



THE PRINCIPAL'S PAMPHLET

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.**



May 31, 2021
Dyer, Indiana

Quenching a Parched Land

Is it possible to starve for words? Do we hunger for just the right expression? Sometimes, we're just at a loss for how to communicate an idea that's in our mind to get it to another person's mind. A common phrase heard in elementary school is "I don't get it." At that time, you may hear the teacher ask in response, "What don't you get?" or "Tell me what you do know." We recognize that we must understand where the gap in understanding is in order to address it and reteach. Learning how to mirror back ideas one to another in communication is a God-appointed task since it is the means He has chosen to convey His saving plan to a dying world.

This instills in us the essential nature of the transmission of ideas. I put before you a contrast of two words: vulgarity & nobility. I do not speak here of vulgar language (although that is also void of value). Instead, I use the old sense of vulgar meaning common. We think of the Latin Vulgate written in the common language. Similarly with nobility, I am not referring to the elite or those high in status. Rather, I'm getting at the pursuit of what is noble or virtuous. In Philippians 4:8, the Greek word translated as honorable in the ESV can also be rendered as noble.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable [noble], whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

At Providence, we do our very best to be mindful of the reasons behind what we do. What is our purpose? This striving to be resolute in our aims is meant to result in noble choices. If we are unfocused or even just lacking in our intent, then by default we land on the vulgar. An example of this can be the contrast between spoken language vs. written. When I am talking, my mind is racing ahead to what I'm attempting to say and I may not choose elevated or precise vocabulary. Whereas, when I write, the words are worked over and edited to convey the meaning I intend in a concise and more articulate manner.

So, how do we get to a place where our children are fed a balanced diet of the rich vocabulary they need in order to avoid the vulgar commonplaces of the world? One basic technique every teacher at our school uses across the subject areas and grade levels is direct instruction. We expressly teach new terminology—some that is subject-related and some just for fun. You can see a sample of words taught in recent weeks across the grade levels in the word cloud on the next page.

A second method we employ is modeling and practice. We teach the words in context of how they are used. Several



teachers even have contests for using the word of the week in the proper circumstance.

Saturation in fertile literature is another way we expose students to excellent word usage. This is an area where your choice in exposure through books and media helps. When we look for elevated language and beauty in imagery, then our students will have noble modeling.

In this modern era of vulgarity, words losing meaning by over-use or mis-use. Let us do all we can to instill in our children the beauty of language and to train them in its proper handling. With a flood of outstanding words, we can quench the parched land of our children's minds.

“For every one pupil who needs to be guarded against a weak excess of sensibility, there are three who need to be awakened from the slumber of cold vulgarity. The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts.”

~ C.S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*

Sights and Sounds at Providence

- ❖ Chapel: The May chapel speaker was Rev. Vander Hart. He spoke about Daniel and his three friends. They had each been given names by their parents to remind them that they belonged body and soul to their faithful Savior. Their ability to resist temptation did not lie in themselves but in God's gifts within them. The devil had an agenda to draw them away, but by God's grace they stood firm. The students were reminded to remember who they are—even in the little day-to-day things.
- ❖ Field Trip: The Gabis Arboretum was another hit this spring. This time, we had docents who led each of the three science groups and taught us about what we were observing. We were thankful for the beautiful wildlife and plants we saw.
- ❖ Co-Heirs in Eternity: This month as I spoke with the students about the last verse in our Colossians passage, I gave an illustration of Samson and Daniel. These two men are quite opposite as far as how we look at them from our vantage point in history. However, they are both lauded as faithful men of God who served the Lord at His calling. Now, they are united as one in all of eternity. We may guess that they may have had a hard time being fellow church members or school classmates. It may be difficult to work through differences, but it's worth it because we are one in Christ. We are fellow image-bearers, and loving our neighbor is a supreme calling.
- ❖ Education Committee: This year, the teachers and Education Committee took an in-depth look at our history and geography curriculum. We found that our program is strong, but we did find a way to enhance our study and that is through the use of biographies. (See the next section.)

Announcements

- ❖ Biography Projects: In response to the review of our history program, we believe we could strengthen our program by the students each reading a biography from our history time periods. This will put flesh and bones on what we are studying. The 3rd – 8th students have been introduced to the project and given a handout for next year's history time period. The students were given a chance to peruse our school library, but the public library, church library, your own personal collection, etc. are all acceptable. Please see the additional handout for more information.
- ❖ Field Day: For dress code on Thursday, June 3, the 5th – 8th graders can choose to wear their PE clothes since it fits the purpose of the day. The K – 4th graders may wear similar clothes that match that category of the PE uniform. Any student may also choose to wear jeans as listed under the field trip dress code. Any choice of clothing must be found somewhere on the dress code list in the handbook. For instance, any shorts worn must be knee-length, and any shirts worn must have no words or pictures.
Note: This is not a dress-down day. It is a school day where the PE uniform or the field trip uniform are permitted as is the normal school wear.
- ❖ Helpful Site: A family friend of our school contacted me to recommend an on-line Christian news summary. While this is something that we cannot use here at school, it may be something that would interest your family. It is called [World Watch](#). For an annual subscription, you will get a daily summary of current events sent to you. It comes highly recommended and is already used by at least one family of our school.