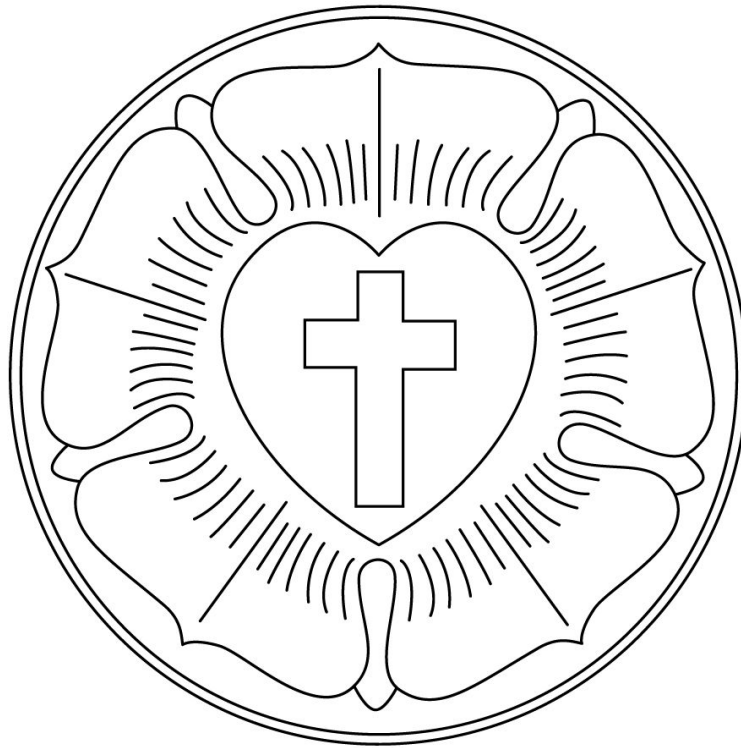


# **Good Shepherd Classical Academy**



## **Homeschool Co-op Handbook**

The **Director** serves as the liaison with Saint John's Board of Christian Education.

The **Board** is comprised exclusively of faithful, confessional LCMS parents who are actively involved with our homeschool co-op (*LCMS is shorthand for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*).

**Co-op Participants** are defined as teachers, students, parents, guardians, siblings, guests, and visitors.

## 2025-2026 Academic Year

### Overview

Good Shepherd Classical Academy provides homeschool classes that are conducive to a group setting. Our co-op exists to partner with you, help your child learn and grow, and round out your home education with solid group classes, all in a Lutheran setting that extols Jesus Christ and is faithful to God's Word. Our goal is to teach your child what is good, true, beautiful, and enduring, and help them grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Class teachings/discussions by Co-op Participants during our time together on Thursdays are not to contradict the Holy Scriptures or the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as confessed in the Book of Concord. We follow God's Word on all issues related to His good gifts of life and sexuality.

This handbook outlines various requirements, expectations, and guidelines in order for our co-op to function smoothly.

### Classical Education

Our co-op follows the classical model of education. Classical homeschool education is based upon the Trivium, a teaching model that tailors the curriculum to the way a child develops cognitively. All three stages — grammar, logic, and rhetoric — are taught from a Christian worldview, grounded in Holy Scripture, and confess God the Father as the Creator and Jesus Christ, His Son, as the Redeemer of the world.

#### *The Grammar Stage*

The grammar stage covers the early years. Young children will be introduced to new topics, concepts, and ideas and encouraged to practice, observe, and record things for later exploration. Concrete thinking and memorizing of facts are emphasized, laying the foundation on which the next stage is built.

#### *The Logic Stage*

The logic stage covers the middle years. Children will sort through facts they learned, analyze them logically, ask questions to better understand, and start to form arguments with these facts. Abstract thinking is developed during this stage, putting in place the building blocks on which the final stage is constructed.

#### *The Rhetoric Stage*

The rhetoric stage covers the later years. Teens will integrate the facts they learned and analyzed in the previous stages and apply them to their lives in a meaningful way. This final stage cultivates the ability to have discussion and debate on topics using clear, articulate language, and to deliver a speech convincingly and persuasively.

### Location

Our homeschool co-op meets at The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. John ("Saint John" throughout this handbook), located at 26555 Brickville Road in Sycamore, Illinois. As the church graciously provides space for us, Co-op Participants are expected to abide by everything in this handbook.

### **Membership, Enrollment, Fees**

Good Shepherd Classical Academy is open to all students. While students do not need to be Lutheran to enroll, all teachings will accord with sound doctrine as summarized in the Overview. The Board reserves the right to terminate membership when these expectations and responsibilities are not being followed.

An academic year consists of five sessions, each six weeks in length. We meet on most Thursdays, taking breaks for national holidays and various occasions. The yearly calendar, classes offered in the current session, and an enrollment link are listed on the church website ([stjohnsycamore.org/good-shepherd-classical-academy](http://stjohnsycamore.org/good-shepherd-classical-academy)). Parents need to enroll their child for the classes desired no later than one week before a new session begins.

Class fees vary by class, are set by each teacher to cover expenses, and are due the first day of each session unless otherwise negotiated with the teacher. Forms of payment accepted for each class will be determined by the teacher (i.e. cash, check, PayPal, Venmo, etc.).

Communication outside of classes by the Director or teachers will normally happen via an individual or group text. If an email needs to be sent, it will be accompanied by a text notifying recipients to check their email.

### **Facility Rules**

Saint John is graciously opening up its facility to us that participating students may learn and grow through our homeschool co-op. It is incumbent upon us to be good stewards of the facility and leave it each week in good, proper, and clean order.

1. Co-op Participants have access to designated classrooms in the education wing, the nursery rooms, the multi-purpose room (gym), and part of the outside grounds.
2. The sanctuary is off limits, unless a learning opportunity led by the Pastor or Director of Parish Music takes place therein.
3. The large kitchen next to the multi-purpose room (gym) is off limits, unless a baking or cooking class takes place therein.
4. Non-designated classrooms, church offices, the workroom, the meeting room, the youth room, and all closets and storage areas are off limits.
5. Defacing of church property in any way, including the pulling of fire alarms, is not permitted.
6. It is the responsibility of Co-op Participants to repair or replace any property they have damaged.
7. Smoking, vaping, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and weapons of any kind are prohibited.
8. Bicycles, skateboards, rollerskates, rollerblades, and hoverboards are prohibited.
9. Animals and pets are prohibited, except as allowed by ADA Service Animal guidelines.
10. Food and drink are only allowed in the lunch room (Room 321), though Co-op Participants may have water bottles in the classrooms, multi-purpose room (gym), and outside.

### **Expectations of All Co-op Participants**

1. Co-op Participants are expected to act in Christian love toward one another. Jesus said: "As I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34). "Put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14). "Love one another with brotherly affection" (Romans 12:10), "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).
2. Co-op Participants are expected to use proper language that is edifying. "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear" (Ephesians 4:29). This means no yelling, shouting, cursing, gossip, foul language, crude talk/jokes, or language that puts others down.
3. Co-op Participants are expected to wear clothing and attire (including backpacks and anything carried in) that are modest and appropriate for God's house. The following are prohibited: midriff tops; super short skirts (unless shorts underneath); items with explicit language, crude/improper graphics, or words/imagery that are contrary to the sound doctrine as summarized in the Overview.
4. Co-op Participants are expected to help with cleanup after the final class. This cleanup covers the classrooms, hallway, bathrooms, nursery rooms, mini-kitchen, and multi-purpose room (gym). The Board reserves the right to assign different tasks to each family, in which case one or more families will be responsible for a designated area, with tasks being rotated each session.

### **Parental Responsibilities**

1. At least one parent (or guardian) must stay onsite during class times when his/her child is present. Dropping off and picking up one's child is not allowed.
2. If another co-op parent acts as guardian in your stead on a given class day, the Director needs to be notified ahead of time.
3. Parents are encouraged to participate by teaching a class, assisting another teacher, or helping with a group field trip.
4. Each parent (or guardian) is responsible for his/her child's words, actions, and conduct.
5. Each parent (or guardian) will actively watch that students are not running, roughhousing, fighting, being disrespectful, or damaging church property.
6. Each parent (or guardian) is allowed to enforce the Student Responsibilities listed below for every student enrolled in our co-op, as well as non-enrolled siblings and younger guests.

### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Students are expected to be in the classroom on time for each enrolled class.
2. Students are expected to address teachers as Mr./Mrs., followed by last name -or- first name (depending on each teacher's preference).
3. Students are expected to be respectful of both teachers and other students.
4. Students are expected to listen, participate, and complete required assignments.
5. Students are expected to accept guidance and correction from their teachers and other adults.
6. Students are expected to "do all things without grumbling or disputing" (Philippians 2:14).
7. Students are expected to use the bathroom between (not during) classes whenever possible.
8. Students are expected to stay in the classroom during class, unless given permission to leave by the teacher.
9. Students are expected to remain within the portions of the facility the congregation allows us to use (see Facility Rules above).
10. Students are not allowed to be in a classroom by themselves.
11. Students are not allowed to wander the facility or go outside without adult supervision.
12. Students will not act violently, physically abuse, or bully anyone.

13. Students will not roughhouse, horseplay, climb on or damage church property, bite, hit, kick, slap, or push (even in jest).
14. Students will not yell, shout, curse, gossip, use foul language, verbally abuse, participate in crude talk/jokes, or put down others.
15. Mobile phones, electronic games/devices, and toys are not allowed in/during class, unless given permission by the teacher.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance is necessary in order for our homeschool co-op to run smoothly and efficiently. Take into consideration the time and effort others have done to be prepared for the class or activity they have graciously offered to teach.

1. Students are expected to arrive at church 5-10 minutes before the first class begins.
2. Students are expected to report to each of their classes on time.
3. In you are running late, please contact the Director or reply to the group text.
4. If a teacher or student will be absent because of illness, vacation, or unforeseen circumstances, please follow these steps:
  - a. Notify the Director ahead of time.
  - b. If you are a teacher, you must arrange for a substitute and get the appropriate materials to him/her to cover your class (along with compensation).
  - c. If you are a helper, notify the teacher so he/she can find another parent to take your role as helper.
  - d. If your child will be absent, please notify the Director and the teachers so you can arrange picking up any relevant information, homework, etc. in preparation for future classes.
  - e. Failure more than once of Co-op Participants to show up without following the aforementioned steps will result in a review by the Board and may result in dismissal from classes.
5. Attendance at parties and special events held during the school year are not mandatory but strongly encouraged to help build a cohesive group.

## **Allergies and Sickness**

1. Please let the Director know if your child has any food allergies or sensitivities.
2. Please let the Director know if your child is experiencing any seasonal allergy symptoms.
3. Please do not come to co-op if anyone in your family has had a stomach bug in the previous 48-72 hours, especially if you have more than one child.
4. Please do not come to co-op if your child has had a fever in the previous 24 hours.
5. Error on the side of caution; if you or your child are not feeling well, please do not attend.
6. If your child gets sick while at co-op, please take him/her home.
7. We trust your judgment as parents with regard to other medical issues not listed above.

## **Discipline**

1. If there is a problem with a student during class, the teacher will first speak privately with the student to address the issue and come to a satisfactory resolution.
2. If the problem persists, the teacher will speak with the student's parent (or guardian) onsite.
3. If the problem still persists, the teacher will speak with the Director.

4. If the problem is not corrected following a meeting of the teacher, parent (or guardian), and Director, the student will be removed from classes until such time as the problem is corrected.

### **Conflict Resolution**

In group settings, conflicts and misunderstandings sometimes arise. The following steps will help us address these situations so we can stick to the task of educating the students.

Initial steps:

1. Take it to the Lord in prayer.
2. If it's an issue between adults, talk with the one who wronged or offended you.
3. If it's an issue between students, their parents should talk constructively with one another.
4. Strive to be forgiving, for "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).
5. If all parties are at peace, put the matter behind you and do not discuss it with others.

If more intervention is needed:

1. Take it to the Lord in prayer.
2. Talk with the Director, who will arrange a meeting with all parties involved.
3. In all things, act "with love in a spirit of gentleness" (1 Corinthians 4:21).
4. "In humility count others more significant than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3).
5. If a group meeting with the Director is not able to resolve the conflict, the issue will be taken to the Board for a hearing and subsequent action.

### **Adding, Dropping, or Dismissal from Classes**

1. Classes may be added after a session begins, if the teacher approves. The full class fee (no pro-rating) must be paid before attending.
2. Classes may be dropped after a session begins. No refund will be issued.
3. When students are dismissed from a class because of behavioral issues, no refund will be issued.

### **Visitors**

Our homeschool co-op welcomes visitors. All visitors must contact the Director prior to visiting. Prospective students are encouraged to attend one or more classes and lunch on a pre-arranged Thursday. This allows new families to tour the facility, meet the group, observe classes, and have the children interact.

### **Inclement Weather and Necessary Cancellations**

In the event of inclement weather, acts of God, cancellations necessitated by church scheduling, or other unforeseen circumstances, Co-op Participants will be notified by group text no later than 8:15am on that Thursday morning (much earlier whenever possible).

In the event of extreme or dangerous weather during our time together on a Thursday (i.e. severe thunderstorm warning, tornado warning, etc.), Co-op Participants are required to gather in one or more of the interior rooms designated by Saint John until the threat has subsided.