



Narration: A Classical Guide with Jason Barney

Lecture 12: Narration as Atmosphere, Discipline, and a Life

Outline:

Children are persons.

- For Charlotte Mason, the mind is an active, living, breathing, feeding entity.
- Charlotte Mason brings back mystery in her view of what it means to be human.
- Ideas are what the mind feeds on. We want to offer a rich feast to children.
- We have to be careful in our educational thinking that we don't become scientists puffed up with our own pride in our ability to manipulate the small details of what a child will learn.
- A child is a person, not a robot to program. We need to put the child in the right process, where they can do the digesting on their own.
- We fall into error when we think of education as exercise and training. Children need both a good, rich, varied diet and they need the proper exercise and rest.
- We can be inclined to manipulate children for our own ends. Are we focused on behavior modification or are we treating them with the dignity of whole persons?
- Narration suits children as persons. Narration seeks to call forth the child's full powers.

An atmosphere of learning that's cultivated by the practice of narration.

- We learn not just by what is taught, but also what is caught.
- We want to raise children that have a deep respect for authorities.
 - We do this when we embody a respectful atmosphere around a variety of books.
- There is a richness of beauty that a child can experience. Are we putting classic paintings on the wall? Are we falling into the trap where we are analyzing things to death?
- Our motivations and the motivations that we spread to one another as human beings are part of the atmosphere that we breathe in.

The discipline of habit

- We are habituated creatures.
- The effort of decision would be fatiguing if we did not rely on the power of habit.
- We want to put students on tracks toward the good life (Mason).



- Narration is one powerful habit training practice.
- The habit of attention is the master habit for a scholar or for scholarship. Being able to attend fully to the task at hand can be trained through the practice of narration.
- The power to focus is absolutely necessary for achievement or success in any area (Goleman).
- Perhaps our technology is having something to do with our inability to focus. Perhaps our brains are being trained in the habit of distractibility.
- We are trying to give students the ability to read the powerfully written, detailed, full word.
- We want to give students the habit of discussing important ideas and disagreeing with one another rationally and respectfully. Our culture needs to do this.

Education is a life.

- A life is sustained by ideas.
- There should never be a morning that goes by in which rich content is not presented to the mind of a child.
- Children are eclectics. They take some ideas and not others.
- If we are so focused on standards, objectives, and goals, we might miss the opportunity to have that inspiring discussion. Take the time for some student who will go on and do whatever the Lord might call him or her to.
- Education is for children's lives of leisure.