

Curriculums for Christian Schools *by Dr. Laurel Hicks*

The *A Beka Book* curriculums are an opportunity to stand alongside a master teacher. They offer a chance to observe master teaching techniques at work and learn the methods by imitation, the only way one really learns to be a master of any art. Teachers who learn this way are soon able to add their own ideas to the teaching process and thus become masterful teachers.

Classrooms using the *A Beka Book* materials and methods are well-organized, highly efficient, interesting, and challenging classrooms. Their purpose is not socialization, self-awareness, self-gratification, democratization, or adjustment to environment. Their purpose is to educate students in the Bible, language, subject matter, and character.

The teachers do not teach character in an abstract, separate way. Rather, character is taught through consistent discipline; the teaching of traditional subject matter; reading from the great literature of the world; teaching the great characters of history that are worth emulating; and teaching traditional math, grammar, etc., in a disciplined, traditional way. Character training is seen as training children to do right because it is right to do right, not as encouraging children to concentrate on their feelings, needs, conflicts, and attitudes. Right character training leads a child to forget himself, not to concentrate on himself.

The students do not determine the curriculum, the pacing, the discipline, or the methods. These decisions are made by the teacher, who is a confident, well-trained, eager, willing servant of the Lord, working on the premise that a job worth doing is worth doing well and that in the education of children as well as in all of life, time is to be redeemed and every minute counts. Teachers using *A Beka Book* materials and methods are in control of the situation. They know that they are the teachers and that the students are the learners. They know what students need to learn, and they do not hesitate to teach facts and drill facts in order that the facts may be remembered. They do not accept the existential philosophy that we cannot know anything for sure and that there is no real meaning to life and that thus each individual must make his own meaning in his own way. If classroom teachers accept this philosophy, they would have no confidence in drilling facts and no basis for their claim to authority as teachers.

Master teachers are concerned with teaching selected facts, the connection between the facts, and the interpretation of the facts. Therefore, they are acquainting the students with the great thoughts of the great minds of the past—especially of the era since 1500 during which the Bible has been of tremendous influence on modern science, literature, philosophy, art, and culture in general. The facts taught in the lower grades take on tremendous meaning in the upper grades as they are viewed in Christian perspective.

Teachers using *A Beka Book* materials and methods are not building on sand; they are building on the firm foundation of the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and they know that there is an abundance of subject matter that they can and must teach and review and drill and test with confidence.

Dr. Laurel Hicks

Beginning in 1972 as A Beka Book's first writer and editor, Dr. Laurel Hicks was key in the development of A Beka Book. She managed the growing editorial staff for 25 years.

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