



REASONS FOR CONSIDERING LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

"Adapted from Dan Gehrke's 'Why Christian Education?'"

Below are some of the concerns people have posed to Lutheran high school education and answers to these concerns

CONCERN #1 - Isn't a public high school a neutral environment for my son or daughter? (Isn't it good enough?)

While we would by no means wish to slam public high schools, we simply want to draw out reasons for considering Lutheran high school. We acknowledge that there are many outstanding students, parents and teachers that are Christian within both public and private school systems, and we are thankful for this.

Lutheran high schools are excited to offer a worldview that is centered in Christ. God is the reference point for truth and learning within our Lutheran high schools. If God is not the reference point for truth and learning in a high school then something else is, and often times that something else is secular humanism.

In many public high schools, students are told in some fashion that Biblical principles are irrelevant, and that absolute right or wrong do not exist. These perspectives promote consciously or subconsciously, non-Christian philosophy and worldview.

We recognize that much of the life of a Christian is spent in environments that are very non-Christian in nature. Discernment of right and wrong while in the world is indeed an important spiritual discipline. Lutheran high schools wish to encourage and affirm your son or daughter that a Christian worldview is not at all wrong, intolerant or old-fashioned.

In his book *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, well re-known researcher and author George Barna reminds us "A family can benefit from the help of a supportive community, especially when that community is grounded in the Christian faith- a faith that is genuine, unchanging, readily accessible, focused on what matters to God and based on love and truth. Imagine the power that would be available to a family - any and every family - in which parents are godly, biblically literate, responsible advocates of God's ways and supported by a godly, Bible-driven body of Christians who share the same spiritual goals for every believer's children."

Christian parents have the opportunity to help shape the worldview of their children for Christ - that opportunity exists at Lutheran High.



CONCERN #2 - Doesn't Lutheran High shelter kids from the real world? (Shouldn't they experience the real world of a public high school?)

Part of the conversation in addressing this concern is addressing the question - What are parents who are seeking to give their children a "real world experience" hoping to accomplish? ..Our concern is that it is not in your child's or family's best interest to have young people in an environment 35-50 hours a week that would not respect (and possibly degenerate) their Christian worldview. The overriding humanistic philosophies that are prevalent within public schools - Darwinism, moral relativism, and secular humanism, have an effect on young people. We at Lutheran High would like to

support your parental guidance in bringing up young people who are secure in Christian truths. We respect the cognitive and moral growth of Christian adolescents whose brains are still developing and who are seeking answers to life's big questions.

We know that it is very important to recognize that peer pressure to participate in high risk behaviors most prevalent to teenagers certainly exist within private Christian high schools just like they do in public high schools. So what is the value of the Christian high school education -

Recognizing that because Jesus conquered sin for us by his death on the cross, we [adults and young people alike] can face pressures with -

- *Reliance upon Word and sacraments
- *God's Word of truth that does not change and defines right and wrong.
- *Teachers and counselors and leaders who provide Scriptural Christian guidance
- *An environment of fellow believers that encourages growth in Christ
- *Forgiveness when mistakes are made
- *Appropriate consequences when actions deserve consequence
- *Recognition of each student as a dearly loved child of God

Lutheran High is a part of this world, but what distinguishes it from other schools is that we strive against being *of* this world (Romans 12:2-3).

CONCERN #3 - Shouldn't my son or daughter be a witness to other students in the public high school?

While it is very true that young people can be excellent witnesses for Christ, please ask yourself - Are they ready? You may ask your son or daughter questions like the following -

- *How do you know that God exists?
- *Isn't the Bible just another story book?
- *How do you know that Jesus really rose from the dead?
- *What right do you have to suggest that Christianity is the only way to heaven?
- *If God is so great, why do bad things happen?

If your son or daughter's answers to these questions are slow to come, vague, or something like "Well those things are true for me," - you might want to allow for understanding that your son or daughter probably will not be an open witness for Jesus Christ in a public high school.

Some Christian students with the gift of evangelism can be witnesses to others in the public high schools. Their actions and relationships can be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. Yet the majority of adolescents will be uncomfortable witnessing to others due to the simple fact that they are still learning and being trained and brought up as strong Christian soldiers to boldly witness their faith.

The Theology/Religion department of Lutheran High is dedicated to training its students to be witnesses to others so that they can defend their Christian faith effectively in the open market place of ideas. The existence of God, the historical reliability of the Bible, Jesus' resurrection, and the validity of Christianity are topics that are objectively studied at Lutheran High. God's Word is used to train student disciples at Lutheran High. Our students can then, with the Holy Spirit working through them, be a witness to their non-Christian friends, and hopefully to others when the graduate from high school.

God's Word tells us - "But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give a reason to anyone who asks for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." (1 Peter 3:15)

Respectfully, Christian education up to age 13 or a couple of hours a week on a Sunday isn't going to get this done. Christian high school education provides an opportunity to work with Christian families to train disciples to change the culture of our world for Jesus Christ! What a blessing!



CONCERN #4 - How can I possibly afford the tuition? (It's too expensive)

It is true that Christian education comes with a fairly high price tag. Lutheran high schools across the country range from \$4500 to \$11,000 a year. Spread out over 10 school months, that is a commitment of \$450 to \$1100 a month for high school education.

Lutheran High comes in at about \$550 a month. A few things to consider with that price tag:

*LH does offer financial aid and tuition assistance for those that qualify.

*LH works very hard with outside foundations and sponsors to offer scholarship help to students.

*Many of the Lutheran churches in our area also offer financial support to families interested in attending Lutheran High.

The cost for tuition can seem daunting. How does a middle income family afford it?

Attitude and mindset are key! When something becomes a priority, it is easier to find a plan to make it work. If you believe that a Christian high school education is important in the academic and spiritual development of your son or daughter (and to your family), then sacrifices in other areas are doable.

We certainly understand that the cost of tuition for Christian education mandates sacrifices, but we also believe that there is nothing more important than the daily presence of God's Word in the lives of your son or daughter, nothing.

CONCERN #5 - But they want to go where their friends are going!

There is an underlying question at the core of this question: Who should make the decision about where your son or daughter will go to high school? Should that decision be made solely by the parents, solely by the student, or through a combined effort?

Parents who allow their kids to make or share in the decision about where they will go to high school might be faced with this type of situation:

You:

"I've thought and prayed about it and I would like you to go to Lutheran High."

Him or her:

"But, mom and dad, all of my friends are going to (fill in the public high school here)! You aren't going to separate me from my best friends, are you?"

Now what do you do?

Friends are extremely important to the average 13-14 year old. It is not surprising that they would want to do what their friends are doing. High school can be a scary proposition and going into a new environment with their best friends at their side can be very appealing. This argument is probably one of the most compelling one that a kid can make to his or her parents.

The answer to this dilemma is two-fold:

1. Parents should make the decision about high school for their son or daughter. Your son or daughter's input should be considered, but ultimately decisions about the spiritual well-being of your children should be yours.

If you believe that choosing a high school will play a role in the spiritual development of your son or daughter, then making that decision for them is not only prudent it is also Scriptural:

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6).

2. They will make new friends. That may be a harsh reality for them to grasp, but not only can they stay in touch with their existing friends, but they will make new ones as well.

If you have ever spent considerable time around high school students, you would know that friends and social circles are ever changing for kids during those four years. It is rare that a student has the same best friends as a senior that he/she does as a freshmen.

Regardless, the beauty of a Christian education is that it provides an environment that holds to a Christian worldview perspective. Your son or daughter can make friends that will encourage his/her walk with Christ. They will be taught at Lutheran High what it means to be a true Christian friend to others. They will have the opportunity to rise above and learn what it means to truly love others as Christ loved them.

CONCERN #6 - Doesn't bigger mean better?

Our Sioux Falls area is full of big and very impressive high schools. A quick tour through many of the public high schools in our area will reveal beautiful gyms, weight rooms, auditoriums, cafeterias, labs, etc. It seems only natural that parents would take one look around the facilities,

programs, classes, and activities that a large public high school has and think, "That's what we want for our son or daughter."

When you look at what our large public high schools have to offer, why would anyone choose a small Christian school? ..Because that small Christian school (Lutheran High) can offer something the larger schools cannot, including -

*Your son or daughter being less likely to get lost in the shuffle. At the smaller schools school leaders know your son or daughter well, and they often take the time to get to know your family. That kind of connection is key in the academic and spiritual development of your son or daughter. Relationships, not facilities, make a school excellent.

*We are a family. At a smaller school, students, parents and teachers feel as if they are part of a community in which they can take pride and have input. People know each other, and relationships become the foundation for the excellence of the school.

A caring, Christian environment that values each of its students as a special child of God is a wonderful blessing.



CONCERN #7 - But won't my son or daughter have a better chance of a college athletic scholarship if he or she goes to a larger public school?

This objection to Christian education is born out of a fear that athletes at a smaller Christian school won't receive the quality of coaching and development that a larger public school can provide and that talent could go unnoticed.

Neither of these fears is justified. Parents that insist that a small Christian school could be costing their son or daughter a chance at college scholarship are ignorant to how colleges and universities find athletes.

Consider the following:

*** If your son or daughter has Division I talent, it doesn't matter where he/she goes to high school** - schools will find them. The scouting and recruitment programs at colleges today must search all high schools to find talent. The competition is fierce for the best players - no matter where they go to school. To think that a talented player would go "unnoticed" is to believe that major colleges and universities aren't exhausting every avenue to find talent. That is a bad assumption.

***Smaller Christian high schools are often better connected to Division II and Division III schools** since those schools must recruit outside of the large public high schools to find talent to stay competitive. It should be noted that Lutheran High Schools consistently provides athletes to NCAA Division III and NAIA schools every year.

***The nature of college recruiting has changes over the last ten years.** Students with athletic ability who aren't sure-fire blue-chip prospects MUST market themselves with the help of their high school and high school coach. The web is full of college recruitment services that help players and parents market their son or daughter. It is more important to find a high school that has coaches who will work with players and

parents to videotape, call coaches, and work with recruitment services. Lutheran High coaches will work with athletes to connect them to programs where they can be successful.

***Parents often over-estimate the athletic abilities of their son or daughter.** That statement may seem harsh, but according to the NCAA statistics, for instance, only 2.9% of all boys high school senior basketball players will fill a freshmen roster position at any level of NCAA college basketball.