. They can gradually be introduced to ways in which we quantify the world by applying dimension, magnitude, duration, measure and rank, and also ways in which the world may be analyzed and modeled through mathematical representation, including geometric and algebraic expressions. To the extent possible, students can be encouraged to ‘construct mathematics’ (such as building Platonic solids) as well as work it out on paper, and come to understand that the symbolic writing of mathematics enables us to describe accurately and therefore to predict the outcomes of many real-world events.
- The study of mathematics should emphasize its foundational contribution to aesthetics (the study of beauty). The “mathematics of beauty” can be discerned in every subject.
 - In history, for example, students can begin to understand the meaning of the architectural design and sacred geometry of classical buildings, in which not only shape, pattern and placement convey meaning, but number also is used to encode philosophical and theological truths.
 - The mathematical foundations of music can be introduced from the mono-chord to tone relations, and then to the understanding of harmonics and series. In the upper grades, students can be introduced to the mathematics of the fugue and the canon, and taught to hear the voices in their relationship.
 - In the study of visual art, students can be trained in the geometric and numeric relationships that are at the basis of representational drawing, particularly for creating the illusion of depth through the application of transformation and projection, and can be taught the visually pleasing and dynamic ratios that appear in great art and photography. This visual training can be extended to a broad discussion of dimensionality in the context of iconography and non-representational art.
 - In the language arts, the mathematics of rhyme and meter can be discussed and practiced, at first through recitation but eventually through imitation. Also, the discovery of the numerological meanings written into great literature can begin with the Bible and advance historically through the various periods studied.

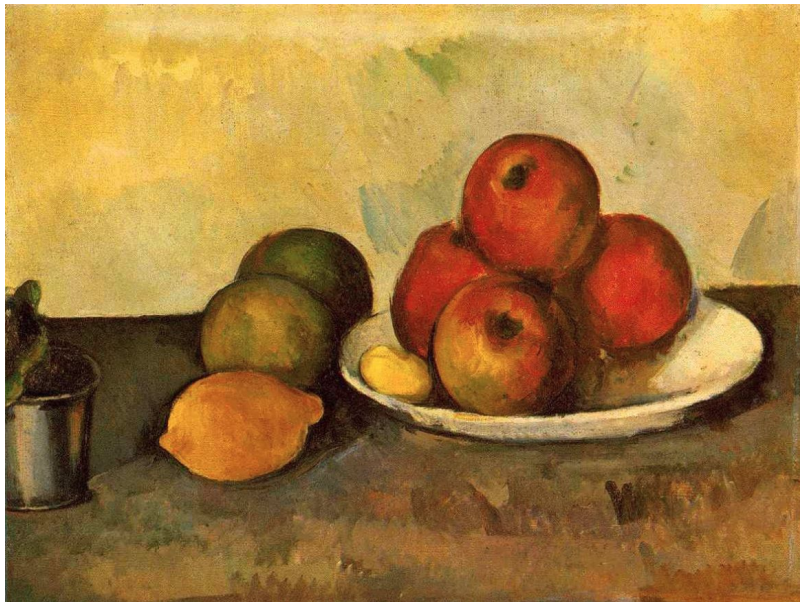
- In nature studies, the mathematics of nature can unveil the mysterious occurrences of transcendental constants such as pi and the natural logarithm, the recurrence of biological geometry such as the spiral of Archimedes, and the myriad ways in which relation is communicated in the branches of a tree, the strands of an orb web, or the convergence of streams into a river. Individual plants and animals can be introduced as the basis for understanding growth, and direct observation and measurement can be the basis for understanding numerical and visual representation of change through time. Individuals and populations can be used to illustrate the concepts of rate of change, large numbers, and eventually infinity. Measurement and the mathematical representation of natural systems can become the entry point for a discussion of estimation and precision, order and entropy, probability, and eventually chaos. This can include a discussion of how to represent things numerically, which presupposes an understanding of Aristotle's four forms of causality, and can culminate in understanding that mathematically representing and quantifying the world depends on philosophical choices.
- A love of mathematics naturally leads not only to the development of analytical and critical reasoning skills, but deep creativity. Most importantly, it fosters a sense of profound reverence for the cosmos and our place within it, and the infinite depth of intelligibility woven into creation. This love is a spontaneous response that arises when a child first discovers math in the world, and must be nourished so that the work of solving math problems does not become tedium. Puzzles, codes, riddles, games, and the direct observation and experience of mathematics in our world are important ways to keep the intrigue and enchantment of mathematics alive while building necessary skills.

Music

- The study of music should be to the sense of hearing what the study of art is to the sense of sight. It should cultivate the power of that form of attention known as listening.
- The study of music should complement the study of history, e.g., in the movement from Gregorian chant to polyphony.
- Children should learn the 'aesthetics of number' and learn to 'hear number' through learning harmony and measure.
- Students should learn and experience how music expresses the mystery of God, and the spirit of adoration should be cultivated through acquaintance with the tradition of sacred music, chants and hymnody. Students should be able to sing the *Salve Regina*, the *Regina Caeli*, and other prayers that are appropriate to different liturgical seasons.
- Students should learn the language of music, both in terms of musical notation and the ability of different instruments and notes to 'tell stories'.
- If possible, students should participate in a *schola cantorum* and, if possible, learn to play an instrument in order to internalize music, appreciate its beauty, and foster creativity and discipline.

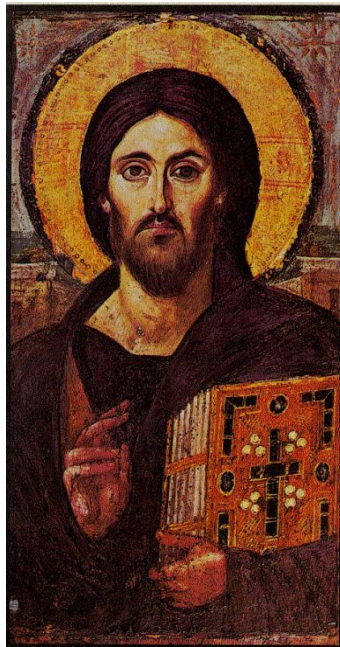
Physical Education

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



Still Life with Apples, Paul Cézanne

Part III: Laying the Foundation



Christ the Teacher
St. Catherine Monastery on Mt. Sinai

Laying the Foundation: Pedagogy

A Catholic classical education seeks both to incorporate students into the wisdom of the Catholic tradition and to form certain habits and dispositions in the souls of students. This endeavor requires a distinct pedagogical approach, though it will obviously take a more developed form in the higher grades. It will fall to teachers in their expertise to tailor this approach to particular subjects and situations in age-appropriate ways. The following guidelines will help to cultivate those habits and dispositions. By working creatively within their parameters, teachers in the lower grades will lay a solid foundation for future work in the upper grades, while teachers in the upper grades will build upon this solid foundation.

What You Don't Know Won't Hurt You. (But What You Don't *Want* to Know Will.) Very few people teaching today are the beneficiaries of a classical education, and nowadays even those with some classical training have holes in their knowledge of the tradition. So it is natural to feel overwhelmed or intimidated at the prospect of such a demanding and ambitious approach, so foreign to common experience. The nature studies program, for example, differs markedly from conventional introductions to science, and there are few resources in this area that are complete and readymade for this approach. Teachers in this as well as other areas will have to be thoughtful and creative in bending imperfect materials to fit this approach. But the most important ingredient in teaching a classical curriculum is not command of the tradition, though this is a worthy and desirable goal and should come with time. Rather the most important thing is that 'you become like this child', that teachers begin to think of themselves as students, that they fall in love with thinking and are gripped by the same fundamental human questions that animated our forebears in the tradition and created the greatness of Western and Christian culture. Regardless of what 'information' a student may acquire, classical education has only truly succeeded when this desire, having become contagious, is passed from teachers to students. When this happens, teachers and students are incorporated into the 'great conversation' together and bound by a common love and common desire to discover the truth and make it one's own.

What They Don't Know Won't Hurt Them. (Yet.) Remember that a classical education lays a foundation for future learning *both* by developing skills *and* by incorporating students into the great conversation of the tradition. The themes and texts introduced in the early years (e.g., Greek characters and themes) are foundational for the subsequent tradition. They will reappear frequently in later art and literature, and they will be covered again in the upper school. It is therefore vital to introduce these texts and themes in the early grades even if students do not fully comprehend them. In doing so you will be cultivating dispositions, contributing to the culture and atmosphere of the school, and a common knowledge base that will be developed further later on in the curriculum. This knowledge, in turn, will deepen and perfect what is sometimes only imperfectly grasped at earlier stages.

Practice the Art of Memory. To cultivate memory, confidence, and good speaking, heavy and regular emphasis should be placed on memorization and recitation of phonics rules, math facts, and the narration and dictation of short poems, stories, and even history lessons. These skills and facts are the foundation for later work.

Homework: A Game the Whole Family Can Play. Because in the early grades memorization and narration precede the child's ability to read, and because class sizes will not always allow children to perform their narrations and recitations in school, children will often have to practice narration at home with the help of a family member. Parents should be informed of this expectation in orientation prior to the start of classes, and teachers should remind parents of this responsibility at the onset of classes. This will help to achieve the additional goals of raising standards and expectations and involving parents more deeply in the education of their children.

Stretching Minds by Stretching Language. From a very early age we want to establish a standard of excellence and promote the command and love of language. We want to nurture the ability to think about and discuss stories. We want to foster a capacity to remember and sustain attention and cultivate a love for what is noble and high. A good deal of instruction in the early grades will therefore consist in teachers reading great works of literature (e.g., children's versions of Homer) to students over the course of a number of days. Often 'age appropriate' texts are less challenging (and inspiring) than great works which seem slightly out of reach. But when these texts are read slowly, with the teacher pausing to explain or discuss difficult phrases and ideas, children begin to discover the wonders of language, the power of big ideas, and to improve their own vocabulary. And they acquire a foundation for understanding most of the great Western art and literature they will encounter later in their studies and in life.

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

Thinking With the Mind of the Ancients. As students advance in their ability, they should be encouraged to place themselves imaginatively within the historical period they are discussing in order to understand how that culture thought about the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, and the nature of God and man. The assignments included at the end of every chapter in Eva March Tappan's *The Story of the Greek People* provide a good example that could be adapted to oral or written work.

Is There a Text in This Class? The use of textbooks should be minimized. This is for several reasons: to provide students a coherent history, to produce a more integrated curriculum, to introduce them to 'primary sources', to develop memory and a capacity for sustained attention, and to prepare them for reading great works of literature in later grades. Teachers may choose to use textbooks or other reference books for themselves in order to develop a narrative of historical continuity tailored to the school's characteristic emphases, and some subjects (e.g., math) may require greater reliance on textbooks from students. Still teachers should strive so far as possible for 'textbook independence' and to devise an oral presentation of historical material in 'lecture' form, as a thread on which to hang more targeted readings in primary source material, ideally, whole books.

History and the Restless Heart. Teachers in the humanities should strive to integrate history, literature, religion and the arts so as to provide a comprehensive and coherent history which

addresses the basic human questions: Who is God? Who and what is man? What is true, good, and beautiful?

Forming the Soul One Sense at a Time. Developing what is peculiarly human in the souls of students means developing the art of noticing and the habit of attention. By definition this means developing one concentrated sense or capacity—seeing, listening, and reading— at a time. This allows students who excel at one particular ‘learning style’ to succeed, while also giving them opportunities to develop in weaker areas. Teachers should seek methods for cultivating these capacities one at a time, avoiding as far as possible multimedia presentations which dilute and diffuse attention. Instead, they should rely on a diverse range of activities (e.g., looking at artwork, listening to music, reading of *books*) that develop concentration in diverse ways, ‘one sense at a time’.

Humanizing Technology. Education develops what is most human in students: the capacity for wisdom and love which requires insightful reading, depth of thought, and the autonomy that comes from virtuous self-command. These, in turn, require disciplined habits of patience, attentiveness, memory and concentration and a desire for what is truly good and beautiful. The role of computers and information technologies should be critically assessed in light of these goals, and prudence should govern their use in instruction and the completion of assignments. These technologies are both a fact of contemporary life and a wonderful resource, providing access to sources of knowledge otherwise unavailable. They should be utilized when appropriate and students should be taught to use them responsibly. However, premature or excessive use of these technologies undermines the very qualities and skills education seeks to cultivate: it inhibits the development of reading comprehension, alters the very processes of composition and calculation, and creates dependence on the technologies themselves. It also hampers the transmission of tradition by isolating students from previous generations and instilling the prejudice that new equals better. Furthermore, it isolates students from one another. Real education therefore requires a space where children can experience a measure of freedom from these technologies and develop independently of them. Our pedagogy should help create this space by stressing personal interaction in instruction and ‘manual labor’ (e.g. handwriting) in the completion of assignments. We should encourage students to take time, attend patiently to detail, and correct mistakes. We should prioritize the insightful reading of books over the collection and manipulation of data and should use ‘instructional videos’ and other media sparingly after evaluating their quality and their effect on school culture. Lastly, we should promote communal activity over computer games or movies during leisure time. The truly liberating answer to the problem of children's immersion in technology is not just a more responsible use of technology; it is to give them something better to love.

Laying the Foundation: Curriculum Objectives Stage by Stage

Each of the core disciplines has its role to play in the building up of the whole and each has its own more specific set of objectives for the different stages at which it is being taught. Quite simply, at each stage there are things we want children to know, things they ought to be able to do, and habits, dispositions, or aptitudes they ought to have acquired or be acquiring. Considering these in detail and in light of the general objectives of each subject, and considering each subject in light of the overall end, teachers in specific subjects and at specific stages can see how each stage builds upon the previous stage, how their work contributes to the ‘finished product’, and how they can tailor specific classes and methods to serve these ideals more effectively.

The curriculum is divided into the following developmental and historical segments:

Lower Grammar Stage

Kindergarten: The Cradle of Civilization Year

Grade 1: The Greek Year

Grade 2: The Roman Year

Upper Grammar Stage

Third Grade: The Medieval Year

Fourth Grade: The Modern Year

Fifth Grade: The American Year

Logic Stage

Sixth Grade: The Ancient Year

Seventh Grade: The Christendom Year

Eighth Grade: The New World Year



The Death of Socrates

*For more information on curricular objectives and materials,
please contact St. Jerome Academy.*