**The Classical Christian Imagination**

**Our vocation as Christian educators involves**

* Reorienting our students’ longings and desires towards a vision of the true Kingdom, rather than the false visions of the “good life” that surround them. (The cross, baptismal font, and the table vs. the “icons” of the “happy life” seen at the mall, in commercials, and on the web, all of which orient us towards a consumerist vision of the world.)
* Modeling virtue as mentors in spiritual formation
	+ In the Greek world, philosophy meant pursuing goodness through both logos and ethos.
	+ The Church Fathers developed this concept with the understanding that the love of true virtue brought profit for the soul and that training our affections to imitate Christ was how to restore our broken image of God.
	+ Virtues formed through imitation and practice are key to historic Christian formation
* Rehabituating our students into a different way of being human, shaped through practices, rhythms and rituals.
	+ Prayer
	+ Spiritual disciplines
	+ Singing
	+ Celebrations of the Church year
* Enculturating students with the story of the gospel. According to James K. A. Smith. “Christian worship doesn’t just teach us how to think; it teaches us how to love, and it does so by inviting us into the biblical story and implanting that story in our bones.”
* Reintegrating the disciplines. In the classical view of education, Christ is the “Logos” that binds all the disciplines together in a harmonic whole (theology as “Queen of the Sciences”).
* Shaping image bearers sent into a broken world. According to N.T. Wright, “Our task as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled Christians, following Christ and shaping our world, is to announce redemption to a world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to a world that has discovered its brokenness, to proclaim love and trust to a world that knows only exploitation, fear and suspicion.”
* Cultivating good taste—the Good, the True, and the Beautiful

**From “The Christian Imagination” by Janine Langin**

“We tend to think of the imagination as “ice cream on the cake”-- as flight, fancy, distraction, decoration. And education, of course, should focus on the fundamentals. My contention is that there is nothing more fundamental than the imagination, and that our loss of respect for it is directly linked to religious apathy.”

“We access all reality past, present and future, through its screen. It colors our view of ourselves in the world from the ground up.”

“Imagining is an act of hope, a challenge to fate, an effort to take matters in hand and to accept our unique role as human beings, 'in the world but not of it.' It is the weaver of culture.”

**From *You Are What You Love* by James K. A. Smith**

“An intellectualist model of the human person—one that reduces us to mere intellect—assumes that learning (and hence discipleship) is primarily a matter of deposition ideas and beliefs into mind-containers.”

“Instead we need to embrace a more holistic, biblical mode of human persons that situates our thinking and knowing in relation to other, more fundamental aspects of the human person.”

“What if instead of starting from the assumption that human beings are thinking things, we started from the conviction that human beings are first and foremost lovers? “

“To be human is to be animated and oriented by some vision of the good life, some picture of what we think counts as “flourishing.” We are oriented by our longings, directed by our desires. We adopt ways of life that are indexed to such visions.”

**From *Beauty and the Word* by Stratford Caldecott**

“Through doing and making through *poesis*, the house of the soul is built.”

“Our goal in education is a sympathetic or connatural knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful, rather than an abstract appreciation of values at a distance. For the ancient writers, this meant that education at every stage must be musical in this broad and deep sense. For Plato in the *Laws*, speaking through the Athenian, education as a whole is comprised of ‘singing and dancing.” When the right kind of song penetrates the soul, the result is an education in virtue.”