

Ten Informational Minutes on Classical Lutheran Education: A Summary

Minute #1 – Classical Lutheran Education

The classical education movement is growing, because parents and teachers see the dire need for more effective teaching in our homes and schools. What IS a classical education? In our 10-part mini-series, we explore this question with the acrostic CLASSICAL, one letter at a time. For now, here is a working definition:

A classical education is a formative education designed to incline the child from his earliest days toward that which is good, true, and beautiful. This education is rooted in the liberal arts and sciences. A Lutheran classical education is bathed in Christian catechesis – the teaching of the faith at all levels – that the child will know one Lord, one faith, one baptism. To learn more visit the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education, ccl.org. C-c-l-e dot -o-r-g.

Minute #2 – C for Canons

The first “C” in classical education is for Canons. As citizens of two kingdoms, we uphold and teach the Canon of Holy Scripture for heavenly citizenship, and we explore the canon of Western civilization for our earthly citizenship. Two kingdoms, two canons. Whereas experimental education allows the child to direct his own studies, in classical education we unapologetically teach the Holy Scriptures, confessions, hymnody, and liturgy for faith and life; AND we teach the great books. As Christians, we are free to teach the great literature, music, art, mathematical arts, and the sciences of Western civilization.

All is informed and edified by the pre-eminence of God’s Word for us. Join us at our annual summer conference, Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education, ccl.org, ccl.org.

Minute #3 – L for Liberal Arts

The first “L” in classical education is for Liberal Arts. Whereas the Romantic era of Rousseau sought to focus the child inward, and the progressive era sought to focus on social engineering with the teacher as mere facilitator, a classical education gives every student knowledge and proficiency through the liberal arts --the language arts of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric – along with the mathematical arts – to equip students for service to others in any vocation.

In Christian classical education, we herald Christ our Savior – not the child and not the social state – properly and needfully turning our children’s eyes toward Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. To connect with others who share this vision, visit our CCLE FB page, CCLE on Facebo

Minute #4 – A for Alphabet and Arithmetic: A Firm Foundation

In our 10-part series, we are exploring classical education through the acrostic of the word CLASSICAL. The first C was for the two canons – the canon of Holy Scripture and the canon of Western civilization – two kingdoms, two canons. The first L was for liberal arts – the language arts and the mathematical arts.

We now turn to the first “A” in classical – standing for alphabet and arithmetic – a firm foundation. Whereas post-modern education pushes abstractions and applications long before teaching prerequisite knowledge, a classical education insists on giving students a firm foundation. In the early years we teach arithmetic to mastery, and we teach to mastery all of the sound/symbol connections needed for reading, writing, and spelling. Join our discussion groups or learn more, ccle.org.

Minute #5 – S for Simplicity and Order

The first “S” in classical is for simplicity. Whereas post-modern education may fragment learning into something confusing, random, or complicated, a classical education is orderly. We begin with needed facts, skills, and knowledge to lay a foundation built upon ample practice. With the foundation firmly in place, students then learn to discern and analyze. Finally, they are taught to express themselves in persuasive and eloquent ways. Grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. Because we lay a strong foundation before delving more deeply, the simplicity and order allow any student to benefit, even if only at rudimentary levels, as explained in the book *Simply Classical: A Beautiful Education for Any Child* and as taught in the *Simply Classical Curriculum*. On the cover of the books you will see Jesus welcoming the little children in mercy, simplicity, and truth.

Minute #6 – S for the Sciences

The second “S” in classical is for the sciences, rooted in the word for knowledge. The liberal sciences are moral – study of man, natural – study of the world, and theological – the study of God. Whereas a utilitarian, industrial education has narrowed toward dehumanizing, technological STEM to the exclusion of the language arts, the balanced richness of classical education humanizes for service in any vocation.

Historically, theology has been deemed the Queen of the Sciences, and so it is with classical Lutheran education. For this reason, we teach the Holy Scriptures at every level, that the child might receive to himself the Gospel: in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for us, we have eternal life. Join us in restoring the liberal arts and sciences in Lutheran education, ccle.org.

Minute #7 – I for Imitation

In our series, we are using the acrostic Classical:

C- canons – the canon of Holy Scripture informing the canon of Western civilization. Two kingdoms, two canons.

L - liberal arts - the language arts and mathematical arts

A - alphabet & arithmetic - a firm foundation. We begin at the beginning.

S - simplicity for any child

S - sciences - moral, natural, and theological sciences with theology at the apex

I - I is for Imitation. Whereas in the child-centered approach, the child's own thoughts become his focus, in classical education the child imitates that which is greater than himself. He studies and imitates the great speeches, art, music, literature, and ideas of all time, including the catechism, prayers, hymns, and the Word of Christ for life eternal. Learn with us, ccle.org.

Minute #8 - C for Cultural transmission

The next "C" in classical stands for *cultural* transmission. Our task is the passing on of the heritage of Western civilization. Whereas other forms of education may base lessons on current movies, television shows, or cartoon characters, in classical education we strive to hold and cherish the gifts of the past, grateful for all we have been given.

To this end, we teach our children the stories and books every child should know, the historical events & people every child should know, and the geography, music, and art every child should know. In this way, we close educational gaps, and we cultivate a taste for that which is excellent. As we do this as Lutherans, we teach the humbling and certain historic and present promise of salvation in Christ alone. Join the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education, ccle.org.

Minute #9 - A for Aesop

The last "A" in classical is for Aesop and all good moral instruction. Rather than approach Character Development as a separate subject, in classical education we carefully select all fables, stories, literature, music, and even exquisite classroom art with an embedded moral compass to guide our way. Aesop's Fables, taught for millennia, embody this practice.

A classical school or home library intentionally looks different from a public library. From infancy through the university level, we are not casual about teaching; a classical education is careful to teach that which will never need to be unlearned. With embedded Christian catechesis - the teaching of the faith - the student's character is formed from within. Above all, a classical education is a formative education. See our recommended literature list, ccle.org.

Minute #10 - L for Life

The final "L" in our acrostic of Classical is Life. Whereas pragmatic education says it prepares a student for a job, it often fails to provide even a rudimentary literacy or academic

competence despite that frightfully narrow focus on employment. In classical Christian education, we seek to enliven the child in body and soul. Equipped to study and proclaim God's word, the student is equally equipped to specialize in whatever field or career for which he is well suited. He finds that even in his leisure, his *life* is enriched by being comfortable in the realm of ideas. In this way, a classical education is intended to serve Christian education. Join us as we educate our children for life in Christ, now and for eternity. The Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education at CCLE-org

Adapted from [Simply Classical: A Beautiful Education for Any Child](#) (Memoria Press, 2013) by Cheryl Swope, M.Ed.

Key Elements of Classical Education

- recitation and repetition during early stages and during introductory study of any content area
- diligent study and analytical thought as the child matures
- cultivation of eloquence, beauty, and persuasion in the student's writing and speaking
- Socratic questioning for the pursuit of truth
- the reading and analysis of good literature
- the ancient languages and writings
- the Great Books of Western civilization
- the seven liberal arts [grammar, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, music, geometry, astronomy]
- the formation of a well-educated, virtuous human being who lives his life in noble service to others

A working definition of classical Lutheran education:

A classical Lutheran education is a formative education designed to incline the student from his earliest days toward that which is true, good, and beautiful through the liberal arts and sciences, guided by the great literature, art, music, mathematics, and ideas of Western civilization, while insisting upon the centrality of Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Confessions, as the child is granted faith in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit through Holy Baptism, the receiving of forgiveness through absolution, and the remission of sins in, with, and under the Lord's Supper, for the receiving and nourishing of his new life in Christ.

Just as we strengthen his academic knowledge, so we nurture the child in the faith, that he may know, believe, and share the message that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation through His life, death, and resurrection on our behalf. All of this is enfolded in a classical Lutheran education in church, school, and home. For more information, visit the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education, CCLE.org, and join us on Facebook.