



## Introduction to Classical Education

with Dr. Christopher Perrin

### Lesson 8: Communal Education (Paideia)

#### Outline:

##### Education as Community

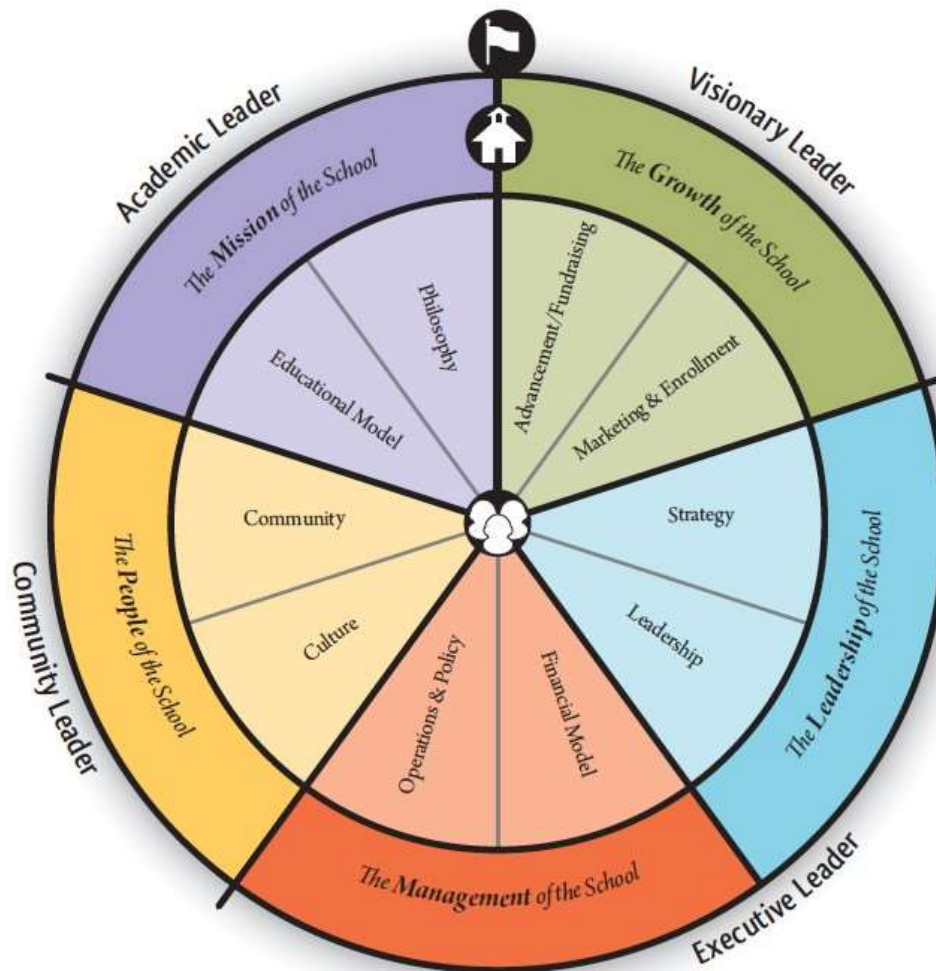
- Education is a means of enjoying a fellowship together as we pursue truth, goodness, and beauty.
- Human relationships are at the center of a good vibrant education.

##### Renewal phases over the last 35 years

- **Truth** (first 15 years): revived the Trivium arts, which enable us to perceive truth
- **Goodness** (next 10 years): Culture and community, curriculum alone was not sufficient. We needed soil for these arts to take root. We need to bring goodness into schools and relationships, which creates culture and community, (if we speak the tongues of men and angels, but lack love, it profits us nothing).
- **Beauty** (next 10 years): Embodiment, aesthetics and art, we pay so little attention to our bodies and practices. Rather we inherited practices from progressive schools, we think our context for what education should be what we experienced.
  - What should schools smell like, and sound like?

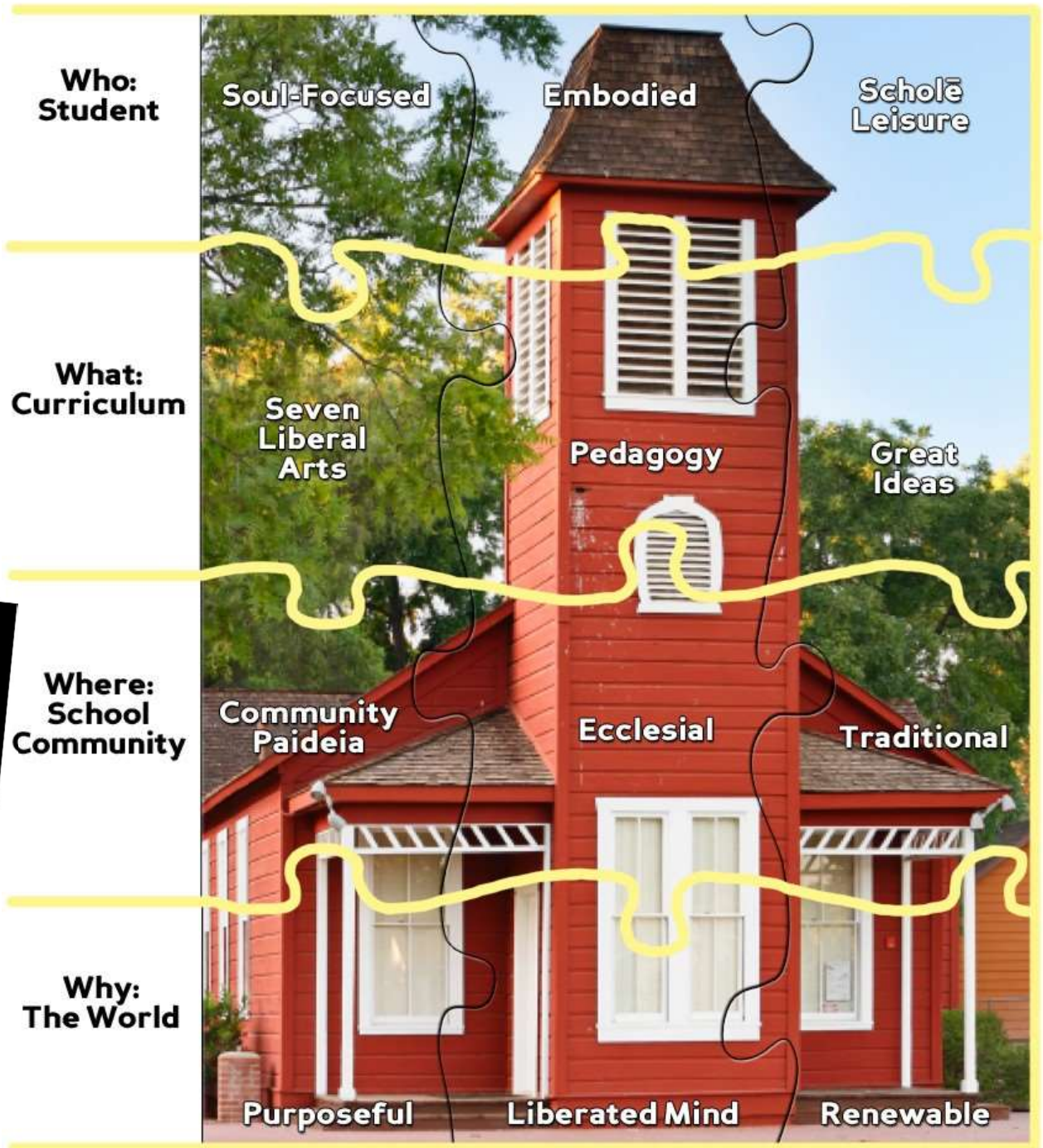


Community can be thought of as soil where the arts can take root and grow and bloom and bear fruit.



Fellowship in community needs to be represented in the leadership of a school or homeschool.

- Four major areas of leadership that need to be done with excellence and in community.
  - Academic Leader
  - Visionary Leader
  - Executive Leadership
  - Community Leadership
  - We need leadership teams who live together in friendship and community.





## Cultivation of Community

- Paideia: Greek word, to raise and educate a child to a fully functioning adult
- Ecclesial: Religion has had an important role to play in what education is considered to be.
- Traditional: Respects the past and seeks wisdom from the past
- Progressive model is popular youth culture (this is what happens by default), cater to culture that is produced by mass media (music, dress, speaking, communication).
  - Modern educators are seeking to be relevant to youth culture.
  - The culture is experimental. Short cycles of change occur.
- How can community be cultivated such that it creates an atmosphere of learning?

## What is a Human?

- What is our view of man? What is our anthropology?
  - Every pedagogy assumes an anthropology. James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*
  - If you believe a human is a material animal, that will lead toward a certain pedagogy. Not everyone who is a materialist/atheist will teach in a way that we can predict, because thankfully we are not always consistent with our beliefs.
  - Classical education cultivates community. Community creates comfort and enjoyment and delight. Communities strengthen us. A school is strong when it has a rich community. We build strong walls around us when we are together.



## Community is Classical

- Having another student around creates an attraction to learning.
- The fundamental things apply as time goes by. Casa Blanca (1942)

## Communal: Traditional

- Trans-temporal Community: Past, Present, Future
- Tradition means something that has been handed down to us (surrender, handing down).
- We pay attention to traditions. Traditions unify and bring comfort and delight to families.
- “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. In the democracy of the dead all men





are at last equal. There is neither rank nor station nor prerogative in the republic of the grave.” G.K. Chesterton



Perhaps the World Ends Here, by Joy Harjo

- So much of what happens, happens at a kitchen table.
- Aren't educators seeking to feed their souls, inviting students to come and eat and learn?
- The Table:
  - Tradition, curriculum, masters, theory, imitation
  - Variety: Regional recipes, variety, customs
  - Best local ingredients: great books, ideas, resources, sustenance
  - Making/cooking/timing: Skill, art, practice
  - Presenting; beauty, love (presentation matters: the way we dress, the words we use, the way we speak)
  - Dining: conversation, courtesy, manners, civility, celebration, humanizing...
- The circular table makes us think of us being together pursuing something wonderful.
- The table is also a long table because we are not the only ones at the table. There are others at the table (Aristotle, Plato, Augustine).
- Bread: Bread is a kind of nourishment to us all.

It takes an ecclesia

- Ephesians 1:22: ...gave him [Christ] to be head over all things for ecclesia (church, called out ones)
  - We are calling out students to come out from and rest and learn, to acquire skill, knowledge, and understanding.



- Paideia, 360 degree education
  - The full enculturation and training up of a child.
  - Education was not only what occurred in the school.
  - Education transcends wall of school and homeschool
  - Our teaching methods lead a child to understand.
  - Paideia includes partnerships with parents, teachers, students, churches, grandparents.
  - What if your school was something like a little monastery?
  - Translated by the Romans in *educatio* and *humanitas*: the leading out of a mature human being, which is *humanitas*.
  - Are we bringing a paideia to our students or is it just school?
  - Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not make your children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord.
    - There is recovery and extension of the enculturation of the child by linking it to Biblical teaching.
  - Deut. 6: 4-9: 4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. 6 Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7 Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, 9 and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
    - Education is to occur in many different contexts.



## Culture of Learning

- Culture of Learning/Overlapping roles
  - Teacher
  - Parent
  - Student
  - Community – church

## Application: Places

- In Class
- Common Areas
- Playground
- Bathrooms
- Athletic Fields
- Homes
- Churches
- Restaurants
- Museums, Theatres, etc.
- In Nature



## Applications Occasions

- Celebrations
- Worship
- Meals/Lunch
- Recreation
- Work/Projects
- Study
- Conversations
- Car pools/rides
- Before and after school hang-out times

## Applications: Events

- Assemblies
- Retreats
- Chapel/School Worship
- Athletic Events
- Concerts
- Plays
- Graduation
- Home room
- Each class!

## Suggestions

- Get outside of class
- Integrate parents into everything
- Invite pastors in
- Support other church, community activities
- Mentor students
- Celebrate, a.k.a. party
- Lead by example
- Build a web and use the internet: Classical U
- Enter, engage the broader culture

## Events and Activities

- **Book Salons** (discuss great books in homes with teachers, parents and students)
- **Shakespeare Night** (read Shakespeare or other playwrights)
- **Reading Lunches** (read great literature during lunch once a week)
- **Lunch and Dinner Discussions** (try the pigfest format, information on the web)
- **Host a Speaker and Reception**
- **Host a Debate at School or in the Community**



- **Good-Bye Parties** (End with a bang when teachers and administrators move on)
- **Host a Great Staff Christmas Party** (pull out the stops, make it terrific)
- **Campus Field Days and Feasts**
- **The Great Movie Night** (with good food and well-led discussion afterwards)
- **Hiking Club** (take 2-3 trips a year with parents, teachers and students)
- **Mock Trial** (start a team and support it—classical schools excel!)
- **House Concerts** (have musicians and choirs perform at a home)
- **Great School Trips** (museums, concerts, plays and dinners out work well; plan for the expense)
- **Sporting Events** (find creative ways of supporting your teams)
- **Dances and Balls** (ballroom dancing, line dancing and swing dancing with parents, teachers and students will become highlights of the year!)
- **Poetry Readings and Recitations** (in homes, at school and other settings; participate in Poetry Out Loud)
- **Speech Meets** (host competition among school)
- **One Act Plays** (have mini-dramas performed in a variety of settings)
- **Worship in School** (do this well with talented faculty and student leadership)
- **School Assemblies that Build Community** (plan well with student and faculty participation)
- **Class Dinners on a Theme** (historical, linguistic, ethnic)
- **Murder Mysteries** (with a dinner; students can write their own)
- **Community Service** (in conjunction with a church or churches)
- **Mission Trip** (combine Spanish learning/use with the trip—take you Spanish teacher)
- **Display Art Everywhere** (student art and purchased, excellent art)
- **An Excellent Website** (this is a vital part of building a community—hire a pro)
- **Good Music Everywhere** (play excellent music in a variety of settings)
- **Seminar Day or Week**