

Easy Homeschooling Techniques

Sampler


This ebook is an excerpt of the first Seven Chapters from
Easy Homeschooling Techniques
(Christian Edition)
by Lorraine Curry

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EASY Homeschooling Techniques



The REAL
How-To
Guide

3rd Edition

Written and Illustrated by Lorraine Curry

Easy Homeschooling Techniques

Christian Edition

By Lorraine Curry

Ebook Edition

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“Jessica’s Favorites” booklist—Jessica Curry Jobes

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5 Stars for 5 Years!

The contents are definitely worth it and I am very impressed.

Germaine Anderson, The Homeschool Bookmark

I love reading your book. Very informative and it is one of the best among many I purchased about homeschooling.

Zsolt, NH

How is it possible that Lorraine Curry wrote in one book what others have attempted in so many?

Deborah Deggs Cariker, former Houston area star reporter

I thoroughly enjoyed reading your EasyHomeschooling Techniques, even with all the religious references. Had it been available and had I realized I could teach my own children at home I certainly would have used it as a guide.

Rebecca Brown, www.rebeccasreads.com

I've been devouring Easy Homeschooling Companion. Thank you for writing it! I'm also re-reading Easy Homeschooling Techniques today. Both titles are giving (re-giving) me the direction that I'm needing! THANK YOU!!

Deb, NE

My doubts disappeared, replaced with a peace, knowing that I made the right choice. I thank you so much for the "tools."

Jo Ann

I LOVE my book. . . . Thank you for getting me thinking, re-organized and motivated again!!

Pat, GA

The book was wonderful. . . . Thank you for the encouragement and push into the right direction.

Debbie Burkett

Easy Homeschooling Techniques by Lorraine Curry has some unique aspects I have seen in no other homeschooling book.

Mary Collis, Home School Favourites, Australia

I have read chapter 1 about 20 times! It is the one book that I am recommending to anyone considering homeschooling. The book is one of those life-changing books—if you read it and follow its guidelines, it will change your life (unless you already do all of this). If I had one word to describe what the book teaches it would be “focus.”

Edie Molder

I absolutely LOVE this book! I already have a copy, but I often lend it out, and then I really miss it!

Linda, CA

I have read it twice! After seven years of homeschooling I have learned that the most expensive or most time consuming teaching method is not always the best. Your book makes that SO clear. It was also very encouraging.

Millie in CA

I just got the sample copy, and sat down and read two sections . . . the ones on methods and home businesses. If the rest of the book is this good, you’ve got a winner.

Mary Hood, *The Relaxed Home Schooler*

Bite-size, manageable chapters bursting with information . . . something for everyone.

Shari Henry, author of *Homeschooling: The Middle Years*

It was your book that made it look so easy to homeschool, that my daughter and I are pulling my three grandchildren out of public school.

Patricia A. Saye, "Lady Liberty"

Wealth of important information.

Kathy Reynolds, *The Home School Gazette*

I LOVE your book!!!!

Penni, MA

It is wonderful! It gives real, simple advice that can help avoid burnout while homeschooling.

Debbie, IL

I've gotten so much encouragement from your book. . . . God bless you.

Renee

An EXCELLENT resource for beginning homeschoolers and veterans alike! Highly recommended.

Robin Nash, The Mustard Seed.

A superb job.

Laurie Hicks, author of *Simply Phonics & Simply Spelling*.

Lorraine Curry has a gift for making homeschooling easy! This book is no exception. Chapters are short, manageable for the mom needing help and needing it QUICKLY! Whether you are new to homeschooling, wanting to get off to a good start; or you have homeschooled for more years than you can count, this book will have much to offer. I found myself making excuses to curl up to read just ONE more chapter!

www.lifetimebooksandgifts.com

I can't remember if I let you know how much I LOVE your book! It was such a breath of fresh air! I have been VERY impressed with it. It was such a delight for me. You KNOW it is a great book when a veteran is just as encouraged as a newbie!

Cindy Rushton, author, publisher of *Time for Tea*

I guess my excitement stems from the many books I've read and gotten nowhere with . . . something about the way yours is written . . . your book spoke to me in a way that none of the others have . . . it's so easy to follow—all the symbols you put in there to mark what goes in a notebook were very helpful.

Dee, FL

Lots of great stuff. Many more goodies than just techniques for teaching. Lorraine believes that home education does not have to mimic institutional school . . . also doesn't believe in letting students "do their own thing" without accountability. Methods are quite similar to Charlotte Mason with an emphasis on lots of reading and research. Tells HOW to implement a low stress education without blowing the budget. I learned new things, and it reaffirmed several points on which I was shaky . . . definitely worth a read, and a re-read at that.

Virginia Knowles, *The Hope Chest*

*Home*schooling ^{EASY} Techniques

by Lorraine Curry



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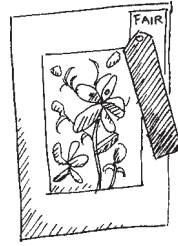
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Are you Qualified?

- ☐ I love my children.
- ☐ I have, or can make, some time each day to spend with them.
- ☐ I have strong beliefs not taught in public schools.
- ☐ I can probably do better than public schools.
- ☐ I can read and write.
- ☐ I usually commit to things I believe in.

Did you check most of the boxes? You are qualified to homeschool!

Dingbat Key

- ✓ Teaching tip or technique
- ✗ General tip or technique
- ✍ Notebook activity
- ★ Especially important statement
- 📖 See more in *Easy Homeschooling Companion*
- 📖 Vintage or out of print book
- 👉 If bolded, look in the back of the book.
- ✍ New in this 3rd edition

What a Little Girl Should Be Taught

- To cook plain wholesome food
- To make her own clothes
- To be neat and orderly
- To care for her own room
- To learn well the art of housekeeping
- To care for her person
- To exercise a quiet reserve in the presence of boys and men
- That all cheap talk is unbecoming
- That loose jokes about “beaux” and “lovers” are improper
- That modesty is a priceless treasure, and will prove her surest protector
- That her brothers are better escorts than most other young men
- That her mother is her best companion and counselor
- That her dress should be plain and not the chief subject of her thoughts or conversation
- That she should wear only such styles of clothing as will cover her person modestly
- That it is better to be useful than ornamental
- That there will be time enough to learn fancy work after she has learned to darn stockings
- That the old rule, “A place for everything and everything in its place,” is a good one
- That she should dress for health and comfort as well as for appearance

Home and Health © 1907, Pacific Press Publishing

What a Little Boy Should Be Taught

- To be strong and brave—a little man
- To shun evil companions
- To respect gray hairs
- To be gentle
- To be courteous
- To be prompt
- To be industrious
- To be truthful
- To be honest
- To prefer the companionship of his sisters over other girls
- To honor his father and mother
- To be temperate
- To discard profanity
- To be thoughtful and attentive
- To keep himself pure
- To be his sister's protector
- To refuse to listen to vulgar jokes or stories
- To use common tools skillfully
- To care for his own room
- To do all kinds of housework
- To earn money and to take care of it
- To be neat and orderly in his habits and appearance
- To be self-reliant
- To be his father's partner

Home and Health © 1907, Pacific Press Publishing

Foreword

When Lorraine sent me an earlier edition of this book, I sat down and read the whole thing, which I didn't really have time to do. I had the feeling I was reading all the how-to books boiled down into one volume. This book is concise: Lorraine won't waste your time telling you things you already know. But she will show you how to keep school from being an expensive, confusing operation that leaves you tearing your hair out. She has included detailed courses of study for each grade, excerpts from vintage books, author and poet lists, schedule planners and a list of free or inexpensive resources. Briefly and clearly, she explains how to make sense of various homeschooling methods, lay a good foundation and set goals that you can meet. She'll give you six ways to tell if you are qualified to homeschool, identify time robbers, help you choose good literature for your children and encourage you to read classic novels to even your youngest children. She'll help you see you can learn to draw and paint with your children and why it's important. She even discusses cleaning, making a peaceful home with obedient children, teaching with old books and old-fashioned methods and training your child for eternity! I loved this book! Reading it may give you the confidence you've been needing. A wonderful gift for a new or veteran homeschooler. It would be a special comfort to someone who is being pressured by family or friends and has begun to lose sight of the big picture.

Tammy Duby
www.tobinslab.com

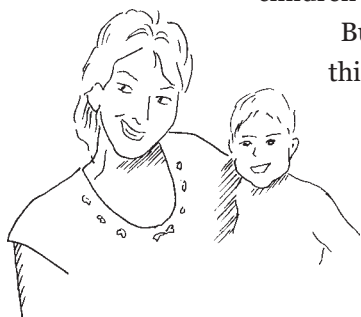
Preface

As you grow, Jessie, you will be trained in the way that God wants you to go . . . I love you, Dad. —August 5, 1983

I forced open my heavy eyelids and looked around the dimly lit room. Would that baby ever stop crying? The pale green walls were about to enfold me in deep sleep. But wait—that was my baby! It had to be! The tiny hospital’s nursery had been empty as we passed earlier that evening.

Soon that baby was snuggled quietly in my arms, and I was in the midst of life’s most wondrous experience. An experience—amazingly—I never would have chosen. But Jesus is Lord of my life, and that night I learned, once again, that His ways are not our ways—they are much better! Before long, three other precious children were placed by a loving God under our sheltering wings. How then could we tear them out from that protected place and entrust their care and education to anyone else? No one else could love them as we did! Besides—we had a mandate from God. We knew that obedience to God equals blessing. I also knew—from personal experience—how a life without God could result in heartache and sorrow. How then could we place our sweet children in God-less government schools?

But me?—a *teacher*? I never wanted anything to do with education! My fondness for art and design made “education” seem bland and boring.



✍ **However, my children's well being was more important than my inclinations.** Yet, I still refused to consider a structured curriculum. Simple techniques evolved that resulted in children rich in skills and knowledge. In fact, God blessed all of us beyond what we could have imagined or achieved for ourselves. *In every thing ye are enriched by him* (I Cor. 1:5).

A Practical Guide for the Beginner

This book was written as a technique manual for the beginner. It begins at the beginning, details simple techniques and gives step by step instructions. It answers questions, such as:

- “What do I buy?”
- “What can I skip?”
- “How can I simplify the methods, materials and advice?”
- “What do I do first?”
- “How do I do it?”
- “Why should I avoid a structured or full curriculum?”
- “Can I really homeschool through high school?”

You will soon learn how to start and operate a homeschool that will rival the best schools in the nation. This book explains the “nuts and bolts” of this method called *EasyHomeschooling*. You can homeschool, whether you are rich, poor, poorly educated or even employed outside of your home—and the payoff is excellence, with minimal effort. ★ ***Do not spend a dime, or saddle yourself with unnecessary stress, until you read this book!***

A Better Way for the Experienced

Are you already homeschooling? Do you feel overwhelmed because of what you think you must do to educate your children? Are you marooned on Methods Island, trying to make sense of them all? Are you drowning under a deluge of educational materials? The catalogs keep getting bigger and bigger while the decisions become more and more difficult. Even reading the giant curriculum guides takes valuable time.

Are you using a structured curriculum? Do you really enjoy your lessons—and their preparation? Are the courses pushing too much? Are your children really learning anything?

Perhaps you have been using the unit study approach. How much time do you spend in preparation? And in “school”? Is this much time really necessary for quality education?

Are you searching for a method that will draw your family closer? Independent studies and computer courses can pull family members in different directions.

Which method will draw your family closer?

A Christian Book

Jesus Christ changed my life dramatically many years ago. Jesus Christ daily loads us with benefits (Ps. 68:19) and is faithful to answer every prayer as we stand in faith. Because of His death for my sins, and resurrection from the dead, I have a guarantee that the blessings will not end with this life. I would consider no other lifestyle nor philosophy.

Even if my beliefs differ from yours, we *do* agree about wanting the best for our children. This is a practical book—a how-to book. If my faith is revealed through its pages, I make no apologies. My goal for this particular book is not to share my faith but to share the method of educating called *EasyHomeschooling*. Nevertheless, I write as a Christian to other Christians—because as homeschoolers, Christians are the majority.

Materials

Have you ever gone to a store needing one item, and found yourself detained hesitating among an overwhelming array of manufacturer’s brands? The vast assortment of homeschooling materials now available can make things extremely confusing. Homeschooling does not

have to be so complicated! EasyHomeschooling is a simple—yet high quality—method of educating. Moreover, this method offers tips and suggestions for low-cost alternatives. Homeschooling can even be free! This book tells how. But because most of us want to purchase some books and materials, I give certain materials a stamp of approval and even produce and sell some items through our business ☞ **God's Gardener**. But the choice—whether to spend, or not to spend—is yours!

Do you want to be frugal or free with cash?

Three Basic Methods

The maze of methods can be simplified by sorting them into three basic groups: unschooling, structured schooling and a style of schooling that I will call watershed schooling.

Unschooling

John Holt—whose books are available at libraries—was the father of unschooling, the first method of the modern homeschooling movement. Bill Greer of ☞ **F.U.N. News** says that unschoolers want “. . . to keep alive the spark of curiosity and the natural love of learning with which all children are born.”¹

The idea behind unschooling is that individuals learn best when they are free to seek knowledge about personal interests. I found this true in my own life. My knowledge store accumulated only when I had a personal interest in—and sought out information about—a particular subject. The sum of what I learned during structured schooling could have been taught in a year or two. (If there had been more reading aloud from interesting books throughout my youth, things might have been different!)

Unschooling is a hands-off method. In pure unschooling the parent acts as teacher only when the child expresses interest in a particular topic—then merely aids the child in finding the resources he or she

needs. Mark and Helen Hegener, publisher and editor of *☞Home Education Magazine*, say:

Our children have always been completely responsible for their own learning, from the ABC's on up. They've known from day one that they've had our complete and loving support, and that we'd be here to help them whenever they asked for it. There's been no delineation in our family between "learning" and "living." As we live, we learn. It's as simple as that.

Dr. Raymond and Dorothy Moore in their book, *☞The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook*, report on a well-funded study done many years ago which gives a gold star to unschooling. "The children who were not formally taught at all had the highest scores in all areas measured." ³

Structured Schooling

Most of us know structured schooling well because we are its products! Structured homeschoolers have just moved the school into their homes—sometimes even moved a teacher into their homes with videos. The structured homeschoolers purchase their books, materials and teacher's guides from one company or from similar curriculum companies. Such books usually have an abundance of data in them that the students are expected to read and retain, but alas! students promptly forget most everything they have read. I know—I was schooled this way and also witnessed our daughters' lack of retention when they used these books. Although the books are sometimes beautiful and interesting, permanent learning is rare with a structured curriculum.

Watershed Schooling

A watershed is a ridge of high land dividing two areas that are drained by different river systems. A watershed is also a critical point that marks a division. I'm christening this group watershed because it is midway

between unschooling and structured schooling. Watershed parents usually, in their own words, pick and choose curricula. Some make their own plans and schedules and teach whatever they want. Others loosely follow the plan of a chosen method. They sometimes focus on the child's interest—as in unschooling—but more often the teacher decides what she wants her children to learn. She may have a schedule, or may just do school when it is convenient. These parents are usually flexible in what, where, why and how, and yet not so flexible that they give the child complete control—as in pure unschooling. Often much time is spent in reading aloud. There are more homeschoolers in this third group than in any other. ⁴ Some examples are *Charlotte Mason*, *Far Above Rubies*, *Five In A Row*, *KONOS*, and *EasyHomeschooling*.

EasyHomeschooling

Although other methods have given good results, all methods are not equal. EasyHomeschooling techniques such as planning, combining, using the library and reading aloud unite to produce high quality education without large expenditures of time or money.

Just as EasyHomeschooling provides maximum education in minimum time, the mission of this book is to provide maximum information in a minimum of words. I have chosen to leave out socialization and laws, as well as lengthy personal experiences, so that I can focus on what *you* will do in your own successful homeschool. By following the suggestions in this book, you will save its price, many, many times over. May *Easy Homeschooling Techniques* inspire your thoughts and actions and be always completely usable.

Lorraine Curry

www.easyhomeschooling.com

Since you will be learning with your children, I have used the pronoun, “you” interchangeably to represent you or your children. Many times you will want to have your child do the suggested activity. Other times you will do it together.

1

Laying Foundations

Thank you Lord, for this new adventure in your service. Thank you that you have called me to this. —February 20, 1989

I lay on the beach, gasping for breath. I was a body surfer and even Maui's huge winter storm waves couldn't keep me home! The exhilaration was worth the battering. In college, I wanted to skydive, but my father wouldn't grant permission—a friend's son had been killed when his parachute failed to open. Later, I was enticed by the opportunity to succeed in life insurance sales and became the first female member of our company's President's Cabinet. I've welcomed most challenges, but succeeding at this task of raising children has been life's biggest challenge—and its greatest adventure.



By definition, an adventure is an undertaking that includes uncertainty. Are you asking yourself, "Is homeschooling the best choice for my child? . . . Can I *really* do this?" I never really considered whether I was qualified to teach my own children. My desire to keep them home was so strong, I knew that I would find a way.

An adventure is often—by its uncertain nature—an exciting experience. There are surprises ahead that you don't even know about yet!

Homeschooling can be a financial speculation or risk—somewhat like a business venture. The word "speculation" makes it sound as if homeschooling is risky. But homeschoolers everywhere prove that this "venture" is a sure thing!

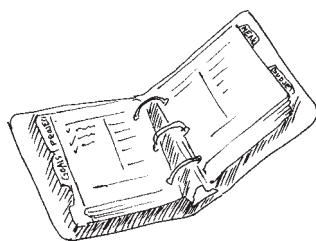
I wanted to protect them from the wild world!

List Motives

There are several good reasons to homeschool. I wanted my children to have a better education than I had. I felt like we could do better than the schools. I wanted them to know the truth of God's Word that would set them free—as it had me. I wanted to spare them the awful consequences of a life lived without God. I wanted to protect them from the wild world. I just wanted them to be home, not off somewhere else. My husband and I wanted to obey God. Why do you want to homeschool?

Notebook Planning

✍️ Get a notebook or diary. You can use a three-ring binder, loose-leaf notebook paper and at least five tabbed dividers or a thick divided spiral notebook. ✍️ I now have a *Busy Woman's Daily Planner*



with pages that seem to be made for this system. For help in choosing the planner and pages that will work best for you call **800-848-7715** or visit **www.thebusywoman.com**

Write your motives (reasons) for wanting to homeschool on the first page of your notebook. I think you will enjoy this list-making process as you *write the vision, and make it plain* (Hab. 2:2). These planning techniques will build a foundation that will make homeschooling easier and more focused. ¹

Now go to the second page and make a list of your values. A value is a *principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable*. Some values are a strong family, a close relationship with God, a consistently loving attitude and untarnished integrity.

Dream Dreams

✍️ Label your first index tab “Dreams.” List your dreams for yourself and your family. This activity should be done over a period of time, such as several days, as you pray and add to the list. Make sure you have everything, even those dreams that seem totally out of reach. Our God says, *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me* (Jer. 32:27)?

My notebook lists the following:

- I would see my children grown into fine young adults.
- I would be a designer in my own manufacturing company.
- I would write and publish several books, including an autobiography, how-to’s and novels.
- I would have wealth to give generously to God’s work.
- I would glorify God by using my creativity.

This list gives ideas and examples of the types of dreams that you can put on your list. Look over your own dreams list and check to see if your dreams are in line with your values. Either cross off those that aren’t or star those that are. But don’t be too hasty—another name for dreams is desires.

Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart (Ps. 37:4). *It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom* (Luke 12:32). *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land* (Is. 1:19).

Think about all the people you could help if you had more money. Very large budgets are needed to preach the “good news” today. Your family might be the one the Lord wants to use to help meet the world’s needs!

Set Goals

Goals are definite results that can be achieved within a certain period of time. Long term goals might be achieved within five years; short term within one. No need to list your long term and short term goals separately. These lists work. After three months, I had achieved

almost half of my top goals; after six, I crossed off more!

- ~~Start up business.~~
- ~~Run business.~~
- ~~Become organized.~~
- ~~Sell land.~~
- ~~Pay off credit cards.~~
- ~~Touch every home in our town for Christ.~~
- Pray habitually, using prayer list.
- Teach children to be self starters, accountable to God.
- Finish restoring house.

This is not my complete goal list. I have combined major goals for illustration purposes. Several completed goals will lead to fulfillment of your dreams. Again, take time to get your thoughts crystallized. Don't rush this process. When you get your goals down on paper and see a pattern emerging, it will be clearer why you have considered home-schooling.

✍ Label your second index divider "Goals." Following the examples, list your own goals. You may make separate lists of personal goals, homeschooling goals and business goals, along with goals for each of your children. Choose your top ten goals from your lists and star each or list these top goals on a separate piece of paper. These will be the goals that you will work on first. Place this list in the front of your goal section. If you have made lists for your children, choose one or two important goals for each of them.

At least once a year, review and revise both your dream list and your goal list. At that time you may decide that a particular dream or goal wasn't as important as you once thought. Eliminate it from your list and replace it with any new dreams and goals you want to add.

Commitment

Next, it is time to prayerfully consider commitment. If we go into major personal relationships without commitment, the relationship usually fails. Homeschooling also requires serious commitment. First, take the time to find out just what it is that God wants for you and your family. Remember, you *can do all things through Christ.* (Phil. 4:13).

There is a method for reaching your goals. There are steps to take that will lead to the fulfillment of your dreams. In Chapter 5, “Planning for Success,” you will learn how to schedule those steps. When you work your step lists, your goals will be met and surpassed, almost automatically. In the meantime, pray about committing to this life choice for your family. This book will make your commitment effortless, as you discover that homeschooling can be simple and natural.

✍ Enter your commitment statement or pledge on the very first page of your notebook along with your motive statement.

✍ This is *such* an important step! If you will not commit—especially to Biblical parenting and scheduling principles (described more fully in **✎*Easy Homeschooling Companion***) I cannot wholeheartedly recommend homeschooling. Your child might be better off elsewhere.

Educational Philosophy

Why educate? If you have read about home education, you may have already formulated some opinions, but don’t be too quick to define your educational philosophy. An example is Charlotte Mason’s. She said, “It is the business of education to find some way of supplementing the weakness of will which is the bane of most of us, as of the children.”²

Here’s another:

An education isn’t how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It’s being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don’t. It’s knowing where to go to find out what you need to know; and it’s knowing how to use the information once you get it. . . .³

Why should we educate anyhow?

✍ For more ideas on the philosophy of education, see Chapter 10, “Gleaning from History.”

✍ After you have formulated your educational philosophy, write it in the front pages of your notebook. When you have laid the foundation by listing your motives, commitment pledge, educational philosophy and values in the first pages of your notebook and your dreams and goals in their own sections, you are ready to go on and start your very own successful homeschool!

2

Starting Up


Started “school” this month. —February 20, 1989


Lephi, at five, amazed her aunt and uncle with her perfect reading. “Perhaps,” my *public-school-educator* sister offered, “she should have the advantages of the special resources of schools.” Although I highly respected her opinions and had been greatly influenced by her previously, this time God’s call to homeschooling was stronger than her advice. The fact is, the mother is the perfect teacher for her own children because she loves them more than anyone else ever could. The father, of course, is also qualified and responsible for teaching his own children.



Can you read? You can teach your children to read. Can you write? You can teach them to write. You can teach your children to teach themselves, even though you may not know a subject well. You can read and learn, and share what you’ve learned. You can learn along with them! Qualifications are minimal to guide your children into educational excellence.

Legal Requirements

Homeschooling is legal in every state. Information can be obtained from your state’s Department of Education or from the  **Home School Legal Defense Association**. Some homeschooling books

include this information—but be sure it is current. I found extremely outdated legal requirements in our library’s copy of  ***The Home School Manual*** by Theodore Wade. (It was the library’s oversight, not Mr. Wade’s—he regularly publishes new editions!)

Some states might allow you to choose what day of the year, days of the week and hours of the day you want to homeschool. Along with a minimum number of hours required, you might also need to sign and notarize forms stating your firmly held religious beliefs. Some states require a scope and sequence if one does not use a recognized curriculum. A scope and sequence details what one plans to teach each year and in what order the topics will be presented. See Chapter 5, “Planning for Success,” for more about the scope and sequence, including instructions for creating it.

If the parent uses a structured curriculum package from a major publisher, a scope and sequence may not be required. Although this may be easier when submitting information, the day-to-day use of a full curriculum is definitely more difficult and time-consuming. It is also the same ineffective style of educating that has been used in schools for years. This method attempts to pour facts and figures into the student, hoping that some will “stick.” It allows no room for individuality, but rather molds each student into a “clone” of the next one. Since I am a creative type, I hated this type of education as a youth and wasn’t about to tackle it, nor shackle my children with it. With *EasyHomeschooling*, you can forget the bother and expense of using a traditional curriculum with its hefty and formidable teacher’s guides!

Prepare!

Before you actually start schooling, some preparations need to be made. Along with making time and preparing spiritually, there is “pre-school”—but this preschool is not what you would expect! There is also the preparation of organizing the home which you will learn in Chapter 4. Because this startup is so easy and gradual, you can delay your organization until later, but if you feel you just must have order now, jump to “Making Order” first, and then come back here.

Make Time

If homeschooling is started with young children, there is a gradual building of routines—and very little time required—because subjects can be introduced one at a time.¹

If you are taking your child out of an institutional school, there might be more time required, but not as much as you might think. To make more time, set your priorities and eliminate distractions.

Disconnect the Distractions

✍ Some of my closest friends and family members say I am far too radical about TV and movies (and the KJV Bible). I would not be radical if these things were not a matter of life and death to Christians, our nation and the world, and I believe they are. I do not judge those who watch TV, I just don't understand. Even though I watch occasionally I come away more repulsed and determined that it is not for the Christian. Think about it! Where did the majority of criminals first see criminal activity? Where did the majority of youth first see fornication as acceptable and even “proper”? Why is the occult and the “supernatural” more acceptable today than even twenty or thirty years ago? Why are the churches so dried up and dead? Why have all these things overtaken us? Christians are not praying, but why? There is a Christian gift called discernment, but the Lord warns that we will become dull of hearing. ★ *TV has made us deaf and blind.*

Learn not the way of the heathen.—Jer. 10:2

At the very least, TV and videos are time robbers. Although there are a few worthwhile programs and videos, the value of these—in my opinion—can never outweigh their detriment. Thirty years of research show that ninety percent of achievement in school is determined by how much TV a child watches.² The separate hemispheres of the brain have different functions. If one is stimulated more in the developmental

TV trains your children in worldly ways.

stage (from ages two to twelve), the other could be stunted. The nature of TV dumbs down children, causing low attention span and creating the need for simplistic (instead of rich and classic) subject matter. Other negative effects on children are less sensitivity to the pain and suffering of others, greater fear of the world around them and increased likelihood of engaging in aggressive or harmful behavior. Many of you know exactly what I am talking about, because you have seen these effects in your own children. Consider these facts and predictions from *The Futurist* magazine:

Television is absorbing increasing amounts of people's free time [It is] entertainment without any need to associate with other people. . . . [It] deprives people of the social learning acquired during group entertainment. In the days before television and computers, face-to-face conversation was the primary means of entertainment, pursued around the dinner table at home. . . . This social entertainment trained people to deal with other people, to respect their interests The rise of electronic entertainment seems to have been accompanied by increasing rudeness . . . will tend to desocialize people, making them more prone to antisocial and criminal behavior . . . a non-society—a poorly integrated mass of electronic hermits, unable to work well together because we no longer play together. Institutions . . . will face the challenge of seeking support from people whose loyalty is almost entirely to themselves. ³

Even if there is nothing offensive about what one is watching, vulgar advertising can be flashed so quickly before pure and precious eyes that it is impossible to prevent access to this window of the soul.

✍ Who is the enemy here? Let's not forget to pray for all involved in media and entertainment and against the one who delights in stealing our children.

Along with TV, computers and online activities can also interfere with family solidarity and waste time. Soon after World War II, science fiction writings predicted “that people might become the slaves of machines . . . might begin to think differently, submit to computers, lose judgment, become spiritually shallow, unhappy and unable to cope with jobs and daily lives dominated by technology.”⁴

Having a computer requires self-control and wisdom. Contrary to popular opinion, it is not essential for a quality education. Your child will learn computer skills quickly when needed. There are so many better things to do—books to read, walks and picnics to go on, chores to do together, independent discovery—the list is endless.

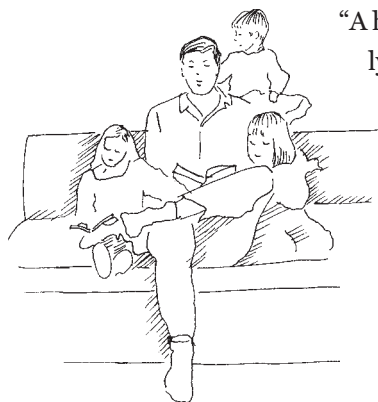
Other Time Robbers

Do you (or your children) spend a lot of time reading catalogs or magazines? Are your days spent on the telephone or shopping? Life is too short to waste. (Ps. 90:12)

Plan to spend the greatest portion of your time on the activities that will help you reach your goals. In Chapter 5, you will learn to list these activities as steps to your goals (step lists).

✍️ Take a one or two week inventory of exactly how you spend every hour of every day. You may see a whole lot of time that could be better spent.

The Solid Rock



“A hurried glance at Christ snatched after lying abed too late will never effect a radical transformation of character.”⁵

Christians know that the foundation of life is God’s Word. The Word should be the foundation of the Christian homeschool too. The most important activity in all endeavors—and in your homeschool—

ing effort—is a habitual quiet time. I thought I didn't have time when my children were small, but I found it an absolute necessity to make time, somehow. I had to trust God to give me the rest that I needed, even if I got up very early.

Secure your foundation before you actually begin teaching your children. If you have many small children and many demands on your life, hang on—it does get easier! Our four children were very close in age, so I know what some of you are going through. But our girls started helping at a young age, and eventually did so much of the housework, that I was able to do projects such as book writing! Wait on the Lord—there is a time and season for everything. Which brings me to counsel you not to rush into homeschooling when your children are too young.

How do you know when they are too young? Resistance to instruction is a good sign. Be sensitive to your child and ask the Lord, expecting His answer.



Most of all, *enjoy* those precious little ones—how I long to be able to return to those days you are now experiencing. They are truly the best days of your life!

Easy Preschool

You have prepared by praying, thinking, listening, listing, making time and possibly making order. Now we will begin schooling. You don't have to leave home. You don't have to buy toys, games or snacks. You don't have to expose your children to other children's germs. At this preschool you cuddle in with your little ones and read lots of good books. That's it! This is the *EasyHomeschooling* preschool. Simple, isn't it?

You do not have to spend hundreds of dollars when you begin to homeschool. Do not overwhelm yourself and your child with an excess of material. Easy does it. The best materials are often those that you already have in your home.


Bible

The earliest American schools had two textbooks. These schools used the Bible for history, literature, spelling, science, grammar and reading; and a hymnal for music reading, singing and writing music. Read at least one chapter a day from the Bible to even your youngest child. Your children will begin to learn morals, character and many other important things (see Chapter 8, “Training for Eternity”). Using the *King James Version* of the Bible will also give them a very strong start in English skills. See more early-learning tips for teaching the Bible in *Easy Homeschooling Companion*, especially in Chapter 5, “Harvesting from History.”

Ban TV! Break out the Books!

Professionals and intellectuals agree that the most important thing a parent can do for their child’s education is to read to them. The one common factor found in all children who learned to read without being formally taught was not high IQ, not high family income, not parents who had college degrees, but rather “all these children were read to by their parents regularly, frequently, and from whatever materials happened to be at hand—newspapers, road signs, even packing labels.” ⁶

If you do an abundance of reading aloud, your children will learn spelling, grammar, vocabulary and style without being formally taught.

It may be—especially if your child has watched much TV or many videos—that he or she will find it difficult to concentrate when you read aloud. If this is the case, ban video and start reading simple books on an interesting subject. The longer the fast from visual stimulation, the more their hunger for words develops. They will desire the mental stimulation of words and the enjoyable process of making their own mind pictures. May I suggest Beatrix Potter’s well written and illustrated titles such as *Peter Rabbit*. Other options are vintage books about animals by Thornton Burgess (reprints available from  **Dover**) or

Arthur Scott Bailey (www.hstresasures.com). These will hold a young child's interest, expand intelligence and whet his appetite for good books.

An easy startup technique is to introduce the basics one at a time. Make sure your child knows phonics well before going on to reading. When he can read fluently, begin handwriting exercises. Creative writing can only be done after handwriting is learned. (Pre-writing *can* be done, and is explained below.) Finally, begin simple math. An exception is combining spelling with phonics. See more in Chapter 6, "Combining Subjects."

Early childhood is the best time to begin establishing and maintaining habits—especially health habits such as brushing and flossing teeth, bathing regularly and washing face and hands as needed.

Phonics

Achievement in all subjects will be built upon thoughtful reading. Skill in reading starts with a mastery of phonics. Public education's failure is most obvious in this area as parents often purchase phonics materials and reteach their children the most basic of skills—when the school has had all day to do it. Look at what else parents are supposed to do.

[They should] . . . talk to their children about school and homework, read with them, go to the library, have books at home and ensure that their children attend school daily. "I'd like parents to go into the school and be involved with the teacher, the principal, the PTA . . .

”

Whew! Talk about overtaxing already stressed parents! You will do it right the first time by teaching your child yourself. (Homeschooling is also a more economical solution—public schools spend an average of \$5,325 per student per year! ⁸⁾

✍ Although the “No Child Left Behind” program has attempted to solve the problems, according to recent reports they are experiencing “growing pains.”

The Reading Solution

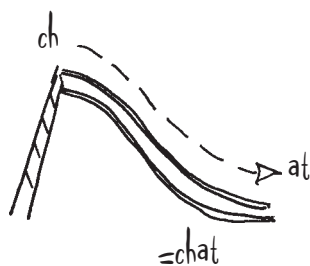
The solution to the reading problem is phonics. We used the same copy of *Alpha-phonics* by Samuel Blumenfeld for each of our children. Actually I used it for only three of our four, because Zephi sat in on her older sister's lessons and learned to read on her own. Several years ago, the book cost us around twenty dollars. It was one of our best buys considering the great value of reading and the per-student cost. The book was very easy to use. *Simply Phonics* is similar to *Alpha-Phonics*. It can be used for one to three years and will take your child step by step through letter sounds and word families. When your child finishes the book, he or she is able to read!

Soon your child will be able to read!

✓ A free *EasySchool* technique is to do it yourself without a book. Start with the lower case (small letters) because text is primarily lower case. Later your child will learn to read the upper case.

Using a pencil and paper (or a dry-erase marker board or chalk board), teach the sound of each letter, starting with the short vowels. (✓ Always speak as clearly as possible.) Add some consonants—one at a time—to make simple words such as *cat* and *dog*. Next teach the vowel combinations such as *ae* and *oi*. Other consonant combinations such as *ch* and *st* should be taught along with all the rest of the consonants. Finally, teach long vowels, long vowel combinations and words with silent *e* at the end such as “gate.”

To help your child blend the sounds of letters into words, use a simple playground slide diagram. At the top of the slide write the beginning letter or combination, and at the bottom, the rest of the word. “Make the ‘ch’ go down the slide and run into the ‘at’!” Keep it simple by teaching only the sounds of the letters. Later your child can learn the names—perhaps when long vowels are learned. Teach the usual sounds of the letters—do not confuse your child by teaching rules or exceptions now. If they ask, just tell them they will learn those later,



identifying them as “rule breakers.” If your little geniuses are really interested in these exceptions, have them list them in a notebook!


Here is a simplified sequence for teaching phonics. Teach the sounds consecutively. Make sure your child gets plenty of practice reading words that fit each pattern.

- 1) short *a, e, i, o, u*; and *y* sounding as a short vowel
- 2) consonant sounds (all the rest of the letters)
- 3) consonant clusters such as *ch, th, st*
- 4) broad *o*: *au, aw, al*
- 5) other clusters: *oi, oy, ou, ow*; *oo*; *ar, er, ir, or, ur*
- 6) long vowel clusters: *ea, ee, ai, oa, ow*
- 7) long vowels: words that end in silent *e*
- 8) *c* followed by *e, i* or *y* says “s”
- 9) *g* followed by *e, i* or *y* may say “j”

✓ For drill, make your own flash cards. Use three by five inch blank index cards, scrap cardboard or white poster board cut to size. Write one large letter or combination (*sh, pl, ch,* etc.) on each card. Have your child say the sound. Later put these cards together to form simple words.

Practice Makes Perfect

As soon as your child knows how to read, he or she needs practice. Get simple phonics-based readers such as *Hop on Pop* from the library or *Bob Books* from **Scholastic**. But don't try to use *Dick and Jane* ! These books have so many sight words in them, they will only frustrate your new reader. By using *McGuffey's Readers* —received free as an introductory offer from a book club—our girls were two grade levels ahead of other homeschoolers when they were in second grade. They were then reading independently and fluently, so we

discontinued *McGuffeys* but kept them for their content. The secret to success with whatever practice materials you choose is regularity. Do something every day, even if it's just for a short time. (Exact replicas of the original 1879 *McGuffey's* are available from  hsttreasures.com)

Some educational “authorities” would burden us with unnecessary work such as spelling, comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. These do not need to be learned separately! If a child is read to, learns to read phonetically, *is read to*, starts reading fluently, *is read to*, and continues to read individually, that child will learn, and learn well, all the peripherals of our language.

Penmanship

Don't be confused by the styles available. Just choose one and stick with it. We started with traditional and then went to italic. Since our eldest had started with regular cursive she did not do well with italic so we went back to regular cursive for her. All of our other children used italic workbooks. Zephi did calligraphy at eleven. At age fifteen, Jessica finally acquired an attractive hand after more practice with calligraphy and Spencerian. One complaint I hear from my children who have learned italic is that they can't read cursive, although they do eventually figure it out.

✍ Jessica has the best writing as an adult because she had the most practice as a child. Handwriting is important training in neatness and influences achievement in every subject.

✓ Although there are penmanship tablets available, any type of notebook or notebook paper will do. Use two lines or as many as necessary, adapting the size to that which your child is comfortable with. (Have him make a letter first so you can see.) In your best penmanship, write the alphabet in a column to the left of the page and let your child fill out the rest of each line.

✍ Worksheets for penmanship (and for nearly every other subject) can be printed from internet sites. Search for “free worksheets” along with your topic word at www.google.com.

Pre-Writing, Writing

✓ Encourage your youngest children to be storytellers. If your child is not able to write yet, take dictation as he or she tells you the story. Your child can then illustrate this story. This is the creative pre-writing I mentioned earlier. When you read to your children from a young age, they will be natural writers.

Copywork is an effective technique for the young child. Either write the passage for your child to copy or let him copy directly from a book. By doing copywork, your child will learn style and grammar from master writers.

When your children are able to write, have them transcribe their own stories. Don't pay any attention to errors at this point. You don't want to discourage them. If they want you to spell the words for them, do it. Eventually they will know more words. At that time, you can point out misspelled words or make a daily or weekly spelling list of those. (See more on spelling in Chapter 6, "Combining Subjects.") Save your students' papers—at least the best ones—you will treasure them someday! If you need help with grammar, get a language handbook from *Scott, Foresman and Company* (800-554-4411) or search www.amazon.com or www.google.com. You could even use an old or vintage title.

Arithmetic

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little . . . (Is. 28:10).

Children will learn number concepts by taking part in ordinary daily activities. For instance, they can be a big help by counting silverware and setting the table. Some people use beans or other items to teach primary number concepts. Although we used many games and other math materials over the years, we found the simplest tools to be best.

✓ The simplest tools are pencils and paper. Flash cards can be made starting with the easiest equation: $1+1=2$. Use daily until the facts are mastered and then occasionally for review. *Calculadder* is a

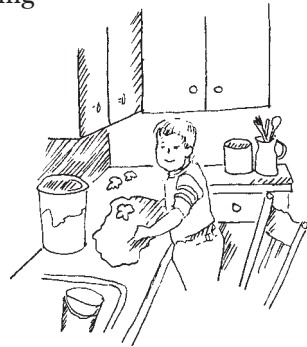
set of master sheets for timed math drills, and also is effective for mastering the math facts. Another great tool is an antique math text. Save time, money and effort by using speed drills and old texts exclusively for the best results with young students. We had great results with *Strayer-Upton Practical Arithmetics*, which are now available as reprints.

Learn With Your Children

After a degree of mastery has been achieved in the basics, you can continue with every other subject and topic by studying together. Subjects that you might have disliked all of your life suddenly come alive. This was my experience with history. When the children and I started reading biographies and other historical books, I discovered history to be quite interesting!

Your Children Learn With You

As a homeschooler, you will do the inconvenient thing, and let your child be your partner in every task you and your husband do. This is the most effective training and learning opportunity. If you do it now, you will be blessed tremendously in the future with hard-working children, more free time and a closer family.

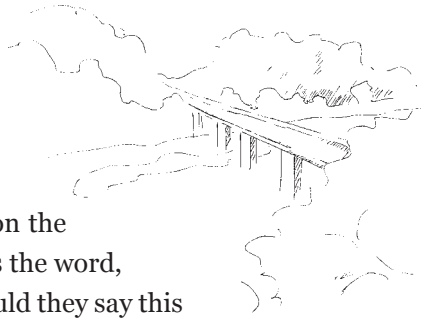


3

EasySchool Basics

I am going through some old school papers and throwing a lot out. If what I have is representative of my education, what a poor education! . . . making way for a new generation of learning . . . God's way and the most excellent way. —January 3, 1989.

I dropped the magazine into my lap and gazed into the distance where Jessica, Ezra and Eli were jumping from the bridge piling into the glistening river. I was dazed—and it wasn't the summer sun. Under *structured* on the cover of this “methods” issue was the word, *easiest*. How could it be? How could they say this method was easier than even the highly successful unschooling? A long-time acquaintance—and brand new homeschooler—had just told me the real facts about the structured method. After wavering for years, she finally plunged in with this “easy” method and was using fifty books for two children and schooling for eight to nine hours each day! Others have told me similar stories. I was mentally weeping for all the beginners who had been lead astray by these two words, when Zephi drew me back with a comment about her engineering feat. She had built a dam in the sand.



What is EasyHomeschooling?

Although you will find *EasyHomeschooling* systems throughout this book, here I will highlight its features, especially those not explained

elsewhere. In a nutshell—reading aloud produces great results, while using the library saves money. Free and low cost resources are available; particular techniques and materials encourage excellence.

EasyHomeschoolers learn all the time like unschoolers. We emphasize great books as do those using the Classical method. Reading aloud is a cornerstone, as it is for Charlotte Mason people. We encourage self-study as does Dr. Robinson, and combine subjects as do unit-study enthusiasts. Our students have been accelerated, but without push and shove, without the strain of excess structure. EasyHomeschooling combines the best of the methods with the lowest cost materials.

Save Money

EasyHomeschooling can save you lots of money. Homeschoolers spend an average of over five-hundred dollars each year per child, while public school's average is over five *-thousand* dollars!¹

A recent year's bottom line for us was only fourteen (\$14.00) dollars! True, we have ready access to antique books because we sell them, but we also purchased the expensive Robinson CDs that year. How did we do it? In previous years we bought assorted new items and didn't need them anymore so we sold them. But you can save money, even if you have never homeschooled before.

Your tools will include a rich assortment of library books and materials, old and antique books, like-new used materials, leaflets, booklets and art videos. EasyHomeschooling encompasses free or inexpensive do-it-yourself techniques such as how to keep high school credits, set up homemaking classes, train your children to draw and teach math in a unique way.

Save Time

Most of the other methods take much time, as my friend learned in her first year with structured learning. EasyHomeschooling is so time efficient that even a working parent can homeschool! In issue #18 of *Practical Homeschooling* I recommend two or three hours a night and four to five on the weekend. EasyHomeschooling eliminates the

“unnecessaries” and focuses on the learning activities that have been proven to give excellent results.

Reading Aloud

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.” ²

Children’s success in school is definitely linked to reading skill, which itself springs from early parental involvement. Reading aloud is like leaven that prepares dough for baking. It increases the quality and quantity of brain cells so that a child eventually excels in all educational endeavors, not only in reading. ★ ***Reading aloud is the essential activity for all ages.*** Do this one thing and you can forget teaching language arts. Your children will begin to read much on their own, acquire a lovely command of the English language and write beautifully. They will use advanced vocabulary, although sometimes mispronounced (a good reason to have your children read aloud, even when older).

✍ ***Using the Dictionary.*** Although most unknown words will be understood through context (the meaning of the words and sentences around them) it is a good idea to look up unknown words at times when a work—such as a poem or memory scripture—will be reread over several days. Spend a few minutes learning how to understand the symbols that are the key to proper pronunciation and also look up those words that no one knows how to pronounce properly.

Do you want the best, or the rest?

The Best Read-Aloud

The most important book to read aloud is the Bible. Don’t settle for second best and read one of the newer versions to your children. When read much and often, the King James Bible will be understood and

will give your children a wonderful literary foundation. The KJV Bible was selected by scholars as one of the finest examples of writing style in existence. Other versions give your children a model of poor writing, with grammar and style mistakes. ³

Most words are understood in context—if they are heard often enough, they will be understood by the way they are used in the sentences. See more about the value and simplicity of the King James Bible in “Training for Eternity,” Chapter 8.

Other Books, Other Benefits

✓ Once you are habitually reading the Bible then you can go on to other classic works. These authors will garnish your lives with their lovely prose: Beatrix Potter (*Peter Rabbit* and others), Laura Ingalls Wilder (*Little House on the Prairie* and others), Louisa May Alcott (*Little Women*, *Little Men*, *Jo’s Boys* and others), Charles Dickens (*David Copperfield*, *The Christmas Carol*, others), and Mark Twain. We laughed all the way through *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, although sometimes Twain’s young characters model character one would rather not see in young ‘uns! My girls read a lot of James Herriot’s books because they love cats. Try authors and poets like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Robert Louis Stevenson, John Greenleaf Whittier and Rudyard Kipling. You don’t have to read something just because someone recommends it. If you don’t like a work or think it inappropriate for your family, find something better.

Another reason to read aloud—and perhaps even more important than the educational benefit—is to foster family togetherness. You will find that sharing laughter and tears draws your family together. (In our family, Mom is usually the only one with tears!)

How to Choose Literature

Don’t waste your time on dumbed-down books. Not every book worth reading will have exquisite language, yet after reading a few paragraphs, you will know whether a particular book will foster excellence or mediocrity.

To choose good literature you can rely on catalog descriptions with comments such as “well-written,” “interestingly written,” “of literary quality” and so forth. If you can see a book, it is even easier to choose literature. Study the following excerpts so that you will be able to choose fine writing.

- “Mistress Botsford grabbed a heavy skillet and planted herself firmly in the doorway. If they planned to enter unasked, they’d reckon first with her and her frying pan. The riders drew up. Two of them dismounted. Ten remained on their horses.” A *We Were There* book from the 50s
- “Those who returned safely went back to the camp at the valley’s entrance. But General Jeffries was not there.” A *Signature* book. © 1957

The following are from the 1800s or earlier.

- “During the weeks that elapsed while the three great armies were assembling and taking up their positions, the troops stationed round Brussels had a pleasant time of it.” *One of the 28th*, G.A. Henty
- “Graham then gave a brief narration of the direful circumstance. He and his father, Lord Dundaff, having crossed the south coast of Scotland in their way homeward, stopped to rest at Ayr.” *Scottish Chiefs*, Jane Porter
- “And having administered this rebuke, as though it were something of a chief importance, he turned to examine our defenses. *Kidnapped*, by R. L. Stevenson
- “The time which passes over our heads so imperceptibly, makes the same gradual change in habits, manners, and character, as in personal appearance. At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same—there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them; a change of motives as well as of actions.” *The Abbot*, Scott
- “Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice: take each man’s censure, but reserve thy judgment.” *Hamlet*, Shakespeare
- “Now I beheld in my dream, that they had not journeyed far, but the river and the way for a time parted; at which they were not a

little sorry, yet they durst not go out of the way.” *Pilgrims Progress*, Bunyan

- “She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.”

King James Bible, Jeremiah 1:2

The Public Library

Your library has many beautiful and useful books. If a book is questionable, skip over the objectionable parts. Our children learned that God’s Word is the only complete truth and measuring instrument for everything else they read or hear, and just laughed at writings indicating evolution was fact. But when a child is young, the truth needs to be continually re-emphasized. *For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little* (Is. 28:10).

I was thrilled to find one fragile copy of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* on a bottom shelf in the back of the library. I even asked to purchase it to protect it from the discard pile! We shared this Christian colossus during our Civil War study. I cried more than once while we were reading it. Andy seems to read the most memorable books—or are they are memorable because “Dad” reads them? More recently we read another book of this caliber during our study of World War II. It was *The Hidden Place* by Corrie ten Boom.

The library saved us a lot of money—thousands of dollars over the years. I can’t imagine where we would put all those books if we had bought them, although we have a large bookcase and several smaller ones throughout our house. Of course you may want to purchase some books for gifts, for reference or for building your own library, but unless you like to be lavish with your financial resources, wait—and in a future chapter, I’ll give tips on finding the best books. (Chapter 7, “Enjoying Heirlooms”) For school, we select books from the library based on our scope and sequence (Chapter 5, “Planning for Success”) Some years we use mostly non-fiction for science and history. Other years we use more classic literature and biographies.

Learning Materials

Along with books, libraries provide videos, magazines, computers, scanners and printers. Educational software is available. Look for discarded books to purchase. Ask when your library has its annual book sale. We have even had opportunity to attend special homeschoolers' events covering public speaking, crafts, favorite books, science and more.

✓ Foreign language or phonics tapes are available at some libraries. Do an intensive study while you have the program at home. Work until your child wants to stop. Start again after a break. Do as many sessions as possible, forgetting other subjects during this time. Then take the tapes back. Check the program out again in a week or two, and do another intensive study. If you are doing this with a very young child, make sure that he or she is ready for learning and that the program is enjoyable so that burn-out is avoided. Never push! More real progress will be made by letting your child set the pace.

Other Inexpensive or Free Resources

- For the cost of a stamp, you can write to your state government and ask about materials available for educators.
- Are there people in your community—friends or family—who have interesting lifestyles or careers? They might be willing to share their knowledge—perhaps even apprentice your child.
- What can you teach your children that you know? What would you like to learn with your child? Choose from balancing a check-book, to gardening, to cooking, to any other specialized or ordinary talent that you have or want to learn!
- If you have a friend in a foreign country, ask him to try to find a penpal for your child. Our friend, Ali from Iran, couldn't find anyone who knew enough English but he did send us a wonderful photograph of ancient Persian ruins!
- Do you know of a foreign college student who would love sharing about his country while enjoying a home-cooked American meal and visit with you?

- Do you have encyclopedias? Teach from them! They are packed with information and if you have an old set, their content will be richer.
- Many free homeschool catalogs have teaching tips included with their product descriptions.
- Your local homeschool support group may have programs available for both you and your child. These will usually be free or low cost.
- Your child could be a volunteer at a living history museum.
- There are many free resources available online—books, courses, outline maps and worksheets. My favorite search engine is ***www.google.com***.

✍ For teachers, the Internet can be quite helpful. For children, let the computer be a glorified typewriter—helping the words flow into wonderful prose. Let the Internet be the fantastic research tool that it is. However, because it is visual, limit time. If you want to accomplish really great things with your children, use books more than the computer.

Teacher Preparation

Good news! With EasyHomeschooling, teacher preparation is unnecessary—other than spiritual preparation and the occasional books you may wish to read. You save a lot of time. Instead of preparation for “classes,” Mom learns along with the kids—as in reading aloud. Mom pursues other interests while the children work independently. I don’t even keep a school log or diary, although many recommend it (and some states require it). It just seems like a waste of paper and time and I dislike clutter so I would probably throw it out eventually anyhow! Our children are the “journal” of their education. Once a year, you will design an annual teaching plan (scope and sequence) and a daily schedule. That’s it! Then you are free to learn with your children each day. You *may* wish to keep a record of the great books that you read!

Workbooks and Texts

You may choose to use one or two purchased texts or workbooks. Used or antique are fine and less expensive—see “Enjoying Heirlooms,” “Resources,” or the Internet. These allow your child to work independently which is time-efficient. Some that we have used and can recommend are 🖋️ **Saxon** math for older students and *Learning Language Arts Through Literature Bible Study Guide for all Ages* is a family study or all-grade study. It stresses the important doctrines and includes activities that the youngest child will enjoy.

It is very important to have a system of accountability for independent study and the use of workbooks. Check work daily—immediately is best, so that your child can have the satisfaction of having finished their day’s work well. Don’t allow sloppy work.

Don’t forget, you are training for life!

Please don’t go out immediately and buy suggested workbooks and texts! Read this whole book first and then you will be better able to decide just what you really need. Once you have made your decision to homeschool, God will equip you. He will provide whatever materials that you need and will give you novel ideas. A great blessing to me is how His timing is so perfect—such as the picture of ancient Persian ruins in Iran, sent by our friend during the time we were learning about ancient cultures! There were many other times when we saw God’s provision for the topic or subject we were studying.

✍️ As these blessings occur in your life, record them in your notebook. Reflecting on God’s hand in your life can only increase your faith. You may also keep your day-to-day thoughts in a section labeled “Diary” or “Journal.” You may see excerpts from my journals under the chapter headings in this book and an entire chapter covering several years of our homeschooling experiences in 🌟 **Easy Homeschooling Companion**, “Drawing from my Diary.”

The Basics and Excellency

Mastery—in the basic subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic—is the keystone of knowledge. These skills are used daily throughout life. In this book, I've shared the easy way to teach the basics. Although a large time investment is not needed to educate well, a concentrated focus during the time that you are schooling will multiply results.

Always follow up if your children are working independently. Drill math facts until they are known and known well. Do not allow calculator use. Require excellence. Attention to these and other suggestions will make the whole process much easier. Decide to be disciplined, even if you have to start with just one thing.

I know from experience how a school can just slide into inactivity, but it is always a mistake. If children know their honest best is expected and shoddy work is not accepted, they will not disappoint you. Be firm for a season and you will be blessed with diligent children who do excellent work.

Hurrah! You can forget about wasting time on such “subjects” as careers, communities and sex education. Instead of “Health,” teach the Bible! *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh* (Prov. 4:20-22).

Next you will learn how to free up more time for important activities by putting order into your home.

4

Making Order

Lord, what I need to do is overwhelming . . . I need a plan—a 1, 2, 3 list—a checklist and target dates. Let me know where to start, Lord, and order my steps. —September 9, 1998

A very undisciplined mom started our homeschool. I tore out paneling—and three years later we would be dining in a kitchen with unpainted plaster walls. I would spend hours—even days—looking through seed catalogs. I had never learned to work. Although my siblings had grown and left home—and I *should* have been helping more—my parents did everything. Interested in fashion, my pre-adult years were spent poring over fashion magazines. I carried many of these wasteful and irresponsible habits into my adulthood. I became bored quickly with employment, never keeping a job long. It was very difficult to stay motivated.

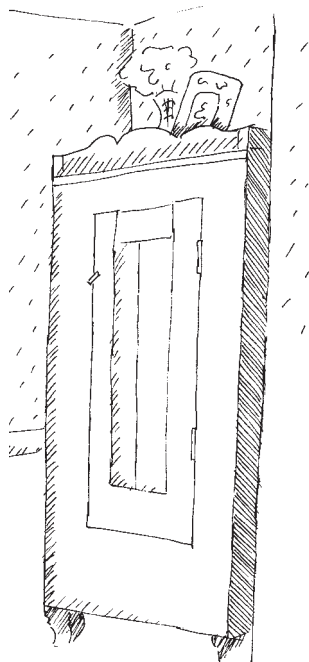
When we started schooling, we always had school regularly, but I accomplished little else. Since then I have learned to use lists, plans and schedules to save time and get us to our destination. In this chapter and the next I will explain the same procedures that have helped me fulfill many goals for myself and for our homeschool. You, too, will soon learn to draft your own blueprint for success!

Organizing Your Home

Our homes are havens for our homeschools. When home is in order schooling moves forward smoothly. We can make changes in this area in order to free time for homeschooling and for working toward other goals. If things aren't organized and accessible, we not only waste

precious time searching, but our frustration at not finding the needed item(s) destroys the peace that should rule and reign.

Before starting our business, I organized everything in our house from files to sewing supplies. For years I kept my fabric in a large hinged box. Every time I would try to find something, I'd leave it in disorder. Then we purchased an old wardrobe at an auction, and my husband fitted it with shelves for fabric and notions. Shelves in a closet or even on a wall would work just as well. When you get organized, your frustrating moments will be fewer. We still have a few areas that get unorganized quickly but when I regularly clean and sort these, upkeep is not overwhelming.



The golden rule for making order out of chaos is to throw away, give away, put away. In one word—eliminate! Get rid of as much as you can do without. I love to see order emerging in this process. But I must confess, I have gone overboard in my quest for order and have later wished I had kept certain things—like depression glass, pink floral china, antique linens and our children's toys!

Steps to Order

- 1) Gather boxes for storage, and a broad-point marker for labeling. I like to use more boxes for trash so items can be easily tossed in. You could use paper grocery sacks or plastic trash bags. (Just make sure you do not accidentally trash valuables! Always check the bags and boxes before disposing of them.) We sometimes used large plastic garbage “cans” and industrial laundry bins on wheels! They did not have to be emptied as often so were especially helpful in cleaning the second story of our home.

- 2) Throw away all obvious trash including papers, old mail and catalogs. You will see the beginnings of order and be inspired to continue with your task.
- 3) Work on one room at a time. As you sort and organize, you will find that you have items too good to toss, but that you neither want nor need. Put these items in separate boxes to give away or to sell at a garage sale. Label accordingly.
- 4) Box excess items that you can't bear to part with and label.
- 5) It is very important to put these "treasures" under lock and key, especially if you have young children who love to explore. Weeks of organizing can be destroyed in minutes by your bright, inquisitive children!
- 6) Go through all of your family's clothing, sorting as above. But this time have another pile for worn cotton garments. Cut these into one-foot squares for cleaning cloths. If you sew, you may wish to save the buttons from these clothes and reuse them. Use for cleaning, wiping up spills, washing cars, stripping woodwork and so forth. They not only save the cost of paper towels, they usually do a much better job!
- 7) My mother's maxim is a good one. "Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place." If you don't have a place, make a place.

Cleaning

Once your possessions are organized, you can begin cleaning. This might take a day—or even a month if you deep clean everything. I usually vacuum once a week, after having one or more of the children pick up. Children should have regular chores, such as keeping their rooms clean and neat, dusting, and washing dishes.

Major Cleaning

Choose a sunny day so you have lots of natural light. Unplug appliances before cleaning them and turn the electricity off at the breaker box before cleaning switches, outlets, and light fixtures. Your tools are

a thick rough cloth or sponge, a bucket, warm or hot water, cleaner, a step ladder, an old dish brush, an old toothbrush and a larger floor scrub brush. The brushes will get into cracks, crevices, corners and embossed vinyl flooring. You could get by with one brush, such as the dish brush. Optional are protective gloves and goggles.

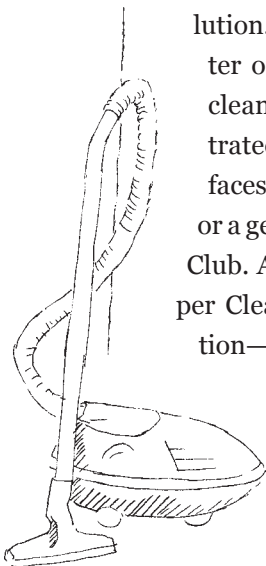
Tackle one room at a time. Kitchens and bathrooms take the most “elbow grease” so they are a good place to start. In the kitchen, it is best to do the insides of the cupboards, refrigerator and stove before the major cleaning. It might take a day to do the interiors, and another day to do the rest of the kitchen.

Do each room top to bottom starting with the ceiling. You may wish to use goggles to keep spatters out of your eyes. This cleaning strains lazy muscles, but I prefer washable ceilings. Each room does get easier! Clean the light fixture, then wash the upper walls, cupboards and lower walls. Windows can be done next.

Clean the floor thoroughly. I love my “ugly” Tri-Star® Compact canister vacuum because I can quickly take off the smooth floor attachment and use the metal tube to get into corners and along edges (and even along the ceiling with the brush attachment). Compacts are made well and do a good job, although very expensive if purchased new. When your floor is vacuumed (or swept), attack grime on hands

and knees with a scrub brush and a strong cleaning solution. Do the baseboards at this time. Change the water often and rinse thoroughly if you want a truly clean floor. There are several all-purpose concentrated products available for washing smooth surfaces such as Mr. Clean,® Fantastic,® Simple Green® or a generic cleaner from a warehouse store like Sam’s Club. A professional cleaning person says, “I use Super Clean® available from Wal-Mart in the auto section—strongest stuff you’ll ever see—will take the skin off your fingers! It’s in a gallon and will last a very long time. I dilute it about ten to one to clean almost everything”¹

Give a final touch to your floor with a coat or two of wax. Before you know it your



house will shine! To make cleaning more manageable, you may choose to do one major cleaning job each week or each month.

Once your home is clean and organized, simple daily and weekly upkeep will maintain it. To keep order, pick things up, or have your children pick things up immediately when that activity is finished. Have a ten minute daily “pick up” time before or after school. It really doesn’t take long to keep your house in order. Letting it go is what makes the job overwhelming!

There are many books available to help with putting and keeping order in the home, such as those by Bonnie Runyan McCullough, Emilie Barnes, and 📖 **Don Aslett**.

I told them, “There’s no fun like work!”

Delegate

The mutually beneficial relationship that family members share is seldom more evident than in the area of work. Working is a very, very important part of education, and one that is almost completely overlooked by schooling institutions. A phrase that I coined and use often with my children is: “There’s no fun like work!” I love to work because I love to see the results of work—a clean house, a redecorated house, a weed-free garden, knowledgeable children, a quality product and so on. Our children make it possible for us to achieve much more than we could without them. But, our successes and accomplishments are their successes and accomplishments.

✕ Start early with each of your children, let them have some say in what they would like to do, enforce their choice until it becomes a habit and let them know you need them. Teach that *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*. Tell them to *be not weary in well doing*, and to do their work *as to the Lord, and not unto men* (Gal. 6:7, 2 Thess. 3:13, Col. 3:23).

If you are financially able, pay your children for work well done *for the labourer is worthy of his hire* (Luke 10:7). Money does

motivate, especially if your children are not already overly “blessed.” But if you don’t feel like you are able to pay them, fine! They are paid with food, clothing, shelter, occasional trips and treats.

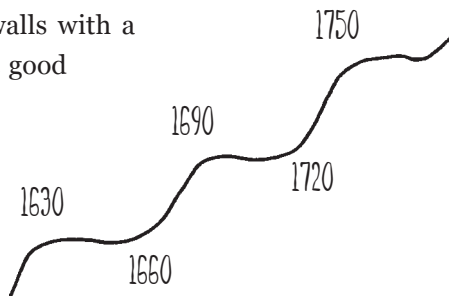
Don’t try to delegate to your husband. If he is working at a full time job, whatever he does around home is an additional blessing. Be thankful that he is supporting your family—many men aren’t these days. Let your boys try the handyman jobs. Ezra, when nine, had already built a boat and a tool box and was quite handy and helpful, as was our youngest son Eli who even fixed a mower that the repair shop said couldn’t be fixed!

Schoolroom

We began homeschooling informally so the whole world was our schoolroom. Our van was a schoolroom, as was the river and the backyard. Our couch was our schoolroom, with babes on laps and cuddled nearby. This had to be one of life’s most precious times. At that time our couch was directly in front of the bay windows, so we had lots of light. Next, we purchased our “teaching board” and wherever that happened to be was our schoolroom. We also used the dining room and kitchen tables.

Our first formal schoolroom was once a junk room. We made order in the room and it was beautiful, bright, spic and span. It was a pleasure to be there and conducive to learning. We decorated it with school things—our white board, a globe, maps and an antique wooden desk. One day the children and I went to an auction at an old school building and we picked up three more desks for one dollar each!

Next we moved upstairs to our large central hall and covered the walls with a time-line and a chart of the good and bad kings of Israel and Judah. When the hall was used for other purposes and the first schoolroom became an office, the desks spent some time in our



dining room with its floor-to-ceiling bookcase. Sunny bay windows and school decor completed the setting. I sometimes allowed the girls to take their individual studies up to their rooms. Later they all worked in their rooms at their desks. ★ ***It is very important to check progress often with this approach, unless you know duty has become a sure habit.***

As long as you do not neglect getting together for family read-aloud times, it really doesn't matter where you do school. I've just shared what we've done to show how flexible "location" can be. However, having a special room adds orderliness because everything is in one place. Time is spent on the important things and not wasted searching for something or moving from room to room. (If you school on your only table, you must clear it before meals.) It is also easier to supervise your children and their progress if they are in a special room with you, or working quietly while you tend to other things.

Now would be a good time to talk about those babies and toddlers—our solution was simple. We worked on school while they were napping. All of ours took long naps until they were about five or six. Older children can work independently while the little ones are awake.

✕ If possible choose a schoolroom with a southern exposure, especially if you live in a northern state.

✕ Get a low-cost white board from a building supply store. Ask for shower board.

Train them to nap if you have to!

5

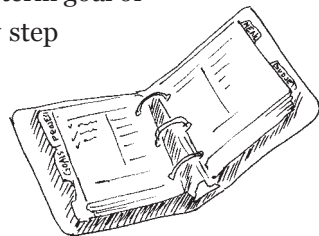
Planning for Success

Planning and praying for our new school year . . . God's order and priorities . . . the best education possible. —July 6, 1994

It may be that you struggle to stay motivated. Change for me was a process. Necessity was the catalyst that began that process. I learned procedures along the way that accelerated my ability to get more done in less time and motivated me to accomplish more. In Chapter 1, “Laying Foundations,” the concept of recording dreams and goals was introduced. Now we will look into step lists, which are the key to meeting the goals you have set, which in turn will make your dreams come true.

Your Step List

✍️ Open your notebook. If you haven't done so, make a separate list of your most important goals. You are now going to make a list of the steps you need to take to reach each of these goals. Start with your short-term goals because short-term goals are often steps to long term goals. For instance, one of my short-term goals is to get organized, which is also a step toward my long term goal of running a successful business. One of my step lists looks like this:



Goal: Become and Stay Organized

Today's Date_____

Date to be Accomplished_____

- 1) Get up earlier.
- 2) Stay up later.
- 3) Take a time inventory.
- 4) Make file folders as needed .
- 5) Sort and discard some clothing.
- 6) Put things back right after use.
- 7) Teach kids to do same.
- 8) Spend ten to fifteen minutes a day picking up.

✍️Now list the steps that *you* will take to achieve each of your goals. The steps do not have to be in any particular order. At the left of each step write the date you begin to do it. Then when it becomes a habit or you have accomplished it, note that date on the right side and put one line through the step to cross it off, leaving it readable. It is encouraging to go back and see what you have achieved. You should have one page of steps for each goal. Each step may be simple or more complex—perhaps needing some steps of its own. Later we will detail another helpful tool—the monthly to-do list.

You can school anytime, or all of the time.

Homeschoolers can plan their school year for whatever suits them best. Some choose six weeks on, two weeks off year round. Others school year round with only a few days off. This schedule would make it possible for your child to be finished with his formal schooling at a much younger age or would enable you to spend less time per day on schoolwork. This would be an option for the teaching parent who works full time outside of the home. (See Chapter 12, “Building a Business” for more ideas on how to combine work and homeschooling.)

When our children were younger, I wanted to get outside first thing in the spring to garden. Living in the North, we all wanted to enjoy the

warm seasons as much as possible, so we did most of our schooling in the winter when we had to be indoors anyway. I scheduled few hours for spring, summer and fall and many for winter. Our vacation ran from March or April to September or October, leaving only four or five months for intensive schooling. I knew that I would have to do some serious planning.

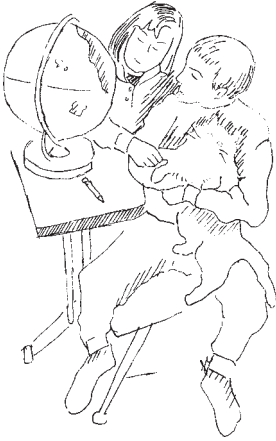


Scope and Sequence

“Scope” means *the area covered by a given activity* and “sequence” is defined as *the following of one thing after another*. Simply put, the scope and sequence shows what you plan to cover during your school year, and in what order. You can write your own scope and sequence in outline form with the main headings of language arts, mathematics, social studies (history, geography), health and science. Nebraska required a scope and sequence unless the parent-teacher used a standardized curriculum such as Abeka, Bob Jones or even the more flexible Robinson method. (See more on methods in Chapter 11, “Mining the Methods.”) Drafting a scope and sequence may take a bit more effort once a year, but saves time and money throughout the year with better results. Even if your state does not require a scope and sequence, it would be a good idea to do one for your own benefit. You will be able to see at any point during the year what you have covered and what needs to be taught next.

✓ Begin school planning by viewing a curriculum guide such as the simplified **Course of Study** provided in back of this book. A course of study lists suggested topics for each grade. Pick and choose among topics for a grade level. Don’t ever be enslaved by any course of study. If you would rather study a topic or subject that is not on the list, go ahead!

When I wrote my scope and sequence, I attempted to put some



order into science and grouped similar topics together. One year we focused on botany, another on chemistry and so on.

In all subject areas, pick what you like from those listed. Look at the grades near your students' grades. If you have children in several different grades, you may combine topics or pick one that all can learn at the same time. I do this frequently with history, science and health. Teach your children who are close in age the same math and language arts. Look through several of the grades and plan ahead to achieve a continuity from year to year.

The following is an idea for a history plan. Again, this is an option only. Your plan will probably be much better! After covering these basics you could go on to English history or the history of another country. You could also study the history of missions, the history of the church, politics or law. Each number below is equivalent to a school year but not necessarily a school grade.

- 1) World history
- 2) American history
- 3) State history

Then, repeating in greater depth or with different emphasis


- 4) Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Middle Ages
- 5) Renaissance and Reformation
- 6) American history: explorers to pioneers (including state history)
- 7) Pioneers to World War II
- 8) World War II to present

✓ After you have looked over the course of study, begin writing your **scope and sequence**. I have used the outline format most years. Other years I simply wrote a paragraph about what we were going to study under each subject heading. When writing an outline, your topic headings should be similar, and when using subtopics you should have at least two. For instance under your main heading, "Language Arts," you could have as subtopics, "Reading" and "Writing." Under "Writing" you could list "Themes" and "Poems." Or you could

have all of the different language skills listed equally under your main topic. I often added the heading “Other,” with “Music” and “Art” as subtopics. Then below each I listed what type or period of music or art we planned to cover. There may be other subjects or topics that you would like to teach your children. List them also. Make your scope and sequence as simple or as detailed as you like!

Times and Classes

After you have prepared your scope and sequence, you can begin writing your daily schedule. A schedule helps you stay on track and accomplish what needs to be done.

✓ Find the  **Class Schedule Planner** in the back of the book. Enlarge and make several copies or write in pencil. Decide if you want to study a subject in the morning or afternoon. We almost always do Bible first—to honor God—and after that, math. It is usually best to do the more difficult subjects first. You may decide to do your “together” school—such as reading aloud—first, followed by individual studies such as math. The younger students usually are done before the older ones, so the older ones could continue working on their own after lunch. You can also spend whole days, a week or even a month on one subject or topic. You are the designer! But do plan and schedule, for progress can be haphazard without a plan, just as getting to a destination is often difficult without a road map.

You are the designer of your family school.

To find out how many pages of a workbook or text that your child should do each day:

- 1) Count the pages or chapters. How many total days do you plan to do school? Let's say your school year is 9 months. Each month has 4 weeks. You have decided to school for 5 days of each week.
- 2) Multiply to find out how many total days you will be schooling. First multiply 9 times 4 to get a total of 36 weeks. Then multiply 36 x 5 days per week to arrive at 180 days. Your child's penman-

ship book has 200 pages.

- 3) Divide 200 by 180 to get 1.11 pages per day. Have your student do one and one half pages per day, which would allow for an occasional missed day. Toward the end of the year, readjust the daily work, perhaps cutting back to one page a day. (Divide the number of pages left by the number of days left.) If 180 days of school are planned and there are only 72 pages in a text, you will know that book or subject will only have to be done about 2 times a week. If you find that your child needs to do a subject twice a week, choose the days—say Tuesday and Thursday—and enter the subject under those days in the proper time slot. (Science and health are often done only twice a week.)

After you have written a school schedule a few times, it will be easy. Pray first! Then fill out your planning sheet with whatever times, subjects and intervals you want. You may want to write a note at the bottom or side. I started my chart at 5:00 a.m. one year, because I wanted to list all activities upon arising, such as quiet time and chores.

Your schedule is a tool to help you get more learning done in less time. It is not your master but your slave. Do *not* use it as a weapon. You could use Gayle Graham's idea in *How to Homeschool* and have an alternate schedule for the days you need to stay in bed a little longer. That way you won't be tempted to forget schooling completely on that day. Informal learning—such as reading aloud, library trips, vacations, field trips or other outings—can also be counted as time spent on schooling, so don't fret if you have not spent as much time on task as your schedule says you should.

The Monthly To-Do List

✍️ Look at your step lists and from that make another list. This list will be your monthly to-do list. Only put as much on it as you think can reasonably be accomplished. I have fourteen entries on one month's list. These are things that you will be working on almost every day of the month. These are the most important activities that will bring you the results you want for your life, your children and your family.

If there is something on your list that you do not have completed

at the end of the month, transfer that to the next month's list if it is still a priority. When things become routine, it is not necessary to list them. Your list is for projects unique to each day, month, step and goal. Usually your monthly to-do list and your daily list—if you have one—will list an assortment of activities relating to many steps and goals. Here is one of my monthly to-do lists:

- 1) Send letter & tracts to residents of my town.
- 2) Start book. Write one chapter.
- 3) Cover letter to publisher.
- 4) Learn graphics.
- 5) Study and apply marketing tools.
- 6) Make dresses for girls.
- 7) Write article.
- 8) Compile media data.
- 9) Query letter for article.

It is also a good idea to note the date when each activity is accomplished. By regular use of your step list and monthly list you will be spending most of your time on the priorities which will move you toward your goals and dreams.

✍️ You can even break your monthly list down into smaller steps. Mary Kay called this her “\$35,000 List.” Each night, she made a list of ten things to accomplish the next day.¹



You can do this too. Look at your monthly to-do list, and make yet another list of about six things to do the following day. (If your list is a short one, it is more likely that you will complete it.) This is called the \$35,000 List because that's what the president of a large company paid a professional organizer after his staff increased business profits by more than \$35,000 after beginning this simple technique.

Spend your time on what matters most!

Motivation for Children

After you have learned how to set goals, and have met a number of them, you are qualified to teach this tremendous motivational system to your older children. Give them a permanent notebook with dividers and have them start with their dreams, just as you did. Let them spend a few days or weeks praying about, and then compiling their dream list. Then go on and teach them about goals. A goal is a desired effect that can be met within a period of time. Then teach them to compose their goal lists, step lists, monthly lists and daily to-do lists. Emphasize that this is a lifetime project and that their notebook needs to be updated regularly. You may choose to have a “notebook day” once a month until this becomes habitual. As your children see what steps they need to take to meet their goals—and see the progress made by completing these steps—they will take responsibility upon themselves. They will discover that personal initiative produces the results that they want for their lives—just as it does for us. *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established* (Prov. 16:3).

Have a “notebook day” once a month.

6

Combining Subjects

The girls are doing reports on the astronomers, Copernicus and DaVinci. —May 8, 1995

Have you ever washed dishes while cooking or read while eating? If you have, you have combined tasks. You can also combine subjects to make the most of the time you spend at homeschooling. The following are suggested activities. We did them over several years. Do not try to tackle them all at once. Never neglect the basics to clutter the curriculum with any added activities. The greatest portion of schooling time should be spent reading aloud, and—as your children mature—reading silently.

History

“History is a voice forever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong . . .”¹ Following the history plan from your scope and sequence (last chapter) or the table of contents from a text, choose books to read aloud. To save money, use your

library. We used books from the children’s section to introduce a period or country. Historical novels and biographies are even better choices. Your reading will lead to people or events that you will wish to learn





more about. Then you can get additional biographies and other more exhaustive books. Combine history with language arts, fine arts, penmanship, home economics, science, travel, geography, Bible and speech.

Language Arts

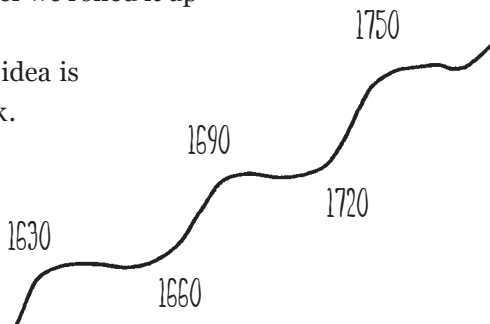
- Dictate some of the more memorable passages from your reading. (See upcoming section on spelling for instructions.)
- Have your children research a particular aspect of history or a person and write a paper.

Penmanship

- Read history (or science) while your children are doing penmanship or a detailed art lesson. Borrow art videos and other materials about the period you are studying from your public library or from the  **National Gallery of Art**. Purchase inexpensive project booklets on different periods of history from  **Kids Art**. While children are working on art projects, read biographies of artists from the period you are studying.

Fine Arts

- Create a timeline. Get ends of newsprint rolls from your local newspaper. Draw a wavy horizontal line with a wide marker. Label each hill and valley with a year 30 years apart (1630, 1660, etc.), leaving enough space for the events of those thirty years (about 18-24 inches). Have your children draw a picture of each historical figure or event studied with colored markers, including the date of his or her life, or date of event. (Shown is a greatly reduced sample; it was not at an angle.) Ours was very long and we had to put it up along our tall ceilings and over the tops of some doorways. Later we rolled it up for storage.
- / Another timeline idea is to use a notebook. Place punched construction paper or poster board into a three-ring binder. Paste



pictures cut from magazines, or have your student draw a person or an event from that period and label. You could put each event on one page, with the date at the top of the page, and then put them in order, or you could have one page for each decade. Yes, have your children memorize the most important events and dates.

- ✎ Although the above idea is easier to work with, it does not show the full span of history. Perhaps you could do the actual timeline as in the first suggestion, only cutting the time periods into centuries or other divisions so that your timeline is not so long. Then occasionally you could lay it out end to end if you could find room, even outside in the summer on a windless day.


Home Economics

- I have crocheted gift afghans while my girls read, and later they crocheted afghans while I read. You could knit, do needlepoint, embroider or even hem garments during this time.
- ✎ One capable child could be cooking or baking while you read.
- ✎ You could do crafts from the period, especially valuable home-making or building crafts.

Science

- When studying a period of history, you can veer into scientific topics or personalities. We have done this during our Renaissance study by combining science concepts and the astronomers, da Vinci and Galileo. Your older children could do research and then write a paper.

Travel

- Visit historical sites. Have your children journal about what they have learned. Take photographs or do sketches for a scrapbook to be completed at home. (Scrapbooking is a  **Cindy Rushton** learning idea.)

Geography

- Always look up the place that you are learning about on a map or globe.

Bible

- Study Bible history to learn God's will and His ways along with ancient and creation history.

Speech

- Speech skills can be practiced reciting memorized Bible verses.
- Have your children read history aloud, practicing the speech skills of enunciation, projection, emphasis and pronunciation.
- Speeches and historical documents—such as the *Gettysburg Address*—can be memorized. Take several days or even weeks to memorize longer passages.

How to Memorize

- 1) Read the complete work together several times.
- 2) Recite the first sentence together several times.
- 3) Add another sentence as soon as the first is committed to memory—always reciting all that is known, from the beginning.
- 4) When you are able to say the entire piece together from memory, start testing your children individually.
- 5) Once learned, practice often (overlearn), lest it be forgotten.

State History

You can study your state's history using the same combinations mentioned above with free and low-cost materials. Begin planning by contacting your state's government offices. This time, some of those tax dollars will benefit you! Write or call these offices that often have free information or materials.

- Tourism
- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Game (wildlife) and Parks
- Historical Society

The Department of Tourism will have an attractive thick “magazine” that will provide background information, including historical sites and other interesting tidbits. General books about your state, from your library, can be used as an introduction to this study. Read them with your children. Then choose specific areas to focus on. What would you like to know more about? Does your child show an interest in a particular topic? Our boys love to “rough” it and were interested in explorers and cowboys. You might choose native residents, immigrants,

exploration or geography. Here is a list of the free or low-cost materials that we used in our state study:

- A booklet of quotes about Crazy Horse. (Native Americans had wonderful memories because their minds were their journals!)
- A man's overview of Nebraska published by the Economic Development Department.
- A booklet describing a particular fort and the daily routines there.
- A free publication called "Trail Tales" published by Game and Parks that features articles on wildlife, endangered species, land areas, nature study and making bird feeders.
- A free newspaper from the historical society. I actually got to pick topics for the six issues and each child received a personal copy.

Combine state history with literature, science, nature study, cultures, the arts, language arts and geography.

Literature

- I wanted to focus on our state's literary heritage, so we read some of our best authors, such as Willa Cather (*My Antonia*, *O Pioneers!*). Parts of the television version of *My Antonia* were filmed just a few miles from our home. Our living history museum—where more of the movie was filmed—offered a free premiere showing to local residents.

Science

- Although a state study may have history for its hub, other subjects can be studied at the same time. We took a scientific field trip to a dig site in our state. This stimulated a discussion about how those bones actually got there and how the Great Flood may have played a part. We saw wrong and speculative information set forth as fact, notified the paleontologist in writing and received a response.

Nature Study, Cultures, The Arts

- Does your coastal state have a large aquarium or other zoo? Is there a special culture native to your area that you could study? (Spaniards in California, French in Louisiana, etc.) Has a former or current resident done something notable in art or music?

Many populated areas are resource-rich in the arts. Take advantage of this!

Language Arts

- As soon as possible after your field trip, have your child write about the outing, telling what they have learned about their state.

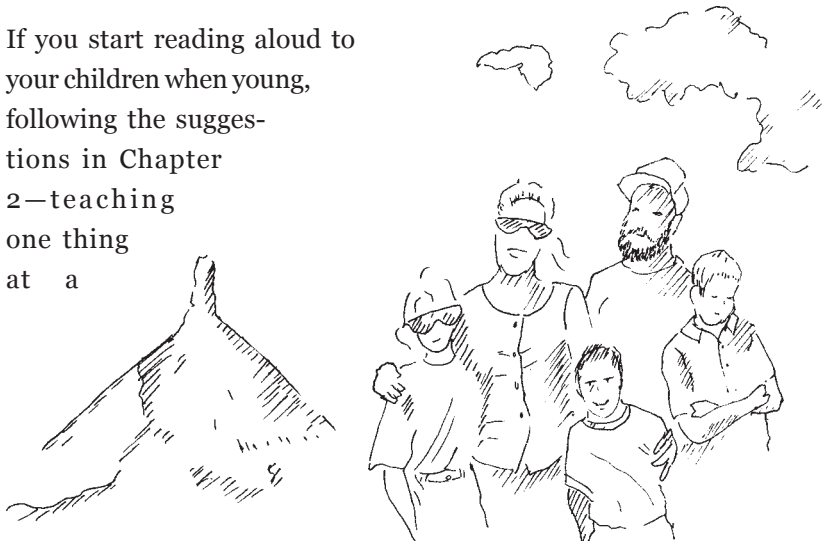
Geography

- Give your children a map while traveling and let them mark your route. Study counties before you go. Passing through the actual area will make the map and the names come alive. Have them draw a map of your state and label each county after they have memorized them. You can also do this with states, or even countries if you are a world traveler or a European citizen. ✍ You could use free outline maps from the Internet for this.

A state study can be as open-ended or as focused as you desire. Make it personal and enjoy the time with your family. Mini-vacations visiting your state's sites will foster family togetherness. One of our most memorable state field trips was visiting Chimney Rock and Scottsbluff National Monument, a pioneer passage west. God broke the clouds directly over the cliff-like rock formation and brought along a once-in-a-lifetime centennial pony-express rider soon after we arrived!

Spelling

If you start reading aloud to your children when young, following the suggestions in Chapter 2—teaching one thing at a



time and giving your children plenty of opportunity to experience many good books, spelling will not have to be taught. Zephi taught herself to read at five and also taught herself to spell. Seeing an abundance of the printed word, she observed and assimilated proper spelling. Jessica didn't spell quite as well, but she also did not read as well or as much. When I suggested that Jessica become more attentive to how words were spelled in her reading, her spelling also improved. Our sons have always needed more help. Because of the research done by 📖**Dr. Raymond Moore** suggesting that boys mature later than girls, and my own tendency to baby our “babies,” I did not expect as much from them. The result was that they did not read as early, nor spell as well ✂ and spelling class has continued up through high school!

Mama, help those babies grow up.

Phonics

- If you are going to teach spelling, the perfect time is at the same time you teach phonics because phonics rules are spelling rules!
- A book such as 📖***Simply Phonics*** is ideal because it lists the words in families with like sounds and spellings. During each phonics lesson, encourage your child to pay attention to what letters make up each word. Afterwards test orally (or in writing, if they can write). *Simply Phonics* could also be used with an older child who is having difficulty with spelling.

Language Arts

- Copying (copywork) from the Bible or classic literature is an excellent way to learn language arts, including spelling. Your student reads the selection and copies it. This is easy on the teacher because the proper grammar forms, punctuation, capitalization and spelling are in the selection. Dictation is another effective learning technique. Here's how:

Dictation

- 1) Let your students spend some time studying the passage.
- 2) Read the piece as slowly as necessary for them to get it down.
- 3) Older children now check (proofread) and edit, marking any errors they think they might have.
- 4) Teacher checks for grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes.
- 5) Make a separate list of misspelled words to look up and correct.
(If your children are younger, write the correct spelling for them to learn.)
- 6) Have your student write each misspelled word about ten times each or speak the spelling aloud.
- 7) Finally, give an oral or written test.

If your child needs review, he will misspell the word again (and then you will go through the above steps again). To avoid extra work, he will try harder to spell more words correctly and will either learn the words, or look them up. To discover what grade level your child is at in spelling, you can test occasionally using *A Measuring Scale for Ability in Spelling*. ✂ Get from www.amazon.com. You can also use this for spelling lists, if you decide you want your child to learn the most commonly used words.

At least once a week, besides your dictation work, your children should write a story, or other piece. Make sure it's not too long for your younger students. If they are reading independently, they can write about what they have read (this is ideal). Then go on to correct and make a spelling list according to the directions given above for copying and dictation. It is important that your children learn neatness, so it is best that their papers be done in pencil. Otherwise they will have to recopy.

Geography

Combine with research, missions, games, literature and history.

Research, Missions

- Make your own calendar or plan, listing one country a week.
After checking what country is listed on the calendar for that

day, find it on the globe and pray for the people there. Have your children do research and report on that country after pointing it out on a world map or globe.

Games

- Play games such as “Where in the World” or “Take Off.”

Literature

- Read books such as *Hans Brinker* (The Netherlands) or *Treasures of the Snow* (Switzerland). *✓ All Through The Ages* lists books by time periods and geographic regions.

Current Events

- An event in the news can spark a mini-study on a country and its geography.

History

- Geography will be related to historical studies. While studying English history read about England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Always find the country that you are reading about on a globe.

Math

Focused Attention

It is so important that parents give their children focused attention. This does not always come easily, even for homeschoolers. Math “class,” especially for younger students, is an excellent time for giving this focused attention. Put the baby down for a nap, and send the other children off to work on their own while you spend special time with one of your children. I don’t know if I’ve ever felt closer to our youngest! His smiling brown eyes looked into mine, wondering if his answer was correct. Remember, when it takes a little more time to get them to understand, instead of getting frustrated and short tempered, demonstrate patience and let this be a special time. And be sure to praise them when they get it right!

Speech

- Do oral math with your children. Have them speak the problem and solution in complete sentences and with proper diction.

Nature Study

“I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in . . .” ²

Family Time

Many of us live in beautiful locations where free educational opportunities abound. We spend many pleasant hours in the summer on the sand bars at our river or going on country drives. More than once we have had wonderful nature sightings—deer, bald eagles, hawks, even panther paw prints! Our children certainly can identify more than I could when I was their age! This is an example of learning along with your children.

Drawing, Crafts

- Go outside, open your eyes and *see!*
- Get your children sketchbooks. Sit in a secluded spot (one child at a time works best) and let the richness of creation pour in. Whenever you go on an outing, have a sketching time as part of that outing. Art school students are never without their sketchbooks!
- Check with your state Game and Parks Commission for nature guides for your locality and use them to identify plants and animals.
- Sketch what you are seeing. (Drawing instructions coming later in the book).
- Label your drawings.

Literature, Language Arts

- Read books like those by Ernest Thompson Seton.
 - Have your children keep a nature diary as did the naturalist and writer, John Burroughs.
- ✓ To make a simple plaster model of animal prints, cut a strip of poster board or other cardboard about one and one-half inches by one foot (depending on size of print). Form it into a ring, and paper-clip together. Push the ring into the soil around the animal print. Mix plaster of Paris according to the directions and pour into the cardboard ring that you have pushed in the soil.

Combining Students

Have older children be responsible for tutoring a sibling. Our youngest son didn't want to begin his first *Saxon* text with me or our eldest daughter. But as soon as twelve-year-old Zephi took over, he did three pages! Even if your older child is not particularly gifted, tutoring will help develop their patience and personal skills.

Other Combinations

- Combine vacations with studies by reading about deserts (mountains, the seashore, etc.) before visiting that area and that area's museums.
- Study artists and art history before visiting art museums.
- Study local history and spend a lot of time at local museums.

Our girls attended “school” in an 1890s one-room schoolhouse at our living museum. (This is where I noticed that they were reading better than other homeschoolers their age.)

We have fond recollections of the Civil War re-enactment near “Railroad Town.” What beautiful period music, clothing and dancing we savored that balmy summer night! Yet—and importantly—our background reading made it bittersweet, knowing the very real suffering that families experienced during that time.

Now It's Your Turn!

✍️As you homeschool, you will discover your very own combinations that will save time and make homeschooling easier and more enjoyable! Again, you may choose to write these ideas in your notebook.

7

Enjoying Heirlooms

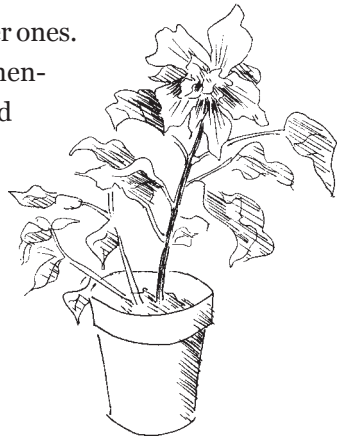
Thank you Lord! I am so pleased with the boys' writing—they are already using high quality literary terms. Could part of it be their use of the KJV for such a long time? —September 18, 1998

Growing up in a modern 1950s house with its sterile decor left me reaching back for something fuller and richer. My father worked in a museum and I almost hated to visit—I didn't just want to look at the treasures, I wanted to own them!

Today our priority in dress seems to be comfort whereas in the past it was appearance, including cleanliness, neatness and presentability before God and others. Even as recently as the 40s, 50s and into the 60s women wore hats when they did simple activities such as shopping. How wonderfully the Victorians dressed themselves and their houses. Even my grandmother had a beautiful wedding dress—and she lived on the prairie.

Precious People

God gives a great treasure in precious older ones. One blessing is that they can share a tremendous amount of history, because they lived it! I am so thankful that our children had a chance to know their grandparents. When we were studying our community, our then seven-year-old daughter interviewed her grandmother. She found out that her great-grandfather was the first rural mail carrier in our



area. Later we saw a picture of his “box” on wheels with “U.S. Mail” on the side and a small square opening in front for the reins to pass thorough—keeping out the cold winter winds. Mom told us how he had come to America alone, lived with an uncle for a time and then traveled on to Nebraska.

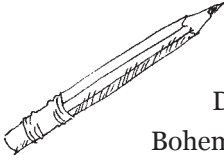
My father’s family lived over the hills in another small community. Uncle Theo, Dad’s oldest brother, told how Grandma would bathe, hitch the horses to the buggy and ride over here through the dusty hills. Because she was expecting my father, she came to see Dr. Dickinson, who built, lived in and had his office in the house we have called home for nearly twenty-five years. My two oldest uncles would play on our lawn. How could history be more interesting!

One of our town’s oldest residents also shared local history. He’s told us about the charm of our tiny community when it was a boom “railroad” town with livery stables and blacksmith shops. He even told us about incidents in his grandmother’s life. When she was a child, the Indians ransacked their cabin. The motive for this incident became apparent as we read about the Indians’ very real hunger as natural game was depleted.

✓ Ask your older friends and relatives to tell you or your child about their life when they were younger. General facts can be remembered, but you may want to jot down names and locations. Have your child do a written or oral report after the interview.

“What did you do when you were my age?”

In our studies, we found out that my great-great-grandfather (1829-1924) “had a brilliant mind and at one time was one of the largest landholders in Sherman County”¹ He and his son (1856-1941) came to Nebraska in a covered wagon, taking over a month to get here from Illinois. Great-Great-Grandfather enjoyed splitting wood up to his death at age ninety-six. My mother-in-law said that her grandfather was from Persia (Iran). Even today, there are only a handful of



immigrants from the Middle East in our whole state. Those who settled here came from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Bohemia.

You too can discover interesting tidbits on your family tree! Visit with family. Check the public library for basic books. Make friends with your reference librarian. Search the Internet. Just as historical studies lead into deeper and deeper studies, genealogical studies can do the same and may become a lifetime hobby.

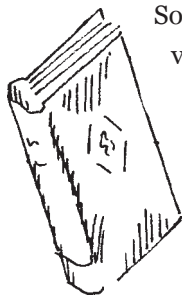
Skills and Ministry

Older people have had years to develop skills. Perhaps they could teach your child something that they do well. How about bartering some home cooked meals for these “classes”? You would meet a primary need for some of these older people! Let your children help in food preparation. Andy’s co-worker could not believe that our little girl had made the bread that he was eating for lunch, nor could he believe that she had been doing it for years. These are skills that other children may not learn until they are adults—I didn’t! Homeschooling trains for life.

✓ For a ministry and history project, adopt a nursing home and go from resident to resident visiting and questioning them about their past. Perhaps you could talk with one resident each visit. Compile your notes into a “book”—each chapter about an individual resident. Most residents have lots of time—but little to do—and would love the company.

Another way to bless those dear ones in care homes, as well as improving musical talents is to learn *a capella* harmonizing. Get tapes from 📖 ***The Lester Family***. On the tapes, the parts are sung separately so they can be learned, and then all parts are sung together. Beautiful!

Heirloom Books



Some people are concerned that antique books will provide outdated information. Consider this: Only 2% of recorded history has occurred since 1911! ²

It would be difficult to exhaust the core knowledge found in older books, no matter what the subject. I've found that older books cover the most important topics and ideas more thoroughly and clearly.

To be classified as an antique, an item should be at least fifty years old. In our area, it would be difficult to find a book at a reasonable price and in good condition with a date before 1860. This may be because our state was settled around that time and only a few books were brought with the pioneers. Those that were transported were probably Bibles and copies of *Pilgrim's Progress* that were very used and subsequently worn out before my grandparents were born.

I prefer books with a copyright date from around 1860 to 1930, although newer books with copyright dates into the late 40s can also be delightful. Some books published in the 50s might be acceptable—but not *Dick and Jane* sight readers. Not all books published between these optimal dates are worth buying but they are generally far superior to what you would find today. Another option is to purchase reprinted books such as the 1879 *McGuffey* readers, available from **Home School Treasures**. Little Bear Wheeler of **Mantle Ministries** also reprints some wonderful old books.

In addition to our inventory of **Exceptional Books**, we have a personal library of old books—acquired throughout the years. When our children were younger, my husband would make a weekly stop at a small library to pick up these “keepers” that the librarian replaced with newer (and often inferior) titles. Some that we acquired during that time were *Kidnapped*, *The Black Arrow*, *The Works of Shakespeare*, *Les Miserables*, *Treasure Island* and *Little House on the Prairie*.

✕ Look for low-cost, old books at your local thrift store. Several years ago we found an oversized well-written devotional book with a 1936 copyright. This beautiful book was garnished with photos, drawings, stories, poems and scriptures—and in great condition! We have also purchased Bibles and Bible teaching tapes from thrift stores. We found special books at garage sales—such as a poetry book that I had been wanting for years. Auctioneers gave us boxes of books that didn’t sell. Even now we occasionally hear of a large number of books that have been trashed because no takers were found. With prayer, you can be in the right place at the right time. Check with your relatives. Search attics. Buy lower-cost, paperback reprints. Soon you will be able to use the books that you have collected and avoid annual homeschooling expenses and trips to the library, while your children thrive.

There are two basic categories of antique books for the homeschooler—the classic novel and the textbook. The classic novel is sometimes available as an unabridged reprint—but be careful! Some “unabridged” reprints are not the original text, so choose the oldest book you can find rather than a newer copy, whenever possible.

Develop a taste for vintage books.

The antique textbook is not as readily available as a reprint, yet is a valuable tool. In this category you will find history texts; historical, literary and nature readers; Latin dictionaries and math books.

Other categories are children’s novels, biographies and non-fiction. We have an antique set of *The Book of Knowledge* encyclopedias. It is so rich in history, authors, literature, poetry and more, it could be used, along with a Bible, for your entire curriculum. It even includes a study-guide volume.

For Preschool and Elementary

Do not hesitate to use classic novels to read aloud to your youngest child. Many classics have interesting story lines that your children will follow, especially if yours is a TV- and video-free home. There are books of shorter devotions or moral stories that would also be appropriate for this age.

Continue reading aloud to your elementary-age children. Read aloud from all antique books—your *King James Bible*, history and science textbooks, classic novels, and so forth. Discuss or have your children write about what has been read. Once you start reading aloud, one thing will lead to another. When you find yourself liking a particular poet, look up his biography. Find the author's homeland, state or city on the globe. Then read a book about that place.

Arithmetic

Antique textbooks were written for a child to use and understand so the teacher should have no problem! Many of them include explanatory prefaces and introductions along with answers. They provide problems for young children that are simple enough to check quickly. With the more advanced texts, answers will certainly save time, but you can also use a calculator or have an older child use a calculator or his brain (preferred) to check the work. Teach your children to do exercises very carefully and to always double-check their answers. You may choose to have your child do just a few of the problems presented. This would certainly make checking easier but make sure that he or she is getting enough practice to be learning.

After two or three years of using *Practical Arithmetics* I found that the *Saxon* books were about two levels behind our daughters. We made copies of the pages from the old book and the girls used them like worksheets. The numbers were quite small but they did their figuring on another sheet. Traditionally, the complete problem was copied onto a blackboard or onto notebook paper. You can enlarge the page when you copy it, to use it as a worksheet.

Language Arts

Selections from old poetry books can be memorized and recited. Dictate from them to teach grammar and spelling. Dictate short selections from classic fiction. Dictation is described in detail in Chapter 6, “Combining Subjects,” under the heading, “Spelling.”

After learning to read, our children used *McGuffey’s*, the reprinted readers. In the second grade, the girls were at fourth-grade level according to the teacher’s guide. I simply had them read to me every day, one lesson at a time. We ignored all the other suggested activities.

History

Use an old history text’s table of contents for a guide for the history section of your scope and sequence. Read books written at that period of time by someone who lived then, or about that time. If you are introduced to a person you would like to know more about, get a biography from the public library, your personal library or other book source. Do related activities such as studying the art of that period, and even attempting to re-create it. Listen to the music of that epoch in history.

Prepare to experience vibrant history.

Science

You can do similar studies with science and scientists. Collect scientific biographies, texts, literary works and old experiment books. Combine a biography with books on that scientist’s field of research. Re-create his experiment. Write and report.

Bible

The KJV Bible is an antique book that will never be outdated. Along with its great spiritual weight, it is an outstanding literary work and example of proper English. It has no equal among the newer versions and should be a major part of the Christian's homeschool.

Avis graduated from 8th grade when 11!

Find someone who was educated with these books. Ask the person what they learned in school. You will be amazed at what many of them still remember after fifty or sixty years! A psychiatrist who evaluated my mother's memory loss said that her spelling and writing were impeccable for a woman her age. Of course he was a young "whipper-snapper" who didn't consider that most older people were better educated than even he, with his many degrees.

In 1907, Avis Carlson received her eighth-grade diploma. Later in life, she found her examination questions and was surprised at their difficulty: "The questions on that examination in that primitive one-room school, taught by a person who never attended a high school, positively dazed me."³ Avis was only eleven years old when she exhibited proficiency that today would be beyond exceptional.

1907 Education

Home and Health, © 1907, Pacific Press Publishing

A child is recognized as well-educated if he can read distinctly and intelligently, spell correctly, write a smooth, plain hand; and if he acquires a knowledge of the fundamental rules of arithmetic, a fairly good knowledge of the geography of the world and the history of his own country. But if he acquires all the languages, arts and sciences of the schools, without a knowledge of the fundamentals above mentioned, he will forever be set down as an ignorant man.

In selecting a child's reading material, the line should be drawn between the good and the bad. A serious mistake is often made by separating arbitrarily between truth and fiction. Much that is true in this wicked world is the most debasing; while some imaginative incidents, stories and allegories are the most elevating and beneficial. Parents should select the reading for their children with the utmost care. The contents of every book read should be known to parents. Liberal enough provision should be made to keep the children interested in the reading planned for them, so that the active little minds will not reach out with a hungry longing for the worthless story books of their playmates. This mental chaff and rubbish will sooner or later prey upon their morals.

One of the most certain ways by which children are led to novel reading is by the negative system of controlling their reading. They are positively forbidden even to look at books of a certain class, but at the same time nothing is provided to satisfy the honest literary hunger of their little hearts. Under such restrictions, children too often secure bad books and read "on the sly," and really go to injurious lengths, far beyond where their unrestrained desires would have led them.

In this evil world, sin is made most enticing. Bad books are often more fascinating than good ones and the unguided child is almost certain to choose them. As soon as the child can begin to comprehend and appreciate what is read to him, he should be led into the most interesting and beneficial literary treasures which can be provided for him. Then when his taste is developed so that he can appreciate and enjoy the good, the true and the beautiful, he will have a bulwark of good taste and principles built up around him, which will naturally shut him out from much of the world's sin and folly.

See Chapter 13, "Sailing Through High School," to find out how to use antique books for high schoolers.

Easy Homeschooling Techniques

Sampler

This ebook is an excerpt of the first Seven Chapters from
Easy Homeschooling Techniques
(Christian Edition)
by Lorraine Curry

:

If you enjoy this and would like to obtain the entire
“Easy Homeschooling” Library, please visit us at

EasyHomeschooling.com