



SCHOLÉ GROUPS

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Scholé Groups Start-Up Guide

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Introduction

Welcome!

We recommend that Scholé Group directors download and read **The Scholé Groups Handbook**, which includes comprehensive information and guidance regarding directing, operating, financing, and developing a Scholé Group. The Start-Up Guide is an abbreviated version of the comprehensive Scholé Groups Handbook and serves as an introduction to those interested in starting or joining a Scholé Group. The Start-up Guide is free to all and may be distributed freely with the following restrictions: 1) the content may not be edited or altered; 2) the Classical Academic Press copyright must be displayed.

What follows is a description of a Scholé Group (SG), a discussion of our approach to curriculum and pedagogy, and some operational guidance for Scholé Groups.

The Essential Core of a Scholé Group

A community of three or more homeschooling families may apply to become a Scholé Group. Scholé Groups are guided by their commitment to a classical curriculum and a pedagogy of restful learning. The Scholé Groups Network offers each Scholé Group a wealth of resources and benefits to help them pursue these ideals—at no charge. If you need more in depth guidance in starting, planning, and growing your Scholé group, you may hire a Scholé Mentor or Consultant, who can give you customized support and personalized solutions and resources for your particular group. Book a consultation with a [Scholé Mentor here](#).

Four Core Qualities of Scholé Groups

We seek to ensure that each SG is characterized by four essential qualities or ideals:

Classical

Scholé Groups are committed to a *classical* course of studies, a path that has been tried and proven since ancient times. The long tradition of classical Christian education has emphasized the seeking after of truth, goodness, and beauty and the study of the liberal arts and the great books. A classical education should be like a stroll through a garden of delight. As with any good walk, there may be digressions, but the main path—the key spots and visitations—should be known. Scholé Groups follow a core sequence of studies, which includes Latin, logic, writing, and rhetoric as well as the

great books, mathematics, and science. Because each Scholé Group is unique in its setting and composition, we encourage our groups to structure their community time according to the specific needs and goals of their co-op, focusing on certain areas of study together and others individually in their homes. Likewise, we encourage each group to use the tools and published resources they find most fitting and helpful.

Restful

Scholé Groups are united by their pursuit of restfulness in learning, or *scholé*. The word *scholé* (pronounced skoh-LAY) comes from a Greek word that means “restful learning,” with the connotation of “contemplation,” “conversation,” and “reflection.” Ironically, it is also the basis for our English word *school*, which no longer holds for us these restful connotations. Scholé Groups seek deep engagement that results in enjoyable, permanent learning that is free from anxiety—that is, they seek to put the *scholé* back into (home) schools. The concept of *scholé* cuts across the grain of modern education and therefore takes a principled commitment to the ideal in order to be implemented and realized. We provide each Scholé Group with a variety of educational and practical resources for understanding and implementing *scholé* in their communities.

Communal

Scholé Groups are vibrant communities of adult and student learners united by a passion for truth, goodness, and beauty. Each Scholé Group co-op is comprised of three or more families who gather regularly to pursue studies together. While student learning is at the core of Scholé Groups, parent-teacher education is also of great value to the community. Many Scholé Groups choose to integrate parent education into their co-op activities on a regular basis using ClassicalU, the teacher-training platform recommended by the Scholé Groups Network.

Flexible

Scholé Groups have the flexibility to customize their practices to their unique settings. While Scholé Groups are united by the values above, they also exhibit a great deal of variety. Some Scholé Groups prefer maintaining a small group setting, meeting weekly in a member’s home and focusing on a few key areas of study. Other Scholé Groups have grown into large communities that offer a variety of courses and meet several times per week. Likewise, individual Scholé Groups span a wide range of Christian backgrounds—some Catholic, some Protestant, and some Eastern Orthodox (see [Scholé Groups Statement of Faith](#)). We appreciate the diversity throughout our groups and encourage each group to seek a structure and focus that they prefer. While Scholé Groups have a great amount of flexibility, we understand that guidance can be helpful for those who desire it! With this in mind, we provide support and recommendations for Scholé Groups who are looking for guidance as they establish the structure of their group.

Scholé Groups Resources

We equip the parents, teachers, and administrators of each Scholé Group with the following benefits and resources:

- **The Scholé Groups Start-up Guide** (you are here!): The Start-up Guide provides a philosophical, pedagogical, and practical overview for group directors or individuals interested in starting or joining a Scholé Group.
- **Scholé Mentors and Consultants:** Reach out to one of our experienced Mentors and Consultants for counsel and advice. Each Scholé Mentor has significant experience and expertise with classical education generally and leading a Scholé Group specifically. You can view and contact each of our certified Mentors [here](#).
- **The Scholé Groups File Library:** Discover a collection of files created for Scholé Groups. Benefit from the work and wisdom of fellow directors and parents.
- **Forums:** Our forums are a platform upon which you can connect and collaborate with other Scholé Groups from across the globe.
- **Webinars—Live and Archived:** Join live discussions and training sessions with national leaders in the renewal of *scholé* and classical education. Notifications of upcoming webinars are sent to Scholé Group directors, and archived webinars are available to view [here](#) at your convenience.
- **20% Discount at ClassicalAcademicPress.com:** Save on curriculum from [Classical Academic Press](#). Scholé Groups receive a 20% discount on any order over \$200. Additionally, Scholé Groups in the 48 contiguous United States receive free shipping on such orders. (Excludes distributed lines, online courses, and subscriptions.)
- **Discounts on ClassicalU Subscriptions:** Grow as a teacher and as a thinker with self-paced teacher-training courses from ClassicalU led by leaders in the renewal of classical education. Scholé Group members receive a discounted rate for individual annual plans (over \$50 in savings per person). A coupon code is distributed to each director upon acceptance of their application or renewal agreement.

- **A Free Website Template for Your Group:** Share your group with the community while facilitating communication and collaboration within your group. This customizable website template is built specifically for Scholé Groups. Not a web guru? We'll help you connect with a website specialist who can set up your website for you! View demo site [here](#).
- **Newsletter:** Each quarter we send out a newsletter keeping directors, teachers, and parents up to date on the activities and opportunities available throughout the Scholé Groups Network.

Director's Agreement

The director of a new or returning SG will sign a straightforward agreement that contains the following terms in exchange for using the Scholé Group name and receiving all SG services, discounts, and support:

I (or my designee) agree to operate a Scholé Group (SG) according to the terms, philosophy, core curriculum sequence, and pedagogy specified in the Scholé Groups Start-up Guide, including but not limited to the following elements:

– I commit to operating a co-op comprised of three or more families.

– I commit to implementing a classical curriculum as described in the Scholé Groups Start-up Guide.

– I commit to implementing classical pedagogical principles as described in the Scholé Groups Start-up Guide, such as Festina Lente, Multum non Multa, Virtue Education, and Curiosity and Wonder.

– I commit to pursuing a pedagogy of “scholé” throughout the co-op to the best of my ability.

– I understand that our group will include the word “Scholé” in the group name or subtitle.

– I understand that as a SG, we will be entitled to all benefits, services, and resources provided to SGs as specified in the Scholé Groups Start-up Guide. I agree not to share or distribute these benefits, services, and resources outside of my official SG roster, and to ensure that the members of my SG agree to the same.

– I agree to notify the Scholé Groups Network leadership if the group no longer can or wishes to keep the terms of this agreement, at which time the group will no longer receive the benefits, services, resources or support of the Scholé Groups Network, and at which time the group will remove the name “Scholé” from the group name.

– I have read and am committed to the [Scholé Groups Statement of Faith](#).

Each director is the operator of his/her own Scholé Group and may operate the group as his/her own business. Scholé Groups may also choose to operate as friends, sharing expenses and without forming a registered business, but will still be registered with the Scholé Groups Network as an official SG and with a registered director (even if a volunteer). SG makes no requirements on what curricula (published materials) are used. Directors may generate revenue for compensating themselves and teachers (and other service providers) by charging tuition of SG participating families. Directors are free to charge whatever tuition they deem wise. Compensation for teachers at a given SG is set by the director in negotiation with a given teacher. Apart from the terms of this agreement and guidelines of the Scholé Groups Start-up Guide, there are no restrictions placed on Scholé Group directors or teachers.

Pricing Structure

Scholé Groups Network Pricing: The Scholé Groups Network charges no fee to start and run a Scholé Group. Scholé Groups provide basic guidance for how to set up your group

Individual Group Pricing: Each director is the operator of her own Scholé Group, and may operate the group as her own business. Some Scholé Groups may also choose to operate as friends, sharing expenses and without forming a registered business, but will still be registered with SG as an official SG and with a registered director (even if a volunteer). Directors are free to charge whatever tuition they deem wise.

If the group’s director chooses to charge tuition, she has the freedom to determine the best pricing model for her group. That is, directors may charge tuition per student, per family, per class, or by any other measurement they deem wise. Groups vary greatly in size and structure, and we wish each

group to find and utilize the pricing structure that suits it best. For example, a group that spans many grade levels may wish to charge different tuition rates for different grade levels. A group with many class offerings within one grade level, on the other hand, may wish to charge according to which and how many classes a student is taking. We recommend marketing your group to interested families according to the pricing structure chosen by your group.

Compensation to Directors, Teachers, and Other Service Providers: Directors may generate revenue for compensating themselves, teachers, and other service providers by charging tuition within their Scholé Group.

Educational Philosophy and Approach

As our name implies, we value “restful learning” that is at the root of the word *scholé*. Modern education is largely an education in anxiety, with stress created by students taking up to eight classes at a time. For each of these, they are numerically graded weekly by teachers who are often driven to “teach to the test” and who use dehumanizing tests that are “machine readable” (easily quantified data). Students in such a system learn to cram, pass, and then forget. By contrast, Scholé Group directors and teachers create an atmosphere of restful learning by modeling peace, tranquility, love of the subject, unrushed learning with meaningful, deep engagement of fewer books and concepts (comparatively speaking), so that learning becomes memorable, enjoyable, and permanent.

This means that Scholé Group directors and teachers will work to create engaged discussion and learning, and seek to build relationships with and among students. In an effort to recover reflection and contemplation as part of learning, Scholé Group directors may organize their group meetings and classes through a liturgical pattern ([What is Liturgical Learning?](#)); through positive presentation/lecture/review; and/or through discussion/debate/engagement with text and ideas. SG classes will be distinctive for their passionate teachers whose own love for the seven liberal arts is contagious. Teachers will strive to lead memorable, meaningful discussions that make students “become alive” to the art they are studying and excite them for further study of the truth, beauty, and goodness the art contains.

We recommend all SG directors and teachers read the following books and articles prior to engaging in the leadership of a SG. All of the articles are available on the SG website ([here](#)), where you can easily download and read them. Some articles are also included in the appendix of the Scholé Group Handbook.

- *The Liberal Arts Tradition: The Philosophy of Christian Classical Education*

- “*Scholé* in the Scripture: Choosing What Is Better” by Christopher Perrin (see article in full in appendix)
- “Desiring a Kingdom School” by Christopher Perrin (see article in full in appendix)

Student Virtues

Scholé Groups employ two key pedagogies that are part of the classical tradition. First, they emphasize the development of the student/educational virtues; second, they employ a pattern of “liturgical learning.” In fact, liturgical learning is an important part of developing student virtues. While it is beyond the scope of this handbook to fully develop the student virtues and how to cultivate them, they should nevertheless be briefly described.

Augustine described education as essentially teaching students to “love that which is lovely,” following on Plato’s idea that affections and taste must be cultivated. The classical and Christian tradition has emphasized that it is critical to model for students the love for the true, good, and beautiful, and by various means to cultivate and stir up a love for them. C.S. Lewis makes this case persuasively in his little book *The Abolition of Man*, telling us that we need to cultivate not only minds but also chests (the visceral, affective part of us), especially since presently our modern schools neglect the cultivation of affections, rendering us as “men without chests.” He comments that modern students are not so much “jungles to be cut” as “deserts that need to be irrigated.”

Even the word *student* suggests this. The word *student* is derived from the Latin word *studium*, which means “zeal,” “fondness,” and “affection.” Thus, etymologically considered, a *student* is someone who is zealous and eager for truth, goodness, beauty—for knowledge. Is it not true that there are many students—who are not really students? Until we have a child before us who is seeking and zealous for knowledge, then we really don’t have a student before us; instead we have someone we must force to do academic work, usually by means of the carrot and the stick. Such a “student” will be generally uncooperative, resistant (even if passively so) and will quickly forget what he is forced to “learn.” Teaching such “students” is no fun at all. By contrast, once a child becomes eager to learn, to know—is in fact “in love” with math, history, language, or logic—then teaching is a joy.

So great teachers know instinctively that they must cultivate this *studium*, this zeal in their students. Naturally parents play the most vital role in this, and therefore parent-teachers and hired teachers must forge a partnership for success. So what are the key student virtues that we need to cultivate? What are the corresponding vices that we must overcome?

Virtues

- **Love:** Love is a master virtue that fuels and empowers the other student virtues and leads to them. Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 13 that even if we speak in the tongues of angels (high linguistic achievement!) and fathom all mysteries (surpassing the learning of a genius) but have not love, it will be worth nothing. Students are called by God (and thus should be called by us) to “love the lovely,” to glory in God Himself and His revealed mind in nature, Scripture, and ourselves. Knowing of God’s goodness in the world, and His goodness toward us, we can live out of love and gratitude in all we do, including our study and seeking the true, good, and beautiful in all our academic work. We can always say to our students therefore, “Choose joy.”
- **Humility:** Humility is another master virtue that leads to other virtues. We cultivate humility by taking students to the heights and showing them greatness. In the presence of greatness and height, students become conscious of their own slender resources, and will then not take on anything beyond their power, but learn to rejoice in what is given them in their measure. Humility will also lead to gratitude—gratitude even for those friends whose gifts and capacities surpass our own. Sertillanges writes, “In face of others’ superiority, there is only one honorable attitude, to be glad of it, and then it becomes our own joy, our own good fortune.”
- **Patience:** This entails bearing difficulties well, enduring the hardship and “suffering” that does come occasionally (and sometimes regularly) as part of learning new skills and acquiring new knowledge.
- **Constancy:** Keeping steady at task and remaining focused and diligent is what constancy is about. This virtue enables students to push away even “good” distractions that would inhibit learning and mastery.
- **Perseverance:** Similar to constancy, but this virtue requires a willful spirit to do what must be done, and even to love what must be done (remind us that love is a master virtue). Students will be motivated and inspired to persevere by the vision of mastery, capacity, and wisdom that teachers lay before their eyes. Small wins and slowly increasing capacity will also kindle perseverance, constancy, and patience.

- **Temperance/Studiosness:** Students need to avoid excessive negligence (laziness) and excessive curiosity and ambition (vain ambition and overreach). To master an art, students must walk the wise, proven path, starting at the beginning and mastering each step. To leap ahead (even when they can to some degree) does damage to the necessary discipline of mastering an art. Sertillanges says, “If you want to see things grow big, plant small,” and go to the sea by way of the streams and rivers—it is folly to go jump in the sea. Recall as well the Tortoise and the Hare. Students also must balance or temper their studies with other academic work, and with their other responsibilities and human being (good exercise, prayer, worship, family living, and contributions, etc.).

Vices

- **Pride:** Drives students to love their own opinions and thoughts such that they cannot learn from others or discern the broader wisdom from other minds that would inform them.
- **Envy:** Agitates the mind by refusing to honor the gifts and capacities of others; hinders students from learning from other honorable and able students.
- **Sloth/Laziness:** Where the good gifts and capacities of students go to die.
- **Sensuality:** Indulgence in sensuality (not only of the sexual variety) creates lethargy, befogs the imagination, dulls the intelligence, and scatters the memory; sensuality distracts from learning.
- **Irritation/Impatience:** Irritation and impatience repels exhortation, direction, and constructive criticism and thus leads students to less mastery and increased error.
- **Excessive Ambition** (a form of intemperance): Leads students to leap ahead of their capacity without true mastery and integration (often out of pride), which ultimately slows down learning and leads to patchy, nonintegrated understanding.

All of these vices compromise a student’s ability to attend, to judge/assess, and therefore to truly know. All of these vices also tend to come together and lead to one another—they are interconnected.

Teaching the Virtues

These virtues are not so much taught as they are cultivated and modeled. We should make students aware of these virtues and we should in fact occasionally teach them directly. However, it is very important that students begin to hunger for these virtues themselves, and cry out to God for them. This seems to be the point of Proverbs 2—if a student won't cry aloud for wisdom and seek it as hidden treasure, he won't ever get it. Therefore (among other things we do), we must exhort our students to ask God for virtue and wisdom—a prayer He delights to answer (James 1).

Sample Class *Scholé* Template: Liturgical Pattern

This pattern or template is intended as a guide that should not be “followed to the letter” but nonetheless should shape the “learning liturgy” of SG classes, to distinguish them as *scholé* courses. It is this learning template and approach that will set SGs apart in the world of homeschool education. We think that it is one faithful application of the classical tradition, and it also is what differentiates us from other educational approaches. We want you to embrace and love this approach so that your students will too. Please note that extensive training in this approach is available on ClassicalU.com. In addition, you can watch a short video explaining liturgies in a Scholé Group and classroom, which applies to both online and in-person scholé groups, [here](#).

- **Welcome/Greeting:** 3 minutes (students greeted by beautiful images and music, possibly with an inspirational quotation or key question; 3 minutes of contemplation before official start)
- **Grateful Acknowledgment:** 2 minutes (of the art, one another, the opportunity to study some aspect of God's creation, the mind, nature, humanity)
- **Confess What We Need:** 2 minutes (disposition, the frame of mind, virtue, a heart that seeks and calls out for wisdom; a written confession can be read and/or prayer offered); key Scripture: Proverbs 2:1-7
- **Teach/Present/Discuss:** 50-60 minutes (traditional lesson, led by the teacher, ensuring that all students are engaged and participating)
- **Confess What We Know/Have Learned:** 2 minutes (summary and review taking the form of “creedal” confession that edifies)
- **Expression of Thanksgiving:** 2-3 minutes (led by a teacher or mature student, but giving opportunity for all students to express gratitude to God, teacher, other students)

- **Benediction/Dismissal:** 1 minute (prepared benediction written by a teacher, or from traditional sources).
- **Processional:** 3 minutes (return to beautiful music and images; students free to leave immediately, or remain for quiet contemplation).

Training and Oversight

All SG teachers are growing in their craft and seeking ways to improve. They also seek to help other teachers and colleagues to improve. Therefore, SG teachers will be occasionally observed by either the SG director or other teaching colleagues. Those teachers pursuing training on ClassicalU.com will be moving through valuable training online, seeking to advance from level 1 (novice classical teacher) to level 2 (peer classical teacher) to level 3 (mentor classical teacher). As part of the ClassicalU training, teachers will be encouraged to observe other teachers and be observed as well. These observations are designed as part of teacher mentoring and will involve constructive, formative criticism guided by an observation form. Peer observations may therefore be requested for this purpose. Parent and student surveys may also be employed in order to assess the feedback given from those we serve. Directors should take advantage of the training on ClassicalU and consider making training on ClassicalU a part of a teacher's work agreement. All Scholé Group directors, tutors, and parents receive a discount on individual annual subscriptions to ClassicalU.

Scholé Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence

As an excellent homeschool, each SG will need a clear, meaningful and classical course of studies. The old Latin word curriculum means a racecourse, so academically speaking we want to take our students through a meaningful course—but we don't want to race. To change metaphors, our course should be more like a stroll through a garden—a garden of delight.

In any event, the course or path we take our students down should be clear; it should be tried and proven. Not every detail must be planned ahead of time, but the key spots and visitations should be laid out. On any good walk there may be digressions, but the main path is known.

Each SG will therefore share a common path with all other SGs, but no SG need be identical in all the details. What we lay out here is the common path every SG will follow; each director may create various excursions as wisdom dictates.

We only require each SG to teach a core sequence of Latin (or Greek or Hebrew), logic, writing, and rhetoric (using any published materials you would like) as well as a commitment to teach “the great books,” mathematics, and science. The chart below indicates this core sequence.

NOTE: While an SG will follow the sequence below, it will not necessarily offer all of the courses in a weekly meeting (or meetings). Families can provide the courses/teaching on their own, via online teaching, etc.

The Required Core Curriculum for a Scholé Group

Required Core Sequence			
K	Two years of Latin Grammar	Arithmetic	
1	Two years of Writing	Arithmetic	
2		Arithmetic	
3		Arithmetic	
4		Arithmetic	Great Books
5		Arithmetic	Great Books

6		Arithmetic		Great Books
7	Two years of Latin Grammar*	Mathematics	Science	Great Books
8	Two years of Logic	Mathematics	Science	Great Books
9	Two years of Rhetoric	Mathematics	Science	Great Books
10		Mathematics	Science	Great Books
11		Mathematics	Science	Great Books
12		Mathematics	Science	Great Books

* Greek or Hebrew may also be studied along with, or instead of Latin.

Four Levels of Instruction

1. Lower Grammar
2. Upper Grammar
3. Dialectic
4. Rhetoric

What follows is a general description of the goals and tenor of each of the four levels of a Scholé Group. This guide contains more detailed descriptions of the elements of a Scholé Group, the operation of a group, and the curriculum for each level, below. We also have included a “Portrait of a Scholé Group Graduate” in the appendix (available in the SG Handbook only) that further describes the ideal student we seek to cultivate.

Lower Grammar (K-2): The Cultivation of Wonder and Virtue

During grades K-2, the larger educational aims are the cultivation of wonder and virtue. Students at these ages are naturally filled with wide-eyed wonder at the world, and need that wonder to be protected, cultivated, and extended. As younger children they are also the most receptive to acquiring virtuous habits of learning that will serve the rest of their lives. So while we will teach these students phonics, handwriting, reading, and arithmetic, we will be very intentional about developing them as passionate lovers of truth, goodness, and beauty, and showing them the natural world as a living museum full of wonders that delight the soul. We will also be intentional about cultivating virtues of humility, courage, constancy, and temperance.

During these lower grammar years, it is also the ideal time to acquaint younger students with the pedagogical (teaching methods) wisdom of making haste slowly (*festina lente*), mastering a few things rather than lightly “covering” many (*multum non multa*). Students will learn the virtue of working wisely and well, but without anxiety and exhaustion. Students will focus on a core of three main arts: reading, writing, and arithmetic; additional study in music, fine art, Bible, and nature study will serve to season and delight but not overwhelm. The study of Latin vocabulary (and some conversational Latin) may also be lightly introduced.

Younger students also learn naturally and with delight by means of songs and chants, so we will teach important ideas and information with lots of singing and chanting.

As students learn through all five senses, we will not merely speak truth to them, we will also embody our ideals by sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. This means we will create meaningful rhythms, practices, routines, and traditions replete with beautiful images, music, and “liturgy.”

Upper Grammar (3-6): The Cultivation of Language, Literature, and Number Sense

During grades 3-6, we seek to extend the wonder and virtue education begun in the lower grammar years and “seal” and strengthen students’ wonder and virtue so that they become a permanent aspect of their character. At this time we also begin the dedicated study of grammar, studying both Latin (or Greek or Hebrew) and English grammar. We will reveal to them the wonder of language—how it works as a medium of thought and communication, how it delights the ear, the tongue, and the soul. We will teach grammar as an art that illumines and humanizes, and that provides students with the capacity to acquire wisdom (via reading) and express their ideas and thoughts clearly (via speech and writing).

At this time we will also begin to introduce students to the Great Books, or great literature. Now that students are independent readers, we will give them a steady diet of the best literature—including novels, poetry, and history. For a listing of over 900 vetted great books suitable for a classical education listed by grade, genre and level of difficulty, see ClassicalReader.com. These 900 books are also listed in the printed resource, [The Classical Reader: A Comprehensive Reading Guides for](#)

K-12 Students. Other good lists of great books are also available. We recommend that SG leaders also consult the list of books suggested by David Hicks in the back of his book *Norms and Nobility*.

We will also work to impart mastery of number sense—showing students the wonder of mathematics and giving them a solid understanding of how numbers work (numeracy or number sense). Students will see mathematics as another language to describe the world, something beautiful, something to play with, and something with which to do valuable work.

Beauty: As in the lower grammar period, we will continue to surround students with beautiful art and music and to give ample opportunities for students to engage the beauty of nature outside. All students should begin to study a musical instrument, sing, or study another fine art such as drawing, dance, or drama.

Dialectic (7-9): The Cultivation of Logic, Collaboration, and Wisdom

During these years, students are ready to argue, debate, deliberate, and collaborate. We will not only teach students logic, but will teach them all subjects using logic as a central teaching tool—which is to say we will teach dialectically. Teachers will in particular employ the study of the informal fallacies in every subject, helping students analyze arguments for potential fallacies. Teachers will teach primarily by utilizing effective discussion and debate rather than by lecture.

Students in this period also naturally enjoy collaborating with their peers, discussing important issues, deliberating ideas, and working together on projects, presentations, and assignments.

During this time, students will begin to study the traditional mathematical arts of algebra and geometry (though geometry may be studied in grade 10), mastering the functions, ideas, and language of these arts. Students will also begin the study of natural philosophy (natural sciences), including geology and botany.

This is the time to begin to study history, literature, and theology for the ideas they contain and the wisdom they can impart. History becomes the study of the ongoing story of human acts and civilization, and the great deeds and virtues of the past—a source of wisdom. Literature is studied for truth, goodness, and beauty as students seek the best that has been thought and said. Theology provides the coherent framework as God’s revelation that brings unity to all knowledge and experience, and thus is the “queen” of the other arts and disciplines and a chief source of wisdom.

Rhetoric (10-12): The Cultivation of Rhetoric and Art (Making)

During these years, students are ready to employ their past learning to meaningful work, art, music, writing, and speech—they want to begin making a contribution to their surrounding community and culture. The study of rhetoric formally enables this as students study what makes for effective,

beautiful, and persuasive speech and writing. Rhetoric students, therefore, are frequently asked to speak, write, share, and create. As emerging adults, they take more responsibility for teaching younger students, and find that they master learning best by teaching others (*docendo discimus*, by teaching we learn).

Students in the rhetoric years will continue their study of the traditional mathematical and scientific arts, and will study geometry, trigonometry, and calculus, and biology, chemistry, and physics. Some students may wish or need to forgo the study of calculus or physics or delay their study until college. The study of the mathematical and scientific arts, far from being merely a study of truth, will also engage students in imagination, beauty, and creativity.

As more responsible, well-trained students, these students will wisely engage in contemplation (*scholé*, contemplation and leisure) and discussion with fellow students, teachers, and adults. Rhetoric students will regularly read and discuss the Great Books that are part of their courses, eagerly engaging in conversation and written papers in response to these books.

As students grow in wisdom, these students will begin the formal study of philosophy and theology for which their previous study has prepared them. The study of philosophy and theology will engage them in the great questions of human existence about living a “good life” characterized by wisdom, virtue, and eloquence and engaging them in the Great Conversation at a mature level. Rhetoric students will conclude their studies by completing a “capstone” project or thesis that will display a synthesis of the learning over their K-12 years, and represent a meaningful, creative contribution to their community. This project will be accompanied by a prepared paper and speech that will employ the rhetorical training of the graduating student.

Desiring a Kingdom School (or Homeschool)

by Christopher A. Perrin, PhD

A review of *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* by James K.A. Smith. This review was originally posted on Christopher Perrin’s blog at [InsideClassicalEd.com](https://www.insideclassical.com).

We all have ideals—ideals for a wonderful marriage, the best job, a superb vacation. Our ideals, however, are often fuzzy. What does the ideal church really look like? An ideal government? What about an ideal school?

Well, to outline an ideal marriage involving the intersection of two inscrutable human beings is a difficult challenge; to actually live out an ideal marriage is beyond difficult. What might an ideal school look like—with the intersection of two to three hundred human beings—parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and...students? And that would be a small school.

If James K.A. Smith is right, we simply cannot help imagining an ideal future, an ideal of human flourishing. According to Smith in his book *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation*, imagining ideals is a large part of what it means to be human. We all are seeking some version of the good life; we all desire a kingdom. What is more, we are all being shaped and formed in various ways to love and desire one sort of kingdom or another.

Smith contends that before we humans are cognitive, rational beings, we are creatures of desires, passions, and loves. He further contends that the way we change is not primarily a matter of the mind, but primarily the result of the heart-shaping forces of the “cultural liturgies” we encounter in the world. He writes, “Because our hearts are oriented primarily by desire, by what we love, and because those desires are shaped and molded by the habit-forming practices in which we participate, it is the rituals and practices of the mall—the liturgies of the mall and market—that shape our imaginations and how we orient ourselves to the world. Embedded in them is a common set of assumptions about the shape of human flourishing, which becomes an implicit telos or goal of our own desires and actions. That is, the visions of the good life embedded in these practices become surreptitiously embedded in us through our participation in the rituals and rhythms of these institutions.”

Smith takes time to examine the ways that various institutions do in fact act as cultural liturgies. He begins with the mall, imagining what it might be like for a Martian anthropologist to study its culture. Smith is convinced that such an anthropologist would see the mall as a thoroughly religious institution. The mall has a daily visitation of pilgrims who enter a large and dazzling cathedral of glass, concrete, light, and ornamentation. There are banners and flags displayed in a large atrium; there are familiar texts and symbols placed on walls to help us easily identify what is inside the various chapels that are contained in this labyrinthine cathedral. Rich iconography lines the wall of each chapel, and there are many three-dimensional statues adorned with the garb that we too can acquire in imitation of these ideals. These same icons, statues, and exemplars can be found in similar temples across the country and around the world. In fact, the wide distribution of these colors and icons are found in many places in the outside world and have drawn us as pilgrims in the first place. The power of the gospel message of these temples is the power of beauty, “which speaks to our deepest desires and compels us to come not with dire moralisms but rather with a winsome invitation to share in the envisioned good life.”

At this point, Smith is just getting started with his analysis of the “religion of the mall.” He goes on to describe the purchasing experience as a kind of secular Eucharist. Understandably, he does not like or praise the religion of the mall. He does acknowledge, however, that the mall understands something profound about human beings. It embodies its view of its kingdom, rather than merely talking about it. He writes, “Indeed, the genius of mall religion is that actually it operates with a more holistic, affective, embodied anthropology (or theory of the human person) than the Christian church tends to assume. Because worldview-thinking still tends to focus on ideas and beliefs, the formative cultural impact of sites like the mall tends to not show up on our radar.” (We don’t have glasses to see them.)

As you might guess, the point of Smith's book is to help us turn on our radar to the formative impact that various cultural liturgies have on us all. Of interest to classical educators will be his liturgical analysis of university education and of Christian college education. Using Tom Wolfe's book *I Am Charlotte Simmons*, Smith points out that the college experience is far more than the fifteen hours a week a student spends in a classroom. Secular university experience exerts a dynamic and intentional shaping influence on college students in dozens of ways. Dorm life, frat house life, football games, drinking, bar and club escapades, hooking up, and an exhausting, frenetic rhythm of classes, study, and exams shape and form students for the "real world" of "corporate ladder climbing and white-collar overtime needed in order to secure the cottage, the boat, and the private education for the kids." Smith concludes that while the classroom, laboratory, lecture hall, and library have performed some role in shaping a student, they do not compare to the other ways students are shaped. The information provided in the academic areas is "not nearly as potent as the formation we've received in the dorm and frat house, or the stadium and dance club."

His look at Christian colleges is not much more encouraging. Too many Christian colleges in his opinion simply take the basic secular approach to education and add the integration of a Christian worldview or Christian perspective. Smith suggests that the dominant paradigm of Christian education asserts that "goal of a Christian education is to produce professionals who do pretty much the same sorts of things that graduates of Ivy League and state universities do, but who do them 'from a Christian perspective,' and perhaps with the goal of transforming and redeeming society." For Smith this is regrettable reduction as it "unhooks Christianity from the practices that constitute Christian discipleship." For Smith, the worship practices of the church must be vitally bound up with the rhythms and practices of a Christian college (and school). When the Christian college is unhooked from the liturgies of the church, we end up with an intellectualization of Christianity, leading students to think that "being a Christian doesn't radically reconfigure our desires and wants, our practices and habits." This happens because for far too long Christian education has "been concerned with information rather than formation; thus Christian colleges have thought it sufficient to provide a Christian perspective, an intellectual framework, because they see themselves as fostering individual 'minds in the making.' Hand in hand with that, such an approach reduces Christianity to a denuded intellectual framework that has diminished bite because such an intellectualized rendition of the faith doesn't touch our core passions."

I think by now Smith's thesis is beginning to sink in. Christian worldview instruction is not enough. Appealing to the mind and intellect is not enough. Not that instruction in Christian worldview and ideas should not be done—such instruction is vital. But it is not sufficient, not enough. We must address the core passions of our students, and we do this by means of creating community, atmosphere, rhythms, practices, and traditions that shape the hearts of students by engaging them as affective, passionate lovers, not mere minds. The church, rightly worshipping, seeks to do this. Welcoming, greeting, singing, hearing, tasting, standing, kneeling, we worship with all of our person—mind and body. Embodied worship is formative and shapes our love for the kingdom of God and acts as a powerful counterformation over against the formative influence of a dozen secular liturgies we witness and experience. In fact the liturgy of worship helps subvert the power of these secular liturgies, wising us up to their power and methods.

This is where things get interesting. Could it be that our children are being shaped to love a version of the good life that is primarily determined by the “liturgies” of the mall, football stadium, TV sitcoms, and the iPod? Could it be that our schools privilege direct engagement with the mind and the presentation of ideas and a Christian worldview but are nonetheless failing to thwart the power of these other shaping influences? Any teacher with experience can tell you about scores of students whose minds and hearts are seldom truly present in the classroom. They are rather occupied with shopping for the next fashionable item, the next soccer game, the latest movie, Monday Night Football, the coming rock concert. These things shape them and engage them as lovers, and the teacher often feels powerless standing before her whiteboard with a black marker in her hand. She wonders if it would not be better to show them an educational movie—something they can relate to.

Consider the atmosphere and community of your school. What is its liturgy? That is what are its rhythms, rituals, practices, and traditions? We carefully plan our curriculum and lessons. Do we carefully plan and create rhythms, rituals, practices, and traditions? Do our teachers carefully plan rhythms, rituals, practices, and traditions for each class of students? If Smith is right, then it is these things that will most profoundly shape what our students will love. Every teacher knows that students will forget seventy-five percent of the content you “teach” them in a classroom. Might it be wise then to pay attention to more than just content, to think about form with the same rigor? How can we shape, form, and engage hearts, minds, and yes, even bodies? Is there vibrant worship in your school? Does music echo through the halls and the great art adorn the walls? Are there dinner parties and great conversation with students and adults alike? Is your facility attractive and conducive to worship and learning? Are poems read and recited, stories written and told? Is Scripture read at lunch for a time? Are there traditions of hospitality when existing students welcome new students into the school, when upper school students warmly welcome new 7th graders or 9th graders? Do teachers and parents gather socially to read books, cook meals, and pray? Do high school students babysit for the young children of teachers (maybe at no charge?). Do your older students help teach the younger students and join them for games on the playground from time to time? Do teachers and students go hiking together or bike-riding or running? Are pastors visiting your school, counseling students, speaking in your classrooms or chapel services, or teaching a Bible class? Do you pray for the churches represented by your school and for each pastor by name? Does your school fast occasionally and give money or food to the needy?

These and dozens of other questions might enable us to think more deeply about embodying classical Christian education, such that students absorb it with all five senses and with their hearts as well as their minds. By considering such questions (and generating more), we might clarify our vision of an ideal classical school, and remove much of the fuzziness and confusion that impedes enthusiasm and momentum. Classical education has historically been communal and ecclesial, and Smith poignantly reminds us of this. He also helps us to see more clearly that a classical Christian education involves the collaboration of family, church, and school as we seek nothing less than the kingdom of God. Classical educators and leaders would do well to learn from the insights of this valuable and timely book.

Embodied Learning Outline for Discussion

PHILOSOPHY

1. We are not merely thinking things...or disembodied minds. Our hearts are actually shaped through our five senses to love some ideal of human flourishing. The rational part of us—our minds—is crucial and part of being made in the image of God. But our bodies are just as important, and just as determinative of what we choose to love. This insight is developed in James K. A. Smith's book *Desiring the Kingdom*.
2. Augustine said we should "order our loves" so that we love beautiful things with the appropriate esteem and affection due those things. There is a proper way to love a daughter and a proper way to love an oak tree. We need to learn how to "love those things which are lovely"—which means our affections need to be cultivated.
3. C.S. Lewis develops this theme in his slim book *The Abolition of Man*. He argues that modern students are not so much jungles that need to be cut (overly affective) but rather deserts that need to be irrigated (students lack robust affections and sentiment).
4. Because we have been conditioned to resist calling something truly lovely and then loving it, we often lack the courage to praise, extol, admire, and praise. We also lack the courage to blame the ugly, despise the lie, flee the immoral. We have become humans without robust emotion, without conviction, without affections, without heart. In Lewis's words, we have become men without chests.
5. Because we are physical beings, we are creatures of habit in the world, creatures who create and live in various daily, weekly, and annual "liturgies"—rhythms, practices, and routines that impart meaning and direct our affections to a view of the "good life." There are secular as well as ecclesial liturgies. For example, the mall has its own "liturgies" that attract our hearts (through the five senses) and shape our loves (often disordering our loves). Other liturgies can be sports, TV, Facebook, concerts, fraternity or dorm life, etc.

PRACTICE

If we are liturgical creatures who live life through our bodies, then what are the implications for education?

1. Education is embodied whether we acknowledge it or not. It always takes some form, even if “patched together” with little thought.
2. Consider the forms (liturgies, embodiment) of your past education: the architecture of the school, the setup of the classrooms and hallways, the bells, the smells, the cafeteria, the liturgy of the bus ride to and from school... Recall the materials posted on the walls of your classrooms and the way your teacher would greet you and dismiss you from class. Recall the pledge of allegiance, the school song...
3. Some practices (embodiments) are more fitted toward the educational goals of wisdom, virtue, and eloquence (traditional, classical educational desired outcomes). Other practices will better fit the outcome of just getting a job, or serving the state.
4. Here are some practical questions that can lead to practical changes. Consider the atmosphere of your homeschool. What is its liturgy? That is, what are its rhythms, rituals, practices, and traditions? We carefully plan our curriculum and lessons. Do we carefully plan and create rhythms, rituals, practices, and traditions?
5. If Smith is right, then it is these things that will most profoundly shape what our students will love. Every teacher knows that students will forget seventy-five percent of the content you “teach” them in a classroom. Might it be wise then to pay attention to more than just content, to think about form with the same rigor? How can we shape, form, and engage hearts, minds, and yes, even bodies? Is there vibrant worship in your homeschool? Does music echo through the house and great art adorn the walls? Are their dinner parties and great conversation with your children? Is your homeschool “room” attractive and conducive to worship and learning? Are poems read and recited, stories written and told? Is Scripture read at lunch for a time? Are there traditions of hospitality when inviting younger siblings or co-op students into your home or class? Do parents in your co-op gather socially to read books, cook, dine, and pray? Do older school students babysit for the younger children—and for other parents in your co-op? Do you older students help teach the younger students and join in their games and play? Are pastors engaged with your homeschool or co-op—perhaps counseling children or teaching a co-op Bible class? Do you pray for your church and the

churches represented by your co-op—and for each pastor by name? Does your homeschool fast occasionally and give money or food to the needy?

6. These and dozens of other questions might enable us to think more deeply about embodying classical Christian education, such that students absorb it with all five senses and with their hearts as well as their minds. By considering such questions (and generating more), we might clarify our vision of an ideal homeschool, and remove much of the fuzziness and confusion that impedes enthusiasm and momentum. Classical education has historically been communal and ecclesial and James K. A. Smith poignantly reminds us of this. He also helps us to see more clearly that a classical Christian education involves the collaboration of family, church, and community as we seek nothing less than the kingdom of God.
7. Consider starting a Scholé Sisters group. Scholé Sisters meet together to engage in... *scholé*. They take time to pursue truth, goodness, and beauty together on a monthly basis to ensure that they never stop being students themselves.

Scholé in the Scriptures: Choosing What Is Better

by Christopher A. Perrin, PhD

Those of you who know this blog (or anything about me) know that I have been reading and writing about returning scholé (σχολή) to our schools and homeschools for about three years now. Here is an article relating the Greek concept of scholé to the Old and New Testament.

Aristotle and Scholé

Well, it was Aristotle who first described the importance of *scholé* (leisure, restful learning and conversation, contemplation), and yet the Hebrew Scriptures (which predate Aristotle) seem to touch on this theme as well. The New Testament certainly does too in some unique ways. Aristotle writes in Book VII of *Politics*:

...we fulfill our nature not only when we work well but when we use leisure (scholé) well. For I must repeat what I have said before: that leisure is the “initiating principle” of all achievements. Granted that work and leisure are both necessary, yet leisure is the desired end for which work is done; and this raises the question of how we ought to employ our leisure. Not by merely amusing ourselves, obviously, for that would be to set up amusement as the chief end of life. (Book VII:iii)

Aristotle does not disparage wage-earning work, but he says that such work (and amusement) cannot be fitting ends for human aspiration and life. The highest end is the right employment of *scholé*.

Scholé in the Old Testament

Now this insight was picked up by the church (many centuries later) and identified with contemplation. This is not surprising since the Old Testament also suggests a life of “restful learning” and contemplation as the heart of a full human life:

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.” (Isaiah 30:15)

“I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.” (Job 3:26)

The Hebrew concept of *shalom* (often translated “peace”) also includes a connotation similar to *scholé*: in addition to the idea of safety and soundness, *shalom* also frequently means quiet, tranquility, and friendship—all components of *scholé*.

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), *scholé* only appears twice (in Genesis 33:14 and Proverbs 28:19) and means “leisure” in the primary sense of “going slowly” (Genesis 33:14) and even “wasting time” (Proverbs 28:19). In the Wisdom of Sirach, however, we find this interesting passage:

The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure (scholé): and he that hath little Venture shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labors, and whose talk is of bullocks? (Wisdom of Sirach 3:24-25)

Here the word *scholé* is used very much as Aristotle uses it, and the context makes it clear that wisdom comes from the man who takes the opportunity of *scholé* and does not overindulge in wage-earning labors. Note how the passage not only addresses too much Venture or labor—but also address the mental preoccupation of the man who only talks about his work. If his only talk is of his bullocks, we must surmise that his only thought is about them as well.

Scholé in the New Testament

In the New Testament (written in Greek), *scholé* only occurs a few times. *Scholé* can refer to a lecture hall (where *scholé* or learned discussions occur), and this is what we find in Acts 19:9, where we read that Paul took his disciples daily for discussions at the lecture hall (*scholén*) of a man named Tyrannus. In 1 Corinthians 7:5, Paul writes that married couples should devote (*scholaséte*) themselves to prayer. Paul here uses the verbal form of *scholé* that means to have rest or leisure, or to be dedicated or devoted (no distractions or obligatory work!).

Beyond the actual use of the word *scholé*, we do find the New Testament addressing the concept of *scholé* in several places:

The Example of Christ

The first indication we get that Jesus condones “restful learning” is that time we find Him at age twelve, away from His parents for at least three days, “in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). Leaving aside the fact that “Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers” (2:47), we should note that Jesus spent three days (sleeping at the temple too?) engaged in conversation with the best teachers in Israel. And He did this at the age of a sixth grader. He tells His parents that “he had to be

in his Father's house" (see 2:49), but we note that what He was doing in His Father's house resembles *scholé*, or restful learning.

We find Christ frequently going off by Himself to pray, even for forty days at a time. Christ seems never to be in a hurry, but relaxed and peaceful. Even when others around Him are frenetic, He is tranquil. In Luke 10, Martha implores Jesus to tell her sister Mary to help her with dinner preparations, for Martha was busy working while Mary was sitting and talking with Jesus. Jesus responds to her: "Martha, Martha you are anxious (busy) and troubled about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better (literally 'the good part'), and it will not be taken from her" (see Luke 10:42).

It is hard to imagine a better illustration from the gospels about what *scholé* means than this event recorded in Luke 10. We all have to prepare meals, do dishes, and work for wages—and these are good things. The better thing, however (when we are free to choose), is to talk with a master. Mary was talking with the Master, and certainly chose wisely.

Example from Paul's Writings

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

Paul notes that the faithful, in the context of the freedom given by the Spirit, contemplate (gaze, reflect) the glory of God and are then transformed to resemble that very glory. This reminds us of Christ's teaching that a student, when he has been fully trained, will be like his master (Luke 6:40). Paul also hints that this transformation is a process that takes time. We gaze and study the glory, and slowly (with ever-increasing glory, literally "from glory to glory") we grow to resemble this glory. Paul has in mind the experience of Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai after meeting with God there, having received the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments. When Moses came down from that mountain, his face was glowing brightly enough that he spooked the Israelites and had to put a veil over his face.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.... Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD. (Exodus 34:29-30, 35)

Apparently to Paul, the life of the Christian is to be one of contemplation and gazing—looking on the same one that set Moses's face aglow. This implies undistracted gazing, focus, and...time. Looking, gazing, and contemplation thus become a metaphor for learning, conversation, and transformation. After all, Moses was not upon the mountain in a kind of dream sleep—he was rather talking and listening to God—having a remarkable conversation with the Master. Paul suggests that we can now do the same.

Conclusion

It seems that even when not using the word *scholé*, the Old and New Testaments nonetheless describe a growing and learning process that is very much in keeping with Aristotle's use of the word. Slow, restful conversation and learning is set before us as an example to follow, with Christ Himself as the Master of *scholé*.

If the entire Christian life can be summarized as a kind of slow and sanctified conversation with the Master, could it be that all of our learning should take a cue from this same kind “restful learning” and resemble a refreshing and ongoing conversation?

If Christ says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,” and if He says, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29), then should not the way we educate our sons and daughters be gentle and restful?

How many of us have been busy about many things, thinking that we were not free to choose anything else?