



MIDDLE SCHOOL
OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, Feb. 2, 2012
4:00 to 7:00 P.M.

602 Everglade Drive, Madison, WI (608) 827-5863

St. Ambrose Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.



ST. AMBROSE
ACADEMY

www.ambroseacademy.org

Building a Solid Foundation

Constance Nielsen, Ph.D., teaches English and Religion at St. Ambrose Academy and serves as dean of faculty.

Is classical education only for the elite or the super student?

Classical education offers wonderful advantages to a wide range of students and is not just for the especially gifted.

What is classical education?

At its most basic level classical education suggests the Trivium, the three stages of learning. These stages refer to the development of a mind over time as well as growth within a specific subject. The grammar stage involves acquiring information through study, practice and memorization. A student needs to build on a wide breadth of knowledge before higher critical thinking can develop.

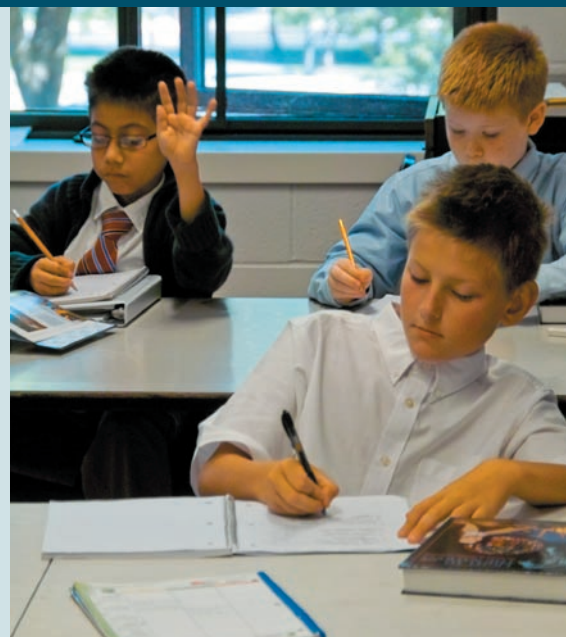
The logic stage is the study of reason itself. At this stage the student learns about argumentation, the difference between a valid and an invalid argument, the distinction of validity versus truth, and the way in which truth can be discovered through a logical examination of premises.

Finally there is the rhetoric stage, and this is where learning really becomes fun, because students start to analyze their own ideas and form their own opinions. They learn not only how to construct their own logical argument, but to effectively and elegantly express the fruits of their own thinking.

Of course the classical method must be adjusted in order to match the needs of the modern student and incorporate modern advances, but leading students through the process of learning in order to eventually become self-learners has always been the goal of education.

How do kids with this sort of education do in college?

Our students tend to do very well in college because they arrive already well prepared. They know how to read a text and analyze it. They have acquired the habit of fulfilling homework assignments, are accustomed to seminar style teaching and confidently participate in discussions. They know how to take notes in class, study on their own, and reproduce what they've learned in essay exams and full



length papers. They know how to formulate their own educated opinions and effectively defend them.

They have all the skills they need to be successful. That is the goal of the classical education model: to produce critical thinkers with the skills they need to succeed.



Positive Peer Influence

By Theresa Klinkhammer, M.Ed.

St. Ambrose Academy religion and math teacher

St. Ambrose Academy aims at the education of the whole person: body, intellect, and conscience. The further development of one's conscience is particularly important during the adolescent years. At this stage, students are questioning authority and testing limits, and they have the opportunity to make the faith their own but also the risk of choosing to let it go. Instead of being told what to do, they get to choose in many instances how and if they will follow the faith of their parents.

In order for students to make the faith their own, they need to be able to discuss matters of faith with their peers and trusted adults. St. Ambrose Academy provides an atmosphere in which students can participate in these vital discussions and learn more deeply what virtue is and then practice it. Morality forms a part of dialogues in history, English, and science as well as in religion class.

Students hear from their peers how to live a moral life and see them put those insights into practice. The most important assistance in the development of conscience can be provided by the encouragement and example of their peers.

Affording a Catholic Education

Principal Scott Schmiesing addresses the cost of a Catholic education at St. Ambrose Academy.

A Catholic education can be expensive, Scott. How much should a family expect to pay at St. Ambrose Academy?

Tuition for one child in 2012–2013 is \$5,250, with a \$350 book fee. Uniforms add about another \$200.

What if the tuition is too much for a family's budget?

Catholic education is an important part of the mission of the Church. If a family wants an integral Catholic education for its children, we will work to make it happen. Our benefactors realize the future of the Church depends on the Catholic formation

of young people, and they make it possible for us to offer generous financial aid.

That's wonderful. But what if a family isn't poor, but would still face a struggle to pay full tuition?

If parents are facing difficulty in paying tuition, they will probably qualify for financial aid. I encourage parents interested in sending their child to St. Ambrose Academy to contact me and see what we can do. As Pope Benedict XVI has told us, "everything possible must be done" to make our Catholic schools accessible to families at all income levels. We take that charge very seriously.

