



## **Philosophy of Language Arts Education**

English Grammar, Writing, and Literature at Sanborn Christian are taught in such a way as to equip students to use and understand our language in light of our twofold mission statement -- being both "Under God's Word" and ready "for serving Him in His world."

Teaching language "Under God's Word" means it is informed by Biblical principle with recognition of the Creator. We strive to show this in our instruction and curriculum in both our writing and grammar courses as well as our literature courses.

Through writing and grammar, we are able to better understand who God is by using, understanding, and developing the complex gift of language. We see His attributes in language structure (i.e. grammar) and use (i.e. writing). More precisely, we see God's gifts of order, beauty, structure, meaning, honesty, and work. We understand these attributes to be part of what it means to be image bearers of God. We recognize according to the Biblical narrative that these gifts, created perfect, have been twisted and marred by the fall. This means that language is now often used to hurt, deceive, and harm, rather than create and tell the truth as we see God use language in Creation. It also contrasts to how God's Son, who John 1 describes as "the Word made flesh," used language in the Bible. The fall has also made the complex process of learning and using language difficult and painful, as with all work after the Curse in Genesis 3. However, thanks to the redeeming power of Christ's sacrifice, our use of language can now be seen as part of the works of thankfulness that we offer back to God. This is in both our use and understanding of grammar appropriate to different contexts as well as our use of writing to communicate clearly, show Truth in meaningful ways, and create works of beauty through which we can direct glory back to God.

In our literature courses, we use story to understand the master story-teller while also understanding the views of people (Christian and unbelievers) as expressed through text. We use the opportunities we have in Literature to explore, discuss, analyze, and challenge what people have written while we are in a safe environment and have the opportunity to look at it in comparison to the truth of Scripture. We also

take the opportunity in Literature to explore many of the same elements of order, beauty, structure, meaning, honesty, and work that we see in grammar and student writing, but at a larger scale. We are also able to learn indirectly from the writers we read who are able to portray their thoughts with more depth and subtly than we see in the grammar or student writing instruction.

The second part of our mission makes clear that we don't stop by simply recognizing or analyzing the gifts God has given us, but instead, we put them into practice so that students are prepared "for serving Him in His world."

In grammar and writing, we strive to create meaning and communicate clearly. Communicating with other people is one of our primary acts of worship and service to God. Communication is nearly always involved, if not central, as we evangelize, show mercy, show the grace of Christ, and challenge the work of the devil by exposing lies with truth. All of these acts of service must be done with an awareness of what we are communicating, how we communicate it, and where that communication fits into the calling we've been given to live every moment of every day. By learning the impact of words, their structures, and how to put them together effectively, we are able to dig into the "what," "how," and "where" of our communication in a Godly life.

We prepare students to serve in God's world through literature when they are prepared not only to create their own writing but to be ready and able to act on the messages they are being offered every day. Students encounter countless messages that attempt to shift their thinking (and in turn their doing) each day. By applying the skills we learn in Literature, students are prepared to serve as truth-seekers in a dark world. Knowing how to see and use genre, theme, characters, and all the other literary elements are a means to better equip students for engaging and serving in the world in which they live. The work we do through literature helps enable students to serve one another by identifying messages in the communication of others and either defending against or ministering to those who offer messages contrary to the Gospel.

Whether in Grammar, Writing, or Literature, all that we do in English language classes at Sanborn Christian equips students to identify, understand, and use the English language "under God's Word for serving Him in His world."