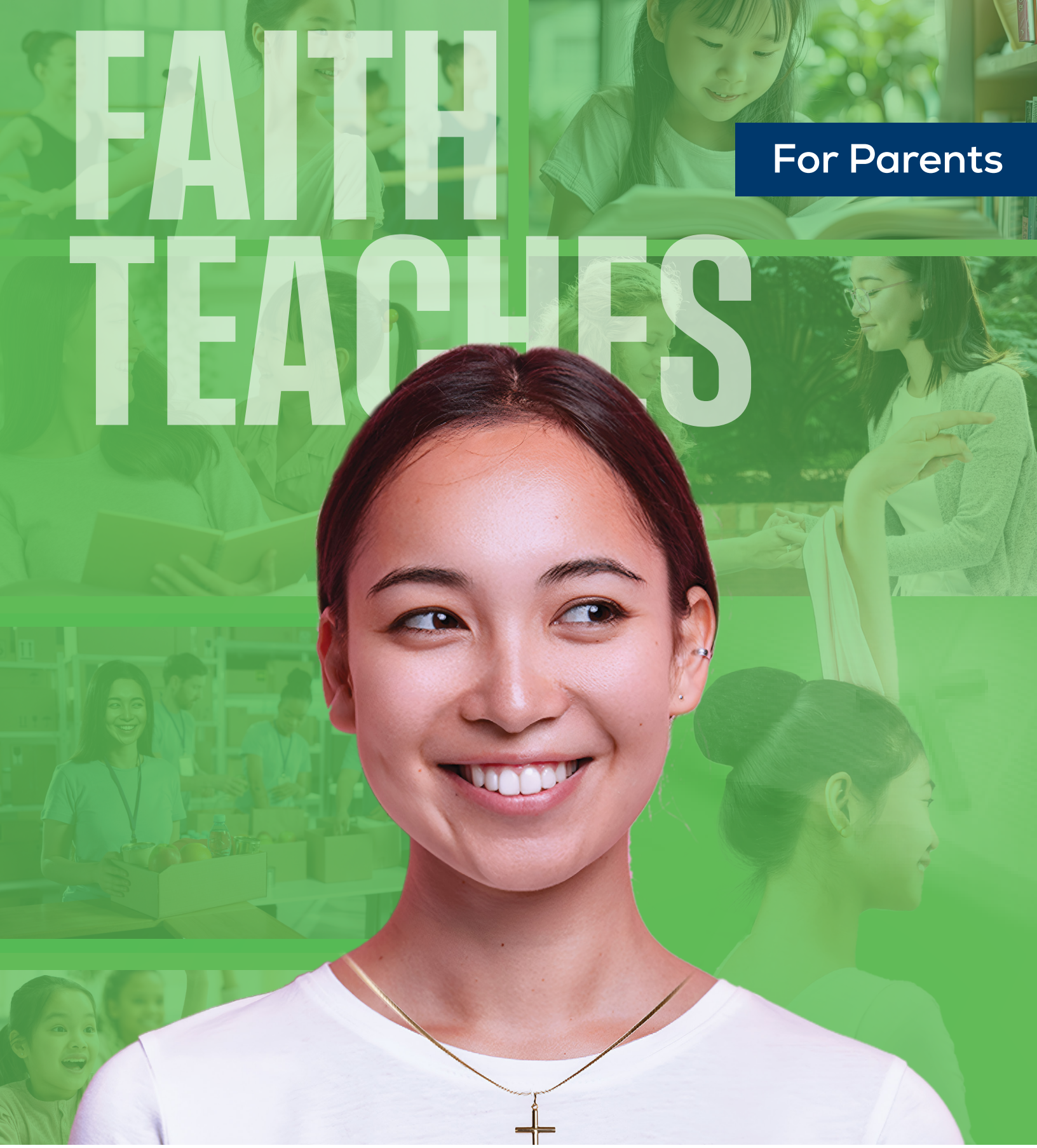
FAITH TEACHES

For Parents



Christian Education Awareness Parent Guide

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

ACSI
STRONGER TOGETHER

Dear Parent,

Thank you for downloading this guide. Choosing the right educational environment for your child may seem like a daunting task. We pray this guide will be a helpful resource to you as you contemplate the various educational options for your children. The new Federal Scholarship Tax Credit opens doors for your children to attend a Christian school like never before.

First, know that you are not alone. God will provide guidance and direction as you pray about this important decision. Next, there is useful information in this guide that will help you understand school choice and your options. Finally, know that no matter your choice, ACSI is here to help you foster strong spiritual formation in your child and understand the best practices of education for each age and stage.

We are standing with you during this exciting time!



Dr. Larry Taylor, Ph.D.
ACSI President & CEO



Contents

Faith Teaches 4

Christian Education Awareness 5

What Is the Best School for Your Child?.....6-7

Resource Articles 8-14

Homeschool Resources 15

Faith Teaches

What a loaded phrase!

Our faith, founded on God's Word, the Bible, brings us truths that transform reason. We see a little boy slaying a giant and young men standing unharmed in a fiery furnace. We see the Red Sea parted and a family saved from a world-destroying flood. We read about a talking donkey and a burning bush not consumed. We see a queen save her people from destruction and a Savior saving His people from their sin and eternal separation from Him.

Faith teaches that with God, nothing is impossible.

Our faith teaches us so many things, like the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31, Matthew 7:12). We learn in Galatians about the fruit of the Spirit as we abide in Jesus Christ. Through parables, we learn to care for those in need, to forgive, and to shine brightly for Jesus.

Faith teaches how to live and follow God.

Our faith is formed in the seconds of a teachable moment, in the tiny deposits of time in the minivan, the minutes hearing God's Word, the hours of learning, and the years of growing.

Faith teaches anywhere, every day.

As a faith champion, you have the opportunity to remind your faith community about the power of passing on biblical truths to the next generation. May this be your prayer:

We will tell the next generation their
praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
Psalm 78:4

Christian Education Awareness

ACSI created this Christian Education Awareness campaign, “Faith Teaches,” to encourage parents, schools, and churches.

For Parents

We desire Christian parents to be empowered to provide the best spiritual formation for their children so they can come to know, love, and follow Jesus Christ at an early age. We want to ensure parents understand the educational options they truly have in order to best educate their children in a personalized manner. Whatever educational path they choose, ACSI seeks to equip parents to fulfill their God-given role as the primary spiritual and educational influence in their children’s lives.

For Schools

We desire Christian educators to be equipped and strengthened in the educational environment God has placed them in. We believe that the best soil in which students can grow is a Christ-centered educational environment that infuses biblical worldview training into all academics. This setting helps students learn how to stand against cultural currents seeking to detract from God’s ways. Whether schooling happens under a tree in Uganda, on a kitchen table in Kansas, or anywhere in between, ACSI wants to support every child so they have access to Christ-centered education.

For Churches

We desire for churches to pray for educators and students knowing that the most time spent each day in a child’s formative years is in an educational environment. We believe that the church can come alongside its community to advance Christ-centered education in small or big ways, creating an eternal, next-generation investment today and tomorrow. Whether a church simply prays for students or decides to open their campus Monday through Friday, ACSI wants to support churches in advancing Christ-centered education.



What Is the Best School for Your Child?

"Faith Teaches" every moment of every day in every way.

That's why the education choice you make for your child is so important. While the hours spent in school might vary per state or country, a typical school year is 180 days long. That's roughly 1,260 hours of instruction each school year or 16,380 hours outside of your home before graduating high school. The question becomes, "What is the best educational environment for my child?" There are a wide range of school choices today for K-12, including public, private, online, and charter. There are also alternative, innovative models such as micro-school, university, or some type of hybrid. Ultimately, as a parent, there are several factors to consider, including curriculum, program offerings, teaching style, location, and cost.

School choice allows public education funds to follow students to the schools or services that best fit their needs. Learn about school choice: www.edchoice.org/school-choice/what-is-school-choice/.

Christian School

At ACSI, we value the ability to infuse a biblical worldview into every aspect of academic learning. This download offers many articles about Christian school education. Some Christian schools allow open enrollment, which is available to anyone. Others offer covenant enrollment, which will have both parents and children sign a statement of faith. Students often pay tuition; financial aid may be available.

Private School

There are different private school educational choices that typically offer academic rigor or specific instruction, such as the arts or different languages and cultures. Students often pay tuition; financial aid may be available.

Charter School

A charter school is a publicly funded educational institution that operates independently of the traditional public school system. Charter schools often entertain various educational philosophies but must meet specific performance standards outlined in their charter. Charter schools are publicly funded.

Micro-School or Learning Pod

A micro-school or learning pod is a small, personalized educational environment serving typically five to 150 students. They may operate independently or as part of a network mixing traditional or innovative teaching methods. Hands-on experiences, flexible curricula, and individualized instruction are often elements of this model, which can be personally or publicly funded.

University/Hybrid Model

This innovative model combines in-person and online learning together creating flexibility and blended learning styles. Beyond personalized education, often collaborative projects providing group work and heavy technology integration create real-life learning opportunities. Typically, enrollment can be part- or full-time, personally or publicly funded.

What's the Best School for Your Child?

Public Schools

Public schools are government-funded and operate with state-mandated curricula and educational standards. Public schools are generally open to all students in their designated geographic area without requiring tuition fees. Some schools have access to Bible classes through Life Wise (lifewise.org).

Homeschooling

Homeschooling is an educational method where parents or guardians take primary responsibility for educating their children at home rather than enrolling them in a traditional public or private school. Parents can choose and design curriculum that best fits their child's learning style and interests. Homeschooling provides a flexible schedule. Legal requirements may vary by state or country.



Resource Articles

Shattering a Few Myths About Christian Schools

By Dr. Paul A. Kienel (Updated 8/24)

The increase of evangelical Christian schools in America over the last few decades has spawned more than its share of myths and misconceptions about the purpose of Christian schools and the value they provide. It is to these misconceptions and myths that this article is addressed.

Myth:
It is un-American to send your children to a Christian school. It is wrong for Christians to abandon the public schools.

Reality:
Christian schools are not un-American. Bible-centered Christian schools existed in America 230 years before public schools were established. From the first American settlement school at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, to state-controlled public schools established by Horace Mann in 1837, America's schools were Christ-centered and committed to a high level of literacy. It is true that many Christians and non-Christians alike have opted out of public schools in recent years, but it must be remembered that in 1837 Horace Mann and the new public schools of Massachusetts abandoned the well-established Christian schools of New England. The reestablishment of Christian schools in America is indeed threatening to some people in the public school community, but our first concern as parents is to do what we know is best for our children. That is why we enroll them in Christian schools.

Myth:
Christian schools are elitist academies; only wealthy families send their children to Christian schools. Christian schools are "havens for the rich."

Reality:
Christian school leaders and supporting organizations like ACSI are champions of school choice and school choice legislation. Such legislation creates a pathway for families in under-resourced areas to send their children to the school of their choice, including Christian schools. As proponents of school choice for all, Christian schools hold a position which naturally promotes more economically diverse student bodies.

In his article "Here Are 10 Reasons School Choice Is Winning," Jude Schwalbach writes that the number four reason is because "School choice provides options for low-income families."[1]

According to Schwalbach, educational choice removes the connection between where a child lives and the school they can attend, ensuring that a family's ability to afford a home doesn't determine their child's access to quality education. While middle- and upper-income families often can afford private schooling in addition to paying taxes for public schools, lower-income families cannot. School choice ensures that access to a good education is not dependent on a family's financial resources.

Resource Articles

Myth:
Christian schools cannot compete economically with the public schools. Therefore, their academic programs suffer.

Reality:
According to a *U.S. News & World Report* article (August 29, 2023), "Research has consistently shown that private school students tend to perform better on standardized tests."[2] Recent National Assessment of Educational Progress data corroborates similar research that reveals students from private schools score better in nearly every subject.[3]

In 2022, the NAEP reading test reported that eighth graders in private schools scored around 20 points higher than students in public or charter schools. Fourth grade private school students showed similar test advantages.[4]

The National Association of Independent Schools found that private school students outperformed their public school peers on a consistent basis on college entry tests such as the SAT.[5]

Christian schools are not perfect. Their only claim to perfection is the perfection they find in Jesus Christ. Because of Him, they are making a major spiritual, academic, and social difference in the lives of multiplied thousands of students.

Footnotes

[1] Schwalbach, J. (n.d.). Here Are 10 Reasons School Choice is Winning. The Heritage Foundation. The Heritage Foundation. https://www.heritage.org/education/commentary/here-are-10-reasons-school-choice-winning

[2] https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/private-school-vs-public-school

[3] NAEP - Private schools. (n.d.). https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/dashboards/schools_dashboard.aspx Ibid.

[4] https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/spring-2016/independent-schools-and-the-sat/

Resource Articles

The Distinctives of Christian Schooling

By Dr. Derek J. Keenan (Updated 8/24)

Education is a process of change. What children come to learn, know, understand, and believe changes them. And until full maturity is achieved, education has a profound and life-impacting consequence. This is the directional issue of every educational and learning experience. You see, education—and particularly the more formal type of education we call schooling—moves its students toward some goal. Schooling is an educational process of becoming, and the question then is, becoming what?

Christian schooling is committed to producing a particular kind of person: a Christian person. Christian schooling is an education for a particular kind of life: a Christian life. Christian education involves preparing students for living, in the fullest sense of the word, as followers of Christ. This way of living is the desired end for the kind of education we are contemplating. Children are blessed when they are started on the road to this goal early in life.

"It begins in the home," writes Dr. Larry Taylor, ACSI president and CEO, in his book "*Running with the Horses"*. "I strongly believe that the biblical principle of Luke 6:40 is the most powerful principle related to the practices I am suggesting. In other words, the influence of parents is immeasurable in the areas of Bible reading, Bible study, and prayer. These practices can be administered to some degree by other people, such as youth pastors, teachers, other parents, and peers; however, we are talking about reaching synergy levels—and there is simply no replacement for Mom and Dad. Luke 6:40 would encourage me to develop these practices [1]with my children so that the most important influencers in their lives truly mold them: their parents."

Schooling, no matter what type, shapes students in significant ways. These ways cannot be separated or pulled apart, as some may think, but are all woven into the person that each child or young person is becoming. This shaping may be thoughtfully defined or ill defined, but no matter the intention of the school, the life of every student is being changed in these areas:

ACADEMICS
Thinking that includes knowing and understanding

SKILLS
Proficiency in using content and ideas

WORLDVIEW
Belief system about the world and how it works

SPIRITUALITY
Individual personhood and the core beliefs that control behavior

RELATIONSHIPS
Social connections with peers and teachers

Christian schooling is a Christ-centered educative agent, and it addresses each of these five developing areas of a child's life.

In the academic area, it takes seriously its responsibility for development of the life of the mind, but it does not distance or discount God from the academic life. It views preparing skilled young people as essential to assisting each child to reach their God-given potential in Christ. The Christian school helps cultivate a worldview that gives God His rightful place, and it looks to the Bible for guidance in answering life's big questions. Christian schooling enhances the child's spiritual development in an intentional and nurturing manner, and provides an environment guided by biblical truth wherein students will grow in relationship with peers and teachers.

The desired end of Christian schooling is to develop spiritually formed thinkers who are academically well skilled and who are biblically oriented in their world perspective as they seek daily to love and please God in all that they do. Dr. Alan Pue, in his book "*Rethinking Discipleship: Why Christian Schooling Matters"*, aptly describes the goal of Christian education this way: "Christian schooling is not shielding our children from the realities of life; rather it is about inculcating in them an understanding of how we can know what is good and beautiful and true, of how we can distinguish truth from error, and then live life according to that reality."[2]

Footnotes

[1]Taylor, L., PhD. (2013). *Running with the Horses.* WestBow Press.
[2]Pue, Alan, PhD. (2021). *Rethinking Discipleship.* Purposeful Design Publications.

Biblical Reasons for Sending Children to Christian School

By Dr. Paul A. Kienel (Updated 8/24)

The following was written by Dr. Wayne Grodin.

> *The main reason my wife Margaret and I sent our children to our local Christian school was a conviction that Scripture directs Christian parents to give their children a Bible-based education whenever they have opportunity to do so. I have listed six biblical principles here that we found very persuasive.*

1. All of a child's education should be Bible-centered and God-centered.

Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4)

I'm saddened when Christian parents tell me of the frustration and stress their children experience in secular schools, but I also wonder if parents aren't doing exactly what Ephesians 6:4 says not to do: putting their children, day after day, in situations that "exasperate" them, that "provoke them to anger," or to sorrow or frustration.

Training that is not "of the Lord" will do that: The contrast in the verse ("do not exasperate ... instead bring them up in the training of the Lord") tells us we should expect "exasperated" children from secular education.

2. Education should be positive and truthful.

Sometimes parents think that a secular environment will "strengthen" their children by forcing them to stand up for their own beliefs. But God's Word does not endorse that viewpoint. It does not say, "Give a child 12 years of training in the way he should not go, and he will be made strong by it." Instead, God tells us,

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it (Prov. 22:6).

I know of no verse of Scripture that tells me that secular training will "strengthen" Christian children. It may callous them so they view sin as more "normal." It may harden them so they care more about the things of the world and less about God. It may desensitize them so they are more comfortable living in the midst of repeated sin against their Lord. But it will not strengthen them as Christian men and women; train a child in the way he should go.

3. Peer influence should be positive and Christlike.

Parents sometimes think it helps or strengthens their children to spend much time with children who have different moral standards and goals for life. But God's Word disagrees and reminds us that children will tend to become more and more like their frequent companions:

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion to fools suffers harm (Prov. 13:20).

Do not be deceived, 'Bad company ruins good morals' (1 Cor. 15:13).

We've seen the results of good peer influence in our boys' lives. They've picked up from friends at our Christian academy a deeper concern for prayer, for purity of speech, for missions, for kindness to others, for respect for authority–and in general, they're happier.

They love their school. Their education is the kind God wants it to be, and even very young children sense that, although they can't explain it.

4. Every teacher's pattern of life should be worthy of imitation.

Children are great imitators. A teacher they like will have tremendous impact not only on studies, but on attitudes toward all aspects of life. Jesus knew that, for He said,

Everyone when he is fully taught will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40).

5. Only God-centered education gives true wisdom.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10).

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (Prov. 9:10).

In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3).

This is the reason our secular educational systems have strayed from the truth. Isn't it foolish to think we can get a true perspective on God's creation from a system that begins by excluding His words?

Here is the issue: Do we really think the Bible works in the real world? Does it give crucial guidance in modern life? If not–if we quietly assume the Bible is mainly intended for use inside Sunday school classes–then secular education will be our natural choice. But if we do think the Bible guides us in all areas of life, then we'll give our children education that applies Scripture to every area of training for life.

6. Christian schooling is the best hope for transforming society.

Jesus tells us, "You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13,14).

Society is to be influenced and guided by Christians. But why aren't we doing this more today? I think the largest reason is our meek acceptance of secular education all the way from kindergarten to the university Ph.D.

School is where we learn to think. It's where we learn how to work and relate to others and influence the world. But if that whole process excludes God's own viewpoint in Scripture for 12 years, our Christian witness grows accustomed to being mute, and it remains uneducated, never growing beyond the "Sunday school" level.

Our lamp is put under a bushel, and our salt loses its saltiness and is no longer good for anything (Matt. 5:13,15).

Resource Articles

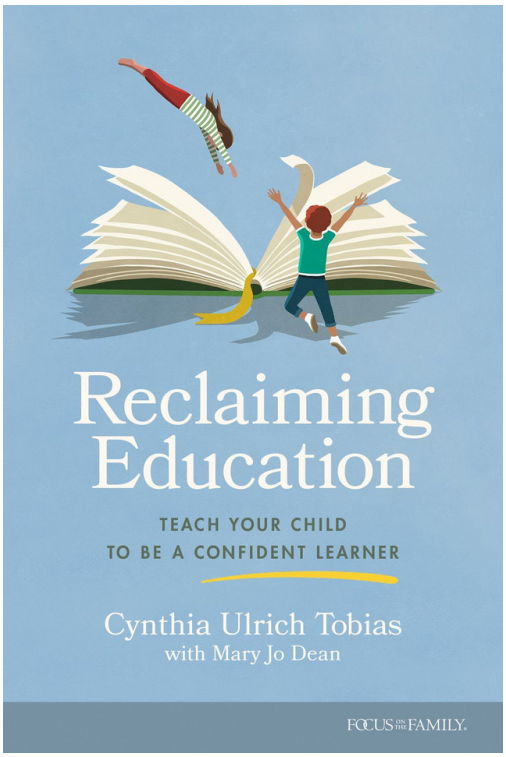
Christian parents sometimes say they want their children to be “salt and light” in secular schools. But how much salt and light can untrained, silent Christians be? Must we not rather train our children in Christian schools that they may become salty and brilliant lights to transform a society wandering in darkness?

I suspect that the verses discussed here may convince you (as they convinced us) that Scripture directs you to put your children in a Christian school. I assure you, if you do so you will see God’s blessing on your children and your whole family. For all eternity, you will not regret making this decision.



Homeschool Resources

Our good friends at Focus on the Family recently a book by Cynthia Tobias and Mary Jo Dean titled "*Reclaiming Education*". This resource will equip you with practical and immediately useful tools to work in partnership with your child to identify and develop their learning styles and strengths.



Download First Chapter

www.faithteaches.com/reclaimingeducation

Focus on the Family provides homeschooling resources such as articles to read and videos to watch.

Homeschool Resources

www.faithteaches.com/homeschoolresources

flourishing families



Equip parents and guardians in their God-given role to disciple their children.

ACSI
STRONGER TOGETHER

flourishingfamiliesplan.org



ACSI

STRONGER TOGETHER

P.O. Box 62249
Colorado Springs, CO 80962
acsi.org

RV-2509-30