

25 Years of Ambleside



# Ambleside

2025 MAGAZINE



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“

## Know Thyself

It is time we reverted to the teaching of Socrates. ‘Know thyself,’ exhorted the wise man, in season and out of season; and it will be well with us when we understand that to acquaint a child with himself—what he is as a human being—is a great part of education.

— CHARLOTTE M. MASON —



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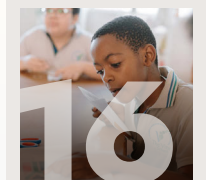
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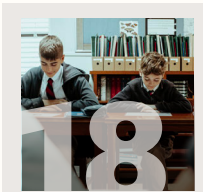
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International



A publication of Ambleside Schools International

## Dear Friends of Ambleside,

I'm pleased to present this second edition of the Ambleside Magazine, rich with stories of impact and practical applications of a Charlotte Mason education in Ambleside schools worldwide.

### An Inflection Point

These pages are full of timely wisdom, as I believe we are truly at an inflection point for our country and the world.

As we work to steady our families in the midst of the seismic shifts we are seeing, there is a standard that does not waver in the **living education** that we provide our children.

This living education is accomplished in an atmosphere where students are free to learn for the simple joy of learning. A living education does not happen by accident; it's a product of Charlotte Mason's vision that applies to all humans in all places, regardless of the cultural "moment" in which they find themselves.

### The Mission

We are holding steady to our mission of inspiring, training, and equipping a global community of member schools and educators to provide and promote a living education as described by Charlotte Mason for **the renewal of Christian education**.

That's why we're all here. Take courage as you read that we are all linking arms together in this mission.

The Ambleside movement is spreading across the globe. Thank you for joining us through your readership and being a part of the greater Ambleside community and allowing us all to continue providing a living education.

### How To Start An Ambleside School

If you are inspired to start an Ambleside school in your area, go to [amblesideschools.org/why-start-a-school](http://amblesideschools.org/why-start-a-school)

Standing beside you,



*Dean Peterson*

DEAN PETERSON  
Executive Director

Dean Peterson | Executive Director  
Maryellen St. Cyr | Founder, Director of Curriculum  
Bill St. Cyr | Founder, Director of Training

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A LIVING EDUCATION

THAT SUMMER IN THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE, I EXPLORED THE VARIED REMNANTS OF CHARLOTTE MASON EDUCATION AND FORMED THE BEGINNING OF A RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH I WOULD GAIN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT MEANT TO EDUCATE FROM A THOROUGHLY CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY AND PEDAGOGY.

25 Years of Ambleside

# For The Children's Sake

## The Birth of a Movement: Maryellen's Story



**By Maryellen St. Cyr**

*Founder, Director of Curriculum,*

*Board of Directors*

*Ambleside Schools International*

**I didn't begin my career in education with the intention of founding a movement. I started out by emulating what was modeled for me.**

Like most Americans, my school experiences were eclectic, generally determined by the preferences of my teachers. Class dynamics were based upon teacher personality and interests. And so I became this kind of educator.

After teaching in my second school, I began a search of what it truly meant to educate. I read the stories of diverse educators from Steiner to Montessori, from Collins to Wilson. I visited dozens of schools seeking to gain the fundamental knowledge of both a philosophy and a practice of education.

After seeing inconsistent practices and limited philosophies in these schools, I returned to teaching, applied for a position, and asked the principal, "What will you do to help me grow?" He reached behind his desk and gave me Charlotte Mason's six volumes, asking me to read and outline them.

And so I did. For two to three hours a day, I was engaged with this common-sense educator who began with a biblical philosophy of personhood. My life was forever changed! **For the first time in 14 years, I experienced a principled way of thinking about education.**

My class of third graders and their parents were most accepting as I changed from one way of educating to another. If I read something in

Mason's text on Monday, I put it into practice on Tuesday.

I recall telling the students, "I have been incentivizing you with crossword puzzles, independent reading, or longer recesses to do the work before you. But work is what is intended for each of us; we work to know – not to pass a test, get a grade, or finish hurriedly so you can do what you desire more."

I brought narration into the mix. We had finished reading a chapter in literature, and I assigned the students to tell back in writing what they knew. I had no thought whatsoever that the students would spend 45 minutes writing and still not be finished. They asked if they could take it home and finish, and **the next day they came in with 10-12 pages written in their copybooks!** Students and parents alike were learning how to work, to gain knowledge and thereby grow in the varied disciplines of study.

Later that fall, Ranald and Susan Schaeffer Macaulay hosted a conference nearby. One of my school parents was in attendance, and he shared with Susan the changes occurring in his child. Soon after, Susan walked into my classroom and asked me if I would like to visit L'Abri in England with her; if so, she would be my tutor. Of course, I nervously said yes. And before the day's end, that same parent came in and said he would arrange all the finances!

That summer in the English countryside, I explored the varied remnants of Charlotte Mason education and formed the beginning of a relationship with the Macaulays and other educators in which I would gain understanding of what it meant to educate

from a thoroughly Christian philosophy and pedagogy.

After three years of sharing what I was learning with my fellow teachers (some of whom were interested and some of whom were not), I was asked to be the principal of a sister school nearby for the following school year. Once again, not everyone was on board. They resigned prior to my leadership and the remaining faculty consisted of ten teachers whose hearts were open and desirous of learning more about Charlotte Mason.

So much so that after one of our weekly teachers' meetings, they came to me with a request: could we meet twice each week instead of once, since there is so much to be learned? I was delighted to say yes, and it was during this season that I realized that **growth is synonymous with change.**

As a single woman, I began to think broadly about starting a school from the ground up – not transitioning a school but growing a school from its beginning. Friends offered me their guest house in Fredericksburg, Texas for a time while I considered next steps. I traveled widely, hosted conferences, and led a study group among the families I was meeting.

It was here in the city of Fredericksburg that I launched the first Ambleside school.

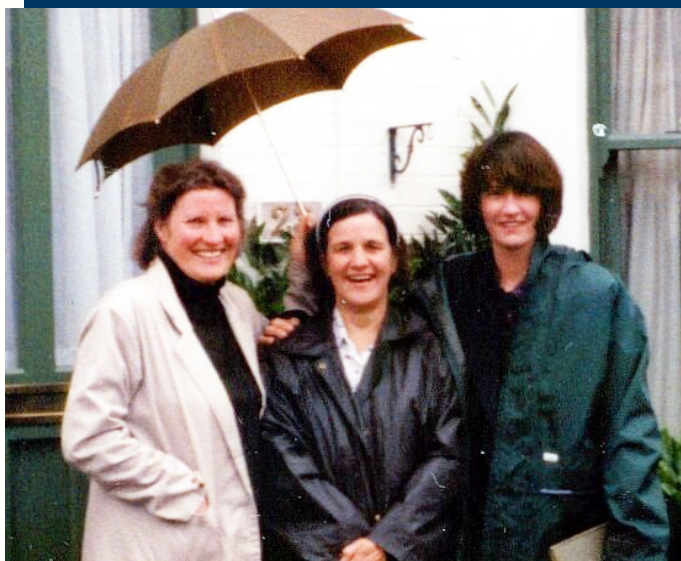
Living a full and busy life, I never really thought of marriage, but others did, with me in mind. I was introduced to Bill St. Cyr at the annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. We had much in common from the very start, especially love of God and love of persons; he by way of discipleship and counseling, and I by way of education. After the first year of Ambleside, Bill and I were married in July. We have made Ambleside our life's work.

**Our greatest joy has been the people,** working on behalf of the children with teachers, principals, and parents to provide this life-giving education where children learn to work well because this is what is intended by God for each one of us.

It is not all a fairy book story. There is an element of "journey" as God worked in and through a community, but also an antagonist here and there who upset the harmony. Yet we are called to remain faithful and steadfast to the course set before us.

But it is the faithfulness of God that has been foremost throughout the years – the ASI Board, schools' leadership, and the parents and teachers who all labor "for the children's sake."

**Praise God for the blessings of 25 years!** 🐦



# 25 Years of Ambleside Milestones

After 9 years of teaching, Maryellen begins searching for a more consistent and Christian philosophy of education. She reads the six-volume opus of British educator, Charlotte Mason, and immediately begins to implement Mason's methods in the classroom – first as a classroom teacher, then as a director of instruction, and finally as a school principal.

The first Ambleside School opens with 28 students in Fredericksburg, Texas.

Ambleside School in McLean (Washington, D.C. area) joins with Ambleside of Fredericksburg, becoming the second Ambleside member school.

1980

Maryellen Marschke graduates with a degree in education and begins her teaching career. She earns her Masters of Education in Curriculum Development in 1997 from Covenant College.

1989

1999

With a calling and vision to build a Charlotte Mason school from the ground up, Maryellen resigns her position as a school principal and moves to Fredericksburg, Texas. There she spends a year praying and planning.

2000

2001

Maryellen marries Bill St. Cyr, who joins in the Ambleside work full time, initially serving as a high school teacher at the first Ambleside School in Fredericksburg.

2002





# The History of Ambleside Schools International

Ambleside Schools International grows to a network of 27 schools (and counting) with locations in the United States, South Africa, Nigeria, Mozambique, Austria, and India.

Bill and Maryellen establish Ambleside Schools International (ASI) to both facilitate the conversion of existing schools to Charlotte Mason's pedagogy and support the establishment of new Ambleside Schools.

Ambleside Southern Africa is incorporated as a regional partner to advance the Ambleside work in Southern Africa.

2003

Ambleside School of Concho Valley is founded in San Angelo, Texas.

2005

2006

Ambleside of Hout Bay, South Africa becomes the first international Ambleside School.

2016

2020

Bill and Maryellen transition the everyday leadership of ASI to new Executive Director Dean Peterson and shift their focus to writing, speaking, and mentoring.

2025



AT AMBLESIDE, WE TAKE GUIDANCE FROM A 19TH CENTURY BRITISH EDUCATOR NAMED CHARLOTTE MASON, AND WE ARE CONVINCED SHE GOT IT RIGHT IN HER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO BEST EDUCATE CHILDREN.

25 Years of Ambleside

# What is an Ambleside Education?

## Its Simplest and Most Essential Definition



**By Bill St. Cyr**  
*Founder, Director of Training,  
Board of Directors  
Ambleside Schools International*

**When Maryellen St. Cyr first dreamed of Ambleside School, what was it that she sought to bring to life?**

**With 25 years of our life's work behind us, I want to bring us back to the foundation of our movement.**

At Ambleside, we begin with the end in mind.<sup>1</sup> Imagine an 18-year-old who is consistently kind and quick to serve; who, wherever he or she goes, radiates joy and creates belonging; who is diligent, careful, and accurate in work; who can manage emotional distress well and stay his or her best self; who shows appropriate respect for appropriate authority; who communicates well in speaking and in writing; who is curious and hungry to know; who delights in neutrinos and quasars, differential equations, birds of the air and flowers of the field, the stories of Julius Caesar and Mother Teresa, great novels, and beautiful poetry.

And above all, picture this one who loves God with the entirety of heart, mind, soul, and strength. Nurture such a man, such a woman, and we at Ambleside are convinced that "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."<sup>2</sup>

Such aspirations cannot be realized by the grade-grinding, factoid-memorizing, testing-and-forgetting, run-of-the-mill, Darwinian competition that is so common to so many classrooms.

At Ambleside, we take guidance from a 19th century British educator named Charlotte Mason, and we are convinced she got it right in her understanding of how to best educate children. This philosophy of education is best summarized by her motto.

*Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life.*<sup>3</sup>

### **Education as an Atmosphere**

Contrary to what we have been led to believe, it is not actually a child-centered environment that children want. What children need is something that doesn't have to be contrived: an emotional-relational atmosphere.

The chief characteristic of an Ambleside atmosphere is joyful belonging. For a person, particularly a child, to flourish, he must be part of a community where he is known and where others are glad to be with him. An anxious, competitive environment deforms the heart, hindering academic, psycho-social, and spiritual development.

### **We are made for joy in our relationships, and we cannot thrive without it.**

In addition to joyful belonging, an Ambleside atmosphere has many elements – peaceful authority, serene order, warm smiles and kind greetings, hospitality and courtesy, shared curiosity, beautiful spaces and places both in the classroom and on school grounds – to name but a few.

### **Education as a Discipline**

By education is a discipline Charlotte Mason meant "the discipline of habits formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or of body."<sup>4</sup> To be clear, discipline is not punishment. It is the impartation of skills that make for the fullness of living.

While not all human responses are simply the result of habit, there is no human response that does not presuppose an underlying set of habits. Using a fork, throwing a ball, solving a math problem, writing an essay, praying regularly, making eye contact, negotiating conflict, sustaining attention, returning seamlessly from distress to peace – all require distinct, well-formed habits.

Thus, the intentional cultivation of life-giving habits of body, mind, and heart is a very large part of an Ambleside education.

### Education as a Life

Like the body, the mind too is alive. And just as the body needs food to survive, so the mind needs its food. In Charlotte Mason's words:

*The mind is capable of dealing with only one kind of food; it lives, grows, and is nourished upon ideas only; mere information is to it as a meal of sawdust to the body.*<sup>5</sup>

Ideas are spiritual, and the power to know them is a spiritual power which cannot be reduced to data processing. Good, true, and beautiful ideas (rightly understood as grounded in the mind of God) strike us as a revelation.

In light of this recognition, Ambleside schools provide a broad, rich curriculum: "living" works of literature, sacred Scripture, art of great masters, music of the best composers, the wonders of nature, mathematics, and handcrafts.

Our concern in education is not with strings of names or dates, nor with nice little reading-made-easy stories brought down, as we mistakenly say, to the level of the child's comprehension. **We recognize that a child's spiritual power to learn is at least equal to our own**, and that it is only his immaturity and inexperience that we work to develop.

### Education that's Alive

This is the Ambleside education we are offering. The enrichment of an emotional-relational atmosphere, the training of discipline toward life-giving habits, and an abundance of Good, True, and Beautiful Ideas – **this is that living education, birthed 25 years ago at the first Ambleside School, which is feeding the heart, mind, and soul of a generation.** 🐦



# Member Schools



## UNITED STATES

### Ambleside School of Ashland Ashland, WI

Grades: K–8

[AmblesideAshland.org](http://AmblesideAshland.org)

### Ambleside School of Boerne Boerne, TX

Grades: Pre K–8

[AmblesideBoerne.com](http://AmblesideBoerne.com)

### Calvary Schools of Holland Holland, MI

Grades: Jr. K–12

[CalvarySchoolsHolland.org](http://CalvarySchoolsHolland.org)

### Charlotte Mason Community School Detroit, MI

Grades: K–8

[CharlotteMasonCS.org](http://CharlotteMasonCS.org)

### Ambleside School of Colorado Centennial, CO

Grades: K–12

[AmblesideColorado.com](http://AmblesideColorado.com)

### Ambleside Concho Valley San Angelo, TX

Grades: Pre K–12

[AmblesideConchoValley.org](http://AmblesideConchoValley.org)

### Ambleside School of Fredericksburg Fredericksburg, TX

Grades: Pre K–12

[AmblesideFredericksburg.com](http://AmblesideFredericksburg.com)

### Ambleside School of Hernando Nesbit, MS

Grades: 1–10

[AmblesideHernando.com](http://AmblesideHernando.com)

### Ambleside School of Marion Marion, IL

Grades: Pre K–8

[AmblesideMarion.com](http://AmblesideMarion.com)

### Ambleside Magnolia

Coming Fall 2025

Ocala, FL

### Ambleside School in McLean McLean, VA

Grades: K–8

[Ambleside.org](http://Ambleside.org)

### Ambleside School of Ocala Ocala, FL

Grades: K–12

[AmblesideOcala.com](http://AmblesideOcala.com)

### Ambleside School of the Rio Grande McAllen, TX

Coming Fall 2025

### RiverTree School

Crystal, MN

Grades: K–12

[RivertreeSchool.org](http://RivertreeSchool.org)



### Rocky Mountain Christian Academy

Niwot, CO  
Grades: Pre K–8  
RMCAonline.org

### The Augustine Academy

Hartland, WI  
Grades: Pre K–12  
AugustineAcademy.com

### Ambleside School of Waco

Waco, TX  
Grades: K–9  
AmblesideWaco.org

### Ambleside School of the Willamette Valley

Newberg, OR  
Grades: K–12  
AmblesideWillametteValley.org

## EUROPE/AUSTRIA

Ambleside School of Linz  
Grades: 1–8  
DieLerche.at

## INDIA

The Calcutta Emmanuel School  
Grades: Preschool–2  
TheCES.weebly.com

## MOZAMBIQUE

Beira United Christian Academy  
Grades: 1–7  
BeiraUnida.com

## NIGERIA

Bethel Academy  
Grades: K–5  
Israel@BethelAcademy.org.ng

## SOUTH AFRICA

Ambleside School of Durban  
Grades: Preschool–5  
AmblesideDurban.com

### Ambleside School of Hout Bay

Grades: Preschool–12  
AmblesideSchool.co.za

### Ambleside Primary School of Kensington

Grades: Preschool–7  
AmblesideKensington.co.za

### Three Peaks Primary School

Grades: Preschool–5  
ThreePeaks.org.za

### The Vine School

Grades: Preschool–7  
TheVineSchool.org.za

# As Old As Ambleside

## Father and Son Reflect on Their 25-Year History at an Ambleside School

*A work-related move from Portland, Oregon in 2000 led Dave and Leslie White to enroll their youngest son, Paul, in the inaugural fifth-grade class of the first Ambleside School, which opened in Fredericksburg in the Fall of 2000. They became very active in the community and served on various Ambleside boards throughout the years.*

*After graduating, Paul went on to Wheaton College, moved to the Middle East for nonprofit work for two years, and now lives back in Fredericksburg where he sends his two children to the same Ambleside school he attended.*

### How did you find your way to Ambleside School of Fredericksburg?

**Dave:** In the spring of 2000 we had been living in Oregon for 12 years and began to plan to return to Texas for my work opportunity with Edward Jones. Leslie found that a new school was starting while looking for a great option for Paul, our youngest, who was entering fifth grade. Fortunately, she was introduced to a new school opening – Ambleside School of Fredericksburg!

**Paul:** I had only attended public schools in Oregon before the move, so I could immediately tell this was something different and new, and I recall being very excited for the school to start.

Then when I moved back to Fredericksburg in 2015 I was asked to serve on the Ambleside Fredericksburg Board, which I did until my term expired in 2021. We then transitioned into the parent role, and have had our oldest son there since 2021.

### What brought you back to Ambleside as a parent?

**Paul:** The way of looking at children as persons is really a fundamentally different viewpoint than what I see anywhere else. The careful consideration for what our children will learn is also instrumental in our being at Ambleside. But ultimately the short answer is that we see the joy our son has when he goes to school and the joy he has after the day is done, and we know we're at the right place.

### How has Charlotte Mason changed your family?

**Dave:** Her educational philosophy as understood and taught by Ambleside has been revealed in Paul's continued love for learning and understanding of the world in which we live! It has given us a view of a system and philosophy that we have wished we could have experienced firsthand as students.



### Can you share a story about its impact on your life?

**Paul:** When I went to work overseas I was expected to do many things, from practical tasks like managing the schedule to planning a major peace summit in Cyprus. I remember one of my British colleagues saying to me that she appreciated having me on the team because “you have the confidence that you can do anything, even if you aren’t trained in how to do it.” In reflecting over the years, I attribute that confidence to the ideas instilled in me at Ambleside – that I can do hard things and that through developing habits and strengthening weaknesses, any problem can be figured out and overcome.

### What has been particularly meaningful for you as a parent watching your kids grow and develop into maturity?

**Dave:** I have always, in the simplest way, appreciated that Paul had a cohesive understanding of educational disciplines that are most often taught in a rather disjointed way. He could correlate history with the arts and literature of a specific time.

### When your friends ask you about your kids’ school experience, how do you answer them?

**Paul:** The simplest answer to many friends is to give practical differences: we don’t have technology in the classrooms. That really resonates as many of our friends who don’t attend Ambleside attend a private school where every classroom has a smart board, and the children are expected to have personal technological devices as early as fourth grade. I often find myself telling people that intentionality is something they’ll find at Ambleside. There are no neutral actions when it comes to creating an atmosphere, so many friends are struck by the intentional way things are done at Ambleside because of that fact.

### Tell us about your friendship with the St. Cyrs.

**Dave:** They are some of our dearest and most treasured friends! We have shared

great times of sharing life and faith, along with some traveling together. We value the cherished times of sharing poetry, readings, and scripture together.

**Paul:** The St. Cyrs have been good friends to our family since that first year here. Maryellen was a sometimes intimidating figure as the Head of School those first years, and we’ve laughed since then about my childhood perceptions of her during that time. What has struck me the most on reflection is that what was intimidating was that you couldn’t “skate by” under the radar at Ambleside, and it was intimidating to have the Head of the School be actively and actually interested in me and my life. I had never experienced that type of atmosphere before, where you were not just one of many but were seen and appreciated as a unique individual.

Bill quickly became a mentor to me and poured much wisdom and advice into my life for which I’m very grateful. To this day, when they come to Fredericksburg we try to get together, and he asks me wonderful, caring, and pointed questions about my life and relationships so that it doesn’t feel as though it has been a year since our last conversation. Some of the very best advice I’ve ever received came from Bill. 🐦



*The Ambleside Schools network extends across six countries and four continents.*

*Because we serve such a wide diversity of families across economic, geographic, and cultural spectrums, we asked the directors of Ambleside schools from multiple cross sections of the globe to share how a Charlotte Mason education is applied in their unique contexts.*

# How An Ambleside Education Is Applied Across The Globe

## Three Case Studies



**Terri Costello**  
Principal, Ambleside School  
of Marion

The small town of Marion, Illinois is home to 17,000 Midwesterners, most of whom live in dual-income, middle-class households. Because the population is traditionally and predominantly Christian, there is a strong values match that draws families to Ambleside School of Marion.

**Why It Works.** Mason's relationship-focused approach is a bridge-builder to these families, who walk through the highs and lows of life together in their small community. Because the local churches are reinforcing similar values, there is a strong community partnership that unites them in relationship.

According to Costello, Ambleside's self-education component is one of the reasons a Charlotte Mason education works universally. "The approach is so centered on the student and helping them gain insights on their own," she explains, pointing out how the method focuses on universal ideas, truths, and habits that transcend culture and teacher.

**Local Integration.** Having taught in Ambleside schools in Florida, Virginia, and now Illinois, Costello notes, "It's all the same approach wherever you go." Some of the differences emerge from the various strengths of each local community.

In Florida, literature is brought to life when students visit Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park, the setting of *The Yearling*. In Virginia, the plethora of field

studies at historical sites enriches their understanding of history. In Marion, where outdoor hobbies are widely embraced, knot-tying is integrated into the Handwork curriculum.

The local setting becomes a strength. "It's what they get to experience *live* to really make it their own."



**Shanna Sansom**  
Executive Director, Charlotte  
Mason Community School

Detroit has a rich history of immigration and cultural exchange, and this is reflected in the school population, where 74% of students identify as a person of color.

The school serves families from various neighborhoods across Detroit, both urban and suburban, and a blend of working-class and middle-income families. Approximately 80% of students receive tuition assistance, and the school is one of only three Christian schools within the city of Detroit.

**Why It Works.** This wonderful diversity enriches the educational experience, says Sansom, allowing them to celebrate different traditions and perspectives within the framework of Mason's approach.

"Charlotte Mason's educational philosophy is a profound fit for our geographic area because it addresses the unique history, challenges, and strengths of Detroit while celebrating the cultural and natural resources available to our community," Sansom explains.

Charlotte Mason education works universally, she says, because it speaks to what it means



to be human – a child of God with infinite potential. “Her methods meet children where they are and call them to something greater.”

**Local Integration.** That call is particularly needed in Detroit, where the 1968 riots left a lasting impact on the city, with many families still recovering from the economic and social inequities that followed. The Charlotte Mason method, with its emphasis on cultivating a love for truth, beauty, and goodness, serves as a pathway for their healing and empowerment.

“Our history lessons often include discussions on the resilience of Detroiters during and after the riots, inspiring students to see themselves as part of the city’s ongoing story of renewal and hope...”

“This is the education our students need to thrive in Detroit – a city rich in history, diversity, and untapped potential.”



**Natalie Thomson**  
*Director of Training and Pedagogy,  
Ambleside Southern Africa*



**Jean Louw**  
*Director of Training and  
Curriculum, Ambleside  
Southern Africa*

Ambleside Southern Africa serves children in five schools in South Africa and one school in Mozambique. While each school differs demographically, all function in urban settings. Cape Town, where three of the schools are located, has a population of almost five million.

“South Africa is a real melting pot of very poor living next to very rich, literally separated by a single road,” explains Louw. “And so one school can serve both communities.”

With 12 official languages, many students come into the English-speaking school with English as their second or third language, particularly in Mozambique. Literacy levels across the region are very low, and many government schools put as many as 40–60 students into one classroom.

**Why It Works.** Charlotte Mason is a bridge to all of these groups. “It leaves those differences at the door,” says Louw. Because the shift governmentally has been to remove all religion from education and require teachers to manage so many children at once, students are not really being taught or treated as individuals. Parents notice the difference in Ambleside’s approach.

“It’s beautiful how Charlotte Mason’s approach educates not just the children but the parents as well,” Louw shares. “It sees the family as a whole unit. What the children are learning at school gets passed on to the parents so that they can apply those same truths at home. And so it doesn’t only lift the students themselves, but it also lifts families and then ultimately the community as well.”

**Local Integration.** There’s no difference in the application of an Ambleside education, but specific things have been added or adapted for this particular geographic area. The history curriculum includes South African history, and additional languages and book translations are offered because in South Africa students are required to be proficient in at least two languages. African art influences are incorporated into art and picture studies as well.

“We’ve been careful to make sure that we keep that wonderful range with an international feel. For example, we try not to have too many books about winter being a snowy time because that’s not what we experience,” says Thomson. “So we change the things that are necessary but keep the real essence of the Ambleside curriculum. It’s been a good journey doing that over the years, and it’s worked really well.” 📖



WE HAVE TO HAVE A DEFINITE GOAL IN MIND FOR WHAT THE CHILD SHOULD BE BECOMING. THERE SHOULD BE A DEFINITE GOAL — NOT JUST WHAT A CHILD SHOULD BE DOING BUT WHO HE OR SHE IS.

# Begin At The Beginning

## The Process of Spiritual Formation in a Living Education

With Caleb Douglas HEADMASTER, THE AUGUSTINE ACADEMY



**“Only a disciple can make a disciple.” – A. W. TOZER**

There are two common ways Christian schools have traditionally walked out discipleship with students: 1) by dispensing information about God to students in Bible classes, and 2) enforcing a set of standards for conduct, dress, and speech.

**These are good and needed practices.**

But Genesis 3 gives a clue as to the root of where the process of spiritual formation actually begins, and therefore, what we as educators and parents must understand and embrace.

*“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” – Genesis 3:6*

### ABOUT CALEB DOUGLAS

Caleb Douglas holds degrees in business, theology, and pastoral studies, and his commitment to lifelong learning is evident as he currently pursues a PhD in Historical Theology at Marquette University. As an ordained Lutheran minister, his approach to education is deeply rooted in the Charlotte Mason philosophy, which he believes powerfully affirms the dignity of each child. Before joining The Augustine Academy as Headmaster in 2022, Caleb held roles as a pastor in New York City and Pittsburgh. He and his wife met while studying at Moody Bible Institute and have five children. For both his children and his students, Caleb is passionate about guiding them to know and love Jesus and realize the beauty of His creation.



# Desire

Eve *desired* to be wise, and the crafty serpent presented the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil as the means to become so. Her desire for becoming equal with God was birthed, and her will to attain that desire determined her next course of action.

Spiritual formation is rooted in desire. We pursue what we desire, and so we must pay careful attention to what we lift up as good and desirable when discipling students to become more Christlike. To start with behavior modification is to attempt to change the output, but the output, or behavior, actually finds its source in the desire.

**In a living education, we are working to shape the desire and set a child's affections toward God.**

And so we are very intentionally making that which we should desire, desirable. We're helping the child to desire what is good and right and beautiful and

true. The goal that we have for each child is that they become more like their Lord, more like Jesus Christ Himself. Academics, then, falls under the larger umbrella of Christian formation.

**Spiritual formation and academics are one; they aren't separate things in an Ambleside education.** Every piece of curriculum is carefully chosen accordingly.

In math, for instance, we're not really concerned with what the child now knows. That will grow as their capacity for knowledge grows. But who is the child becoming? How can we use the subject of math to help the child become who they ought to be?

This doesn't diminish the role of academics, but rather, elevates it. We have to have a definite goal in mind for what the child should be becoming. There should be a definite goal – not just what a child should be doing but who he or she IS.

# Intellect

We start this process of becoming Christlike by informing the intellect. We cannot desire that which we do not in some sense understand.

So the intellect is necessarily involved. But there is a necessary step beyond the giving of information, and that is the intentional setting of affections on what is good, true, and beautiful.

We go through the intellect, if you will, to get to the heart, which is the seat of the child's emotions and desires and affections. Then we start to inform those desires and inform those affections which shape the heart. We get at that through the whole of the curriculum.

**Once desire is established, then follows will and action, as it did with Eve.**

# Habits

The next step in spiritual formation, then, is habit formation, one of the pillars of a living education. Habits run along the lines of the desires that are already in place, but they strengthen those desires, confirming and solidifying them. With the youngest of children you can start to put habits in place to reinforce the desires that are being formed over time.

**Habits act to reinforce and strengthen, but they are not a replacement for having love for Christ in the heart. Habits alone are not enough.**

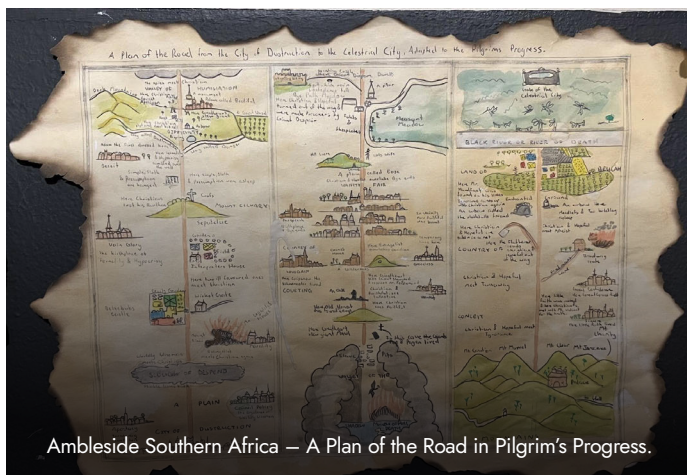
When we put beautiful things before a child, something within them responds to that beauty. God has created them so that they will only be satisfied with the highest beauty. They will not be satisfied with anything less than what is most good and most true and most beautiful, which is Jesus Christ Himself.

“Every child should leave school with at least a couple hundred pictures by great masters hanging permanently in the halls of his imagination.”

— CHARLOTTE M. MASON



Ambleside Southern Africa — Pysanky eggs (Slavic egg decoration).



Ambleside Southern Africa — A Plan of the Road in Pilgrim's Progress.



Calvary Schools of Holland — Tree rings (left). Reproduction of Claude Monet's Haystacks (right).



Ambleside of the Willamette Valley — Reproduction of Utagawa Hiroshige's Birds and Camellia Bushes in Flower.



Eighth grade student — Scratchboard hawk art.



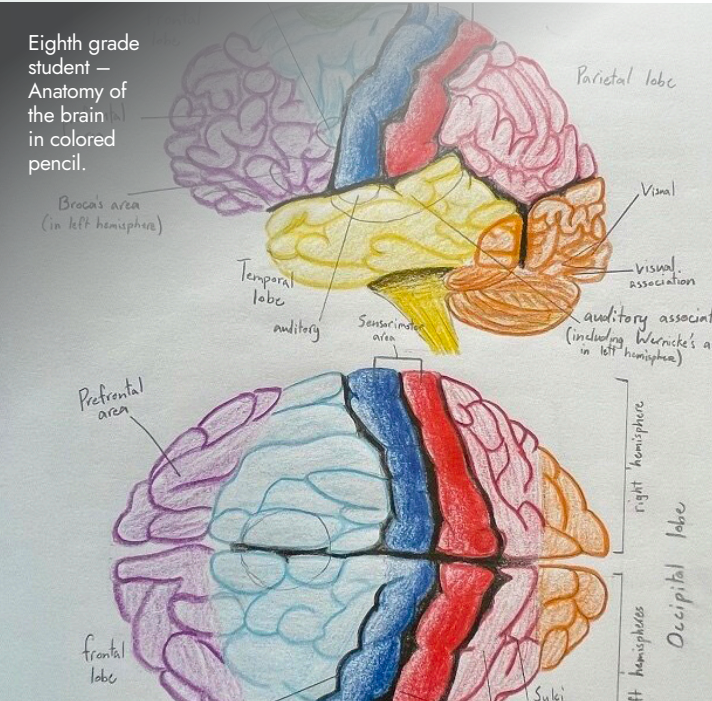
RiverTree School — Paper quilled lion.

Ambleside School in McLean — Reproduction of Vincent Van Gogh's *Almond Blossoms* in paper, glue, Gesso, and acrylic paint.



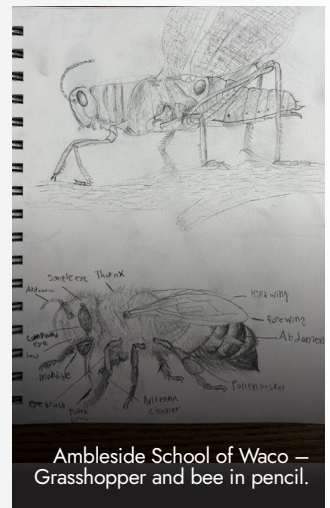
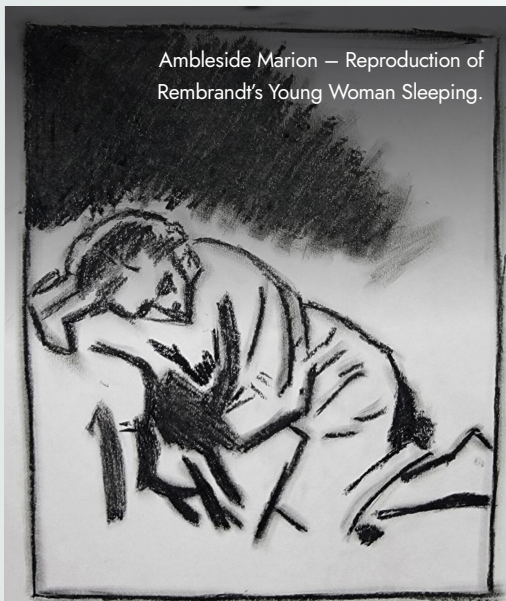
The Augustine Academy — Peacocks in chalk pastels.

Eighth grade student — Anatomy of the brain in colored pencil.



Lion puppet in paper-mache, yarn, and recycled materials.

Ambleside Marion — Reproduction of Rembrandt's *Young Woman Sleeping*.



Ambleside School of Waco — Grasshopper and bee in pencil.

THE TRUE TEST OF ANY GRADING SYSTEM IS ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN REPRESENTING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ACTUAL LEARNING AND ITS ABILITY TO ENHANCE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH LEARNING AT ALL.

# Beyond Grades & Prizes

## Exchanging Efficiency for Efficacy

With Cheryl Ward, M.Ed. CALVARY SCHOOLS OF HOLLAND



There are certain ways of doing things in the world of education that are universally accepted. As those who have chosen less traditional ways of educating children, Ambleside practitioners and families are especially attuned to these widely-accepted norms.

The institution of the grading system is perhaps the most unchallenged of all educational norms, and its practice in almost every type of school environment spans nations and people groups. Its use is pervasive.

Ambleside Schools International believes there is a more effective approach to the evaluation of students' growth and knowledge than letter or number grades can achieve. We have found the traditional grading system to be so inadequate that we have jettisoned its usage entirely.

In doing so, we open the door to a more complete evaluation of progress – one that is only possible inside an educational system designed around relationships rather than efficiency.

### Remembering The Purpose of Education

Schools are fundamentally about growth and knowledge. Every educational institution is in the business of ensuring that students are engaging with the learning process and then trying to understand what students know following instruction.

Traditional grading systems are theoretically designed to:

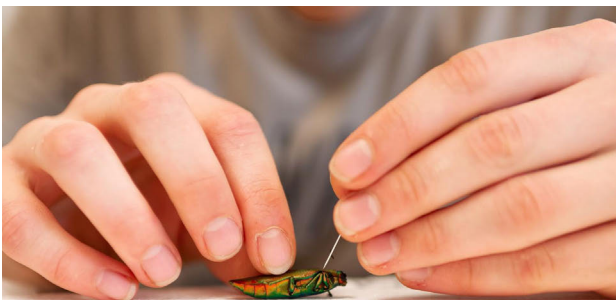
- 1) motivate students, and
- 2) reflect the student's understanding of a subject.

But the true test of any grading system is its efficacy in representing an individual's actual learning and its ability to enhance their relationship with learning at all.

In following the trend of the Industrial Revolution, traditional schools employ a factory-based approach, as if children were products to be created at scale. The system has to be designed to be extremely efficient because it favors higher numbers of students in a classroom. Therefore, the system of evaluation has to be designed to be efficient first and foremost, which typically deprioritizes effectiveness and accuracy.

What is supposed to be efficient, though, in the end actually isn't, because it does not provide enough information nor does it intrinsically motivate students to learn without the promise of reward.

The student is generally provided with a single score overall (say 73%) with very little



context (perhaps a phrase or two, such as “works hard,” “incomplete work,” “poor participation in class,” etc). The child and parents need much more information than that to really understand how the child is engaging with the subject.

Ambleside provides it.

### **Redefining the Process of Evaluation**

Ambleside uses a narrative approach to evaluate mastery of a given subject because it allows the teacher to describe the student’s relationship with the elements covered in that subject: what the student knows and what the student doesn’t know. Sometimes this will involve specific scores, but what is most important is the specifics of how the child interacted with the material, what they understood or did not understand, and what their relationship with the subject is like overall.

Constant evaluation is occurring in an Ambleside classroom. Teachers are trained toward it. Immediate feedback is paramount. Whiteboards, oral responses, written responses, and visual responses are all incorporated. In math, students are explaining the process rather than merely producing the correct answer.

Teachers are trained to know how much the child is engaging with the text and

retaining information. The observations and conclusions of this process are then communicated in the student’s report of growth, which is one of the most important things a teacher does.

### **Motivating with Joy Instead of Fear**

What we achieve by removing the external systems that reward knowledge through the earning of letters or numbers (prizes) is the most important purpose of all: fostering an intrinsic motivation to learn.

We are motivated creatures, and we act according to our motivations. Grades use fear to motivate. Charlotte Mason advocated for a process of evaluation that fosters joy in doing the work, figuring out a problem, overcoming a difficulty, learning all that we can know within the bounds of our God-given ability – and feeling satisfied with the effort.

The result is that we are growing students into functional adults who have natural curiosity, desire to work hard for the sake of doing work well, are able to motivate themselves internally to accomplish necessary work, and are not anxious or fearful about encountering new challenges.

What we draw them with, we draw them to.



### **ABOUT CHERYL WARD**

*Cheryl Ward is the Head of School and Executive Director at Calvary Schools of Holland (Michigan). Cheryl’s work in education spans continents, having served in various educational and ministry settings in India (including a stint with Mother Teresa in Calcutta); in an overcrowded and impoverished school district in Chicago; among international students in China; back to Chicago in a classical school setting; and in West Michigan where she led her school’s transition to a Charlotte Mason pedagogy. She has a bachelor’s degree in education and a second degree in Biblical studies, as well as a master’s of education. Cheryl has been an advocate for Charlotte Mason education, and an Ambleside affiliate, since 2009.*

BECAUSE THE DISCUSSIONS IN HIS AMBLESIDE CLASSROOMS WERE ALWAYS STUDENT-DRIVEN, MATT INTERNALIZED THE IDEA — “THEY WANT TO HEAR MY THOUGHTS, THEREFORE MY IDEAS MUST BE VALUABLE, THEREFORE I MUST BE VALUABLE.”

# A Lifelong Student

*Charlotte Mason at Home, at School, and at Work*



## **Matt Wilcox**

*Ambleside Alumnus & Teacher*  
Student alumnus of Ambleside McLean and currently the High School Lead Teacher at Ambleside Colorado

You might say that Matt Wilcox has been a student of Charlotte Mason all his life.

Homeschooled in his earliest years according to Charlotte Mason’s philosophy; educated at an Ambleside school from 2nd through 8th grade; brought up by a mother and father who served as Ambleside Principal and School Chaplain, respectively; and now teaching 9th grade in an Ambleside classroom – Charlotte Mason is part of Matt’s DNA.

Matt remembers, “My mom [Ginnie Wilcox] was an avid student of Charlotte Mason, so much so that whenever she was demoralized by the challenges of life raising five children, my dad would say, ‘Go read Charlotte Mason.’ And this rejuvenated her.”

For Matt, the most enduring fruit of this immersion in Mason’s worldview was the belief in his own innate value as a person. He remembers having this conviction even as a child. Because the discussions in his Ambleside classrooms were always student-driven, Matt internalized the idea – “They want to hear my thoughts, therefore my ideas must be valuable, therefore I must be valuable.”

“I had an immense respect for people,” Matt declares. “When something impinged on the respect of persons, I noticed and saw it as a significant problem.”

After graduating from Ambleside School in McLean, Matt entered a traditional Christian high school. In his classes, he perceived that his thoughts and ideas were not valued. This was a very different atmosphere from that in which he had been brought up.

“I got the message that what mattered most was what the teacher thought about the literature, history, or ethics being studied,” he said. “Lack of interest in student thought made me angry. I perceived the expectation to be, ‘Listen and regurgitate. Don’t think. Listen and memorize.’ There was little freedom to engage with the ideas that authors presented.”

While Matt recognized that his teachers had only good intentions, even as a ninth grader, he found this treatment demeaning. And he admits he didn’t respond well at first. In due time, he learned to play the game, as was expected of him. He also became more keenly aware of the gift he had been given in an Ambleside education.

Matt’s decision to become a teacher was a “slow burn,” as he named it.

Having inherited his parents’ passion for education, while in college, he pondered all his parents had shared about teaching and leading an Ambleside community. Still, his only plan after graduating from George Mason University was to hike the Pacific Crest Trail, starting in Mexico and ending in Canada. He would figure out the rest of his life from there.

Providentially, mid-hike, Maryellen St. Cyr emailed him about an open teaching role at an Ambleside school. She wrote, “You can





## ABOUT MATT WILCOX

*Matt Wilcox studied Economics at George Mason University, where he received a Bachelor of Science, and he has since completed Ambleside Schools International's Master Teacher Training Program. Matt was homeschooled using Charlotte Mason's methods before entering an Ambleside school in Virginia from 2nd through 8th grade. His childhood memories include nature painting in the woods behind his home and reading and narrating Treasure Island in the living room. Those early years fostered a deep love of the outdoors, so after college, Matt worked as a backpacking guide in New York before hiking the Pacific Crest Trail with a friend. He's been an Ambleside teacher since 2016 and loves the Ambleside mission that proclaims education is a life.*

learn how to ski. And I hear there's some attractive single women on staff."

He decided to try it for a year.

"Each year I asked myself, 'Should I do this for one more year?' And then after three or four years, it became clear that teaching is my calling."

Now that Matt is discipling students in his own classroom, he wants to impart to them love for a vast array of relationships with diverse persons and things. Mason says that one of the best indicators of intelligence is the number of things about which one is curious. That's what he wants for his students.

"In a utilitarian, secular view of education," Matt explains, "the implicit assumption is that the purpose of education is essentially to make me of use for my career. Charlotte Mason would disagree with that. And I think Scripture disagrees. The purpose of education is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind and strength..."

"And that applies to all areas that He has created."

Matt is now in his eighth year of teaching in Ambleside schools. He shares his passion for a living education with his wife, Frances, a former Ambleside teacher whom Matt met during college when she joined the Ambleside McLean teaching staff. She was hired by Matt's mom.

"When I started teaching full-time at Ambleside, I would call Frances and pretend I was asking for teaching tips," Matt admitted, laughing.

After six years and "a couple of dates that weren't dates," he asked her out on a real date. It went well. They now have two young daughters, Mary and Virginia, and Matt considers this season one of the best of his life.

"I think we have a tendency to yearn for the future ... whatever it is, there's always something. But I think when I'm retired, I'm going to be thinking back longingly on these moments. It's a very sweet and special time right now." 🐦

WE DON'T HAVE THE  
EXPECTATION THAT  
YOU OUTGROW YOUR  
IMAGINATION HERE.



# It's Always Storytime

## The Secret Garden of Education

With Marybeth Nelson CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF  
CURRICULUM, RIVERTREE SCHOOL



It's afternoon recess, and a game of tag is underway at RiverTree School in a northwest suburb of Minneapolis. As two students race across the playground, the chased yells a command over his shoulder to his pursuer, "I love thee not, therefore pursue me not!"

In a separate corner of the yard on another day, Robin Hood's merry men are engaged in a heated stick-sword fight with an enemy just outside Sherwood Forest, which is cleverly disguised as a regular old stand of oak trees on this day.

By a generous act of diplomacy, the merry men spare his life and issue an invitation to join their band, which he readily accepts.

After reading a chapter in *Benjamin West and His Cat Grimalkin* during read-aloud time, one student goes home determined to find out if cat's hair really does make a good paintbrush. The school's co-founder Marybeth Nelson confirms that it does, according to her own children's similar experiment and her dear cat's unwavering conviction to never let it happen again.

"It's a sign of a good book if the children go outside and start acting it out in play," Marybeth says. "We just give them instruction on how to play with sticks without hurting each other."

**Spending time in great stories creates appreciation and hunger for things outside our world, expanding it. Stories make our world bigger.**

This is readily seen in the play of young children, but the same progression is happening in older students as well. They're inspired toward the care of women and children when reading about passenger rescue attempts during the sinking of the Titanic. The dystopian societies presented in Huxley's *Brave New World* and Rand's *Anthem* help students appreciate independence and free thought in a new way altogether.

Throughout their Ambleside education, students encounter ideas presented through story in each living book. As they put themselves into the stories, they're engaging with the ideas held within – and those ideas stay with them.

"We all think in stories. It's how we interact with each other," Nelson explains. "Stories are how we connect with people, and so I think that stories are also how we connect with ideas. They are the backbone of what we do."

### **Stories shape ideas.**

Of all the memorable characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Collins is one of the most distinct because of the extremity of his social awkwardness.

At her school one afternoon, Nelson overheard a classroom discussing this clergyman's clumsy compliment of the boiled potatoes at the Bennet dinner table. Eventually, the teacher called on a student whom she had noticed being very quiet throughout.

This student shared, in an unexpected moment of vulnerability, that she had never

thought of Mr. Collins as being awkward because she could relate to him. "I don't know what to talk about when I'm at a dinner party or when I'm with new people," she confessed. "I know I often say the wrong thing or maybe I just make a little comment about the food because I know it's something safe to talk about. And so he didn't strike me as so awkward. I could understand where he was coming from."

Nelson said you could tell from her voice that there was a larger question being presented: "Am I also awkward, then?" In the tension of the moment, she waited to see how the other students would respond.

But that student's vulnerability made everybody else enter into the same kind of honesty, admitting they hadn't considered that they often do the same. The teacher was able to lead the discussion into how they could respond in a similar situation, and how they could show graciousness to a friend who maybe doesn't know the right thing to do in that kind of setting.

"If I made a lesson plan about how to be a good dinner guest and how to make good conversation, that would be really flat," says Marybeth. "But that story provides the scaffolding to have these interactions that end up being much more powerful."

## Stories shape relationships.

Nelson recalls a particular fifth-grade student who was a very determined individual. When this student landed in Nelson's office after being escorted off the playground by her teacher, Nelson asked the girl what had happened, and the girl shared her experience.

Knowing the girl needed to calm down in order to be able to think about things in a new way, Nelson turned the conversation to story, asking questions about the book she knew the student was reading in her fifth-grade classroom.

"Who is your favorite sister in *Little Women*?" Marybeth asked the fifth grader.

"Mrs. Nelson," the student answered immediately, "I identify with Jo so much."

After talking further, Nelson asked, "So that's interesting because Jo also struggled with her temper. Did she ever regret it?" And they talked about when Amy burned Jo's novel and how angry Jo was. Then after Jo went through the process of almost losing Amy, the two girls reconciled.

The student confessed, "Some days I think that everybody just wants me to be like Beth, but I'm not like Beth."

"You don't need to be like Beth," Marybeth replied. "Wouldn't our world be kind of dull if everyone was Beth?" They talked about the other characters in the book, concluding that there's a reason why there are so many different personalities in the fifth-grade class. 🐦

## Stories shape character.

We probably read Shakespeare in the first place for his stories, afterward for his characters. . . . To become intimate with Shakespeare in this way is a great enrichment of mind and instruction of conscience. Then, by degrees, as we go on reading this world-teacher, lines of insight and beauty take possession of us, and unconsciously mold our judgments of men and things and of the great issues of life.

### CHARLOTTE M. MASON

#### ABOUT MARYBETH NELSON

Marybeth Nelson is a founder of RiverTree School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She has filled many roles at RiverTree over the years; High School Principal, teacher of various subjects, and Director of Curriculum. Her favorite interactions with students occur on stage as she directs theater productions. When not at school she enjoys reading, playing the harp, gardening, and spending quality time with her husband Rodney and their six children, all who attend or have graduated from RiverTree.



PARENTS WHO WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO BE DISCIPLINED NEED TEACHERS TO CARE ABOUT HOW THEIR CHILDREN HANDLE STRUGGLE, HOW THEY APPROACH WORK, AND HOW THEIR CHILDREN RELATE TO GOD, THEMSELVES, AND OTHERS.

# Home Is The First Classroom

## Parent-Teacher Partnership

With Jill Romine PRINCIPAL, AMBLESIDE OCALA



“Parents are the primary educators of their children.”

Jill Romine, Principal at Ambleside in Ocala, Florida, references this Charlotte Mason teaching as one of the cornerstones of the Ambleside educational philosophy: the strength in the parent-teacher partnership.

The definition of “education” becomes diluted if we limit it to the mere presentation of facts and data points from a teacher in a classroom. Ambleside embraces a definition that also encompasses the proper cultivation of habits, relationships, and disciplines that lead to a fuller life. Parents who want their children to be disciplined need teachers to care about how their children handle struggle, how they approach work, and how their children relate to God, themselves, and others.

“When there’s a strong partnership between a teacher and parents, there’s trust,” Romine says. “That teacher knows how to look above and beyond just a set of skills that need to be mastered, but rather from a character perspective.”

Parents and teachers work together in building that character, both at home and in the classroom. Rather than shying away from weakness, they can address it together. Romine lays out what that can look like in practice.

### What Parents Can Do to Support Their Children’s Growth

#### Model Healthy Authority

Authority is a good and healthy structure. We all ultimately live under God’s authority and sit under other leadership in one way or another throughout our lives. Parents who understand and demonstrate their authority in the home prepare their children to accept their teacher’s authority in the classroom. Having a healthy relationship with authority is important, as is being able to rest in it peacefully.

#### Build Habits at Home

Habits shape character. Parents can reinforce habits of attention and orderliness by encouraging routines at home – ensuring homework is completed, helping children tidy up after meals, or setting consistent bedtimes. A classroom full of children who are trained in these habits consistently at school and at home is a classroom marked by peace and order, which creates a conducive atmosphere for learning and engagement.



## Engage in Meaningful Conversations

Rather than focusing solely on to-do lists, we encourage parents to talk with their children about big ideas. Discussing books, history, or moral dilemmas helps children mature, make connections, and think for themselves. “Since the mind feeds on ideas, relating over the good, true, and beautiful as a family is one of the most important things we can do at home,” says Romine.

## Set Boundaries on Screens

Establish firm limits around screen time. Modeling a healthy relationship with technology and setting parameters around its use in the home communicates that being present with one another matters.

## Volunteer and Be Present

Parents who volunteer for school activities, like field studies or classroom Handwork sessions, get a close-up look at what their children are capable of. Not only does this support the school community, but it also provides parents with insight into the habits and culture of the classroom, which they can mirror at home.

## Encourage Perseverance

Ambleside embraces the idea that struggle and delight go hand in hand. Parents can encourage their children to persist through challenges, from a difficult math problem to learning to crochet. Romine notes, “Real growth happens when we’re outside our comfort zone. Children need to experience the satisfaction of working through something hard and succeeding.”

## What Parents Should Avoid

### Rescuing Children from Struggles

One of the most detrimental habits parents can develop is stepping in to relieve their child’s discomfort too quickly. This robs children of the opportunity to build resilience and discover their own capabilities. When parents rescue children from every struggle, it sends the message that they can’t handle challenges, which undermines their confidence.

## Sowing Limiting Ideas

Casual comments like, “It’s no wonder you struggle with this – I was never a math person,” can have a lasting negative effect on a child’s mindset. Such statements can lead children to internalize limitations that might not exist. Instead, parents should convey that learning is a journey and that effort, not innate ability, determines growth.

## Focusing on Performance Over Growth

A parent’s personal anxiety around performance often filters down to children, creating a pressure-filled atmosphere that detracts from a love of learning. Ambleside aims to cultivate curiosity and understanding, not competition. Parents should avoid comparing their children to others and instead celebrate personal growth and effort.

## A Beautiful Partnership

“When it’s really working beautifully is when a parent and a teacher are both laboring together, and there’s a sense of being for one another, with ultimately the end goal being the success of the students. We want the fullest life possible for your child.” 🐦

### ABOUT JILL ROMINE

*Jill Romine discovered Ambleside while investigating educational options for her young children. In reading *For the Children’s Sake* by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay, she and her husband connected deeply with the Charlotte Mason philosophy and soon after enrolled their son in the first stand-alone kindergarten class at Ambleside in Ocala, Florida. She began working in the classroom that year and continued serving in various teaching and administrative capacities, eventually becoming principal in 2011. Romine is continuously inspired by the living ideas she encounters every day on campus and lives daily with gratitude for this work that is a “good and perfect gift from above” (James 1:17).*

# FAQ

## **What do you mean by the phrase a living education?**

What Charlotte Mason meant by "a living education" is the conviction that our minds require nourishment in the same way our body does. Minds are not just products, but they're dynamic, alive. A living education seeks to provide what a living mind needs to flourish. Charlotte Mason talks both about living books as a gateway to the mind, and then she also speaks about living ideas in the living books, which furnish the mind with real food for its growth and learning.

## **How can the ideas of a 19th-century British educator be relevant today?**

Charlotte Mason gave expression to truth, in much the same way that the 1st-century ideas of a man from Tarsus, or the 5th-century ideas of a Bishop from Northern Africa might be relevant in the 21st century. They are relevant because they give expression to truth, and truth is timeless and always relevant.

Charlotte Mason built a pedagogy on a philosophy of education shaped by a Christian anthropology, convictions regarding who the student is and who he/she is becoming. She also makes specific claims about the nature of knowledge and learning, claims that fit with a Christian epistemology (philosophy of knowledge).

## **Are Ambleside students prepared to take the standardized entrance exams that colleges require?**

Because they are so well educated, Ambleside students have tended to do exceptionally well on standardized

tests. Just given the breadth of their studies and curriculum, their vocabularies and math skills tend to be far above the norm. The rigorous thought they have learned helps prepare students for varied aspects of learning. Because of Ambleside's focus on "soft," relational skills, Ambleside graduates tend to shine even more brightly in the interviews many colleges require.

In terms of practical preparation, Ambleside high schools offer workshops to prepare for standardized tests. A teacher stays with students and helps with the practice and instructs in the varied kinds of testing. Ambleside recognizes that standardized tests are a hoop through which college-bound students must jump and prepares them to jump well.

## **Do you have a STEM focus at an Ambleside School?**

We have a broader than "STEM" focus, one that builds on these topics and also includes the arts, literature, and music. One of Ambleside's fundamental convictions is that a broad curriculum – inclusive in science, mathematics, technology, and mastery of the humanities – prepares one for the many kinds of relationships students will encounter after they graduate from an Ambleside classroom.

**If you have additional questions that you would like us to answer, feel free to email us at [office@AmblesideSchools.org](mailto:office@AmblesideSchools.org).**



# Give to Ambleside Schools International

Our end goal is a child who is useful to the world, is trained to choose rightly, and whose love for many different things brings joy for life. Your support makes that possible.

## Ways to Give

### Donate by Mail

Please make your check payable to Ambleside Schools International and mail to:

P.O. Box 2976  
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

### Donate Online

You can donate securely online by using the QR code below:

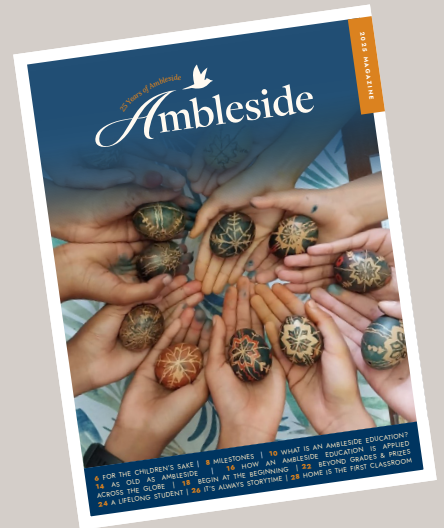


Or go to:

[AmblesideSchools.org/Donate](https://AmblesideSchools.org/Donate)

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## Ambleside Schools International Register Today for our 2025 Training Events

Ambleside Schools International (ASI) trains teachers, parents, and educational leaders in the Ambleside Method, a comprehensive philosophy and practice of education based on the teachings of British educator Charlotte Mason.

ASI's educational training accomplishes two goals: it provides vision of what education can be, and it equips participants with the knowledge and tools that allow them to make Charlotte Mason's vision a reality in their schools and homes.

Three-Day Internships and Summer Institute training events are venues for both teachers and parents. Since 2000, our staff has trained thousands of teachers and parents from North and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

### Three-Day Internship



January 27 – 29, 2025

Ocala, FL

February 26 – 28, 2025

Fredericksburg, TX

March 4 – 6, 2025

Cape Town, South Africa

### Three-Day Internship



March 10 – 12, 2025

Newberg, OR

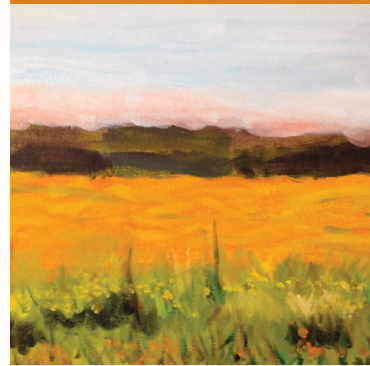
April 23 – 25, 2025

Holland, MI

October 21 – 23, 2025

Johannesburg, South Africa

### Summer Institute



July 27 – August 2, 2025

Holland, MI



For full details scan this QR Code or go to [AmblesideSchools.org/Training](http://AmblesideSchools.org/Training)