

Educational Philosophy

Revised May 2010



Tampa Christian Community School integrates a variety of methods and materials for teaching our children according to Biblical principles and the ancient wisdom found throughout Scripture. Our teaching reflects an approach similar to that of the Classical style, with attention given to the developmental progression of optimum learning stages (the Trivium). During the early years (Grammar Stage), children are taught the language of academic disciplines and how to connect words to ideas. Drilling and reviewing are primary tools for teaching at this stage and much is accomplished through rhyme, chanting and song. Art, music, movement and hands-on experimental learning provide the counterbalance for the disciplines of memorization and drills. Once basic academic skills are mastered, students are taught how to research and collect information, integrating what they have learned in different subject areas through the rigors of logic and reason (Dialectic/Logic Stage). With this foundation, upper level students are able to logically present and defend their ideas, while continuing the systematic construction of a Biblical worldview and deepening their understanding of integrated academic disciplines (Rhetoric Stage).

We agree that **literature-based curriculum** will move students toward cultural literacy and provide the foundation for a broader understanding of history. At the primary level, we recognize the importance of a strong phonics-based approach to teaching reading skills that is used alongside a consistent exposure to high quality children's literature.

Not all the literature we use is explicitly "Christian"; in fact we acknowledge that some of it may contain elements that may be thought of as scary, "un-Christian" or even offensive to some. Why would we include these books? Simply put, what is considered rich literature and intellectually challenging to one person is encountered as offensive to another. We have tried to select great literature that well represents a broad historical perspective, a wide range of human experience that exposes moral and spiritual dilemmas, that which powerfully describes the struggle of a fallen world toward the redemptive act of grace and so on. We want to engage our students, at age-appropriate stages, in intellectual discussions that provoke high level thinking and expose them to deep questions of the faith. We also believe that God's Word is as relevant today as it has been throughout history and we will always drive the student toward answers that are reflective of God's truth found in Scripture.

History is taught chronologically, integrating that which is recorded in the Bible with that which is not, in a time-line format that properly orders and systematically builds a strong historical foundation in students' minds. A chronological understanding of God's plan of salvation for the world and His sovereignty throughout history provides the backdrop for a deep understanding of a Biblical worldview.

Science is taught as an exploration of God's creative design throughout the universe that will give students an understanding of the God-ordained order and physical laws found in the natural world. Our school community focuses on an in-depth immersion approach which prepares students to understand how the scientific world operates and helps develop a love for the subject and love for learning. Hands-on experimental learning is a vital part of the science curriculum.

Math is presented as a continuum of skills and conceptual mastery. Our primary levels are strong in teaching arithmetic computation, mathematical principles and constant integrative review along with a strong use of manipulatives. Older students are placed in a math class based on their ability rather than

their grade level which allows mathematically minded students to excel and gives struggling students the extra support they need to be successful.

Each curriculum selected for use at TCCS is taught from a decidedly evangelical Christian perspective, even if it is not an explicitly "Christian curriculum". We agree that "all truth is God's truth" and are committed to teaching a sound Biblical worldview throughout all academic disciplines. We also seek to establish a global perspective on social, environmental, political and humanitarian issues that help prepare students to become world citizens with a broad view of the Great Commission and a proper response to the Lord's command of world-wide ministry. Students are taught how to defend their faith. Throughout the teaching of theology, philosophy, science and history, apologetics is represented as a natural and necessary part of living in a post-Christian era. We want to develop in our students (as the writers of the Sonlight Curriculum so aptly put it) "a healthy scholarly skepticism" toward the things they will encounter throughout life, designed to motivate them to seek, find and defend the truth.

We firmly believe and support our educational philosophy that parents are first and foremost responsible for their children's education. The partnership between parent and Christian educator, which is a hallmark of the Tampa Christian Community School, is a trust relationship based on a mutual desire to honor the Lord Jesus Christ in all that is taught to our children. May He be lifted up and glorified by every aspect of our educational program.