



# Ad Fontes Academy

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### MISSION

#### 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](http://adfontes.com).**

#### 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.

#### 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.

### **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 classes that develop 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).

Lower School students will receive excellent language instruction with a thorough phonics and grammar program and be immersed in great literature and history, committing foundational facts to memory through songs, chants, poems, and skits. Students develop strong skills in math, reading, and writing.

Latin instruction begins in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade which develops their analytical skills, vocabulary, and cultural understanding. Latin courses are offered through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Classical composition/rhetoric (writing and oral presentation) begins in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Ad Fontes Academy is unique in providing a separate writing and speaking class from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Students have research projects annually with oral presentations starting in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. In 12<sup>th</sup> 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 defend 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-style discussions, and debate. Ad Fontes students become adept at thinking clearly and forming coherent opinions on issues of significance.

Students develop superior skills in math and science, including a full year of formal logic (the art of thinking) in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In the Lower School, students study Singapore Math which develops a deep conceptual understanding of mathematics as students learn effective methods of navigating word problems. Students explore science through hands-on projects. The Upper School builds 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.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

### **Is Ad Fontes Academy accredited?**

In 2002, Ad Fontes Academy received accreditation from the Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS) ([www.accsedu.org](http://www.accsedu.org)). In spring 2019, ACCS oversaw our five-year accreditation renewal visit.

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

AFA has 191 students enrolled in Grades kindergarten through 12 for the 2019-2020 school year. Ad Fontes has graduated 152 students in its history. Currently, we average 15 students per grade. The target class size is 18-20 students in each class.

### **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, builds one's vocabulary, and develops a rich understanding of our society's history and culture. AFA students excel on the National Latin Exam.

### **Do you offer after school options?**

Lower School students are offered a variety of options for after-school activities. Our Scholastic Club meets Monday through Thursday from 2:45-4:30. Students complete homework and then engage in fun, creative activities. Opportunities exist for students to participate in the Scholastic Club daily, or for limited days during the week. The Lower School also offers piano and violin lessons throughout the year as well as shorter-term classes for specific grade levels on a variety of topics such as art, choir, science, and robotics. There is an extra charge for students to participate. In addition, AFA offers a variety of afterschool clubs and sports. Please see our Activities and Athletics brochure for more details.

### **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, theatre, music and art, as well as a variety of clubs tied to additional areas of study.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM (con't)

### 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.
- In the Upper School, student use homework time to study for tests and quizzes, and to prepare presentations and write papers.

Here are Ad Fontes Academy homework guidelines for the average AFA student proceeding with due diligence. Certainly some days a student may spend less or more time, as these numbers serve as an average for a class over a period of time.

Please note that students in Advanced high school courses would exceed these limits.

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
9-10	120 min
11-12	180 min

## **TRANSFERS AND STUDENT PROGRAM**

### **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 behavioral 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. The Lower School offers weekly group math tutoring, and the Upper School offers weekly teacher tutoring time.

Additionally, students have access to the Student Support Center. A director in both the Lower School and Upper School work directly with students and parents to develop academic support plans for those in need. While we are not equipped to deal with every eventuality, we are able to provide some individual support for students with learning differences.

### **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.

### **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 with minor learning disabilities, we are not able to provide for those with serious difficulties that require significant individualized help in the classroom.

### **Do you have a dress code?**

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

### **What do students do for lunch?**

Students bring their own lunches and snacks to school. Tuesday is Chick-Fil-A day and Thursday is pizza day. Students may place orders at the beginning of each semester for one or both of these meal choices.

# **PARENT QUESTIONS**

## **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.

## **What is the level of parent involvement?**

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.

## **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 Lower School 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 Academy has a committee actively seeking to acquire land towards a permanent K-12 campus targeting property in the quadrant west of Centreville, east of route 15, south of route 50 and north of route 29. This will be a 5+ year project.

## **What is your school schedule and calendar? Do you follow local schools?**

Grades K – 6 begin class at 8:00 a.m. and end at 2:45 p.m.

Grades 7 – 12 begin class at 7:55 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 week-long holidays for both Thanksgiving and Easter, and two weeks at Christmas. We follow Fairfax County for weather-related closures and delays.

**We encourage you to view our website at [www.adfontes.com](http://www.adfontes.com) for further details on Ad Fontes Academy.**