



RMCA

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Middle School Course Overviews

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Dear Parents,

We are pleased to provide you with these Middle School Course Overviews. As a school dedicated to excellence, we are continually developing and improving our curricular choices. Therefore, we will occasionally and purposefully make changes to our scope and sequence as we continue to grow and refine our practice of education. Our focus is to partner with you, the parents, in “equipping students to impact their world for Christ by igniting a life-long passion to pursue truth, goodness, and beauty.”

For His Glory,

*Sylvia Robinson, Ph.D.
K-8 Principal*

Discipleship: Sixth Grade

Description and Rationale: Students will be disciplined in the principles of building godly character. The structure of the class is designed to be interactive and relevant, but most importantly to nurture healthy relationships. Also, the students will discover why developing a virtuous character is indispensable to their walk with the Lord, and the importance of applying those virtues to their everyday life situations.

Course Goals:

- Practice praying scripturally sound prayers;
- Nurture the building of strong friendships;
- Develop biblically mature skills to deal with difficult situations and people;
- Delve into questions pre-teens ask in order to build a bridge to maturity;
- Foster the importance of the parent-child relationship;
- Identify areas in their Christian walk they need to work on, and come up with an action plan to help them grow.
- Memorize Scripture passages.

Principal Textbook: *Character Quest*, by LifeWay;

Supplemental Texts: Selected Scriptures; *Proverbs*; *George Washington's Rules of Civility*; *The Quest for Godliness*, J. I. Packer.

Language Arts/Reading: Sixth Grade

Description and Rationale: The mission of this course is to help students to understand the grammatical structure of the English language, the mechanics of clear essay writing, and how to analyze literature. We also want all students to learn to appreciate the beauty and complexity of the English language. In grammar, they will be challenged to identify the Parts of Speech, how to diagram complex sentences with the traditional method, and they will continue to develop their punctuation skills. In writing, students will learn how to research, outline, and write clear and concise research essays, and also how to write exciting and vivid poetry and stories. In literature, they will be inspired to wonder, seek, explore and critically think about a variety of issues and ideas.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Become masters of basic grammar skills;
- Use writing to organize logical arguments and develop critical thinking skills;
- Read a variety of literature, including English translations of Latin texts.
- Learn about literary elements such as point of view, plot, setting, characterization, conflict, etc.
- Identify the elements of myths, fairy tales, legends, and fables;
- Be able to write creatively;
- Perform the skills necessary to write logical and clearly written essays;
- Build their vocabulary, mostly through words from their literature books.

Principal Textbook: *Prentice Hall: Grammar & Composition*

Book List: *Mara, Daughter of the Nile; Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry; Book of Greek Myths; The Bronze Bow; Essential Readings: An Anthology of Original Texts*

Language Arts: Seventh Grade

Description and Rationale: In Lang. Arts 7, students are encouraged to interact with literature on many levels. We hope to enjoy drama, novels, and poetry while analyzing literary devices and life philosophies inherent in these works. Students will gain writing experience through assignments including the composition of compare/contrast essays, analytic essays, original poetry, journal entries, and an original allegorical story.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Learn and review grammatical concepts in order to write more fluently
- Broaden vocabulary through a systematic vocabulary curriculum
- Compose organized 5-paragraph essays
- Read a variety of literature both on their own and together with classmates
- Respond to literature in a variety of ways, through journaling, discussing, essay writing, testing, acting and researching
- Expand exposure to literature through optional free reading

Principle textbooks/Curriculum: The Phantom Tollbooth; The Silver Chair; Emily of New Moon; Out of the Silent Planet; Adam of the Road; poems by Frost, Dickinson, Blake, drama selection; excerpts from Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream; Vocabulary from Classical Roots; Prentice-Hall Literature text; Prentice-Hall Grammar text; reader's theater version of Dicken's A Christmas Carol (time permitting)

Language Arts: Eighth Grade

Description and Rationale: This course will help students discern the embedded world views and appreciate the literary devices woven together within a variety of literary works, including novels, drama, short stories and non-fiction. Students will expand their writing experience through a variety of analytic and creative composition assignments, including essay of analysis, journaling, autobiography, and a brief research report. In addition, students will refine their writing fluency through exercises designed to promote sentences which include parallelism, compounding, variety.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Enhance comprehension through vocabulary development
- Analyze and respond to literature on both a "heart" and "head" level through discussion and composition
- Review advanced grammatical concepts to increase written fluency
- Compose organized 5-paragraph expository essays
- Expand exposure to literature through optional free reading

Principle textbooks/Curriculum: The Fellowship of the Ring; Huck Finn; Drama selection; The Hiding Place; short stories by Hawthorne, Bradbury, Poe and London; excerpts from Dante's Inferno; Vocabulary from Classical Roots; Prentice-Hall Literature text; Prentice-Hall Grammar text

History 6

Description and Rationale: Students will gain a comprehensive overview of history from the time of creation until the rise of the Roman Empire under Augustus Caesar. Students will critically analyze the evolutionary model of the origins of the universe, and compare that to the creation model in its various forms. Also, students will study key people, significant events, influential cultures, various government models, and the impact of wars on human history, all from the Christian perspective that history is guided by God's supreme oversight and His redemptive plan.

Course Goals:

- To emphasize God's activity throughout the course of human events;
- To gain a greater appreciation of our place within God's plan;
- Draw life lessons from the people and events studied;
- To be able to sequence the flow of major empires, including those appearing in the Bible.
- To develop a clear understanding of the chronological order of events and people in the Old Testament;
- To read the entire Old Testament.

Principal Textbook: *Holt: Ancient Civilizations* (classroom text and online text)

Supplemental Texts: *The House of Israel*, published by Christian Schools Internationals; *The Chronological Old Testament* (a reading guide developed for RMCA's sixth grade).

History 7

Description and Rationale: In this course, students will learn, understand, recount, and explain worldviews and the chronological flow of the church, key individuals, cultures, governments, events, inventions, the arts, literature, and ideas in human history worldwide from the rise of the Roman Empire in 31 BC to the high point of the Middle Ages in AD 1300. Throughout this course, students will continue to explore history through the worldview of Christian theism and will be taught and called upon to infer life lessons from the significance of ideas, human choice, and divine involvement in history.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Apply a Christian approach to history;
- Understand the ongoing role worldviews play in the saga of human history;
- Be able to sequence the flow of major events, key people, cultures, and nations, including those in the New Testament;
- Learn why ideas, choices, and relationships matter, especially across generations;
- Identify, trace, and appreciate God's involvement in human history, especially in the coming of his Son as Jesus Christ and in the establishment and growth of his church;
- Learn the historical reliability of the New Testament, and the historical reality and pivotal significance of Jesus Christ;
- Draw life lessons from the historical period covered.

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: NIV Bible, *Holt World History: The Human Journey*

Supplementary Materials: Here is but a sampling of the numerous additional resources that will be used as aids for teaching history: *A General Introduction to the Bible*, by Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix; *A Treasury of Evangelical Writings*, ed. David Otis Fuller; *Art: A New History*, by Paul Johnson; *Documents of Western Civilization, Volume I: To 1715*, Jackson J. Spielvogel; *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, by Ruth A. Tucker; *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, ed. John D. Woodbridge; *In the Fullness of Time*, by Paul L. Maier; *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., ed. Philip Schaff; *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History*, by A. Kenneth Curtis et al; *Timelines of World History*, by John B. Temple; *Western Civilization*, by Jackson J. Spielvogel

History 8

Description and Rationale: This course will help students learn, understand, recount, and explain the chronological flow of the church, key people, cultures, governments, events, inventions, the arts, literature, ideas (including worldviews), and choices in human history worldwide from the high point of the Middle Ages in AD 1300 through the Vietnam War. Throughout this course, students will continue to explore history through the worldview of Christian theism and will be taught and called upon to infer life lessons from the significance of ideas, human choice, and divine involvement in history.

Goals: In this course, students will:

- Apply a Christian approach to history;
- Understand the ongoing role worldviews play in the saga of human history;
- Be able to sequence the flow of major events, key people, cultures, and nations;
- Learn why ideas, choices, and relationships matter, especially across generations;
- Identify, trace, and appreciate God's involvement in human history, especially in the Protestant Reformation and its aftermath, the colonization of North America, the establishment and development of the American Republic, and the ongoing spread and growth of the church worldwide;
- Appreciate the continued pivotal significance of Jesus Christ's first coming and his anticipated second coming;
- Draw life lessons from the historical period covered.

Textbooks: NIV Bible, *Holt World History: The Human Journey; The American Republic* (textbook and workbook)

Supplemental Resources: Here is but a sampling of the numerous additional resources that will be used as aids for teaching history: *Art: A New History*, by Paul Johnson; *Delivered From Evil: The Saga of World War II*, by Robert Leckie; *Documents of Western Civilization, Volume I: To 1715*, Jackson J. Spielvogel; *An Illustrated History of the First World War*, by John Keegan; *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, by Ruth A. Tucker; *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, ed. John D. Woodbridge; *Great Women in American History*, by Rebecca Price Janney; *Jazz: A History of America's Music*, by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns; *More Than Conquerors*, ed. John Woodbridge; *Sources of Our Liberties*, ed. Richard L. Perry; *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., ed. Philip Schaff; *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought*, by Barry Alan Shain; *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History*, by A. Kenneth Curtis et al; *Timelines of World History*, by John B. Temple (Dorling Kindersley Ltd.); *Western Civilization*, by Jackson J. Spielvogel

Logic & Apologetics (7th Grade)

Description and Rationale: What is logic? Where does it come from? What kinds of logic are there? What does thinking logically involve? Why does logic matter? How does logic relate to Christianity? We will ask and answer these questions in this course, focusing especially on deductive (formal) logic. In the process, students will apply what they learn to select issues in Christian apologetics and worldview.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Gain knowledge of the logical nature of God and humankind;
- Discover the friendly relationship between faith, reason, and revelation;
- Learn and memorize what logic is and what kinds of logic there are;
- Come to identify, appreciate, and better use the three logical acts of the human mind;
- Become much more skilled at reasoning correctly and critically;
- Become familiar with numerous formal fallacies of incorrect thinking so they can spot them, critique them, and avoid them in their own thinking.

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: *Traditional Logic: Book I*, by Martin Cothran; NIV Bible

Supplementary Materials: The following resources will also be used as primary aids for teaching this course: *A Christian's Guide to Critical Thinking*, by Henry A. Virkler; *Come, Let Us Reason: An Introduction to Logical Thinking*, by Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks; *Creative Thinking Puzzles*, by John H. Doolittle; *Critical Thinking*, books 1 & 2, by Anita Harnadek; *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, by Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli; *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek; *Introductory Logic*, by Douglas J. Wilson and James B. Nance; "Jesus the Logician," by Dallas Willard, in *The Best Christian Writing 2000*, ed. John Wilson; *Logical Thinking Skills*, by Martha Martin; *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, by J. P. Moreland; *Ten Philosophical Mistakes*, by Mortimer J. Adler; *Think-a-Grms*, by Evelyne M. Graham; *Dr. Funster's Think-a-Minutes*; *Yes or No?*, by Peter Kreeft

Logic & Apologetics (8th Grade)

Note: Logic 8 for the 2006-07 school year varies little from Logic 7, since this is the first year that the Logic course will be offered to 7th graders. For the 2007-08 school year, Logic 8 will deal with more of deductive logic, along with principles of and fallacies in inductive and material logic. These added studies will give students ample opportunities to apply their critical thinking skills to even more contemporary issues, especially in apologetics, politics, theology, ethics, biblical interpretation, and worldviews.

Life Science: Sixth Grade

Description and Rationale: The student will learn that *Science* can be defined as *man's observations of the world God created and man's use of those observations to make decisions*. Life Science is observations and decisions about living things. The student will learn about the observations other people have made about living things and learn to make good observations on their own. In this course the student will also learn what God has said about life and living things in his Word. The student will learn the principles he has given to direct our decision making about living things. Most importantly, students will learn how to make wise and healthy decisions for their own lives.

Course Goals: In these courses, students will:

- Learn the Foundations of Life Science such as the scientific method, how science and the Bible relate, classification, cell structure and activities.
- Develop critical thinking about Heredity and the Origin of Life by studying mitosis and genes, genetics of organisms, genetic changes, biblical creationism, and theories of biological evolution.
- Be introduced to concepts of Microbiology and Plant Biology by studying the little seen Kingdoms (Monera, Protista, and Fungi), as well as the Kingdom Plantae (plant structure, activities, asexual and sexual reproduction).
- Explore concepts in the Animal Kingdom by studying invertebrates and vertebrates through zoological surveys and dissection labs. Also learn about animal behaviors and sexual reproduction in animals.
- Learn structure and function of the Human Body by studying all the major body systems. Human Sexual Reproduction is briefly covered on an opt-out basis and parents may review materials in advance.

Primary Textbook/Curriculum: *Life Science for Christian Schools*, and *Student Activities in Life Science for Christian Schools*, both from Bob Jones University Press

Supplementary Materials: NIV Bible; *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation* by Dennis Petersen, Creation Resource Publications

Earth Science: Seventh Grade

Description and Rationale: This course is designed as a survey course touching the major areas of earth science including astronomy, meteorology, geology, oceanography, and glaciology. Students will study the old-universe and young-universe models in astronomy and old-earth and young-earth models for the rest of the course with the assumption that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) Naturalistic evolution will also be discussed so that the students have a general understanding of this model of origins.

The year will begin with lessons on defining “science” and understanding its role in our lives as well as its limitations. Students will also apply the general principles of the scientific method and learn the methods and importance of taking accurate measurements in scientific investigations. There will be hands-on activities and field trips, as well as writing assignments, throughout the year.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Gain better insight into the character of God. “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)
- Gain an appreciation and better understanding of the physical universe that God has created
- Be able to think critically and rationally about science-faith issues
- Develop the skills of observation and recording, reasoning, and communicating findings in written and oral formats

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: *Earth Science for Christian Schools* by Bob Jones University Press, and *Earth Science* by Addison-Wesley

Supplementary Materials: *Developing Critical Thinking Through Physical Science* and *Science-wise* by Critical Thinking Press, as well as supplemental readings and handouts

Physical Science: Eighth Grade

Description and Rationale: The broad objective of this course is to develop laboratory skills, reasoning skills (e.g., the application of knowledge to new situations), and communication skills while gaining an understanding of force, motion and energy. We will concentrate on a few key topics on which students will be able to build in the future. This course relies on the fact that all students have had some everyday experience with pushes and pulls; time, distance, and speed (“fast,” “slow”); and temperature. But this course has no science-content prerequisites. In this program, all new ideas are based on concrete student experiences during labs and all new terms are introduced only after the need for them has been established.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Gain better insight into the character of God. “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)
- Gain an appreciation and better understanding of the matter and energy that make up the physical universe that God has created
- Be able to think critically and rationally about science-faith issues
- Develop the skills of observing, reasoning, and communicating in written and oral formats

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: *Force, Motion, and Energy* by Science Curriculum.

Supplementary Materials: *Developing Critical Thinking Through Physical Science* and *Science-wise* by Critical Thinking Press, as well as supplemental readings and handouts

Mathematics: Sixth to Eighth Grades

Description and Rationale: Saxon Math is based on introducing a topic to a student and then allowing them to build upon that concept as they learn new ones. Topics are never dropped but are instead increased in complexity and practiced every day, providing the time required for concepts to become totally familiar. This incremental approach to math differs from most traditional programs, which are “chapter-based.” Saxon program divides concepts into smaller, more easily grasped pieces called increments. A new increment is presented each day and students work only a few problems involving the new material. The remaining homework consists of practice problems involving concepts previously introduced. Thus, every assignment (and every test) is a cumulative review of all material covered up to that point. Harold Jacobs’ *Elementary Algebra* is used in the Algebra 1 class because it is better suited to the logic stage of the trivium in classical education. In all of the above, students will learn to appreciate God, the Master Mathematician, as they apply math concepts in observing, quantifying, measuring, and modeling created things, and the physical laws that govern them.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Better understand abstract mathematical concepts
- Achieve automaticity in concept recognition and skill application through daily practice
- Understand how mathematical concepts demonstrate the orderliness, precision, and consistency of God

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: Saxon Mathematics Series: 76, 87, and Algebra ½; Harold Jacobs’ *Elementary Algebra*

Supplementary Materials: NIV Bible, Math Games (various), *When Are We Ever Gonna Have to Use This?* by Dale Seymour Publications

Spanish Electives

Description and Rationale: RMCA's Spanish electives are equivalent to level one high school Spanish foreign language instruction. Upon successfully completing both Spanish I and II, students will be prepared to take second-year high school Spanish. Spanish I and II are designed to provide students with an introduction to the Spanish language and cultures where Spanish is spoken. Students will communicate orally and in writing and will also develop listening and reading skills in Spanish.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Speak, write, listen, and read in Spanish
- Begin using and understanding basic Spanish while learning simple Spanish vocabulary
- Learn about Spanish-speaking cultures in the United States and the world
- Interact with Spanish-speaking Christians
- Experience the Latino culture in our own community

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: *En Español 2000* by McDougal Littell Inc.

Supplemental Materials: *Integrated Audio Program*; Audio CD's; *Más Práctica* workbook by McDougal, Littell, Inc.

Art/Drawing Elective

Description and Rationale: Drawing is a method for students to express their own creativity in the visual arts. Students explore a variety of techniques, styles, and media. The course focuses on the elements of art (line, shape, form, color, value, texture, and space). Students begin by using pencil, charcoal, and ink, and slowly explore color. Art history is integrated throughout this course. The course is designed to build a strong foundation in many aspects of the arts.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Show an understanding and ability to apply the elements and principles of art to work
- Keep a sketchbook to develop and expand on learned elements
- Gain confidence in their skills
- Develop an appreciation of fine art and the ability to analyze and critique
- Recognize God as the author of creativity, and recognize that visual arts should bring him glory
- Have fun!

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: Teacher-designed lessons and projects

Supplemental Materials: *Our Christian Heritage Through Art*, by Kathryn L. Bell; *Drawing for Older Children and Teens*, by Mona Brooks; and samples of various artist's work

Art/Mixed Media Elective

Description and Rationale: Students in the Mixed Media class have already had an exposure to the fundamentals of art. After a brief review, they go on to look at the principles of art (balance, contrast, proportion, pattern, rhythm, emphasis, unity, and variety). Students explore a variety of two- and three-dimensional projects in this course. Art history is integrated throughout. The course is designed to build upon the foundation that is already in place, and to allow students to begin to discover their niche in the arts.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Show an understanding and ability to apply the elements and principles of art to work
- Keep a sketchbook to record what they are learning and expand on their own
- Further an appreciation of fine art and the ability to analyze and critique
- Recognize God as the author of creativity, and recognize that visual arts should bring him glory
- Have fun!

Principal Textbook/Curriculum: Teacher-designed lessons and projects

Supplemental Materials: *Our Christian Heritage Through Art*, by Kathryn L. Bell; *Drawing for Older Children and Teens*, by Mona Brooks; and samples of various artist's work

Technology Elective

Description and Rationale: This is a one trimester course designed as an introduction to using word processing and spreadsheet application software. The students will be using Microsoft Word and Excel and, if time permits, Power Point presentation software. They will be using IBM laptop computers to complete assigned projects. They will also become familiar with basic file management. The students are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Course Goals: In the course, students will:

- Learn basic file management concepts of file names and extensions, directories (folders), file paths, and the saving and copying of documents that they create.
- Learn to use basic tools and functions to create and edit different types of documents in MS Word and Excel.

Materials Used: Software: Microsoft Office suite

Beginning Band Elective

Description and Rationale: This course is designed for the student with no instrumental music experience. The course is open to woodwind, brass, and percussion students. Students will learn basic skills, and will study the musical elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, tone, and texture. Students will grow in their God-given talents to further his kingdom through music.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Follow daily rehearsal procedures
- Meet all performance obligations
- Follow basic concert performance etiquette
- Individually practice their instruments effectively, at least 60 minutes per week
- Demonstrate basic performance competency in the following areas:
 - Tone—demonstrate a suitable characteristic tone/sound for the instrument
 - Ensemble—demonstrate the ability to play rhythms together and follow a conductor
 - Intonation—demonstrate the ability to match pitch
 - Technique—demonstrate the ability to play a one octave range and basic eighth note rhythms

Materials Used: *Standard of Excellence Book I*, and other music assigned throughout the year

Culminating Activities include performing in Christmas and Spring Concerts, and participating in the ACSI Music Festival.

Intermediate Band Elective

Description and Rationale: This course is designed for the student with one or more years of experience in Band. The course is open to woodwind, brass, and percussion students. Students will learn intermediate skills, and will develop their understanding and skill with the musical elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, tone, and texture. Students will grow in their God-given talents to further his kingdom through music.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Follow daily rehearsal procedures
- Meet all performance obligations
- Follow basic concert performance etiquette
- Individually practice their instruments effectively, at least 60 minutes per week
- Demonstrate basic performance competency in the following areas:
 - Tone—demonstrate a suitable characteristic tone/sound for the instrument
 - Ensemble—demonstrate the ability to play rhythms together and follow a conductor
 - Intonation—demonstrate the ability to match pitch in each section of the band
 - Technique—demonstrate the ability to play basic sixteenth note patterns and a range of 1 ½ octaves

Materials Used: *Standard of Excellence Book II*, and other music assigned throughout the year

Culminating Activities include performing in Christmas and Spring Concerts, and participating in the ACSI Music Festival.

Choir Elective

Description and Rationale: This course is designed to provide an introduction in basic musical skills and content for the interested young singer. There are two important objectives. First, the aspects of good singing and musicianship are explored and experienced. Additionally, an emphasis is placed upon active and responsible group participation. This course provides instruction in proper vocal techniques and rehearsal practices. Through a variety of choral literature, students will experience two and/or three-part singing. The musical elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, tone color, and texture will also be learned through the direct application of performing music in an ensemble setting. Students are encouraged to grow in their stewardship of their God-given talents in furthering His kingdom through music.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Follow daily rehearsal procedures
- Meet all performance obligations
- Follow basic concert performance etiquette
- Sing two and sometimes three part music depending on the range and level of the choir
- Begin to use the music as a tool for learning as opposed to rote learning
- Begin to sightread music and appreciate the skill as a singer
- Develop his/her individual singing voice within his/her own limitations
- Appreciate all music by singing music from diverse cultures and styles
- Have fun, do their best, and enjoy music!!

Materials Used: *Essential Musicianship Book I*; *Essential Repertoire Book I*; and other music assigned throughout the year

Physical Education: Fitness Elective

Description and Rationale: Each student is an individual uniquely created by God. Education of and through movement is a portion of developing a mind in a sound body. This course is designed to help students appreciate and care for their physical bodies, while appreciating the individual differences in others. Students will participate in a wide variety of physical activities, allowing them to learn new and different skills, develop and improve existing skills, and refine and master skills already acquired, while increasing personal physical fitness levels. Students will develop an appreciation for lifelong fitness habits.

Course Goals: In this course, students will:

- Participate in vigorous physical activity twice a week for forty minutes
- Participate in individual activities, lead-up activities, and team activities
- Participate in the Presidential Challenge Fitness Program
- Learn about healthy and safe methods of exercise
- Learn about cardiovascular, respiratory, and muscular systems and how they function during exercise
- Memorize scripture relating the physical body to the spiritual body

Materials Used: Presidential Challenge Fitness Program; *Physical Education 6-8* by Christian Schools International; NIV Bible; various other internet sites, resources, and activities, as well as the instructor's own ideas

Appendix

Curriculum Defined

The word “curriculum” means “what it intended to be taught.” It actually comes from the Latin word *currere*, meaning *to run*. It is the same root from which we get the word *course*, as in a running track. This view of curriculum, as a set *course*, helps us to view our curriculum in a somewhat different way than exists in most public schools. While the popular fad in education is to individualize instruction, classical education defines a course, or curriculum, through which every student progresses. Our curriculum is deliberately chosen, based on what has been tried and true and taught to children across the centuries. Of course, there are always adjustments to content as new knowledge is discovered, but the basic truths and methods do not change.

There are, however, some categories of curriculum which must be considered when discussing a school’s curriculum. This guide is intended to spell out the “written curriculum,” the documentation that describes the scope and sequence of what students will be taught in each subject. There are two kinds of curriculum that certainly exist but are not usually described in written form. They are the “living curriculum” and the “cultural curriculum.” The “living curriculum” is the result of what an individual teacher brings to the “written curriculum.” While each teacher may be provided with the same list of learning objectives, she brings her own experience and teaching flair to that topic. So, the “written curriculum” may be taught in a slightly different way and to a slightly varying level of detail depending on who is teaching it.

The “cultural curriculum” refers to the atmosphere in which the “written curriculum” is taught. The culture of the school itself (and each classroom) provides a foundation upon which the learning experience is created. Therefore, the written curriculum described in this document must be considered in light of the living and cultural curricula of the school.

Our Instructional Values

Are there certain beliefs that you hold which guide you in your curricular decision making?

Yes. At RMCA, our core beliefs about instruction drive what happens in our classrooms. These instructional values are listed below:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). Therefore spiritual formation and intellectual development are not mutually exclusive. All subject matter is taught from the perspective of a Christian worldview. Biblical faith, precepts and principles are integrated into learning and activities.

The classical Trivium promotes intellectual development. Therefore, teachers grow in the understanding and application of classical practices.

Growth and learning is the aim of education. Therefore students are active participants in the learning process, not passive recipients of information. Teachers model growth and learning before their students.

Subject matter is interrelated. Therefore, subjects are naturally integrated and multidisciplinary approaches to learning are used when appropriate.

Teachers are instructional and moral authorities. Therefore, they purposefully and systematically guide and direct the learning of their students while modeling the highest Christian virtues.

The preservation of innocence cultivates healthy social and emotional development. Therefore, instruction and subject matter are age-appropriate.

Students possess differing learning styles and intelligences. Therefore teachers engage students in a variety of activities and utilize varying teaching methods and materials.

Christian & Classical Education

What do we mean by Christian Education?

Since God's truth is revealed in the Bible and in His creation, we teach that knowledge is interrelated and can instruct us about God Himself. We seek to integrate God's truth and love into the academic, physical, social, and spiritual education of each student. Ideals and standards of scholarship consistent with the understanding of the lordship of Jesus Christ are continually fostered. Students are encouraged to view their world through God's truth.

Parents, teachers and students are all expected to take an active role in the learning process. We believe that education is most effective when the responsibility for learning is shared among all those involved.

What do we mean by "classical" education?

One of the most valuable developments of western civilization, classical education utilizes traditional liberal arts as a means of instilling wisdom and virtue in our students. Our liberal arts curriculum is delivered by way of the "Trivium" – a word that describes three modes of learning: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Grammar is concerned with the basic facts, rules and required skills of any given subject. Logic involves learning to think and reason in the language of various subjects. And, rhetoric requires students to express their thoughts in a compelling and persuasive manner.

While each area of the Trivium is addressed at every grade level and in all subjects, the developmental stages of children lend themselves to particular modes of learning. For this reason, we emphasize the grammar mode of learning with kindergarteners through fifth graders, who find skill acquisition and repetition to be easy and comfortable. Once students begin to question and contradict, overlapping into fifth grade and up through about the eighth grade, they are ready to emphasize logic. As students begin to know, think about, and explain their world, they are being prepared to begin their lifelong pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

Choosing the Best Curricula

Some schools attempt to ensure the religious content of their curriculum through the use of textbooks written and published especially for Christian schools. Many schools use such textbooks exclusively, for all subjects. This is commendable if the quality of instructional material is at least on a par with that which is available from secular sources. Unfortunately, however, much of what I have seen in this area is sadly deficient.¹

Such textbooks may be "Christian," but if they fail to capture the interest of students and fail to convey the subject matter clearly, their use becomes counterproductive. My own experience is that a teacher can more successfully supplement a good secular textbook with her own Christian input in class discussion than try to correct the educational deficiencies of an amateurish Christian textbook. Administrators making purchasing decisions can help improve the overall quality of the Christian textbook market by buying only those specific products that measure up to high academic standards, rather than bring in a publisher's complete line which may include a mixed bag of books, some excellent and some inferior. Such selective buying should eventually raise the quality of our own textbooks by forcing them to compete directly with secular books. On the other hand, buying inferior books just because they are "Christian" has the same weakening effect as when a businessman hires incompetent friends rather than qualified workers who can get the job done right.²

Should resources known to be authored by non-Christians be banned from the Christian school? Should we reject Webster's English Dictionary on the basis that non-Christians have been contributing editors? The answer is, no. God, in His wisdom, has given insights to all people. This is known theologically as "common grace." Many of the great discoveries, advances, and even educational resources have occurred as a result of the work of non-Christian people. One reason for using a book authored by a non-Christian is that we should be vigilantly looking for the evidence of a non-Christian worldview. However, in a work written by a Christian, we may be lulled into a false sense of security.³

The bottom line is, the whole issue needs redefining. Choosing the best curricula should not be about whether the author was a Christian or a non-Christian. The question we ask when choosing our resources should be, "Which curricula conforms to our mission statement and will assist us most effectively to work out our educational purpose and goals in the Christian school?"⁴

¹ & ²Reed, Cecilia "What Makes a School 'Christian'" in "Here, Fix My Kid" at <http://ww7.com/herefixmykid/#what>

³ & ⁴Edlin, Richard *The Cause of Christian Education*, Vision Press: 1998.

Excerpt from “Who’s Teaching My Child?”

By Brett King, RMCA Headmaster

Living the values they teach is a teacher’s most potent strategy to influence the development of Christ-like character in our kids. Consider this passage from Luke 6:39-40: “He also told them this parable: ‘Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.’” I have always been humbled and challenged by this passage. After all, I want my own children, when they are fully trained, to be like the Great Teacher, Jesus. It seems, therefore, that it would be beneficial to entrust my children to teachers who pursue the same goal in their own lives. This connection is one of the key reasons why a godly character is the foremost qualification for teaching at RMCA. Modeling is the most powerful teaching tool, and it is only one aspect of RMCA’s strategy of forging character in our students.

Kids need to both see and hear biblical principles. Direct instruction surrounding the character of God and the precepts of scripture is a natural outgrowth of our teachers’ walk with the Lord, and an integral piece of the planned curriculum. From memorizing Bible verses to applying a biblical worldview to interpreting historical events, students are naturally taught the “*meaning of the stipulations, decrees, and laws of the Lord...*” (Deut. 6:20) One parent expressed surprise at the request of a history teacher that students bring their Bibles to history class. This is a common and even expected practice at RMCA. Teachers seek to develop in students the connection between the benefits of morality as defined in scripture and the consequences of immorality so often revealed in history. Simply put, we teach students that ideas and behaviors have consequences.

Our teachers aren’t perfect. But their own commitment to Christ-likeness has an immediate and a cumulative impact on their students’ character development. As you assess your schooling options each year, please consider the moral influence of the teachers to whom you are entrusting your most precious commodity.

Recommended Resources

The Case for Classical Christian Education by Douglas Wilson, Crossway Books, 2003.

The Cause of Christian Education by Richard J. Edlin, Vision Press, 1998.

The Educated Child by William J. Bennett, Free Press, 2000.

Piety and Philosophy by Richard A. Riesen, ACW Press, 2002.

Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning by Douglas Wilson, Crossway Books, 1991.

Why Johnny Can’t Tell Right from Wrong by William Kilpatrick, Simon & Schuster, 1993.

“Why Sonlight Uses Certain Books that Some Homeschoolers Won’t Touch” article on <http://www.sonlight.com/thatbook.html>

Why Don't You Teach About Sex & Drugs?

Many of us recall the “fifth grade film.” It was the day in public school when boys and girls were taken into separate rooms and shown films about the human reproductive process. Any questions? You bet! Was anyone going to ask them? Not a chance! This whole process is part of the big lie that information and education will change the hearts of kids. You've seen the ads on PBS with the open ended statement, “The More You Know!” That's just not true. If knowledge is all it takes to keep us from sinning, why is sin ever increasing in the Information Age? We all know what God wants, why don't we do it or not do it as the case may be? The answer is, it's a heart issue. Choosing to be moral is not a decision we make because we've seen a film. We decide to be moral because we love God and His children.

The best place for children to learn how to treat the opposite sex and how to care for their bodies is in the home. Kids learn courtesy, kindness and respect for others first at home. It is within the context of family that children understand what it means to love others as you would love yourself. When parents perform their God-given role to set the example by living pure and moral lives, children are watching and learning. If we wait until children are pre-adolescent to teach them these things, no amount of “Just Say No” ribbons or “Purity Pledges” will do the job.

Every child is different. It is primarily the parents who have the kind of relationship with a child that would allow them to know the best time to discuss such delicate issues. This is another reason why schools are not the best place for sex and drug education. Just because a child is a certain age, in a certain grade, does not make him or her ready to learn all there is to know about human reproduction. The parents can do a better job of gauging readiness and teaching their child what they need to know when they need to know it.

So what *do* we teach? We teach that God made our bodies and the ways that they work are a testament to His design. We teach that God wants us to take care of the bodies He gave us because they are a temple of the Holy Spirit and we are bearers of His image. We teach about the systems of the human body and how they react, both positively and negatively, to chemicals (including legal and illegal drugs and even foods). We underscore that God's word has much to say on the issue of moral decisions affecting the body. But, ***we would not dream of robbing you, the parents, of the opportunity to explain the beauty of the love between a husband and wife to your child.***

RMCA recommends that you contact your church's children's ministry staff with questions about resources to help you with these discussions.