2020 Syllabus Updates HERE

Mater Amabilis High School Master Syllabus
Level 5, Years 1 and 2 (U.S. Grades 9-10)
Level 6, Years 1 & 2 (U.S. Grades 11-12)
Mater Amabilis High School at a Glance

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Introduction

In this program, we have tried to offer a flexible, customizable course of study for early high school, which is faithful to the principles of a Charlotte Mason education, as well as to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, which grants parents the right and the responsibility to be their children's primary educators.

We think so often of Charlotte Mason's educational principles in light of the needs of our younger children, but they are equally true for our teenagers, as they prepare to take their places in the adult world, and to discern the vocations which will determine the course of their lives. If a small child's mind is not a passive receptacle for information, neither is a teenager's. If a small child is made to partake of a wide and varied feast of "living ideas," then that feast should not cease simply because he is older and preparing for future endeavors. If in a small child the intellectual and spiritual lives are integrated, so too are those lives in our teenagers.

This high school education is meant to speak to the young person on the cusp of adulthood, as a physical, intellectual, and spiritual being, capable of virtue, and most of all, capable of reason. That capacity for reason is a kind of hunger in the mind, satisfied only by the meat of ideas, as presented in "living" books. This is why the education presented here does not rely on textbooks. Textbooks exist to impart information; as Charlotte Mason says, to give the mind mere information to feed on is like feeding it sawdust. What we want instead is to offer the opportunity for relationships: with history, with literature, with geography, with the natural world, with the fine arts that make our lives beautiful, and most of all with our Catholic faith.

For this course of study, we have selected a range of books and resources which we believe will stretch, challenge, and nourish any teenager's mind, regardless of personal interests, tastes,

proclivities, or future plans. A plumber can and should know his Aristotle just as much as a professor should -- what's to stop him? We have, however, tried to present flexible options. We have tried to build in alternatives that allow time and space for dual-enrollment and other courses that students might pursue outside their home studies, as well as extracurricular activities, jobs and internships. As the high-school years progress, students' lives often become complicated, and it's good to have a program that can flex, depending on what's being outsourced or covered by life experiences.

At the same time, books will be a student's chief teachers throughout his educational career, and we have tried to choose good, living teachers for every subject. Like any teacher, these teachers are human. There is a human mind behind every living book. It is worth noting here that any human mind is a complex of ideas, and that some of those ideas may be better than others. Consider the examples of Church Fathers like Tertullian, whose writings verged into heresy at certain points, but whose good and true ideas are not negated by mistaken ones. Our high-school planning committee has made every effort to choose what Charlotte Mason would call *the very best books:* books of the highest literary quality, books dedicated to good ideas and the pursuit of truth. Not all of these books are books by Catholic authors, and none of them (with the exception of papal encyclicals) is infallible. The reader is asked to approach every reading with discernment, as he might approach a conversation with a beloved friend whose views will not be a perfect reflection of his own. With that in mind, we encourage parents to read alongside their children. Their education is your education as well, and your best function, as the homeschooling parent of a high-school student, is to be a co-learner and conversational partner. Notes will be provided to help with difficult texts, but bear in mind that a huge component of a Charlotte Mason education, especially at this level, is to help a student develop as a *thinker,* a discerner of ideas, and a pursuer of truth.

At this level, a student is spending more or less a standard six-hour school day in study. It's reasonable to think in terms of an hour a day for each one-credit course, and half that for a half-credit course. Naturally some students will work more quickly, some more slowly. But six hours is a reasonable maximum time expectation for daily work in high school. The student should *not* need to study at night (unless that's when a given student does his or her work anyway; teenagers sometimes thrive at strange hours) or on the weekends.

Parents may find that they need to adjust the workload as they go. For a ninth grader, especially, the syllabus as written is a lot of work. It is fine to pare back extra readings; it is fine to pare out subjects like government and economics early in high school, if desired (the standard graduation requirement is a half-credit of each, though in MA we wanted to include some readings in both these subjects yearly). For older high-schoolers, it's entirely reasonable to substitute dual-enrollment courses for some of the selections provided here, and to calibrate the home workload to accommodate time spent in classes plus assigned homework for those classes.

If you want to see how MA stands up to standard state requirements for graduation, here are those standard requirements, in a handy worksheet format. It may help you to work through the

MA syllabus to fill in these blanks with listed book titles, to see how your child will be achieving required credits using MA. In most instances, what MA offers exceeds these standard requirements.
Here is a similar list in checklist style.

These are requirements for college-bound students. Of course, not every student will or should attend a traditional four-year college. BUT every student deserves the very best, most rigorous liberal-arts/Christian Humanist education available for his or her level. Of course parents are free to adjust the syllabus so that that excellent education does correspond to a given student's level of ability, to stretch without overwhelming.

A Note About Optional/Additional Readings:

In addition to the books set for a given subject, many subjects also have lists of optional or additional reading. A family might opt to do none of this reading, and that would be fine. A family wanting to incorporate some of these readings might do so in any of the following ways:

- In a morning basket
- As an evening family read-aloud
- As part of the student's free reading
- Anywhere in the schedule where gaps open up -- even if those gaps occur in a different subject area. Any time there's a break in the reading, or a book comes to an end and there's nothing to take its place: that's a good time to plug in something extra.

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I. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
II. ENGLISH
III. HISTORY
IV. GEOGRAPHY
V. GOVERNMENT, ECONOMICS, AND PHILOSOPHY
VI. SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, FOREIGN LANGUAGE
VII. FINE ARTS
VIII. ELECTIVES
IX. FURTHER RESOURCES

CONTENTS BY LEVEL

LEVEL 5

LEVEL 6