Admissions

 2020-2021

**Mission:** St. Stephen’s Classical Academy is a University Model program that exists to partner with parents in providing an excellent classical education, equipping students to walk in the wisdom of God and joyfully pursue a life of learning.

What is Classical Christian Education?

1. Classical Education:

Classical education utilizes The Trivium – the breakdown of a student’s education into three parts: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The grammar stage of each subject is fundamental rules of that subject. The logic stage is the ordered relationship of particulars in each subject. The rhetoric stage is how the grammar and logic of each subject may be clearly expressed.

1. Christian Education:

The teachers at SSCA have the opportunity to partner with parents in modeling a distinctly Christian worldview. This means the inclusion, discussion, and reflection of biblical truths are present in all subjects, not just Bible. We believe when students are able to engage in curriculum based on biblical truths, all knowledge coheres.

1. Half-day Model:

SSCA’s half-day model is four mornings per week, Monday through Thursday. Students arrive at school around 8:15AM and report to their classroom for warm-ups. Teachers begin class promptly at 8:30AM. Teachers deliver daily instruction in Reading, Math, and Grammar until approximately 11AM. The remainder of the day includes a rotation of lessons in History, Geography, Science, Bible and Latin until 12:45PM. Students spend rigorous and concentrated time in their classes, subsequently returning to their homes where parents help them manage homework and other responsibilities and interests. This model places a great deal of responsibility on the parent while also requiring students be disciplined and independent learners. Parents register their student as homeschooled with the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

What will students learn?

[**First Grade**](https://www.ststephensacademy.net/first-grade) **Curriculum:**

**Reading:** All about Reading & All About Spelling

Reading will become your student's favorite subject of the day! All About Reading is a delightful, developmentally appropriate method for learning to read.

* Covers letter sounds A-Z, plus consonant teams TH, SH, CH, CK, NG, and NK
* Dozens of colorful activities and games reinforce the lessons
* Includes 52 full-color decodable stories that are sure to delight your child along with comprehension activities
* Reading instruction is differentiated and children are taught at their instructional level to ensure they are making steady and appropriate progress.

**Grammar**: Shurley English Level 1

The most astounding and effective grammar program available. The children learn jingles to memorize the parts of speech, enabling and encouraging them to chant till they start dreaming grammar lessons.

**Bible:**Stories of the Bible

What better way to enjoy and have children become familiar with God`s work. These hand-picked titles from two different series will give much enjoyment while familiarizing young ones with God`s Word. This collection includes: Birth of Jesus: The Promised Child, Jesus: The Child, Jesus is Alive: The Amazing Story, John: The Baptist, Mary: Mother of Jesus, Saul: Miracle on the Road, Paul: Journeys of Adventure, Peter: The Apostle, Jesus: The Healer, Jesus: The Savior

**Math:** Saxon 2

The friendliest and most thorough math program, Saxon, with its ``incremental approach`` will allow any student to master the grammar of math easily.  This program will slowly build upon previously learned concepts and increase retention. Math 2 covers working with larger numbers, geometric shapes, Venn diagrams, graphs, basic calculations, simple fractions and multi-step problems.

**Science:** Usborne Complete First Book of Nature

Students spend the year engaging with the world around them through nature walks, wondering questions, investigations, and art. This hands on approach to learning about the world is a solid and meaningful introduction to science.

**Geography:**  1. States & Capitals Songs CD  2.  Legends & Leagues Storybook

1. This thirty–four track CD and companion book take advantage of children’s natural aptitude for learning through exposure to music. By singing the songs while reading the lyrics, children can easily learn the names and location of all fifty states as well as their capital cities.

2. Join Mr. Longitude and Mr. Latitude as they help the disoriented Elmo Tardy discover geography! Students will learn concepts about maps, points on the compass, and much more alongside Elmo.

**History:** Bede’s History of the US

This is a fun activity book for 1st grade students in which an adorable yarn timeline named Bede rolls through, teaching about family trees, national holidays, art, toys, George Washington, and more! Bede’s History Series lays some basic groundwork for the students to prepare them for later years of history study.

**Second, Third, and Fourth Grade:**

**Reading:** Literature and Comprehension Guides

Students will continue to receive phonics and fluency practice, but most of the Reading curriculum is literature-based. Students are instructed on the practices of good readers and then spend time reading quality literature. Instructors use carefully selected model texts for direct instruction, and then guide students in their practice of reading and comprehending a multitude of picture books and chapter books.

**Language Arts:**  Shurley English

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The most astounding and effective grammar program available. The children learn jingles to memorize the parts of speech, enabling and encouraging them to chant till they start dreaming grammar lessons. Students become efficient at classifying sentences, which then supports their writing and understanding of the structure of written language. This incremental curriculum also includes vocabulary development and ongoing assessments.

**Writing:** Classically Cursive

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Second grade is the best age to teach children cursive writing. The Classically Cursive Series is geared to follow the Phonics Museum, or any program using modern manuscript. Students will be expected to be efficient at cursive by the end of third grade.

**Math:** Saxon

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Saxon teaches students using a spiral-format that consistently reviews older concepts, adding more and more information to concepts they've previously encountered. The program is built on three principles: **Math instruction must be incremental.** Students are given time to understand, practice, and master smaller concepts before adding next steps. This builds confidence and fluency as students advance to more complicated, multi-step mathematics. **Math instruction must be distributed.** Skills are not studied in isolated units or chapters, but are steadily distributed throughout the school year. This allows for consistent practice, review, and reinforcement of concepts. **Math instruction must be cumulative.** When practice and assessments are cumulative, it ensures students retain information and make meaningful connections between concepts.

**Science:** Biology for the Grammar Stage

This curriculum lays out a twenty-week study of animals using the Kingfisher First Encyclopedia of Animals, a ten-week study of the human body using the DK First Human Body Encyclopedia and a six-week study of plants using Basher Biology. Students conduct hands on activities and practice making scientific observations throughout every unit.

**Geography:** 1. Geography songs CD and Song Book 2.  Legends & Leagues South and East (Africa and Asia)

1. This thirty–four track CD and companion book take advantage of children’s natural aptitude for learning through exposure to music. By singing the songs while reading the lyrics, children can easily learn the names and locations of all 226 countries, oceans, continents, and planets.

2. Legends & Leagues, Ltd. is at your service, providing geographic services for anyone who needs help knowing how to get from Here to There! Using their old and new maps, Mr. Latitude and Mr. Longitude are able to take their clients anywhere, anytime. Dive into this storybook, where these two gentleman travel south and east to share the continents of Africa and Asia with students. Throughout the South and East books, students not only learn the names of countries, capitals, and important landmarks – they learn stories, legends, traditions, and fascinating facts about African and Asia.

**History & Bible:** 1. Old Testament & Ancient Egypt 2. New Testament & Greece and Rome

3. Middle Ages – Renaissance and Reformation

Veritas Press curriculum has built these content rich courses for the grammar years. Students study 32 events from each time period as they see Biblical history in the context of all history. The curriculum builds in such a way that students learn an ongoing timeline of the chronology of world history and they learn to see the tremendous way that the God of the Bible has been at work throughout all of history redeeming his people.

**Latin:**  Song School Latin and Latin for Children

Students will begin their study of Latin in second grade with *Song School Latin* and progress to *Latin for Children* in third grade. The *Song School Latin* program is a gentle and delightful introduction to the language. Students learn over 100 everyday vocabulary words for the seasons, body parts, food, animals, and common greetings. The weekly lessons use songs, illustrations, stories, and activities to encourage memorization. When students transition to *Latin for Children*, they continue chanting and singing more than 240 vocabulary words with the inclusion of noun declensions, verb conjugations, and grammatical explanations.

How will students learn?

**Primary Texts**: Learning content by reading original sources, our students gain the opportunity to contemplate for themselves, thereby strengthening their intellectual and emotional faculties through direct interaction with great texts and great ideas.

**Exploration and Imagination:** One of the most important teaching tools available to the teacher is the students themselves, their own imaginations and free curiosities. Humans naturally want to understand, to ask and answer questions of exploration and understanding. This is most especially true of children. Therefore, the classical Christian classroom seeks to engage and enliven the child’s imagination, using their own desire for knowledge, truth, and discovery in the pathway to knowledge.

**Order and Decorum:** Classroom management is necessary for a proper education. This means the overall school culture and the culture of each classroom ought to showcase and expect order and decorum.

**Recitation:** Particularly in the grammar stage, students delight in the use of songs, chants, and jingles to put information to memory. Students will participate in a morning routine in which recitation is practiced. This includes a wide range of scripture, prayers, and daily practice of jingles that reinforce and aid in the learning of content.

Educational Outcomes (ACCS – Association of Classical Christian Schools)

Tuition

One of the core goals when beginning SSCA was affordability. Our desire is to make classical Christian education accessible to as many families as we can. Grammar school tuition includes a nonrefundable $400 application fee and $3,400 annual tuition to be paid in full, semesters, or ten monthly installments. Tuition does not include the cost of curriculum workbooks – parents are responsible for purchasing these prior to the start of classes. We provide a detailed guide of what parents are to purchase. The cost of workbooks is approximately $200. We do not offer a multi-child discount.

What about financial aid?

SSCA has a scholarship application available that can be submitted with a completed application. Scholarships will be reviewed and granted based upon board approval. Please contact the program director for more details and an application. We will look forward to working with you to make the program affordable for your family.

Grade Level Competencies

Competencies are the qualities of a student which must be present in order for a student to be accepted into a particular grade level. Competencies at any grade level are of two types: academic and behavioral. Academic competencies are the student’s ability to learn, retain, understand, and articulate the material being taught. This includes: reading level, abilities in Math, and writing ability. Behavior competencies are the student’s ability to exhibit age-appropriate virtue, obey adults, have a maturing work ethic, and contribute positively to the classroom and SSCA’s culture.

First Grade:

* Healthy pencil grip
* Able to follow directions in a group
* Able to take correction without melting down
* Bathroom independence
* Respectful manners
* Able to focus and remain still for 10-15 minutes at a time
* Physical self-control
* Can count to 50
* Can identify shapes and coins

Second Grade: (1st grade competencies plus the following)

* Able to focus and remain still for 30 minutes at a time
* Can count to 100
* Properly formed print handwriting
* Able to use scissors properly
* Able to read
* Able to compose simple sentences
* Able to follow increasingly complex directions (multi-step)

Third – Fifth grade (1st and 2nd grade competencies plus the following)

* Neat print handwriting
* Cursive handwriting appropriate to grade level
* Able to read for information at level appropriate to grade
* Master or near-mastery of addition and subtraction facts
* Mastery or near-mastery of multiplication and division facts (4th & 5th)
* Able to follow detailed directions
* Able to write down assignments and turn in homework
* Good physical and verbal self-control in a group
* Respectful manners

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Where is the Academy located?**

All classes are held at St. Stephen’s Church, 405 Frederick Avenue, Sewickley, PA. Classrooms are located on the second floor elementary wing.

**Is the Academy only for families who attend St. Stephen’s Church?**

No. The Noah’s Ark pre-school and Kindergarten at St. Stephen’s has served many, many families from other churches over the years. In that spirit, St. Stephen’s Classical Academy is designed to serve the whole community, not just one church.

**Must a family agree to the statement of faith for a child to attend?**

A classical Christian education is most effective when both parents agree to, support, and live out the Academy’s mission, vision, and values. As a school that seeks to train its students in the Christian faith, SSCA is committed to ministering to Christian families so as to affirm and teach the biblical worldview. This faith and worldview should first be instilled at home and in church. We are glad to have conversations with families who have questions about the statement of faith.

**Who chooses the curriculum?**

All course curricula are ultimately decided by the administration and SSCA advisory board. Much of the curriculum will come from Veritas Press, a reputable provider of classical Christian curriculum.

**Will my child wear a uniform?**

Yes, all SSCA students are required to wear a uniform. We have a partnership with Lands’ End to make uniform purchase convenient, but they may also be purchased at the store of your choice according to the guidelines provided in the application.

**What will this cost us?**

SSCA offers an excellent education for less than half the cost of most private schools. There is a $400 non-refundable tuition deposit which leaves $3,400 remaining for tuition. We have a scholarship application available as our hope is to make classical Christian education available for all who are interested.

**What kind of organization is the Academy?**

SSCA is a ministry of St. Stephen’s church which offers academic courses for students who are registered with the state of Pennsylvania as homeschool students.

**Does St. Stephen’s Classical Academy fulfill state requirements?**

Once a student is registered with the state of Pennsylvania as homeschooled, the program supervisor (parent) may educate their child as they see fit. SSCA’s courses meet or exceed Pennsylvania state standards concerning content and pedagogy.

**Will the Academy offer extracurricular activities?**
The Academy will offer occasional after school programs, but the focus of the half-day structure will be on instruction. The Academy has community partnerships with Fern Hollow Nature Center and Sewickley Public Library – both of which offer special programming specifically for SSCA students.

**How is this different than other homeschool co-ops?**

Most homeschool co-ops are taught and led by parents. St. Stephen’s Classical Academy is taught and led by professional educators. Another difference is class time: most homeschool co-ops meet once per week; SSCA classes meet four mornings per week.

**What are the state requirements for my child’s school year? Will the school file this paperwork?**

As part of this hybrid education model, parents will be responsible for enrolling their child with the local school district as homeschooled. The Academy will provide the guidance and resources to assist parents throughout every step of this process.

**Does St. Stephen’s Classical Academy teach a foreign language?**

Yes, SSCA offers Latin beginning in second grade. The study of classical languages fosters patterns of learning that aid immensely in all areas of life. In classical education we call these the "tools of learning,” which include memorizing data, correlating facts, and applying what we learn. These patterns, formed early and developed consistently, benefit any task a student will face in life.

Steps to Register

STEP 1: Consider attending an information meeting:

**SSCA Fall Information Meetings:**

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| Tuesday, September 24 | 9AM | St. Stephen’s Lecture Hall  |
| Tuesday, October 22 | 8:30AM | Promised Land |
| Tuesday, November 12 | 9AM | St. Stephen’s Lecture Hall  |

 \*Childcare will be available if requested prior to the meeting date.

STEP 2: Consider taking time to observe in an SSCA classroom. Email program director, Anna Conley (aconley@ststephenschurch.net) to schedule a visit.

STEP 3: Print and complete an application from the web-site, which will be made available on January 1, 2020. **\*Enrollment will close when class sizes reach 16 students.**

STEP 4: Pay the registration fee of $400 per child by sending a check to St. Stephen’s Church (Indicate SSCA registration on the Memo Line).

STEP 5: Upon receiving your application and fee, the Director will contact you to schedule an entrance exam and family interview.

STEP 6: Wait for SSCA to notify you of your enrollment status. This will be done no later than May 1, 2020.

Important Registration Dates

**December 1, 2019:** Early registration for current SSCA and Noah’s Ark families

**January 1, 2020:** Registration opens for all families

**May 1, 2020:** Final round of acceptance letters mailed

**May 31, 2020:** Last day for registration

PROGRAM DIRECTOR & SECOND GRADE TEACHER

Anna Conley: aconley@ststephenschurch.net

FIRST GRADE TEACHER

Kathy Boehmig: kboehmig@ststephenschurch.net

THIRD & FOURTH GRADE TEACHER

Hannah Knox: hknox@ststephenschurch.net

SCHOOL LOCATION

St. Stephen’s Church – classrooms are on the second floor

MAILING ADDRESS

405 Frederick Avenue, Sewickley 15143