



MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE SCHOOL

Catholic, Classical Education at Home for Over 25 Years

"In this day and age, homeschooling is one of the great hopes for the future. Fr. Joseph Fessio, S.J., has compared its role to that of the monasteries in the so-called Dark Ages. They were dark, in certain ways, much as our time is dark. Civilization was crumbling. Uncivilized hordes were taking over previously civilized nations, and the moral code was being eroded. There were great saints and there were great movements in the Church during this time, just as there are now, but there was chaos in the culture and the monasteries were places where the truth was preserved, the moral order was recognized and lived by, and the love of God ruled. When we homeschool, we have the opportunity to do likewise. We can pass on to our children the great truths of the Catholic Faith, the moral values that accompany those doctrines, and we can model for them how one lives in the love of God."

Laura Berquist

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: CLASSICAL EDUCATION

Letter From Our Founder	Pg. 1
What Is Classical Education?	4
The Intellectual Stages of Formation	5
More On the Classical Method	7
Overview of Our Curriculum	9

PART 2: STRUCTURE OF MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE SCHOOL

Teacher Review Program	13
Teacher Services	14
Learning Support	15
Special Services	17
Graduation Requirements	18
Prepared for College	19
Learn More and Enroll	20



Mother of Divine Grace School offers a Catholic, classical approach to distance learning. MODG was founded by Laura Berquist in 1995 to provide parents with the information, resources, and support necessary to educate their children according to the classical tradition. Based in Ojai, CA, Mother of Divine Grace School serves over 6,300 students in grades PreK - 12. Mother of Divine Grace School is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER



When I started teaching my children at home, more than 30 years ago, I knew I wanted to teach them how to think. I knew that it wasn't enough to accumulate facts because facts alone won't get you to truth. You have to know what to do with the facts, you have to know how to judge and order the facts, if they are going to help you. The children were going to need a formation that would enable them to make good intellectual judgments. I wasn't, initially, clear about how to achieve that goal. So I experimented on my guinea pigs.

My experiments, though, had a direction in addition to the general desire to give the children the tools of learning. I am a graduate of Thomas Aquinas College, in Santa Paula, CA, and my husband was a founder of the college (www.thomasaquinas.edu). I wanted my children to be prepared for the education offered there. If they were well prepared for that education, I knew they would also be prepared for anything else they might desire to do.

The education offered there is the education every educated person in Western Civilization once received, sometimes known as a liberal arts education. In this education the idea is to educate the man as man, whatever vocation he may pursue. All of his faculties are used. He develops all the powers of his soul.

In the classical curriculum the liberal arts studied include the Trivium: grammar, logic and rhetoric, and the Quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. These are all presupposed to and ordered to philosophy and theology. In acquiring the arts of the Trivium and the Quadrivium the student cultivates these important areas of understanding. His intellect is strengthened and formed, enabling him to make good judgments. He becomes a free man (the 'liberal' in liberal arts comes from the Latin 'liberare' meaning 'to set free'), able to direct his own life and the common life of the community.

That is what my husband and I wanted for our children. My husband, however, who had been teaching in colleges for 25 years before we were married, knew that such an education requires the right preparation. There is a tendency to think that the way to achieve every good is simply to practice it. If you want to skate well, practice skating. If you want to cook well, practice cooking. This is true, but you can't practice it until there are certain foundational tools in place. If you can't keep your balance, you won't be able to skate well. In fact, you won't even be able to practice skating. If you haven't tasted the various foods, can't read, or use measuring utensils, you can't really practice cooking. Though it is true that the way to improve reading skills is by reading, before one can do that he must know how to read. Similarly, there are skills one must develop before he can do the classical curriculum in its fullness well.

"So we designed a curriculum that would prepare the children to do the fullness of the classical curriculum at the right time."

So we designed a curriculum that would prepare the children to do the fullness of the classical curriculum at the right time. We worked on developing the imagination, on giving the beginning of each of the liberal arts and sciences (described more fully later on in this brochure, and on our website), and on specifically teaching the children how to think, that is, how to order and make judgments about the information they receive.

When I was first thinking about this, I read Dorothy Sayers' essay, "The Lost Tools of Learning." Much of what she said resonated with me. She was not an educator, and she acknowledges that in her essay. But she was a smart and observant lady; she knew that the educated person needs to not only learn, but know *how* to learn, so that he can learn what is necessary any time it is desirable. She knew that education is ordered to truth, and that to arrive

at truth, one needs more than facts; one needs principles in the light of which he can make judgments. He needs to judge the conformity of the facts he learns to the reality outside. That is what truth is, a conformity of the intellect with reality. Such a person will be an independent learner and thinker, and we live in a time when we have to be able to resist collective thinking. We want to order our lives to the truth, specifically the eternal Truth, not to what is popular.

When I first read Dorothy Sayers' essay, I knew from internal experience and education that she was right. It fit with what I had learned in my own education at Thomas Aquinas College. But I didn't know exactly what it meant in terms of day to day teaching. Also, Miss Sayers spoke of stages of intellectual formation. She called them the Grammatical, Dialectical and Rhetorical stages, and said these stages were characterized by certain natural inclinations to action in the children. She chose those names for them because she saw a likeness between what children naturally wanted to do, and the method of the classical Trivium. Since what I was familiar with was the subjects of the classical Trivium, I wasn't sure what she meant by that, but I noted it as an interesting idea.

Then, for ten years, I experimented with curricula, keeping in mind the classical curriculum I wanted to prepare my children to do, and the fact that I wanted them to learn how to think, to obtain the tools of learning that would help them all their lives and teach them how to make judgments.

At that point I returned to "The Lost Tools of Learning." I was more than ever in agreement with the notion that we wanted to teach our children how to think. I had seen, first hand, that thinking can be done well or badly, and one can be taught to do it well. I also saw that there are steps in learning. Small children cannot analyze in the same way older children can. I needed to change the type of assignments as the children grew. When I reread the essay I realized that I now knew, from experience, what Miss Sayers was calling the *stages for intellectual formation*.

It is essential in teaching that the student do what is appropriate at each period of learning. He should memorize, sequence and observe at the "primary" and "grammatical" stage. This strengthens and makes docile his imagination, so that in the next stage of learning, the analytical (sometimes called the logical or dialectical), he will have the help of a trained imagination in following and constructing arguments. In turn, it is essential to this education that when the student is capable of grasping and marshaling arguments, he should practice doing so (in 7th through 9th grade – the desire for argument is often noticeable!). If he does, then the last stage, the rhetorical, can be given to articulating those arguments elegantly, in the service of the truly noble. The student should, at these various stages, have the opportunity to consider much of the same material in a different light, based on his ability, interest, and level of formation.

The reason that it is so important to keep the appropriate level of intellectual formation in mind is that

"Such a person will be an independent learner and thinker, and we live in a time when we have to be able to resist collective thinking."



if you ask your student to do something before he is ready, you will both be unhappy. There comes a time when the student is ready to analyze and then he should do so. But if you ask him to give you the main point in a paragraph, chapter, or story when he is still working on sequencing (and thus ready to retell the material), you are going to be disappointed, and you may actually interfere in the proper formation of the student.



The reason Miss Sayers named these stages from the subjects of the classical curriculum, is that they share with those subjects a method. Learning a language and the grammar of language involves memorization and observation. Logic involves analysis and careful reasoning. Rhetoric requires attention to the power of words. So while Miss Sayers was not suggesting that the student undertake the study of the liberal arts in their perfection, she was observing that children are naturally good at different methods of learning at different stages of their development. That's true, and thus I incorporated her terminology in my explanations of the goal of the assignments at different grade levels.

At the end of ten years, I had basically the curriculum we now offer in Mother of Divine Grace School. That curriculum has been refined over the last 20 years, as I have worked with hundreds of additional students. We now have syllabi for every course, with course objectives, teachers to assist students, and group classes in nearly every middle school and high school subject. Each of these offerings has been developed in response to parent input. We love our MODG families, and want to help them in the way they want help. We truly believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and that they have the sacramental grace to know what is best for their children. We want to help you raise your children in the Catholic culture of your home. We offer each family an individual consultant who will help the parents choose the best course of studies for each child, and help them implement those studies. The consultant is always a mother who has used this curriculum successfully in her own home with her own family. We keep records for each student, and we help students with college applications. We want to help you and your children to succeed in your goals.

Please look over our brochure, visit our website www.modg.org, and feel free to call our office with any questions.

God bless you,
Laura M. Berquist

"To be the primary educators of their children for eternal life is not easy for parents. It never has been since the dawn of Christianity. But in today's world, intoxicated with its own pride, addicted to its own pleasures, indoctrinated in its own propaganda that only temporal life exists and eternal life is a mirage - to become parents of eternal life demands heroism."

Fr. John Hardon, S.J. from "Parents as Primary Educators - Parents for Eternal Life"

WHAT IS CLASSICAL EDUCATION?

The classical method is fundamental to Mother of Divine Grace School. It permeates every aspect of our program, from the selection and application of texts to our interactions with parents and students. This is a general explanation of the methodology behind our program by our founder and president, Laura Berquist.

The end of education is wisdom. Man desires by nature to know, and that means we want to have not only the facts, but the reasons for the facts. We want to think about the highest things, the most noble, the most interesting in themselves.

There are steps in such an education. One can't begin by studying the very highest things. One does not give his second grade student the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas and expect that he will read and understand it. He needs to do some preliminary work. But that preliminary work is ordered to eventually understanding the very highest truths.

Liberal education, which we also call classical education, is such an education. It begins in wonder and aims at wisdom. It involves the seven liberal arts: grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. It also includes the study of nature, the soul, ethics and politics, the highest created objects, and finally that to which all the others are ordered - Theology, an understanding of the divine. Liberal education in its perfection is Catholic education, for it has the same end, identically, as the Catholic faith: the highest, best, and most perfect object, God.

"Liberal education in its perfection is Catholic education, for it has the same end, identically, as the Catholic faith: the highest, best, and most perfect object, God."

Though all men think, thinking can be done well or badly, and one can be taught to do it well. In large measure, the role of the teacher of grade school and high school children is this: teaching children to think well.

More than Latin and ancient authors

"Classical education" refers to the method used to guide the student to knowledge. Not only is the method different from our modern approach to education, the goal is no longer the accumulation of facts, but to learn the art of learning."

Laura Berquist
Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum

The education we give our children is intended to give them the beginning of the education every learned person in Western Civilization once received, a classical or liberal arts education. In such an education the idea is to educate the man as man, whatever vocation he may pursue. All of his faculties are used. He develops all the powers of his soul. His mind is formed, strengthened, and developed.

THE INTELLECTUAL STAGES OF FORMATION

Work with Your Student's Naturally Developing Skills. At MODG we recognize that students go through various stages of intellectual formation as they mature. Our curriculum is aligned with these stages to give students the opportunity to use and perfect the skills appropriate to their stage of development.

Primary Stage: Focus on the formation of the imagination through observation, sequencing, and memorization.

Grammatical Stage: Focus on observation, memorization, and developing patterns of language.

Dialectical Stage: Focus on analysis through conversation and writing.

Rhetorical Stage: Focus on elegant and persuasive argument.



The Primary Stage: K-2nd

"...the saint stories, the tales of noble actions performed by noble people, the fairy tales, with their clear divisions between good and bad, will make a lifelong difference."

– Dorothy Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning"

These first years are ordered to the acquisition of the skills necessary for further learning. Primarily, the focus is on the formation of the imagination. It is very important for students to have a good imagination because it will provide them with the images and order necessary to eventually produce an ordered chain of thought and cohesive arguments. The method our program uses at this level is intended to aid the mind in producing images, and to improve the quality of

the images produced. This is done through observation, sequencing, and memorization: all the assignments in our K-2 grade syllabi are geared to form the student through these activities.

A student in this stage should concentrate on learning to read well, and learning to write, both in terms of letter formation and powers of expression. The student spends time acquiring facility in addition and subtraction. If these things are learned well, all the rest of one's school time will be much more profitable. Additionally, time should be spent reading to your child during these years. If your kindergartner doesn't learn to read this year, or even next year, it won't finally make much difference in his life. "But the saint stories, the tales of noble actions performed by noble people, the fairy tales, with their clear divisions between good and bad, will make a lifelong difference." (Sayers). For this reason we have added book lists to the K-2nd grade syllabi.

The Grammatical Stage: 3rd-5th

"...one rejoices in the chanting of rhymes and the rumble and thunder of unintelligible polysyllables; one enjoys the mere accumulation of things."

– Dorothy Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning"

The third grade is the beginning of the next stage of intellectual formation. In the classical curriculum this stage is called the Grammatical Stage. Miss Sayers, in her essay "The Lost Tools of Learning," calls it the "Poll-Parrot stage," in which learning by heart is easy



and, on the whole, pleasurable. “At this age, one readily memorizes the shapes and appearances of things; one likes to recite the number-plates of cars; one rejoices in the chanting of rhymes and the rumble and thunder of unintelligible polysyllables; one enjoys the mere accumulation of things.” (Sayers) Observation and memorization are still the focus of these scholastic years. In addition, an emphasis is placed on developing patterns of language, accomplished by using copying, dictation, conversation, usage exercises, and creative writing. Continuing to read aloud and encouraging sustained silent reading is also very important. All of these are pre-writing or writing activities.



The Dialectical Stage: 6th-9th

"...children are born causists and their natural propensity only needs to be developed and trained."

– Dorothy Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning"

In “The Lost Tools of Learning,” Dorothy Sayers says of this stage, “All events are food for such an appetite. An umpire’s decision; the degree to which one may transgress the spirit of a regulation without being trapped by the letter, on such questions as these, children are born causists and their natural propensity only needs to be developed and trained – and especially be brought into intelligible relationship with events

in the grown-up world.” Since children, at this stage, are now interested in argument, capitalize on their natural inclinations. Let them think about reasoning, how it is done and what works. The emphasis in each subject changes from memorization to analysis: learning to understand and produce an intellectual argument. It is a beginning of the study of Logic or Dialectic, not as one will study it in Aristotle’s *Prior and Posterior Analytics*, but preparing for that study. First, the student must see clearly what is being said and why. Reasonable arguments for opposing positions can then be worked out and resolutions proposed, based on ethical and dogmatic principles. This will be done both in writing and in conversation.

The Rhetorical Stage: 9th-12th

"...here and there a sudden insight will bring about that most exciting of all discoveries: the realization that a truism is true..."

– Dorothy Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning"

The Rhetorical Stage builds upon the Dialectic stage and leads to the study of subjects as subjects in higher classical education. This stage seems to be characterized in the student both by the discovery that he needs to know more, and a resulting interest in, and capacity for, acquiring information. The imagination is active; there is a new enjoyment of the poetical in literature, art and music. This combination of information and poetical



interests gives the student an ability, which our curriculum fosters, to express himself in elegant and persuasive language. Miss Sayers, in her essay, says of students at this stage, “The doors of the storehouse of knowledge should now be thrown open for them to browse about as they will. The things once learned by rote will be seen in new contexts; the things once coldly analyzed can now be brought together to form a new synthesis; here and there a sudden insight will bring about that most exciting of all discoveries: the realization that a truism is true... Any child who already shows a disposition to specialize should be given his head: for, when the use of tools has been well and truly learned, it is available for any study whatever.”

MORE ON THE CLASSICAL METHOD

It is our hope that in college your child will study the liberal arts in their perfection (the Trivium: grammar, rhetoric, and logic, and the Quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy), the sciences to which they are ordered, such as the *Physics* (the study of nature), the study of the soul (*De Anima*), the *Ethics and Politics*, then natural theology (*Metaphysics*) and ultimately Sacred Theology. Before the student gets to this level, though, he prepares for these disciplines by developing his power of making images, his habits of thought, and by doing the beginning of every one of the liberal arts.

All learning is cyclical. We learn first on an introductory level and then we come back to the same objects at a deeper level. This is easiest to see, I think, in mathematics. When one first masters counting, the very next step is to learn the four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) with respect to whole numbers. The rest of one's mathematical career is spent learning the power of those operations. One adds, subtracts, multiplies and divides fractions, then decimals and percents, then algebraic expressions, then trigonometric functions and then he uses them in calculus. This process is clearly a deepening of one's understanding of what is first learned on a very simple level.



We follow the same process in every field, including the liberal arts and sciences. What young children do, if those who direct them are knowledgeable of the ends of education, are exercises that will prepare their minds and hearts for the deepest level of natural, and, finally, supernatural, knowledge.

It is my view that in the earliest years one helps the student strengthen and make docile his imagination with exercises in observation, memorization and sequential ordering. One does this with a matter that also prepares the mind and heart for later deeper truths. At

this level children make their acquaintance with salvation history, something they will study all their lives. They also are introduced to the good and the beautiful in many areas, as a preparation for the true, as such, later on. (See my introduction to *The Harp and Laurel Wreath* where I explore this theme.) They learn the basis of all arithmetic, develop an acquaintance with the geometric figures, are exposed to great music, and study God's effects in nature, including in the heavens. These are the beginnings of the arts of the Quadrivium. They learn the basis of all language arts, reading and writing, which constitutes the beginning of the Trivium.

As the student matures, he continues to perfect these methods and subjects; he keeps coming back to them at a deeper level, developing his habits of thought. For example, in language arts preparation, one is clearly preparing for the Trivium done in its fullness. The Trivium, as we have noted, consists of the arts of grammar, logic and rhetoric. It is worth also noting that all of these have to do with speech in some way or another. Grammar is concerned with the construction of the sentence, and its principles are the ways of signifying that determine the parts of speech. Logic concerns the common method of procedure in all the sciences, and principally considers

definition and reasoning, both of which are carried on through speech. Rhetoric is the art of speaking persuasively. In all of these there is a sort of making: one makes a statement, one makes an argument, and one makes a speech. In every course in our curriculum, we work on perfecting these first connections with the arts that will lead to the sciences that will lead to natural and Sacred Theology.

Further, young students work on argumentation, so that they can eventually use rhetoric in the service of the truly noble. We teach our students to summarize, which is to order items according to importance instead of chronology; we teach them to identify an argument and then construct their own arguments. We teach them to develop their thoughts in paragraphs, so that they can develop them later in essays and papers using the rhetorical modes: exposition, argumentation, description and narration.

"Further, young students work on argumentation, so that they can eventually use rhetoric in the service of the truly noble."

We explicitly, with our older children, introduce the ends of rhetoric into their regular assignments. Rhetoric is of three kinds: the political, the forensic and the ceremonial. The political aims at establishing whether a proposed course of action is expedient or inexpedient; the forensic, whether an action done was just or unjust; and the ceremonial, whether someone deserves praise or blame. In our high school program we discuss and write about all three types of actions and characters. In my experience, the student in the rhetorical stage is interested in the high and noble, he cares about what is good and bad, and about what is blameworthy and praiseworthy. So the ends of rhetoric are by nature of interest to the high school student. This is a very real preparation for, and participation in, the art of rhetoric.

In the commentary of St. Thomas on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, he notes that the arts of the Trivium are used to produce compositions and discourses, as well as syllogisms. We work on those throughout the curriculum. We prepare for the sciences, too. We introduce our children to great literature. Through these works the student gains a sort of experience. The great works of literature appeal to the imagination and move the affections rightly.

These works present or imply profoundly important views of human life and reality as a whole. Similarly, the great works of history provide vicarious moral experience, a conception of human society, and an awareness of the greatest issues mankind faces. All of this prepares the student well to read the more difficult things, such as Plato's *Dialogues*, and then the *Ethics and the Politics* of Aristotle, at the right time. We introduce our children to the arguments our Founding Fathers had regarding the nature of the republic, and the particular "incarnation" of the form of mixed government that was appropriate to us, in this new land. This is the beginning of the study of the *Politics*. We have the children study natural science, particularly animal behavior, as a beginning to the study of the soul. For those of us who are consciously aware of the fullness of the classical curriculum, there is an intentional ordering of the parts of our curricula to that curriculum, so that the fullness of the classical curriculum can be achieved as excellently as possible when the time is right.

As regards the highest object of the classical curriculum, God Himself, the end of natural and supernatural theology, we are preparing our children for that knowledge from the moment they are born. We do that by the way we live, by the example we give them of fatherhood, and of sacrificial love, and by the doctrine we teach them as soon as they are able to reason. All of this is their first introduction to the greatest truths, and to the object they will, with God's grace, contemplate in eternity.

- Taken from a Classical Education talk given by Laura Berquist in 2010

OVERVIEW OF OUR CURRICULUM

RELIGION: Our religion program in grade school provides the student with knowledge of the origins of our Faith, the basic tenants of the Faith, and examples of heroic faith through studying the Bible, the Catechism and lives of the saints. In **Kindergarten** we use the *Children's Golden Bible* to share the stories of salvation history in rich and varied language. In **1st through 4th Grade** students become familiar with the teachings of the faith first through the *St. Joseph's First Communion Catechism* and then through the *St. Joseph's Baltimore Catechism*. Alongside the catechism, students deepen their knowledge of salvation history through lives of the saints and bible histories. We continue this study of Catholic doctrine in **5th through 8th Grade** with both the *Faith & Life* series and a deeper reading of the *St. Joseph's Baltimore Catechism*. Students expand their knowledge of salvation history reading the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles along with early Church history. In high school, we use the Father Laux series, because they are Thomistic and thorough in approach. They help the students understand the importance of clarity when discussing matters of doctrine. We use Fr. Laux's *Introduction to the Bible* for an in depth study of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We also use *Following Christ in the World* by Anne Carroll, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and various encyclicals to help students understand the relationship between reason and faith, as well as provide opportunities for students to apply principles learned in Father Laux's texts. In **middle school** and **high school**, our religion program includes a variety of writing assignments appropriate to the analytical and rhetorical stages, helping the student to cement his understanding of the Faith and articulate it in an ordered and persuasive paper.

MATH: Our math program makes use of the spiral method. (The spiral method involves starting with basic concepts and building on those, while constantly returning to the earlier concepts to reinforce them.) In **early grade school** we use Abeka math, which is very user friendly and provides an excellent introduction to mathematical concepts. In **later grade school** and throughout **high school** we use Saxon math. Saxon math is a tried and true program that utilizes the spiral method as well. There are an array of excellent support opportunities for Saxon such as the D.I.V.E into Math CDs or SaxonTeacher for parents looking for additional assistance teaching the Saxon texts. We also recommend Harold Jacob's Geometry course for high school geometry because it requires the students to demonstrate proofs, something very suitable for the rhetorical stage. In addition to our primary math recommendations, our educational consultants can advise parents on additional options suited for the specific child's academic needs. Some families make use of the online support found in programs like *Teaching Textbooks* or ALEKS math.



ENGLISH: Our English program is one of the central components of our curriculum. It contains a variety of elements: language arts, reading, writing, spelling, editing, poetry, and grammar. In early grade school, we focus on exposure to beautiful literature by having parents read aloud; Laura has crafted book lists for each grade level to help parents and students cultivate a love of literature. Students in the early grades focus on learning to read and write correctly, working on retelling skills, and memorizing poetry to increase vocabulary. In **3rd through 5th Grade** the student begins an informal study of grammar through language arts, using the Emma Serl texts which introduces the student to patterns of language in an array of writing styles. Students

are guided through gentle activities that encourage observation, develop the art of conversation, and strengthen writing skills through copying and activities. Throughout grade school, the student moves through daily exercises in both spelling and editing, using *The Writing Road to Reading* along with *Starting a Spelling Notebook*, and various editing texts. In **middle school**, the beginning of the analytic stage, grammar study begins formally. We offer several grammar texts as options, including *Easy Grammar* and *Voyages in English* in **middle school** and Warriner's *English Grammar and Composition*, *Holt Traditions Warriner's Handbook* and Abeka's *Grammar and Composition* in **high school**. Students also have the option to use our *Fundamentals of Latin Grammar* which teaches Latin and English grammar simultaneously. In **middle school** and **high school** we use a variety of living history texts for literature to let students develop and hone their reading and comprehension skills. Students read from age appropriate retellings as well as original sources, reading classic texts from great authors through the ages. Paper topics are carefully chosen to work on skills pertinent to the student's stage of development. Students work on topic sentences, paragraph development, short summaries and essays. Then they progress to move advanced essays, argumentative papers and finally research and persuasive papers. We also continue the study of poetry throughout middle school and high school, moving to advanced, beautiful, classic poems.



HISTORY & LITERATURE: Our history and literature program is another central component of our curriculum. Our history and literature assignments are interwoven throughout the curriculum. In **early grade school** we focus on exposure to beautiful literature, while in the **middle school** years students use living history books to make history come alive and to help them develop and hone their reading and comprehension skills. In **high school**, students are carefully led through a series of ordered paper topics in history that will lead them from basic summary writing to writing persuasive and effective compositions.

Our History program proceeds from what is more known to the student to a study of more complex things. In **early grade school** the student begins with the study of family history in order to establish a sense of time through what is most familiar, his parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and so forth. Next we study American History because it is what is most familiar to our students in the United States (note: we do encourage our international students to supplement this study of American history with a study of their own country's history to lay a similar foundation for history in what is most familiar). In **3rd Grade** we begin with a study of American history based on persons through biographies because people are more accessible to a young mind. Students can cultivate a sense of before and after by ordering these famous American personages. In **4th and 5th Grade** we then develop this into a more formal study of American history through events expanding the student's knowledge of American history from the exploration to the Civil War. In **middle school**, we begin an ordered study of western culture, beginning

with Egyptian history in **6th Grade**. We delve into the rich history of Greece and Rome in **7th Grade** and then explore the great events of Medieval Europe in **8th Grade**, ending with a more in depth look at United States history in early high school. Throughout the rest of high school, we begin a more intense and developed study of history interwoven with a study of government, which involves a consideration of the nature of man, law and virtue, and ends with the formation of the United States government. Students return to the democracies and oligarchies of Ancient Athens and Sparta and to the republic of Ancient Rome. They consider the development of parliamentary systems alongside a monarchy in Medieval England and Spain. And finally they consider the structure of the American



Government alongside Thomistic principles of law in our Adv American Government course. In these last three years, students are asked to consider some of the most important questions, such as “What is virtue?”, “What do all men desire?”, and “What is the end of government?” Our history papers guide students through the process of writing, culminating in persuasive argument papers in each year of high school. Students must assemble facts, lay out opposing positions, make a cogent argument and draw a compelling conclusion.

SCIENCE: Our science program, in early grade school, encourages students to observe and marvel at God’s creation. In **K through 2nd Grade** students use MODG’s science books that facilitate this sense of wonder, and provide for nature journaling and science projects. In **3rd and 4th Grade** we use Abeka’s science program which facilitates the student’s continued wonder at the natural world, while beginning the more formal study of science in a traditional framework. In the **middle school** and **high school** years, students learn the necessary biology, chemistry, and physical science concepts they need to excel in college. In **5th through 8th Grade** we use the *Concepts and Challenges* series or the *Building Blocks of Science* series. These texts present a solid scientific foundation, but also provide students with valuable practice identifying the topic sentence of technical paragraphs and writing their own further reinforcing the student’s writing skills. In **high school** we use a combination of Milliken Press, Novare, and Apologia science texts. Our courses in science not only teach science, but also help with student analysis of material, expository essay writing, research skills, hands-on learning, and reflection on the order in creation. The analysis and expository writing in **9th grade**, in particular develops the student’s ability to reason logically.

LATIN: Our Latin program introduces the student to the study of Latin gradually. Mother of Divine Grace School uses *Beginning Latin* and *Fundamentals of Latin Grammar* to teach younger students Latin. The program is unique because it is rules based. From the beginning, it presents in a simple and straightforward manner the basic rules and patterns that underlie all of Latin grammar. *Beginning Latin* does this principally through observation and memorization, while *Fundamentals of Latin Grammar* adds analysis, in keeping with the method of classical learning. The student is also directed to the elements common in Latin and English grammar, providing a solid background in the grammar of both languages. The students who come out of this program are uniquely prepared for further Latin study. In high school, the student continues to expand his vocabulary, knowledge of Latin grammar, and his ability to translate, culminating in translating passages from classical authors. We offer Latin

classes and syllabi for Henle Latin, Cambridge Latin, Shelmerdine Latin, and MODG's own *Beta Latin* and Advanced Latin programs.

ART: Our art program teaches students to appreciate beautiful art. In the **early grades**, we focus on studying beautiful pictures and the student's ability to identify colors, forms, and artists. In the **later grades**, we focus on art comprehension, the composition of the picture, and the ability to identify schools of art. We also include a variety of hands-on 'how to draw' texts to provide the student with practical application.

MUSIC: Our music program focuses on listening to and understanding beautiful music. We provide the student with lists of classical music and a variety of weekly exercises ordered to comparing various musical works and identifying the composers of a piece. We also encourage the student to understand the tone, composition, and the instruments used in the musical pieces. We include some "sing-along" texts and encourage learning simple musical instruments in the earlier grades and studying a musical instrument in later grades.

OUR PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM: The **Pre-K** curriculum is gentle by design. It is set up to be completed over one year or two years depending on the student's ability and interest. Preschool students in a homeschool situation naturally have a wonderful advantage. They participate in the life of a family. They play "kitchen," measure rice, move cereal from one bowl to another, pour water, stir an ice cube with a spoon, listen to conversations around them, and create while they play. Our suggested activity lists include activities for learning to follow directions and for working on motor control. The activities are all gentle and doable for the busy homeschooling mother.

The formal schooling component consists of:

- Presenting good role models and heroic examples in the form of Bible stories, saint stories, and classic children's literature.
- Writing workbooks that are gentle and help the student begin to develop fine motor control.
- Our art program, which exposes the children to beautiful works of art, and helps develop observation skills.
- The math program, which helps students work on pre-math skills such as learning sizes, shapes, sequences and colors.
- Reading, which is primarily an auditory activity. If the children cannot remember the sounds that are associated with those 'squiggles' on the paper, they won't be able to read. Little children should listen to children's songs, poems, stories, and they should learn prayers to exercise auditory skills. Listening to classical music and learning to identify the different instruments can help with auditory skills as well. Having the child repeat random sequences of numbers is also a pre-reading skill, and can be fun.

OUR PROGRAM:

- Teaches the child how to think
- Follows the child's natural stages of learning
- Takes account of the child's individual needs
- Supports the spiritual formation of the child
- Allows parents to play an integral role in their child's education
- Is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

TEACHER REVIEW PROGRAM

Enrollment in Mother of Divine Grace School consists of enrollment in the Teacher Review Program. Each enrolled family participates in the development of their child's education. The parent's participation in our program means that the curriculum will be tailored to each child's specific needs and will result in a plan of study that encourages that child to develop as an active learner, effective communicator, and independent thinker. Enrollment in Mother of Divine Grace School includes the following services:

- **Assistance** implementing a Catholic classical curriculum and adapting it to the specific student's needs and goals
- **Practical tips** on general homeschooling questions, such as how much time to spend on school subjects, how to educate children in multiple grades effectively, etc.
- **Guidance** in how to grade the student's daily work through our rubrics, learning objectives, and grading charts.
- **Grading and evaluation** of quarterly student work.
- **Record keeping** including semester report cards, health records (CA students), and transcripts that are maintained in our administrative offices. Our semester report cards and accredited transcripts are accepted at private and public schools nationwide. Our high school transcript is accepted at colleges throughout the United States.
- **College/Career counseling** throughout high school including college recommendations, a personalized high school plan, test preparation, etc.
- **Private school perks** including ID cards, HSLDA family discount, academic diplomas, work permits, community newsletter, and access to standardized testing.
- **Networking** with other committed homeschooling parents through our list of enrolled families.
- **Access** to our Special Services advisors when needed and to our Learning Support, Teacher Services and Special Services Programs.
- **Free online syllabi**, optional hard copies of the syllabi, and a discount at our online bookstore.

Our Educational Consultants have well over 1,000 combined years
of distance education experience.

Parents receive the support and guidance they need to homeschool well through an educational consultant. Consultants have years of distance education experience, and they know our program well. The consultant is able to provide parent support by:

- Helping the parent explore curriculum options tailored to each child's talents and needs.
- Helping the parent apply the classical method.
- Conducting three consultations per year (and an additional consultation for new families) in which they will review the parent's progress in implementing the MODG curriculum, suggest modifications, answer questions and provide support.
- Providing additional consultations if needed or desired (Note: additional fees may apply).
- Answering questions throughout the year via phone or e-mail.

For information on how to enroll and our Tuition and Fees, please see our website at www.modg.org. (Please Note: Books are purchased separately. Enrolled families receive free online versions of our syllabi as part of enrollment and can also purchase hard copies at a discount from our office.)

TEACHER SERVICES PROGRAM

Teacher Services is a supplement to the Teacher Review Program. It is offered for most subjects for Grades 6-12, and for selected subjects in Grades 3-5, and runs from late August through May 31st. Students who sign up for courses in our Teacher Services receive support from one (or more) of our teachers.

Middle School and High School Courses

Students in 6th through 12th grade work one-on-one with a teacher who will:

- Discuss texts and assignments with the student by Zoom or phone and e-mail.
- Explain problem concepts and provide tips on how to improve work.
- Set goals for the student based on his current stage of intellectual formation.
- Provide deadlines for the student (if requested by the parent or student).
- Review and grade all papers and selected additional assignments and provide feedback on the quality of the work.

In our Teacher Services, students work with a teacher in one or more academic courses (i.e. Religion, Math, English Grammar, Science, History & Literature, and Latin). In this program, we offer several levels of support: Grading Only, Assisted, Directed, Enhanced Directed; students are welcome to take courses at any level or may take a mix of courses at each level. For more information on the differences between Grading Only, Assisted, Directed, & Enhanced Directed services, please see www.modg.org.

During the school year the teacher and student have regular meetings, either via phone or Zoom, in which they discuss the student's recently completed, current and upcoming assignments. The student also submits written assignments regularly to the teacher. The teacher reviews these assignments, grading them and providing feedback using Mother of Divine Grace School's subject rubrics, and returns them to the student in a timely manner.

Parents play a key role in the education of their children in the Teacher Services. The teacher is here to assist the parent and student and to help direct the student's course of studies. But the teacher does not replace the parent as the primary educator of their child. The parent continues to hold a vital role in the student's education, primarily with regard to the daily discussions. The parent also remains involved by overseeing the student's schedule, making sure the student is submitting work on time and making his scheduled meetings.

Grade School Courses

Mother of Divine Grace is offering a limited number of grade school courses in our Teacher Services program as "Grading Only" at a special reduced cost. 3rd-5th Grade students can sign up to work one-on-one with a teacher for religion, history and language arts courses. As in our other Teacher Services courses, writing assignments from the course will be submitted to the teacher for grading and review and the student will be given access to online quizzes. Additional questions may be submitted to the teacher by email.



LEARNING SUPPORT CLASSES

Learning Support classes are online classes that meet once or twice a week for about an hour. A MODG teacher leads discussions, presents materials, and helps students come to a better understanding of the materials. The student has an opportunity to discuss the material in the classes and ask questions. We have found that not only are the classes a great way to learn the material, but it is also a great opportunity for the students to get together with other students around the country to discuss common interests and develop friendships.

We believe that parents are responsible for the education of their children. We expect that a parent will be very involved in the student's learning and know that what we do in the conference calls can only be successful if the parent is actively involved. We think that the Learning Support classes are an excellent tool to assist the parents in the education of their children.

What is Learning Support?

Learning Support classes are another way to enhance the development of the student's intellectual ability. Discussion is key to our program; defending and presenting opinions in class help the students love learning and improve their written work, because they come to an understanding of the different positions first through the spoken word. Classes provide additional accountability and keep students on track. We welcome any parent to sit in on the classes that her (or his) students are doing with us. (Please check with us about how this may be done.) It is our hope that discussions in the class encourage the students and parents to continue the discussion together after class.



Learning Support Courses include paper grading. When grading work, the teacher can immediately see when there is a problem in understanding and address it within a few days. For that reason, in most classes we encourage the students to submit work for grading.

The camaraderie that develops between the students in the class is also a benefit. It helps the students feel that they are part of a class in a school. Also, we have found that Latin is a subject for which many parents want additional help. The classes provide parents with that support. The result of this system is clear; more students are taking Latin, enjoying it, and continuing with it in later years.

What are the benefits of Learning Support?

More teaching time, accountability, structure, group discussion and camaraderie are the benefits of Learning Support. Students must move at a regular pace and meet deadlines. Small class size allows teachers to pay attention to individual students, but do so in a group setting. Class size is limited to ensure maximum benefit to students. Some classes like Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation and Story Hours provide opportunities for

students to participate in an activity without any homework or prep time on the part of the parent. Students simply need to show up to class. Teachers are available for questions outside of class as well. It is our intention that the Learning Support classes will facilitate discussion in your home, and enhance your child's learning experience without replacing you as the primary teacher.

We hope anyone would benefit from these classes! However, students who may need to go at a slower pace than the syllabus due to real learning issues with concepts may want to consider using our Teacher Services and taking courses at the Directed or Enhanced Directed level in lieu of these classes.

How does Learning Support work?

Learning Support classes meet on a regular basis. Classes are conducted weekly (or twice weekly) via Zoom, a virtual classroom which requires a computer, headset and high speed internet connection. The link to the virtual classroom is posted to the families' site, once the student is assigned to a section. In class, the students work on new concepts with the teacher and review previous concepts, employing the discussion method. Students receive approximately one hour per week of class teaching. Students do not have personal one-on-one calls with their teacher as a general rule. If students need extra support, they can sign up for Learning Support Labs (for non-writing courses) or TS-in-LS (for writing courses), which will allow them to meet individually with a teacher throughout the school year, in addition to attending the class.

Are grades given in Learning Support Classes?

Grades are given based upon papers, tests and quizzes submitted. Assignments will be graded either by the Learning Support teacher, or by a grader who works with the entire class section. While paper grading is covered in the cost of the course, parents may choose to have their student not use the grading portion of the course. Except for religion courses there will be no difference in price for audited classes. Religion courses and grade school Discussion Book Clubs are offered either as a discussion only class, or as a class with grading, between which there is a difference in pricing.

In summary, Religion and Discussion Book Club Learning Support Classes have options. You can sign up for grading in these courses or not. If you chose the grading option, your student's papers will be corrected by the teacher grading his section's work. If you choose the discussion only option, grading is not included. So you are free to utilize any other resources for grading such as local teachers or our Teacher Services. **All other Learning Support Classes do include grading** and the student should not sign up for those courses in Teacher Services.

“My daughter just adores her teacher and tells me and my eighth grader how much fun the classes are and how much she enjoys them. I love this option much more than the option of putting them in a high school for a class.”

Michelle, a MODG parent

For information on our Registration and Course Fees, please see our website at www.modg.org.

SPECIAL SERVICES PROGRAM

All Students Are Created Equal but Not Identical. Our standard texts are chosen with great care and consideration. At MODG, however, we understand that our students have different needs, abilities, and interests. For this reason, we strive to keep our curriculum as flexible as possible through course and text substitutions, assignment revisions, elective credits, and by accepting course credits from other institutions. Your consultant will guide you through these choices and help you to make the right decisions for your family. Our general policy is to approve outside courses that do not contain anti-Catholic material and that meet our content standards for the grade level in question.

The Special Services Program is a supplement to our Teacher Review Program designed to help families who have children with learning challenges. Enrolling your child in the Special Services Program provides:

- Help implementing the classical method and adapting the curricula to the student's particular needs.
- Ability for your consultant to work closely with a special service consultant to provide a successful plan for your child.
- Helpful tips and resources on homeschooling a child who struggles. (found on the family site)
- More levels of service, if needed: Planning and Additional Consultation (see below).
- Paper trail documenting accommodations and modifications.
- Ability to meet with Sharon Hensley for a consultation at a reduced rate from her standard charge.

The consultants are homeschooling mothers who have broad experience working with children with many different special needs. They have received extensive training in our methodology and the adaption of our curriculum and goals for the purpose of helping the struggling student achieve his goals. Special service consultants are also available to assist families as well as consultants when designing a curriculum. We have broad experience working with many learning challenges, behavioral issues, and emotional issues.

High School graduation is possible for our students with learning challenges. To graduate from MODG, the student must complete high school requirements for graduation. Your consultant can help you with this. If your child is unable to complete high school requirements, he can earn a Certificate of Completion.

For more information on levels of support and pricing and fees please visit www.modg.org.



GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Mother of Divine Grace School offers a standard academic diploma and transcript. As an established, respected, and accredited private school our transcript is accepted by colleges throughout the United States. Graduation from Mother of Divine Grace School requires completion of 22.5 credits (225 units).

Suggested Course of Study for the College-Bound Student

This is Mother of Divine Grace School's suggested course of study for high school students and meets or exceeds the requirements for most colleges in the United States. However, even though colleges do follow a general pattern, every college is different and may require slightly different courses to be completed in high school for admission to their program. So as the student progresses through high school, he should contact the colleges he is interested in attending for a list of their course requirements. The consultants are able to help the parent adapt the curriculum for each student to meet the requirements for the college he is interested in attending.

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Faith & Morality	Sacraments & Apol	Bible Study	Catholic Doctrine
American Literature	Ancient Literature	Medieval Literature	British Literature
Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Advanced Math (opt'l)
US History & Geog	Ancient History & Geog	Medieval History & Geog	Adv Am Gov & Econ
Earth Science (w/ lab)	Natural Science (w/ lab)	Biology (w/ lab)	Chemistry (w/lab)
Latin I	Latin II	Latin III* (optional)	Health (1/2 credit)
Grammar & Comp	Fine Arts, Music, or Drama	Physical Ed	Physical Ed
70 Units	70 Units	60-70 Units	55-65 Units

Minimum Requirements for High School Graduation

As a fully accredited private school within the State of California, Mother of Divine Grace School's students must meet the minimum requirements for the State of California in order to graduate and receive a diploma. The Minimum Requirements for High School Graduation are:

English	3 years	30 units
Math (Algebra I & Geometry)	2 years	20 units
Social Studies (US History & Geog; US Gov & Econ; World History)	3 years	30 units
Science (1 year lab)	2 years	20 units
Physical Education	2 years	20 units
Fine Arts	1 year	10 units
Health	1/2 year	5 units
Total	13.5 credits	135 units

Because the Minimum Requirements only specify 13.5 credits, but graduation requires 22.5 credits, the balance of credits (9) can be completed with electives or academic courses in the field of the student's choice. Mother of Divine Grace School is interested in helping students acquire the art of learning. The consultants are able to assist parents in determining the best course of study to achieve this goal.

PREPARED FOR COLLEGE

Our graduates have been accepted into 18 of the top 25 schools in the nation:

- Princeton University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Stanford University
- University of Chicago
- University of Pennsylvania
- Johns Hopkins University
- Northwestern University
- Dartmouth College
- Vanderbilt University
- Rice University
- Washington University in St Louis
- Cornell University
- University of Notre Dame
- University of California Los Angeles
- University of California Berkley
- Georgetown University
- University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
- University of Southern California

See www.modg.org for a more complete list of colleges our students have attended.

Our graduates have pursued degrees in a variety of fields including:

Math & Engineering: Aerospace Engineering, Accounting, Applied Science, Architecture, Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Computer Systems, Electrical Engineering, Engineering, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, and Web Design.

Science & Health: Applied Meteorology, Athletic Training, Biology, Biochemistry, Biomedical Sciences, Biomechanical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Chemistry, Dental Hygiene, Dietetics, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Studies, Equine Management, Equine Studies, Fire Science, Health Sciences, Horticulture, Marine Biology, Medical Laboratory Technology, Nursing, Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacology, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, Physics, Pre-Med, Pre-Medical Chemistry, Pre-Medical Engineering, Pre-Veterinary Medicine, Psychology, Radiography, Radiological Sciences, Veterinary Medical Technology, Wildlife Management and Zoology.

Fine Arts: Art, Art Education, Art History, Broadcasting, Classical Ballet, Classical Guitar, Computer Graphics & 3D Modeling, Dance, Drama, Entertainment Media, Film, Film Production, Fine Arts, Graphics Design, Multimedia Design, Music, Music Education, Music Production & Recording Technology, Music Technology, Musical Theatre, Organ Performance, Photography, Piano, Studio Art, Theatre, Television/Radio, Violin Performance, Visual Communications, and Vocal Performance.

English & Education: Child Development, Creative Writing, Early Childhood Education, Education, Elementary Education, English, Journalism, Literature, Middle School Education, and Special Education.

Philosophy & Theology: Catechetics, Classics, Humanities, Liberal Arts, Political Science, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Theology.

MODG graduates have also pursued degrees in Agricultural Business Management, Business Administration, Criminal Justice (including internships with the FBI), Criminology, Culinary Arts, Economics, Enology, Fashion Design, Finance, Forensics, History, Information Systems, International Business, International Relations, Marketing, Pre-Law, Public Relations, Russian, Social Work, Sociology, Spanish.



LEARN MORE AND ENROLL



How to Enroll:

Go to www.modg.org/enroll to begin an online application.

Tuition and Fees:

For details about our pricing breakdown, please visit us at www.modg.org/enroll

Our Bookstore:

MODG sells copies of our syllabi, as well as many of the essential books used in our syllabi. Both enrolled and non-enrolled families can purchase these items from MODG's online bookstore: books.modg.org. Enrolled families receive a discount on syllabi and books but must log in to their family account in order to get the discount.

Questions? We would love to talk with you!

Here at Mother of Divine Grace School, we have a wonderful staff that would love to spend time with you and answer any questions you may have about our program. Please reach out to our office with any questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

Call us at (805) 646-5818

Monday - Thursday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm PT



MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE SCHOOL

(805) 646-5818 • 407 Bryant Circle, Suite C, Ojai, CA 93023 • www.modg.org