Love, Think, Honor

December 2012

From The Oaks
Classical Christian Academy

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We've all heard the term "lost art" from time to time. For most it brings up thoughts of something that once had value but is now seldom seen. I would suggest there is one such lost art we as Christians, and especially fathers, should be striving to recover – the art of dinner-time conversation. Imagine the lessons to be learned by families whose fathers are striving to lead the home at the dinner table. Imagine the opportunities for building interest in one another, developing clarity of thought as each person shares his understanding of an issue, and discovering what took place in each person's life that day. The list could go on and on. Conversing around the table builds trust and reinforces within our children's minds and hearts that they can share their vulnerabilities with us. We can develop Biblical character qualities at the dinner table – honesty, transparency, appreciation and conviction. Recently, in the largest survey of its kind, the National Study of Youth and Religion unveiled several enlightening statistics about American teenagers. Most significantly, the study reported that "most U.S. teenagers mirror their parents' religious faith." While not necessarily surprising, this fact does have important implications. Think for a moment about the spiritual condition of our country today and what kind of religious faith is being mirrored. What could happen if fathers took ownership of this condition? How would we go about turning things around? Let's start this evening by making a concerted effort to revive the lost art of dinner-time conversation in our homes. *"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:24-25*

ACADEMICS

Everyone's talking—Around the Harkness Table, that is. This year, The Oaks has acquired its first Harkness table. What is a Harkness table? Well, it's similar to a very large family dinner table that better equips teachers to implement Socratic discussions. Several secondary classes are taught using this method, in which students gather around the table to discuss assignments, helping them to better articulate their understanding, to ask more effective questions, to improve their critical thinking, and to connect their learning across the disciplines. Although the teacher directs, the majority of the conversation is amongst the students. Because it is necessary for students to help lead, they take ownership in their education, acquiring greater comprehension with better retention of the information. For more information about the Harkness method you can read "Harkness Discussion, and Self-Education" by Bryan Lynch from the Autumn 2012 edition of *Classis* found on the ACCS website (www.accsedu.org). And be sure to stop by Ben Palpant's room to see our new piece of furniture as well as to sit in on a discussion.

Want to learn more about Classical Christian Education in a condensed form? You're in luck! This fall The Oaks began a monthly in-school publication called *Night Stand Articles*. These articles are one-to two-page excerpts from articles or books that The Oaks' staff have studied. Night Stand Articles are designed to be brief, nightly readings that will educate our community about Classical Christian Education. They are available at The Oaks campus or online at http://theokscca.org/OaksStoreLibrary.aspx. Happy night reading!

"...even a rudimentary knowledge of Latin cuts down the labor and pains of learning almost any other subject by at least fifty percent" (Dorothy Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*). What an advantage it is then that Oaks' students are learning Latin in the third through tenth grades! Using *Lingua Latina*, a book written entirely in Latin, describing the life of a Roman family, students are immersed in the spoken language and are being taught how to understand and appreciate Latin literature.

STUDENT LIFE

Tuesday, December 18th, is The Oaks Annual School Christmas Program. This program is a must see! You won't want to miss favorites such as the all-school choir and madrigal choir performances, the staff vocal piece, or the kindergarten Nativity skit. This year, Oaks' Alum Regan Siglin ('12) has composed a new piece for the program and many students will be accompanying the different ensembles. Please join us December 18th at 7:00pm in the sanctuary for this once a year event!

Thanksgiving celebrations abound in giving thanks to God for the blessings he has bestowed upon us. In kindergarten and first grade, parents and grandparents partook of a Thanksgiving feast, and students shared what they've learned about the Pilgrims and Indians. Third graders, dressed in togas, feasted on lamb, Baklava and many other delicious Greek treats before participating in some Olympic games at their Greek Feast. The most authentic celebration, however, was held by the fifth grade class as they spent a day dressed up as Pilgrims and Indians at Ross Point Camp. Students, parents, and grandparents shared the time together dancing, crafting, and feasting. To end the celebration, the fifth grade class presented an entertaining historical play about the first Thanksgiving, written by their teacher, Thomas Kolarsky. And the senior class, as well as their parents, treated Oaks' staff, Valley Fourth staff, and alumni to a scrumptious Thanksgiving luncheon, complete with a musical performance by the Madrigal choir. How much we have to give thanks for! *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless his name." Psalm 100:4*

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RESOURCES

As the end of the year approaches, we give thanks for our many donors. We know all good things come from our Lord. And we count ourselves blessed to receive so generously from our countless donors.

ATHLETICS

The Oaks' Varsity volleyball team ended the season as the Mountain Christian League Champions. After losing their second game of the tournament, the girls fought up through the losers' bracket. On the last day of the tournament, the team played straight through from 4:00pm until 10:30pm, winning the championship match 18–16 in the 5th game. Coach Renee Williams said she especially enjoyed seeing the girls work together. Way to go, girls!

Basketball has begun! This year's boys' coaches are Jeff Schlect and Chris True, and girls' coaches are Ben Palpant, Tom Lewis, and Heidi Reimer. The first games have been played and the boys varsity team has started the year off with four wins! A complete game schedule can be found on The Oaks athletic page of the website at http://theoakscca.org/Athletics.aspx

Did you know Oaks sports only occur four days a week? For example, if there are two games in a week, there will only be two practices that week. Why? Because we want to make it possible for families to enjoy dinner together on a consistent basis. It is far too easy, especially as our children get older, to become so busy that having dinner together is uncommon. And yet, the dinner table provides an important setting where we can connect with our children, learning about them and teaching them. By limiting the amount of time spent in school sports, The Oaks desire is that family dinner would be a common occurrence at the homes of each of our school families.

ALUMNI AND PARENTS

It's that time of year again. Christmas? No! It's the annual Oaks' Alumni Dinner! This year's dinner will be Thursday, December 27th, at The Oaks. All Oaks' alums and seniors, along with their parents and current and past teachers, are invited to attend this evening hosted by The Oaks. This is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect, reminisce, enjoy a delicious meal catered by Trezzi Farms, and have fun with friends in The Oaks' photo booth. Please be sure to RSVP right away so there's enough food for everyone!

Parent Academy began its third year at The Oaks last month as forty-six pre-kindergarten through second grade parents met for the first of three sessions this year. The goal of Parent Academy is to better enlighten parents about educating our children both classically and biblically. Headmaster Bruce Williams spoke about the importance of establishing a regular routine of coming together and conversing as a family around the table while our children are young. Do we know how our children are interpreting the world around them? Are we helping them? When our children leave home for college, will they want to return home to partake in the family table? These are some of the goals of establishing a consistent family table. If you would like to attend the next Parent Academy please contact the school office. *"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." Deuteronomy 6:7*

post scriptum...

What are you doing at the family table? One Oaks' family, upon discovering their third grader was learning The Lord's Prayer in Latin, decided to study it together around their family table. Would you like to learn The Lord's Prayer in Latin as well? Your child can help with the pronunciation. Imagine your child's excitement to teach you!

Pater noster quī es in caelīs,
sanctificētur nōmen tuum.
Adveniat regnum tuum.
Fīat voluntās tua
sīcut in caelō et in terrā.
Pānem nostrum cotīdiānum dā nōbīs hodiē.
Et dīmitte nōbīs dēbita nostra
sīcut et nōs dīmittimus dēbitōribus nostrīs.
Et nē nōs indūcās in temptātiōnem
sed līberā nōs ā malō.
Quia tuum est regnum, et potentia, et
glōria in saecula saeculōrum.
Āmēn.

Do you have an idea for a future newsletter? Write up an article and send it to **anya.schnell@theoakscca.org** to have it published!