

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO  
**CHOOSING A  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN  
DALLAS/FORT WORTH**



**COVENANT  
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

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**DALLAS/FORT WORTH**

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Making a decision regarding your child's education can be one of the most stressful tasks as a parent. You understand a solid educational foundation is critical for their future and it can be overwhelming to navigate.

Gone are the days where parents assume the neighborhood school is taking care of all a student needs. Recent years have brought numerous choices – from charter schools to private schools to online schools to homeschooling. Where do you start in the process and how do you ensure you are making the best decision so you don't "mess up" your child?

Test scores are an "easy" way to evaluate schools but are they truly an accurate assessment and isn't there more to consider?

We have compiled a list of things to help you evaluate your educational choices. Years of research and experience have provided the following criteria. Each family will have their own unique priorities but we have found they generally fall into these top eight areas.



## 1. FAITH INTEGRATION

Most, if not all, Christian schools will teach Bible as a subject at some point within each week but there is more to consider if you want your child to graduate with a solid Biblical Worldview.

- Is the Bible simply one class among many or is it integrated within all of the subjects taught? Ask for examples of how this is done.
- Do Faculty members have to sign and agree to a Statement of Faith. If so, read it and make sure it is one you agree with as well. If not, what requirements are there regarding the Faculty's religious beliefs?
- Does the school educate students on other world religions and compare them to Christianity? Are students equipped with tools to evaluate and make decisions for themselves regarding their beliefs? Do students know what they believe?
- Review the Bible curriculum plan. Does it cover all of the Bible during the course of the child's education or only certain parts?
- Are students taught to share their faith and articulate their beliefs?

## 2. ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Clearly, the main purpose of education is to prepare your child for what lies ahead. This is no small task and one that can only be accomplished successfully with a specific and intentional plan. Academic Preparedness can often take a "back seat" to some of the areas a student may have a particular interest in such as a sport or arts offering. It's important to remember the main driver to your child's future which is the ability to learn.



- Ask about the accreditation of any school you are evaluating. If they are not accredited or are not accredited by a reputable organization such as ACSI, ACCS, or SACS be sure to ask serious questions and evaluate how they are accredited.
- Can the school provide you with a full curriculum plan for a student's education? Does there seem to be a solid plan for covering all of the subjects in a way that makes sense?
- Are there clear goals of what a graduate should know?
- In today's world, it is important a child learn critical thinking skills. Once a basic foundation of knowledge is built, they should be taught to think for themselves and be able to communicate their thoughts in both oral and written form. What methods does the school use to teach critical thinking as well as communication?
- What tests are used to evaluate a student's progress? How does the school utilize the assessment tool to refine what is being taught in the classroom?
- In what ways does the school provide college and career planning?

### 3. FACULTY

The Faculty and the Curriculum are the primary “products” the school is providing. A solid faculty that loves education and loves your child are critical to your child's academic success. In evaluating a school, we recommend meeting and talking with some of the faculty members.



- What are the hiring requirements for Faculty members? Are they certified? What degree must they have?
- Is continuing education provided and/or required for Faculty members?
- Does the Faculty express a love for learning and do they consider themselves lifetime learners?
- What is the average tenure of the Faculty?

## 4. COMMUNITY/CULTURE



In our busy culture with overcrowded schedules, we tend to find community, friends, and fellowship in the midst of all of our activities. The culture and environment of a school can make a huge impact on not only your student, but your entire family.

- How does the school evaluate families for admission? Are they required to sign a Statement of Faith or something to indicate they agree with the school's beliefs?
- Does the school have events to promote families gathering together, helping one another, praying together, etc.?
- Are Faculty members involved in school activities beyond school hours?
- Are parents welcome to attend class parties, field trips, special projects, and events in the classroom?

## 5. FINE ARTS SELECTIONS

By exercising our creativity and using the creative gifts God has given to us, we commune with God in a very special way. By developing skills in music, art, and spoken word, we give expression to our faith and deepen our relationship with God. In addition, the development of the artistic talents – both visual and performing arts - glorify God and bring others to know Him.

- Are the arts celebrated and encouraged at the school?
- How does the Fine Arts program promote the student's understanding of and walk with God?
- Is there a broad exposure to fine arts offerings? How many fine arts disciplines will a child explore during their years at the school?

## 6. ATHLETIC OFFERINGS

Athletics can be used as a tool for not only physical development but for a child to grow and develop Christian character qualities. The arena of athletic competition parallels the Christian faith in many ways. A well-developed athletic program is important in developing the whole child.

- Are athletic programs included as a part of the school curriculum?
- Is physical training offered at every grade level?
- What sports offerings are available to students?
- What is the coaching philosophy of the school?



## 7. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Developing the whole child – preparing them for college and life – also includes character development. A child that is mature, articulate, and confident is prepared for success in whatever role the Lord has for them.



- How does the school prepare students for adult conversations?
- What are the discipline policies of the school? Are the policies designed to address the behavior alone or also address the heart issue behind the behavior?
- Are students taught to handle conflict using Matthew 18?

## 8. SAFETY

The headlines are full of stories of bullying, assaults, and threats in schools. It can be scary to send your child off to school not knowing what they will be face. School should be a safe environment – physically, socially, and spiritually - so that learning is the primary focus.



- How secure are the buildings on the campus? Is there limited access?
- Are procedures in place and regularly rehearsed for weather issues and lock-down situations?
- Does the school have a system of alerting parents of an emergency?
- Is there adequate supervision in more vulnerable areas such as locker rooms?
- Do teachers get involved with social situations or issues on the playground or in the cafeteria?
- Is there a clear set of guidelines for addressing student concerns?

## 7. NEXT STEPS

In evaluating a school for your child, it may be hard to entertain the cost of a private education but it is a worthy investment in your child's future, maturity, and academic development. Careful consideration should be given as your child will be spending a large part of their time in a setting that either reinforces your family's values or detracts from it.

So, now what?

- Using the criteria in this book as a guide, make a list of what is most important to your family.
- Evaluate potential schools based on your priorities. A starting point is the website which should give you a good idea of the school's vision, mission, and offerings.
- Schedule a tour of the school(s) you feel might be a good fit for your student(s). Ask the questions in this book that are most important to you.
- Pray for God's direction and wisdom in the decision.



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