

The Mission of Lighthouse Christian Academy is to partner with Christian parents to provide a biblically integrated and academically excellent education to develop each child's Christ-like character, intellectual ability, and physical health to the glory of God.

Principles of Christian Education

Four Basic Principles as
Expressed at LCA

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Introduction Biblical Integration

Parents throughout the community are currently weighing the choices placed before them for the education of their children. You may have had the opportunity to speak with a fellow church member, a neighbor, or coworker, about the educational opportunities found at LCA. Over the next several weeks, *The Heart of the Head of School* will encompass articles that articulate four basic principles that form the foundation of a biblical approach to education, what we refer to as Christian Education, as it is expressed here at Lighthouse Christian Academy. Though not in any order of importance, they may assist you in conversation with other people when they ask you questions about our programs, or why you chose Christian education over other alternatives. Here are the four principles in summary.

- **The education of a child is the responsibility of the parents to whom that child was given. Parents will answer to the Lord for the education their children receive. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:18-21; Psalm 78:1-7; Ephesians 6:4)**
- **The education of a child, if and when delegated to others by the parents, must be accomplished by teachers chosen with the greatest of care, with the clearest of intentionality, and with the knowledge that the teacher will *disciple* those students found within their care. (Exodus 18:21, Psalm 78:6-7, Matthew 28:19-20)**
- **The education of a child should be structured in such a way as to provide an academic platform for success for the whole child. (Proverbs 22:6, Luke 2:40 and 2:52)**
- **The education of a child must take into consideration training for student impact upon his own culture, and his educational impact with eternity in mind. (Acts 1:8, II Timothy 4:6-8, Colossians 3:23-24, I Corinthians 3:11-13, Philipians 3:9-14)**

To lay a foundation for these principles, it would be advantageous to define the term *Biblical Integration*. The words *biblical integration* are found in both the Vision and Mission Statements. That our school must remain biblically-based is unquestioned. The Statement of Faith and Core Values undergird this value. *Biblical integration* reflects our intentionality of integrating, or making the connections between, the academic content and a biblical world view at an age appropriate level for each student.

Biblical integration occurs at two fundamental levels. The first involves the daily interaction of our teachers with their students. This places a great amount of weight upon our teachers. This interaction involves not so much what content is taught, but more so, the values that drive their biblical world view. The second of the four principles given above will more clearly define the import that we place in hiring and retaining the very best teachers possible, knowing that they will share their values with the children they teach.

The second fundamental level of biblical integration is seen at the academic level. Our teachers have spent time in training in order to appropriately integrate a biblical world view in the academic content they present. Our Bible Department has identified themes, or strands, that form the connection between academic content and a biblical world view. The goal of this process is for our students think “Christianly”, and to be able to articulate and argue their faith from a biblical perspective. Care has been given to refrain from sermonizing, or simply applying a Bible verse to a lesson. It has been our experience that parents are reticent to hear their children are being “preached to” during class. Preaching, appropriately, should be left to the church. Academic content presented within God’s larger frame of reference is the job of our school, as articulated in the Mission and Vision Statements. .

Of all the alternatives available to Christian parents for the education of their children, only homeschooling and the Christian school allow for the intentionality of a biblically integrated approach to education. We stand ready to partner with you for the biblically integrated education of your child, here at LCA.

Principle 1 A Parents' Responsibility

The previous edition of this article set forth a foundation of Christian education through *biblical integration*. This is a critical distinction in the kind of education one might receive in an alternate setting. The four principles that follow are built from that foundation. Though not in any order of importance, they may assist you in conversation with other people when they ask you questions about our programs, or why you chose Christian education over other alternatives. Here is the first of the four principles.

- **The education of a child is the responsibility of the parents to whom that child was given. Parents will answer to the Lord for the education their children receive. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:18-21; Psalm 78:1-7; Ephesians 6:4**

When stated, most parents will readily agree with this principle. The biblical references listed illustrate the responsibility of the family for the education of their children. But how does this principle work its way out for the parent-school relationship? I believe that the parent will answer to the Lord for the education of their child. We, as a school, the administration, faculty and staff, will answer for the stewardship of all that was entrusted to us by the Lord through the parents. Stewardship is a biblical principle that is honored at a spiritual level.

First, we, as a school, are compelled to do the very best job at education that is possible. We are committed to presenting a well-developed and balanced curriculum in a manner that impacts the greatest number of students that attend. We are compelled to understand the student and how best to reach that child with the established educational objectives. We are compelled to hire Christian teachers that have a high value in their own spirituality and call to the field of education. We must hire the best Christian teachers possible, and challenge those teachers in every best practice from a biblically integrated ethos for the benefit of the students they serve.

Just as importantly, we, as a school are committed to support the parental decision for enrollment. Priority Registration begins next Monday, January 23, 2012. This is a critical time for current parents as they weigh the educational opportunities and options available to them and their children through Lighthouse Christian Academy. Parents face a myriad of challenges and weigh a number of factors as they reach their decision. I personally believe that we have a great school that is continually getting better through evaluation and process improvement. That being said, LCA might not be the best fit for every child. It is the parents' honor and responsibility to make that decision based upon all available information. Once made, whether it is for enrollment at LCA, or a choice for another option, we must honor that parent and their decision. Once again, this is a biblically based, stewardship issue, and honored at a spiritual level. With that said, we desire that every child have the privilege to experience Christian education as expressed here at Lighthouse Christian Academy.

LCA is a school that understands its responsibility before God and its role before parents. We are committed to Christian education. We are committed to student learning. We are committed to partner with our parents for the education of their child.

We'll cover three more principles with practical application that help to define Christian education in coming pieces. Be looking for those. I look forward to our partnership in the education of your child here at LCA!

Principle 2

A Teacher's Stewardship

We find ourselves in the middle of a short series of articles that lay the foundation for Christian Education as expressed here at Lighthouse Christian Academy. This week's thoughts revolve around the second of these principles. It is our hope that when you find yourself in a discussion with a neighbor, a friend or a relative concerning your value in, and decision for Christian education, you will be armed with principles that are carried out on a daily basis at Lighthouse Christian Academy. Here is the second of our four principles.

- **The education of a child, if and when delegated to others by the parents, must be accomplished by teachers chosen with the greatest of care, with the clearest of intentionality, and with the knowledge that the teacher will *disciple* those students found within their care. Exodus 18:21, Psalm 78:6-7, Matthew 28:19-20**

Christian curriculums utilized in a classroom are critical to the process, but that does not make a school "Christian". The vast majority of our students should have a strong, family familiarity with church attendance, and may even have a sincere profession and expression of faith. This, though important, in and of itself, however, does not make a school "Christian". A school is certainly not defined as "Christian" simply because that word is contained in its name and placed upon the brick over the entrance. The key component lies within the *teachers*. It is the teachers that make this school "Christian" in its expression and practice.

Great care is employed in *who* we hire, and *how* that process is carried out. That our teachers are qualified and certified to teach what they teach is just a baseline test. This only gets them through the door for an interview. Through the application process and subsequent (multiple) interviews, LCA develops a relatively solid feel for the teacher's spiritual position and progress. It is important to LCA that the person placed in front of our students is a growing, vibrant Christian, one who is not hesitant to articulate their faith, both in word and practice. Discipleship happens intentionally (through our curriculums) and through daily exposure to the character of that teacher. How they act and how they will respond is equally as important, and will be under as great, if not more scrutiny and greater study by each student than the material that is taught by that teacher.

Our present teachers have been challenged to evaluate three critical aspects in their approach to their calling. What investment have they placed in, and what output might be measured when considering these three aspects? These are in no special order, and may be placed upon an equilateral triangle. Does the teacher love the subject they are teaching? Does the teacher love the craft of teaching? And, finally, does the teacher love the children placed in their stewardship? It is in the strength of these answers that the degree of student learning and success will occur.

Once again, this second principle helps us to identify how Christian education is *different* as opposed to *better* than other alternatives found in our community. A subsequent principle in coming weeks will state how we need to be academically sound or excellent as stated in our Mission Statement, and how that should be expressed in the lives and hearts of our students. When we say that the home, the church and the school form a unique partnership, a three-legged stool, as it were, that sets the stage for student success, it is only through a Christian education where a Christian parent can have a reasonable degree of surety that the teacher standing in front of their child will share a common, biblical world view, one that is articulated freely and without hesitation or restriction in both curriculum and character.

Take a moment to read a portion of the story of Samuel (1 Samuel 1:27-28 and 1 Samuel 3:1-10). In these related passages, we find Samuel in the care of his "teacher", the prophet Eli. The Lord twice calls the young boy Samuel, but it was not until Eli gave Samuel a frame of reference, a biblical world view, on how to interpret the call that Samuel

answered the Lord. Appearing on the scene during the darkest of Old Testament days, Samuel grew to be the last, and one of the greatest, of the Judges. Samuel called the people of Israel to revival and appointed two kings, Saul and David.

LCA is committed to *Christian education*. We are committed to hiring the best Christian teachers possible. We are committed to program improvement and staff development so our teachers are best equipped to stand before your children and teach all that they do from a biblical world view. Thank you for investing in Christian education.

Principle 3 A Biblical Structure

Most commentaries will recognize Luke as the author of a great portion of the New Testament, writing both the *Gospel of Luke* and the *Book of Acts*. Luke was a physician by training and trade. It is no wonder then, that Luke would include “developmental history” in his recounting of the Lord’s life. Twice, Luke refers to Jesus growing strength, wisdom and in favor with God (Luke 2:40 and 2:52). These aspects of growth alluded to by Luke lay the foundation for our third principle of Christian education as expressed here at Lighthouse Christian Academy.

- **The education of a child should be structured in such a way as to provide an academic platform for success for the whole child. Proverbs 22:6, Luke 2:40 and 2:52**

“A school is a school, is a school.” Dr. Bruce Lockerbie, founder of *Paideia*, a Christian education consulting organization, punctuated his words with force and conviction as he attempted to convince the gathered educators of their mission and goal. The Christian school that parents choose for their child must be biblically holistic in its scope and must be academically excellent in its rigor. Identifying what that scope and excellence should look like is the subject of intense debate throughout our homes, churches and schools. Here, we will address the scope and the rigor of the programs found in this school.

LCA has had a demonstrated history of strong attention given to our art, music, drama, and physical education programs, classes of which are part of the core curriculum, electives and clubs found in kindergarten through the 12th grade. This intentionality of process is designed to allow our students great exposure to a wide variety of educational experiences. This exposure over time provides for our students the opportunities to “grow in wisdom and stature”, and to provide an educational culture that will, in turn allow your child the ability to make informed, biblically based decisions as to what educational goals to pursue as the child gets older.

If the strength of a school is determined by the scope of the elementary programs for the youngest of students and upward, then the identity of a school is driven by the oldest of students and downward. It is the older students that travel all over the state for competitions, representing their families, their school and themselves. Jesus had already been exposed to educational rigors that developed the whole child by age 12. Though a stretch for comparison at best, we find our Lord well equipped to “compete” with the minds of his time, and handling himself quite well in the process. Luke concludes that Jesus “*kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*”, quite possibly for the next 18 years, until the beginning of His public ministry.

The rigors of our educational programs must be based upon the educational goals established for the students that attend Lighthouse Christian Academy. The vast percentage of our graduates will apply to colleges and universities locally, regionally, and nationally. Our programs must be designed in such a manner to meet the demands of college preparation. This allows our students to turn down available options as opposed to be limited by their decisions. This translates to a higher degree of course rigor, and more work more difficult than a student might expect in alternative

educational settings. Our standardized testing and their results provide one, external measuring stick to determine our effectiveness in reaching these goals. Though quite good, standardized tests do not give the complete picture.

It is probably the most telling measure to look at our graduates to see if we are preparing the students to engage their culture on God's terms. From an article printed September 29, 2008, we discussed spiritual formation markers for our graduates. Reprinted here, they serve as a reminder of the importance of Christian education and the true measure to which we hold ourselves as educators to. It might challenge our thinking if we added the interrogatory opening of "Is" to each statement.

1. Our graduate is abiding in Christ. This student seeks God's will for wisdom in decision making. John 15:1-7
2. Our graduate is devoted to God's word. Quiet time or a devotional study marks the norm for this student. He or she memorizes the Word of God. Psalm 1:2-3
3. Our graduate serves others with a mission oriented mindset. This student seeks to reach others not normally within their established world. Mark 12:30-31
4. Our graduate seeks to impact his or her community, locally, nationally and internationally. He or she is involved with service projects. Acts 1:8
5. Our graduate is engaged in making disciples. Chief among this individual's values is reaching the lost for Christ. Matthew 28:19

Our fourth and final principle covered in this series will address the questions of student influence and impact on his or her culture, and the greater impact for eternity. I am thrilled to talk with parents nearly on a daily basis that share their heart, their convictions and sacrifice for Christian education. We are continually humbled by the privilege to partner with parents in the education of their children here at LCA.

Principle 4 An Eternal View

It has been a joy to take some time to outline these principles of Christian education as expressed at Lighthouse Christian Academy. It is our hope that this both answers questions you may have had, as well as promote thought and further questions and discussion as you consider your own view of Christian education. Years ago, while teaching, a principal of mine said that the key to a Christian philosophy of education is the ability to articulate what you believe. These four principles may help you articulate to others why you value Christian education over other alternatives found throughout the community.

Here are the four principles, three of which we have covered during the last three weeks. The fourth principal is covered after the summary.

- 1. The education of a child is the sole responsibility of the parents to whom that child was given. Parents will answer to the Lord for the education their children receive. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:18-21; Psalm 78:1-7; Ephesians 6:4**
- 2. The education of a child, if and when delegated to others by the parents, must be accomplished by teachers chosen with the greatest of care, with the clearest of intentionality, and with the knowledge that the teacher will *disciple* those students found within their care. Exodus 18:21, Psalm 78:6-7, Matthew 28:19-20**
- 3. The education of a child should be structured in such a way as to provide an academic platform for success for the whole child. Proverbs 22:6, Luke 2:40 and 2:52**

4. The education of a child must take into consideration training for student impact upon his own culture, and his educational impact with eternity in mind. Acts 1:8, II Timothy 4:6-8, Colossians 3:23-24, I Corinthians 3:11-13, Philippians 3:9-14

Our final principal addressed in this series tackles the issues of impact. This impact is defined by a child's ability to influence and engage his or her culture on God's terms, as opposed to terms defined by a secular culture or context.

For the younger child, ownership of the values expressed in Christian education belongs primarily to the parents of that child. There is an eventuality in that those values will be owned and expressed by the child as he "grows in wisdom and stature, and in favor before God and man" (Principle #3). This is the essence of maturity. Maturity cannot be rushed, but it can and must be guided and modeled by those to whom the child is entrusted. Guiding and modeling *is* discipleship (Principle #2). Though much popular psychology would beg to differ, the Bible is clear that the greatest influence in a child's life is his or her own parents. Through its unique relationship and balance, the church experience and the educational environment share in this influence, along with the family, guiding the child toward maturity, which is Christ-likeness (Philippians 1:6).

The fourth principle lays the foundation for one of the most profound differences realized by Christian education as opposed to an education found in alternative settings. If *eternal* impact is to be expressed, then maturation must carry a spiritual value. The scope and sequence crafted for the curriculum, the exam schedules, field trips, music and athletic competitions, chess club, art classes, recess schedules, and every other aspect of school life must be crafted with this spiritual maturity *and* eternal impact in mind. The goal for this maturing process is far greater than simply producing good citizens who will be an asset to their community. As Paul so clearly states in the third chapter of Philippians, we are to *know Him*. The home, the church and the school cannot rush this process or force its acceptance. Education, though, is a critical part to help set the stage for the child so that it can happen.

Earlier this year, LCA introduced a new program called, "Timothy to Paul". Its basic mission is to provide opportunity for our older students to have intentional, positive interaction with the younger students. You may have seen the high school kids running with the elementary children at our Jog-A-Thon, or heard of the class visits during the "One Brick at a Time" campaign to help earthquake victims in Haiti. This simple, yet profound relationship between students illustrates the importance of our discipleship, our modeling, and our impact on the generations that follow.

I hope you have found this short series of articles thought provoking. I would simply love to talk with you about Christian education or any aspect of its expression here at Lighthouse Christian Academy. Continue to pray for the administration, the faculty and staff, the students and the parents of Lighthouse Christian Academy. This school has been greatly blessed by God.