Challenge Math Program FAQs

1. **Why has Classical Conversations chosen to "standardize" their Challenge-level math track with the Saxon program?**
    a. It is a complete **K-12** Program
    b. Teaches math spirally, incrementally, systematically, and with repetition.
    c. Intentionally *integrates* with the subject of science and other practical applications "along the way".
    d. Has been around for more than 25 years with proven results.
    e. Computer-based, DIVE CD's available that aid in "extra" help for home school parents in *introducing* the Saxon Lesson. (Be sure your editions match☺)
    f. *Teaching Tape Technology* has created DVD's that work through every practice problem *and* lesson problem for Saxon Math editions. website link view video sample link
    g. Listen to Leigh Bortins concerning the Saxon Math selection. link

2. **Where is the Geometry in the Saxon Math program?**

    Many universities require students to have a full year of informal geometry in order graduate. The Saxon math program has integrated geometry into their Algebra scopes. Therefore once student has completed Algebra 1 and 2 they have completed three credits.

3. **How do I record Saxon Math credits on my transcript?**

    Visit Saxon's FAQ webpage.

4. **Do colleges view Saxon as an acceptable math curriculum?**

    Yes, Saxon textbooks are used by thousands of students in public and private schools nationwide. Many of these students have continued their educations at colleges and universities throughout the country. There have been no major problems with these institutions accepting Saxon's math programs. Some have had questions regarding our integrated approach to geometry, but in every case we have successfully addressed the questions with a letter of explanation. – *from Saxon FAQ page*

5. **We do not use Saxon Math at home, why should I attend the Challenge Math/Logic Seminar?**

    Participating in the *math seminar* of a particular Challenge program is about the *dialectic (logic) discussion or skill* of math concepts as well as working through some of the math problems associated with that math concept. It is not about "getting through" a *certain* math book.

    While using the same text at home that is being used as the reference in the one hour math seminar is *convenient*, it is not *necessary or required* in order to benefit from the math seminar.

    CC Challenge tutors will work from CC's core math program, which is Saxon. Parents may use the math curricula of choice at home and still benefit greatly from the dialectic discussion and *logical thought process* during the math seminar.

    Suggestion: Check with your tutor on the concepts covered using the Saxon Algebra reference and how it may correlate with your preferred math program at home. There will be similarities that may easily coincide in schedule between the two programs.

Classical Conversations recognizes that the selection of a solid math curriculum is an intimidating task for many home school parents. As home school parents our greatest desire is to "do things right", but we must be careful to not make decisions based on ignorance, fear, or the latest "fad". A few of CC's leadership team members were engineers by training, and they find the math included in Saxon solid and excellent. Your math curricula choice will be based on your own views of math and past experiences with math. Remember there is no "perfect" math curriculum; upper-level math will require hard work no matter what math curricula you end up choosing. May the Lord grant you wisdom!

Comments from Leigh Bortins regarding Saxon and the Math/Logic Seminar…

Saxon math texts are popular among home school families because their incremental explanations and practice sets allow most parents and students to teach themselves Algebra. Classical Conversations uses Saxon's most recent edition texts. Most students can not learn Algebra in a class setting in only an hour a week. To excel, they must work daily at good study habits and completing the problem sets while a parent at home keeps up with their work. By following the math of their eldest child, most parents can relearn while their child learns and then they will have a much easier time teaching math with subsequent children. Home schooling is work for the parent as well as the child. If you couldn't read, you would need to learn how to read in order to teach your child. The same idea applies to math. It is currently fashionable to be innumerate in America. Being innumerate is as dangerous as being illiterate in our culture. Christians especially have no excuse to give up on the language of God's Creation (mathematics). Please, pray not to pass this attitude on to your children.

The goals of the Algebra seminar are to explain the new lessons for the week, go over any previous difficulties students have had, and provide a chance to discuss math with other students. At the beginning of each seminar, students need to tell the tutor which problems are challenging them, otherwise the tutor can't help. When the student's questions are resolved, the tutor will move on to explaining the next four lessons assigned for the upcoming week. The class will study the practice problems together, working at the board so both the tutor and students can see how they approach the problem. Quite often one student will clarify a problem another student has.

Algebra students must work on good study habits. Students who have always been good at math start to have difficulty at this point for two reasons. First, they are often used to doing math in their head. When they encounter multi-step problems, they may lose track of the steps if they do not write them down. Second, the number of steps increases opportunities for careless errors. To help overcome these problems, insist that problems with more than one step be written down. Also, insist that only a few problems be completed per page. Many students attempt to do 25 problems on the front of one sheet of paper. This leads to a lot of small numbers per page, which are difficult to check quickly. We suggest dividing a page into four sections for four problems. It may seem like a lot of wasted space now, but it is a habit that will pay off as the number of steps increase in higher math.

Saxon has done a great job of hand-holding through the Algebra I text. In the later texts, Saxon expects the student to be able to look up previously taught information and to study the steps presented. They also make the assumption that students understand basic algebraic principles and do not always show every detail when solving a problem. Learning to study well in Algebra 1/2 and Algebra I will greatly improve the odds for success in Algebra II and beyond.

- excerpt from Challenge I Guide (pps 11, 12)