

Seven hallmarks of Reformed Education

How does one define Reformed Christian Education, and distinguish it from other Christian or Secular Education? What is the defining difference between a John Calvin School classroom, compared with any other classroom? When Reformed Christian parents promise to instruct covenant children entrusted to them in the ways of the Lord, does that promise include enrolment in the John Calvin School? These are pertinent questions of our time, and are questions that a new generation of young parents are wanting clear answers to, and rightly so!

John Calvin

The Reformer, John Calvin, during the Reformation of the 16th Century said: "The knowledge of God's Word is necessary for understanding all learning". Calvin also said that instruction begins at home, and at school he made scripture and theology central to curriculum. It is therefore not surprising that our John Calvin Schools foster a strong partnership in which the church, home, and school stand shoulder to shoulder in that beautiful God-given task of nurturing and educating God's children.

The John Calvin Schools provide a Christian education that reflects the heart of the Reformed Faith. All teachers and students at our John Calvin Schools share a living faith in Jesus Christ. They allow their faith to be strengthened

and activated by the lessons and truths of the Great Reformation.

The Seven Hallmarks

The heart of Reformed teaching and learning is alive when the knowledge, fear and glory of the Lord underpins the whole spectrum of learning. This heart beats in rhythm with the seven (7) distinctives of the Reformed faith, namely:

1. When Teachers and Students....Accept **the absolute authority of scripture** as God's revealed will for all matters of faith and practice.
2. When Teachers and Students....Acknowledge **the sovereignty and supremacy of God** in all things, including that He actively rules creation and is in complete control of the salvation of the elect.
3. When Teachers and Students....Accept **the Covenant promise of: "I will be your God and you will be my people"**. This is not just a request or wish, but is a statement of what God will do, and it's a promise that stands for Old and New Testament believers and their children.
4. When Teachers and Students....**Value the Law of God**, including the 10 Commandments. The law is not only a rule for orderly living; or for living in thankful obedience, but also shows our daily need for a Saviour.





Seven hallmarks of Reformed Education (cntd)

5. When Teachers and Students... **View the Church as a gathering of covenant people, a local, visible, living body, with Christ as Head.** The church is connected with other churches of the same faith, and is known by its three (3) marks, including infant Baptism;
6. When Teachers and Students... **Understand the Kingdom of God as: “already, but not yet”.** In Christ the Kingdom of God has come, and through the Holy Spirit the Kingdom of God is coming, and is already manifesting itself where people live in subservience to the Lord. The coming of God’s Kingdom is not first and foremost about our personal salvation, but about the power and glory of God. Our personal salvation is not the focus of God’s coming Kingdom, rather His power and glory are everything; and
7. When Teachers and Students... Accept and have a sound knowledge of the confessions of the Church, namely, the **Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dort.**

These seven distinctive hallmarks of Reformed Teaching and Learning are visible and permeate through all the conduct and activities at our John Calvin Schools. Students experience, taste and are immersed in the riches of the Reformed Faith throughout their school years at John Calvin. And whilst true reform is never finished, the Great Reformation certainly added a richness and depth to the Christian faith that may not be ignored, nor idolised, but needs to be learned, lived and loved from the heart.

Life in the Reformed Classroom

The heart of Reformed Christian Education comes to life in the John Calvin Schools and classrooms when:

- the bible is opened frequently each day and scripture impressed on the hearts of students through learning of Psalms and texts, and biblical instruction;
 - all students are acknowledged, treated and respected as
- already being God’s children by His covenant promises, and are therefore nurtured and trained to live in thankful obedience and service to Him;
- the Teachers serve the students graciously and in love, and in this way the children may experience the love and grace of their heavenly Father throughout their learning journey in the John Calvin Schools;
 - the doctrines of the Church as explained in the confessions are taught regularly through-out all years of schooling, for example scriptural truths relating to the sacraments, the importance of the Ten Commandments, and the covenant; and
 - all areas of curriculum are presented and viewed through the lens and authority of scripture, and whether it be Church History, World History, Science, or Mathematics, all learning comes under the sovereignty and supremacy of God over all things.

God’s blessing for the children of the Church

For 65 years now, our John Calvin Schools have been instrumental in the task of educating the children of the Church with a distinctively Reformed Christian Education, thereby assisting parents in honouring their baptismal vows; to instruct their children in the ways of the Lord to the utmost of their power.

Parents who see that the John Calvin Schools, established for the children of the church, clearly display teaching and learning that is in rhythm with the seven (7) distinctives of the Reformed Faith, will send their children to this school! Parents who understand that the knowledge, fear and glory of the Lord underpins the whole spectrum of learning, at home, at church and at the John Calvin School, will send their children to this school!

And in this way they are seeking to fulfil their vows to the utmost of their power and may confidently seek the Lord’s blessing on that.

H Dykstra
FRSA Board Chairman