

Mission and Philosophy

Central to our vision of a rigorous college preparatory education is our strong commitment to the character development of our students. As a school, it is our mission to educate your children. As a *Christian* school, it is our mission to educate your children within a framework of godly instruction and example.

MISSION

The Dunham School seeks to provide students with the opportunity for college-preparatory education set in a framework of Christian instruction and example. To this end, the school offers boys and girls rigorous academic instruction: challenging athletic and recreational activities, and creative expression in the fine arts. Each of these opportunities is ultimately grounded in a desire to “educate the heart.”

By “education of the heart,” we mean addressing spiritual issues from a Christian perspective and allowing our students the opportunity to begin to understand themselves and the world around them from a Christian worldview. Some of this education of the heart will be formal (chapel, Bible classes and studies, counseling), while the rest will happen as the faculty and the students interact in the normal flow of school activity. This, then, is a truly holistic view of education – a desire to educate the whole child: academically, physically in the creative realm, socially, and spiritually. The key to what we are doing is the faculty, who serve as role models in each of these areas as men and women mature in their professional growth and Christian faith.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

A Christian education emphasizes not simply acquiring knowledge, but attaining wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge shaped by the realization of where one stands in relationship to God and by the recognition that the order and beauty seen in the universe is the product of the Creator’s hand.

Wisdom is understanding that man is made in God’s image and is given the

responsibility to be a good steward of His world. Yet wisdom cannot simply be taught in the classroom, but must be seen, then emulated.

A Christian education, therefore, is one in which Christian men and women, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, impart to their students a lifestyle, a way of seeing reality, a sense of service to God and men. In the classroom, students should be challenged to investigate, analyze, critique, and explore the curriculum with those who know Christ. In day to day experiences, the faculty should serve as Christian role models as they counsel, coach, instruct, discipline and interact with the students under their care.

A Christian education should center on the study of the Bible as the common foundation for both faculty and students. It is imperative that students be allowed the opportunity to read the primary documents of the Christian faith in an atmosphere in which discussion and questions are not only allowed, but also encouraged. To enter adult lives literate in the Biblical text, students should have the privilege of a first hand understanding of its content. Finally, a Christian education should foster a primary concern for one’s relationship to God and from that, a sense of service towards others. Students need to be offered opportunities to serve others -- their peers, the community, the poor, the elderly. Students must capture a sense of their responsibilities to their school, their family, their community and their country.

A Christian education encompasses the intellectual, physical, social and spiritual needs of the students – an education of the whole child.

WHY WE TEACH BIBLE

There are varied reasons that a school in Western culture might decide that the Bible should be part of its curriculum. We would like to clarify why we think it is important at The Dunham School. Yes, we teach Bible because we are a Christian school. Yes, we teach it as a means to expose students to the claims of Christianity. These are valid reasons, but our rationale goes beyond.

At Dunham we teach Bible because we want the students to read the primary documents. It is increasingly clear that, although we live in a very “religious” culture where people constantly refer to the Bible and to the Christian faith, few have actually sat down and read the Bible thoroughly and completely. For that reason, we are all prey to “religious propaganda” of every variety. We are being told daily what Jesus was like, what the Christian faith is, and how Christians should act. How can we respond intelligently to the religious cacophony that surrounds us if we have not read the primary text completely to gain a first hand understanding of the person of Jesus and the beginnings of the Christian faith? We would be remiss if we did not teach the Bible. We would then allow our students to go into the culture uninformed and ignorant of the one text that has influenced Western culture more than any other.

Certainly, there are other important reasons for teaching the Bible, but reading the Bible first-hand is a compelling one. In a religious culture that is essentially Biblically illiterate, it is imperative that The Dunham School lead the way in systematically teaching this text so our students leave educated, not only in English, history, math, science, and the arts, but also in the Bible, the book that forms the cornerstone of Western culture.

*"Educating
the mind and
the heart for
Christ"*