

Classical Christian education's interdisciplinary approach builds thinking minds and creates full hearts.

By Danny Kahalley



Classical Christian education is a unique academic approach. It isn't focused on securing a particular job or learning a singular academic discipline. It doesn't ignore the thinking of previous generations or the impact religion has in a student's development. Classical Christian education is focused on developing well rounded students and, as a result, it creates critical thinkers rather than teaching what to think.

At Saint Thomas' Episcopal School, we believe that classical Christian education is a powerful instrument in shaping the lenses of our students, preparing them to engage with others and face any challenge their future may hold. The approach strengthens both mind and heart, creating lifelong learners.

So, what is classical Christian education?

AN EDUCATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

A classical Christian education is well rounded and instructs students in the core disciplines of natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities where God is the center of wisdom and virtue. It integrates learning with an appreciation that the transcendental virtues of goodness, truth, and beauty surround us as reflections of the triune God.

This type of education isn't tailored to a vocation. Classical Christian education focuses on developing thinkers more than teaching what to think. It equips students with discernment, effective communication, and critical thinking which can be used in any of life's pursuits. This type of education seeks to liberate the mind through foundational learning, reasoning, and expression.

What can my child gain from a classical Christian education?

A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Classical Christian education is holistic. It favors the intersection of subjects over compartmentalized thinking. Instead of dividing ideas, classical Christian thinking encourages us to see how ideas connect and overlap, while giving attention to their relevance to the divine. In a classical Christian school like Saint Thomas', you may hear phrases such as the "beauty of mathematics" or "the geometry of art."

A DISCERNING MIND

In a world that gets increasingly smaller as technology connects us, it's more important than ever to be able to critically analyze information and articulate thoughts. A classical Christian education guides the discernment of language, thought, and the processing of information. This is also called rhetoric, and in this context it is defined as expression; understanding language and how it is used. As a result, students gain clarity in communication and a better understanding of concepts.

RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US

It's easy to fool ourselves into thinking we are the main characters in the timeline of history. Classical Christian education reminds us this isn't true, and it provides context for the development of thought over the millennia. It teaches that we are the most recent characters in the timeline and encourages us to pay respect to those who have come before us. GK Chesterton explains it well in his book *Orthodoxy*, saying "Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about."

ADAPTABILITY WITH A FIRM FOUNDATION

Inherent to classical Christian education is its adaptability to change. The approach educates the mind while informing the heart with its grounding in Scripture, and thus equips students with a broad base of knowledge and a strong moral compass. Students can use their education to face whatever challenges or changing circumstances come their way. Students who benefit from a classical Christian education are poised to persevere and find stability on the other side.

Preparing students with faith and a complete foundation of learning is the greatest gift we can give them. It provides for the next generation and is our greatest opportunity for a healthy society. With discernment, a holistic perspective, the wisdom from past generations, and adaptability, students are equipped to engage in the world with knowledge and compassion, standing confidently against the unknown.

Danny Kahalley is the Director of Admissions at Saint Thomas' Episcopal School in Meyerland and has over twenty years of experience in education administration. He has worked for numerous schools and colleges in Tennessee, Alabama, and Texas at the primary, secondary, undergraduate, and graduate level. He is powered by fresh roasted coffee and enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife, daughters, and sheepadoodle. Danny has his bachelor's degree from Rhodes College and master's degree from the University of Alabama.



Visit [stes.org](https://www.stes.org) to learn more about the impact of a classical Christian education at one of the premier PreK through 12th grade schools in Houston, Texas.

