

# THE FALCON

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2019-2020

## A LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Greetings!

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our semester-based mailing. The purpose of this publication is to proclaim in words and in photos the unique place Arborbrook Christian Academy holds today. In a world of school options, Arborbrook has carved for itself a distinctive role. It is our goal to see our students become life-long lovers of learning—not just the curriculum we teach, but the person that embodies all the curricula we teach—Jesus Christ. He is the center of all we do.

This school year we have focused our Assemblies on the topic of the One Anoth-

ers. Our theme verse for the school year has been John 13:34-35:

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

As a community, our school has sought to live out these verses through our actions in the classroom, on the court, on the stage, in the field, in the interview, in foreign nations, and in our back yard. God has something very special in mind for Arborbrook Christian Academy. It is a privilege to lead this school into its best days ahead.



Enjoy this publication as we attempt to share our school's passion with you.

Best Regards,

Dr. Andrew Zawacki  
Head of School

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Love Boldly and Guatemala teams have life changing impact*
- *Arborbrook Falcons sports teams soar to new heights*
- *Dual Enrollment offers students opportunity to double their efforts*
- *Spotlight on Alumni Daniel Zangmeister*
- *Lower School students learn history by living history*
- *Devotion time offers new opportunity for digging deeper into faith*

## ARBORBROOK APOLOGETICS

In recent years, one of the most common criticisms of Christian education, even from within church circles, is that it can over-insulate students. The worry is that their convictions may crumble once they leave the comfortable bubble of church, Christian school,

and Bible-believing parents and go out on their own to face hostile professors, incredulous co-workers, and scornful friends.

Unfortunately, it's not an unfounded concern. According to research from the ministry Campus Re-

newal, roughly 70 percent of previously-engaged Christian teens leave the church after they head off to college. This corresponds to a similar Barna Group study that found only 20 percent of youth who were involved in church as teens remained spiritually active by age 29.

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What research like this illustrates is that Christian education's primary role cannot be to provide students a "safe space" (to use the popular term) from the negative influences of a fallen world. Rather, it should equip them to contend mightily for the faith within the fallenness. As an article in the secular, center-left magazine *The Atlantic* recently put it, "If four years of college undo 18 years of parenting and religious affiliation, perhaps the faith community's tenuous hold is the problem, not the particular place outside its bubble where that hold evaporates."

*'Only 20 percent of youth who were involved in church as teens remained spiritually active by age 29.'—Barna Research Study*

## *Giving a Defense*

As a Christian educational institution, Arborbrook recognizes its charge to prepare students to "give a defense to any who ask for the hope that is in them." While this is accomplished in a variety of ways throughout the year, including traditional Bible classes, corporate worship, and sacrificial service, one that our high schoolers say is especially effective is our apologetics classes. In both the required and elective courses, students are equipped to confidently confront not only age-old challenges to the faith but also those unique to contemporary American culture.

It's a chilly Wednesday in February and Apologetics teacher Andrew Reinken and his class are discussing the proverbial "man on the island" conundrum about what happens to someone who dies without ever hearing the Gospel. Eleventh-grader Gabe Hampton observes that the Romans 1 doctrine of natural revelation might apply. "In theory, couldn't it mean that you could just believe there is a God, and because you never had the opportunity to know anything more about Him, you would still be saved?"

Reinken explains that this is what some theologians believe and prompts the class to consider Old Testament saints like Moses and David who didn't have the opportunity to express faith in Christ, yet whom the Bible assures us are in Heaven. "How can this be," Reinken asks? A flurry of suggestions follow, with multiple students calling out that Moses and David had faith in the promised Messiah, until Reinken laughs and reminds the class to answer one at a time.

While a scene like this might not seem unusual for a college class, it isn't the level of engagement one typically expects from high schoolers. But Reinken says his students are eager to engage weighty questions about their faith. That includes questions even some pastors shy away from discussing.

"When it comes to current events stuff like abortion and marriage," says Reinken, "sometimes I have to go, 'Guys, settle down, we're gonna get there, I promise. I know that these conversations are crucial. But we need to lay the foundation of the reasoning first.'" Reinken says that while past generations could take broad agreement on the most fundamental issues of life for granted, Christian teens today know they'll have to defend their Bible-based views, so they're enthusiastic about learning to do it persuasively.



*Seniors meet with Mr. Jim Zangmeister for Advanced Apologetics where they discuss current issues college students will face.*

Hampton agrees. "I started the class thinking every topic was going to have an easy answer," he says. "Like it was just going to be, 'This is true because the Bible says so.' And while that's right, Mr. Reinken makes us look at these questions from

the angle of people who don't already believe what God says. You have to be able to come to a conclusion, defend that conclusion, and be able to explain clearly why you believe what you believe. So it's been really interesting going through all the evidence and then the counterarguments and just fleshing the logic out."

Like Hampton, eleventh-grader Micayla Cocchi was surprised at how rigorous the class turned out to be. "I thought it would be so much easier," she admits with a chuckle, "but it turns out learning how to defend your faith can be complicated! You're not only going deeper into *why* you can believe the Bible, but you're also considering how to turn that belief into strong arguments so you don't just end up drifting over time toward whatever opinion is popular."

Reinken says this is the ultimate goal of both his class and the Advanced Apologetics class: to teach the students to think critically about all areas of life based on the only source of objective truth—the Bible.

*'You're not only going deeper into why you can believe the Bible, but you're also considering how to turn that belief into strong arguments so you don't just end up drifting over time toward whatever opinion is popular.'—Micayla Cocchi*

"All the things that might affect their faith or bring up doubts, we want to explore them and help them understand the biblical responses and encourage them to believe those biblical responses," he explains. "But we also want to let them know, it's okay to ask questions and have doubts. God is big enough to handle doubts. The important thing is what you do with the doubts, whether you're examining them in the light of Scripture. It's largely about teaching [the students] how to get to the water so they can drink."

## A Spirit of Service

Service hours have become a common requirement among modern schools, both public and private. Guidance counselors often stress it as a selling point for colleges, leading teens and parents to view it as just another box to check off application to-do lists. But Christ calls his followers to a much higher purpose. Arborbrook's aim with missions, whether in a foreign country or in our own backyard, is to make sure students understand that, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Junior Seminar teacher Missy Trent puts it this way: "We want the students at Arborbrook to know that we don't care what other schools are doing. We don't care what colleges think. We are doing this because we, as believers, are *called* to do this. Our mission is to make sure the students understand the reason we require them to serve, and that's to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

Along with responding to ministry needs throughout the year, this March Arborbrook high schoolers had the opportunity to spend a week devoting their time and talents to either a local campaign they named "Love Boldly" or to a mission trip to Guatemala.

### Love Boldly

Part of making sure the students take ownership of their service means letting them take an active role at all stages. Trent says that while she's the facilitator for Love Boldly, students are the true driving force. They not only came up with the name and logo and handled social media promotion, they also chose the ministries and worked with them to match students' skills to ministry needs. From planning crafts, games, and other activities with needy children to helping struggling men and women at local shelters work

out transportation to apply for jobs and aid, students were able to see the impact of love in action.

“I love who we partner with,” says Trent, “because they’re all organizations that come alongside people rather than just hand out stuff. They address the why behind the pain and allow our students to share the Gospel with the people they’re serving. So it truly is a week of missions, not just service.” This was exactly what senior Madison McCarter experienced at Charlotte Rescue Mission, where she met with men and

women struggling with addictions. “It really left me with this new humility that these were people just like me who sometimes ended up in unfortunate situations because they weren’t raised by good parents, weren’t introduced to Jesus at an early age, and just didn’t have some of the advantages I’ve had.” She goes on, “I mean, it wasn’t like a movie or something; nothing miraculous happened. But those small conversations where I was able to talk about the Gospel while learning about their backgrounds changed my view and made me realize that giving my time can change

someone’s life.”

Trent says this desire to carry on serving after the week has ended is the rule rather than the exception. “Here it is two months later and I had 15 students go back to Union County Shelter last week just to help stock food,” she says. “I’ve had students go back to tutor. Recently I had another student go back to Harvest Center to babysit at night so parents can go to classes so they can get a diploma and then a job. These are practical things that show God’s love.” She adds with a laugh, “boldly.”

*‘We don’t care what  
other schools are doing.  
We don’t care what  
colleges think.  
We are doing this  
because we, as believers,  
are called to do this.’  
—Missy Trent*



*“Therefore, as we have opportunity let us do good to all.”*

## Guatemala

One of the pitfalls of short-term international missions is that if believers aren’t intentional, it can function more as tourism. At Arborbrook, we want our students to have fun with educational and cultural experiences like climbing a volcano or taking a traditional Guatemalan cooking class. However, our highest commitment is to see them serve sacrificially in a way that has lasting spiritual and material impact on the local community.

As a recent Gospel Coalition article argued, carrying out short-term missions effectively means, “[working] primarily through local churches with a long view in mind...the desire should be to serve at the request of and under local church leadership.”

To that end, for our trip to the village of Santa Maria de Jesus in Guatemala, Arborbrook partnered with Catalyst Resources International, an organization that works alongside Guatemalan pastors, churches, and ministries. “They are the in-country contact,” explains Arborbrook Spanish teacher and Worship Director Chad Meers.

Meers spent five years living and doing ministry in Guatemala, an experience he feels specially prepared him to lead the team of 33 students and six adult chaperones. “What we were really doing,” he says, “was giving support to the on-going work Catalyst was already accomplishing on the ground.”

Along with building four houses, that support included teaching around 100 local children, ages ranging from three to 14, about the love of Jesus through a VBS-style



program developed and executed entirely by the students. To develop the curriculum, students broke up into groups of five or six, with each group planning a day's worth of activities. "They would choose a passage of Scripture, plan a theme that often included a testimony, and do all the teaching," says Meers. "They had complete ownership of it."

While many students cited working with the children as their favorite part of the trip, senior Madalyn Thompson's standout experiences included assisting with a local ministry to the elderly and shadowing at a soup kitchen. "I loved getting the fresh perspective of what God's doing in other countries and how he's using and equipping people there," Thompson says. "I got to understand the ways daily service happens in Guatemala. It helped me know how to better support them once we got home."

One way Thompson and other Arborbrook high schoolers have continued to support the people of Santa Maria de

Jesus is by selling t-shirts to raise money for Mimi's House—Catalyst's housing facility that also provides food, clothing, medical care, and bilingual Christian education to local children.

"It was just amazing," says Thompson, "to see God's provision for these Guatemalan ministries that have so little money to run on and to know that we're now part of that provision."

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*'What we're really doing is supporting the on-going work Catalyst is already accomplishing on the ground.'*

*—Chad Meers*

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## Arborbrook Athletics Take Flight

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It was a banner year for Arborbrook sports, both figuratively and literally. Not only did the Falcons claim conference titles for all five of their varsity teams, the boys soccer team and the girls volleyball team both won their conference tournaments as well.

But don't think that just because the various seasons have ended the training has gone on hiatus. Athletic Director Scott Tyson says coaches work to develop the students on and off the field over the summer as well. While the rest of us are lounging by the pool, the Falcon boys will be training in basketball, soccer, and cross country and the Falcon girls will be getting ready to compete in basketball, soccer, volleyball, and cross country.

All that extra work is reaping tangible rewards. For the second year in a row, student athletes earned college scholarships. Ryan Norman will be playing basketball at Bridgewater College in Bridgewater, Virginia, while Christie Zawacki signed to crash the boards for Coker College down the road in Hartsville, South Carolina.

As graduating seniors, both Christie Zawacki and her towering twin Anna give plenty of credit for their success to basketball coach Brian Morris. Anna says, "He's so good about prioritizing our workouts.

We work really hard. And then he gives us workouts at home!" Asked if they were really going to miss those tough workouts, they laugh in unison, "Yesss!" "Believe it or not!" Anna adds. "In fact," Christie says a little wistfully, "now that





*“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”*

they’re almost at an end, I’m even feeling a little sad. I’m definitely going to miss them.”

The sports program at Arborbrook first took flight in 2007, and while it’s covered impressive ground over the last decade-plus, Tyson says it’s especially soared over the last couple of years. However, he stresses that while he’s the first to own up to a

competitive nature, what Arborbrook coaches are really trying to build is something far more lasting than impressive athletes and winning seasons. Their first priority is modeling Christian ethics on the field, court, and track.

“The world watches to see how you act when you compete,” Tyson says. “To a lot of people watching, we rep-

resent God’s people. So though we’re winning now, whether winning or losing, we’re trying to be good sportsmen. We’re striving to be the type of team other teams want to play.”

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## Dual Enrollment

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### M a k i n g   t h e   M o s t   o f   T i m e

Most parents are familiar with Advancement Placement (AP) classes which allow high school students to take college-level curriculum. However, not all AP classes qualify for college credit, and unless the student receives high scores on additional tests, they may never see any benefit beyond their high school years.

Dual enrollment (DE), on the other hand, isn’t merely college-level coursework in a high school class. It is a college class that qualifies for both high school and college credit at the same time. And it’s taught by Arborbrook’s teachers on Arborbrook’s campus. What this means is that the credits are guaranteed—they already meet university requirements and no additional testing is needed for students to receive them.

Last year Arborbrook began offering DE classes to juniors and seniors on its regular campus, during regular school hours. The program began with eight DE classes, including common general education requirements like Psychology, Spanish, and English, among others. In the 2019-2020 school year those options will expand to an additional three classes in history and science.

“So basically,” says Head of School Dr. Andy Zawacki, “graduating Arborbrook seniors could actually walk out of here with upwards of 25 to 30 credits if they wanted to.”

#### ***The Obvious Benefits***

Some of the benefits of dual enrollment are immediately clear, not least of which is saving students time and money.

As the nationwide student-debt crisis of \$1.5 trillion (and growing) continues to dominate the headlines, options like DE could increasingly offer creative, cost-effective solutions. Zawacki puts it this way: “If you can save a semester or year’s worth of tuition, that’s thousands of dollars, potentially tens of thousands of dollars. And believe me, I know,” he adds with a laugh, “because I have three headed that way.”

DE also offers students flexibility with how to spend their time savings. While many will take the much-publicized path of using DE credits to graduate from college sooner than usual, it could also provide recent high school graduates some freedom to spend a gap year on a personal passion like missions or on an intensive internship that supports their long-term career goals. It could even, given the rising cost of higher education, simply allow a young person an easier path to take time off to work and save money until they are ready to pursue their degree.

### ***The Not-So Obvious Benefits***

However, some DE advantages aren’t so immediately apparent.

Beyond earning college credits while still in high school, recent studies have shown that juniors and seniors who participate in DE programs are better prepared for college coursework and more likely to complete their degree.

Summarizing five recent studies conducted by the Department of Education, *Marketwatch* wrote on June 2, “There are clear benefits to providing high-school students with the opportunity to take college courses. Students who take these classes are more likely to attend and persist in college.”

Another benefit that could easily go overlooked is that DE can help a student discover what subject matter they especially enjoy (or definitely don’t) before they leave for college. This early experience could prevent them from wasting time in expensive college classes that turn out to hold little academic interest for them.

Say an Arborbrook senior initially has dreams of pursuing law but then finds himself particularly engaged by his DE anatomy class. That student may decide to start looking at colleges that offer stronger pre-med programs instead. Es-

entially, taking college-level courses in high school can help students learn what subjects they’re naturally gifted for and provide them greater wisdom in choosing a major.

Perhaps most importantly, DE classes give Arborbrook educators a few final opportunities to inculcate a Christian worldview in their students in areas most in need of godly teaching.

Zawacki points out that it’s actually an upside that Arborbrook partners with a secular institution—Ocean County College—to administer its DE program. Because students are learning secular curriculum from Christian faculty, they’re in a unique position to confront some of the ideologies they’ll face on college campuses in a far less isolating environment.

“I actually teach a sociology class,” says Zawacki. “And I took sociology in college. But it’s very different taking it today. There’s a whole unit on gender and sexuality. As the parent of college-age students, I can tell you what secular professors are teaching. And I know the truth that I’m able to emphasize while *I’m* teaching.”

As example Zawacki points to the fact that nearly every sociology class in a public higher learning institution today (not to mention many private religious colleges) frame gender and sexuality as social constructs. “We have the opportunity to test that outlook and talk about it from a Christian perspective,” he says, “to talk about what role faith plays in your identity and your sexuality.”

Zawacki contends that no one in a Western culture can avoid engaging with these topics any longer, and we can view it as a blessing that DE provides space to prepare the next generation of Christian college students better than those that came before them.

***Recent studies have shown that students who participate in dual-enrollment programs are better prepared for college coursework and more likely to complete their degree programs.***

# Alumni Spotlight

**Daniel Zangmeister**

Class of 2012

Arborbrook's first graduating class was only a handful of years ago in 2011. Yet for such a young school, we are blessed to already see our alumni having a great impact on their communities and in their professions. One of them is 24-year-old Daniel Zangmeister.

After leaving Arborbrook in 2012, Zangmeister went on to graduate with a degree in biochemistry from Elon University. He now works for Discovery Life Sciences in Columbus, Ohio, a firm that performs contracted genomic research, disease diagnostics, and biospecimen analysis. "Basically we research diseases to look for therapies and stuff like that. It's biochemistry adjacent." Zangmeister laughs.

***To start with something simple, what do you do for Discovery Life Sciences?***

I'm a critical affairs manager. I work with a network of hospitals. We have 180 different hospitals, and I work with 15 of them from all across the country and manage their relationship to the company.

***That sounds like a pretty good job for a guy your age.***

It's definitely fun. Keeps me on my toes!

***Tell us about your time at Arborbrook.***

I was in the second graduating class, and I went there from fifth grade on with some of the founding families. I got to help paint the school before it opened and everything like that. It was just a wonderful experience for me. We'd moved from Columbus, Ohio, and the school really became a family.

***How about your high school experience? What was that like?***

It didn't feel like a traditional high school that's for sure. There was no herding students through hallways. It was very alive. The teachers were passionate about their subjects and thrilled to teach them. Plus, they really prioritized relationship with the students. The experiential learning of the Charlotte Mason philosophy—it really made the work we had to do have a place to sit in real life.

***So did you feel like your educational background gave you any advantages?***

Oh definitely. One, while a lot of public schools around the country do a fine job educating students, the focus a lot of times is, "What's going to be on the test? What's going to be on the



accreditation?" I felt like I had more ownership in my education, between doing service work, field trips, and going to museums and the theater—all of that. So going into college I felt like I had a really strong sense of what I wanted to get out of it.

***We've heard a lot about professors and college culture in general trying to undermine Christian faith. Was that your experience at Elon and how did you handle it?***

Elon was pretty thoroughly anti-Christian, and there weren't a lot of Christian groups on campus that preached the gospel or engaged in any real spiritual practice. I tried a few and it was the kind where you go and talk about your feelings for an hour, and then get drunk afterwards. I wasn't into that. But even without a solid campus group, coming from Arborbrook, I never felt worried about my



faith. I never felt my foundation was rocked.

That said, naturally, growing up in such a small school, I was a little nervous at first. It's a tight-knit environment. I wasn't sure what I was going to face at a private liberal arts school with people from all over the country. That's part of why I did a first year gap semester program. It felt like Arborbrook. It was a small group of students and we did a lot of that experiential learning, hands-on stuff in Costa Rica. It also felt like I was building something. That program was a first for Elon, so I was part of the founding of that class as well. That's been a trend I've continued with—being on the

front end of building things. Even in the company I work for now. I think that all started with Arborbrook.

We had some incredible Bible teachers like Jim Hughes and others. Scott Tyson who was also my basketball teacher was formative. I did worship band with Jerry Temper, another amazing influence. All that was really amazing for my faith. So later, in college, when I was thrust into new situations, I just had a sense of stability that came from that environment at Arborbrook. There was never any sense of questioning what was true and what was not. It was just making sense of what was going on around me in light of my faith.

### ***Do you find your years at Arborbrook still impact you today?***

They definitely do. At work, I'm surrounded by a bunch of people of different faiths and beliefs, including atheism and agnosticism. Some of my closest friends are Muslim, and I've had some great conversations with them. It was really helpful to go through the worldview courses at Arborbrook, because none of the beliefs come as a shock. Because it wasn't taught in such a way that you were afraid of other religions or afraid of talking about other religions. Instead, I developed a hunger for knowledge and conversation from those courses that has carried through to my job now.

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## **Lower School History Fair**

If you wanted to learn how to *walk* like an Egyptian, you might have been disappointed to discover they pretty much walk like everyone else. But if you were curious what the tombed Tuts of the 14th century B.C. believed about the afterlife or what kinds of food they ate, some costumed fourth graders were happy to satisfy your curiosity. Students and family mem-



bers touring Mrs. Brandsen's and Mrs. Rhoades' classrooms learned not only that the Nile river dwellers were carboholics who loved bread and beer, they got a taste of the treats that satisfied the ancient sweet tooth as well.

### ***Firing the Imagination on all Fronts***

The purpose of the history fair isn't to play dress up in the duds of the past (though that's certainly a lot of fun). It's to place the burden of learning squarely on the students' shoulders. As Charlotte Mason fervently believed, sitting and listening to a teacher talk has little power to inspire a love of history. What does is *inhabiting* the world of history as much as possible.

From first to eighth grade, students read up on their topics through a variety of sources then synthesize the information into written reports. As plenty of readers will probably recall from their own school

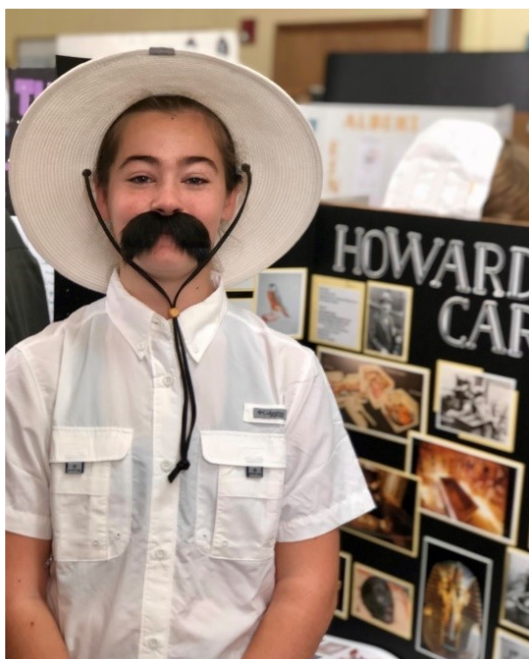
days, that's where most history projects end. But Arbrobrook students go further. They then practice speaking about their subjects extemporaneously (and here's where the inhabiting part really comes in) in the guise of specific historical figures with visual aids they create themselves.

At last all those weeks of hard work pay off—the fair where the past not only comes alive, it walks and talks.

## *Learning that Lasts*

By spending weeks getting to know a historical figure and imagining that person through an interactive presentation where they answer questions in character, students' learning becomes lasting. Third grade teacher Karla Dimmette explained it this way: "What we do is so much more than the typical copying information from a Google search in order to hand in a paper. This event really lets [the children] go in depth. They study that character. They become them."

Sixth grader Ella Jones, who embodied Montana paleontologist Jack Horner, could still recite her presentation three months later. "Seeing people all dressed up in costumes really makes you feel like you're living in the time period," she said. "You're involved in-depth with the history. You're staring at it, and it feels like it's happening in front of your eyes."



Fellow sixth grader Jacob Lane felt dressing up in costume allowed him to understand the mindset of the time period his character lived in. "I wore a top gun flight suit," said Jacob, "and when I put it on, I just wanted to learn more about this guy. It helped me focus like tunnel vision on that project. It just helps me understand how they lived, and how they thought."

The passion for history that the fair inspires lasts long after the students tote their costumes and visual aids home. Sixth grader Lili Carroll became so committed to learning about her historical figure, archeologist Howard Carter, and his discovery of King Tut's Tomb, her parents decided to take her family on a trip to Africa this summer to explore the area. Lili's teacher, Mrs. Noble, couldn't have been more pleased to hear about the trip. She exclaimed about the connection the fair makes with the students, "I love the passion these guys have for their characters. It makes me feel so proud when I see how it sparks their love of learning. That's the kind of education that stays with them in their adult years."

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## *Introducing* LOWER SCHOOL DEVOTIONS

A bedrock principle of the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy is that to be truly worthwhile, all learning must be built on an understanding of the Giver of knowledge. As Mason put it, "We hold that all education is divine, that every good gift of knowledge and insight comes from above."

Because of this, starting the day with a time of Bible learning and worship has always been a priority for Arbrobrook. In the past, that has been primarily accomplished in morning assembly. This year, however, Kindergarten through 6th grade teachers experimented with a new approach. Instead of corporate worship with the entire lower school,

teachers experimented with a new approach. Instead of corporate worship with the entire lower school, two days per week they used that time for classroom devotions. Both students and teachers were enthusiastic about how the new, smaller-group setting supplemented their experiences in assembly.

## ***Flexibility to Dig Deeper***

Because the goal for devotions was to give younger students an opportunity to dig deeper into the Bible in personal ways, teachers were free to use the time in ways that best addressed their class's needs. For some teachers, that meant fostering a sharing time where students could praise God for positive things or seek advice and prayer on applying Scripture to their problems in a practical way. Other teachers used the time to further explore the assembly teaching on "One Anothers," encouraging students to discuss ways to practice principles like "live in harmony with one another" or "bear one another's burdens" in their daily lives.

Fourth grade teacher Diane Rhoades said being able to tailor her approach was especially helpful in explaining to the children how God's Word applies to the habits she's been working to build in them. "We started something new this year called 'the habit evaluation,'" she explains. "One day a week we would talk about our 'One Anothers' and the other day we would talk about a habit like self-control—what self-control means, how we see the habit of self-control reflected in Scripture, and steps we can take to create self-control in our lives."

Rhoades says it was especially helpful to be able to draw on devotion time when the children struggled to master a habit or when conflict arose between students that application of a habit could solve. She was able to point them back to the Bible as the foundation for the habits they were working on. "I think that getting a chance to talk about what we were learning helped the children internalize it, because they had to process it in their own words rather than just listen," she says.

Third grade teacher Karla Dimmette took a different ap-

proach to her slightly younger students. "For my class it was a more traditional Bible study time," she says. "I followed a Billy Graham devotional and would read the verse highlighted that day and his commentary. Then, we would

discuss as a class what it meant in their life."

Dimmette says that devotion time had the added benefit of making assembly time more valuable to her students: "I think when we went to assembly every day, it became common place and not as special as it should be. Changing things up made them appreciate worshipping with the whole school and enjoy that time just as a class to discuss things all the more."

## ***Growing in Grace and Knowledge***

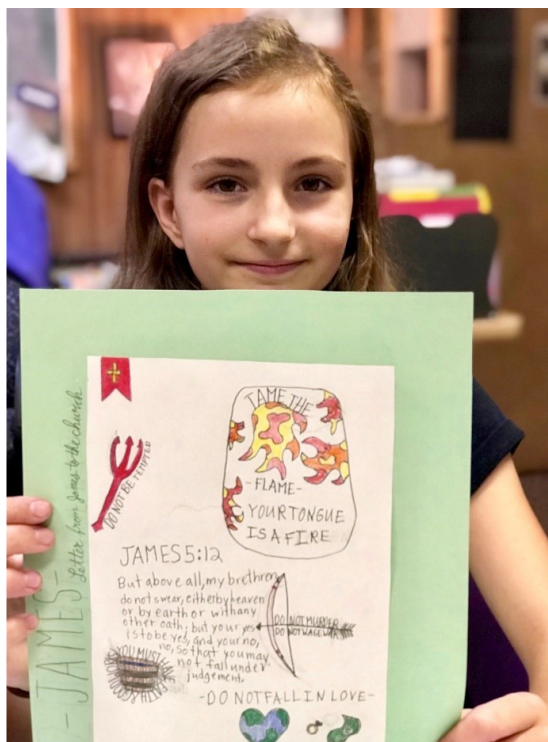
Ask the students to describe their feelings on the new devotional time, and you'll get some variation

(albeit sometimes in the sweet, unstudied phrasing of elementary-age children) of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

Sixth grader Macie Mumpower describes the green folders in which her class jotted personal reactions on verses in James. "It was great to be able to write our thoughts down along with the verses," she says, "because then I could go back and read over them a lot and think about them and study them. It helped me get a lot closer to Jesus." Mumpower's classmate Mia Hepler was a fan of an approach called One-Pagers: "We would write and draw different pictures on one page to go with the verses like how you must have faith *and* works and how our tongue is like fire, and we can't tame it. It was a fun way to reflect on that."

But perhaps no student summed up their favorite thing about devotions better than fourth grader Taylor Knight. "We got to talk about and read Scripture in class without having a test or homework or anything. That was great!"

What's seems clear in every answer is that both assembly and class devotion time are training Arborbrook lower-schoolers up in lessons they won't easily depart from when they're older. ■





# Arborbrook CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



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