

Delivery

Don Furuto

A son proudly told his father, “I know what the Bible means!”

His father smiled. “Oh really? What does the Bible mean?”

“It stands for ‘Basic Information Before Leaving Earth!’”

At Briarwood Christian High School, our school mission is to help our students gain this “Basic Information Before Leaving Earth” through teaching from a Christ-centered, biblical worldview about subjects from the arts to zoology. We have purposely delivered this basic information to our students through biblically integrated instruction and supportive relationships to strengthen student spiritual formation.

Why use biblical integration? Biblical integration correlates a subject (general revelation) and biblical concept (special revelation) by scriptural evaluation into a coherent, complete, and compelling view of reality. This process requires that students see truth in relation to God, who created it, sustains it, and imparts all its properties, designs, and relations (Colossians 1:15–17). Because God is truth (John 14:6), students comprehend that truth is absolute and knowable, and truth and knowledge come from Him. Without this connection, truth becomes subjective, no longer knowable in the same absolute sense. Thus, integrating faith and learning instructs and transforms the students’ understanding of God’s world by His Word.

Why do students desperately need this integration today?

1. They see life in fragments rather than in wholes in this sin-broken world. Integration puts the pieces back together.
2. They are presented with idolatry, which reduces everything down to their size. Integration moves the matter toward God and makes it God-sized.
3. They are confronted constantly by the secular mind, which presents a man-centered relativism. Integration engages their Christian mind (1 Corinthians 2:16) and advances it.
4. They are challenged to answer tough questions in changing times (1 Peter 3:15). Integration like the apostle Paul’s speech in Athens (Acts 17:16–31) takes the life experiences and questions of the recipients and transforms them into a gospel message.
5. They are called to fulfill the cultural mandate to win the world (Genesis 1:27–28) and the Great Commission to win lost people for Christ (Matthew 28:18–20). Integration understands all truth is God’s truth and identifies where truths are present and absent in all areas of study (Romans 1:18).

Through spiritual formation, God continues His lifelong transformation of the whole person into Christlikeness by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, through the means of grace—prayer, sacraments, and ministry of God’s Word—and in authentic Christian community. Biblical and spiritual integration are essential in this sanctification.

In *A Christian Paideia* (2005), D. Bruce Lockerbie contends:

Those of us who are called Christians find the call to integration spelled out clearly in Holy Scripture. We are summoned to wholeness first, by knowing who God is and loving Him as Lord. We are commanded to love with our whole being: heart, soul, strength, and mind. In doing so, we learn both how to appreciate our own gift of life and also what it means to love others as ourselves. The same principle holds for the educational principle called integration. It must begin within.



How does biblical integration impact the student's spiritual formation?

1. It enhances prayer and worship. When integration is properly applied to a concept, it reveals the character and nature of God or illustrates His laws and ways (Psalms 8:3–4; 19:1–2; 104:14, 20; 147:15–18). The believer's response is praise, adoration, confession, and thanksgiving.

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2. It maintains Christianity's supernatural nature. The Bible insists that we live in a supernatural universe created and caused by a personal God. If we remove the objective reality of His supernatural universe in any area, through thought or action, we are not fully experiencing God or our salvation, nor truly living by faith.
3. It completes basic parts of the training. Scriptural integration moves disciples toward Christlikeness (Luke 6:40) by fully equipping their beliefs and behaviors for doing God's work (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Interestingly, Jesus taught more in parables (Christ's integrations) as He intensified His training of the Twelve regarding the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 10:10–13).
4. It improves study and application of God's Word. In Leviticus 11, Moses distinguished between clean and unclean foods, i.e., what to eat and not eat. Eating often symbolizes our intake of God's Word. Clean animals had parted hooves and chewed the cud (Leviticus 11:3). These features illustrate the actions of discernment (separation) and meditation (reflection). Discernment trained by practice distinguishes between good and evil choices (Hebrews 5:14). Christian meditation chews on the meaning and intention of God's Word. It is an antidote to today's superficialities and thoughtlessness and a prescription for the practice of godly leadership (Joshua 1:8).
5. It illustrates dynamic spiritual community. Interactions within the body and its parts show the connections and the importance of each part in the growth of the whole and in relationship to its head, Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–26; Romans 12:4–5).

How have we fostered spiritual formation through integration and relationships?

Biblical integration is a key part of our teachers' practice, planning, and process. Consistently, teachers write biblically integrated concepts into their subject area and incorporate them into their unit planning and teaching. As learners (disciples), students are taught to integrate through scriptural

reflection, testing, and judgment, and to apply their results to their life context.

Briarwood teachers have worked diligently to make their classes more interactive and to encourage participation in them. Creating more life-on-life engagement seemed the obvious next step for advancing student spiritual formation. Our recent ACSI and AdvancED accreditation agreed and recommended that we enhance spiritual formation through discipleship-oriented relationships.

Briarwood administrators immediately set three goals for students. All students would:

1. Know one faculty member who cares for them
2. Have an adult advocate who facilitates their spiritual growth and development
3. Participate in a GAP (Growth, Accountability, and Prayer) small group

GAP groups are the primary means through which the above goals are accomplished. Groups are led by faculty and staff and consist of 10 students. Groups are gender- and grade-specific. Groups meet weekly after chapel, discuss the topics presented, and pray together. Members meet at other times for fellowship and fun. Groups are part of a larger, grade-level neighborhood, where faculty leaders regularly pray, plan, and discuss student needs and involvements. To promote connections, faculty members in neighborhoods volunteer to be present at student events. In addition, all faculty have invited students to read a selected book over the summer and discuss it in their fall book club.

Through spiritual formation, God continues His lifelong transformation of the whole person into Christlikeness by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, students annually take a spiritual character formation survey. This audit assesses spiritual trends, growth, and needs in our students, and is evaluated by school staff.

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Reference

Lockerbie, D. Bruce. 2005. *A Christian padeia: The habitual vision of greatness*. Colorado Springs, CO: Purposeful Design Publications.