Gileskirk

A Moral Philosophy of

American Culture

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An Introduction to Gileskirk

Gileskirk curricula are designed to be complete, self-contained courses of study for individual students, a family, or a group. The goal of Gileskirk is to provide a strong Humanities study surveying the disciplines of history, literature, philosophy, theology, civics, art, music, and architecture of a particular epoch. In our students, we hope to foster a love of learning, a passion for reading, and the ability to discern worldviews and to think critically. To that end, we hope this introduction will provide insight and instructions for using Gileskirk studies in your home or classroom.

This year the area of focus will be American Culture—during the epoch from the Age of Exploration and Colonization to the advent of Modernity. The study will emphasize the basic classical academic approach of Moral Philosophy—thus equipping us with tools for a lifetime of learning: a working knowledge of the timetables of history, a background understanding of the great literary classics, a familiarity with the sweep of aesthetic achievement, a worldview comprehension of basic geography, a Principle Approach to discerning the significance of current events, and an emphasis on a Christian life paradigm. The idea is to study this period of human achievement in context both in terms of its historical and societal sequence and in terms of its providential and cultural importance. Out of this integrated understanding of God's world, every other subject and discipline is informed.

Elements of the Course

Each Gileskirk study course is comprised of the following material:

Lectures

Each lesson is built around a lecture delivered by Dr. George Grant. These lectures are available as audio or video cassettes or on CD-ROM. Each lecture is numbered to indicate its order within the series. As much as possible, Dr. Grant's class instructions for projects, assignments, and readings have been included. You will need to allow for extra class periods during the year to accommodate project presentations, review sessions, and exam days for the midterm and final. You may also desire extra class periods for discussions of the literature texts. The numbered lessons in this book correspond to the numbered lectures.

Lesson Outlines

Each lesson gives the reading assignments which should be finished before listening to the lecture. If a quiz is to be given, it is listed at the beginning of the lesson, and the quiz should be given before the lecture. The quiz will cover information from the previous lectures and readings. Additional homework assignments are due the next class period. If the homework assignment is a reading journal entry, it should be written that day. Many lessons include an outline for the specific lecture. While students should certainly use the outlines as guides to help order their notes, the temptation is to copy the information

and then relax. Students' note-taking skills will improve throughout the year, but teachers and mentors should check notebooks occasionally to make sure students are getting the important information. A series of bad quiz grades could be another indication that students are merely copying the outlines rather than taking substantive notes.

Reading Assignments

The primary and literature texts are listed at the beginning of each lesson with the specific reading assignments in the primary texts to be completed before listening to the lecture.

Literature Text

A specific literature text is assigned for each grading period. The literature text is also listed in each lesson plan as a reminder that the student should be reading through the text on a regular basis. Please note that specific page assignments are not given, so the student should plan a schedule of reading which will enable him to finish both the literature text and his own choice of a supplemental book during the grading period. The lectures essentially assume familiarity with the literature and then build upon themes within the literature.

Supplemental Reading

A list of Supplemental Reading choices relating to the time period or topic being studied is given in this Introduction. The student should choose one book from this list to be read each month of study. However, as with the literature text, the student must pace himself since no specific assignments of the supplementary readings are given.

Reading Journal

Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, often said, "Thoughts tend to disentangle themselves when they flow over the tip of a pencil."

The reading journal is a book or notebook reserved only for writing reflections on one's reading, thus organizing and giving coherence to one's thoughts. The use of a reading journal also promotes good writing skills by providing the impetus to write daily.

Each student should keep a reading journal of some sort, a book or notebook reserved only for writing journal entries. At the end of each month the teacher/mentor should collect the reading journal for a class participation grade. For the purpose of the Gileskirk study, the journal entries should be reflections on readings in the textbook assignment, the literature selection, the *Stirling Bridge*, or the supplementary reading book. The student should discuss his thoughts on the ideas, themes, and characters in the books; journal entries should not be what he did that day, what TV show he is watching, or other "mental laundry." However, grammar standards should be relaxed because the student should be more concerned with content rather than making corrections, etc.

High school students are expected to write about a page, approximately two hundred to two hundred fifty words; junior high students should write one-half of a page. These amounts can be adjusted to the ability of the student, but each student should start slowly and increase in length and substance over the course of the year. Students should be

required to make five journal entries a week, which gives them Sundays off and one other day of their choosing. A quick pop-check of journals, before the normal collection at the end of the month, reveals more accurately who keeps up with their journals and who is waiting until the night before journals are due.

Reading journals are excellent for integration, especially with English classes. Teachers in other classes can provide specific directions or assignments, such as discussing a particular style, character, event, idea, etc. Homework of this type can also help new or younger students learn how to write in their journals. However, students should only have such assignments once or twice a week—the subject of most of their journal writing should be their discretion.

Quizzes/Opportunities

Approximately every other lesson plan will include a quiz/opportunity that should be taken before listening to the lecture which it accompanies. The quizzes reinforce important information from the previous lectures and reading assignments; therefore, a particular question may appear on three or four quizzes. Students should correct their old quizzes so they may use them to study for future quizzes and the exams. (In his classes, Dr. Grant refers to quizzes as "opportunities" because they are opportunities for students to show what they know.) Each quiz has a corresponding key (see *Appendix A)* with all of the answers for each question. The best possible answer is provided. For some questions or identifications, several possible answers are given. Decide how much information you require. Deduct points according to an answer's proximity to the ideal answer. On discussion questions, the salient points that are required for full credit are listed, but the student's answer should be in correct, full sentences and/or paragraphs—not bullets or a list. Many quiz questions have two parts: list and describe or list and identify. If a student does not do both, he loses half of the points.

Exams

Two major exams, the Midterm and the Final, are given for this study. *Appendix B* is comprised of the exams and exam keys. The midterm exam is given after the first semester of study. It is comprehensive. Allow 2 to 4 hours for students to complete the exam. After grading the midterm, return it to students as it will be a valuable study guide for the final exam. The final is given at the end of the year and is also comprehensive. Again, allow 2 to 4 hours for the exam.

Projects

Projects, whether monthly or quarterly, are an important part of the course. They are not only a significant portion of students' grades, but also they engage the more creative side of the students, which is especially important for students who are less academically inclined. The required projects are described at the beginning of each grading period. The 40 Hour Project synthesizes all of the different areas and ideas which have been studied during the course of the year, but each student should also design this project along the lines of his own interests. Projects should always be presented before an audience, even if it is a family and some friends; such an atmosphere encourages the students do a better job and gives them an opportunity to work on their oratory skills

American Culture Book List

Primary Texts:

A History of the American People by Paul Johnson (HarperCollins)
The Patriot's Handbook edited by Dr.George Grant

Literature Texts

The Last Crusader by Dr. George Grant (Included on the CD)
Longitude by Dava Sobel
The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne
Greyfriars Anthology of Puritan Sermons edited by Gregory Wilbur (Included on CD)
The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper
Greyfriars Anthology of Early American Short Stories edited by Gregory Wilbur
The Confidence man by Herman Melville
Nashville 1864 by Madison Jones
Poetry from the *Norton Anthology of Poetry, Shorter 4th edition*

Suggested Supplemental Reading

Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe
The Sketchbook, Washington Irving
Religious Affections, Jonathan Edwards
The House of the 7 Gables, Nathaniel Hawthorne
At the Moon's End, Andrew Nelson Lytle
George Whitefield, Arnold Dallimore
God & Government, Gary DeMar
Federalist Papers, Hamilton, Jay, & Madison
Red Badge of Courage, Stephen Crane
Struggling Upward, Horatio Alger
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Washington Irving
Cabin Faced West, Jean Fritz
Magnalia Christi Americana, Cotton Mather
Decision in Philadelphia, Collier & Collier
Moby Dick, Herman Melville
Red Badge of Courage, Stephen Crane
I'll Take My Stand, Donald Davidson
A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants, Junius Brutus
The Autobiography, Benjamin Franklin
The First Salute, Barbara Tuchman
Emergence of Liberty, Doug Kelly
America's Christian History, Gary DeMar
Patrick Henry, David Vaughan
Gouveneur Morris, Theodore Roosevelt
Alexander Hamilton, Henry Cabot Lodge
Evangeline, H. W. Longfellow
American Democrat, James Fenimore Cooper
The Naval War of 1812, Theodore Roosevelt
The Birth of the Modern, Paul Johnson

The Trail of Tears, John Ehle
Disquisition on Government, J. C. Calhoun
A Defense of Virginia, R.L. Dabney
Uncle Tom's Cabin, H.B. Stowe
Penhally, Caroline Gordon
Collected Tales, A.E. Poe
Southern Essays, Richard Weaver
Leaves of Grass, Walt Whitman
The Lincoln Nobody Knows, Webb Garrison
Call of Duty, Steve Wilkins
Christ in the Camp, William Jones
Intellectuals, Paul Johnson
Servile State, Hillaire Belloc
Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain
Up From Slavery, B. T. Washington
Killer Angel, George Grant
Mont St. Michel, Henry Adams
Carry A Big Stick, George Grant
The Proud Tower, Barbara Tuchman
The Aftermath, Winston Churchill
Walden, Henry David Thoreau