

Reading with Reason: A Cultural Analysis Program for High School¹

The intent of this program is to parallel prior or current academic subjects, offering a forum to discuss and debate books selected for their value in giving breadth and depth to the home educator's curriculum. The program relates three leading ideas to all the subjects of the curriculum and to books, writing, theater, dance, art, and music. It is not intended to be a stand-alone course; it is intended to complement by providing supplementary scholarship skills.

The program is intended to cultivate the spirit of Daniel 1:3-4 to prepare Christians students to enter a world of diverse and often conflicting ideas: "certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skilful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and understanding science and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."

In terms of Reading with Reason, "A chosen progeny of strong character, cherished, disciplined, reasoning, alert, (standing in) leadership and service, to be the articulate builders (of the kingdom of God)."²

Reading with Reason presents three leading ideas over the course of a year for study, discussion, debate, and for recording observations and reviews. The class leader acts as a mentor in cultivating an understanding of the ideas and classical readings, pacing the reading, and reviewing and leading the forums. The class leader selects the art, drama, music, film, and other cultural expressions of the leading idea for review. This process expands and deepens every prior or current course in the curriculum by allowing students time to confront, ponder, articulate, and debate the leading questions and ideas.

Requirements and Procedures:

1. A weekly meeting is held to preview, prepare, and present the selections to complement the readings that are done independently.
2. A main book is read by the whole class.
3. Related selections are chosen by students; students read and present their choices.
4. The class leader previews the leading idea with the class by defining words, discussing the meanings, and formulating questions that naturally arise from the discussion.
5. Approximately six weeks are given to each topic.

¹ The NOAH Plan®, ©2005, Foundation for American Christian Education

² *The NOAH Plan® Reading Curriculum Guide* by Martha Shirley, pg. 31, ©2005, Foundation for American Christian Education

6. Students keep a reading diary for each selected book. Film, art, and music selections are recorded in the diary along with any questions, thoughts, and comments.
7. When the main selection is read, a forum is held in which the questions formulated are addressed and discussed or debated.
8. Students present their reading to add to the topic. The interaction of the students in the reading, reviewing and discussion, and debating gives the desired effect of creating a forum for each student to contribute from his own reading and reasoning.

Semester costs:

- Basic student supplies:
 - Notebook (spiral, composition, or binder) to act as the Reading Diary
 - Pens/pencils (to record responses, questions, thoughts to books, film, art, music, drama)
- Co-op Membership includes class fee.
- Non-Member fee: \$50