

The Case for Studying Classical Literature and Poetry



"The classical purpose for teaching literature is the same as the classical purpose for teaching anything: to cultivate wisdom and virtue so that the student is better able to know and enjoy God. Classical literature exposes the student to models of virtue. It also places demands on his intellect, thus developing his intellectual virtues. As the intellectual virtues are developed, the student's capacity to know and understand facts, ideas, relationships, and persons is nurtured. Furthermore, classical literature cultivates what James Taylor and John Senior have called Poetic Knowledge.

Poetic knowledge is the type of knowledge children gain when they read, e.g. The Chronicles of Narnia or fairytales. It is an intuitive knowledge of the nature of things, but the reader may not always—or even often—be directly aware of what he is learning or how he is being nourished by it. Poetic knowledge removes the reader from the realm of pragmatism (love of power) and lifts him to the realm of genuine ideals (love of virtue). By presenting models of virtues, training the intellectual virtues, and nourishing poetic knowledge, classical literature cultivates wisdom and virtue in the student."

~Andrew Kern, Founder and President of the Circe Institute

K-5 Sample Reading List

- *A Bear Called Paddington by Michael Bond*
- *A Child's Garden of Verses by Robert Louis Stevenson*
- *Bears on Hemlock Mountain by Alice Dalgliesh*
- *Charlotte's Web by E.B. White*
- *Cricket in Times Square by George Selden*
- *Norse and Greek Myths by D'Aulaire*
- *Farmer Boy by Laura Ingalls Wilder*
- *Tales from Shakespeare by Charles Lamb*
- *The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare*
- *The Moffats by Eleanor Estes*
- *Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell*
- *Amos Fortune, Free Man by Elizabeth Yates*
- *Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank*
- *Homer Price by Robert McCloskey*

6-8 Sample Reading List

- *A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens*
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream and other works of William Shakespeare*
- *The Adventures of Robin Hood by Roger Lancelyn Green*
- *The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis*
- *The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom*
- *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table by Roger Lancelyn Green*
- *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass*
- *The Ransom of Red Chief by O. Henry*
- *Saint Joan, the Girl Soldier by Louis de Wohl*
- *Saint Benedict, Hero of the Hills by Mary Fabyan Windeatt*
- *The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien*
- *The Pearl by John Steinbeck*
- *Selections of Classical Poetry*

How does Epiphany School Embrace the Classical Tradition?

Epiphany School educates students, grounding them in the Catholic tradition of love for what is good, true, and beautiful. We equip our students with the skills needed to learn while cultivating virtue, fostering wonder, developing self-order and personal initiative. Epiphany School educates students, grounding them in the Catholic tradition of love for what is good, true, and beautiful. We equip our students with the skills needed to learn while cultivating virtue, fostering wonder, developing self-order and personal initiative. Our school is committed to preparing students to embrace a life of purpose and become leaders according to the mind of Christ.

