

What Does SLO Classical Academy Add to Home Schooling?

part of our Parent Education Literature Series



by Lisa Lewis

For you seasoned home schoolers your likely question to us is simply – “What’s the benefit of attending the SLO Classical Academy?” We see many benefits to you, your student, and your family. We will address many of them within three specific categories: time, time, and time!

The first category of time is for your student. At each age and stage time with parents is vital for secure emotional development. This is an important reason to home school in the first place. Additionally, at each age and stage it is important to balance interactions with others to help your child develop further emotionally and socially, as well as academically. With carefully chosen “others” in your child’s life, he or she can benefit greatly from additional modeling, input, gifts, ideas, personalities and perspectives. At the Classical Academy teachers are interviewed before becoming a part of the school to learn not only of their teaching experience and strengths, but also of their character and interest in character development of their students. We believe that the long-term goal of who a person is grows up to be is equally as important as what they know. We believe the adults your student will interact with to be concerned with the same long view as the Board of Directors at the Classical Academy. The time your student will spend with other adults investing in their academic, social and emotional growth and development

will be of great benefit to your student.

In addition, the time your student will have with classmates can also significantly contribute to growth and development. Students learn from each other, model for each other, teach each other, discuss with each other and relate to each other within a small group setting, allowing each student to be stimulated towards growth socially and relationally. The twelve-student limit in each class encourages differences to be worked through rather than ignored; it stimulates lively discussion and a wealth of ideas; it moves children towards confidence of self as well as respect of others. It becomes, in essence, a safe environment to express, struggle, and shine.

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Time for students, which encompasses so much, is accompanied by a second category of time we feel will be of benefit as you participate in the Classical Academy — time for your family. The program at our school is designed to accommodate the unique needs of each family by providing instruction on two site days balanced with structure for

your home days. Because the length of each day is not considered to be a full day in terms of usual school hours, this allows considerable flexibility for your family’s schedule. We have heard from many who are able to include family activities that did not fit in their previous time structures. In addition, the pattern of studying world history as a school over several years that we follow at the Classical Academy allows for deeper study as a family. Moving through material and learning together, although at different levels, can be of great benefit to various ages and stages of students and can simplify home schooling life.

You may also be amazed at the learning that takes place for *you* as potential gaps in your own education are filled in as you learn alongside your students. In addition to the education we lay out for students, we also offer purposeful parent education opportunities, allowing the parents in the family to grow and enjoy the educational process as much as the student. In fact, it is not uncommon for families to express that the entire family benefits from partnering with the Classical Academy.

This time for families is also boosted by the community the Classical Academy provides. Together, each family can take advantage of the opportunities provided to develop a strong sense of community amongst other families by volunteering, hanging out before and after class, being involved in small group activities together, attending our wonderful history events together, and taking part in our field trips. It simplifies life because the entire family can truly be together with friends all at once, sometimes educating together, and sometimes sharing home schooling tips together, and sometimes just being together. It can take some time to develop this, but the benefits are well worth the investment.

The final category of time we see at the Classical Academy is your time. As home schooling moms ourselves, we know how difficult it can be to find time for planning thoroughly for each student's needs, caring for children and home, being a "good" wife and friend, and investing in your own interests. We have purposefully designed our program with two days on site and

an optional third morning so that you may find some time to address these needs while resting in the knowledge that your student is secure and progressing in their learning. Having time to get a load of laundry done, meet a friend for coffee, take care of business or play with your toddler without feeling guilty are all so valuable for you to be able to balance your own needs with the needs of those in your life. There is peace of mind while doing these things because the questions about whether or not you are doing enough, whether or not your student will be ready for the next "grade" or the "real world," and whether or not you are keeping pace with those around you can be alleviated as you learn to trust the school, your mentor teacher and the process of educating your child.

One of the fun ways we also seek to alleviate some time pressures on parents is by providing optional enrichment classes right on our campus. This can simplify life by having one primary place at which your children go to have exposure to a wide variety of topics, from Latin to music to art to physical education to folding laundry! We offer academic, fine arts, and special

interest classes that are sure to provide options for all interests!

You may already be able to organize your time to provide for your needs within your current home school pattern and we applaud you! However don't neglect the two other categories of time for your student and your family that will change in a favorable way as you partner with the Classical Academy. We look forward to discussing with you further any questions you may have regarding the nuts and bolts of day to day partnership with us. Please feel free to contact us via phone or email.

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Lisa Lewis brings 24 years of teaching experience in public, private and home schooling settings. She is widely respected as a teacher and is committed to her own life-long learning. Lisa has spent hours becoming versed in classical education and has used classical methods in her teaching. Lisa is one of the founders of SLOCA, and continues to work hard as the Director of Education to keep the vision alive and improve the model and quality of education.

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