

# HEAD OF SCHOOL

At Cypress Christian School, “running the race” is much more than a metaphor...



Head of School Stephen Novotny encourages a young elementary student competing in this year's Run-4-Fun.

# Contenders for Life

By Stephen Novotny, J.D.



While there is a place for non-competitive sports programs, enrichment classes that are not graded, and cooling stations at amusement parks, a wise person realizes that such soft and comfortable situations are not to be seen as normal. Life can be described with many words, but “easy” is not one of them. To the contrary, life is a battle. Life is a contest. Life is a difficult race. When the apostle Paul chose a way to describe his life experience to his apprentice Timothy, he wrote “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (II Timothy 4:7) Hard words to describe a hard reality.

The fact is, just as in the apostle Paul’s time, the life that modern man faces is just as difficult. The only question is will a person be prepared for this reality of life, or will they be caught by surprise and overwhelmed when they inevitably come face to face with this truth? The word “contender” describes a person who is fully engaged in a contest or battle. Here at Cypress Christian School, we are committed to preparing students to be powerful contenders in life. We are committed to do all we can to prepare each student mentally, physically, and spiritually for the race God has called them to run.

## Mentally Prepared

Most Fortune 500 companies spend a substantial amount of money each year on safety awareness training for their employees. When you go into a modern manufacturing plant, you normally see a huge sign that states how many days have safely passed since the last work-related injury occurred. Why is so much energy and time spent on these efforts? Because it has been proven that if you increase a person’s mental alertness, they are more successful in avoiding hazards and in achieving success in their endeavors. This

principle is true in all aspects of life. If a person is not aware of the difficulty and dangers of life, they will be unprepared for the trouble they will inevitably experience, and more easily be overcome by it. Alternately, if a person is alert and prepared, there is a much higher likelihood that they will be able to prevail over the challenges that come their way. Not only does Cypress Christian School stress the importance of excellence in academics, but the school also emphasizes that students should practically use their academic knowledge as a means to prepare for challenges that will come their way in the future. This is why the Cypress Christian School mascot is a warrior. We understand there is a battle and we are committed to helping our students prepare for it.

## Physically Prepared

One of the unique characteristics of Cypress Christian School is the phenomenal amount of access that all of our students have to participating in co-curricular activities, including a wide array of competitive athletics. The school intentionally does this in order to allow as many students as possible to profit from rigorous athletic training. We believe that great mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits are gained at the same time an individual reaps the physical benefits from athletic competition. In the book of Genesis, it is clear that from the beginning, God designed man with both a physical and spiritual component. Having a strong reserve of physical strength is often helpful when bearing the weight of emotional and spiritual struggles. It is notable that when the great prophet Elijah was emotionally and spiritually exhausted, the Bible records that God dispatched an angel to administer a physical treatment plan that included appropriate food,

water, and rest. Recognizing the basic nature of how God created us, Cypress Christian School is in the business of physically preparing students so they will be strong in facing the challenges of life.

## Spiritually Prepared

Many of the struggles encountered in life are experienced solely on the spiritual plane. However, even physical battles have spiritual causes. Bullets do not explode from the barrel of a rifle, nor do arrows spring from a bow string on their own accord. Instead, there is usually a spiritual cause behind these physical effects. A spiritual condition of greed causes one nation to seize the territory of another by force of arms. A self-serving pride will propel a king to start a physical war against another nation. In the end, it is the spiritual aspect of our existence that defines both the spiritual and physical significance of life. Jesus put it this way, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26) Of all the things that Cypress Christian School does, preparing our students to succeed spiritually is the most important for both today and for eternity. We do this by letting our students know that temporal failures and defeats can be overcome when the ultimate victory of life is secured through faith in Jesus Christ. Armed with the knowledge that final victory is certain, the other challenges of life can be faced with hope. At Cypress Christian School, we strive to prepare our students spiritually so that with the apostle Paul they will be able to say “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

*Mr. Novotny’s photo by Signature Studios*