

# Teaching the Trivium

---

*Christian Homeschooling in a Classical Style*

Also by Harvey Bluedorn:

Books

*A Greek Alphabetarion*, 1993  
*Handy English Encoder & Decoder*, 1994  
*Vocabulary Bridges from English to Latin & Greek*,  
1994  
*Homeschool Greek, A Thorough Self-teaching  
Grammar of Biblical Greek*, 1996  
*The Covenantal Allegory, A Study of the Covenant  
Promises Made to Abraham*, 1997

Pamphlets

*The Biblical Evidence for House Assemblies*, 1993  
*Observations on the Order of the Assembly*, 1994  
*An Acceptable Sacrifice of Praise*, 1995  
*Woman's Role in the Gathered Assembly*, 1995  
*On Family Worship*, 1997  
*The Sabbath Syllogism*, 1998  
*The Logical Defense of the Faith*, 1998





# Teaching the Trivium

---

*Christian Homeschooling in a Classical Style*

*For the Lord giveth wisdom:  
out of His mouth cometh knowledge  
and understanding.  
— Proverbs 2:6.*



*by Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn*

May 2001

TRIVIAM PURSUIT

Teaching The Trivium  
by Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn

Library of Congress Control Number: 2001117112

Trivium Pursuit  
PMB 168, 139 Colorado Street  
Muscatine, Iowa 52761  
309-537-3641  
www.triviumpursuit.com

© Copyright 2001 by Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn. All rights reserved.

This book was published in May of the year two thousand one by Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn. *Teaching the Trivium* is the private property of Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn. The right to reproduce or publish this material in any portion, in any manner, by any means, or for any purpose, is reserved as the sole right of the authors, who hereby grant permission for brief quotes in critical articles or reviews, provided that the authors' names and address are clearly cited, and a copy of the publication containing the article or review is forwarded to the authors.

“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.” — First Timothy 5:18 (First Corinthians 9:9; Deuteronomy 25:4; and Luke 10:7; Matthew 10:10; Deuteronomy 24:15)

“Therefore, behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.” — Jeremiah 23:30

“. . . Thou shalt not steal, . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” — Romans 13:9 (Matthew 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; First Corinthians 6:8,10; Ephesians 4:28; Exodus 20:15; Leviticus 19:11,13; Deuteronomy 5:19 and Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:43; 7:12; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8)

“Render therefore to all their dues: . . . honour to whom honour.” — Romans 13:7

“That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.” — First Thessalonians 4:6 (Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 32:35; Proverbs 22:22,23)

Biblical quotations are either from the King James Version, common 1769 edition of Dr. Benjamin Blayney, or else they are our own very literal translation, abbreviated v.l.t.. Occasional corrections of the KJV are enclosed in brackets. Alternate translations follow a forward slash [/abc], more literal translations follow a backward slash [\xyz].





# Authors' Preface

WHEN WE WERE MARRIED in 1973, the term “Homeschooling” had not been coined. Nevertheless, the Lord impressed upon our consciences at that time the commitment to homeschool what children He might give us. The Lord blessed us with our first child in 1975. In 1980, we taught him how to read, and we have since homeschooled all five children with whom the Lord has blessed us.

In 1989, we were asked by an Iowa Homeschool convention to give a seminar on teaching Latin, Greek, and Logic. We have now given seminars in forty-four states. We would never have chosen this role for ourselves. Others have called us to it.

In 1993, we began a small magazine, called *Teaching the Trivium*, which forced us to write down some of what we had learned – and were learning. After much and varied experience in homeschooling, in applying a classical model and method for education, in speaking, and in writing, we concluded that it was finally an appropriate time for us to put together in an orderly manner those things about which we had learned. In the spring of 2000, we published a series of eight booklets called, *The Teaching the Trivium Booklet Series*. Within the Lord’s providence, we have now transformed and expanded those booklets into a complete book.

We have subjected all of what we have written to criticism. Parts of this book have gone through twelve years of correction. We invite your further criticism for the improvement of any subsequent editions. We ask the Lord to make use of our labors, despite their faults.

In this book, we lay down a spiritual and philosophical foundation and a practical program for Christian Homeschooling in a classical style. We can’t fill in all of the details to satisfy every situation. Instead, we give our principles and suggestions, and we guide you to other sources. Our emphasis is communicating the picture and encouraging the practice. May it please the Lord to use this work to further His kingdom.

The book design and typography was by Nathaniel Bluedorn. The scene in oils on the cover and the chapter title illustrations are by Johannah Bluedorn. The illustrations at the end of Chapter One are by Helena Bluedorn. This book would never have been completed without the help of all our children.

Harvey & Laurie Bluedorn  
April, 2001

# Contents

Part One	25
Chapter One	27
<i>The Transformation of Classical Education: A Biblical Vision for Homeschooling</i>	
Breaking out of the Mold _____	27
What is Classical Education? _____	29
Classical Humanism _____	29
A Classical Model and Method _____	30
Christian Limits to Classical Uses _____	30
What We Mean by “Classical” _____	31
Transformation from the Inside Out _____	32
The Steps of Transformation _____	33
The Opinion of Scripture on Classical Greek Education _____	33
Distinctives of the Biblical Model of Education _____	36
1. All true education must begin with the revelation of God. _____	37
2. The family at home is given sole jurisdiction over the education of children. _____	38
3. Education is to fully prepare children for adult life. _____	38
4. The ultimate goal of education is holiness – separation to God for His service. _____	39
Why Follow a Classical Model and Method? _____	41
Don’t Try This at Home _____	42
The Arrangement of This Book _____	43
Chapter Two	45
<i>Who Should Control Education: Parents, or the State?</i>	
Introduction _____	45
The First and Great Commandment _____	46
The Whole Commandment _____	47
An Exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 _____	47
The Unity Commandment _____	48
The Education Commandment _____	50
The Method of Education _____	52
The Implications of this Commandment for the Family _____	55
The Broader Implications of This Commandment _____	56
Summary and Conclusion _____	60
Chapter Three	61
<i>Should Christians Prefer a Classroom School?</i>	
Introduction _____	61
The Biblical Order _____	61
Why not Classical School? _____	63
Ten Problems with Classroom Schools _____	64

1. Classroom schools create bonds which can easily cross and oppose the proper bonds of authority and affection. _____	64
2. Classroom schools can create an atmosphere of ungodly rivalry instead of godly challenge. _____	65
3. Classroom schools create a cross-cultural exchange outside of the parents' control, establishing values which may conflict with those of the parents. _____	66
4. Classroom schools can be academically inferior in many cases simply because of the inefficiency of teaching the identical material to multiples of children at different learning levels. _____	67
5. The age segregation of classroom schools encourages peer groupings as the proper way of partitioning society. _____	68
6. The gender mixing of classroom schools can create situations which are inappropriate. _____	68
7. Time at school away from home, other after-school programs away from home, and schoolwork brought home from school – these all draw order and commitment to the school and away from the family. _____	69
8. There is an inherent contrast between: the tutorial-discipleship model, and the teacher-classroom model. _____	70
9. When learning is artificially separated from real life, many things are left unlearned, creating a vacuum void of things which need to be learned by daily example. _____	70
10. Resources are imprudently consumed. _____	73
The Problems with Classroom Schools – A Conclusion _____	73
The Homeschool Advantage _____	74
Some Questions _____	75
Can Parents Handle Classical Education? _____	75
How Long to Homeschool? _____	75
Our Child Doesn't Want to Homeschool _____	76
What About Emergencies? _____	77
What About an Only Child? _____	79
Summary and Conclusion _____	80
Some Final Words _____	81

## Chapter Four 83

### *What is the Trivium?*

Introduction _____	83
The Classical Trivium _____	84
The Applied Trivium _____	84
The Trivium Model of Child Educational Development _____	85
The Trivium Method for Teaching Subjects _____	86
The Scriptural Trivium _____	87
Analogy of the Trivium to a Building: Foundation, Structure, and Use _____	88
Analogy of the Trivium to Computers: Input, Processing, and Output _____	90
The Development of Knowledge, Understanding, and Wisdom _____	91
Trivium Terminology _____	92
Modern Education is Dysfunctional _____	92
Harvard, 1643 _____	92
Three Observations on Modern Education _____	93
1. Trivia, not Trivium. _____	93
2. Interrupting the Learning Process. _____	94
3. Regressive Education. _____	97

Trivium Based Education versus Outcome Based Education _____	98
The Whole Trivium in a Capsule _____	100
The Picture _____	100
The Early Knowledge Level (or Grammar Stage) _____	100
The Knowledge Level (or Grammar Stage) _____	100
The Understanding Level (or Logic Stage) _____	101
The Wisdom Level (or Rhetoric Stage) _____	101
The Final Finishing Level (or Stage) _____	102
Summary _____	102
Question _____	102
How Can a Victim of Public School Remediate? _____	102

## Chapter Five 105

### *Teaching Languages*

An Argument for Teaching Classical Languages _____	105
Why Study Other Languages? _____	106
Christians Should Have Some Overriding Considerations _____	107
Further Argument for the Study of Greek _____	110
Further Argument for the Study of Hebrew _____	112
Further Argument for the Study of Latin _____	115
Principles for Learning Languages _____	119
Which Languages to Study? _____	119
If Only One Language, Then Greek _____	119
If Two Languages, Then Latin and Greek _____	119
If Three Languages, Then How About: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew? _____	120
Levels of Proficiency _____	121
Where Should We Begin? _____	121
A General Course of Study _____	122
Level One: Focus on Lexical Skill	
– Learning the Sights and Sounds of the Language. _____	123
An Introduction to Ancient Alphabets _____	123
Beyond the Alphabet _____	128
Level Two: Focus on Grammatical Skill	
– Learning the Grammar and Syntax of the Language _____	134
A Comparison of Ancient Grammars _____	135
Three Basic Approaches to Formal Grammar Study _____	137
1. The Traditional or Deductive Approach _____	137
2. The Natural or Inductive Approach _____	139
3. The Programmed-Interactive Approach _____	141
Some Tips and Helps _____	144
1. Alphabets and Phonetics. _____	144
2. Readings in the Language. _____	145
3. Language Notebook _____	145
4. Vocabulary Cards _____	146
5. Reading and Memorizing _____	146
6. Student Pace _____	147
7. Reference Grammar _____	147
8. Practice, Repetition, and Hard Work is Classical. _____	147
Level Three: Focus on Fluency Skill	
– Learning to Translate and Interpret the Language _____	147

## Chapter Six

149

### *Teaching Logic*

An Argument for Teaching Logic _____	149
What is Logic? _____	149
Words, Sentences, and Meaning _____	150
Why is it Important to Study Logic? _____	152
Polylogism _____	153
Logic and Morality _____	154
Logic and A-morality _____	154
The Spiritual Power of Logic _____	155
What is Our Responsibility? _____	156
What is Logic Useful For? _____	157
The Rejection of Logic Leads to the Rejection of God _____	158
Principles for Learning Logic _____	159
Defining and Describing Logic _____	159
Formal Logic _____	159
Informal Logic _____	161
1. Classification _____	161
2. Definition _____	161
3. Argument _____	162
4. Problem Solving _____	162
5. Informal Logical Fallacies _____	162
6. Propaganda Techniques _____	165
7. Methods of Manipulation _____	165
Overall Observations for Learning Logic _____	166
Logic Materials _____	166
Pride, Sarcasm, Cynicism and Logic _____	167
Logic Notebook _____	168
Study Logic Together _____	168
Before Age Thirteen – Focus on Elemental Logic Skills _____	168
Age Thirteen and Beyond _____	169
A General Course of Study _____	170
A Three-Step Curriculum _____	170
Step One: Beginning About Age Thirteen – Focus on Informal Logic _____	170
Step Two: About Age Fifteen or Later – Focus on the Practice of Logic _____	171
Step Three: About Age Sixteen or Later – Focus on Finer Details of Logic _____	171
Some Questions _____	171

## Chapter Seven

175

### *Teaching Rhetoric*

An Argument for Teaching Rhetoric _____	175
Principles for Learning Rhetoric _____	177
Defining and Describing Rhetoric _____	177
The Five Parts of Classical Rhetoric _____	178
Some Overall Observations for Learning Rhetoric _____	178
1. Early Bloomers. _____	179
2. Late Bloomers. _____	179
3. Preparing Future Rhetoric Students. _____	179
4. Learn Rhetoric by Doing It. _____	181
5. Hard Work Will Pay in the End. _____	182
6. Bible Principles for Rhetoric. _____	182
7. Called to Communicate. _____	183

8. Establish High Standards for Grammar and Logic _____	183
9. Standards for Rhetoric. _____	184
10. Boys and Girls _____	185
A General Course of Study _____	186
Before Age Ten — Focus on Vocabulary _____	187
Ages Ten Through Twelve — Focus on Spelling and Grammar _____	187
Ages Thirteen Through Fifteen	
— Focus on Composition, Argumentation, and Speech _____	188
Ages Sixteen Through Eighteen — Focus on Research and Debate _____	188
A Word About Political Correctness _____	189

## Chapter Eight 193

### *Principles for the Study of Literature*

Introduction _____	193
Cultural Principles _____	193
Cultural Values _____	195
Cultural Goals _____	196
How Should We Deal with Other Cultures? _____	198
Paul at Athens _____	198
Lessons to Learn from Paul at Athens _____	211
What Are the Classics? _____	212
How To Classify Literature _____	213
Four Categories of Literature _____	213
Choosing What to Read _____	216
To Burn or Not To Burn? _____	216
Ten Principles for Choosing What to Read _____	217
1. Do what is pleasing to the Lord. _____	217
2. Do not follow the world. _____	217
3. Do not allow the world to follow you. _____	218
4. There is only so much time in the day. _____	218
5. Older does not necessarily mean better. _____	219
6. Is this profitable? _____	219
7. Does this promote good habits? _____	220
8. Will reading this further my education? _____	220
9. Does this material have lasting value. _____	221
10. When in doubt, leave it out. _____	221
Where to Draw the Line _____	222
Appropriate Ages _____	223
Reading Critically _____	226
Questions _____	227
1. Don't Godly Men in the Bible Pursue the World's Wisdom? _____	227
Examples or Exceptions? _____	227
Paul's Example _____	228
2. Don't We Need to be Culturally Literate? _____	230
Cultural Response _____	230
Literature and History _____	231
Cultural Acquaintance _____	232
Mythologies: Ancient and Modern _____	233
3. How Should We Approach Classical Literature? _____	234
Raiders of the Lost Arts _____	234
1. New Covenant Use. _____	236
2. Practical Use. _____	236

3. Apologetic Use. _____	237
4. Educational Use. _____	237
4. How Do We Maintain a Proper Separation? _____	239
How Do We Stay Pure? _____	239

## Chapter Nine 241

### *An Application of Principles for the Study of Historical Literature*

Three Underlying Principles For the Study of History _____	241
1. Knowledge Level: “History repeats itself.” _____	241
2. Understanding Level: “The past is key to the future.” _____	242
3. Wisdom Level: “He who does not study history is doomed to repeat it.” _____	242
An Introduction to the Study of History _____	243
An Outline for Evaluating Historical Documents _____	244
The Value of Primary Sources _____	244
What is a Primary Source? _____	244
What is Important About a Primary Source? _____	244
What is a Secondary Source? _____	244
Biases, Interpretations, And Other Distortions _____	245
Criteria for Critical Evaluation of Sources _____	245
More than One Point of view _____	246
Historical Fallacies _____	246
A Sample Model for Combining History and Literature: Ancient Greece and Contemporary Civilizations _____	248

## Chapter Ten 277

### *Different Methods and Approaches to Homeschooling in the Light of the Trivium*

Introduction _____	277
1. The Scope and Sequence Method _____	279
2. The Habitual “Charlotte Mason” Method _____	280
3. The Environmental “Unschooling” Method _____	281
4. The Unit Study Approach _____	285
5. The Formal Classical Approach _____	286
6. The Principle Approach _____	286
7. Formal Versus Non-Formal Early Academics _____	288
Research, and You Will Find _____	288
A Moral Foundation for Academics _____	289
Against Indulgences _____	289
Brain Strain _____	290
The Downside-Up Solution _____	291
Filling Buckets Versus Lighting Fires _____	292
Preparation for Academic Progress _____	293
The Ideal and the Real _____	293
Don’t Bring the Classroom Home _____	294
Summary _____	294
Each Method and Approach Has Its Place _____	295

## Part Two 299

### *The Practical Trivium*

Chapter Eleven

301

*The Early Knowledge Level: Ten Things to Do Before Age Ten*

- Introductory Remarks \_\_\_\_\_ 301
- A Suggested Course of Study \_\_\_\_\_ 303
  - 1. Reading and Writing \_\_\_\_\_ 304
    - Phonics \_\_\_\_\_ 304
    - Artificially Induced Dyslexia \_\_\_\_\_ 307
    - English Language Notebook \_\_\_\_\_ 308
    - Copywork \_\_\_\_\_ 309
    - How Much Writing is Enough \_\_\_\_\_ 310
  - 2. Oral Narration \_\_\_\_\_ 311
    - How to Develop Narration \_\_\_\_\_ 312
  - 3. Memorization \_\_\_\_\_ 313
  - 4. Hearing and Listening \_\_\_\_\_ 315
    - Three Do Nots: \_\_\_\_\_ 315
    - Timeline \_\_\_\_\_ 316
    - History Notebook \_\_\_\_\_ 317
    - Abridged Versus Unabridged Books \_\_\_\_\_ 317
    - Non-Christian Books \_\_\_\_\_ 318
    - I Cannot Keep Up With My Child's Reading \_\_\_\_\_ 319
    - Quiet While Reading Aloud \_\_\_\_\_ 320
    - Books Recorded on Tape \_\_\_\_\_ 322
  - 5. Family Worship \_\_\_\_\_ 322
  - 6. Arts and Crafts \_\_\_\_\_ 323
  - 7. Field Trips \_\_\_\_\_ 324
    - Protecting a Child in the Library \_\_\_\_\_ 325
  - 8. Work and Service \_\_\_\_\_ 326
  - 9. Discipline \_\_\_\_\_ 328
    - Socialization and Young Girls \_\_\_\_\_ 329
    - Does Not Want to Work \_\_\_\_\_ 331
    - Peace in the Home \_\_\_\_\_ 332
    - Irritated Obedience \_\_\_\_\_ 333
    - Wait Until Daddy Gets Home \_\_\_\_\_ 334
    - Unmotivated Son \_\_\_\_\_ 334
  - 10. Play and Exploration \_\_\_\_\_ 335
    - A Mom for all Seasons \_\_\_\_\_ 337
- Summary of Ten Things To Do Before Age Ten \_\_\_\_\_ 339
- A Suggested Daily Schedule For Families  
with Children All Under the Age of Ten \_\_\_\_\_ 340

Chapter Twelve

343

*The Later Knowledge Level:*

*Ten Things to Do With Children Ages Ten Through Twelve*

- Introductory Remarks \_\_\_\_\_ 343
- A Suggested Course of Study \_\_\_\_\_ 344
  - 1. Family Worship \_\_\_\_\_ 344
  - 2. Literature and Reading Aloud \_\_\_\_\_ 344
    - Memorization and Interpretive Reading \_\_\_\_\_ 345
  - 3. History \_\_\_\_\_ 347
    - The Chronological Study of History \_\_\_\_\_ 347
    - Principles for Choosing and Using a History Textbook \_\_\_\_\_ 348

The Interest-Directed Study of History _____	348
History Notebook _____	349
History Fairs and Contests _____	350
Learning to Use the Library _____	350
4. Composition _____	352
Copywork and Dictation _____	352
Journals and Letters _____	352
Simple Outlining Skills _____	353
Using a Composition Curriculum _____	353
Hates to Hold the Pencil _____	354
Math and Pencils _____	355
Dictation _____	355
5. Spelling and English Grammar _____	356
Two Methods for Studying Grammar and Spelling _____	357
Using Old Spellers _____	357
English Language Notebook _____	359
Using Webster's Speller _____	360
Why Sentence Diagramming? _____	362
6. Latin and Greek _____	362
Latin and Greek for Young Children _____	362
Suggestions for Studying Greek _____	364
Beginning the Formal Study of Greek and Latin _____	365
Creating & Maintaining a Greek or Latin Language Notebook _____	365
7. Early Logic _____	368
8. Arithmetic _____	369
Beginning Arithmetic (Math) At Age Ten _____	369
Our Research On Early Informal Math _____	370
What We Recommend For Math (and Grammar Too) _____	370
The File Drawer Analogy _____	370
The Computer Analogy _____	371
Time Better Spent _____	371
Eighteenth Century Attitude Towards Math _____	372
Math Before Age Ten _____	373
Math By Age Ten _____	373
Math at Ages Eleven and Twelve _____	375
Textbook Math _____	376
John Quincy Adams and Math _____	376
Math Underdeveloped? _____	378
Math and Testing _____	379
Hard Work Versus Exasperation _____	380
Sitdown Math _____	381
9. Science _____	382
10. Art and Music _____	384
A Few More Thoughts _____	384
Classical Cowboys _____	384
What Do I Do With This Boy _____	385
How Much Time to Spend On Academics _____	387
A Summary of Ten Things To Do From Ages Ten Through Twelve _____	388
A Suggested Daily Schedule For Families	
with One or Two Children In the Later Knowledge Level (Ten through Twelve)	
And Some in the Early Knowledge Level (under Ten) _____	389

Chapter Thirteen

*The Understanding Level:*

*Ten Things to Do With Children Ages Thirteen Through Fifteen*

- Introductory Remarks \_\_\_\_\_ 393
- A Suggested Course of Study \_\_\_\_\_ 394
  - 1. Family Worship \_\_\_\_\_ 394
  - 2. Reading Aloud \_\_\_\_\_ 395
  - 3. History and Literature \_\_\_\_\_ 395
    - 1. Chronological Versus Interest-Directed \_\_\_\_\_ 395
    - 2. Suggestions for Combining History and Literature \_\_\_\_\_ 396
    - 3. Example of a History and Literature Lesson \_\_\_\_\_ 398
  - 4. Composition \_\_\_\_\_ 399
    - 1. Written Narration. \_\_\_\_\_ 399
    - 2. Written Summaries \_\_\_\_\_ 402
    - 3. Essays, Creative Writing, and Beyond \_\_\_\_\_ 403
  - 5. Speech and Debate \_\_\_\_\_ 404
    - Oral Interpretation and Speech \_\_\_\_\_ 404
    - The Benefits of Debate \_\_\_\_\_ 404
    - Speech and Debate Resources \_\_\_\_\_ 405
  - 6. Languages \_\_\_\_\_ 405
  - 7. Logic \_\_\_\_\_ 406
  - 8. Mathematics \_\_\_\_\_ 406
  - 9. Science \_\_\_\_\_ 407
    - Science Fairs and Contests \_\_\_\_\_ 407
    - Creation Science \_\_\_\_\_ 409
  - 10. Art and Music \_\_\_\_\_ 409
- Father's Role \_\_\_\_\_ 409
- Summary of a Suggested Course of Study for Youth,  
Ages Thirteen Through Fifteen \_\_\_\_\_ 410
- A Suggested Daily Schedule For Families  
With At Least One Child In the Understanding Level \_\_\_\_\_ 411

Chapter Fourteen

*The Wisdom Level:*

*Ten Things to Do With Children Ages Sixteen Through Eighteen*

- Introductory Remarks \_\_\_\_\_ 413
- A Suggested Course of Study \_\_\_\_\_ 414
  - 1. Family Worship \_\_\_\_\_ 414
  - 2. Reading Aloud \_\_\_\_\_ 415
  - 3. History and Literature \_\_\_\_\_ 416
    - Example of a History and Literature Lesson \_\_\_\_\_ 416
  - 4. Rhetoric (Includes Composition, Speech, and Debate) \_\_\_\_\_ 418
    - How to Write a Research Paper \_\_\_\_\_ 419
  - 5. Government, Economics, and Law \_\_\_\_\_ 420
    - Government at Age Sixteen \_\_\_\_\_ 420
    - Economics at Age Seventeen \_\_\_\_\_ 420
    - Law at Age Eighteen \_\_\_\_\_ 421
  - 6. Languages \_\_\_\_\_ 422
  - 7. Logic \_\_\_\_\_ 422
    - Logic at Age Sixteen \_\_\_\_\_ 422
    - Logic at Age Seventeen \_\_\_\_\_ 423

Logic at Age Eighteen and Beyond _____	423
About Using Logic Materials _____	423
How to Use Introductory Logic, by Wilson and Nance _____	423
8. Mathematics _____	425
9. Science _____	426
Other Ideas for Studying Science _____	426
10. Art and Music _____	427
Beyond Academics _____	427
Preparation for Marriage _____	428
Gaining a Livelihood and Managing a Home _____	428
Summary of Ten Things To Do From Ages Sixteen Through Eighteen _____	430
A Suggested Daily Schedule For Families	
With at Least One Child in the Wisdom Level _____	431

## Chapter Fifteen 433

### *The Finishing Level: Ages Nineteen and Onward*

Sorry, School Never Ends _____	433
Knowledge Level: How We Came to Where We Are _____	434
Understanding Level: Principles for Making Decisions and Setting Goals _____	434
What about College _____	439
Ten Reasons to Go to College _____	439
Seven Reasons Not to Go to College _____	441
Objection: I think college is the best path. _____	440
Things to Remember when Preparing for College _____	445
College and a Classical Liberal Arts Education _____	445
Wisdom Level: Homeschooling is for Life _____	446
The Next Step in Homeschooling _____	446
The Third Step in Homeschooling _____	447
Conclusion _____	447
For Further Study _____	448

## Chapter Sixteen 449

### *Conclusion: Life's Goals Begin at Home*

A Definition for Education _____	450
Our Mistakes _____	450
Some Questions _____	451
Too Little or Too Much? _____	451
Is it Too Late to Begin the Trivium? _____	452
A Final Prayer _____	452
Singing the Praises of Homeschooling: Psalm 127 _____	453

## Appendix One 455

### *Articles on Education*

#### Article One 456

##### *The Lost Tools of Learning, by Dorothy Sayers*

Too Much Specialization is Not a Good Thing _____	457
The Results of Modern Educational Methods _____	458
The Trivium Syllabus _____	462
The Proper and Improper Use of Subjects _____	464

Progressive Retrogression _____	465
The Three Stages of Learning _____	466
The Grammar Stage _____	467
The Logic Stage _____	470
The Rhetoric Stage _____	474
The Ages of the Stages _____	475
The Trivium is Sufficient _____	475
Educational Capital Now Spent _____	477
The True Goal of Education _____	478
Article Two _____	479
<i>The Trivium in Scripture</i>	
The Trivium of Faculties _____	479
The Basic Vocabulary _____	479
Hebrew Vocabulary _____	479
Greek Vocabulary _____	481
Passages Where the Basic Trivium Vocabulary Appears Together _____	483
Passages Where the Idea of the Trivium Appears _____	493
A Few Brief Observations _____	495
Article Three _____	498
<i>Ancient Education: Hebrew, Greek, and Roman</i>	
1. Hebrew Education: Training for Service to God _____	498
2. Greek Education: Training for Service to the Culture _____	498
3. Roman Education: Training for Service to the State _____	499
Article Four _____	501
<i>Mediaeval Education: The Seven Liberal Arts</i>	
1. The Trivium _____	501
2. The Quadrivium _____	502
Article Five _____	503
<i>Education of the Clergy</i>	
Article Six _____	505
<i>The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury: A Twelfth Century Defense of the Trivium</i>	
Article Seven _____	508
<i>A Sixteenth Century Course of Study</i>	
Article Eight _____	510
<i>A Comparison of Ancient Alphabets</i>	
General Observations _____	510
Transliteration Scheme _____	511
Four Alphabets Compared, Letter By Letter _____	513
Further Comments on the Alphabet _____	527
Classical Vowel Letters and Sounds _____	527

The Five Classic Vowels _____	528
Books on Classical Pronunciation _____	532
<b>Article Nine</b>	<b>533</b>
<i>On Christian Doctrine, by Augustine</i>	
<b>Article Ten</b>	<b>535</b>
<i>The Christian Use of Logic</i>	
Fundamental Laws of Logic _____	538
<b>Article Eleven</b>	<b>540</b>
<i>History and Research on the Teaching of Math</i>	
Formal Arithmetic at Age Ten, Hurried or Delayed? _____	540
The Historical Perspective _____	540
What the Ancients Did _____	540
What the Mediaevals and Later Did _____	541
When It Changed _____	543
Summary of the Historical Evidence _____	543
The Research Perspective _____	544
Inefficient, Period _____	544
Children Don't Do Better in Math, But They Do Learn to Hate School _____	544
Fractional Reserve _____	545
Drive Them to Abstraction _____	546
Math Class Postponed _____	547
Two Years Before the Math _____	548
The Chorean War _____	548
Moore Says Less _____	550
The Brain, It's Plain, Is Sprained if it is Strained _____	552
What Should We Then Do? _____	555
<b>Article Twelve</b>	<b>558</b>
<i>Outcome-Based Education Versus Trivium-Based Education</i>	
Ancient Persecution of the Trivium _____	558
Julianus Redivivus _____	559
A Contrast of Opposites _____	560
Principles _____	561
Values _____	562
Goals _____	564
Conclusion _____	565
<b>Article Thirteen</b>	<b>567</b>
<i>Contests in Your Curriculum</i>	
Contests Are Great Motivators _____	567
Contest Participation Develops Research Skills _____	567
Contests Can Bring It All Together _____	568
Contests Develop Character Qualities _____	568
Advantages of Time _____	568
Which Contests To Pick _____	569
A Few Warnings _____	569
Trivium Pursuit's List of National Contests and Exams Open to Homeschoolers _____	570

Article Fourteen 580

Family Bible Study by the Trivium

Choosing a Bible Translation 580
Bible Reading 582
Implementing the Trivium 582
Study Bibles 583
After the Study 584

Article Fifteen 585

Beginning A Homeschool Speech and Debate Club

Goals 585
Suggestions for Leaders 586
Suggested Schedule for Meetings 587

Article Sixteen 588

Pointers for Public Speaking

Five Points to Watch For When Giving an Interpretive Reading or Speech 588
Proper Breathing and Relaxation When Speaking and Debating 588
Articulation, Enunciation, Diction 589
Inflections 591

Appendix Two 597

Resource List

Introduction 598
Fair Warning 598
How To Use This Guide 598
General Index 599
1. Classical Education 600
2. General Homeschooling 602
2A. General Preparation 602
2B. Discipline 605
2C. Unit Studies 605
2D. Principle Approach 605
3. Language Arts & English 606
3A. Phonics 606
3B. Readers 606
3C. Copywork 606
3D. Spelling 606
3E. English Grammar 607
3F. Sentence Diagramming 607
3G. Outlining 607
3H. Composition 607
3I. Research 608
3J. Oral Narration 608
4. Rhetoric 608
4A. Textbooks 608
4B. Composition 609
4C. English Handbooks and Style Manuals 609
4D. Oral Interpretation 609

4E. Speech	611
4F. Debate	612
5. Literature	615
5A. Reading Aloud	615
5B. Booklists	615
5C. Classics	616
5D. Books Recorded on Tape	618
6. History	619
6A. Histories and Textbooks	619
6B. Reprints of Old History books	619
6C. Catalogs	619
6D. Primary Sources	620
6E. Timeline Materials	620
6F. Geography	621
6G. Miscellaneous	621
7. Government, Law, and Economics	621
8. Languages	623
8A. Vocabulary Studies Curricula	623
8B. Selected Latin Bibliography	624
8C. Selected Greek Bibliography	625
8D. Selected Hebrew Bibliography	626
8E. Other Resources	626
8F. Interlinear, Interleaf and Intercolumnar Texts	627
8G. Selected Latin texts	627
8H. Selected Greek texts	628
9. Mathematics	628
10. Logic	628
10A. Pre-Logic Curricula – Knowledge Level	628
10B. Logic Curricula – Understanding and Wisdom Levels	629
10C. Other Resources	629
11. Bible and Theology	630
11A. Bible Study Helps	630
11B. Family Worship	630
11C. Theology	630
11D. Devotional	632
11E. Confessions and Catechisms	632
11F. Catalogs	633
11G. Bible Versions	633
12. Philosophy	633
13. Science	634
13A. Textbooks	634
13B. Microscopes and Other Science Equipment	634
13C. Nature Study	634
13D. Creation Science	635
14. Art and Music	635
14A. Art	635
14B. Art Appreciation	635
14C. Art Curricula	636
14D. Music Appreciation	636
14E. Music Theory	636
15. Miscellaneous Resources	636

# Chapter Eleven



## *The Early Knowledge Level: Ten Things to Do Before Age Ten*

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

### ❧ INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ❧

THE GOAL OF TEACHING by the Trivium is to give students the tools with which to learn on their own – to liberate them from the drudgery of task-performance and to make them independent scholars. In previous chapters we have:

1. Explained how the Trivium can serve as both a method for learning any subject, and as a model of how the learning of a child develops (Chapter Four).
2. Argued the importance of the three formal subjects of the Trivium, and supplied some introduction to those three subjects (Chapters Five, Six, and Seven).
3. Discussed the importance of literature and history, laid out some principles for studying them, and given an example for the study of the literature of an ancient historical period.

(Chapters Eight and Nine).

4. Offered a survey of different approaches to Homeschooling, showing where they all fit into the Trivium model of development (Chapter Ten).

There is more than one legitimate way to approach teaching by the Trivium. In this chapter, we explain how we, as a Homeschooling family, have put the principles of the Trivium into practice. Other classical educators may apply the Trivium differently, emphasizing different methods and principles. Most of the things we recommend come from our own experiences. This does not mean that we followed every one of our recommendations all the years we have taught our children. It has taken us almost three decades to fully develop our philosophy of education – and we’re not done yet. We made the most mistakes with our first children – they were our guinea pigs. Some of the things we recommend are what we would do if we could begin again. In this chapter you will read the culmination of our long journey.

Education does not occur on a factory assembly line. We disagree with the “one formula fits all” approach, which seeks to press every child into the same mold. Each and every child is one-of-a-kind, growing up in the unique family where God has placed him. You, the parents, must determine for yourselves, under the direction and guidance of the Lord, what is the best approach for your own family and for each of your own children. We suggest that you should not limit yourselves to our recommendations. We certainly do not know everything, and we may know very little about what may fit your particular circumstances.

Some classical educators have had little or no experience with Homeschooling. Classical private schools apply the principles of a classical education to a classroom environment. This influences their methods significantly, as well it should. We would not expect them to necessarily regard our Homeschooling experience as applying to a classroom. These are two greatly different experiences. When compared to classroom schools, Homeschooling operates under a very different set of circumstances and by a very different philosophy of education. Teachers and principals in a classroom school would use teaching methods which differ significantly from the one-on-one methods which a mother would use in teaching her own children. Discipline would significantly vary between the two different situations. Classical classroom educators tend to focus more on competitive academic achievement in the classical subjects (Latin, logic, Greek, rhetoric, etc.). Because less can be achieved in a classroom situation in a given amount of time than can be achieved by one-on-one tutoring in the home, classroom educators are driven to

pursue academics at earlier ages. Homeschooling tends to release parents from these restrictions, so they can focus more upon the classical method of the Trivium. This freedom allows them to pay more attention to the principles of child development. In other words, in a Homeschooling situation, teaching by the Trivium becomes more than just an academic discipline. It becomes a way of life.

There is a wide variety of ways to implement the Trivium model and method of teaching in the homeschool. In this *Course of Study*, we have laid out *general principles and plans*, not detailed and micro-managed instructions. Who knows better how to bring order to your own homeschool and family life than yourself? If we tried to take in every possibility, this Chapter would resemble a phone book. If we laid out any one possibility in every little detail – which day of the week to teach each Latin verb – it would be a workable plan for practically nobody. Those who produce individual curricula often lay out these details. But whether you are following a pre-planned curriculum, a recommended reading list, or your own collection of materials, you still must adapt it to your own circumstances, which you should learn to do rather easily. We have mapped out the road ahead of you. We have left it to you to lay out your traveling schedule and to explore some of the side roads. You must figure out on your own when and how to eat your breakfast in the style of a truly classical education – as if that actually mattered. Though teaching by the Trivium may seem a bit daunting at first, it is not necessarily more difficult than other approaches to education, and in some ways is actually easier than most. So do not feel overwhelmed. Average parents with average children – like us and ours – can certainly succeed and thrive while teaching by the Trivium. We have found it rewarding and enjoyable.

Because our ideas are built one on top of the other, we suggest that you read this and the following Chapters from beginning to end, rather than skipping to the parts which focus on the particular needs or ages of your children.

### ❧ A SUGGESTED COURSE OF STUDY ❧

Before age ten, the child is at the Early Knowledge Level, where he is mostly dependent upon his concrete sensory experiences for learning. To put it in computer lingo, he is still *booting up*. Around age ten, the child enters a more intense phase of the Knowledge Level, where his brain becomes physically able to make more complex connections, which, among other things, makes the child more able to handle abstract con-

cepts, and which helps the child with self-management and self-control.

Force feeding academic studies before age ten is not an efficient use of your time, it is not going to accomplish all of the good which you desire, and it may actually work some harm. Of course the exact age differs from child to child, but about age ten the child becomes developmentally mature enough to pursue studies which are more academic. *Before* age ten, the focus should be on building a good foundation for the later academics. We suggest that formal academics should be the focus *after* age ten. If we exercise those parts of our child's mind which are developing, we will strengthen and enlarge his capacities. In the early years, we want to sow such seeds as:

Honoring God and parents.

Developing the capacity for language.

Developing the appetite for learning.

Enriching the memory.

Encouraging creativity.

Instilling a good work and service ethic.

These are the kind of things which will lay a good foundation for the formal academics later. First things come first. Academics must be built upon a good moral foundation.

At age ten, with a well prepared mind, you can choose the curriculum which best suits both your child and your circumstances. If you lay a firm foundation, then you can build upon it a mighty edifice. But if you begin hastily on the building while skimping on the foundation, then the building may sag and lean, and parts may fall, as the foundation sinks or crumbles beneath it.

The following is a general list of ten things we believe are important to teach your children before age ten. After this, we will outline a suggested daily schedule. Questions which are inserted into the text are actual questions which we have received.

### *1. Reading and Writing*

#### PHONICS

Sometime before your child reaches the age of ten, you should teach him to read, using a good intensive phonics method.

The first question is: "At what age should I begin?" A few children will learn to read at age four, while a few may be fully ten years old before they can confidently read a basic reader. Most children, however, will learn to read sometime between the ages of five and eight. The age at which a child learns to read is no indicator of how intelligent he is or

how well he will do later in academics. Our own children learned to read between ages five and nine. We suggest that you begin phonics instruction at age five. If, after a reasonable amount of time, you find that your child is not retaining any of the instruction, even though he is putting forth an effort, then you may want to put the curriculum aside, and wait a few months before attempting it again, and continue this routine until it sticks.

The second question is: “What materials should I use?” There are many good intensive phonics reading programs. Some families will use one, find it does not work, then use another, find it does not work, then use another, and at last it works. So, to the parents’ mind, this last program is the best program, while in reality, the child was finally old enough and had developed to the point where he was ready to read. A child simply cannot blend letter-sounds together into words until he has physically developed to a certain point.

Here is how I (Laurie) began to teach our oldest child, Nathaniel, to read. This is by no means a recommendation, but only the story of a small part of our journey through the school of hard knocks. When Nathaniel was just an infant, I read the book *How to Teach Your Baby to Read*, by Glenn Doman. This book teaches a pure form of the “look-say” or “whole language” method for learning how to read. Back in the 1950’s, I was taught to read with the Dick and Jane “look-say” sight readers, so I recognized Doman’s method as the way I had been taught to read. Since I did not know any better, I latched onto this method of teaching reading. Following the book’s instructions, when Nathaniel turned two, I began to teach him to read. As the book directed, I made up large flash cards, with vocabulary words printed on them: mommy, daddy, house, school, etc., and I drilled Nathaniel several times each day. Yes, he learned to “read” those words on the flash cards, but I found that if I skipped a day’s instruction, then he forgot all the words, so I had to begin all over again. My sister suggested that I teach him the alphabet first. I simply parroted the instructions of Mr. Doman by replying, “Oh, no, teaching the alphabet would just confuse him.”

I think I lasted about three months with this method. It was an exercise in futility, not unlike pouring water into a bucket full of holes. As long as I spent large and precious amounts of time each day drilling him with the flash cards, he continued to “read” them back to me. But if I failed to fill his bucket by drilling him with the cards, then his level of reading ability would drop as his vocabulary would drain out of the holes.

At about this time, I heard a radio talk show program on the subject of teaching reading by a method they called “intensive phonics.” The guest that day was Benita Rubicam, president of the Reading Reform Foundation. What she said made sense, and she immediately converted me. I read everything which that organization had to offer, and I began my search for the best intensive phonics program to use with my children. That all happened back in 1978. I finally decided to use *The Writing Road to Reading*, by Romalda Spalding. At that time, it was considered to be the best intensive phonics curriculum. Back then, the many helps and teacher’s manuals available today did not exist. When I first looked the curriculum over, I was overwhelmed. I thought, “How am I ever going to learn *all of these rules?*” It was not nearly as hard as it first seemed. Mom had to learn the phonics system herself – which she did, as she taught her first couple of children to read. After that, it was easy. Remember, mom was never taught the phonics system herself! Once mom had correctly learned the phonics system, she could teach reading with just about any curriculum – or even with no curriculum, using whatever was at hand.

Homeschooling families have many good intensive phonics programs from which to choose. You should locate an intensive phonics curriculum which best fits the needs of your family. Here are some criteria for choosing a phonics curriculum:

1. *Expense.* The teaching of reading does not need to be costly. Because many of us parents were not taught phonics, we need a full curriculum to teach ourselves first! Once we have learned the system, then we can easily teach our children by using a small chalkboard and a few easy readers.
2. *Method.* Despite what some persons want us to believe, English is a phonetic language. The problem with English is that it has the largest vocabulary, manifold larger than any other language which has ever existed. As a consequence, English has incorporated spellings from many different languages. Therefore, the way a particular word spells its sound may also display some of its history. This is the great cultural treasure of the English language – a treasure which is rapidly being lost as our vocabularies swiftly shrink under “look-say” or sight reading – a method of teaching reading which was invented for the deaf! You cannot build a large vocabulary upon the foundation of sight reading. Intensive phonics teaches the sounds of each letter or letter combination, and builds up a full system of pronunciation. (Yes, there

are some quaint little exceptions, and they are taught also.) Intensive phonics is the only method which fits English. Do not be fooled by the phony phonics programs which are based upon “look-say” sight reading, but which sprinkle in some incidental phonics as “auditory-clues.” Most of the reading curricula used in the state-socialist schools are phony phonics.

3. *Usability.* If you are unfamiliar with the English phonetic system, then make sure that the curriculum which you choose has plenty of teacher’s helps. Back in the seventies and eighties, when we used *The Writing Road to Reading*, the parent was expected to take a course at a college in order to learn how to use it. Today, numerous helps have been added. We recommend using a phonics curriculum which is easy to understand and use, such as *TATRAS* or *Alphaphonics*.

Here are a few suggestions to reinforce whatever phonics curriculum you choose: When your child studies a particular sound, bring it before his mind in different ways. For example: Write the letter “B” on the blackboard, or write it on paper and hang it in the living room. Talk with him about words which begin with “B.” When the children and I would play on the swing set, I would sing to them the alphabet song, and they would sing along. When we played with clay, I would make the clay into shapes of letters and encourage them to make them also. We were often making cards to send to the relatives, and I would encourage the little ones to write their letters on the cards. I would give them a pile of macaroni or rice or beans, and we would glue these items onto paper in the form of letters. We would line their toys up on the floor in the shape of letters. Our family worship time doubled as phonics instruction time. The little ones who were just learning to read would be required to find in their Bible a letter which they could recognize – such as the initial letter of their name. Later they would sound out words. As the children become proficient in reading, they should be reading aloud some each day, perhaps out of one of the old-time readers. Our youngest child went from sounding out letters to reading fluently the King James Bible in about one year.

#### ARTIFICIALLY INDUCED DYSLEXIA

*Question:* Several of my children do not seem to think deeply, despite the fact that they have been homeschooled. We reached a crossroads recently with my thirteen-year-old son, and we finally put him into a classroom school full time. I found that I could not do this job by my-

self. I needed my husband's help to do it. But my husband has "dyslexia," and so does his whole family. He does not think in words, but in pictures, which makes our communication difficult at times. My husband has been so adversely affected by the teaching methods of the secular school system that he is not a reader – not by his choice. My husband is willing to read several hours a week in order to set an example. Since my husband is already well past the normal age to learn reading, where should he begin?

*Answer:* This appears to be a classic case of artificially induced dyslexia. I would suggest that you pick out an intensive phonics program and teach him to read phonetically instead of pictographically. Your biggest problem will be to break his habit of looking at words pictographically. Encourage him to practice sounding out words aloud (or mouthing the words silently). Find easy books for him to read which will interest him.

Concerning the problem of not thinking: people who do not read, and who spend their free time watching television and movies, playing video and computer games, or who otherwise spend their time seeking entertainment, will not be able to think critically. Documentation for this is given in Jane Healy's two books, *Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It* and *Failure to Connect: How Computers Affect Our Children's Minds for Better and Worse*.

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE NOTEBOOK

We recommend that each student maintain an English language notebook (which we will discuss in more detail later). The notebook can begin with his study of phonics. Because pages can be taken out easily and replaced, three-ring binders often work better than spiral notebooks. Fill it with notebook paper, blank paper (white and colored) and subject dividers. Each child should have his own notebook. If phonics is new to mom, she may need one also. The student will add to his notebook each week.

At about the same time you are teaching your child to read, you should also teach him to write his letters. Most phonics curricula include instructions for how to teach writing. You begin with printing each letter of the alphabet. He may fill a page or two of his notebook with each letter of the alphabet. Decorate the pages with your child's own drawings, or with cutouts from magazines: apples on the "A" page, buttons on the "B" page, etc. Have your child add pages of his practice letter writing to his notebook. You will add consonant digraphs, diphthongs and other letter combinations later. This notebook will *supplement* a phon-

ics curriculum, but will *not take the place* of it.

#### COPYWORK

When your child becomes reasonably proficient at printing his letters, and he is on the road to learning how to read, you can begin him on copywork. The practice of Copywork dates back to ancient times, and is, along with oral narration, the first step in teaching a child how to write.

Christ also suffered for us, leaving behind for us a copyhead [ὑπογραμμών: hupogrammon], in order that ye should trace over his tracks. — First Peter 2:21 (v.l.t.)

Copywork is a good way to practice handwriting skills, reinforce phonics instruction, introduce grammar and proper sentence structure, and lay a foundation for creative writing. In copywork, the child copies on his own paper, word for word, from a sentence or paragraph which someone else has written. Whose sentences and paragraphs should your child copy? Use the finest literature. Begin with the Bible. For more advice on selections, consider,

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. — Philippians 4:8,9

Your child should spend some time each day doing copywork. Ruth Beechick (*A Strong Start in Language*) and Cindy Rushton (*Language Arts... The Easy Way*) outline how to incorporate copywork into your curriculum. Copywork could be kept in his English language notebook, or it may deserve its own separate notebook. Your child may copy from the Bible one day, copy poetry or literature the next day, copy famous speeches or sayings of important men another day. He may maintain all of his copywork in one notebook, or he may maintain different notebooks for different kinds of literature.

How much time should he spend in copywork? As always, it depends upon your child. Some little girls, who are born with pencils in their hands, will write the day away, and you must set some upper limits. Some little boys, who find it a struggle to even hold a pencil, let alone use it – even at the age of nine! – will require some minimal “you’re not free until this is done” time. Writing just one verse of Scrip-

ture may reach the upper limit of their ability. You want to teach these little ones diligence and perseverance and challenge them, but without discouraging them. How do you determine what to require of your child? Here is a principle: once you have found a level at which he can work, then steadily challenge him to do a little more, a little better, a little further, yet never pushing beyond his level of abilities. If you require far too much, then you will certainly discourage him. If you require far too little, then you will spoil him. There is a band in the middle, and it is your job to find it. Some children reach a plateau for a while, until a couple things click, then they are off again. Attempt that in a class of thirty students, then you will understand why one-on-one tutoring is so superior. Normally a five-year-old may spend perhaps fifteen minutes a day in copywork, while a nine-year-old may spend thirty minutes each day.

#### HOW MUCH WRITING IS ENOUGH

*Question:* We have been using X Curriculum as the foundation for our history and reading. Their language arts program, especially creative writing, seems overwhelming. There are weekly assignments, poems, dialogues, outlines, imaginative writing, etc. It is a bit daunting for my eight-year-old and seven-year-old. Instead of dictation, we have been doing copywork two to four times per week, using a variety of sources: poetry, Psalms, Proverbs, and passages from the books we are reading. My children will occasionally, without any initiation, add dialogue to pictures they have drawn, tell silly stories, put on plays with puppets, etc. So I know they are not completely devoid of creative abilities. Since my husband is in the habit of maintaining a journal, we plan to give them nice journals at the end of the year and make journal writing a family affair. Are we on the “right track” with copywork, journal writing, oral narration, and their occasional creative writing impulses? My instinct is to encourage their other creative pursuits, and not to require any creative writing at this point – except what they initiate themselves. My husband is concerned that if we do not require the creative writing assignments at this time, then they will miss out on something.

*Answer:* Copywork, oral narration (which we will talk about later), and their occasional spontaneous creative writing – this seems like plenty for children at the Early Knowledge Level (below age ten). There’s only so much time in the day. We encouraged our children to combine art with copywork. They made little booklets of their copywork, of the Greek or Hebrew alphabets, of little stories which they wrote and illustrated with pictures, of science projects or history projects. Children

can cover their booklets with scraps of fabric or paper out of wallpaper sample books.

## 2. Oral Narration

In Britain, at the close of the nineteenth century, Charlotte Mason developed the concept of narration as a method of teaching. In her book, *For the Children's Sake*, Susan Schaeffer Macaulay has reintroduced narration to Homeschooling families. Karen Andreola followed this with *A Charlotte Mason Companion*. In oral narration, the parent reads to the child, or the child reads to himself, then the child “tells back” to the parent, in his own words, what was just read. It is best to begin narration at an early age, when the child is four or five years old, to practice it on a daily basis, and to continue the practice through the later teens.

Narration is an exercise which builds mental stamina. According to Karen Andreola, “. . . narration takes the place of questionnaires and multiple choice tests, it enables the child to bring all the faculties of mind into play. The child learns to call on the vocabulary and descriptive power of good writers as he tells his own version of the story.”

Narration is very difficult to do. Could you, without notes, narrate the sermon which you heard last Sunday? Most of us – including the pastor who preached the sermon – would have trouble remembering even the text of the sermon. Our adult minds have not been trained to listen to something, remember it, and then retell it. We were never trained in the skill of narration.

It is best to begin small. Read to your child one short paragraph from a simple story, then ask him to retell the story in his own words. In the beginning, you may need to prompt your child with questions about the passage. As the child becomes more practiced in the skill of narration, he will be able to narrate longer and more detailed passages.

Narration can serve three functions.

1. To periodically test how well a child is comprehending the material which he reads or hears. The more a child must say in his narration, the more thoroughly he has understood the material. If he does not remember much about the material, then he probably did not listen well or read carefully.
2. To develop and sharpen the mental capacities. As jogging down the physical road exercises the body, so jogging down the memory channels exercises the mind. Using the information through telling it back strengthens the child's grasp of it.

3. Copywork, when combined with oral narration, constitutes the first step in teaching a child how to write. The process of creative writing involves two skills: the actual physical work of taking pencil in hand and putting the words on paper, which your child learns by copywork; and the work of creating in the mind the ideas to write about, which is developed in your child through oral narration. If you develop these two skills in your child before age ten, then, when your child has matured, he will have these two “tools” at hand to work with creatively when writing.

Do not let your child be a passive observer. If you read to him, ask him questions about what he has heard. Tell him to narrate the material back in his own words. Make him address any moral value issues which may come up. Develop his mind, not simply in the direction of absorbing, but in the direction of responding. The mind which can respond must also absorb, in some measure, but the mind which simply absorbs – as in front of a television or computer screen – is too passive in the learning process, learns to take without giving, and it is questionable how much it really does absorb anyway. Computers do not offer learning experiences which require real human responsiveness. Programmed learning has its uses, and it can be very effective at later ages, but at this age, your child needs interaction with an adult (and not with groups of children his own age).

#### HOW TO DEVELOP NARRATION

*Question:* All my children are reading well and we are managing to read aloud together. My eleven-year-old is doing well with narration, but my nine-year-old twin boys struggle with it immensely. I think they are listening, but they can't put thoughts into words. What is the best way to develop this skill?

*Answer:* If your boys are struggling with oral narration, then I suggest that you take smaller bites for them to narrate. One sentence, then two sentences, then three.

Sometimes the problem is less a difficulty in narrating, and more a difficulty in obeying. The child doesn't want to put forth the effort for you. Oral narration requires that we make our brain work. It takes an effort to force the mind to listen attentively, knowing that you will later be asked to narrate back what you heard. Don't we all hate to put forth great effort? Doesn't it require strong motivation to overcome our reluctance to endure the pain? You, as an adult, see the value in narration, but the child may see only the pain, and if he's not used to obeying you,

it may be difficult to motivate him to put forth the effort. This would be an example of how obedience is a foundation for all of education. But if your child is an obedient child, the problem can perhaps be overcome by reducing the pain by making the narration short, and helping him at first by prompting him with some questions. If he remembers the questions, they will help him to narrate on his own.

There are, of course, some people who find oral narration to be easy and fun and can go on and on narrating. They still need training to improve their narrating. They may need to learn how to cut their narration down to what is important. Regardless of how easy or difficult it comes, all children should be required to narrate. It should be done cheerfully and willingly just like all chores – brushing your teeth and making your bed – and anything else Daddy and Mommy want them to do.

If oral narration is a real chore, then you may let the children know ahead of time when you will be requiring narration – always being “on call” for narration, wondering when mother will call for narrations, might take the fun out of hearing you read.

### *3. Memorization*

Memorization should be begun when your child is young – even as young as two or three – and continued throughout life. (It is good for us old folks, also). Time should be spent everyday reciting memory work. Encourage your child to memorize such things as the Greek and Hebrew Alphabets, passages from the Bible, poetry, catechisms, excerpts from literature. Your child could memorize passages of the Bible in Greek or Latin, and the same passages in English, in order to give them a feel for those languages. Memorizing passages of literature will prepare your child for the study of formal grammar at age ten. This gives him a feel for the way sentences are put together, and it helps him to build his vocabulary. Memorizing also prepares your child to be a good writer. What goes into a child’s head as a little one, will come out later as he writes.

Perhaps your child can recite his memory work in front of the family or a larger group. This may prepare your child for competitions in oral interpretation and speech and debate when he is older. Together, memorization and narration train, sharpen, and strengthen the mind, which prepares your child for more rigorous studies later on. That is precisely what we want to do in the early years of a child’s life. By contrast, television, videos, and even much of the educational software, actually works in the opposite direction.

There is some discussion over *what* to have the child memorize. Some say the time should be spent memorizing facts: dates, Latin verb endings, miscellaneous scientific and geographic data, etc. Maybe so, but there is only so much time in the day, so we, as the parents, need to determine what is the best use of that time. If it is important to you that the child have all the states and capitals memorized by age ten, then by all means do it. Both parents could sit down and write out a list of those things they think are important for their children to memorize, and adjust this list as different priorities emerge. Bare facts, divorced from their contexts, can become a drudgery. Facts are best planted as seeds in the fertile context of their story. Christopher Columbus, discoverer of America on October 12, in the year 1492 – those facts are much better memorized when linked to the story of Columbus. The Greek paradigm for “I believe” – πιστεύω, πιστεύεις, πιστεύει, πιστεύομεν, πιστεύετε, πιστεύουσι – is much better memorized when linked to the actual usage of the words:

πιστεύω, I believe.

And immediately the father of the little child, crying out with tears, said, “**Πιστεύω**, κύριε, **I believe**, Lord. Βοήθει μου τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. Relieve my unbelief.” — Mark 9:24

πιστεύεις, Thou believest.

And Philip said, “Εἰ **πιστεύεις** ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, ἔξεστιν. If **thou believest** from the whole heart, it is lawful.” And answering he [the Ethiopian] said, “**Πιστεύω** τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. **I believe** Jesus Christ to be the son of God.” — Acts 8:37

Et cetera.

Because of the way that the brain is structured before age ten, we believe that memorizing passages of literature in Latin or Greek, and their translation in English, would be much more profitable than memorizing deductive paradigms in the language (which is formal Latin and Greek grammar). Indeed, the ideal is to be a multilingual family where the children learn to speak and read all of these languages in their early years long before they ever study the grammar – just as they learn English before they ever study the grammar! The time for formal grammar – paradigms and such – is at age ten or after. If they’ve trained their mind to memorize, and they have become familiar with the language, then they should be able to memorize the paradigms at age ten with relative ease. More on that subject later.

Spend some time – maybe five to ten minutes per child, once or twice each day – listening to each child recite his memory work. Daily exercise for the memory, like daily exercise for the body, helps to maintain its strength. Certainly, the child will not need to review every day everything that he has ever committed to memory. After he has mastered something, bring on something new, and review the old masters once a week or so. After a fair amount of old masters are accumulated, then review the oldest once a month or so. Over the years, many things may fade, though their impression will always be there, yet some things will never be forgotten.

#### 4. *Hearing and Listening*

By reading aloud to your child, he learns the sound of words, he increases his vocabulary, he enlarges his conceptions of the world, and he develops his imagination. We suggest that you read to your child at least two hours a day (not necessarily consecutive). Read from a wide variety of good literature, biographies, and historical fiction. Include books on science, geography, art, music, and history. Some parents combine narration with read aloud times.

THREE DO NOTS:

1. Do not be afraid to read to young children books with long chapters. A five-year-old is capable of attending to and understanding much of such books as *Treasure Island* or *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.
2. Do not waste your time reading “fast-food” type books (e.g. *Babysitter Club* books or Nancy Drew mysteries).
3. Do not require your children to sit beside you on the couch perfectly still while you read. As long as they stayed in the room and were not distracting or interrupting, we allowed our children to play quietly with their toys, or to work on cross-stitching, or to draw, or some similar quiet project, while we read aloud. Many children listen much better when they are doing something with their hands – indeed, it seems some little boys cannot sit still long enough to listen unless they are holding something.

We do not often read aloud in one uninterrupted two-hour-long stretch. We read some in the morning, some in the afternoon, and some at night. There are notable exceptions. I remember one day when we read *The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder in one long stretch, skipping everything else which would interrupt our reading the day away.

Reading aloud is my (Laurie's) favorite part of Homeschooling. How many others have had this experience: I am sitting on the couch (a chair would never do) reading a good book, such as *Men of Iron* by Howard Pyle. One child sits on my right, and one child sits on my left, and one child sits on the back of the couch behind my neck, and one child sits on my lap. The fifth child must make do. Everyone *must* to be situated, just so, in order to see all of the pictures – which *must* be examined minutely before the page is turned. This is one of the ways God taught me patience. Let them look at the pictures and ask their questions. We will eventually find out if Miles wins the joust. My oldest daughter, Johannah, painted this cozy scene for us, collaging photos from long ago, putting us all into one memorable picture. I was wearing braids and sitting on that old brown couch which long ago met the rubbish pile after much good use. If I could have just an hour of that time again, right now, I would gladly read *Corduroy* fifteen times in a row and not complain.

When I read a book which includes dialogue written in a dialect, I attempt to imitate the foreign accent. This tends to spill over into other conversations – even when answering the phone. The children are embarrassed when we drive into the McDonald's drive through, and I order the hamburgers in a Scottish brogue.

#### TIMELINE

You can develop your child's idea of the continuity of history by marking those things you study or read about on a timeline. Stretch some paper out on your living room wall, draw a line down the middle, mark it off in fifty or hundred year increments, then leave it there for the next twenty years. You could have one family timeline, or each child could make his own timeline. Every time you read something historical, mark it on your timeline. When you read about the life of Bach, mark his birth and death on the timeline. When you read about the invention of the printing press, mark that point on the timeline. The children could illustrate the timeline. Some families put their timelines into three ring binders. That makes them more portable, and more revisable. A timeline displays a continuous view of history, especially when it is placed where the children can always look at it. If memorizing dates is important to you, this may make it easier. More importantly, it gives your child a better notion of the time relationship between events. Daddy and Mommy were not even married when men first landed on the moon! Daddy lived before there were superhighways or rockets. Great grandpa lived before there were jet airplanes. *The Wall Chart of*

*World History*, by Edward Hull, is a valuable resource to have in order to consult. This looks like an oversized hard cover book, but it folds out into a chart over fifteen feet long, and it includes Biblical and world historical events. The chart presents a visual overview of history. It will help you to put into context the historical fiction and biographies which you read aloud. It will also help you to compose your own timeline.

#### HISTORY NOTEBOOK

We suggest that each child should maintain his own history notebook. He could begin this notebook when he is in the Early Knowledge Level, though many will wait until he is older before introducing this. A three-ring binder filled with subject dividers and paper (white and colored) will allow for adding and removing pages. We will discuss the history notebook in more detail under the Later Knowledge Level (Chapter Twelve).

#### ABRIDGED VERSUS UNABRIDGED BOOKS

*Question:* Why is it important to read classic literature in unabridged versions? Isn't the version abridged in order to prevent readers from becoming "bogged down" and "giving up?"

*Answer:* Here are the four phases of a book: 1) the original unabridged version, 2) the abridged version, 3) the comic book version, and 4) the movie version. Why shouldn't we skip the first three phases and only require that our children watch the movie version? I hope the answer is obvious. If our children only watched movies instead of reading, they would not develop literary-mindedness. They would not develop vocabulary, grammatical construction, paragraph construction, development of thought, etc. They would not develop their mental imagery – they would only be seeing pictures, interrupted by dialogue.

What if we only required our children to read the comic book version of a book? They would still gather in some of the story, but the vocabulary, sentence construction, etc. would be at the pabulum level. This sort of thing may be acceptable for children first learning to read, but older children must be challenged in their thinking.

We could stop at the abridged versions. That is where most of America stops anyway. Read this:

Mrs. Swift was waiting for them in front of the house, as the car shrieked to an abrupt halt.

This was taken from *Tom Swift and His Flying Lab* – a typical fast-food type book. It takes no thought to read that sentence. You know all the

words and their meanings. Your mind absorbs the sentence easily. In fact, reading aloud this type of sentence is tiring. It doesn't take long before fatigue sets in and the book is put down. It dulls the mind. Now, read this:

By the time the boat came back to Hall's, his arms were so numb that he could hardly tell whether his oar was in or out of his hand; his legs were stiff and aching, and every muscle in his body felt as if it had been pulled out an inch or two.

This was taken from *Tom Brown at Oxford*. This type of sentence holds the attention. It engages the mind. The sentence structure challenges, yet does not overwhelm. Abridged versions commonly dumb down the language to an elementary level. There are exceptions, of course – but that is exactly what they are – exceptions.

How do you develop an appetite for a good, lean steak if all you eat is soybean imitation meat? One develops the fast-food appetite by reading the fast-food edited versions. They write those abridged versions because most people today cannot read the good literature. They never learned to read properly, and their vocabulary is frozen at the fifth grade level. But we should not allow the unbelieving culture to drag us down with their adulterated versions.

#### NON-CHRISTIAN BOOKS

*Question:* What good purpose is served by reading books which are written by non-Christians? We know homeschoolers who do not read anything which is not by a Christian author, and even then, they reject many books if they appear to have too much “conflict or evil.” This would include, but not be limited to books such as *The Hobbit* and *Silas Marner* or authors such as George MacDonald and Charles Dickens.

*Answer:* I first heard this question many years ago in Houston, Texas. A woman was looking over our booklet, *Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (our list of books of fiction which we have read and recommend) and she wondered why we recommended a book all about war: *Johnny Tremain*.

Some of the books which we read and enjoyed fifteen years ago, we would not necessarily approve of today. Several years ago, we read the *Jeremy* books by Hugh Walepole, and I remember loving them. I recently reread one of them, and I could not believe I ever liked it. Jeremy, the main character, is quite disrespectful of his parents, and what is worse, his disrespectfulness is approved of by the author. In other words, if the boy showed disrespect and was punished for it and this conflict was resolved in the book, then that would be right. But in this story, the

boy showed disrespect, and the author allowed that to be a part of Jeremy's character without showing that it was wrong. Fifteen years ago, I did not see that problem. Today, I see the problem very clearly. We took the books off of our list.

Each book should be read critically, pointing out its good points as well as its problems and faults, and analyzing the author's philosophy. Use each book as an example to show the children what to look for. Though you should never read anything uncritically, yet you also do not want to spend all of your time criticizing. You must determine for your own family what is the proper balance for each book. This is a judgment call, and we cannot fault families who choose not to read some literature. The label "Christian" is by no means a guarantee that the material is not offensive, let alone that it is of good quality. Many Christian authors write pabulum.

We read theological authors with whom we disagree. We read very critically, and they often end up being much more profitable than authors with whom we agree – precisely because they make us think.

The works of Robert Louis Stevenson are some of the most excellent English literature ever written, and there may be much value in reading them, but he does not appear to be a Christian.

Do not make a steady diet of one author. Read critically. Do not live for entertainment.

#### I CANNOT KEEP UP WITH MY CHILD'S READING

*Question:* My son, age nine, devours books. He does manage to put up with my reading aloud, and even seems to enjoy it, but I can tell that he would rather just zoom through the books himself. I have told him that we will continue to do both. The problem is, he reads so fast (and can narrate back accurately) that I can hardly keep him in books! I used to be able to read books before I gave them to him, but I can no longer keep up with him. I am uncomfortable with just handing him books which I have not read. What if he comes across something which I would not want him to read, or which I think would not be appropriate for his age?

*Answer:* You are right in feeling uncomfortable with just handing a nine-year-old a book to read without knowing what is in the book. It is better not to read at all than to read garbage. I never allowed my children to read books with which I was unfamiliar. When they did want to read something with which I was not familiar, then I would read it aloud, commenting on any bad ideas presented in the story, and skipping over any inappropriate parts. Sometimes I would just stop reading – the book

was not worth the bother. The book which taught me this lesson was *Tarzan*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Nathaniel was young when he wanted to read this book, and because it is an old book, I thought it must be acceptable. After Nathaniel finished reading the book, he told me that the main character in it committed adultery. He did not think he should read any more books by Burroughs. I was rather upset that Nathaniel had not stopped reading the book immediately when he came upon that incident, but I was nevertheless glad that he told me about it. It taught me that I need to be more careful concerning what the children read, and that just because a book is old does not mean it is good. If you cannot keep up with the boy's reading, then you may choose to have him reread approved books.

As your son listens to father or mother read aloud to all the children, he will strengthen his auditory learning skills, and he will help him to develop his imagination. He will also be sharing time with the family, instead of being off by himself, indulging his own ways.

#### QUIET WHILE READING ALOUD

*Question:* I have four children. I read to my ten and seven-year-old together, and I read separately to my four-year-old. The four-year-old is wonderful, but he is also strong-willed, and he is inclined to test the waters whenever and wherever he can. Having a seven month old baby on top of this has made schooling very challenging. Since the four-year-old is no longer napping, it is even more challenging. Though I have attempted to include him in the room while I read, it seems very difficult for him to avoid making interruptive noises while I read. I have tried puzzles, and this worked the best, but he does not have the attention span of the older two. It is hard to continue reading while he constantly switches activities. I can read for about an hour when he is with us, but it is a very challenging hour. It is difficult for the older two to narrate against the background noise of his activities.

*Answer:* Imagine this scenario: mother calls up the stairs, "I will be reading in five minutes." Instantly, five little munchkins come tumbling down the steps, ever anxious for the next installment of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Intent on working with the new markers which Uncle David gave him, nine-year-old Nathaniel quietly sits down at the art table which mother has positioned next to the art shelf in the living room. Seven-year-old Johannah picks up her cross-stitch project she is hoping to finish for this year's county fair. Five-year-old Hans plays quietly in the corner with his Legos. Three-year-old Ava happily sits near mother on the couch sucking her thumb and holding mother's hair. And little Hel-

ena crawls around, examining the furniture, and falls asleep on the floor an hour into the reading. All the children work and play quietly, never causing mother a moment's worry or distraction. She never has a need to tell anyone to be quiet or to stop fighting. All is peace and calmness. Mother reads for two hours, stopping occasionally to call for narrations, and then stops to prepare dinner. Is this reality? I think not.

Here is reality. Mother is reading *Two Little Confederates*, by Thomas Nelson Page. Twice, she stops to tell the girls to please stop talking. Then the boys came in from working on the barn roof to check on what had come in the mail. Then grandma calls to tell mother the latest news. By the time mother puts down the phone, her audience has disappeared. If you wait for the perfect time to read aloud, you'll still be waiting. When the children are small, you will have interruptions. The smaller the children and the larger the number of children, the more the interruptions. But what is motherhood all about but a training of these children. When you're through with the brood, and your nest is empty, then you'll miss those times, and you won't care about the interruptions. My hope now is that my sons and daughters will let me help with their broods.

My daughter Helena just asked me if I told you to keep a fly swatter next to your chair as you read. I guess I must have done that when they were young, but I really don't remember. Children do remember the strangest things.

Here are some suggestions which may help. You may require a three or four-year-old to stay in one area – on a blanket or small rug, kept busy for half of an hour with Legos or some such toy. After this, switch his places and his toys and require him to play quietly for another fifteen minutes. By that time, mother will need a break from reading, so everyone can move on to the next thing on their schedule. Perhaps you could hold back some special toys just for read-aloud times. If the child becomes noisy in his play, then stop reading, and gently remind him to “modulate your voice,” as Laura Ingalls Wilder's mother used to say. At times, you will need to use the switch. The process for obtaining the end is as important as the end itself. We would like to obtain the end point of no interruptions when we read, but we must employ appropriate means, even if we never quite obtain that end. Children remember *how* we mothers did things, and sometimes *why* we did things, regardless of how often the perfect result was actually obtained. Were we gentle and kind in our training? Were we consistent in how we disciplined? Was it important to show respect by keeping quiet and not interrupting her, so that everyone could listen? When it's time for them

to raise their children, they'll follow our example. Let's bless them with better examples for them to follow.

#### BOOKS RECORDED ON TAPE

*Question:* What do you think of children listening to books recorded on tape as a partial substitute for mom reading aloud one to two hours per day. My eight-year-old boy has latched onto several very good books, at least two grades above his reading level, which he has gobbled up because he can listen to the tape and follow along in the book.

*Answer:* Our family occasionally listens to books on tape, especially while traveling long distances in the van. Many libraries have a large selection of books recorded on tape. Your suggestion of having the child follow along in the book as he listens to the tape may be very good. This combines the auditory with the visual. But do not allow this to become a total substitute for his own reading, and for father and mother reading aloud. You still need to do this, for your sake, and for your family's sake.

#### 5. *Family Worship*

Contrary to the old saying, "the family which prays together, stays together," studies have shown that the family which only prays together – that is, worships together only at church – does not usually stay together. The family which stays together is the family which prays and studies the Bible together regularly as a family at home. The father should lead the family in prayer and Bible studies, morning and evening, if possible. This will strengthen the father's role as the accountable head and moral guide of the family. The mother teaches her children the proper role of submission to their parents by her example of submission to their father. Mothers are not to be the spiritual leaders of the family. With regular family worship, the mind is developed along spiritual and moral lines in a way which cannot be accomplished by Bible workbooks, private devotions, or regular church attendance.

Here is a method of Bible study which we believe is Biblical and profitable. Have someone read a passage of Scripture, then have everyone in the family, perhaps in turn, ask the father a question about the passage. Before age ten, you may expect a child to ask mostly Knowledge Level questions of fact and details. By age thirteen he will ask more Understanding Level questions of theory and implications. By age sixteen he will ask more Wisdom Level questions of practice and application. If you accomplish all of the academics, but leave out family worship, then you will raise well educated practical agnostics. Family

training in God's word should be your top priority – far above academics. (See Appendix One, Article Fifteen, Family Bible Study by the Trivium.)

Do not let your child ignore God. God is the ultimate reason for why he is alive. When God speaks, He must always have the child's attention. So do not indulge in frivolous Bible story books which degrade God's word to entertaining comics, or reduces Bible history to nice little tales on the level of myths and fables. The standard must not be entertainment value, but faithfulness to God's word.

### *6. Arts and Crafts*

Young children learn more through their senses. They need more hands on manipulatives before age ten. Provide children with the place, the tools, and the time for their art work.

Make sure you have a space in your home where the children can easily pull out these art materials and work on projects. In the main room of your house, or wherever it is you read to the children and spend the most time, maintain a low shelf stocked with good quality colored pencils, crayons or markers, paints, brushes, paper, scissors, glue, clay, wallpaper sample books, fabric sample books, matting board scraps, stitching, sewing, knitting, and crocheting supplies. Next to this shelf, you may have a small table with chairs where the children can easily work on their projects while you read to them. Younger children can do crafts, while the older ones are being helped with math or science. Art and craft projects can be sent to relatives, made into gifts, given to residents at the nursing home, entered into contests, taken to the county fair, or simply displayed in the home. In our home, we have framed many of the children's works, and the walls are covered with the results.

Give them plenty of time to experiment with arts and crafts and thereby develop their elementary creativity. Some children could spend one or two hours a day on arts and crafts, while other children won't be able to give it more than a few minutes attention. If you sit down and work beside them, they'll spend more time.

One of the most useful things I ever purchased for my girls was a bag of fabric scraps from a lady who did sewing and alterations. The bag cost me only five dollars, but was filled with all kinds of scraps of silks, satins, velvets, and wools. The girls were quite young at the time, and they had very elementary skills at sewing, but those first few efforts at turning the scraps into doll clothes fed their desire to learn more. They quickly passed me in ability, and eventually taught themselves tailoring

and pattern making, such that now they make vintage clothing reproductions. All this came out of a bag of scraps. I made sure that they had all of the time and the materials which they needed for their projects, and I provided the place for them to work. The sewing machine, the art shelf, and the tables were always handy and accessible for all of the children. Their projects could be left setting out until finished. Nothing may be more discouraging to a budding young artist than to be required to put away a half finished project. When they're done with the project, they can clean up, and the house can return to order.

Do not allow your child to do arts and crafts on the computer. The mouse does not teach manipulation nearly so well as a lump of clay or a square block. Computers may be wonderful tools in their place. This is not their place.

Our children primarily learned to draw by copying. They copied famous drawings and paintings, pictures out of *The Art-Literature Readers*, or the *McGuffey Readers*, books from Dover Publications, or just anything we had around the house. When our children were young and just learning to draw I bought for them the Dover book, *Animals: 1,419 Copyright-Free Illustrations of Mammals, Birds, Fish, Insects, etc., A Pictorial Archive from Nineteenth-Century Sources Selected by Jim Harter*. This book is full of black and white pen and ink drawings (with short descriptions) which the children copied into their own little art booklets. They also entered these drawings at the fair.

### 7. Field Trips

Take field trips frequently. Take time to attend concerts and plays, museums and exhibits. Visit workplaces. Give your child experiences from which to build his understanding of the world – experiences he will draw upon and perhaps revisit when he is older.

Do not let your child explore the world only from a cathode ray tube. Children need real experiences to relate to. Seeing a jet take off on television is not the same as seeing a jet take off in front of you. Hearing an orchestra on television or radio is not the same as hearing an orchestra in person. Watching a computer simulation of a scientific experiment, or watching a video of it, is not the same as doing it in front of your very own eyes. Yes, you can learn some things by the tube. But it is not the same — there are also some things which you are not learning.

When your child is four or five, begin attending your local Science and Engineering Fair. Observe all of the different kinds of projects and experiments. Encourage the child to think of what kind of experiment

he could enter when he is thirteen (at the Understanding Level).

Early on, form the habit of visiting the library on a weekly basis. At a young age, the child will become familiar with where to find the different assortments of books, and how to ask the librarian for help. Later, you will teach the child to use the computer catalog and the reference section of the library. Around age thirteen (which is the beginning of the Understanding Level), take your child to a good college library and familiarize him with doing research, using the Library of Congress system. At age fifteen, take him to a large university library. By the time a child is in his later teens, he should know how to perform research in any library.

When I was no more than eight years old, Grandma Haigh took me to one of the tiny branches of the Des Moines Public Library. To this day, I can recall the wonder and amazement which filled me when I saw all of those books. After that visit, I yearned to have a library card of my own. It was another three years before my wish was fulfilled. In 1963, when I was eleven, my family moved to San Diego, and there we were given a free card to the public library. For the next year, every Monday night, after doing the grocery shopping, we would visit the library. I began at the "A's" in the juvenile fiction section, checking out six books every week. I do not remember how far I went down the alphabet, but that "year of the library" provoked in me a life time love for reading.

#### PROTECTING A CHILD IN THE LIBRARY

*Question:* Our library children's room is largely filled with light reading and pop-culture rubbish. My seven-year-old son loves to read, and he will read anything, so I must be careful when I take him to the library. Though I direct him to the good books, he often ends up with some rubbish. What is the point in my taking him to the library if I then refuse to take home the books which he picks out? He loves to go to the library, and I do not want to quench his desire.

*Answer:* Libraries have become dangerous places for children. The covers alone on some books on display are very wicked. It is no longer safe to allow a child to wander about in a library – particularly because of the magazine section, the Internet access, the videos, and now, even the books on display in the window. It may come to the point where you must pick out the books for the children and bring them home. It may even come to the point where you do not want to be seen in the library yourself. But then how will your children learn to do library research? Since you are in a situation where you have only one library to which to go, then you must work with the situation. The Caldecott books are

usually safe. Do they have these books in a separate section of the library? Is there a little table somewhere in the library where you could all park your things, and the children could sit and look at the books which you bring to them? If you are unsure of which books would be good for your children to read, then find and work through a recommended reading list from someone whom you trust. You will teach your son how to pick out the good books by picking out the books for him at first, explaining to him what kind of books you do not want him to read. Explain to him that if he is not sure whether you would approve of a particular book, then he must bring it to you and ask. Explain to him that you are teaching him to be a discerning reader. I am afraid Christians must eventually abandon the libraries some day. We need to build our own libraries. If possible, build up your own personal library. I am buying books for my grandchildren.

#### 8. *Work and Service*

Develop in your child a love for work and service. From the time a child is able to walk and talk, he should be given regular chores to perform. We do not mean simply feeding the dog and making his bed. A five-year-old is quite capable of putting the dishes away and folding the laundry. A ten-year-old can prepare simple meals from start to finish. Children of all ages can clean and straighten the house. The mother should not be picking up things from off of the floor. Your goal should be that, by the time the children are in their teens, they are able to take over the work of the household, from cooking to cleaning to caring for their younger brothers and sisters. This not only teaches them to appreciate work while removing some of the burden from the parents, but it is good training for when they have their own households.

Do not do for your child what he can do for himself. We need to reject all of this popular *self-esteem* stuff. The world's problems can be summarized in one simple expression: too much self-esteem. Too many people think they are too good for what they receive in life. They think they deserve better. And among the things which foster such notions is parents fawning over their little children. For the first year of his life, you pretty much need to do everything for him. But after that, the situation should begin to change rapidly. He can learn to do many things for himself in the next couple of years. He can clean up his own messes.

An important corollary to this is: Do not do for yourself what your child can do for you. Your child needs to esteem himself lower than others, beginning with his parents. He can gather the clothes for laundry, and he can fold the laundry. Then he can do the laundry. He can set

the table and wash the dishes. Then he can help fix the meals. He can vacuum the floor and dust the furniture. Then he can wash the windows. If you do all of this for him, then he will develop a notion of *self-esteem*: “I am so important that everyone ought to do things for me.” But if he learns to do it for himself, then he will develop a notion of *self-confidence*: “I can do it myself.” And if he learns to do it for you, then he will develop a notion of *self-usefulness*: “I can be helpful, and I am needed around here.”

We suggest that you write out a schedule of chores for each child. Some families rotate chores on a weekly basis, while other families prefer to give each child permanent chores, changing them only after several months, or when needed. However you choose to do it, the schedule should be well organized, listing who does what and when. You should post the family schedule in a prominent location. Make sure the results for not obeying are clearly understood. When our children were young, I did not write out a chore schedule. I would give out orders randomly and inconsistently. Because the children did not know what was expected of them, I ended up doing the majority of the work. Later, when we put together an organized schedule, dividing up the work among all five children, our life moved much more smoothly. At first, all five children took turns cooking the main meal. After suffering with the boys’ cooking for a few months, we rearranged the schedule so that only the girls cooked. It will take a while for you to fine tune your chore schedule. Be flexible: make changes as children grow older and more mature.

Along with work, children should be taught to serve. We visited the residents of a nursing home on a regular basis. When we visited, we simply walked in and began talking to one of the elderly people. Most of the residents were not able to communicate, so we continue until we found someone with whom we were able to communicate. Some cannot communicate, but enjoy having someone holding their hand. We would eventually find two or three people with whom we wanted to be friends. If you should attempt nursing home visitation, I suggest during your first visits, that the mother and father do the talking, and the children just walk beside and listen.

Other volunteer opportunities abound. Our girls crochet from thread tiny baby booties for different pro-life organizations. When a mother has a positive pregnancy test, she is given a pair of these booties as her first baby present. Many of these mothers have every intention of getting an abortion, and it is our hope that the sight of these tiny booties will bring them to their natural senses. Another area of need is in the

neonatal Intensive Care Unit of your local hospital. They need hospital gowns for the tiny babies born there and clothes for the babies going home. There is also a need for bereavement gowns for babies which die.

### 9. Discipline

We have found, in our own experience, that if the area of discipline is neglected, then we may as well forget about academics. Children will never learn self-discipline if parents do not train them in it. The child who does not develop self-discipline will fail in many things – including the academics for which you hope to prepare him.

Ask yourself these questions: Am I satisfied with the obedience of my children? Do I enjoy being around my children? Do my children honor and respect me? If your answer is “no” to any of these questions, then you should re-evaluate your priorities. If you do not have first time obedience from children of all ages, then your homeschool journey will be beset with all number of difficulties. Regarding first time obedience, we highly recommend a book originally published in 1833, *The Mother At Home*, by John S.C. Abbott. This book is a most valuable resources for training young women, from a Biblical perspective, on the art of mothering. Another resource is, *Letters on the Education of Children*, by John Witherspoon, published by the MacArthur Institute.

Do not allow your child to ignore you. You are the immediate reason for why he is alive. When you tell him something, make sure he hears you. When you read to him, do not let his attention wander too far. Of course, be sensitive. There are going to be times when he has something he needs to think about, and you may need to leave him do so. But do not let him shut you out. You must always have his attention when you speak. You must always have something for him to hear. No, we do not live up to that standard. But that should be the standard by which we measure.

Do not let your child rule you. Let him rule himself. A man must rule himself before he can rule others. (Think of all of the public offices which have become inverted and perverted because of men who could not first rule themselves.) Nobody learns to rule himself by obeying his own desires. He can only learn to rule himself by obeying another’s desires. There must be something larger than himself to serve. (That is why the concept of God is inescapable. If you do not follow the true God, then you must invent a substitute god to serve a similar function.) If you can teach your child to know himself and rule himself, then he will be able to rule that part of the world which you give to him, and

eventually that part of the world of which God places him in stewardship

During one of our trips, we visited a family which lived a very simple life in a very modest home, and homeschooled their five small children. The parents were quite soft spoken and gentle in manner, always speaking to the children in a calm, quiet way. From the very beginning of our visit, it became obvious that the children attended to the voices of their parents. The parents had first time obedience from even the youngest, and this obedience was obtained with a quiet voice and manner. In all my life, I have never witnessed anything like it. On one occasion, the one-year-old began to climb up on the kerosene heater. I saw the father give an almost imperceptible shake of the head and heard him say in a whisper, "Isaac, huh, uh." Immediately the child shifted into reverse and backed away from the heater. The child attended to and obeyed the very whisper of his father. It moves me to tears to recall that scene and the affection which the children and parents had for each other. Oh, that I had trained my children so well when they were young. God wants first time obedience from us, and we should form the same habit in our children. When we resort to speaking in a loud voice when we want something of our children, or when we form the habit of repeating our requests, we train our children to ignore us when we speak. If we could only begin at the very beginning to train our children to attend to our voice – to listen for it no matter what they are doing, and to immediately obey, how well we will prepare them to listen to their heavenly Father as well.

If we were to accomplish this, then our children would view their parents as servants view their masters, and as subjects view their king. They would have great respect and honor for their parents, wanting only to please them. Of course, the king would be a benevolent and kind master who cared most for his subjects, always treating them with tenderness and love. Yes, we are kings and queens, our homes are our castles, and the little ones are the servants training one day to be masters of their own homes. Does a queen need to resort to yelling to have something accomplished? Not likely in a well ordered kingdom. How much better our world would be if we rendered first time obedience to our Lord.

#### SOCIALIZATION AND YOUNG GIRLS

*Question:* My oldest (age eleven) does not want to go to the library during the day, because "school kids" are not there. I am worried about her. We moved here two years ago, and we have not found any home-

school friends in the area.

*Answer:* I assume, from your letter, that your daughter likes to be around other children. She feels lonely. Perhaps she even would like to go to school. Young children like yours actually need *very little socialization*. In fact I would avoid it, except for occasional, controlled situations when you have another family over to visit and your children play with their children. The notion that every child needs another child of his same age to play with all of the time is an idea invented in the twentieth century. Whether children like it or not, it is nevertheless generally a bad idea. Involve your daughter in crocheting, knitting, sewing, and other craft work. Perhaps she can make things to give away, or even sell. My girls sew costumes. Teach your daughter to cook. An eleven-year-old girl is perfectly capable of cooking an entire meal, from start to finish. Obtain a large hope chest for your daughter and have her begin making things to fill it. A profitable use of time for young ones is raising food in the garden and storing it up for the winter. Is she good at drawing or painting? She could produce little booklets on a variety of subjects (birds, dogs, flowers, etc.) to sell or give away. Incorporate this into her school work. She needs to get busy doing things for others and to worry less about her own little desires and comforts.

Around age ten or eleven, many girls go through a phase where they are hard to get along with. When this happened with my first daughter, I did not understand what was happening, and I allowed her rebellion, incommunicativeness, coldness, moodiness, etc. to go without proper correction. I found myself attempting to please her and to make her comfortable. I thought I was not a very good mom. I could not figure out what I was doing wrong. Because she always seemed so unhappy and out of sorts, I would go to great lengths to make her happy. Finally, after several years of heartache, the Lord showed me what was happening, and we resolved the problem.

You cannot allow a child to show disrespect to his father or mother. Ask yourself this question: Am I satisfied with his behavior? If the answer is no, then you must take action. There are many ways a child can show disrespect: rolling of the eyes; exasperated sighing; delayed obedience; questioning; stalking out of a room; slamming doors; non-communicating attitude. You must force them to talk with you and to tell you what they perceive is wrong or what is bothering them. Often, they don't really know themselves until you force them to think about it, when they realize how stupid their ideas are. I insisted that my daughter sit on the couch with me until she told me what was bothering her. Sometimes we sat there for several hours. Many times it all boiled

down to the fact that she just felt irritable and did not even have a reason for it. She learned to recognize and repent of her irritability and moodiness and disrespect. Of course, all of this led me to recognize that I, as her mother, must be a good example for her. I also must learn to recognize and repent of my own irritability.

#### DOES NOT WANT TO WORK

*Question:* I find myself “putting up” for far too long with the rolling of the eyes, the unhappiness, the stomping. Now, what do I do with a young lady, sixteen, who wants to read all day and do nothing else – no cleaning, no chores, no cooking, no gardening? Did you come across this with your children, and if so, how did you deal with it?

*Answer:* Do you mean that she will not obey you when asked to clean or cook? Or is it that she only does the minimum that you require and spends the rest of her time reading? I picture a sixteen-year-old daughter as being able to take over the running of the household. If the mother must be gone for a few days, the daughter should be able to take care of the house: the cleaning, cooking, laundry, answering the phone, and perhaps caring for one or two little ones. Perhaps she will not keep the house as thoroughly clean as mother does, and perhaps the meals will not be as elaborate, but at age sixteen, she can run a relatively orderly household. All this should be done cheerfully and willingly.

Some mothers will expect these things of their daughters, but not give the child any freedom in making some of the decisions as to how these things are done. For example, the daughter is expected to prepare the meals, but is not allowed to decide what she will serve. I suggest that a sixteen-year-old could be planning the meals (with some of mother’s help), shopping for the food, and preparing the meals. That is how we do it in our house. I allow the girls to decide when they will do the laundry. As long as it is finished before bedtime, they can do it whenever they want. I do not tell them when to clean their rooms, but they know they are to keep them neat. I am referring to older children here. Little ones need to be trained, so you would have more rules and time schedules, but older children have already been trained and need less “do this now, and this way” type rules.

I think children find more satisfaction in their chores if they know they are “in charge” of something, and they know they have full responsibility. My older daughters love it when I give them the food money for the week and let them take charge. I do have a problem with them not wanting to use up all the zucchini I harvest from the garden, but we are working on that.

Now, perhaps your problem is that the sixteen-year-old just will not obey. If you write out and explain to her exactly what is expected from her – which goes, beyond chores, to attitudes and behaviors – and what will happen if she does not do them, then she has no excuse. You know what you must do. The Bible tells you that you must respond to the disobedience. The time for spanking is long past by the time a child reaches sixteen. I do not think that is appropriate. There are other ways to discipline her. Take away her reading time. Fine her money. Take away privileges. Require more work from her, such as picking up trash on the roadway. Apply academics to the problem and have her write an essay concerning her disobedience. This will require her to think it through.

How much of the problem is you? Who is boss in your family? Often we parents do not consistently enforce obedience. Sometimes we make them obey, and at other times we are too tired, or it is too inconvenient to make them obey. Perhaps we are at the store, or we have company, or we have been working all day, or we are just plain weary. We make excuses for the child, or for ourselves. Homeschooling is more than Latin and Logic. It is a way of life. And that way of life includes having disciplined children, and encouraging loving relationships within the family. We want peace in our homes. Peace comes with one price – God's order.

#### PEACE IN THE HOME

*Question:* You said the goal is to have peace in the home. How do you accomplish that? I grew up in a non-Christian home where everyone was always fighting, and I do not want our family to turn out that way. Our children are much better behaved than my siblings and I were, but they still spend too much time fighting and crabbing at each other.

*Answer:* In our travels we have stayed with quite a few families. Here are some of our observations:

In families where peace reigns, we notice that the children have respect for father and mother. You can see it in their faces. The children want to please their parents. They know father is in charge, and they look to him for answers. Father knows what is best. They know that their mother controls the household to serve their father, and they understand that father rules the family to serve the Lord. When children are made to understand the order and purpose of things, and they live out their role in that order and purpose – that is peace. Of course, wise parents rule and control their family and household with kindness and gentleness and tender loving care. They are fallen creatures themselves,

and are not always wise. But the more the family matches the ideal, the more peace reigns.

In families where peace does not reign, we notice that the children lack respect for the father and mother. The household revolves around the children and their likes or dislikes, their moods, their desires. They know that their parents are intent on pleasing them, and they use this as a manipulative tool. When the child is displeased, uncomfortable, or inconvenienced, the parents consistently go out of their way to please the child. They think their little child is so smart, or cute, or witty. In other words, the order and purpose and roles of this family are inverted, and anything which might resemble peace for a moment is just a temporary lapse in the ongoing war over who is in charge.

Children may know how to speak and understand words, but this does not mean that communication is happening at the level which it should. We cannot assume that they will come to us and tell us what is bothering them. If we detect something wrong with an attitude or an action, then we need to discuss it with our child. Do not wait until the action or attitude gets unbearable. There was a time when our older daughter began to treat her younger sister very coldly. She was excluding her from things, not confiding in her any more, and siding up with the youngest daughter. It began slowly, and we did not really notice it until it had been happening for perhaps four or five months. The younger daughter had to come to me and point it out. Only when she pointed it out did I see it. Something can begin so small, yet if you do not catch it, it can grow very big, and you still must have it pointed out to you. By the time I began to address the issue, the younger daughter was angry with her sister for treating her that way. It took several weeks to straighten out the matter. The older daughter did not even realize what she was doing. She repented, her sister forgave her, and we had to go through several weeks of pointing out to the older daughter when she was exhibiting the undesirable behavior (acting coldly to her sister). She had developed the habit of treating her sister that way, and I had to help her break the habit. Praise God, He put the desire in her to change. But, what if the older one did not repent, but preferred to treat her sister coldly – for whatever reason? Then I must enforce proper behavior.

#### IRRITATED OBEDIENCE

*Question:* Regarding the eye-rolling and ‘humphs,’ with a little puff of air which blows her hair up: Am I at fault for asking my daughter to do various chores, keeping her “on call” for things which need to be done

at her own convenience, though not on the chart? Do I verbally correct her on the spot? Even that little “humph” can grow into something more as a child gets older, so I think it does need some punishment, but what and how? Should I have a planned “punishment” for every little “humph?”

*Answer:* I think you have already answered your own question. The little “humph” clearly communicates disrespect. What would have happened to a lady-in-waiting at Queen Victoria’s court if she had responded with a “humph” to one of the Queen’s requests? You are the Queen in your house and Daddy is the King. All the little ones are servants in training.

It is good to have a schedule of chores and activities and responsibilities posted so that everyone knows what is expected of them, but there will always be extra things to do which cannot be put on a chart. The children should be happy (if not inwardly, at least outwardly) to perform these tasks for Mommy. A “humph” from a young child needs a visit from the switch. You will need to determine for yourself at what age the switch is put away and other forms of discipline are imposed.

#### WAIT UNTIL DADDY GETS HOME

*Question:* What about discipline for the eight-year-old boy? If he does not do his chores, or if he does something he has been told not to do, then is waiting until his father gets home for the discipline a good idea, or is that waiting too long?

*Answer:* The father rules the family. The mother administrates the household according to father’s rules. Punishment delayed loses its proper force, and introduces other forces. So explain the law, administer the punishment, and go on with the day. Otherwise, the day may be ruined as everyone is just waiting “until father gets home.” There may be some things which need to be adjudicated by father, but mother should be able to handle most matters. Mother can give her court report when father gets home, and he can make any further adjustments at that time.

#### UNMOTIVATED SON

*Question:* My thirteen-year-old son is slower in math, so I let him set the pace. He is also “allergic” to pencils and I am wondering how much is enough writing for him this year. I do not want to encourage laziness, but I also do not want to exasperate him!

*Answer:* One of the most challenging things which I have dealt with in our Homeschooling is a boy (ages ten to fifteen) who seemed allergic to

academic pursuit. One of our five children was like this. He has plenty of inertia. If he is at rest, then he tends to stay at rest, but once you start him moving, he keeps on moving. It is the “get him moving” part which is the difficulty. Somewhere along the way, someone failed to install a starter motor, so we had to crank him to “get him moving.” Like you said, we certainly did not want to encourage his laziness, nor exasperate him, yet we needed to “get him moving” and challenge him. If it is any encouragement to you, our son is now a good writer. When he turned fifteen, he discovered that he could write creatively, and he even discovered he enjoyed writing – somewhat, though we are still laboring to make that newly installed starter motor work more consistently.

Here are some of the right things I think we did with him:

1. Up until about age fourteen or so, we did much of his math orally, and sometimes I would do the writing for him. He dictated to me the problem and the steps to the answer, and I held the pencil and did the writing. This in no way interfered with his understanding of math, but on the contrary, I think it helped him to learn to enjoy math. Later, he was able to go through the Saxon algebra books, Jacobs Geometry, and Saxon Advanced Math book with no help at all.
2. I think television, video games, and computer games and most computer software are especially dangerous to boys like this. I am very thankful that we kept our son away from these influences.
3. I am thankful the Lord moved us into the country when the children were young. Peer influence seems to be stronger on unmotivated boys.

### *10. Play and Exploration*

Give the child plenty of time to explore and play. Do not buy “toystore” toys – they are expensive and are usually forgotten after the newness wears off. Invest in real things. Garage sales and auctions are an unending source for things like sewing machines, small tools for working in the garden, hammers, nails, and things for building, some wooden blocks, and dress-up clothes. Buy tools for exploring (a good microscope, telescope, binoculars, dissecting equipment, basic chemistry equipment, etc.), not toys for adoring. Teach your children how to use them responsibly (safe, neat, and orderly – clean up when you are done), and make them readily available for when they want to use them.

When your children are young (at the early Knowledge Level), spend your money on the tools of exploration, and motivate them to learn

how to use the tools and enjoy using the tools. If I had to do it all over again, I would have bought our microscope and dissecting kit when my children were young (age six or seven), and would have taught them to use this equipment even at that young age. I would also have bought for them a good telescope, binoculars, basic chemistry equipment (beakers, test tubes, burners, etc.). Of course, they would be taught how to keep everything safe and neat and orderly.

It is not only important that you do some things, it is important that you not do some things. It always seems like there are more do not's than there are do's. Do not set your child in front of a television screen. Television is bad. We mean the screen itself. It is unhealthy for the body, and especially for the eyes. Visual strain is the number-one problem of frequent computer users. Studies estimate that anywhere from fifty to ninety percent of regular computer users experience visual deterioration.

The material on the screen is also bad. The entertainment method of learning creates an entertainment addiction – the child wants to be entertained all of the time – he wants his visual and auditory senses stimulated (overstimulated). Every child needs to learn through touch and taste and smell, and through interaction with real human beings who smile and answer back. He needs to learn while in submission to the authority of real parents, not the authority of glamorized, always-happy, limitlessly-resourceful, never-tired substitutes who have absolutely no accountability. Need we say more?

Do not let your child waste away. You must discover the happy medium between giving your child enough time of his own and giving your child too much time of his own. If he has too little time, he will not develop his own thoughts. If he has too much time, he will pursue mischief, or at least no profitable ends. Give him something to think on when he has nothing to do. Memorization fills the mind with things to teethe his mind on and ponder.

Do not let your child play in a cyber world. He can play in a miniature world. He can play in a pretend world. But it must be made up of objects which exist in the real three-dimensional world, not electrons hitting an opaque, two dimensional phosphorescent screen. Why? Because – though he may learn something from the screen image, there are nevertheless many things which he is not learning precisely because it is only a screen image. Besides the missing sensory experiences (touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, seeing – three dimensionally), there are logical things missing (such as consequences for actions in the real world).

When the computer substitutes for the functions and processes which the brain normally supplies, the brain is left to atrophy. It does not develop its brain muscles, as it were. No pain no gain. If you don't use it, you lose it.

Excessive use of computers, especially at early ages, will restructure the way the brain processes information, often for the worse. It also causes the underdevelopment of the emotional and social dimensions of the child. Young children are developing many parts of their understanding, and "holes" can occur in their development if they are deprived of certain experiences during critical periods of time. These may not be discovered until much later. For example, a child may test perfect for hearing. Yet he had a period of head colds earlier in his life, at the same time that his discernment of speech sounds was developing. Because he was not hearing properly at that time, his discernment of speech is underdeveloped. He hears speech perfectly, but he does not properly discern in his mind what his ears are perfectly hearing. Because you know he can hear well, you think he does not pay careful attention, so you punish him. You do not realize that he cannot pay careful attention, and that you need to train him in a missing skill.

Televisions and computers can be useful tools under the proper circumstances and controls. But they are like fire – a useful servant, but a terrible master. There are many legitimate reasons to doubt their value for children below the age of ten, especially in preparation for classical academic education.

#### A MOM FOR ALL SEASONS

*Question:* I'm looking for suggestions on how a mom can best divide, share or even multiply her time among several little ones. My four sons are between two and eight years, with another on the way. Two sons need my time and attention for learning to read and write. I find that I spend less time in puzzles and play dough with the younger two than I did when the older ones were little. I should add that my eldest has some special needs which require one-on-one exercises twice a day. Even when I am reading, or when we are all doing a project together, it seems we serve the interests of the younger sons, or else older sons, but never both. I tell myself that when the older boys are reading, they will have more productive independent time.

*Answer:* Probably most conscientious young mothers worry about this at one time or another. A mother does not always need to be actively participating with the child in his play in order to satisfy his need for mother's attention. Mother's presence is usually enough. When the

children are small, they really don't care to be playing in their bedrooms. They would rather be in the living room or kitchen where mother is. Our children just need to be near us. They need to hear our voice and feel our presence. My friend, who has twelve children, suggested that what is really happening is not that mother's love is being divided more and more as she has more children, but rather, as more siblings are added to the family, love is multiplied, because there are more people to love each child. The family is composed of father, mother, and children. It's not just mother's love that goes around, but father's love and the siblings love for each other. A child in a family of twelve children has thirteen people loving him – mother, father, and eleven brothers and sisters.

## TEN THINGS TO DO BEFORE AGE TEN

<b>1 Reading &amp; Writing</b>	<i>Intensive Phonics</i> program, beginning at age five or when the child is ready. Old-time readers – when proficient. <i>Copywork</i> – at age five: fifteen minutes per day; by age nine: thirty minutes per day. <i>English Language Notebook</i> , containing phonics, copywork (or separate copywork notebook).
<b>2 Oral Narration</b>	Begin at age four or five, practice on a daily basis.
<b>3 Memorization</b>	Begin as young as age two or three, recite five to ten minutes daily from Alphabets, selections from the Bible, catechisms, poetry, or literature. Review old memory masters once a week.
<b>4 Hearing &amp; Listening</b>	<i>Read aloud</i> at least two hours per day (not all at once) from a variety of fiction and non-fiction. <i>Timeline</i> – mark which things you read. <i>History Notebook</i> – record things you read.
<b>5 Family Worship</b>	Family Bible Study morning and evening, using Knowledge level questions.
<b>6 Arts &amp; Crafts</b>	Provide the place, the tools, the time, develop elementary creativity.
<b>7 Field Trips &amp; the Library</b>	Investigate the world. Attend concerts, plays, science and engineering fairs, visit museums, exhibits, workplaces. Begin to learn elementary library research.
<b>8 Work &amp; Service</b>	Schedule children’s chores, visit nursing homes, develop attitude of service to others.
<b>9 Discipline</b>	Establish first time obedience.
<b>10 Play &amp; Exploration</b>	Develop the imagination.

FIGURE 11A

For books and curriculum materials mentioned in this chapter, and other resources, see our Resource List at the very end of this book.


 A SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE
   
 FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN  
 ALL UNDER THE AGE OF TEN

Schedules are made as a standard to serve you, not as a master to break you. Do not be a slave to the schedule, but also do not be a slave to the emergency mindset which always interrupts the schedule. The following is only a suggested guideline. It gives you some of the categories from which to work out your own schedule. Sometimes there are days which are so disruptive that you must simply list priorities, rotate through the list, and perform triage wherever necessary.

Principles to consider: The children should be doing much of the housework, which will free the parents to give attention to personal or administrative tasks. “Early to bed, early to rise” is generally a good policy, though a father’s work schedule or other considerations may not allow for this.

- 5:00-6:30 Parents rise, children rise, showers, dressing, early morning chores.
- 7:00 Breakfast. Morning Family worship.
- 8:00 Daily Chores (predetermined schedule).
- 8:30-9:30 General School Meeting:
1. Recite memory work: All children could recite their memory work (including Greek and/or Hebrew alphabet).
  2. Practice reading: Each child who is able will read aloud a portion of something while all others listen (Bible, history, Constitution, poetry, etc.).
  3. Practice narration: All children practice narration (if there are several children, then break it up – half in the morning, half in the afternoon).
- 9:30-10:15 Mother reads aloud to all children (narration could be included). Children can work on arts and crafts while Mother reads.
- 10:15-11:30
1. Phonics instruction for children learning to read and entries made in English language notebook. (This could be moved to the afternoon when infants are sleeping.)
  2. Copywork, history notebook, and timeline.

11:30	Prepare lunch. Straighten house.
12:00	Lunch. Midday chores.
1:00	Naps.
2:00-2:45	Mother reads aloud and finishes narration (children can work on arts and crafts).
2:45-4:30	Same as 10:15 period; play outside; go for walks; once a week volunteer work (nursing home, etc.), field trips; library.
4:30-5:00	Prepare supper. Straighten house.
5:00	Supper. Evening chores.
6:30	Evening Family worship.
7:00-7:45	Father reads aloud to family.
7:45-8:30	Family activities.
8:30-9:00	Prepare for bed.
9:00	Lights out.

