



## **CHLG Lower School (K-4th) Q & A**

[www.capitolhilllearninggroup.com](http://www.capitolhilllearninggroup.com)

### **Q: What goals do you have for your Lower School program?**

A: We desire to provide a Christ-centered, relationship-based education experience that is relevant to our students and which rightly values character development, parental involvement and each student's unique, God-given gifts and skills. We want to meet our Lower School students where they are in their development while also challenging them to stretch and grow as learners. We also desire that our students understand that while gaining new skills is a worthwhile pursuit, their worth doesn't come from their personal achievements but from the God who made them, loves them, and is calling them to Himself.

### **Q: How is the Christian aspect of the school implemented?**

A: First and foremost, our teachers work from the basis of a Christian worldview, both in their example as Christian character models and in the instruction and training of the students. We are more concerned about the state of our students' hearts toward God and their character than we are in where they are functioning academically, and as such our teachers take the time to speak into these most important areas. While we feel that parents have a direct call to train their children from scripture, we see our role as one which lends support to what parents are teaching in the home. Our teachers lead devotionals and also raise discussions on Biblical truths as opportunities arise throughout the course of the school day.

### **Q: I heard that CHLG is a Micro-School. What does that mean?**

A: Yes. Micro-schools are often defined as schools of less than 150 students, with small class sizes and a reduced in-school schedule. Some experts believe that micro-schools could be the next big trend in education. Trendy or not, we know that the model works! We began in 2011 as DC's first micro-school, and we've seen the positive results first-hand.

### **Q: Is CHLG a certified University-Model® school?**

A: We are currently in the process of becoming certified as a University-Model® school (there are approximately 90 U-M® schools across the country). The University-Model® combines the best attributes of traditional schooling with the best attributes of homeschooling and integrates them into one model. The result is a quality, cost-

effective, college-preparatory education that utilizes one of the strongest indicators for long term academic success, parent involvement. In addition to this, the model also provides parents with more time to impart their own faith and values to their children.

**Q: Is CHLG accredited?**

A: Once we receive our certification as a University-Model® school we can move forward with accreditation as a U-M® school through the international educational accrediting agency Cognia. The accreditation process is tied to the certification process.

**Q: What is the student/teacher ratio?**

A: Classes are capped at 10 students in the Lower School. Smaller class sizes mean more individualized attention and also allow the teacher greater ease in adapting to the learning styles of the individual students. You won't find many programs that have such a low student to teacher ratio (and most will not even state a maximum class size on their website or in their materials). We feel strongly, however, that class sizes should be stated, as there is a big difference between a class of ten and a class of twenty-five. We believe that small class sizes are essential to our model, as this allows our teachers to easily get to know and understand each of their students as individual learners, which then allows for greater collaboration between home and school.

**Q: How is the Lower School at CHLG organized?**

A: CHLG provides interdisciplinary curricula that is used both in the classroom and in the home for consistency, and our teachers ensure that parents have all the information needed to direct their K-4th grade student in the home assignments. Our Lower School students receive classroom based instruction on TU, TH and FRI from 9:00-1:00.

**Q: Does CHLG follow a particular educational philosophy?**

A: Our educational philosophy stems from Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Our starting place is one of humility and includes a recognition that while there is much truth that we can glean from this beautiful world that God has given us, there is also much that God has chosen not to reveal to us. We teach our students that, whether we are dealing in the knowns or the unknowns, we can rest in God's goodness to us, which is shown most clearly through Christ. As we guide our students as learners we use an eclectic teaching methodology (i.e., we are not aligned with a particular educational model). We look for dynamic Christian teachers who will be excellent role models and who can ignite a fire of learning in their students. Most of us can think back to a few Christian mentors who inspired us to run hard after God, or a few teachers who excelled at connecting us (and our classmates) to the subject material. We believe that those mentors and teachers excelled not because they were following a particular plan or educational model, but because they had a God given ability to dynamically connect with students (Robin William's character in the movie Dead Poet's Society exemplifies this so well). Therefore, it's probably most accurate to say that our program is built around relationships rather than around a particular methodology (and because of this we have always held that parents are a child's most influential teacher). That said, if we had to choose a couple of methodologies that we regularly draw from we would point to the Classical and Charlotte Mason methods. Much of the curriculum that we use has a Classical or Charlotte Mason bent to it (go [HERE](#) for a list of our curriculum). If you're interested

in reading more about these methodologies there are summaries of each at the bottom of this page (taken from the book *100 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum*).

**Q: What are the age qualifications for Kindergarten entrance?**

A: At CHLG we have a May 31st Kindergarten cut off (a child must turn five by May 31st to apply for Kindergarten). We understand that this is somewhat challenging for parents who are used to the DCPS cutoff of September 30th, but we've found that our students are able to synthesize more helpfully with our Kindergarten curriculum, as well as manage the requirements and expectations both in class and at home, when they come into Kindergarten a little bit older. You can read more about this [HERE](#).

**Q: How are parents of Lower School students expected to be involved in the school?**

A: CHLG has a cooperative element to encourage strong community ties and help keep costs down. Families are expected to complete 25 volunteer hours annually for their first child involved, and 5 additional hours for each subsequent child. There are some specific requirements for fulfilling these hours, such as completing a certain number of cleaning hours or teacher support hours (ie: copying, helping prep for projects, etc.). Other hours are earned by signing up for various needs, either in advance or as they arise.

**Q: What will my time working with my child on schoolwork look like?**

A: You would be committing to work with your child at home for approximately four to five hours a week for Kindergarten and seven to eight hours a week in the Lower School. One of the goals of our program is to create independent learners, so while you will be investing a fair amount of time on the front end with your child (I would say this is particularly true for K-3rd grade), the rewards will pay off in a student who is increasingly more independent by 4th or 5th grade. The exact amount of time you will need to invest in your child's education will depend on many factors, including your child's age, how efficiently you and your child work, whether you have more interruptions due to a baby or a toddler in the home, etc. Additionally, the amount of time will increase if you have multiple children in the program. For example, if you have two children in the Lower School you, as the parent, will likely be spending more than eight hours a week on the home schooling portion.

To give you an idea of what your work at home might look like at the Kindergarten level, let's consider the subject of reading. Independent reading (of simple text) will be an important tool for your child to master by first grade (if possible), but it doesn't need to be pushed. If you spend fifteen minutes a day with your child in our reading curriculum you'll be amazed at how he/she will pick up on reading over the course of the Kindergarten year. In fact, studies show that we all learn best when we spend a little bit of time in the subject matter each day, as opposed to large chunks of time a few days a week. So your homeschooling time can spread into your family time, and doesn't have to be reserved for just the days when your child is not in school. Many families complete some of the work over the weekend, and science and history lessons can be reviewed during dinner time, which allows children to share what they've been learning with the whole family. It also provides for more lively discussions at the dinner table than just, "What did you do today?"

**Q What curriculum do you use?**

A: You'll find a listing of our curriculum [HERE](#).

**Q: Are there events scheduled for times when students are not in class?**

A: One of the wonderful things about our program is that our families are truly learning and playing together in community. It's not at all unusual to see five to ten CHLG families hanging out at Sherwood Recreation Center after a school day, or meeting up at Yard's Park in the afternoon after a morning of homeschooling. The students know each other across the age levels, and it's touching to see the older children connecting with and caring for the younger children. CHLG Families also join together occasionally for field trips on Mondays or Wednesdays (non-class days). Field trips may directly relate to current studies or may simply be interesting, educational opportunities that would peak the interest of the students. In addition to field trip opportunities, families often join together in scheduling weekly classes or clubs in the afternoons after school (ie: gymnastics, general P.E., art and chess) which are held either at the school or at nearby facilities. Families choose whether or not they would like to participate in these additional opportunities and younger siblings can sometimes join in as well.

**Q: What are CHLG's tuition costs?**

A: 2021-22 tuition has not yet been set, but the 2020-21 Lower School tuition is as follows: Kindergarten \$590/month (\$5900 annually), (1st- 4th) \$625/month (\$6250 annually). Our costs are considerably less than a typical private school, where 35+ hours of classroom time is necessary due to larger student/teacher ratios and less involvement by parents at home. The University-Model® provides our students with more time to pursue other interests and also provides for more family time, giving you the opportunity to teach your child "as you go" (and not just in academic areas and life skills, but in the more important areas of knowing and loving God and character training).

**Q: Do you offer tuition assistance?**

A: We do offer assistance for families who qualify. If you're interested in being considered please complete the tuition assistance application on our website and mail it by January 15th, along with your most recent tax return, to the address on the form. If you have applied for tuition assistance you can apply First Priority with just the application fee (no deposit is needed until awards have been decided, which typically happens by February 15th).

**Q: How difficult is it to get into the Lower School program?**

A: Because we are a micro-school with small classes and no plans to expand (aside from moving further into high school) it can sometimes be difficult to get in. If you apply using the First Priority option (with deposit by February 1st) your chances of placement increase. Additionally, DC is a transient place, and we certainly have families who move out of the area and leave open placements behind. Please use the contact tab to let us know about your interest in hearing more (we'd love to give you a tour and provide more information about our program). Even if we don't have a placement available for your child we always encourage interested families to go through our application process in order to be placed on our waitlist (placements sometimes open up just before or during the school year due to families moving out of the area).

**Q: How can I find out more about the Lower School program?**

A: Please visit our website ([www.capitolhilllearninggroup.com](http://www.capitolhilllearninggroup.com)) Additionally, we also have a number of upcoming ZOOM informational events to assist you in hearing from administrators, teachers and current parents about our unique program. **See below for dates and times and go [HERE](#) to sign up to receive a reminder and a ZOOM Invite.** We are also happy to set up a (socially distanced) opportunity for you to come and see the school. Please reach out to us via the [contact tab](#) of our website to schedule a visit.

**UPCOMING INFORMATIONAL SESSION (ON ZOOM)**

**LOWER SCHOOL: Tuesday, December 8th at 7:30pm**

**Q: How can I make application for 2021-22?**

A: The 2021-22 application information will be online by December 1st, and our First Priority application deadline is February 1st.