

Overview

St. Francis Classical Academy provides traditionalist, Christian education that is rigorous, leisurely, and beautiful. We offer advanced liberal arts courses in humanities, math, and science to homeschoolers. We were founded in 2021 and graduated our first class of seniors in May, 2023. Classes are held Monday through Thursday from 8am to 3pm. We offer classes “university style,” meaning that students may enroll in as many classes as suit them. Our program provides an intensive liberal arts education with traditional pedagogy and content.

Distinctives

- Creedal Christianity
- Traditionalism
- Rigor
- Leisure
- Beauty

We seek to cultivate in our students what St. Augustine calls “rightly ordered loves.” Because we are led by our loves, and because the work to which we commit our hands flows directly from our affections, we want our students to be constantly in pursuit of good taste. And because we are Christians and traditionalists, the things we desire our students to have affection for are the good things that have stood the test of time.

In a relativistic age, when new things are in vogue every ten minutes, we teach students to unashamedly believe that popularity does not indicate value. We teach that some things are better than others. Some food, some art, some music, some ideas are inherently good, and some are inherently bad. We believe that the goodness and badness of things is proven only over time. For instance, we may safely cultivate our affections for the paintings of Caravaggio and the sculptures of Michelangelo because they have lasted for over 400 years, and they are likely to last for the next 400. They have been proven good. On the other hand, we are suspicious of the philosophies and baubles that are in fashion today because they are untested. They are not necessarily devoid of value, they simply have not been proven, and must be handled cautiously and interpreted in the light of our love of the greatest things.

Enrollment

This year’s enrollment, K5-12, is approximately 45 students.

Contact Information

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Headmaster Bobby McGee

Affiliations

Society for Classical Learning (SCL), Member

Tutors

The student : tutor ratio across the school is 5:1.

Graduate Telos

Our final aim is not good test scores, though many students certainly achieve those. Our aim is to graduate able Christian citizens, linguists, philosophers, historians, mathematicians, and theologians — free men and women who, by pious self-denial, will go out to wage cosmic war on rulers, principalities, and the powers of darkness.

Preparation for Life & Further Education

Families who are new to classical or traditionalist education might wonder, “If we educate classically at St. Francis, will my children be educated as well as they might be at another school? Will they be prepared for the rigors of middle and highschool?”

The answer, borne out in good classical schools over time and around the world, is a resounding, “yes.” Students classically educated in the liberal arts tradition are abundantly prepared intellectually and spiritually for any field of study they choose to tackle in the future. The exceptional Tutors, pedagogy, curriculum, and ideology of St. Francis Classical, though unusual in our time, conspire to prepare students exceptionally well for life, labor, and further education.

Leisure & Beauty

In the First Form, we strive to enfold the ancient correspondence of education and play. The Christian philosopher Josef Pieper explains that true *scholē* (a word that means both education and leisure) depends on one’s “ability to celebrate a feast.”

In this spirit, we work to shape students’ loves by immersing them in the “feast” of God’s goodness and the richness of His creation. We use carefully chosen stories, songs, games, and dances to encourage inquiry and direct their loves toward timeless, eternal things. Students work with their hands, sing, read, and dance to develop their taste for the rich labors they will pursue more directly in the Second and Third Forms. During these early years, students learn the basics of interpretation, not just of the written word, but of the natural world, history, and great works of art.

Non-numerical grading

Students at St. Francis Classical only see Latin grade designations and corresponding narrative feedback on their assessments and semester report cards. This approach to grading naturally drives a student’s attention to the quality of his work, and reduces the tendency of students to fixate on the grades themselves.

(Nota Bene: Satis is a true average at St. Francis Classical.)

SCL	Summa Cum Laude	With Highest Praise
MCL	Magna Cum Laude	With Great Praise
CH	Cum Honore	With Honor
S	Satis	Sufficient
NS	Non Satis	Lacking Sufficiency
CD	Cum Defectu	With Deficiency

Courses Offered

N.B. These courses may be offered in alternate sequences depending upon the needs and prior coursework of the students enrolled.

	Grade K5	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Mathematics	Singapore's Dimensions Math K5	Singapore's Dimensions Math 1	Singapore's Dimensions Math 2	Singapore's Dimensions Math 3	Singapore's Dimensions Math 4
Science	Burgess Animal Book or Burgess Seashore Book			Botany or Astronomy	
Literature	K5 Literature	1st - 2nd Literature		3rd - 4th Literature	
Bible/History	Aelfred Rex Bible	Aelfred Rex Bible		Aelfred Rex Bible	
Musicianship, Ancient Language	Kodaly Musicianship I		Kodaly Musicianship II	Latin	
Language Arts	Phonics - Reading, Spelling, and Writing	Dictation and Imitation I	Dictation and Imitation II	Dictation and Imitation III	Dictation and Imitation IV

Course Descriptions

Mathematics: These courses in Arithmetic, one of the seven Classical Liberal Arts, are designed to teach mental discipline and move students from the concrete and tangible study of numbers and patterns (the art of recognizing multitudes and magnitudes) to love the source of all beauty. We use Singapore's Dimensions curriculum because it is particularly suited to helping students learn math conceptually and develop mathematical reading comprehension.

Science: These courses are designed to whet students' appetites for scientific study by encouraging them to delight in the complexity and beauty of creation. Lessons are image heavy, and students do a fair amount of sketching. Lessons are presented in story format in K5-2nd grades; students transition to topical study in 3rd and 4th.

	<u>Primary Texts</u>
K5 - 2nd	<i>The Burgess Animal Book, The Burgess Seashore Book</i>
3rd - 4th	<i>Exploring Creation with Botany, Exploring Creation with Astronomy</i> (Apologia Press)

Literature: Students read and discuss approximately nine books each year with their Tutors. Tutors read aloud and exegese; students read along, narrate, discuss, and respond orally. Because of the setting, we intentionally choose books that are challenging for students. We have chosen these books with the following ends in mind: teaching students to love reading, developing in students a taste for good literature that will prepare them to read great literature, and providing students with stories of exemplary characters for imitation.

Bible/History: Students learn the overarching narrative of the Scriptures by studying the stories of the Bible episodically over several years. This course is designed both to increase students' familiarity with the Scriptures and to improve students' writing abilities. Kindergarteners practice acting out and narrating Bible stories orally, 1st and 2nd graders practice rewriting the narrative in full, robust sentences, and 3rd-4th graders learn to express themselves in paragraph form.

Latin: This course treats Latin as an end in itself - a beautiful thing that is worth enjoying for its own sake. Students begin to learn Latin in 3rd or 4th grades, using book I of *Lingua Latina*. They learn to read, speak, memorize, and recite in Latin.

Musicianship: This course is designed to help students acquire a musical ear, establishing and building on the foundations of pitch, rhythm, and two-part singing. Tutors utilize the Kodaly method of instruction, teaching pitches and intervals through solfege, which engages the body in the processes of hearing and singing. Students listen to great classical works, sing folk songs, dance folk dances, and learn the rudiments of written notation.

Language Arts:

(K5): Students learn to read, spell, and write. We teach reading and spelling using a traditional phonetic method and print writing by emphasizing standard letter formation and proper pencil grip. Students also enjoy hands-on crafts to develop fine motor skills. We use many curricula in this course, but our primary resources are Memoria Press's *First Start Reading* and readers from the *American Language Series*.

(1st - 4th): Students learn grammar and spelling as they learn to write via imitation. Each week, students are presented with an excerpt from a good work of Literature or a Poem. Students read this excerpt aloud, study it with their Tutors, then copy it in preparation for a dictation exercise at the end of the week. During the dictation exercise, Tutors read the week's excerpt aloud, line by line, and students write what they hear in an attempt to duplicate the original exactly. This course is primarily about exposure to good literature and "ear training" - training students to have an ear (and an eye) for good English grammar and syntax. Students begin to write in cursive in 3rd grade.

Art & Choir: Once a week, 1st through 4th graders study Art History through a variety of studio art projects pertaining to the pieces of art they study. Also once a week, all students 3rd-12th participate with their Tutors in choir and receive instruction in musicianship.