



MILLENNIUM CHARTER ACADEMY

THE ACADEMIC JOURNAL

Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Perspectives 8.31.18



Welcome to our forty seventh edition of "The Academic Journal," a bimonthly bulletin in which you can read about MCA's educational philosophy, instructional methodology, and the various viewpoints and positions of our faculty, staff, students, and families.

Classical Education: Citizenship

Over the next several issues of the "Academic Journal," we will offer explanation and insights into MCA's classical education: what it is, why we choose this path, and how we pursue it with integrity. Here we discuss citizenship. We hope you are enriched.

From our Vision: "...we will increase our attention to developing the following characteristics of citizenship in our students: 1) an awareness of themselves as members of a community...2) a devotion to intellectual and moral integrity...3) a respect for the rule of law; and 4) an appreciation of American constitutional democracy."

John Adams said, "The preservation of liberty depends on the moral and intellectual character of the people." In following the principles of moral and democratic classicism, we aim to produce citizens who have the character to preserve our cherished liberty. We view that liberty in the classic sense of the word: the liberty to be a fully formed human being in heart and mind, not a liberty always to do as we please, nor to have a never-ending array of choices.

Schools often speak of "good citizens" as the students who behave well, pick up after themselves, and treat others with respect. These characteristics are all important, but they fall far short of the full meaning of citizenship. Although these activities are first steps in virtue, being a virtuous citizen has far greater dimensions.

Preparing students to be citizens means preparing them in the classical arts of logic and rhetoric. It means helping them to understand the complexities of human nature, politics and government. It means teaching them to deeply and rightly understand our country's founding documents. It means teaching them to rightly order their affections, to love what is worth loving, and to understand the difference between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, and even between better and best. It means tuning their hearts and minds toward that which is true, good and beautiful, and then equipping them to stand in the public square and argue courageously, logically, eloquently, and graciously for the right, calling upon the stories and precepts embedded in their hearts and imaginations.

The civic virtue required of the noble citizen begins early at MCA. Students in kindergarten explore American symbols and learn the difference between a monarchy and a democracy. On through the years, the curriculum spirals through studies of the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the United States Constitution. Students begin early to learn how to live in community and to respect others. Paideia seminars conducted throughout the grade levels teach students how to express ideas kindly and to listen respectfully to the ideas of others. Led by student councils in the divisions of the school, all MCA students are given many opportunities

A publication of the Office of Advancement and Development
500 Old Springs Road Mt. Airy, NC 27030 (336) 789-7570 development@mcacademy.com

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to consider the needs of others by participating in charitable causes. By the time students reach high school, many discussions and readings center on the need for civic virtue, and each high school advisory takes on a service project.



Citizenship in the democratic classical model entails being an honorable and noble person. MCA's honor code undergirds its culture. In a formal annual ceremony, upper school students sign the honor code. Lower school students recite the honor code, and upper school students recite a pledge that elaborates on the honor code and encapsulates the school's vision.

At MCA, citizenship is not an add-on activity; the wise and virtuous citizen is the goal of a formative education and the hope of preserving our liberty.

Pamela J. Braley, Upper School Director

