



Providence Hybrid Academy

Prospective Teacher Overview

A note from Rebecca and Angie on the origins of PHA: This program is the product of desiring a new school choice. We don't like that traditional schools focus so much on close-ended and standardized learning (spurred on by testing), especially at such young ages, often creating developmentally inappropriate practices. We know our children are active and don't learn best/can't sit in a seat for five-six hours a day (plus homework at home!). The research is strong and convincing that shows that children learn through play and movement. Private school, in addition to being costly, doesn't necessarily address these concerns, either. We (and others we know) turn to homeschooling as an answer to many of these concerns but feel intimidated by certain aspects of full-time homeschooling. This hybrid program (two days in a school setting and three days at home) is our answer to all of the above concerns! Our motto is: Honoring God, family, childhood. We would love for you to read through this information and consider the possibility of supporting these families and being part of educating our children, mind, body, and spirit.

Please look through our prospective teacher packet to get a sense of our approach and philosophy, what we are looking for in our teachers, and what we are offering our teachers. If you are interested, please apply on our website.

A. Mission and Vision Statements of PHA

B. Overview of Philosophy

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3. Love and Logic management philosophy
4. The great outdoors

C. Current Schedule

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If you would like to talk more with us about our program or apply for a teaching position, please contact us at:

admin@providencehybridacademy.org

Providence Hybrid Academy:
Honoring God, Family, Childhood

Mission Statement:

We are a hybrid learning program that integrates the benefits of classroom learning with the independence of schooling at home. Our approach prioritizes social development through free play, creativity through the arts, and developmentally appropriate academics enhanced by the camaraderie of group learning.

Vision:

Our vision is a part-time hybrid homeschool program that covers a full range of subjects for kindergarten through 6th grade (for 2019-2020) with teachers teaching two full days per week and assigning work to be done on home days. The curriculum and schedule will be inspired by the British educator, Charlotte Mason, and will prioritize ample time for free play, time outdoors, and creativity as well as academic rigor.

Charlotte Mason

Charlotte Mason was a 19th century British educator whose work is popular in many homeschool circles. We use much of her educational philosophy as the guiding principles for beliefs about how children learn, our schedule, and our curricula.

Mason, a Christian, saw the world from a Biblical perspective, and that transferred into her educational approach. Underlying the academic disciplines is a belief that all good things and all Truth to be found in all subjects, from art to history to math, is put there by a Creator God who desires relationship with people and who gives delightful Truths to be discovered by each child uniquely so that they may gain knowledge of Him. A Christian worldview is integral to her method of education but is not pushed or preached, moralizing is not emphasized, but absolute Truth and a Creator God are integrated and natural. She was also a proponent of parent involvement in education and lead parent trainings.

One of the beliefs of Mason's view of children is that they are born persons. That means that children are not blank slates to be written on by adults but rather are born as their own unique selves and with the ability to learn. Have you ever noticed how curious children are? Mason noticed this, too, and this belief that children have all the faculties they need to learn determines how we teach them. She trained students in the habit of attention in order to sharpen their abilities to observe and absorb. Children don't need us to spoon feed them or make connections for them. Instead, it is our job to present them with things and ideas worth studying, and students will learn it and make the knowledge their own.

A Charlotte Mason education falls into three categories: Knowledge of God, Knowledge of Man, and Knowledge of the Universe. Knowledge of God is paramount and from Him comes all knowledge; for that reason, Mason started each school day with study of the Bible. Without knowing God, all other knowledge is futile. Knowledge of Man encompasses the humanities: history, geography, reading, writing, literature, poetry, foreign languages, art, and music. Knowledge of the Universe includes math, science, and nature study. As you can see, Mason believed in offering a broad curriculum to her students. She wrote, "An observant child should be put in the way of things worth observing."

Several methods are unique to a Charlotte Mason education. Mason believed children learned best from ideas and experiences with hands-on learning. The best way to present children with worthwhile ideas is through "living books," books that tell a story and that are well written by someone with a passion for his/her subject. Contrast a living book with a dry science or history textbook that merely details facts. Instead, living books spark children's imaginations through interesting stories that beg to be remembered and retold.

The way Charlotte Mason believed real learning takes place is, after students have been presented with ideas, stories, or hands-on experiences, students "narrate" what they have heard or observed or experienced. Narration is when students "tell back" the story as they have heard it and internalized it. Each child's narration is as unique as each child because each listener or observer notices something special to him or her. Charlotte

Mason's students narrated almost all of their subjects, even math lessons, because narrating is the way the knowledge is cemented in the child's brain. As you can see, this method is quite different from the practices of mainstream education of closed-ended questions which encompass learning only what someone else thinks is valuable from a reading.

As children are exposed to and absorb engaging ideas and experiences, they are then able to make connections between the materials they learn, which is what Charlotte Mason termed "the science of relations." Because she believed students were capable of drawing connections between the lives, stories, and ideas of the people and events the students learn about, she stayed away from thematic units and spoon-feeding these connections to her students. Any homeschooling mother/teacher will tell you that some of their most meaningful moments in education come when students make these connections between subjects and ideas for themselves, and in a Charlotte Mason education, students have ample opportunities to make such connections because of the "feast" of subjects and ideas with which students are presented.

Another hallmark of the Charlotte Mason approach is that she taught her students with short lessons appropriate to their attention span. Because she emphasized good habits, she wanted her students to develop the habit of attention for a full lesson and stopped lessons before children had a chance to daydream or lose focus. Therefore, for first-third grade students, most lessons were around 15-20 minutes long. She felt that consistent, short lessons were far more effective than long, cumbersome lessons. This can be so helpful to both the child, who knows the lesson will be manageable, and the homeschooling mother, since lessons aren't drug out; Mason encourages us to end a lesson before a child gets frustrated or stops paying attention.

A unique component of Mason's educational approach is nature study and time spent outdoors. Mason valued the study of nature not only because it is the building block for later science studies but also because in studying nature, students learn about how connected and related nature is—each aspect of nature is affected by another aspect and is part of a whole. She also wanted students to have free time outdoors to play and move their bodies; she realized at the turn of the 19th century what many researchers are now decrying, that there are significant physical, mental, and emotional benefits to being outside.

How Does a Charlotte Mason Approach Make Our Program Different?

Because we use a Charlotte Mason philosophy to shape our program, you will notice a number of differences between our approach and that of traditional educational programs. First and foremost, Mason's view of the child and learning is rooted in knowledge of God and His truths, whereas many modern philosophies stem from a secular or atheistic viewpoint. For Mason, knowledge of God included knowing His universe and His creation, so her students studied poems, hymns, the arts, handcrafts, physical education, history, geography, literature, and nature as well as reading, writing, and math. She compared a quality education to a feast for the mind and emphasized all

subjects as equally important. Therefore, on our school days, we have included as many of these subjects as we can and keep lesson lengths the same for all subjects so that no subject is emphasized over others. All of our classes for kindergarten through 3rd grade are about 20-25 minutes long in keeping with the Mason philosophy of short lessons to encourage good attention. Our upper elementary students are ready for 30-40 minute lessons.

Charlotte Mason believed children should be outdoors for hours a day, even in rainy weather, so that they may explore, play, shout, run, and jump! We are also committed to taking our students outdoors every day in all weather (excepting dangerous conditions!). Of course, time outdoors also lends itself to nature study, which is an integral part of a Mason education, and we, too, include weekly nature and field study for our students.

You'll also notice a difference in the type of books we use for our studies. We only use living books for history, science, literature, and artist/composer study. We find students really engage with and internalize the ideas presented in these types of books. They often even incorporate a person, event, or idea they read about into their play!

For more information of Charlotte Mason, visit:
Simplycharlottemason.com or Google Charlotte Mason

Charlotte Mason: Developmentally Appropriate Education

There is a lot of information being written these days on what a developmentally appropriate education looks like. As we began this hybrid program, we knew that we wanted an educational approach that honored the way children develop and learn. Though Charlotte Mason lived over a hundred years ago, we find her method incorporates so many developmentally appropriate practices, and we include as many of these in our schedule and planning as we can.

- Charlotte Mason believed in plenty of play time for young children, especially in kindergarten. We have included an hour of outdoor play a day and our kindergartners get additional indoor playtime.
- Miss Mason's varied the type of lesson and the part of the brain/body it uses so that one part of the brain/body didn't get overworked/fatigued. For example, a math lesson may be followed by a history lesson, and a handwriting lesson may follow listening to a story or studying art/music.
- Miss Mason encouraged good habits, especially during lesson time, so she intentionally kept lessons to an amount of time that students could pay their best attention. For 5- and 6-year-olds, lessons are usually just ten or fifteen minutes! As students get older, lesson lengths gradually increase, but even the oldest students do not have lessons over 45 minutes.
- Living books is a term coined by Mason, and these are at the heart of a Charlotte Mason education. Well-written books by an author passionate about his/her subject, living books spark the imagination of children and encourage them to connect with great ideas. We incorporate living books into all our reading-based subjects.
- Even before people began doing research on the benefits of time out of doors (see following section), Mason was an ardent proponent of children spending 4-6 hours outdoors a day! She knew that children needed to be able to move their bodies, breathe fresh air, and experience nature. While we don't have 4 hours a day to spend outdoors with our students, we keep this spirit alive with one hour of outdoor play as well as a field study where students have a chance to explore and observe nature.
- Miss Mason's method uses a slower approach to writing and grammar than what is common in educational cultures these days. Her focus in the first three years of school is to allow students to develop their verbal skills through narration without requiring them to labor over the written word while they are still learning how to articulate their thoughts and ideas. Students are given the best literature to copy as they are learning to write and are also learning to picture the words in their mind. Formal writing,

grammar, and spelling instruction doesn't begin until fourth grade. We follow this approach at PHA by not including lots of writing for students younger than 9 or so.

- Since Miss Mason didn't require students to write tedious amounts, her approach to math uses concrete objects and visualization and is mostly done orally; math lessons in the elementary years aren't bogged down with needing to read/write, so students really are able to focus just on developing their mathematical thinking without having to also figure out how to write it all down. At our school, this is still a work in progress since there is only one true Charlotte Mason math curriculum and it currently only goes to 2nd grade.
- A Charlotte Mason education fosters children's curiosity and desire to learn and explore. She encourages students to make their own observations and answer their own questions, guided by the adult when need be. She presents students with a rich, broad curriculum that points children back to their Lord and Savior and His love, truth and creativity. At our school, we begin the day with Bible, and we offer many subjects from the Charlotte Mason "feast," using living books, narration, and observations to guide our students in their educational journeys.
- An important principle of Miss Mason's approach is that she honors each child's development at his or her own pace rather than according to some preset standard or goal. Assessments aren't used to see what students don't know but rather to celebrate what they do know. Students aren't compared to one another in their progress but rather we celebrate that unique child's progress and accomplishment based on him/herself.

Love and Logic

The Love and Logic approach to working with children is built on a belief that adults are tasked with the responsibility of teaching children what happens if they step outside the limits of how relationships and organizations work. The adult does this not from the viewpoint of a superior person who needs to control the children or even teach them obedience as an end in itself. Rather, the adult leads with a genuine empathy that sees childish misbehavior as an opportunity to teach the child how the world works. At its core, this requires the adult to release the responsibility of controlling the child's behavior, and instead put that responsibility on the child, while the adult acts as a "consultant," through the use of natural consequences while offering abundant opportunities to learn to think for themselves, make better choices, and contribute to the group/family in a meaningful way. Love and Logic encourages children to think for themselves by offering them limited choices within acceptable parameters set by the adult.

An example of how Love and Logic would give choices within limits might be:

"Would you like to sit outside the door or take part in the lesson in your seat?"

The subtle but profound difference between this and "If you are not quiet, you need to come sit here for five minutes!" is that in the first instance, the choice and responsibility for behaving quietly in class rests with the child. He is not being punished for an infraction with an adult-decided punishment, but he is made to understand that the choice to return is with him always. A genuine empathy from the teacher is the result of the adult not owning the child's behavior, but simply outlining how things are going to work and showing a real hope the child will not choose the option with the unhappy consequences.

At its core, the model always seeks to love all children and extend respect and relationship regardless of their behavior. When the adult is able to release the responsibility for the child's behavior to the child, it frees the adult to implement consequences with less anger and frustration.

Another way this plays out is that the adult avoids power struggles by not arguing with the child and instead stating behaviors that they can control, namely their own.

- Instead of "sit down and be quiet!" they might say either, "I will start reading when you are sitting quietly" or, if it is one child's behavior, "I would love to have you sit with us when you are ready to participate quietly. Would you like to do that or do you need a few minutes to think it over by yourself?"

Some other examples of empowering the child toward the goal of building his belief in his own ability to think for himself, work through his own problems, and believe he is a worthwhile and valuable member of the classroom or group involve:

- Setting children up for success: Allow children to choose ways to contribute in meaningful ways proactively (and often with wisdom toward a particular child's

bent), but also this can be very effective in helping them redirect behavior problems. By telling them things like, “When you try to argue with me about doing that task, it really drains a lot of energy from me and the classroom and makes it really difficult for me to teach. Before our next lesson, can you think of a way to help put that energy back in? I can give you some ideas if you can’t think of any.”

The goal is to show the child that he can’t drain everyone with his behavior without a price, but also to give him an opportunity to show how much he can contribute instead and how valuable he actually is.

- Making kids think for themselves: If a child is contributing to a problem (say with another student), rather than punishing them or separating them, an adult might say, “You two seem to be having a hard time working/playing together. I’ll bet you could come up with a really great plan to make sure that doesn’t happen again. You can come over here and talk about it, and when you have a plan, let me know and we’ll see how it works. I can give you some ideas if you need them.”

Again, the goal is to get the child to move toward maturity in their thinking and choosing, rather than relying on an adult to impose their solutions.

Love and Logic adults need to be willing to let kids “pay the price” for mistakes and irresponsibility and sometimes it can be tempting to come in and rescue! However, if the adult remembers that they are doing the child a favor by letting them pay the price now, when the price is pretty small, they are better able to do this. This doesn’t mean there is no room for grace! But it means that, as a general rule, kids might need to “hurt a little” to learn someone won’t be there to save them all the time and that they are responsible for their own choices and the outcomes!

- For instance, a child who doesn’t do required work may get a zero; a child who leaves a toy outside to get wet may lose the toy and have to earn it back; or even a child who forgets his lunch may go hungry or have to do some extra work to purchase a lunch or snack.

The belief behind Love and Logic is that adults are always there, championing a child, loving them, interested in them as people, and fully believing they are capable no matter what their behavior is like. As part of that, the adult is also there to coach the child toward learning how the world works and how to take responsibility for their actions and choices.

To learn more, visit:

www.loveandlogic.com

Benefits of the Great Outdoors

Another area of education that we have given a lot of thought to is education out of doors. This is a natural way to allow students to move, which is vital for their health and wellness, and we find it is a developmentally appropriate practice that is too easily left out of traditional school days. In Waldorf schools, students are required to bring rain suits, boots, gloves, and snow suits as the weather requires, for they are committed to daily outdoor play no matter the weather. Charlotte Mason believed the same thing, they just didn't have rainproof pants in 1900! Not only did she encourage families to take children outdoors to play, but she also incorporated nature study in her curriculum, and we include weekly nature study and field study as well.

There is growing research on the importance of outdoor play as American childhood has "moved indoors" in the past twenty years and more time is spent in front of screens. Much has been written on the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of outdoor play. Both the National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Learning Initiative cite the research that demonstrates all the positive benefits that result from allowing children to play outside, and below is a summary of their research.

As for the physical benefits, children who play outdoors are, in general, more physically active. Statistics show that 1 in 3 American children are obese. Outdoor play increases fitness and physical health. In addition to better overall fitness, time in nature can help improve eyesight. It also causes kids to get more Vitamin D (the sunshine vitamin), which in turn makes for stronger hearts and bones and decreases the risk of diabetes and other diseases.

Some of the mental benefits include that children who have time for unstructured outdoor play demonstrate greater creativity and problem-solving skills. Time in nature increases children's ability to focus as well as their cognitive abilities. Studies show significant gains in all academic domains when students have time to play outside. And with epidemic rates of ADD/ADHD in children, free play outdoors reduces ADD/ADHD symptoms.

Last but certainly not least, there are emotional benefits to being outside. Outdoor play encourages cooperative play. It also enhances peace, self-control, and self-discipline. Lastly, in a society that hyperschedules and hurries childhood, time in nature reduces stress.

If you'd like to read more, the following articles describe more thoroughly the advantages of playing and learning outdoors. Included is a blog post by a Waldorf teacher describing a beautiful experience of children playing in the rain.

Further Reading:

<http://www.nwf.org/what-we-do/kids-and-nature/why-get-kids-outside/health-benefits.aspx>

https://naturalearning.org/sites/default/files/Benefits%20of%20Connecting%20Children%20with%20Nature_InfoSheet.pdf

<https://www.clws.org/parenting-tips/power-of-outdoor-play/>

Tentative Schedule

You'll see that our schedule reflects the above-mentioned principles by allowing for ample time for free play and time outdoors as well as including a rich, liberal arts curriculum. We may make changes to this schedule for next year. We also value teacher input as the school year is underway and can make adjustments that benefit the students.

	Kindergarten	1st	2nd and 3rd
9:30-10:00	Morning Time (Bible, Hymn, Scripture, poetry, Spanish)	Morning Time (Bible, Hymn, Scripture, poetry)	Morning Time (Bible, Hymn, Scripture memory, poetry)
10:00-10:10	Handwriting	Handwriting	Copywork
10:10-10:30	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:30-10:55	Reading	Reading	Reading
10:55-11:20	Math	Math	Math
11:20-11:45	Play	History	History
11:45-12:10	Recess	Spelling	Spelling
12:10-12:35	Thurs.: History Fri: Music Art/	Recess	Recess
12:35-1:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1-1:30 (30 minutes)	Read Aloud	Thurs: art/music study Spanish	Thurs: Spanish art/music study
1:30-2:00 (30 minutes)	Rest/Play	Fri: The arts Field Study	Fri: The arts Nature Study
2-2:30 (30 minutes)	Nature Study	Nature Study	Field Study

2:30-3:00	Field Study	Geography	Geography
3:00-3:30	Pack up Recess in good weather or indoor movement in bad weather	Pack up Recess in good weather or indoor movement in bad weather	Pack up Recess in good weather or indoor movement in bad weather

Salary and Hours

School Year	We have a 33-week school year with one week off in between terms and time off at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.
Schedule	Contractual day is 8:30-3:45 with 45 minutes prep in the morning and 30 minutes additional prep during the day.
Salary	\$360 per week
Location	(Moving this summer to): St. Paul's Blue Church, Coopersburg, PA
Other	Details such as sick days, faculty meetings, and teacher training will be written into the contract.

Statement of Faith

Below is the Statement of Faith adopted by PHA. It is important to us that our teachers have a personal relationship with Jesus so that they can encourage our students, too, to know and have faith in their Heavenly Father. We do require that our teachers sign and uphold this statement. Our families are required to read and support our statement of faith but do not have to sign agreement because we desire opportunities to be missional in our program.

PHA is non-denominational, which means that we ask our teachers to treat various doctrinal and denominational views with honor and respect and to present their own views as opinions. In the interest of promoting an environment where fear is never a motivator, the Spirit is trusted to bring to Truth, and adults and children alike are always learning and discussing, we certainly encourage discussion of the various views. If you have questions about what this may apply to, please let us know.

1. We believe the Bible is the inspired infallible Word of God.
2. We believe there is only one God, eternally existent in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe Jesus was fully God and fully man. He died and rose physically for the redemption of all who will believe.
4. We believe Jesus is the only Way and Provision for redemption.
5. We believe God, the Creator, is a loving and compassionate God who hears prayer, speaks through His Holy Spirit, and intervenes for His people throughout history and still today.
6. We believe the God of the Bible created the Earth and that humans are made in His image with a Body, Soul, and Spirit.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.