

WHY CHOOSE PAIDEIA? A Parent's Perspective

This article is written by D. Matthew Allen, a lawyer and parent of two children enrolled at the Paideia School of Tampa Bay.

I am writing to explain why my wife and I have decided to entrust the education of our precious children to The Paideia School. Our children will attend The Paideia School because we have seen Classical Christian education work from kindergarten all the way through 12th grade, and we believe it will continue to work at The Paideia School.

In the Beginning – An Open House

Our journey into the world of Classical Christian education began when some friends invited us to attend an open house when our oldest daughter was 3 years old. Before that time, we had thought about schooling options and knew that public school was not an option for us because we wanted our children to obtain a biblically grounded education, something that was not possible in the public schools. We had decided to home school our daughter, that is, until we discovered Classical Christian education. At the open house, even though my wife and both have advanced degrees, we quickly realized we could not do for our children what a Classical Christian school could do. We were excited to learn that a place existed where children would learn Latin beginning in 3rd grade, study formal logic and rhetoric in later years, and learn at all levels to confront and defeat the vain arguments and philosophies of the world rather than run from them. We were hooked from that point forward! We were only disappointed that we would have to wait two more years to begin our daughter's education!

The Grammar Years

We now have one child in her last year of grammar school (6th grade) and another child entering 3rd grade. We have been delighted with the grammar chants, memory verses, Bible chapter concepts, history facts, and poems our children have learned. We love the serious literature they read. And we love the results:

- Our oldest daughter's education has equipped her to have serious biblical discussions with her aunt, who is not a Christian.
- Our youngest daughter can recognize Mozart and sings Bible memory verses as she skips around the house.
- Our children pretend to be Polly and Digory, characters from C.S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*, a book they read in school, as they play in the swimming pool.

The Bigger Picture

As wonderful as the memory chants and songs are, however, we have learned that they are not the "end of the road." To the contrary, the grammar school years are only the

beginning. The grammar facts learned provide “grist for the mill” as students mature into the dialectic (middle) school and rhetoric (high) school years. You see, Classical Christian education believes in cutting with the grain. Therefore, when students in their early teens are naturally argumentative, they are taught how to take the facts they have learned in their grammar school years and argue correctly through training in formal logic. In the rhetoric school years, when they are passionate about life, students are taught how to take the facts and arguments they have learned and present them well. In the rhetoric school years, they frequently engage in speeches and debates, and they actually prepare and defend a formal thesis before a faculty panel.

Like many parents of grammar school age children, I knew this but didn’t really understand how it all fit together until one day four years ago we had Joe Bray, now the headmaster at the Paideia School, and his lovely wife Cindy, over to our home for dinner. During that time, I asked Mr. Bray, “What is your goal in life?” He answered without a second’s thought – “to change Western civilization.” He went on to explain that no other place was training up Christian leaders like Classical Christian schools. Where else are high school students learning biblical Greek, giving them the ability to understand (and, if necessary, correct) the exegesis of their pastors. Where else are students learning to think rigorously and biblically in all areas of inquiry, so they are able to evaluate the deceptive and misleading arguments of the world? Where else are students learning theology and apologetics in high school, rather than leaving training in these important areas to the few able to attend seminary? Where else are leaders in the church being raised up to be leaders in the fine arts and the culture? To my way of thinking, there is no other place.

My wife and I looked at each other in amazement. Our eyes had just been opened to something far bigger than ourselves and our small family. We realized that Classical Christian education is not just about our kids, but it’s about Jesus Christ working through the lives of our children and many others like them to bring revival and reformation, if God allows it, to our land. The Christians of our generation have failed, and the evangelical church is in retreat. Perhaps, though, God will use the next generation, or the one after it, to repair the ruins. Perhaps, as well, we joining together, can play a part in that great work.

The Upper School

In fact, that is what I have done. We believe in the power of Classical Christian education so much that, for the last three years, I have volunteered my time to teach Bible in a Classical Christian school. I am very excited about the fact that I will be able to continue to do this at The Paideia School. For I have seen up close the “end result” of Classical Christian education as I have been privileged to teach high school seniors and see them go out into the world of adulthood as mighty warriors for Christ. I have seen 8th graders learn to grow confident in their thinking and writing abilities. I have seen the light go on in the eyes of 11th graders as they have grasped a difficult theological concept for the first time. I have seen students grow and strengthen in faith and with pleasure

watched them defend that faith against the world's encroachment, yet with gentleness and respect.

The Paideia School

Why Paideia? The things that attracted my wife and me to Classical Christian education will continue at The Paideia School. We at The Paideia School believe in the vision that God is doing a mighty work in the next generation to repair the ruins and create good and godly men and women who will lead the church and change the world. We have a strong and talented faculty dedicated to implementing that vision.

We have seen that God has had his hand on this young school, and we are excited about what He will continue to do in the lives of its students. We welcome others who believe in the same vision to come alongside and join us in the work. Will you join us?

Why have we chosen The Paideia School for our children? Put simply, I can think of no better place to facilitate their growth in wisdom, and stature, and favor with God and man.

Mr. Allen would be pleased to answer questions about this article or The Paideia School. He can be contacted at matt.allen@thepaideiaschool.org.