



Ad Fontes Academy Frequently Asked Questions

MISSION

1. What are the Ad Fontes Academy Mission and Statement of Faith?

Vision: *“To glorify God by assisting Christian parents in equipping their children to be servant leaders through a classical education based on eternal biblical truth.”*

Statement of Faith: Our statement begins, “We believe in one God, eternally existing in three distinct Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God created the heavens and the earth from nothing, and He is sovereign over all His creation. God made man and woman in His image, and for His own glory, responsible to rule over and care for the earth. God is self-existent, unchanging, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, righteous, and loving.” **The entire AFA statement of faith is listed on the Resources and Documents page on our website: adfontes.com.**

2. What does “Ad Fontes” mean?

Ad Fontes is a Latin expression which means “to the sources” (literally, to the fountains). It is historically associated with the renewed study of Greek and Latin classics, and the return to the Bible as the primary source of Christian faith.

3. What are the core components of a Christian education at Ad Fontes?

Ad Fontes is a discipleship school that partners with Christian parents so the students experience a consistent worldview at home and at school. All leaders and teachers at Ad Fontes have a mature walk with Christ and a commitment to honor God and the Scriptures in all of life. Thus, the community and culture at Ad Fontes focuses on glorifying God in every aspect of the school. Prayer is foundational to all we do. This commitment creates an environment of love, encouragement, grace, diligence, and respect.

Students will have a Bible/theology class in every grade to deepen love and understanding of the Bible and its application to their daily living. Each subject is taught from a biblical foundation in pursuit of what is true, good, and beautiful. As students mature, they learn the skills of discernment and wisdom as they encounter increasingly challenging issues and discern how to live biblically in our society.

Lower School students have morning devotions with all students and in their classroom, and attend Chapel each week to worship together through prayer, music and a message. Upper School students have a Morning Meeting every day to open with prayer and Scripture, along with announcements and celebrations. They have Assembly once per week to engage with guest speakers and in live faculty-student discussions to apply faith to real life issues.

4. What are the core components of a classical education at Ad Fontes?

Ad Fontes Academy's classical curriculum is unique in both content and method. Students receive excellent core instruction in math, science, literature, grammar, writing, history, Latin, Bible, and the arts. Students are taught in an interactive and engaging classroom setting that develops student curiosity, interest, and ability.

A core concept of classical education is the Trivium, a historic teaching model that seeks to tailor instruction to a student's cognitive development. The Trivium emphasizes concrete thinking, memorization of facts, and skill development in Lower School (Grammar stage); deeper analytical thinking and understanding in Middle School (Logic stage); and the engagement of ideas and persuasive writing and speaking in High School (Rhetoric stage).

Grammar School students will receive phonics-based language instruction and be immersed in great literature and history, committing foundational facts to memory through songs, chants, poems, and skits. Students develop strong foundational skills in math, reading, and writing.

Latin instruction begins in 3rd grade and develops strong thinking and learning skills, vocabulary, and cultural understanding. Latin courses are offered through 12th grade.

Classical composition/rhetoric (writing and oral presentation) begins in 4th grade. Ad Fontes Academy is unique in providing a separate writing and speaking class from 4th to 12th grade. Students have a multiple research projects annually with oral presentations starting in 3rd grade. In 12th grade, the capstone of an Ad Fontes Academy education is the Senior Thesis, a year-long research project combining their Christian worldview education with their logic and rhetoric skills to complete a research paper (15-25 pages) on a major issue of the day of interest to the students and defended orally before a panel of faculty and experts.

Students are immersed in great literature and original source documents throughout the program and are not dependent on textbooks in humanities courses. In the Upper School, students are engaged in the material through dialogue, Socratic questioning, Harkness discussions, and debate. Ad Fontes students become adept at thinking clearly and forming coherent opinions on issues of significance.

Students develop strong skills in math and science, including a full year of formal logic (the art of thinking) in 8th grade. In the Lower School, students take Singapore Math which develops a deep conceptual understanding of mathematics and students learn effective methods of navigating word problems. Students explore science through hands-on projects. The Upper School build on these foundations to develop students who think like mathematicians and scientists leading to advanced math and science courses where students engage in real world problem solving.

Ad Fontes students average 300-400 points above the national average on SATs, and our graduates have the skills to excel at the university level and in the marketplace in humanities, science, and technical fields.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

5. Is Ad Fontes Academy accredited?

In 2002, Ad Fontes Academy received accreditation from the Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS) (www.accsedu.org). In the Spring of 2013, ACCS renewed our accreditation for five years through 2019.

6. How many students are at AFA? How many graduates? What is your class size? Teacher/Student ratio?

AFA has 200 students enrolled in Grades Jr. K – 12 for the 2017-2018 school year. Ad Fontes has graduated 139 students in its history. Currently, we average 16 students per grade. The target class size is 18-20 students in each class.

7. Why Latin?

Latin is the root of 60% of our English words and teaches students the foundation on which English is built. Latin is the surest way to gain mastery over the English language. Latin students learn English grammar more effectively and comprehensively in Latin than they do in English grammar class. A strong Latin foundation prepares students for diligent study, to think and write well, and to study romance languages easily (e.g. Spanish, French). Latin study provides access to great literature and develops a rich understanding of our society's history and culture. AFA students excel on the National Latin Exam.

8. How much homework do you assign?

Ad Fontes Academy assigns homework as an integral part of the curriculum. Homework at AFA is very purposeful and not just busy work. We seek to balance hard work with leisure time. Primary reasons for homework being assigned are:

- Students need extra practice in specific new concepts, skills, or facts.
- Repeated short periods of practice or study of new information is often a better way to learn than one long study period.
- Reading assignments by nature cannot usually be completed during school hours and will, therefore, be routinely assigned as homework.

Here are AFA homework guidelines for the average AFA student proceeding with due diligence:

Grade	Daily Average time
K	25 min.
1	35 min
2	40 min
3	45 min.
4	55 min.
5	60 min.
6	75 min
7-8	90-120 min
9-12	120-180

Do you offer art, music, or physical education?

We provide one hour per week of instruction in art, music and physical education in Grades K-8. Art and music are integrated to complement the classroom curriculum, particularly in history. Students also have daily recess. Students perform music and/or drama at regular presentations during the school year. High school students are offered electives in dance, film study, drama and art, as well as a variety of clubs tied to additional areas of study.

9. Do you offer after school options?

Lower School students are offered special after-school classes as part of our new Schole Club, an after-school group that meets daily from 2:45-4:30. Students complete homework and then engage in fun, creative activities. Opportunities exist for students to participate in the Schole Club daily, or for limited days during the week. There is an extra charge for students to participate. AFA offers a wide variety of afterschool clubs and sports.

TRANSFERS AND STUDENT PROGRAM

10. Ad Fontes Academy seems like a challenging program. Can my child succeed?

Most students thrive in the Ad Fontes Academy program. We believe students of average and above average ability benefit from a classical education. AFA does have high academic and behavior standards. We provide students with the individual attention, support and tools to be successful. AFA teachers love their students and are proactive in helping them to learn and thrive. AFA also offers weekly teacher tutoring time in the upper grades and provides some limited individual support for students with learning differences.

11. My child would be transferring to Ad Fontes Academy in the upper grades. Can he transfer successfully? How does he catch up in Latin?

We have students every year who transfer to Ad Fontes Academy and are successful. During the application process, the student will complete an assessment, and Ad Fontes staff will provide specific academic recommendations for students to sharpen skills during the summer. Students typically adjust within a few months of starting the program. New high school students will start in Latin I and do not need previous Latin experience.

12. Can Ad Fontes Academy support children with special needs?

All classes at Ad Fontes are taught at either the honors or advanced level. Our teachers are committed to helping their students reach their highest potential, but are unable to devote large amounts of individualized time to those who need extra support. While we are able to support some students who may require minimal additional support, we are not equipped to support children who have significant needs or who need individualized attention.

13. Do you have a dress code?

Yes, we have school uniforms through Land's End. The dress code can be found in the Resources and Documents page of the website.

14. What do students do for lunch?

Students bring their own lunch and snack to school. Tuesday is Chick-Fil-A day and Thursday is pizza day. Students may place orders at the beginning of the semester for one or both of these meal choices. Alternately, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we offer hot or cold lunches through Smart Lunches. Parents order online directly through this company.

PARENT QUESTIONS

15. Is tuition assistance available?

Yes, we are committed to assisting families who are unable to afford the full tuition of the school. If you desire a Christ-centered classical education for your child and finances are a concern, we encourage you to apply for financial assistance through FACTS, an independent, third-party, completely confidential needs assessment.

16. How involved are parents?

We view parents as active partners in their child's education. We endeavor to have exceptional communication with parents. We actively encourage parents to be involved in all aspects of the school from the Board to committee leadership to the classrooms. Ad Fontes Academy has a parent volunteer association to engage as many parents as possible in school activities. There are multiple ways to serve: from driving on field trips to serving lunch on pizza days, from being a class parent, to committing to pray for the school.

17. Where are your facilities? What are your future plans?

Our 2015-16 school year began with the fulfilled dream of our own facility and one K-12 campus. Our Jr. K-6th grade students entered the new facility on the same campus with our Upper School at Centreville Presbyterian Church, 15450 Lee Highway in Centreville. The addition of this Lower School modular facility has increased classroom size and our enrollment capacity to 250 students.

Ad Fontes have committees actively seeking to acquire land towards a permanent K-12 campus west of Centreville. This will be a 5+ year project.

18. What is your school schedule and calendar? Do you follow local schools?

Our five day-a-week Junior Kindergarten class begins at 8:00 and ends at 11:30 a.m. Grades K – 6 begin class at 8:00 a.m. and end at 2:45 p.m.

Grades 7 – 12 begin class at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m.

Our calendar generally follows that of Fairfax County School system though we begin the Wednesday before Labor Day. School ends the first week in June with a week-long holiday for Thanksgiving and Easter and two weeks at Christmas. We make our own decisions regarding weather-related closures and delays.

We encourage you to view our website at www.adfontes.com for further details on Ad Fontes Academy.