

St. John's Classical Lutheran School Opening Service  
Deut. 6:5-15 (ESV)

Intro: The Lord's richest blessings to all of you this evening. Today is a momentous day. Today marks the beginning of a new era in the life of our congregation. It would be difficult for me personally to overstate its significance. Today we officially begin the sacred work of bringing children of our congregation into the wonders of a classical Lutheran education--into a most blessed heritage and tradition which by now extends back for generations, and whose splendor and beauty will, by the grace of God, endure in this place for many more to come.

The point of my homily to you tonight is as simple as it is important, and that is this: that the opening of St. John's Classical Lutheran School is nothing less than a gift from God, and I humbly urge all of you to cherish it as such.

I. In the first place, we should note with great care just how important the education of our children is in the sight of the Lord our God.

a. Exposit the passage. Hebrew word shanan. Whatever else parents would teach their children, whatever other arts and skills would be handed down as they trained their children in the way they should go, they were to conform to and be informed by the revealed knowledge of God. Point out the seriousness of this; Deut. 21 regarding rebellious sons.

b. The Holy Scriptures show us that both then, in the Old Testament, and now in the New, it is pleasing to God for the children among His people to grow up to be wise and learned--that they obtain knowledge and understanding such that (1) they fear, love and trust in Him above all things and (2) that they love their neighbors as themselves, and doing both of these things in a holistic and intelligent way. How very good and right it is then for us as the people of God to adorn our children with a rich and wholesome education, so that they can better understand the Holy Scriptures and so that they can also grow to be godly, wise, learned, and capable members of our society.

c. How very good and right it is for us to immerse our children in the various arts offered by a classical Lutheran curriculum--in rigorous study of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric, learning music, arithmetic, and Latin, gaining a thorough understanding of history, reading the finest poetry and the greatest literary works that have stood the test of time from classical antiquity until now. All these things, dear ones, deeply enrich our minds and the minds of our children especially. And this is because the classical liberal arts cultivate in us a longing and a love for that which is Good, that which is True, and that which is Beautiful. And even if they didn't always speak in exactly these terms, Dr. Luther and many others at the time of the Reformation certainly understood this.

d. By no means is a classical Lutheran education to be seen simply as the latest trend or as just another means of learning for the sake of learning. No, classical Lutheran education is abundantly fertile ground for the flourishing of a child's mind, of their imagination and intellect, and even their very souls. And out of genuine love for our children, we should all burn with desire to give them an education that does just that, that truly enriches their lives, their Christian

faith, and ultimately leads them to the very fountain and source of all that is good, true, and beautiful--to God Himself. I can tell you in all sincerity and truth, my heart overflows with thankfulness that God, in His great love and mercy for us, has established this classical Lutheran school here to foster these things in the children among us--not just for today, not just for a few months or a few years, but (Lord-willing) for generation upon generation to come.

II. Given what I've said up to this point, clearly the promise of classical Lutheran education stands in stark contrast to what many in society today call "education"--education which is supposedly enlightening the minds of our youth, but which in reality is enveloping them in deep darkness. We're seeing what happens when we don't diligently teach children as God would have us teach them and as He commanded the Israelites in our text. If you've been keeping track and paying attention to the state of public education in our country, and all across the West for that matter, you will know that the children is in an advanced state of decay, to put it mildly.

a. In various places, children are being taught, for example, that the discipline of Mathematics discriminates against certain groups of people.

b. White youth are being taught that they are irredeemably racist and that they should despise themselves and their heritage for it.

c. Young people are being taught from very early on that gender is a spectrum, male and female is a social construct.

d. Just a short time ago I even read a report that in the state of California, children in public schools were being taught together in class to invoke and pray to pagan, Aztec deities--deities whose rites of human sacrifice are horrific beyond measure. On and on I could go with cases like these. Doubtless all of you could too.

d. These are all the teachings of demons, and make no mistake, the fact that children in our lands are being taught these things amounts to nothing less than child abuse on multiple levels. You know it as well as I do.

e. What I'm preaching to you is not particularly difficult to figure out, nor, I hasten to add, is it advertisement to vote for a specific political party. Because the truth is that no matter whose name or political party supports these things, the abuse of the children taking place in this country in the name of education must be opposed. It must be fought. And as faithful Christians, we are obliged do so above all by prayer and fasting, by diligently catechizing our children, and by supporting institutions just like the classical Lutheran school that Lord our God has established here.

f. Don't just take my word for it; here's what Dr. Luther himself had to say in a treatise he wrote in 1524. This is what he titled it: "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." In one part, Luther says this: "I beg all of you my dear sirs and friends, for the sake of God and our poor young people, not to treat this matter [of their education] as lightly as many do, who fail to realize what the ruler of this world is up to. For it is a grave and important matter, and one which is of vital concern both to Christ and the

world at large, that we take steps to help the youth. By so doing we will be taking steps to help also ourselves and everybody else. Bear in mind that such insidious, subtle, and crafty attacks of the devil must be met with great Christian determination. My dear sirs, if we have to spend such large sums every year on guns, roads, bridges, dams, and countless similar items to insure the temporal peace and prosperity of a city, why should not much more be devoted to the poor neglected youth." (AE 45:350)

g. Dr. Luther goes on to say this a little later on as well: "For my part...I would have [children] study not only languages and history, but also singing and music together with the whole of mathematics," by which he means music theory, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. "The ancient Greeks trained their children in these disciplines; yet they grew up to be people of wondrous ability, subsequently fit for everything. How I regret now that I did not read more poets and historians, and that no one taught me them!" (AE 45:369-370)

III. Dear ones, like I said before, the opening of our classical Lutheran school here at St. John's is a precious gift from God our Father. As the epistle of St. James says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas. 1:17). God our Father has shown His love for us first and foremost by sending us the greatest gift the world has ever known in His Son, Jesus Christ, the very Light of the World, Whom the darkness has not overcome. And the victory Jesus won by His death and resurrection He now gives to all of you through Holy Baptism. His peaceful light has now come into and has shone brightly in your hearts and in the hearts of your children. And now the Father of lights has visited us once more and given us another blessed gift from above, which is St. John's Classical Lutheran School.

a. To all of the students here with us tonight--blessed are you, you happy few. Your vocation as a student is one of preparation, to learn all you can and to study hard out of love for God and neighbor. Believe me when I tell you that in due time you will shine as dazzling lights in a world growing darker by the day.

b. To those soon to be installed as teachers: Andrea, Erin, and Bethany, our whole church gives thanks to God for you, for your talents and abilities, and that you will faithfully work as teachers for the sake of the children entrusted to you. May God grant your labors to be sweet and fulfilling. You have our support and our prayers.

c. And for all the rest of us here at St. John's, may we all give thanks to God and cherish this gift of a classical Lutheran school for as long as He permits us to have it.

To Christ be all the glory forever and ever. Amen.