

Welcome to Classical Conversations!

We at Classical Conversations are very excited to be working with you this year. The Lord has given you a very special treasure - your students- and we feel honored to be a part of their lives. We want so much to not only help your students have a rich education but to help you as parents grow in the role of home schooling. Home schooling parents have much to learn and offer to one another. We pray that this year we all learn more about raising children to meet God's standards in their thoughts and talents.

Please let us know immediately of any conflicts or challenges as we know we are not perfect but that our Perfect Father wants peace between us and will help us work out any difficulties. Our main concern is the student's ability to do the work assigned. Hopefully, giving you the book list, letting you know Classical Conversations' goals, and talking to you about your student has enabled you to determine if your child will enjoy and be successful in the seminars. To help ensure your student's success, please keep in mind two things. First, you are the primary teacher and principal, and you need to keep up with your child's daily progress. Second, you are the final giver of grades and developer of your home school. The assignments and any grades assigned through Classical Conversations are **optional** for your home school. If you have a better assignment in mind, or are on vacation, or are having a family crisis, or teachable moment, substitute it for our assignment. Please continue to work with your children. We see so little of their actual efforts compared to you and you do know what is best for your children.

This assignment guide is just that - a guide. Your child's facilitator has more detailed directions and will be sending home assignment sheets with more details or changes as needed.

The philosophy, goals, and general description of each seminar are in the opening chapters. Then the assignments and basic instructions for all the seminars are given for each week. Afterward, we have enrollment forms and booklists so you may plan for Challenge B.

A "Criteria for Grading Written Work" is included for you to use as a guide for the entire year's compositions and research projects. Don't expect your student's first papers to meet these standards. Work on one item at a time until your child has mastered it and then move to another. The students will talk about these points in seminar as they share their written work. Some students will be working on writing a complete sentence while others will be working on writing good paragraphs. Encourage your child where he/she is able to succeed and encourage him or her to practice the basics. Also, by reading good literature and discussing it, your student will begin to have a "feel" for writing that is interesting.

Please have your students look over their books before arriving the first day. Gather up the literature reading for as many weeks as possible. You may purchase the novels through www.classicalconversationsbooks.com

Some families are about to work harder at their "school work" than ever before. Remind your children that they are older and God expects them to use their talents wisely and diligently. Also remind them that they will have almost five weeks off at Christmas and that they will be finished earlier than their "school friends." Enjoy your family!

Challenges and Benefits to Classical Conversations

We believe there are many good reasons to attend Classical Conversations.

Since the beginning of modern home education, students taught at home have consistently outperformed their peers in academics measured by standardized test scores. This is good news for all of us, but we are concerned that doing better than the average government-schooled student isn't good enough. Therefore, Classical Conversations has from its inception encouraged a vigorous college prep education using challenging materials and expecting work to be of excellent quality.

We can only be successful if the parents who enroll their students are willing to be highly involved in their children's education. You must home school. We can't do all the teaching in an hour a week per course. Of course, each student will require different amounts of parental involvement. If your student has good study skills and is willing to work hard, you may only have to help him/her find resources and budget time; then ensure that work is completed, record progress, and go over any difficulties. Essentially, you will act as the tutor and principal of your home school. If your student does not have good study skills, you will continue to need to be a full time teacher. Ideally, the goal of the home school parent should be to work yourself out of a job by high school. This achievement will prove that your child is responsible enough to go out in the world and do well in college or at work. In other words, you will have trained a young person in the way he/she should go.

The challenge is to produce high quality work at a very demanding pace and the benefits are related to the work produced. My own children have had to learn time management in order to complete their work and still have a life of sports, friends, and hobbies. They also want to do things well because they know their friends and facilitator will be listening and suggesting ways to improve their work and they don't want to be embarrassed. The time presenting and discussing in seminar provides additional motivation along with an encouraging parent/teacher. The research assigned in the higher Challenges requires a lot more skill than the "read and regurgitate" method of even the best of textbooks. Even if your students forget some of the facts they've learned (they will), they will always know how to find out information because they will have researched so many different questions and ideas. The large amounts of time spent presenting, discussing, and debating will give the students confidence and skill in relating their ideas to others whether it is as an evangelist, an employee or an employer.

For the parent-teacher, we offer one more level of accountability for those who have a hard time keeping their home school on a schedule. We also have done all the planning needed for an excellent Jr. and Sr. High education and we offer guidance to make sure the necessary steps are taken to have your student enter college.

None of this is easy, but I hope it is rewarding and even fun for the students. It takes about a semester to get used to the workload but it is worth the effort, as the whole program becomes easier as the students rise to the standards set and adapt their life to excelling at academics.

Discipline Policy

There has only rarely been a discipline issue within the program. Classical Conversations is committed to helping the enrolled students with a Christian education, so sharpening one another towards godly character must be an important part of our entire program. Our dress code and classroom conduct codes are below.

If a child is not respectful to another student or the tutor, it is up to the tutor to immediately encourage the offender to sincerely repent and apologize, and to encourage the offended to be forgiving. In other words, we are to deal privately with the matter and move on. However, if the child refuses to repent (change conduct), a note will be sent to the parent along with a follow up phone call to discuss the situation. If the child misbehaves again, the parent will be called to pick up the child. If something happens a third time, the student will be dismissed from the program. This policy copies Matthew 18:15-17 three-step procedure.

It is possible for parents and students to blame everyone but themselves in these situations. Classical Conversations' view is that our children are not beasts as the world proposes but heirs to a kingdom and therefore can quite easily control themselves. If this is not the case for your children, may we suggest Trumbull's Hints on Child Training and lots of repentance on the parents' part.

Dress Code

Previously, Classical Conversations has stayed away from a written dress code and trusted the parents to use good judgment. Overall dress hasn't been an issue. But it has come up a few times and as we grow we want to be sure we set a standard before it becomes a problem. Of course everyone then worries about legalism. Well, there will always be a dress code in any situation; it will either be established by the children and the culture or mature adults, but it will be there. So let's set one in a way that honors our Father in heaven. That means dressing to please Him and to make others comfortable around us. We are to honor the body of Christ and not our personal desires. A good way to be sure we do this is for daughters to ask their earthly father if they are dressed modestly and unprovocatively and for sons to ask their mothers if they are dressed neatly and honorably. Since these are children it is up to their parents to teach them to respect others in their dress.