



Renuntio

No nobler training exists but that which cherishes the good, the beautiful, and the true, thus producing disciples of knowledge and lovers of wisdom.

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Teaching Great Classical Books

An English teacher's job is a challenging one. However, being an English teacher is one of the most rewarding and powerful positions to hold in all the teaching profession. It is rewarding and powerful in the creation of language and writing, but, most of all, in the exploration of the written word. Books are the greatest of human achievements. Not all books are created equal, so, as an English teacher, the selection and teaching of Great, classical books requires a specific approach.

Classical books, by definition, are part of the Western Canon of Literature. The canon is an exclusive body of work that incorporates certain selections from all the literature in recorded history. These books may follow the classical model, be written by classical writers, or be about classical topics. Most of all, they must instruct, inform, and stand the test of time. Many of these books are also Great works of Literature. Some are merely good.

So, what is the difference between a good book and a great one? After all, a book can be categorized simply as good and still be in the working body of Classical literature and the Western Canon. How do some works make it into the *Encyclopedia of Great Books* or the *Love Letters of Great Men*? Taste and preference are always factors as well as use and purpose. However, the test of time and the critical review of peers, writers, and readers are also a factor. But, as an English teacher, the most important element in a Great book is the great language, great thoughts, and great stories. A book can be great simply because of the beauty of its language. It may also offer great thoughts to the world and change the scope of human existence. Greatness can be measured in a variety of ways.

Yet, not all readers and certainly not all teachers have the same standards for greatness. What about the virtues of what is good, beautiful, and true? Can a book be Classical and

THE XAVIER PROMISE

Xavier Classical Charter Schools are dedicated to providing a classical, intellectually rigorous, content-rich, liberal arts education, preparing students to excel in every duty and guiding them toward wisdom and virtue.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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- 9/8— Back to School Dance (gr. 7-12) 7p.m.
Bonfire— Rhetoric School only— 10 p.m.
- 9/12— Continuous Planning Meeting— 6-9 p.m.
Parents Welcome!
- 9/14— Board Meeting
6 p.m.
- 9/14— **PARENT BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT**
GRAMMAR SCHOOL ONLY— TWO SESSIONS
6:00 p.m. (half hour)
6:30 p.m. (half hour)
- 9/15— Xavier Spirit Day (College Jersey Day)
- 9/19— Chick-fil-A Night (PFA)
- 10/2-4— eXaLt Week! (Xavier Leadership)10
- 10/5-6— State Teacher In-Service
NO SCHOOL (K-12)

Classical books continued...

Can a book be Classical and even Great if it is not virtuous? Nietzsche and Machiavelli may have some commentary on the matter that is worthy of discussion. Their works are certainly Great by any standard of literature. There cannot be light without dark. These other works of literature, too, are worthy of study and careful consideration in the hands of discerning teachers.

At Xavier Charter School, books are chosen in several different ways. Core Knowledge is one source. Other considerations are theme, moral, story, character, and virtue. All of these components together work to help select the pieces that make up the Xavier canon of literature. Careful consideration is given to have students read the best of what is available to them in each grade. Nevertheless, the selection of Classical, Great books is only the first step to teaching. The next is to foster a deep love of literature in all its forms.

The teacher is absolutely the entity that matters most in cultivating a love of literature. The greatest book in the world can be dull and beaten to death with mind-numbing boredom in the hands of an inept, inexperienced, or substandard teacher. The teacher must love books.

My job is to first choose from the wealth of choices the best, greatest, most-classical books and to be an expert in each one. But, more so than that, my job is to bring these stories to life. I bring them to life with my expertise, my enthusiasm, my passion, my creativity, my story-telling, my humor, and my deep understanding of children. I bring them to life with my deep and abiding love of words.

Amanda Loosli, English teacher

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH

RESPONSIBILITY — We accept obligations related to our own good and the good of others, and we act on those obligations in a manner suitable to their timely and satisfactory fulfillment. We are willingly accountable for what we do and say, and we seek to learn from our mistakes.

Sept. 8 — *“If you want children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders.”* ~Abigail Van Buren (American Advice Columnist, b. 1918-2013)

Sept. 11 — *“And in the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”* ~Abraham Lincoln (16th US President, b.1809-1865)

Sept. 18 — *“Hold yourself responsible to a higher standard than anyone else expects of you. Never excuse yourself.”* ~Henry Ward Beecher (Congregationalist, clergyman, social reformer, b. 1813-1887)

Sept. 25 — *“I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom.”* ~Bob Dylan (American Poetic Songwriter, singer, painter, and Nobel Prize Laureate, b. 1941-)

WELCOME BACK

We welcome our new and returning students to an education “worthy of a free man.” At Xavier Charter School, we proudly educate through the lens of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True. As we begin a new school year, we thank you for your continued support of Xavier, its philosophy and its traditional ideals.