

Five Arguments That Parents Have About Their Children's Education

by Michael W. Lee

Unfortunately, many married couples are not in agreement about where their children should be educated. How should the spouse who deeply desires a Christian education for the children respond to the spouse who believes a secular education is just as beneficial to the children?

Heart Attitude

In a word: lovingly. In the eyes of God, a husband and a wife fighting over a family decision where anger, bitterness and division becomes the order of the day is not pleasing to God. While the discussion is an important and necessary one, it must take place with an attitude of loving patience and gentleness.

Common reasons for disagreement:

Argument #1: "We can't afford the tuition." While the annual tuition is free at the public school, the actual cost is dramatically high in the long run. Can you justify spending thousands of dollars a year for a Christian school education? Yes, you can. What is the long-term cost to the children of any education that is not preparing them for success in this competitive world in which we live? What is it worth for our children to have the greatest number of life options open to them because they had a superior education? How does a superior K-12 education affect the ability to be accepted into the best colleges and universities in America? How does the challenge of a K-12 education prepare a child to succeed in the best colleges and universities in America? You can build a case for a child to attend Cherokee Christian Schools based on possible future outcomes for the child and by doing the math to calculate the exponential differences in results.

Even more important is the Biblical message to parents. The Bible clearly teaches that God owns everything that we have and we are simply managers of the money that He has given us. We will give an account to Him of how we used this money to further His kingdom. This includes how we went about preparing our children to

think and live for Him. Understanding those truths can go a long way toward helping us rearrange our priorities (Christian school tuition instead of a boat and second home) and making paying tuition a joy. God promises to provide for our needs when we seek the things of His kingdom first.

There are two fine sources for understanding what God says about money that are easily available. Crown Financial Ministries has a Bible study that is excellent, or you may want to read a book by Randy Alcorn called *The Treasure Principle*.

Argument #2: "Because they teach Bible, something else must not be getting taught." This objection is understandable because people tend to base their decisions on what they have seen in the secular schools. Yes, in the public schools, teachers are having great difficulty teaching all that needs to be taught because of the circumstances in which they work. Some of the factors that are critical to an excellent education are either absent or minimal in many public schools. Lack of parental involvement, inconsistent discipline in the classroom, poor attendance, broken families, and the pressure to teach preparation for state tests rather than the curriculum has led to a school day that has no room for anything else. However, our Christian school experiences none of the debilitating factors described above. Therefore, our classrooms are able to cover a greater quantity of teaching material and achieve greater quality as well. Please see our chart of National Test Results.

Argument #3: "The school will teach Christianity that I don't agree with." Our school is careful to remember the part of our Biblical mission statement which says that we are to "assist" parents. This means that we are committed to help parents in the multi-faceted education of their children without imposing ourselves into their families. Granted, this is a hard line to walk because our school certainly has a doctrine that we believe honors our Lord, and that doctrine (or any) will inevitably be out of agreement with someone at some point and time.

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We believe the key to “harmony amongst differences” is how we handle the differences. Therefore, we are careful to present truth and discuss truth with an attitude of humility and respect. The proof that our school has a level of success in walking that line is our track record – we have students from over 100 churches and many different denominations.

Argument #4: “We get enough Christian teaching at church.” Probably the best thing we can recommend is to think through all of the issues that relate to this objection. We have written a piece that will help. Please see our brochure or Perspective article titled, “Why Christian Education?”

Argument # 5: “If we don’t consider the Christian part of the argument to attend Cherokee Christian Schools, can we really say that this is better than the public school we presently attend?” There are other school factors that are important and every Christian school should have them. Here are a few reasons for coming to CCS apart from the incredibly important need to have children hear about Christ daily:

- Smaller classrooms. There is a correlation between the size of the classroom and the quality of education.
- Safety for your children - because the enrollment in the Christian school is controlled/screened, families will find that the students and families are less likely to be exposed to physical violence, bullying, or drugs.
- Good values. Everyone is interested in a world where rules are obeyed and people are decent to one another, if only for the sake of avoiding an anarchist society. It is important to any parent that their children learn how to be “moral” people as well as be in the company of others who are learning the same things.

■ Happiness for the child. The typical experience of the public school student is to spend years intimidated or in fear of the students that they see every day. Sheer numbers in the public school and a broad spectrum of “behavior” has made walking down the hallway or using the restroom a terrifying time for many. This is not the case in the Christian school and, therefore, children live out their day with joy.

Still divided?

There is no guarantee that you will win over your spouse and have agreement that your children should be in a Christian school. How should you think about a failure to reach agreement?

■ Love your spouse and do not let this become a wedge that divides your marriage. God is even more concerned that you have a good marriage than how you educate your children. Submit to one another and wait on God to do something that will change your spouse’s mind. Pray fervently for change in your spouse and the grace of patience in your own heart.

■ If you don’t already have them, begin an evening devotion time with your children. This will prove to be the most effective antiserum to the poison of worldly teaching that your children will get in a secular school.

■ Accept the Providence of God. He is not unable to bring change to hearts, minds, and situations, so if He isn’t doing what you want Him to do, remember to still praise Him for His goodness and wisdom. His plan has no mistakes and He can do no other than the very best for His children and His glory. And, again, pray. ■

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