

# THE LION LINE

Learn the True, Do the Good, Love the Beautiful

## Upcoming Dates

- April 3rd: Fair Day, No School
- April 10th: Good Friday, No School

## Calling All Scholars

Even though we aren't physically in the building, we'll still begin our day by saying the Pledge of Allegiance, but we need your help. Record a video of yourself saying the Pledge for a chance to be highlighted on the Academy's Facebook page. A new video will post daily at 9 a.m. Here are a few guidelines:

- Proudly represent SJCA by looking your best in your formal uniform. Remember to groom your hair, too.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Be sure to recite our motto.
- Have your other SJCA siblings join in.
- Email your video to: [jamie.moudy@stjca.org](mailto:jamie.moudy@stjca.org).
- Videos are being accepted immediately.

## Worth the Wait

*Getting to Know Mr. Johnson: An Interview with SJCA's New Headmaster*

By now, you've probably heard the terrific news; St. Johns Classical Academy hired a Headmaster. Please join the faculty, staff, administration, and board in welcoming Mr. Daniel "Matt" Johnson to the Academy. We are delighted to have him. Until the end of the this school year, Headmaster Johnson will serve SJCA on a consultative basis; he becomes full-time on June 8th. We recently had the opportunity to interview Headmaster Johnson so families and scholars can learn a bit more about him— beyond the press release that was published last week.

**SJCA:** Tell us a little about yourself and your family.

**Headmaster Johnson:** I attended Florida State University as a political science major, thinking I would attend law school someday. Since I was paying for my own education, I decided to work for a couple of years and had a desire to teach, so I became a social studies education major as well. I taught history and geography for six years, during which time I earned a Master's of Science degree in Educational Administration and Leadership. I served as the Dean of Students for a year and then went active duty in the military for 21 years.

My wife, Dawn, and I have three children; Mackenzie graduated from Liberty University last year and is working in the university's accounting department, Madeline will graduate next year with a degree in music education, and Grant will graduate from Clay

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High School this year and then attend the United States Military Academy at West Point this summer. Dawn and I homeschooled Mackenzie and Madeline through graduation and homeschooled Grant through ninth grade. I believe in school choice for parents, and I believe SJCA is an excellent educational option.

**SJCA:** What is your favorite subject, and why is it your favorite?

**Headmaster Johnson:** I love history. I am a prolific reader of historical works. I believe I fell in love with history because of my sixth grader history teacher, who made it very interesting.

**SJCA:** Who is your historical hero?

**Headmaster Johnson:** George Washington for sure. He did an amazing thing for our nation by simply being a man of utmost integrity, always putting the good of the nation before his own desires.

**SJCA:** What will you do to carry-out the BCSI mission at St. Johns Classical Academy?

**Headmaster Johnson:** SJCA is a classical education school. We must always strive to adhere to the pure classical curriculum as set forth by the Barney Charter School Initiative. Everything we do must be tied to our school mission, which is to provide a classical education to our scholars. I am committed to that mission.

**SJCA:** What is your proudest moment?

**Headmaster Johnson:** I am thankful for the opportunity to help start SJCA as a founding board member, and I am very proud of where the school is today. I am thankful for my three kids and how they have grown and developed with character and virtue. I am proud of my soldiers and their dedication to accomplishing the mission when we served in Iraq. So, I have many *proudest* moments.

**SJCA:** Now for some personal interest questions. What is your favorite sports team? What do you like to do in your spare time? What is your favorite book, movie, and music genre?

**Headmaster Johnson:** I am a Seminole fan and a Jaguar fan. I like to camp, hike, bike, swim, read, and go to the beach in my spare time. I really like many types of movies. My favorite reading genre is non-fiction, usually a good biography. I like many types of music, from Christian and Classical to Blues and Big Band.



Dear Families,

Something has shifted in my mind. Time has slowed down. The rush and madness of modern society has come to a halt. After spending a few days glued to the television and the news app on my phone, I've released my attention from non-stop, Covid-19 news cycles. I am content to check on the world less frequently now. Like you, my concentration has shifted solely to my family and my work. Those two things bring peace and contentment.

In the evenings, I sit on the front porch, and I have noticed a change. My normally quiet street is a bit busier now after dinner time. Families take rides in trucks with the tailgates down or on golf carts to get out of the house for a little while; my husband says they are searching for teddy bears. Nostalgia has filled my mind, and I think of America in a time gone-by. My great grandparents took Sunday afternoon drives after the weekly church service and occasionally stopped for ice cream when there was a bit of extra money to spend. They worked hard, went without material items, and delighted in the simple pleasures in life. I find my own teenage children now spend their time reveling in the activities that were available to me when I was younger: playing board games, swimming in our pool, riding bikes, taking walks, and doing puzzles, and they are doing it *together*. For the last few years, my kids have been going their separate ways as they've gotten older. Although the situation is scary and so much of our future is unknown, I have decided to focus on the things that are positive. My family has connected more in the last two weeks than we have in the last two years.

As Americans, we are at our best when faced with adversity. George Washington once said, "Perseverance and Spirit have done Wonders in all ages." We always rise to any situation that we face. We are now called to do it again. Our current situation is unique. We became homeschoolers overnight, many of us are now working from home, and some of us have lost our jobs—an immense amount of change without warning.

Before the advent of the public education system, most Americans learned at home. Families had few learning materials, usually just books, but those books produced great men in our Founding Fathers. They read the Great Books, practiced arithmetic, studied history, and learned Latin, some completely on their own. So let's use this time to rise to greatness. Let's take advantage of the quiet and the stillness and immerse ourselves in learning together. Don't underestimate what both you and your scholar can learn in this down time. It'll be worthwhile. I am going to provide you a list of *recommended* resources to use right now. Save them in a secure spot and access them regularly. There is a plethora of online educational resources, but I ask you to be discerning in what you choose for your children. The content that your child ingests matters to his/her mind; it forms who he/she is as a human. We've told the teachers to focus on quality not quantity, and we ask that you apply the same focus, too.

Be courageous and know you CAN homeschool your child. After all, you were his/her very first teacher. We will support you because as a nation, we are going through this together. Know that your scholar's teachers are lonely and miss the classroom. They want to connect with your children regularly, so if possible, encourage your children to attend live sessions when its conducive to your schedule. Educators are called into teaching. The connection with children and the learning process fuels their souls.

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Teachers want to engage and observe the looks on scholar's faces as they grasp new concepts and generate thoughts.

The beginning of this process will be challenging as we all acclimate to this new method of learning. We will adapt as needed. Recognize that you are not alone, other parents and teachers will experience frustration too. When you need a laugh, turn to Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram. You can find humorous videos and memes from other American families plodding their own way through this journey. The levity they provide will ease your stress.

Let's maintain the home and school connection. Email photographs to us. It warms our hearts to see how our scholars spend their days. Beyond academics, let us know how we can help. If your family has a need, please reach out. We are a community. We will take care of each other. We've demonstrated this relationship amongst each other in the past when we supported Ms. Turner through her cancer treatments and provided Christmas to families who needed our help. We can do it again. Just let us know how we can help you, and we will figure it out together. If you are comfortable, don't hesitate to reach out to Mrs. Phillips by email or on the school phone number. All incoming calls are forwarded to her cell phone. Our virtues aren't simply words displayed on a poster, posted on a website, or printed in a handbook. They are the core of who SJCA is as an organization. Now is as good as time as any to demonstrate citizenship.

Each of you are in our thoughts and prayers. We know some families are currently struggling in many ways. Have peace in knowing that you are all loved and deeply missed by the SJCA staff, faculty, administration, and board. Take care of yourselves. Until we meet again.

Sincerely,

*Mrs. Maegen Satcher*

Dean of Curriculum and Instruction



A beautiful, chalk art mosaic created by the Avery scholars during Spring Break.

### **Important Reminder**

Make sure your scholar has joined *all* of their Google Classrooms either through the email invite in their Gmail account or the class codes that teachers sent out. You can access Gmail through the One Clay portal. Sign on information was provided through SchoolMint emails sent by Mrs. O'Neal and Mrs. Phillips.

# BCSI Recommended Resources to Promote Parent and Scholar Learning

## Podcasts

A 20-minute podcast featuring professors, K-12 teachers, and friends of Hillsdale College, all speaking about classical education- what it is, why it's still relevant today, and what makes it unique. Hosted by Scot Bertram.



- ◆ [\*Hillsdale College Classical Education Podcast on iTunes\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Hillsdale College Classical Education Podcast on SoundCloud\*](#)

## Website

### [\*The Classical Classroom\*](#)

A glimpse inside a network of charter schools across the country. This website was recently created by BCSI to support teachers and families. It is updated frequently.

## Online Courses for Upper School Scholars and Parents

Learn from distinguished faculty in courses inspired by Hillsdale's core curriculum. Create an account, watch the courses, take the quizzes, and earn a Certificate of Completion. We highly recommend Hillsdale's newest course in American history, *The Great American Story: A Land of Hope*. If you are interested in purchasing the accompanying book, click [here](#) to buy it on Amazon. This brief, American history narrative is worth adding to your home library.

### [\*Hillsdale College Online Courses\*](#)



BEAUTIFUL FEET BOOKS

# 5 WAYS TO KNOW IF A BOOK IS WORTH SHARING WITH YOUR KIDS

by Josh Berg



# 1. STORY

Does the story include a hero and, amidst the challenges they face, display their character, their will, their perseverance, their qualities worth emulating? Good stories are built around well-developed characters, their setting, the plot of the story, a conflict, and the ultimate resolution.

These things can be found in even the simplest board books. If the story features these essential elements, it's much more likely your child will find it interesting, worthy of their attention, and enjoyable. If not the story will fall flat, seem bland and half-hearted. Choose books that take you and your children on a journey. Skip those that don't.

*"Stories are our primary tools of learning and teaching, the repositories of our lore and legends. They bring order into our confusing world. Think about how many times a day you use stories to pass along data, insights, memories or common-sense advice."*

- Edward Miller, illustrator and product designer



## 2. TEXT

What we're looking for in text are words that elevate our thinking. Words that challenge us to grab our dictionary once in a while. That open up new ways of speaking, writing, and reasoning. If we introduce our children to these types of books at the very earliest stage we're helping them develop their own taste for books that are mind-expanding.

Words and word choice are vitally important, especially in children's books. If a book includes words that are trivial and trite or rely on our base instincts then the story, no matter how well written, will lower our thought processes. Now, that being said, we enjoy a good silly Shel Silverstein book more than anyone, but just like sweets are an occasional treat for our kids so should be books that spotlight absurdity or silliness.

*"By words we learn thoughts, and by thoughts we learn life."  
- Jean Baptiste Girard*





### 3. ILLUSTRATIONS

Just as a picture is worth a thousand words, illustrations in children's books are the kindling for our children's imaginations. Choose books that display the talent of the illustrator and show their care in producing images that are remembered. Far too many children's books include illustrations that appear hurried, thoughtless, and check-the-box. Images like these don't promote curiosity and imagination, but rather sap them from the reader and observer.

Good illustrations come in a myriad of forms. Some are vastly complex and include many colors, others are simple black and white lines. Regardless of the form, the foundation of good illustrations is the attentiveness and thoughtfulness by which they were produced. You can see these elements in the artist's attention to detail, the emotion evoked by the image, and how well it blends with the author's words.

Have you ever heard a song and thought that the instruments didn't match the lead singer's voice? This same disconnect can be applied to the relationship between an author and illustrator. When the two are in alignment, the result is a captivated reader.



## 4. OLD VS. NEW

This is not an argument that everything older is better, however, one area older books have a huge advantage over new books? Staying power.

A book that has been around for several decades and connects with readers of different generations is what we typically call a “classic.” These are books that include all of the elements outlined here. They tell a powerful story, are well-written, include illustrations that were created in an often labor-intensive and painstaking way, and they connect with readers of different eras.

Newer books can absolutely include many of these things but the verdict is still out on their staying power. If you have a choice between an old book and a new book, remember that the old one has stood the test of time.



## 5. AUTHOR'S INTENT

This last point is possibly the most important and can sometimes be the hardest to spot. Here's a tip: look for books that prompt the reader to be inspired, that promote truth and goodness, and that encourage us in our growth and character development. In the midst of our society's current elevation and glorification of the anti-hero, choose books that present qualities we want our children to aspire towards.

These qualities can include, but are not limited to, gratitude, kindness, helpfulness, joyfulness, truthfulness, honesty, respectfulness, patience, thoughtfulness, empathy, diligence, care, self-sacrifice, and love. If a book challenges you towards growing in these qualities then that's a book worth sharing with your children.

If the book tends toward self-absorption, self-interest, or self-elevation, then that's probably one worth passing by.