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# THE PRINCIPAL'S PAMPHLET

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by Melodie McKenzie



PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

**exists to assist parents in the covenantal education  
of their children. We instruct students from a  
Biblical perspective, within a confessionally  
Reformed and classical framework, teaching them to  
exalt Christ by pursuing truth, beauty, and goodness.**



November 30, 2020

Dyer, Indiana

# The Pursuit of Virtues

Our school's mission statement closes with the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. We desire our children to continue upon the path of education that we've started here. Part of helping them see the vision of this pursuit is to change their question of What do I want to do when I grow up? to What kind of person do I want to be?

For our theme this year, we are examining God's character as revealed in Exodus 34 and then comparing that to how He stamped us in His image to mirror His likeness. When we examine the *imago dei*, we see that the image of God in us was perfect at Creation, partially lost at the fall, restored in part as we grow in Christ-likeness, and restored fully at the Last Day. When we reflect upon God, we call these His attributes. When we relate these concepts to ourselves, we usually use the word character or virtues.

At the Evening of Thanksgiving, Dr. Diener was portraying classical Christian education as the pathway to becoming the most human version of ourselves. This harkens back to the garden and God's intended purpose in Creation.

Last year at the same event, the comparison was made to the bee selecting just a portion of the pollen of various flowers to how

we pluck the best of the wisdom of pagans while leaving the rest behind. In this vein, we can take Aristotle's exploration of the Golden Mean where you look for the desired middle between two extremes, one of deficiency and the other of excess. Although we would not swallow all of the meaning and application that Aristotle draws, we can harvest the best part and discard what does not ring true.

In his new book, *Classical Christian Virtues*, Dr. Timothy Demlan takes us on this very journey by exploring 60 virtues along with warnings of their vices of deficiency and excess. For example, bravery is an excellent virtue, but taken in excess it crosses into recklessness while its deficiency is timidity. He roots each virtue with examples from Scripture. Also, there are discussion questions in order to use this as a jumping off point for discussion and self-examination.

The way I'm using this book at school is with our Logic School students. The daily morning devotions are a good way to unite our school and bring a common culture, but they also tend to be more on the simplistic side than these older students need. To supplement, I've brought monthly luncheon devotionals for the past few years, and now I'm using this book on cultivating virtues to guide our discussions. One lunch discussion is the foundations of that particular virtue where the students give examples they've seen in

the Bible, history, literature, or film. Then, they have a second lunch divided into a boys' group and girls' group where they discuss where they see themselves on the spectrum of the virtue (or deficiency or excess) and also practical applications and outcomes.

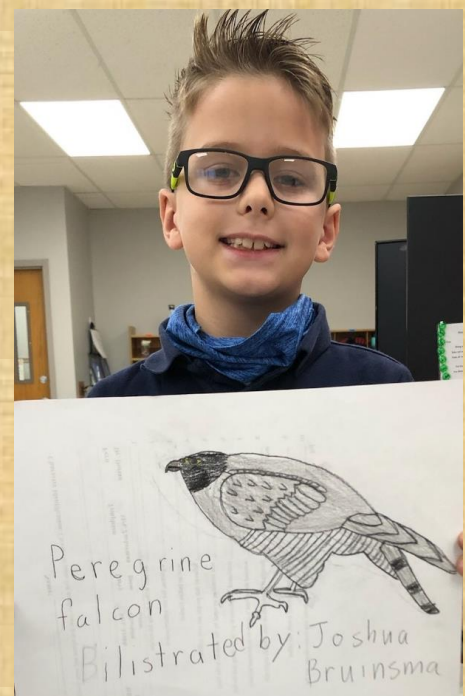
We trust that as the students continue their journey through life that they grow in these virtues. As the home, the church, and the school all reveal truth to our young people, we pray as did Paul that:

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

# Sights and Sounds at Providence

- ❖ October Chapel: We were pleased to have Rev. Brian Blummer here for the first time. He has been a chaplain in the IN Dept. of Corrections and is now the Director of Enrollment at Mid-America. He challenged us with the story of the Pharisees coming to test Jesus. The man wanted to know about eternal life, but Jesus pointed him to the law. Then, He told the man the story of the Good Samaritan. Rev. Blummer closed by declaring that Jesus is the Good Samaritan who gave his life for us to heal us.
- ❖ November Chapel: Rev. Alons from Lynwood lead in November. He compared our Exodus passage to Psalm 145:8-9 where similar attributes of God are praised. He asked the students why a name is so important. Does our name tell someone everything they need to know about us? The Scriptures tell us much about our God so that we can know what He is like and also so that we can emulate Him in many of those ways. We give thanks to God for revealing Himself to us. He closed by using 1 Peter 3:8ff to call us to a unity of mind in mirroring Christ.
- ❖ Joy: We were excited to announce to the students the birth of Kelvin and Emily's son, Peregrin James Tiemstra (named after a Tolkien character). The students were joyous to see some pictures that Emily had texted to Ashley. Josh was inspired to create this sketch of a Peregrine Falcon in the baby's honor.



## Announcements

- ❖ Biographies: This year, the Education Committee and homeroom teachers are partnering to review our history and geography program at Providence. History is near and dear to the heart of classical studies as is literature. We would love to start a tradition of each student reading a biography each year. If you have a vision for making history come alive by inspiring our students with the lives of others who've gone before us, come talk to me to brainstorm ideas for reading biographies.
- ❖ Grandparents Day: We have made the final call to cancel Grandparents Day for this year. It will be all the more joyous when we resume in the future. We've mailed a survey to each grandparent asking if and how they would like to be involved. Please encourage your grandparents to return this survey. Our grandparents are welcome at any time to join a chapel service or contact us for further ways to visit or be involved. (In fact, feel free to share with them the idea above concerning biographies.)
- ❖ Parent Teacher Conferences: Thank you for your attendance at the conferences last month. The teachers are ever so grateful for your partnership with the students' education. It is a privilege to serve you in this way. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us to share concerns and also joys.