



St. Thomas Classical Academy  
2024-2025 Admissions Packet

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# *Prayers*

## **Prayer to St. Thomas Aquinas for Catholic Schools**

O Angelic Doctor St. Thomas, prince of theologians and model of philosophers, bright ornament of the Christian world and light of the Church; O heavenly patron of all Catholic schools, who didst learn wisdom without guile and dost communicate it without envy, intercede for us with the Son of God, Wisdom itself, that the spirit of wisdom may descend upon us, and enable us to understand clearly that which thou hast taught, and fulfill it by imitating thy deeds; to become partakers of that doctrine and virtue which caused thee to shine like the sun on earth; and at last to rejoice with thee forever in their most sweet fruits in heaven, together praising the Divine Wisdom for all eternity. Amen.

## **Prayer by St. Thomas More**

Father in heaven, you have given us a mind to know You, a will to serve You, and a heart to love You. Be with us today in all that we do, so that Your light may shine out in our lives. We pray that we may be today what You created us to be, and may praise Your name in all that we do. We pray for Your Church: may it be a true light to all nations; may the Spirit of Your Son Jesus guide the words and actions of all Christians today. We pray for all who are searching for truth: bring them Your light and Your love.

Give us, Lord, a humble, quiet, peaceable, patient, tender and charitable mind, and in all our thoughts, words and deeds a taste of the Holy Spirit. Give us, Lord, a lively faith, a firm hope, a fervent charity, a love of You. Take from us all lukewarmness in meditation, dullness in prayer. Give us fervour and delight in thinking of You and Your grace, Your tender compassion towards us. The things that we pray for, good Lord, give us grace to labour for: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Thomas Aquinas, pray for us!

St. Thomas More, pray for us!

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, pray for us!

# Vision

***At St. Thomas Classical Academy, students, parents, and faculty accompany one another in the pursuit of wisdom. Our rigorous classical education and cultivation of an authentic Catholic culture allow our students to encounter truth, goodness, and beauty and to deepen their love for Christ, His Mother, and His Church.***

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### **Parents as principal educators**

*Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. -Pope Paul VI, Gravissimum Educationis*

As a hybrid school, St. Thomas Classical Academy offers families the advantages and flexibility of home education, while supporting them in a rigorous academic environment. Parents and faculty act as co-educators, working closely on a unified program. Tutors and administrators choose curriculum, create lesson plans, and comment on written work, but parents have the final responsibility for creating daily schedules, assigning grades, and making the program work for their family.

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### **Rigorous, classical education**

*The object of education is to teach us to love what is beautiful. -Plato, The Republic (Book III)*

The western tradition and the natural world offer a wealth of truth, goodness, and beauty. At St. Thomas Classical Academy, we immerse ourselves in the beauty and order of art, literature, music, poetry, Latin, mathematics, and the natural world. Exploring these gifts, we seek to awaken a sense of wonder in our students and to encourage their God-given, natural pursuit of virtue and knowledge. Using traditional teaching methods and with an emphasis on history, literature, and Latin, we seek not a set of skills or test scores, but rather students who think well and read well and so enter into the Great Conversation of western culture. Through their encounter with the history and beauty of our western heritage and Catholic faith, they will know “their true nature, their dignity, and their rightful place in the scheme of things.” Russell Kirk

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### **Authentic Catholic culture**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of*

*men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. -  
John 1:1-5*

The Greek word *paideia* is often translated “education” but is better described as the transmission of a culture from one generation to the next. Our Catholic culture includes not only art, poetry, literature, theology, and philosophy, but also the ancient practices of our faith. Since the Incarnation of Christ is central to the Catholic faith and the basis of our culture, we devote ourselves to the Eucharist, the continuation of the Incarnation, and to Mary, the vessel of the Incarnation, honoring them through daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and daily prayer. To aid our devotion, Our Lord offers us the communion of the saints. Through novenas, prayers, and observing the liturgical calendar together, we desire that our community of students, faculty, and parents grow in virtue, devotion, and friendship with our Lord.

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### **Pursuit of wisdom**

*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. -I Corinthians 1:23-24*

*Among all human pursuits, the pursuit of wisdom is more perfect, more noble, more useful, and more full of joy. -St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles (Book 1, Chapter 2)*

We seek to give our students a foundation in truth and love to prepare for a life of philosophy, the love of wisdom. Through high expectations for academics, conduct, and character, we seek to create an atmosphere conducive to educating the intellect. While we draw out and encourage our students’ desire to know the truth, we also seek to mold their wills to choose the good and order their desires to love what is beautiful through the habits of virtue. St. Thomas tells us “the pursuit of wisdom especially joins man to God in friendship.” Ultimately, we pray that the students may have the discipline and courage to fulfill their true purpose: to joyfully follow the Truth, the Logos Himself.

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### **St. Thomas**

*I die the King's good servant, and God's first. -Last words of St. Thomas More*

*Such secrets have been revealed to me that all I have written now appears as so much straw. -Last words of St. Thomas Aquinas*

We pray that our students will be inspired by the lives of our patrons, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Thomas More. Both of them, in wisdom and love, wholly offered their

lives to Our Lord, one achieving the “white crown” of purity through a religious vocation, the pursuit of truth, and a devotion to the Eucharist, and the other receiving the “red crown” of martyrdom at the end of a life devoted to his family, his country, and his faith.

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## **Student Code of Conduct**

At St. Thomas Classical Academy, we welcome our students into a learning environment of respect and friendship. St. John Bosco, whose love for children we seek to emulate, addressed the virtue of respect and friendship when he asked the question: “Do you want your friends to respect you? Always think well of everyone and be ready to help others. Do this and you will be happy.” St. Philip Neri, another saint who worked with children, once said that children should “run, jump, have all the fun you want at the right time.”

St. Thomas Classical Academy students adopt a philosophy of mutual respect and friendship with their focus always on God and pleasing Him. Thus, we have adopted the following Code of Conduct for each of our students:

*As a student of STCA, I strive to please God in word and deed. I will respect my tutors, my friends, my school, and myself. I speak truth, love others, and seek wisdom.*

## *Lower School Basics*

St. Thomas Classical Academy's 2-day hybrid program is designed for homeschool families who are looking for academic instruction and Catholic community. Meeting two full days, we offer a comprehensive curriculum which includes history, literature, science, art, language arts, Latin, and math. The week includes a 2-hour CGS session for Grammar students. Classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Faith Development Center of Ss. John and Paul Catholic Parish in Altoona.

*The following information offers a general idea of how we spend our time at STCA. It varies some according to grade and is subject to change as we adjust for enrollment numbers and tutor availability.*

### ***Proposed Schedule***

	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
8:15	Holy Mass	
9:00	Latin, Composition, Grammar, Spelling	9:00 Science or Art
		10:15 Latin, Composition, Grammar, Spelling
11:00	Recess	
11:20	Lunch	
11:45	Math	
12:35	Recess	
1:00	History, Literature, and Geography or CGS	
3:00	Dismiss	

# Grammar I

Grades 1-3

Students must be 6 years of age by September 1, 2024, know their letter sounds well, and commit to at-home reading instruction in order to enter the program.

## Content Subjects

Subject	In Class	At Home
<b>History</b> High Medieval through Post Reformation	Discuss at-home readings. Complete history activities and review memory work.	Read the RC History* Beginner Core text. Read assigned living history books. Investigate specific interest areas, culminating in a class presentation.
<b>Science</b> Human Anatomy & Botany	Participate in hands-on science experiments and activities.	Read the assigned family science read-aloud, review memory work, explore a specialized interest in preparation for a class presentation.
<b>Literature</b>	Enjoy a book club discussion regarding assigned literature books.	Read four assigned literature books throughout the year.
<b>Fine Arts</b>	Explore studio art (7 elements focused) with techniques in various media. Learn about art history.	Observe the beauty of the world together as a family.
<b>Geography</b>	Enjoy a geography-focused read-aloud together as a class. Learn the continents and United States geography.	Identify places on a map.
<b>Memory Work</b>	Introduce all memory work, which includes history sentences, timeline, science facts, math facts, Latin prayers, and poetry.	Review memory work.

\*Roman Catholic History, see [rchistory.com](http://rchistory.com)

## Skill Work

Subject	In Class Instruction	At Home
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<b>Latin</b>	1st & 2nd grades: Learn Latin prayers and songs. 3rd grade: MP* <i>Prima Latina</i> instruction.	Pray Latin prayers and sing songs. 3rd grade: Memorize vocabulary. Complete workbook pages.
<b>Composition</b>	Practice copywork, narration, and dictation. 3rd grade: <i>IEW All Things Fun and Fascinating</i> instruction.	Enjoy stories together. Orally narrate readings. Practice copywork, narration, and dictation. 3rd grade: Compose key word outlines, write and edit paragraphs.
<b>Spelling</b>	<i>All About Spelling</i> instruction.	Memorize key cards and phonograms. Practice spelling list. Dictate words and sentences.
<b>Handwriting</b>	Learn cursive handwriting with the <i>Writing Your Catholic Faith</i> curriculum.	Practice handwriting daily.
<b>Math</b>	<i>Saxon Math</i> instruction.	Complete <i>Saxon Math</i> assignments.

\*Memoria Press, see [memoriapress.com](http://memoriapress.com)

## ***Grammar II***

Grades 4-6

Incoming Grammar 2 students will complete an assessment to help identify which math class best fits with their previous skill level.

### ***Content Subjects***

<b>Subject</b>	<b>In Class</b>	<b>At Home</b>
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<p><b>History</b> High Medieval through Post Reformation</p>	<p>Discuss at-home readings. Complete history activities and review memory work.</p>	<p>Read the RC History Grammar Core text. Read assigned living history books. Investigate specific interest areas, culminating in a class presentation.</p>
<p><b>Science</b> Human Anatomy &amp; Biology</p>	<p>Participate in hands-on science experiments and activities.</p>	<p>Read the assigned family science read-aloud, review memory work, explore a specialized interest in preparation for a class presentation.</p>
<p><b>Fine Arts</b></p>	<p>Explore studio art (7 elements focused) with techniques in various media. Learn about art history.</p>	<p>Observe the beauty of the world together as a family.</p>
<p><b>Literature</b></p>	<p>Enjoy a book club discussion regarding assigned literature books.</p>	<p>Read four assigned literature books throughout the year.</p>
<p><b>Geography</b></p>	<p>Introduce world geography with the MP Geography series.</p>	<p>Complete workbook pages and memorize assigned places on a map.</p>
<p><b>Memory Work</b></p>	<p>Introduce all memory work, which includes history sentences, timeline, science facts, math facts, Latin prayers, and poetry.</p>	<p>Review memory work.</p>

## ***Skill Work***

<b>Subject</b>	<b>In Class Instruction</b>	<b>At Home</b>
<b>Latin</b>	4th: MP <i>Latina Christiana</i> instruction. 5th & 6th: MP <i>First Form Latin</i> instruction.	Complete workbook pages. Memorize vocabulary, declensions, and conjugations.
<b>Composition</b>	4th: MP <i>Classical Composition I - Fable</i> instruction. 5th: MP <i>Classical Composition II - Narrative</i> instruction. 6th: MP <i>Classical Composition III - Chreia &amp; Maxim</i> instruction.	Write and edit papers.
<b>English Grammar</b>	IEW Fix-It Grammar	Complete workbook pages. Memorize recitation questions.
<b>Spelling</b>	<i>All About Spelling</i> instruction.	Memorize key cards and sound cards. Practice spelling list. Dictate words and sentences.
<b>Math</b>	<i>Saxon Math</i> instruction	Complete <i>Saxon Math</i> assignments.

## *Upper School Basics*

St. Thomas Classical Academy's 2-day hybrid program is designed for homeschool families who are looking for academic instruction and Catholic community. We offer a comprehensive curriculum which includes history, literature, theology, science, composition, latin, and math.

Classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Faith Development Center of Ss. John and Paul Catholic Parish in Altoona. Each day begins with Holy Mass.

Students will be placed in a Latin and Math class based on their previous skill level in each subject.

*The following information offers a general idea of how we spend our time at STCA. It varies some according to grade and is subject to change as we adjust for enrollment numbers and tutor availability.*

# Logic

Grades 7-9

Students must be 12 years of age by September 1, 2024 to enter the Logic program. The program may be scaled to fulfill high school credit requirements for a 9th grader who is not ready for the high school program.

## Core Subjects

Subject	In Class	At Home
<b>Faith</b>	Discuss assigned books that enrich and inform the Catholic faith.	Complete readings as assigned.
<b>History</b> High Medieval through Post Reformation	Discuss at-home readings. Complete history activities.	Read the RC History Logic Core text. Read assigned living history books. Investigate specific interest areas, culminating in a class presentation. Write papers about topics from the readings.
<b>Latin</b>	MP <i>Latin Form</i> Series instruction.	Complete workbook pages. Memorize vocabulary, declensions, and conjugations.
<b>Composition</b>	MP <i>Classical Composition V - Common Topics</i> or <i>Classical Composition VI - Confirmation &amp; Refutation</i> instruction.	Write and edit papers.
<b>Geography</b>	Learn about the physical geography and cultures of the world with MP <i>Geography III</i> .	Read text. Complete workbook pages. Practice labeling and drawing the world.
<b>Math</b>	<i>Saxon Math</i> instruction	Complete <i>Saxon Math</i> assignments.
<b>Science</b>	Receive instruction & discuss concepts from <i>Novare Physical Science</i> . Participate in hands-on science experiments and activities. Learn about how to conduct an experiment, culminating in a science fair.	Study the text. Plan, build, and present a science fair project.

# *High School*

Grades 9-12

The high school program is a three-year program that follows a university-style approach. Students complete readings at home and meet in a weekly class to discuss and learn more from a tutor. Tutors will offer feedback on written work, quizzes, test grades, and class participation, but parents decide and award final grades.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sample of Texts</b>	<b>At Home</b>
<b>Theology</b>	<i>The Mystery of Redemption</i> (Didache) <i>The Church</i> (Didache)	Complete readings and papers as assigned.
<b>History &amp; Literature</b> Medieval	<i>On the Incarnation</i> (Athanasius) <i>Beowulf</i> <i>The Inferno</i> (Dante) <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> (Chaucer)	Complete readings and papers as assigned. Watch corresponding <i>Roman Roads: Old Western Culture</i> video.
<b>Philosophy</b>	1st year HS students: Memoria Press <i>Traditional Logic I and II</i> 2nd & 3rd year HS students: selected texts	Complete readings and papers as assigned. Complete readings and papers as assigned.
<b>Latin</b>	MP <i>Latin Form</i> series	Complete workbook pages. Memorize vocabulary, declensions, and conjugations.
<b>Science</b>	1st year HS students: <i>General Biology</i> (Novare Science), with labs 2nd & 3rd year HS students: <i>General Chemistry</i> (Novare Science), with labs	Complete readings, exercises, and lab reports. Complete readings, exercises, and lab reports.
<b>Math</b>	<i>Saxon Math</i> instruction	Complete <i>Saxon Math</i> assignments.
<b>Composition</b>	Students receive individual writing instruction from a composition tutor for all humanities papers.	

# *High School FAQs*

## **Why is the high school program three years, instead of the traditional four?**

The core of the STCA high school curriculum is complete in 3 years, leaving the 4th year to take care of practical necessities or to explore special interests. During the 4th high school year, a student may take community college classes for credit, apprentice with a mentor in a desired career path, focus on musical education, take additional science and math classes, or work to save for college (STCA has hired graduates as assistants). We believe this regimen provides a beautiful and full high school experience.

## **What kind of work will my student be doing at home?**

The majority of the student's time at home will be spent reading and writing. Throughout the year, students will write papers and in-class essays for the humanities classes, complete exercises and memory work for Latin, practice math problems from the math curriculum, and complete exercises and write lab reports for science.

## **How much time at home should I expect my student to be investing in school work?**

Generally, we recommend approximately 2.5 hours per week studying at home for each individual class: history, literature, philosophy, theology, Latin, math, and science. That is a total of almost 18 hours over 3 at-home weekdays in our 32-week year. Some students will spend more time than that, and some will spend less.

## **How many credits will my student receive for the classes?**

Because we are not an accredited school, STCA does not assign credits. That being said, we believe that the rigor, depth, and time commitment of the classes should constitute two credits per class, other than theology. For example:

History 2  
Literature 2  
Philosophy 2  
Theology 1  
Latin 2  
Math 2  
Science 2

One year total: 13 credits

Three years total: of 39 credits

## **Will my student receive a transcript?**

No. STCA does not compile transcripts for students, but the hope is that parents will share with each other the best practices in preparing their own transcripts.

## **Will my student receive a grade at the end of class?**

No. The student will receive feedback on his assigned work and many classes have test and quiz scores, but tutors will not give an official grade. We are not an accredited

school. Parents are the final authority and primary educators, so they will determine the final grade. If parents would like a suggestion from the tutor, they are free to ask the tutor for a recommendation.

**Will my student need to take any other classes to graduate from high school?**

The short answer is yes, your student will need to take additional classes. It is up to you which additional classes to choose. We have paraphrased state law, compared graduation requirements, and included the recommendation by a state college for high school credits below:

*State of Iowa High School Graduation Requirements:*

- Each school or school district must require the following as part of its graduation requirements: 1) one-half unit of United States government, 2) one unit of American History, and 3) student participation in physical education for one-eighth unit in each semester of enrollment in high school.
- Iowa Code 256.7(26) states that the requirements for high school graduation for students in school districts and accredited nonpublic schools shall include four years of English and language arts, three years of mathematics, three years of science, and three years of social science. Any additional graduation credits or units are locally determined.
- Criteria established for early graduation are locally determined.

*Class credit requirements for college-bound students from local school districts:*

<b>Ankeny</b>	<b>Urbandale</b>	<b>Winterset</b>
Language Arts- 8	English- Language Arts- 8	Language Arts- 8
Mathematics- 6	Mathematics- 6	Mathematics- 6
Social Studies- 8	Social Studies- 6	Social Studies- 6
Science-6	Science- 6	Science- 6
Health- 1	Health- 1	Health- 1
Physical Education- 4	Physical Education- 2	Physical Education- 4
Electives- 15	Electives- 17	Computer Application- 1
		Electives- 20
Total: 48 credits	Total: 46 credits	Total: 52 credits

*University of Iowa high school recommendations for entry into their Liberal Arts program:*

- English/Language Arts- 4 years
- World Language- 2 years in a single language
- Natural Science- 3 years
- Social Studies- 3 years
- Algebra- 2 years
- Geometry- 1 year

**What is the three-year scope and sequence for the high school classes?**

The high school classes will operate on a three-year rotation. Students will be able to jump in at any year.

	<b>Theology</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Literature</b>
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<b>Year A</b>	Faith & Revelation, The Blessed Trinity	Ancient Creation-350 AD	Ancient
<b>Year B</b>	The Mystery of Redemption, The Church	Medieval 350-1600 AD	Medieval
<b>Year C</b>	The Sacraments, Our Moral Life in Christ	Early Modern 1600-present	Early Modern

High school science, Latin, and philosophy are set up differently:

### **Science**

The first-year students will complete General Biology. The second- and third-year students will rotate between Introductory Physics and General Chemistry.

### **Latin**

Latin will be leveled according to the student's Latin experience coming into high school.

### **Philosophy**

First-year students will complete a formal logic curriculum. Second- and third-year students will complete readings in philosophy.