The Educational Plan of
St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School

A Classical Catholic School
Constituit Anno Domini 2018
On the 150th Anniversary of St. Thomas Catholic School

“That is the one eternal education;
to be sure enough that something is true that you dare to tell it to a child.”
G.K. Chesterton

“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.”
Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians 4:6-9

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# Table of Contents

## Part I: The Foundation

The Relevance of a Classical Catholic Education in the 21st Century .......... 3
What is a Classical Education? .......................................................... 4
The Five Characteristics of a Classical Education .............................. 4
  1. The Natural Stages of Learning .................................................. 5
  2. Language is the Fabric of Thought ......................................... 5
  3. Thinking is the Origin of Understanding ............................... 6
  4. Understanding is the Eye of Wisdom .................................... 7
  5. History Organizes Learning .................................................. 8

## Part II: The Edifice

What a Classical Catholic Education Teaches—Curriculum ..................... 8
How a Classical Catholic Education Teaches—Pedagogy .......................... 10
Why a Classical Catholic Education Teaches—Principles ....................... 11
- Religion
- History
- Literature
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Visual Arts
- Choir/Orchestra
- Physical Education
- Forensics

## Part III: The Work

- Curriculum Objectives Stage by Stage—Proposed .......................... 15
- Lower Grammar Stage (K – 2nd) Objectives ................................ 15
- Upper Grammar Stage (3rd – 5th) Objectives .............................. 20
- Logic Stage (6th – 8th) Objectives ............................................. 26

## Part IV: The Setting

Classical Education and School Culture ............................................ 33
Part I: The Foundation

The Relevance of a Classical Catholic Education in the 21st Century

Education in the 21st Century is undergoing a significant transformation as our culture continues down a path of fragmentation caused by secularism—i.e. the attempt to build a society independent of a public discourse and commitment to God. For example, secularism’s fragmentation of thought caused by its denial of truth—replacing it with relativism’s ‘each one’s truth’, destroys the basis of human reason’s search to know—ultimately, to know the one God in which all creation is synthesized in one truth.

This cultural fragmentation has similarly fragmented the purpose of modern education into that of ‘equipping’ the child with particular knowledge and skills used to perform a specific task. Education thus becomes methodized and measured, with curricular texts, pedagogy, assessments, and grading being characterized by the principle that knowledge is a means to an end. In the 21st Century when truth is valued for what it does over what it is, education becomes mechanized and so does the learning child.

The Catholic Church has always been the source of a revolutionary leaven that challenges our world. And so it is with education today. Drawing from centuries of wisdom, learning, educating and informing culture—thus the term classical—the Church today offers an alternative to 21st century principles of education.

As Catholic, a Catholic education is not merely religious instruction, or the availability of the sacraments, nor an environment of children with a shared Catholic heritage. A Catholic education is in its essence a worldview that understands learning as the development of a relationship between the child, the created world, and God. This relationship is nothing less than what a child was created for—their soul is meant to learn in an environment where their unity with the world and with God is continually spoken, demonstrated, encountered and explored throughout the school day. Without a Catholic worldview, education quickly becomes a means to an end, and truth, beauty and goodness simply relative to the learner. In a classical Catholic education, learning is an end in itself. It is a relationship of wonder and awe of truth, goodness and beauty, and a vulnerability to being changed and inspired by them—an inspiration that will lead a child to God.

In a truly Catholic education of mathematics, of reading and literature, of nature studies and history, of each of the arts, of socialization and service, the revelation of an eternal unity in the temporal is always on the horizon. Its curriculum, pedagogy, spoken and visual environment, and organization are all intentionally dedicated to bringing a child into an ever growing awareness, experience and appreciation of the holy unity of their self, the world, and God. Creation is sacramental, and education is meant to lead a child to encounter God within and beyond it. Through an education grounded in inspiration, a child’s heart comes to desire the good, their reason seeks the true, and their imagination delights in the beautiful. When education leads a child to participate in this unity, through disciplined thought, creative
imagination and a courageous heart, a child can become who they truly are: Human. This is the relevance of a classical Catholic education in the 21st century.

What is a Classical Catholic Education?

The authentic education of a child is ordered towards their happiness. True happiness is achieved when a child knows who they are and achieves the end for which they exist. A classical Catholic education is dedicated to forming a child to understand his or her self, the world around them and to respond to the voice of God who created them and calls them to Himself. This nature and purpose of a child’s life must be the foundation of their education—the depth and breadth of the humanity of a child. A classical Catholic education is thereby dedicated in its method, content, and structure to respect and nurture this humanity, to awaken a love for truth, to desire to experience clarity, and to perseverance in seeking knowledge and understanding. The classical Catholic learning environment, while promoting these habits of mind, is also enriched with the profound Catholic understanding of reality, inspiration from a rich cultural heritage of heroism and beauty, and sacramental grace which together form a child’s conscience, virtue and prayer. The learning environment of a classical Catholic education therefore:

1. **Intends the integral formation of the whole human person**—body, mind and spirit in the dignity of being created in the image and likeness of God.
2. **Seeks to understand objective reality** and to recognize the good, true and beautiful as revelations of reality’s origin and end in God.
3. **Attains a synthesis of faith, life and culture** incorporating the child into Christ and His Catholic Church.

The Five Characteristics of a Classical Education

The natural application of the above theological and philosophical foundations of a Catholic education is the classical approach to educating the child. The classical principles of education have ancient Greek, Jewish and Roman roots—a pedagogy of learning which produced nothing less than the unparalleled intellectual and cultural development of Western Civilization. This approach can be expressed in many ways but can be captured by five key aspects:

1. **The Natural Stages of Learning**—The child’s three natural stages of cognitive development are the basis of an overall structure of classical learning from Kindergarten to 12th grade—the trivium.
2. **Language is the Fabric of Thought**—Beyond the use of language, classical education develops a child’s appreciation and understanding of language as the key driver of perceptive thought.
3. **Thinking is the Origin of Understanding**—Classical education intentionally trains students in logical and detailed thought leading to an understanding and appreciation of truth, goodness and beauty.
4. **Understanding is the Eye of Wisdom**—Western civilization has produced perennial treasures of virtue, thought and creativity which are the foundation of the classical curriculum’s guide to wisdom.
5. **History Organizes Learning** -- Subject specific learning is grasped in its meaning and depth, beyond its utility, only when understood from the perspective of its historical development.

1. **The Natural Stages of Learning**

A classical education partitions the goals, activities and content of a child’s learning into three fundamental *stages of learning* which are aligned to the natural development of a child’s inclinations and cognitive capacities.

**Grammar Stage** (Kindergarten – 5th Grade): This age’s distinguishing cognitive capacity is *memorization*. Children at this age love to memorize and they are good at it! In this stage the ‘grammar of learning’ or, the verbal, written and conceptual building blocks of future thought and understanding is built up through memorization strategies involving repetition, rhyme, song, etc.

The fundamental elements or tools of reading, writing, mathematics, history, linguistics and the study of nature are put into place to be built upon in a child’s succeeding stages of learning. The three cognitive goals in this stage of learning are: 1) **Paying attention** as a willful activity of attending, 2) **Memorization** as an exercise and development of this faculty, 3) **Imitating** as an ability to recognize key elements and being able to replicate them afterward, both in the correct sequence and accurately.

**Logic Stage** (6th – 8th Grade): This age’s distinguishing cognitive capacity is to *experience meaning* or to *understand*. These students love to argue from a point of view (have you noticed?!) Students at this stage are guided by the educator *posing essential questions*, which promotes key habits of deeper thought, including: organizing, comparing and contrasting, conducting research, ordering ideas, and writing from another’s perspective. This approach comes to include an introduction to the elements of argumentation, formal logic and debate. Students are trained in creating written exposition that is organized, carefully worded and informed. There are three cognitive goals in this stage of learning: 1) **Prioritizing and summarizing details** by identifying the few, key elements that define the content, 2) **Identifying similarities and differences** through comparing and contrasting key ideas and essential details, 3) **Making and evaluating inferences** based on partial evidence and prior knowledge.

**Rhetorical Stage** (9th – 12th Grade): This age’s distinguishing capacity is to *apply, judge and express learning*. In high school classical education settings, students are guided in analyzing, synthesizing, deriving judgements and communicating persuasively their positions.

2. **Language as the Fabric of Thought**

The written and spoken word is the hinge upon which all classical teaching and learning swing. To become a fluent reader, a coherent writer, and an articulate speaker are fundamental goals of a classical education as these form the medium for developing the careful thinking skills that allow students to establish a vantage point, not within but *above* the level of ideas. After first attaining fluency in the word, students can then be trained in the ‘commerce of ideas’. For example, discussing how words of similar but
different meanings, can be used to express ideas closer to your intended meaning, requiring a student to actually grasp his or her thinking more carefully. Or, how less commonly employed words are nonetheless better at expressing ideas, actions, states, and relationships with more impressive impact.

The pedagogy of classical education therefore emphasizes language as the medium for becoming aware of distinctions, relationships and connections among ideas. Language acquisition, grammar, vocabulary, fluency in verbal and written expression, and the understanding of language structures—are all emphasized beginning in the grammar stage and intentionally expanded with age. Through this emphasis a child attains clarity of thought and expression—the power of effective reasoning, of grasping and testing ideas, of readily moving from the concrete to the abstract, assessing the intelligibility of argument, and discerning truth from falsehood.

This role of language in producing clarity and depth of thought is the basis for making Latin a required course of study beginning in the 4th grade and continuing through 8th grade. The benefits of studying Latin are many-fold:

1. The habits of mind of the student studying Latin take on the qualities unique to the unexcelled system that is the Latin language: logic, order, precision, structure, all while learning how to exercise patient, methodic, and diligent effort.

2. 65% of English words have Latin roots—to understand and use English well, we learn Latin (e.g. ‘father’ in Latin is pater, therefore the English paternalism, expatriate, patronize, patriotic, etc., or ‘death’ in Latin is mors, therefore the English mortal, immortal, morbid, mortuary, mortgage, etc.)

3. After learning basic English grammar in Kindergarten through 3rd grade when a child learns to read, the 4th grade child then encounters thousands of new words as he or she reads to learn. Latin provides the important next level of language organization after that of English grammar. Latin does for language, what mathematics does for science.

4. A language can only be studied outside of itself. Latin allows students to study and appreciate words—their origins, relationships, and their travel between languages, Latin forming the linguistic foundation of the five most spoken Romance languages and greatly facilitating their learning.

5. Latin informs the vocabulary of all the natural sciences (e.g. equinox, igneous, symbols of the elements, etc.), the life sciences (e.g. plant and animal classifications, etc.), mathematics (e.g. axiom, integer, exponent, etc.), law and government (e.g. subpoena, pro bono, quid pro quo, non sequitur, etc.)

3. Thought as the Origin of Understanding
The division of learning into subjects is essentially an artificial one. Ultimately, all knowledge of phenomena, quality and change becomes one truth—the reflection of a simple, unified, absolute reality Who is God. The seeing of the transcendent in the temporal world of change and phenomena becomes in
classical education, nothing less than the purpose of learning. This seeing begins in thought, is deepened in understanding, and is fulfilled in wisdom.

The classical educator works hard to identify, present, and lead students to an encounter with the unity that is within the diversity of the world and in the various subjects of its study. “The beauty of the classical curriculum,” writes classical schoolmaster David Hicks, “is that it dwells on one problem, one author, or one epoch long enough to allow even the youngest student a chance to exercise his mind in a scholarly way, to make connections and to trace developments, lines of reasonings, patterns of action, recurring symbolisms, plots and motifs.”

Each subject possesses its own inner nature which the classical student in the logic and rhetoric stages of learning is guided to grasp, verbalize and understand. Beyond the innumerable facts and details—students are trained in the habits of thought which reveal the deeper connections and relationships that abide within a subject. Such perceptive understanding inspires fascination. Here the thoughtful imagination then extends learning, applies and evaluates it. It is at this point that a subject changes a student, shapes them as a person, a thinker, as one who has a purpose that can be inclined toward great ends. Subjects are more than information! Each is formative of a child, impressing its own qualities upon their mind. Are we, what we eat? In any case, our mind certainly becomes what we study deeply!

A subject’s shaping of a child’s perspective is therefore as important, if not more important, than its facts and skills. Literature not only conveys knowledge of other lives and cultures, but when reflected on carefully, teaches insight, perception, and compassion for the human condition. History not only conveys historical events, conditions and relationships but beyond these it can develop judgment, discernment, and wisdom. Mathematics impresses habits of accuracy and logic. These qualities of mind are priceless and what distinguishes the educated person. Deep thought in each subject is therefore a key goal of classical education. The classical educator intentionally leads a child to these experiences the ultimate unities of truth, goodness and beauty that lie at the center of each subject, and all subjects.

4. Understanding as the Eye of Wisdom

If language provides the medium for thought, and thought leads the mind to experience the connections that produce understanding, understanding then provides the perspective in which is revealed wisdom. The classical Catholic curriculum grounds its goals of learning in the Western tradition of virtue, thought and creativity, informed by the Judeo-Christian revelation and its fulfillment in the encounter with Jesus Christ—who is Wisdom incarnate.

True understanding is an achievement that requires this grounding to ensure it becomes a relationship—a relationship between the child’s mind and objective reality. This relationship is established within the liberal arts subjects of literature, mathematics, history, science and the arts. The classical educator works to bring students first into an encounter with key texts, works and exemplars from the western Christian tradition—beginning even in the grammar stage when children are exposed to age appropriate versions of great works. After this encounter, the student is lead to understand the work by practicing analysis—how to break it down into the elements that make it great. Thought leads to understanding which becomes a seeing in which a student can experience the value of what they see—its objective worth, given to it by God—and desires it as good. This is wisdom.
5. History as Organizing Principle
History plays a key role in the development of a child’s understanding of the world, salvation history and their place within it. As such it is not just one subject among others, but serves as a common thread that links the academic subjects in time and circumstance. This is why a classical education moves away from ‘social studies’ to a dedicated, ongoing study of history. A rich study of history reveals to the student the originating quest of learning, exploration and discovery, and inspires them to pursue these in their own life.

In classical education the study of history is reflected in a pedagogy of instruction where learning employs the actual texts that were written within a subject of study—literature, science, history, mathematics—or age appropriate versions of them, to inform instruction. In a classical education, history informs all the subjects, as each has its own story. This is in contrast to the tendency of progressive education’s reliance on textbooks which compile, organize, filter and define a sequence of ahistorical facts and skills, while often losing sight of the deeper meanings and higher purposes that led to the subject’s development in the first place. A classical education ensures that both the technical content of a subject and its historical drama are understood by students so that they too experience the deeper motivations to study the subject.

Part II: The Edifice

What a Classical Catholic Education Teaches—Curriculum

The content of a classical curriculum is determined by the truth that a child is a creation of an intelligent and loving Creator who created them with a purpose—to possess perfect happiness in knowing and loving God. A classical education is designed to cooperate with this purpose—to build up the mind and heart of the child that he or she can know the happiness for which they were created. A classical Catholic education therefore seeks to fulfill the potential of the child’s mind to understand and of their heart to care.

The foundation of the classical Catholic curriculum is the historical unfoldment of the creating and salvific work of God in the world and humanity. The fullness of this work in salvation history begins in the cradle of Western Civilization, unfolding through the Greek, Jewish, Near East and Roman cultures that make up the western tradition. This historical work of God in creation is therefore the fundamental backdrop that orders, gives meaning to and unites the subjects of religion, literature, mathematics, science and the arts. A child’s mind becomes a participant in these fields of learning and enters into the revelation of God’s intelligence (truth), order (beauty), and purpose (goodness) in each.

In the classical curriculum, history is studied in four year cycles sequentially studying the four epochs of Western Civilization: The Ancient World (5000 BC – 400 AD), The Medieval Age (400 – 1500 AD), The
Renaissance 1500 – 1800 AD), and Modern Times (1800 to Present). A classical approach can study history in this four year cycle either as an entire school, or sequentially by grade with the first cycle from Kindergarten through 3rd grade, which is then repeated with an age appropriate depth in 4th through 8th grades (and repeated again in the 9th through 12th grade Rhetoric Stage).

Students will take the following courses based on learning stage:

**Grammar Stage Courses:** Religion, History, Literature (Reading), Writing, Mathematics, Science, *Schola* (Choir--2 classes per week), Physical Education, Art, Spanish (1 specials class per day)

**Logic Stage Courses:** Religion, History, Literature (Reading), Writing, Mathematics, Science, *Schola* (Choir), Physical Education, Art, Latin, Forensics, Orchestra/Band (2 specials classes per day)

Reading lists and textbooks for each course will be identified by the classical educator team and administration, with diocesan consultation, parent input and recommendations of other classical Catholic schools. These courses will be identified for each grade based upon these objectives and resources of other classical Catholic schools to be used as instructional resources meeting these objectives.

**School Day Schedule** (proposed):

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How a Classical Education Teaches--Pedagogy

The second quality of a classical Catholic education seeks to engage the heart of a child—their motivation, self-confidence and capacity to care. Who is the Classical Educator who can do this? A classical educator is one who communicates a love for learning by loving to learn—who reflects on and explores questions deeply. Who fosters the development of a child’s understanding of their identity, in the world and beyond it, through a continual reflection on the virtuous life. Who employs pedagogy focused on the use of language, the connecting of ideas, and creative expression. Who leads students to an experience of wonder by studying classic works of excellence, which reveal to them the good, the true and the beautiful.

Sharing with students this adult experience of wonder, fascination, and a growth mindset is the basis for a teaching that develops learning from open experience versus from closed activity. For example, a classical classroom emphasizes observing and responding over method and practice. In classical education the child is not a passive receptor of knowledge which is then applied in practice—as most subject textbook-based learning involves. Rather, the classical education student is a participant in ongoing discovery and exploration, leading to new connections and experiences of the good, the true and beautiful in literature, history, mathematics, science, and the arts. Bringing these connections to life in the classroom is not easy, but a classical educator teaches just as a classical student learns, by exploring, comparing, discussing and imagining. This active, participatory educating and learning leads to the habits of thought by which a child learns how to learn. Examples of this approach to learning include:

Lower Stage Grammar (K – 2nd Grade): The basic learning temperament of this child is a natural excitement for learning! They enjoy games, stories, songs, projects. Although they have a short attention span, they are captivated by all their senses, and their ability to imagine and create. The lower grammar stage classical educator creates a learning environment for these children through:

- Memorization
- Guided exploration & discovery
- Finding things visually, physically
- Song, recitation
- Coloring, drawing, painting, building
- Use of body movements
- Short, creative projects
- Show and Tell, drama,
- Hear/read/tell stories
- Games

Upper Stage Grammar (3rd – 5th Grade): The basic learning temperament of this child is being able to make personal connections with ideas. This age of child is excited to learn facts, to make connections through making and organizing collections. This age enjoys relating their own experiences to a topic, or just telling a story. They continue to enjoy to memorize while also be able to use what they learn to make connections to bigger ideas. They easily assimilate language. The upper grammar stage classical educator creates a learning environment for these children through:
Collecting, displaying, modeling
Observing, explaining, describing,
Hands-on projects, activities
Memorization & recitation of works
Drills, games
Acting out dramatic episodes
Making cross curricular connections
Gathering, summarizing research
Oral and written presentations
Field trips

Logic Stage (6th – 8th Grade): The basic learning temperament of a child at the logic stage is being able to make connections between ideas to understand the world around them. This age of child enjoys a challenge, making judgements, argumentation and debate, and looking for ways to improve things. This student enjoys showing what they know and can do, is curious about the ‘why’ of things—and wants to know ‘behind the scenes’ facts. These children can often act and speak with a misplaced confidence!

Time lines, charts, maps, anchor charts
Debates, persuasive reports
Drama, reenactments, role-playing
Evaluate, critique (with guidelines)
Formal logic
Research projects
Oral/written presentations
Guest speakers & field trips

Why a Classical Catholic Education Teaches--Principles

While the specific content of each subject of the curriculum will draw from its specific standards, objectives, resources and classical instructional practices, these should all be means of capturing the following key principles at the foundation of each subject.

Religion – The subject at the heart of every other subject. The cosmos is an ordered unified whole as it is created in Christ “in Whom all things hold together” (1 Cor 1:17). This reality leads us to worship which is the highest form of knowledge. Religion class is intended to lead the student into a union of faith, prayer and adoration of God. Through daily religious instruction and Liturgy, with a consistent focus on service and growth in virtue, each student and the school is brought into communion with the risen Lord and with each other in the practice of that love Who is Jesus Christ. This reality of love is the true foundation for the entire human community and its development of culture, society and civilization. Students are to be introduced to the wealth of Catholic culture as the fruit of God’s revelation in the world and in the human person. This includes our vocation to love in marriage, religious and consecrated life. Upper school religion includes formation in the ‘theology of the body’ as a beautiful image of life and love. Through catechetical training students learn what the Catholic Church teaches, and how its teachings matter to our happiness on earth and eternal life with God. All instruction, experiences and activities should therefore ultimately seek to lead each child into a more sincere and personal faith, hope and love of God.
History — The entire setting of the human drama has been and remains the search for answers to the fundamental human questions and the human desire for God. In a classical Catholic curriculum students are provided the vantage point of Christian revelation which reveals the entire historical span of human activity and its fulfillment in Christ. From the pre-Christian cultures, whose works can be understood within their own setting, all is united in Christ who reconciles all things in Himself. History is understood neither as a continual span of progress to the present, nor as a random sequence of events, but rather as a drama, a story of the relationship between Man and God. The historical development of civilizations, societies, personages, events, the works of literature, the arts and the sciences, are understood from the deeper human conflict with ourselves and the historical order brought to human history through divine providence. Students are guided to learn from the key epochs of human history, gaining an understanding of their character, motivations, works and lessons. The student then seeks to understand their own culture and their role in being a citizen of the church, their society and mankind — continuing to live for ourselves and our time answers to the questions Who are we? Why do we exist? What is our destiny?

Literature — The language arts are grounded in the art of reading well, speaking well and thinking well. Reading must become both efficient and insightful—the foundation of communication between one mind and another, between the mind and its cultural heritage. Students must both achieve reading fluency in the lower grammar stage (Kinder – 2nd), as well as a mastery of the English language through grammar (upper grammar stage and logic stage students). This development is continued in the study of Latin in upper school (by logic stage students.) Close ties are made between literature, history and religion. Through literary works students gain deep lessons on how to live, on the complexity of the human person and our story, and the creative work of written expression that allows us to express our humanity. Recitation of classic works bring students face to face with the drama, beauty and creativity which motivate further explorations in reading and inspires them in their own writing.

Writing — Students can naturally enjoy expressing themselves in with the written word. While being the most complex cognitive activity—requiring attentiveness, memory, imagination, organization, sequencing, vocabulary, grammar, and visualization—students can be brought to a natural pleasure and pride in being able to write well. Learning to do so goes beyond the writing stages of: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. While helpful organizational steps, these do not actually help a train a child developing meaningful and coherent text. Writing instruction must train students in a consistent pattern of thinking activity that is developed from Kindergarten through 8th grade, providing a reliable pattern of how to think when writing. With this foundation students can then enjoy learning to improve their writing through vocabulary, grammar, style, research and imagination. Writing instruction should lead all students to feel confident and proficient in expressing their thoughts in writing.
Mathematics—The study of the amazing patterns, order and relationships in the created world are a revelation of the intelligence of its Creator. The mathematical can be seen in science, music, language, art, and logic. In the grammar stage physical counting develops into grouping, place value, and combinations. This foundation provides for the developing in the logic and rhetoric stages the understanding of dimensions, operations, expressions and their applications. Through games, puzzles, codes, measurement and history, the depth of mathematics is kept in full view. All through the extension and application of these concepts, mathematics should be the occasion for experiencing beauty—beauty in the patterns and relationships within the mystery of quantification in creation.

Nature Studies/Science – Science should be studied first with a sense of wonder for the intelligence and meaning we see in the world. Then with our own intelligence we are able to cooperate with this order in the world, understand its complex change and become stewards of its well-being. This wonder is grounded in the presupposition that all reality is God’s creation. While the act of creation is not an alternative to natural explanations, the doctrine of creation does state what the world is and not how it came to be. The classical Catholic science curriculum therefore understands nature from the perspective of the ultimate unity of its mystery revealed by faith, and its intelligibility known through reason. For example, life in nature is understood not as mechanical quality and the result of a mechanistic process. Rather, the nature of life precedes the living creature, guides it, and is an end in itself. Science instruction is to reveal the natural order of the created world through observation, classification, and identifying natural patterns of development and change. The development of a comprehensive view of the created world is the setting for identifying the individual disciplines of science, the life sciences of plants, animals, and biology, and the natural sciences of physics, chemistry, earth science, and astronomy.

Visual Arts – The study of the visual arts are intended to foster a sensitivity and appreciation of beauty, not as a mere subjective preference or matter of taste, but as an objective feature of the created world both in reality and in man-made works. Beauty in both nature and human works is the presence of an objective relationship to the divine. The experience of beauty in art brings delight and inspiration to the student and moves them to create something beautiful for themselves. This ability to render in different mediums is trained through observation of models of beauty, and in practicing their imitation—through attention to detail, shape, color and perspective. A student then builds upon these skills of observation and rendering by applying their own creative imagination to produce beauty. This study and development should be especially infused with the treasures of Catholic art which capture the mystery of the eternal in the temporal that is objective beauty. Throughout the grammar, logic and rhetoric stages of learning, a child is able to capture the beautiful in their age appropriate experience and expression of it.
Music/Choral Arts/Orchestra – The study and experience of the musical arts are to hearing what the visual arts are to sight. This experience should develop the power of listening—a form of attention that leads students to recognize the qualities of sound and appreciate musical beauty. Students can also experience the mathematical within music, in rhythm, harmony, and measure. Joy in music is provided to children through choral song, which is an opportunity to develop appreciation of the tradition of sacred music.

Students singing the Salve Regina for example, or other pieces for the liturgical seasons become a celebration of their faith. To grow their appreciation of music and song all students’ will participate in the school’s schola cantorum (school of song). If interested, a child can study an instrument and participate in the school orchestra which offers students the opportunity to perform some of the richest and beautiful works of music in the western tradition.

Physical Education – Play, like happiness, is its own end. Physical education allows students to enjoy the physical activity of play in structured forms of movement, gaming, and sport that lead to physical well-being, motor control, stamina and team work. These develop the human body, providing for its need of physical exercise and trains students in their responsible care for the body as a temple of the human soul and Holy Spirit. This care is to lead students to take responsibility for their physical health and the body’s need for exercise, an appropriate diet and rest. Through physical education training, including repetition, practice and competition, a child also develops a sense of physical excellence—of strength, endurance, coordination and gracefulness. Team sports allow training in good sportsmanship and the focus beyond the individual to the good of the team. Mental focus, perseverance and high standards should characterize the physical education experience of the child.

Forensics – The ability to express thought in speech is a fundamental characteristic of our humanity and the educated mind. All students in the logic stage of learning receive forensics instruction to develop skills in public speaking, debate and dramatic presentation. 1) Students are trained in the art of spoken expression, developing a foundation of method, confidence and experience in communicating and persuading publically. Training in public speaking allows students to develop the skills of organizing thought, and communicating meaning with style. Students are able to test and improve their skills through participation in regional forensic competitions. Students are also trained in thoughtful argumentation through lessons on logic—the right ordering of sound judgement. 2) Forensics includes experience in organized debate. Through debate students develop skills in research, organization of ideas and argumentation. Debate allows students to apply these skills in deepening their understanding and ownership of the issues of faith and reason that impact social life in our day. 3) Drama training allows students to develop the art of dramatic performance which leads students to an engagement in story, character and the technical skills of presentation. Plays should give students the opportunity to experience the drama of our human story, its heroism, virtue and emotion.
Technology – Technology is a critical tool that has equipped modern man with opportunities for communication, information flow and learning that are revolutionary and comparable to the invention of writing and the printing press. Technology in the school setting is to be a tool for learning, fully integrated into the classroom academic learning process versus a separate class. Classroom educators will lead the implementation of technology in their classroom, providing technology specific training in the skill base needed to use technology while planning how it is implemented into specific learning activities. Teachers will adopt an age appropriate sequence of skill acquisition including keyboarding, use of common applications and safe use. Students will taught that technology is a tool of human activity with a power that can either strengthen or weaken the human spirit. Students will learn how with discipline and wisdom technology can serve man in his care of the human community and stewardship of the earth.

Curriculum Objectives Stage by Stage

The following objectives are provided as a baseline proposal which are those of St. Jerome Classical School in Hyattsville, Maryland with Mrs. Mary Pat Donoghue, Principal. These objectives will be used as a foundation for the development of St. Thomas Catholic School’s grade level learning objectives along with other classical school resources. Currently the Diocese of Lansing is planning the coordination with diocesan classical school principals, the development of a set of diocesan based classical school standards. Until these standards are defined, St. Thomas School will be developing in coordination our school standards and objectives with the supervision of Diocesan Director of Curriculum.

Reading lists and textbooks for each course will be identified by the classical educator team and administration, with diocesan consultation, parent input and recommendations of other classical Catholic schools. These recourses with be identified for each grade based upon these objectives and resources of other classical Catholic schools to be used as instructional resources meeting these objectives.

Lower Grammar Stage Objectives (Kindergarten – 2nd Grade)

History

Knowledge

- Understand history and culture as human desire for goodness, truth, and ultimately God
- Develop basic knowledge of ancient civilizations in ancient Near East and their relationship to one another
- Develop basic knowledge of history of Israel through the Bible and in context of ancient Near East
- Develop basic knowledge of the geography of the ancient Near East, including Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt
- Develop more detailed understanding of Greek civilization: people, places, geography, religion, government, economics, art, architecture, music, technology, and culture
- Understand how Greek civilization contributed to Christianity
- Develop better understanding of Roman civilization: people, places, geography, religion, government, economics, art, architecture, music, technology, and culture
- Understand how Rome became the home of the Roman Catholic Church
- Begin to see how Christianity transformed the Roman Empire
- Begin to see Greek and Roman contributions to culture
- Learn to identify the basic geography of Greece, Rome, and their neighbors
Skills
- Memorization of key historical facts
- Beginning map reading and recognition
- Use a globe
- Understand a timeline
- Ability to narrate historical stories
- Begin to see connections between historical events and themes
- Beginning ability to formulate and discuss philosophical questions
- Artistically render historical scenes from imagination

Aptitudes
- Develop memory
- Develop ability to listen and recall
- Develop an interest in history
- See relevance of past to present
- Appreciate Greek philosophical ideals
- Begin to see an integrated conception of the world on which the beliefs of Western Civilization are based

Religion
Knowledge
- Begin to recognize how Christianity becomes incarnate in culture through art, music, architecture, literature, and the liturgical calendar
- Appreciate the historical setting of the Bible
- Learn the traditions of the Church and the mysteries of the faith through beauty, beautiful liturgy, and adoration
- Become acquainted with the tradition of sacred music as a form of prayer
- Acquire basic catechetical instruction in the meaning of the Incarnation, the Creeds of the Church, familiarity with the Old and New Testament and the difference between them, the meaning of the Mass, the liturgical calendar, basic prayers and practices of the church, etc.

Skills
- Memorize and recite Scripture, Bible facts, catechism, prayers, and hymns
- Learn to pray liturgically, intercessory, and contemplatively
- Learn to regard and participate in sacred music as a form of prayer

Aptitudes
- Cultivate longing for God
- Develop habits of stillness and adoration
- Begin to develop a habit of prayer, a love for the mysteries of the faith, and a desire for God’s beauty and truth
- Develop a habit of noticing the presence of God

Art
Knowledge
- Learn how to look at and begin to interpret paintings
- Study and give rudimentary explanation of Christian art and iconography
- Study and give rudimentary explanation of art related to Egypt, Greece, and Rome
- Begin to know properties, characteristics, and qualities of beauty
- Begin to recognize how art expresses cultural ideals
Skills
- Learn how to look at, examine, and see a painting and other works of art
- Learn to tell the story of a painting
- Begin to render as well as draw imaginatively
- Learn basics of drawing, painting, and sculpting
- Learn to copy according to established rules

Aptitudes
- Acquire habits of attending, noticing, sitting still, and concentrating
- Learn discipline from following simple projects through to completion
- Begin to develop eye and appreciation for beauty
- Begin to question art works for their meaning

Language: Literature, Grammar, Composition, and Drama

Knowledge
- Alphabet
- Phonics and reading
- Spelling
- Beginning writing
- Beginning grammar
- Beginning poetic understanding
- Latin roots (chants), early vocabulary, phrases, prayers

Skills
- Learn to read proficiently
- Develop reading comprehension
- Employ correct grammar in writing and speech
- Learn good penmanship, using proper technique, and beginning cursive
- Recognize and write complete sentences
- Memorize and recite the definition of the parts of speech
- Understand and identify parts of speech and the four different types of sentences
- Say and write the days of the week, the seasons, the months of the year, their home address, titles of respect, abbreviations, dates
- Understand and use beginning punctuation, contractions, capital letters, synonyms, antonyms
- Be able to order simple ideas, form paragraphs, and copy the final work
- Narration: re-tell stories in detail, with vocal clarity, poise, and eye contact; eventually, re-tell the narrative thread of a story
- Act out stories with other students as characters
- Develop ability identify main idea
- Answer comprehension questions about a reading passage in complete sentences
- Copywork: copy sentences from works of history, the Bible, or literature
- Dictation: listen to an oral recitation and write down a sentence(s) from works of history, the Bible, or literature
- Recitation: recite poems or psalms from memory with vocal clarity, poise, eye contact
- Conversation: ‘Socratic’ discussions should teach students to begin questioning and discussing stories, pictures, fables or proverbs according to four rules: 1. Read the text carefully. 2. Listen to what others say and don’t interrupt. 3. Speak clearly. 4. Give others your respect.
- Perform a play and memorize lines

Aptitudes
- Develop capacity for listening
- Develop memory
Appreciate playfulness in language
Develop habits of concentration, stillness, memory
Learn to ask questions about the moral or meaning of stories and symbols
Learn to speak directly and confidently

Nature Studies

Knowledge
- Understand difference between basic animal groups
- State and ‘catalogue’ animals of certain species by their differences
- Recite key characteristics of the way of life for certain select animals or animal groups
- Understand basic divisions within the plant kingdom and the distinguishing characteristics of each
- Learn to identify flora, fauna, and wildlife indigenous to the region
- Begin to develop an elementary understanding of the human body
- Begin to understand the ‘body-soul unity’ of the human person, and the specific characteristics and capacities distinguishing humans from other animals
- Understand basic regional geography and seasons

Skills
- Be able to narrate the above knowledge
- Develop skill of observing, rendering, and cataloguing this knowledge in a ‘nature notebook’

Aptitudes
- Develop a capacity to attend to and notice nature
- Develop wonder and appreciation for the natural world

Mathematics

Knowledge
- Acquire basic numeracy
- Understand equivalent forms of the same number using diagrams, objects, and numbers
- Recognize basic geometrical shapes and parts of shapes
- Solve word problems

Skills
- Count, read, write, and compare numbers up to 1,000, both symbolically and through physical construction
- Acquire facility with basics of place value
- Perform basic addition and subtraction functions of one-, two-, and three-digit numbers
- Understand basic fraction concepts
- Count by 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 10s
- Identify and construct circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, ovals, cubes, tetrahedral pyramids, cylinders, cones, spheres, and rectangular prisms
- Recognize and describe the appearance of basic patterns in nature
- Recognize equivalency in number, shape, pattern, and other physical characteristics
- Construct basic sets and groupings of objects in the environment and nature and be able to articulate the criteria for inclusion and exclusion
- Recognize and solve simple replacement codes
- Solve simple geometric puzzles
- Recognize the relationship of tone to the size, length, shape, and material of the object being sounded (e.g., bells of different size being rung or the length or thickness of a string being plucked)
- Take linear measurement and be able to articulate changes in measurement over time; introduce basic means of recording measurement
Tell and record time and changes in time in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years
Recognize and calculate basic currency; introduce coin-throwing scenarios as an introduction to probability

Aptitudes
- Recognize the ubiquity of number and shape in the world around us
- Develop a sense of wonder at recognizing how the world can be expressed mathematically
- Develop a love for constructing math, numerically and geometrically

Music
Knowledge
- Know elements of music: melody, harmony, rhythm, pitch, tone
- Begin to think about what music means and why it is or is not beautiful
- Know instruments of the orchestra by sound and sight
- Be introduced to tradition of sacred music
- Begin to understand the symbols in music

Skills
- Begin to read music
- Begin to acquire some musical skill singing and playing elementary instruments
- Begin to be able to concentrate on, listen to, and discuss a piece of music

Aptitudes
- Begin to develop a love and appreciation of beautiful music and its power
- Begin to understand the relationship between music, prayer, and liturgy
- Acquire the habit and develop their powers of patient, attentive listening

Physical Education
Knowledge
- Understand their bodies and physical abilities as a gift
- Begin to learn the rules of major sports and races

Skills
- Begin to acquire facility in throwing, catching, hitting, and kicking
- Begin to learn basic dance steps
- Begin to deliberately coordinate body to physical activity

Aptitudes
- Practice teamwork and good sportsmanship
Upper Grammar Stage Objectives (3rd – 5th Grades)

History

Knowledge
- Understand key figures and events of Medieval, Modern, and American history
- Appreciate how the lives of the saints shaped the respective historical periods
- Know how people in the Middle Ages understood God and man
- Recognize how Medieval culture exhibits an understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty
- Know that Christianity has shaped the world and that the expansion of Christianity has brought increasing liberty, reason, and culture
- Distinguish how the Modern period differs from the past in its understanding of God and man, and truth, goodness, and beauty
- Understand how America understands God and man
- Recognize how American culture exhibits an understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty
- Understand history of America in the context of Catholic and world history
- Appreciate the novelty of America in relation to its European origins
- Understand what it means to be a good citizen
- Understand difference between Medieval and Modern political forms
- Understand key technological developments of the historical periods they are studying
- Recognize basic geography (major world land masses and bodies of water; European and U.S. states and capitals)
- Memorize songs and chants for relevant kings and queens, states and capitals, original 13 colonies, etc.
- Recognize major periods of history using timelines
- Understand how the differences between these periods and cultures are reflected in art

Skills
- Compare, contrast, and explain the essential characteristics of cultures, governments, and figures in different historical periods
- Memorize significant dates and be able to build timelines from them
- Recognize correlation between secular history and Biblical/Church history
- Explain cause and effect of historical events
- Discuss philosophical and theological questions which arise from history
- Narrate historical stories
- Read and recognize symbols on maps
- Recognize how geography contributes to historical events
- Write biographical reports and do basic research on important figures in history
- Understand the contribution of major historical figures

Aptitudes
- Continue to develop an interest in history
- See the relevance of past to present
- Develop love of country
- Develop a desire to be *both* a good citizen *and* a faithful Catholic
- Begin to understand themselves and their culture as historical
- Continue developing curiosity to know how things came to be and why people acted as they did
- Appreciate the beauty of saints and integrity and courage of heroes
- Cultivate a desire to imitate the good qualities of these saints and heroes
Religion

Knowledge
- Begin to recognize how the Christian culture of the Middle Ages is reflected in art, music, architecture, literature, the liturgical calendar, the structure of cities, organization of labor, and the code of chivalry and how this is transformed in the Modern period
- Begin to understand importance of the Trinity and Incarnation
- Know they belong to God’s chosen people and are part of his family, the Church
- Know they are made for heaven and that creatures and the created world exist to help them get there
- Memorize books of the Bible, important verses, Apostles, Beatitudes, basic prayers of the Mass in English and Latin, sacraments, major events of salvation history
- Know the parts of the Mass
- Know the major moments of salvation history from creation to Pentecost
- Understand basic teachings on Confession and Eucharist
- Understand sin, grace and the sacraments
- Know the Creed and understand each of its tenets
- Know lives of the major saints of the periods of history they are studying
- Know how to pray the Rosary

Skills
- Give more advanced theological explanations of Church doctrines
- Learn how to "assist" at Mass through acolyte training
- Memorization and recitation of Scripture, Bible facts, catechism, prayers, and hymns
- Learn to pray liturgically, intercessory, and contemplatively
- Learn to regard and participate in sacred music as a form of prayer

Aptitudes
- Cultivate longing for God
- Develop personal relationship with Christ as friend and Mary as mother
- Begin to value silence
- Have favorite saints and relationships with them
- Examine conscience, go to Confession, "offer up" a sacrifice,
- Strengthening of the conscience to begin to love God’s will and wish to avoid sin
- Take responsibility for faults or failure and apologize sincerely
- Acquire a spirit of service, collaboration and genuine friendship

Art

Knowledge
- Understand the significance of the Christian contribution to art
- Begin to appreciate an art history perspective in addition to a cultural history perspective
- Study and give explanations of art of relevant time periods, especially Medieval and Renaissance
- Begin to give more complex explanation and interpretation of works of art
- Continuation of rendering
- Develop an understanding of and be able to apply the following principles in artistic work (drawing, painting, and other media): line, shape, texture, color, value, and form
- Recognize and employ basic elements of space and perspective

Skills
- Continue to learn how to look at, examine, and see a painting and other works of art
- Learn to tell the story of a painting
- Learn how to justify why something is beautiful or not
- Begin to reflect on experience of beauty
- Develop drawing, painting, and sculpting skills
- Copy more complex images according to rules

Aptitudes
- Deepen the habits of attending and noticing
Language: Literature, Grammar, Composition, Latin, and Drama

**Knowledge**
- Acquire familiarity with classic folklore and literature of the historical periods they study
- Begin to master grammar
- Begin to analyze and diagram sentences
- Write complete sentences and paragraphs
- Acquire facility in spelling and vocabulary
- Have a repertoire of light verse, Psalms, ballads and historical mnemonic devices committed to memory
- Memorize the fundamentals of Latin: primary declensions, conjugations, and vocabulary
- Memorize Latin prayers, hymns, and phrases

**Skills**
- Be able to use prefixes, suffixes, and root words as clues to meaning
- Be able to read chapter books without help
- Recognize plot, theme, symbolism, and other literary elements
- Evaluate characters in stories
- Ability to identify the main idea of a story
- Write complete sentences and construct coherent paragraphs
- Read and write summaries of readings
- Practice good penmanship, especially cursive
- Write paragraphs and recognize topic sentences
- Identify conflict, climax, and resolution in a story
- Write an organized, multi-paragraph composition in sequential order with a central idea
- Research a topic using multiple books
- Ability to understand more complex poetry
- Narration: re-tell more complex stories in detail, with vocal clarity, poise, and eye contact
- Construct simple stories
- Be able to read aloud with good inflection and diction
- Recitation: students recite poems, speeches, psalms from memory with vocal clarity, poise, eye contact
- Conversation: students should understand and be able to follow rules for 'Socratic' discussions; students should be questioning and discussing various texts.
- Follow four rules of discussion: 1. Read the text carefully. 2. Listen to what others say and don't interrupt. 3. Speak clearly. 4. Give others your respect.
- Perform a play: memorize lines and help design costumes, props, set, etc.

**Aptitudes**
- Listen attentively to peers and instructor
- Read and concentrate for long periods of time
- Learn to ask questions about the moral or meaning of stories and symbols
- Learn to speak directly and confidently
- Be basically truthful and dependable
Nature Studies

Knowledge
- Recognize the study of nature as part of the human endeavor to understand the world
- Understand science as one aspect of the study of nature which must be integrated into a more comprehensive vision of reality as God’s creation and thus behold nature in a different way
- Recognize persons and animals not as historical accidents or the sum of their mechanical parts, but as living wholes that transcend their parts and are irreducible to them
- Understand that as living wholes, organisms possess an inexhaustible depth and are worthy of our awe, wonder and affection
- Understand that nature is therefore hierarchically arranged according to capacity for self-transcendence:
  - All organisms, including plants, exhibit some form of metabolism that relates them to the world through appetite
  - Animals exhibit metabolism as well, but also a capacity for self-movement and an awareness through the senses
  - Human beings, in addition to these, move and transcend themselves through reason and will, are able to contemplate God and the world, and can offer themselves in love
- Beginning with the study of living things, students should be able to:
  - Render detailed observations of different organisms
  - Distinguish between genera in the plant and animal kingdoms
  - Specify essential differences between species
  - Identify unique characteristics in different forms of animal life
  - Explain what these characteristics mean in the life of the animal
  - Identify essential differences distinguishing human beings from other animals
- From this basis, students should proceed to the interior world of plants and animals:
  - Botany
  - Anatomy
  - Physiology
- Students should then proceed to the external world, understanding Earth as home for life:
  - Ecosystems
  - Natural processes which support life (e.g. weather, soil formation, water cycles)
  - Earth’s place in the solar system: the finely-tuned astronomical factors necessary to support life

Skills
- Continue to develop the skill of observing, rendering, and cataloging this knowledge in a ‘nature notebook’
- Narrate the above knowledge
- Begin to ask philosophical and scientific questions of nature
- Gain detailed, firsthand experience of nature through growing things and recording the various stages of growth
- Follow directions carefully when carrying out scientific experiments

Aptitudes
- Acquire reverence for nature as God’s creation
- Be able to attend to and notice nature
- Have a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world and the mystery of living things
- Have an enthusiasm for examining nature and acquire the habit of curiosity regarding the physical world
- Acquire a desire to experiment with what they are studying and observing
Mathematics

Knowledge

- Deploy numeracy/counting: whole numbers into the millions; decimal place value
- Recognize geometric shapes and calculation of perimeter and area
- Have facility in addition, subtraction, multiplication, division whole number operations
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals up to the thousandths place
- Use fractions (reducing, adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing)
- Measure accurately using both customary and metric systems
- Estimate measurement when measurement tools are not available by comparison of surrounding or similar objects
- Solve word problems
- Count money and basic decimals
- Acquire basic algebra skills (looking for unknowns)
- Begin to understand proportions
- Comprehend basic averages and ranks (median and mode; mean by grade 5)
- Introduce classical geometric and architectural design (choose a building from historical time period being studied and analyze its geometric and proportional properties)
- Analyze rounds and simple canons to identify simple progressions
- Recognize and construct fundamental shapes in plane geometry: points, lines, rays, angles, parallels, perpendiculars, quadrilaterals and regular and irregular polygons
- Analyze composition and use of light in art in relation to geometry
- Analyze perspective in art in relation to angle measurement
- Construct Platonic and Archimedean solids
- Use Euler’s formula for the number of vertices, faces, and edges of polyhedral
- Solve more complex codes such as a single replacement and translation code
- Apply numeric methods in describing natural phenomenon—for example, estimate the number of leaves on a tree by modeling the splits in a branch

Skills

- Memorize and master addition/subtraction tables (0-10)
- Memorize and master of multiplication tables and division (0s-12s)
- Use mental arithmetic
- Multiply single- and multi-digit numbers
- Divide multi-digit numbers by one-digit numbers
- Tell time to the quarter- and half-hour and to five minutes and one minute
- Add and subtract decimals, and compare decimals and fractions
- Multiply multi-digit numbers by two-digit numbers
- Divide larger multi-digit numbers by one-digit numbers
- Find the area of two-dimensional shapes
- Reason mathematically both orally and in writing through word problems
- Use problem-solving strategies to solve real-world math problems
- Add and subtract fractions and decimals
- Identify and describe three-dimensional shapes, and find their volumes and surface areas
- Use long division to divide large numbers by multi-digit numbers
- Recognize numerical patterns in music and nature and geometrical patterns in nature and art
- Solve simple probabilities, including independent and dependent events and simple truth tables for conjunctions, disjunction, negation, and implication
- Read and use bar, line, and circle graphs
- Measure shape and position over time, such as tracking the phases of the moon and simple astronomy, including solar measurements (measuring shadows and angles at different times of the year)
- Count back change up to $100
- Recognize basic Biblical numerology

Aptitudes

- Acquire a foundation for logical reasoning through math
- Be attuned to the relevance and significance of number and shape
- Begin to appreciate the 'aesthetics' of number through recognition of patterns
Music

Knowledge
- Understand the concepts of melody, harmony, and rhythm
- Be able to recognize beautiful music and be able to explain why it is beautiful
- Recognize instruments by sight and sound
- Be able to sing and, if possible, play an instrument
- Be able to read music
- Memorize lyrics and know how to sing liturgical music
- Sing carols, ballads and authentic folk music from periods of history they are studying
- Sing the Hail Mary and Our Father in plain chant
- Recognize forms of music from the periods of history they have studied

Skills
- Acquire some musical skill singing and/or playing an instrument
- Be able to concentrate, listen, and discuss a piece of music
- Begin to learn how to sing/play various parts of a musical piece (applying their understanding of melody, harmony, and rhythm)

Aptitudes
- Develop a love and appreciation of beautiful music and its power
- Understand the relationship between music, prayer, and liturgy
- Acquire the habit of patient, attentive listening, and active participation

Physical Education

Knowledge
- Understand their bodies and physical abilities as gifts
- Learn the rules of major sports and races
- Recognize importance of discipline for achieving bodily excellence
- Understand dynamics of competition

Skills
- Acquire facility in throwing, catching, hitting, and kicking
- Learn to work as a team in order to achieve a goal
- Compete against other students of similar skill level
- Learn basics of contra, square, and ballroom dancing

Aptitudes
- Practice teamwork and good sportsmanship
- Aspire to physical gracefulness
- Admire excellent athletic performances, especially their aesthetic qualities
Logic Stage Objectives (6th – 8th Grade)

History

Knowledge
- Understand the Incarnation as the decisive act of God in history
- Appreciate how the coming of Christ transforms history
- Understand history and culture as the human desire for goodness, truth, and God Himself
- Understand themselves as part of the Israel, Egypt, Greek, Roman, Catholic story
- Understand how the differences between these time periods and cultures are reflected in their civilizations: religion, philosophy, government, economics, art, architecture, music, technology, and culture
- Understand key figures and events of Ancient, Medieval, Modern, and American history
- Understand difference between Ancient, Medieval and Modern political forms
- Understand how the lives of the saints shaped the respective historical periods within which they lived
- Understand how people in the Ancient, Medieval, and Modern periods differ in their concept of God and man
- Understand how the respective time periods pursue and express truth, goodness, and beauty
- Know how Christianity has shaped the world and how the expansion of Christianity has brought increasing liberty, reason and culture
- Understand the historical and philosophical roots of modern materialist atheism
- Understand history of America in the context of Catholic and world history
- Understand the novelty of America in relation to its European origins
- Understand key technological developments of the different historical periods
- Recognize basic geography
- Recognize major periods of history by using timelines
- Acquire familiarity with primary sources characteristic of each period

Skills
- Acquire facility in reading primary sources of various kinds
- Discuss philosophical and theological questions which arise from history
- Recognize correlation between —secular‖ history and Biblical/Church history
- Explain cause and effect of historical events
- Compare, contrast, and explain the essential characteristics of cultures, governments, and figures in different historical periods
- Think and write imaginatively from within the mindset of different historical periods
- Analyze the importance of significant new ideas as they emerge in history
- Memorize significant dates and be able to build timelines from them

Aptitudes
- Deepen appreciation of history as an expression of man’s desire for God and his pursuit of goodness, truth, and beauty
- Evaluate world events and historical characters from a Catholic perspective
- Draw on past ideas to evaluate present assumptions and deepen self-knowledge
- Appreciate the beauty of saints and the integrity and courage of heroes
- Develop a desire to be both a good citizen and a faithful Catholic
- Develop a sense of inquiry
- Develop a comprehensive and ordered sense of the world
- Cultivate a desire for wisdom
Religion

Knowledge

- Know that God made us for Himself and that our hearts are restless until they rest in Him
- Understand history as oriented to Christ before his Incarnation and flowing from Christ after his Incarnation
- Know the major moments of salvation history from creation to the modern day
- Recognize the competing claims about God (or the gods) offered by pagans and philosophers and how the Christian understanding of God is radically different
- Recognize how Christianity transforms the classical inheritance
- Recognize how the Christian culture of the Middle Ages is reflected in art, music, architecture, literature, the liturgical calendar, the structure of cities, organization of labor, and the code of chivalry; and how this is transformed in the Modern period
- Recognize relevance of Christian faith and teachings of Church to fundamental human questions and aspirations that have animated every culture
- Begin to understand how the Trinity and Incarnation reveal both God and man
- Know the teachings of select books of the Bible
- Begin to know the theological tradition
- Begin to understand the art of apologetics and how the teachings of the Church flow from the truth about God and man
- Begin to understand the claims of the Protestant Reformers, modern atheists, and moral relativists and how the Church defends the truth in the face of these claims
- Begin to understand the Mass: its structure, its meaning, and its place in God’s plan for the world
- Understand the basic teachings on the sacraments, especially Confirmation
- Begin to understand and appreciate that a person is a unity of body and soul, created in God’s love and called to love and truth, and thus to understand the true personal meaning of their own bodies.
- Begin to understand how the Christian vision of love and Catholic sexual morality flow from the truth about God and man

Skills

- Give more advanced theological explanations of Church doctrine
- Defend the tenets of the faith against heresy and atheism, as well as the major moral teachings against confusion
- Begin to think theologically
- Memorization of Scripture and scriptural arguments

Aptitudes

- Cultivate and reflect on longing for God
- Deepen the habit of contemplative prayer
- Deepen the familiarity with and participation in the liturgical life of the Church
- Deepen appreciation of silence
- Examine conscience, go to Confession, "offer up" a sacrifice
- Strengthening of the conscience to begin to love God’s will and wish to avoid sin
- Heed the double commandment to love God and neighbor
- Cultivate friendships based on virtue

Art

Knowledge

- Begin to understand how truth is expressed in the beauty of art
- Understand the significance of the Christian contribution to art and how art reveals the depth of the Christian mystery
- Compare and contrast pagan and Christian art, and how Christians incorporate or transform pagan themes in their art
- Appreciate the development of art in its historical, philosophical, and stylistic dimensions
- Give more complex explanations and interpretations of works of art
- Understand how art is the expression of a culture’s desire for truth, goodness, and beauty
- Continue rendering
- Deepen understanding of the principles that constitute a work of art
Skills
- Continue to learn how to look at, examine, and see a painting and other works of art
- Give more complex explanations of artworks
- Learn how to justify why something is beautiful or not
- Reflect on the experience of beauty and its relation to longing
- Develop drawing, painting, and sculpting skills
- Develop creativity on the basis of imitation, tradition, and discipline, not in opposition to them

Aptitudes
- Deepen the habits of attending and noticing
- Sit still and observe carefully works of art and subjects to be rendered
- Deepen love and appreciation of beauty
- Deepen reflection on the experience of beauty and its effect on the soul
- Begin to look at art contemplatively as revealing objective beauty and truth
- Deepen appreciation of art and beauty in the life of faith
- Be able to question artworks for their meaning

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

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

Skills for Literature
- Make connections to related topics, especially history and religion
- Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of tone, style, and use of language
- Analyze the effects of elements such as plot, theme, characterization, style, mood, and tone
- Discuss the effects of such literary devices as figurative language, dialogue, flashback, allusion, irony, and symbolism
- Analyze and evaluate themes and central ideas in literature
- Recognize relevance of literary themes to contemporary problems and one’s own life
- Analyze relationships between characters, ideas, and experiences
- Discern an implied main idea, draw an inference, and recognize how different texts address the same fundamental human questions
- Deepen the ability to question the text and characters
- Develop ability to discuss literature intelligently and insightfully with proper grammar and diction

Skills for Grammar and Composition
- Master all facets of English grammar, demonstrable through the ability to diagram sentences
- Properly express the relationship of ideas in a sentence, paragraph, and essay
- Recognize and correct stylistic errors such as sentence fragments and run-on sentences
- For Narrative Writing:
  - Write original narrative and descriptive passages
  - Write coherent and logical prologues, epilogues, sequels, dialogues or alternative endings for fiction and nonfiction
  - Incorporate effective narrative techniques into a short story focusing on the following:
    - Point of view (first person, third person)
    - Setting, including time and place
Character development

Elements of plot structure

For Descriptive Writing:
- Write descriptive passages focusing on one of the following: person, place, object, event, works of art, plants and animals
- Use evocative imagery (vivid words, active voice verbs, colorful modifiers)
- Use figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, allusion)

For Persuasive Writing:
- Develop a rhetorically persuasive, logical writing style
- Develop a thesis that makes a disputable claim
- Support a thesis with logically organized and relevant evidence
- Develop and logically support a position addressing reader concerns and counterarguments

For Analytical/Expository Writing:
- Develop interpretations exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight
- Organize interpretations around several clear ideas, premises, or images
- Develop a thesis that makes a disputable claim
- Make an argument for the thesis providing reasons, details, and examples
- Write a response to literature demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the text and justifying the interpretation through use of examples and textual evidence
- Begin to explore the connections among characters, incident, setting, symbol, and conflict
- Write a character analysis

Skills for Logic:
- Learn the basics of logical reasoning
- Learn and identify logical structures, logical fallacies, and biases in speeches and various non-fiction texts
- Express own arguments logically and clearly through speech and the written word

Skills for Latin:
- Master basic declensions, conjugations, and simple grammar
- Possess a solid vocabulary
- Memorize Latin prayers, hymns, and liturgical responses
- Know how to translate complex sentences and short stories from Latin to English
- Compose sentences in Latin

Skills for Drama:
- Perform a play, preferably Shakespeare or a Greek tragedy
- Analyze and discuss characters and their motivations
- Design costumes, props, and set

Aptitudes
- Develop a love of reading and of language
- Appreciate the beauty, playfulness, and logical possibilities of language
- Explore own ideas through writing
- Draw on literature for deeper self-knowledge
- Habitually look to poetry and literature as vehicles of truth
- Deepen love for listening to stories
- Deepen habits of concentration, stillness, and memory
- Develop ability to penetrate literature and plumb the depths of its meaning
- Nurture the habit of listening
- Foster sustained concentration
Nature Studies

Knowledge

- Contemplate important questions, such as: What is life? What is nature? How does “world” differ from “environment”? What makes a human distinct from other animals?
- Be familiar with different historical answers to these questions
- Name and employ the Four Causes of Aristotle in the explanation of nature
- Understand more deeply the relation between science and philosophy in the study of nature
- Recognize the study of nature as part of the human endeavor to understand the world
- Understand science as one aspect of the study of nature which must be integrated into a more comprehensive vision of reality as God’s creation

O Acknowledge nature as God’s creation and so behold nature in a different way
- Recognize persons and animals not as historical accidents or the sum of their mechanical parts, but living wholes that transcend their parts and are irreducible to them
  - Understand how this wholeness is exhibited in the relation between the parts of an animal
  - Understand how this wholeness is visible in animal form and patterns, whose meaning in the animal’s life is not reducible to utility or survival value
- Understand that as living wholes, organisms possess an inexhaustible depth and are worthy of our awe, wonder and affection
  - The human organism is always a person: an indivisible unity of body and soul
  - Human beings, because they are made in the image of God, possess a unique dignity among creatures

- Understand that nature is therefore hierarchically arranged according to a capacity for self-transcendence:
  - All organisms, including plants, exhibit some form of metabolism that relates them to the world through appetite
  - Animals exhibit metabolism as well, but also a capacity for self-movement and an awareness through the senses
  - Human beings, in addition to these, move and transcend themselves through reason and will, are able to contemplate God and the world, and can offer themselves in love

- Beginning with the study of living things, students should be able to:
  - Successfully grow and tend to plants, recording the stages of development
  - Render detailed observations of different organisms
  - Distinguish between genera in the plant and animal kingdoms
  - Specify essential differences between species
  - Identify unique characteristics in different forms of animal life
  - Identify essential differences distinguishing human beings from other animals

- From this basis, students should proceed to the interior world of plants and animals:
  - Botany
  - Anatomy
  - Physiology and biological processes
  - Human anatomy: the correlation between the physical structure of the human body (e.g., upright form, opposable thumbs, etc) and uniquely human characteristics associate with the soul (e.g. desire to know, longing for God, human craft, etc.)
  - Fetal development
  - Beginning organic chemistry
  - Heredity and genetics
  - Evolutionary development

- Students should then proceed to the external world, understanding the Earth as home for life:
  - Ecosystems
  - Natural processes which support life (e.g. weather, soil formation, water cycles, atmosphere)
  - Geological processes (e.g., plate tectonics, volcanoes, erosion)
  - Earth’s place in the solar system: the finely-tuned astronomical factors necessary to support life
  - Astronomy
Skills
- Ask philosophical and scientific questions of nature
- Describe various creatures using Aristotle’s Four Causes
- Observe animals and plants in their natural habitats
- Render animals and plants through art
- Employ scientific method
- Continue to develop the skill of observing, rendering, and cataloguing this knowledge in a ‘nature notebook’
- Relate different parts and systems of nature to comprehensive whole
- Explain and defend the distinction between the animate and the inanimate

Aptitudes
- Appreciate the wholeness of animals and plants
- Develop wonder and appreciation of the natural world and the mystery of living things
- Recognize beauty of creation
- Develop enthusiasm for examining nature and acquire the habit of curiosity regarding the physical world
- Desire to inquire into the lived life of organisms and the world that sustains them
- Acquire reverence for nature as God’s creation

Mathematics
Knowledge
- Master arithmetic necessary for algebra: order of operations; fraction, decimal, and integer operations
- Develop more advanced number sense (integers, irrational numbers, percentage, scientific notation, absolute value, exponents, roots and radicals)
- Understand factors and multiples; find greatest common factor and least common multiple/denominator
- Understand measurement concepts
- Master developmentally appropriate algebra and geometry
- Read and use a coordinate plane
- Recognize mathematical and geometrical patterns in nature and art
- Begin to understand the philosophical and theological history of mathematical symbolism

Skills
- Think algebraically and geometrically
- Use logic and hands-on experience to solve problems
- Convert fractions, decimals, and percents
- Rewrite fractions using factors and multiples
- Solve problems using rate, proportion, common formulas, and percentage applications
- Use estimation techniques
- Use mental arithmetic
- Use and convert customary and metric measurements
- Solve developmentally appropriate functions, equations and inequalities and graph them on a coordinate plane
- Calculate slope
- Write and use formulas to solve problems
- Combine like terms
- Add, subtract, multiply, divide, and factor polynomials
- Represent simple quadratic functions
- Identify properties of and congruency between angles, parallel lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, other polygons, and common three-dimensional figures
- Calculate area and perimeter or circumference of two-dimensional figures
- Calculate surface area and volume of three-dimensional figures
- Use the Pythagorean Theorem to solve problems
- Use a coordinate plane to translate, rotate, and reflect a given image
- Calculate simple probability
- Read and create bar graphs, line graphs, circle graphs, and stem-and-leaf plots representing data; make predictions from statistical data

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Aptitudes
- Analyze musical compositions for mathematical properties, particularly Baroque music (Bach, Vivaldi, Pachelbel, Albinoni, etc.)
- Understand Christian iconography in relation to dimension
- Analyze poetic meter
- Recognize sacred number in writing and art

Music
Knowledge
- Appreciate mathematics as one way humans give an account of reality
- Appreciate relevance of math to music, art, science, and architecture
- Enhance logical reasoning
- Acquire a foundation for logical reasoning through math
- Be attuned to the relevance and significance of number and shape
- Begin to appreciate the 'aesthetics' of number through recognition of patterns

Skills
- Acquire some musical skill singing and/or playing an instrument
- Be able to concentrate on, listen to, and discuss a piece of music
- Sing or play various parts of a musical piece (applying an understanding of melody, harmony, and rhythm)

Aptitudes
- Deepen love and appreciation of beautiful music and its power
- Appreciate the profundity and playfulness of music
- Understand the contemplative and mystical dimension of sacred music
- Acquire the habit of patient, attentive listening, and active participation

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

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

Aptitudes
- Practice teamwork and good sportsmanship
Part IV: Classical Education and School Culture

Classical education is not a program, a strategy, a curriculum or a resource. Ultimately, classical education is an educational culture. A culture is shaped by all the beliefs, activities, traditions and values that actively come alive and unite in complex ways to create a spiritual and psychological environment. The culture of a classical Catholic school is grounded in the culture of the Catholic Church and is expressed in the school setting academically in an environment that reveals the good, the true and the beautiful. Such a school culture and all its experiences lead a child to their deepest identity as human and to their created purpose in knowing, loving and being united to God.

The classroom, the hallways, the events, the activities—during and after the school day—should all reflect the ethos of the Catholic worldview of values and aspirations. The ways we treat each other, communicate, dress, the materials that we read or have available for children’s reading, our visual creations in art, musical and choral performances, community building activities, classroom settings, etc.—all are to align and be examples of the Catholic mission of revealing the incarnation of Christ’s divine truth, goodness and beauty in the world.

Through each of these aspects of our school culture, which directly impact is character, we build up our community and our children in an atmosphere that calls them, and each of us, to our next step in fulfilling our purpose in Christ.