



Notebooking!

Yes! You CAN Be A
Binder Queen!

By Cindy Rushton

Notebooking

YES!

You CAN BE A Binder Queen TOO!



Bear buddies read together

By Cindy Rushton

Notebooking... YES! You CAN BE A Binder Queen Too!

By Cindy Rushton

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Notebooking

YES!

You CAN BE A Binder Queen TOO!

By Cindy Rushton

Other Books By Cindy Rushton...

A Charlotte Mason Primer
A Cup of Tea???

A Wise Woman Builds Her Home Bible Study
CHRIST-Centered Christmas
Enlarge the Place of Your Tent...KEEP Your Home! Bible Study
Fill Your Cup Back Up!
High School! YES! It CAN Be Easy Too!
Homemade Books! Yes! You CAN Be a Writer Too!
Homeschooling: Digging Into All of the Options
Homeschooling...The Easy Way MEGA Issue
Homeschooling...The Easy Way Workshop Manual
Homeschooling The Easy Way Reprint Book Volume 2
Homeschooling The Easy Way Reprint Book Volume 3
Inspiring Our Children Toward Greatness Using Great Literature
Language Arts...The Easy Way
Let's Make A History Timeline Notebook
Make Your Own Alphabet Notebook
Make Your Own Alphabet Book
Make Your Own Brain-in-A-Binder Printables
Make Your Own Discipleship Notebook for Boys
Make Your Own Discipleship Notebook for Girls
Make Your Own Discipleship Notebook
Make Your Own History Timeline Notebook
Make Your Own English from the Roots Up Notebook
Make Your Own Mommy Journal
Make Your Own Mommy Record-Keeping Notebook
Make Your Own Never-Ending Reading List Notebook
Make Your Own Never-Ending Reading List Notebook
Make Your Own Recipe Notebook
Make Your Own Science Notebook
Make Your Own Student Record-Keeping Notebook
Marriage 101: Hey! What's This All About??? Bible Study
Ministering to the Heart of Your Child Bible Study
Ministering to the Heart of Your Child
Nature Study...The Easy Way
Notebooking...YES! You CAN Be A Binder Queen Too!
Notebooking! Yes! You CAN Be A Binder Queen Too Workshop Manual
Organization 911! Help for the Messy Homeschool Mom
Organization 911! Help for the Messy Mom!
Spiritual Mothering: The Call to Mentoring, Mothering, and Ministry Bible Study
Step-by-Step Through Daniel
The Great I AM: A Study Through the Names of God—ABBA FATHER
The Great I AM: A Study Through the Names of God—ISHI
The Hidden Woman of the Heart: A Bible Study for YOUR Heart
The Never-ending Rushton Reading List
The Ultimate Mommy Menu Planner!
Time for Tea Reprint Book for Volumes 1 and 2
Time for Tea Reprint Book for Volume 3
Time for Tea Reprint Book for Volume 4
Time for Tea Reprint Book for Volume 5
Time for Tea Reprint Book for Volume 6
Time for Tea Reprint book for Volume 7
Who? Me? A Virtuous Woman???

YES! YOU! A Vessel God CAN Use!

PLUS! Lots More Coming Soon!!!
Stay Tuned!

In Loving Dedication

To Mamaw Alma Lee Rushton...

The very first KNOWN Binder Queen! Although Mamaw has now gone to be with the Lord, she still lives on through her notebooks and those souls that she poured her whole life into. One of my greatest blessings was being one of those that she spent her life pouring into. I am so grateful for Mamaw being that ONE person who saw a writer deep down underneath this little girl from a small town in Mississippi. She truly changed my life.

May her confidence in me be passed on to yet another generation so that other young writers will step up to the call to write all that they write for the glory of our Lord,
Jesus Christ.

Hey Mamaw! As you look down from Heaven with that great crowd of witnesses, all I have to say is that THIS ONE IS FOR YOU! Thanks for believing in me and what God had placed in my heart! See ya soon at the feet of Jesus!

Love, Cindy

"My tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

Psalm 45:1...

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About the Author...



Cindy Rushton...

Cindy Rushton is the wife of her very best friend, Harold Rushton, and the mother of Matthew (18) and Elisabeth (15) who have always been homeschooled. Cindy lives in the beautiful mountains of North Alabama in her dream cedar cabin.

Cindy is the author of over 80 books, Bible studies and homeschool resources. She edits and publishes two magazines, Time for Tea and Homeschooling The Easy Way and Scrap-A-Latte Newsletter. If that is not enough, she also manages two of her own blogs—Cindy's Desk(Top!)- and A Writer's Nook. She has become a beloved and favored speaker for homeschool conventions and retreats across our country.

Cindy began homeschooling Matthew and Elisabeth over fourteen years ago. Matthew graduated in 2005 after being homeschooled throughout his entire education. Her homeschooling journey, tips, and ideas that she has learned along the journey are recorded in the following pages in our humble effort of sharing an EASY way to homeschool.

As you pour yourself a cup of tea and pour through the following pages, you will find a dear, dear friend to give you a great big hug, loving smile, and take you by the hand into a journey of homeschooling the EASY WAY! Get ready...you are definitely in for a treat!



"I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint." Jeremiah 31: 25

Notebooking! YES! YOU Are Going to be Addicted!



Bear buddies read together

"Thus says the Lord, The God of Israel: Write all the words which
I have spoken to you in a book."
Jeremiah 30:2

Notebooking! Ready to Get Addicted???



My earliest memories of childhood go back to our little country church. I would sit every Sunday snuggled up close to my mother. In order to keep me quiet (no comments please!), she would write out names or words for me to copy. As the years went on, writing was an important part of my education. However, my ideas of my "life career" went along the lines of Dental Hygiene (Don't ask me why! I guess I was not a mom yet! The idea of mouths now makes me sick!)

Well, until years later. My husband's grandmother served as my mentor. She and I spent countless hours together. She stepped up to her calling as a Titus Two mentor, who influenced me toward my life calling as a wife, mother, and spiritual mentor. She taught me how to love my husband (Could you get a better teacher than a grandmother who thought of him as her favorite grandchild—we all thought we were!)...how to love my children (Sure couldn't be a greater person to teach this! They were her favorite great-grandchildren—starting to sound repetitive?)...and how to be a godly homemaker. We canned together, farmed together, cooked together, ministered together, and, our favorite pastime, sewed together. Although she was never a writer, she was my single greatest influence in writing.

Every time I would visit Mamaw, I would HAVE to carry a notebook along just to take notes of all she would teach me along the way. As the years went by, I stored away many wonderful ideas and tips. She was an incredible mentor. She had sewed professionally for years. It did not take very long before I began to sew for my family and professionally as well. My addiction to sewing and embroidery soon led me to our local Smocking Guild. They sent out a monthly newsletter that I was soon nominated to write and publish. Of course, I could not just send out the newsletter without tips and tidbits about sewing. Yes, you have guessed. I shared hundreds of the ideas that Mamaw had passed down to me. She loved to see her ideas coming through the newsletter. In fact, she loved it so much that she would pass her issues around to her friends.

One day we were visiting and she shared that she was getting tired of sharing her copies and was afraid that she would not get them back for her "notebook." Of course, at the time that went over my head, probably because of her idea that she continued to share with me in this conversation—she wanted my tips and tidbits printed in the local paper! After informing her that "I" was NOT a writer, I have no idea what happened to my sanity, but I was convinced by this little woman to approach the paper about doing a sewing column. The rest is all history...or Language Arts for ME too!

Jeremiah 6:16...
*"Stand at the
crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient
paths, ask where the
good way is, and
walk in it, and you
will find rest for
your souls."*

Of course, you need this background to know that Mamaw Alma Lee Rushton was the very first Binder Queen (Now, my loving title since she has passed away!). The little blurb about getting the newsletters "back for her notebook" did not even alert me to the fact that she had collected ALL of my writing—my newsletters, my personal letters to her, my handwritten recipes, and, later, ALL of my newspaper articles. The thought that someone loved me so much to keep all of my writing in a notebook, using expensive sheet protectors to protect them as if they were precious to her, still sends chills

up and down my whole body. She was not just someone. She was very, very special to me. Plus, she was one of the greatest women I have ever known. I knew her. I am so touched that she loved me and what I wrote so much that she kept it all and kept it all dear to her.

As I think of Notebooking, I have to tell you that if you are not using this approach in your homeschool, you are in for a big treat! There is something precious that can transform any writer into an "addicted writer," especially when they see that their work is precious to those they love the most. This one idea can revolutionize your homeschool. It has ours! This one idea can take your most reluctant writer and turn him into a researcher, who loves to write! Want to know more? I think you will be addicted TOO! Let's dig in! You will never be the same again...neither will your children!

Confession Time...



I just have to know WHERE you are as you begin this book. So, this is a TEST! The instructions are easy. Just check off each of the following that applies to you. We will tally your scores later.

- ☐ You have 5 or more binders in your home.
- ☐ They are yours!
- ☐ You have one within one foot of you right now!
- ☐ You use sheet protectors on a weekly basis

Your Top Five "Best Deals" include purchases of...

- ☐ 3-ring binders
- ☐ Pretty journals
- ☐ Sheet protectors
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Neat pens
- ☐ Acid-free paper
- ☐ Paper-edging scissors
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ Hole punchers
- ☐ Computers
- ☐ Paints
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Quote books
- ☐ Mounting tape
- ☐ Rubber stamps
- ☐ Scrapbooking magazines!!

Your idea of a great family vacation or date with your husband includes...

- ☐ A trip to the local bookstore
- ☐ A hobby shop (go Hobby Lobby!)

- ☐ A nature center
- ☐ A historical site
- ☐ An art museum
- ☐ A concert
- ☐ A symphony
- ☐ A Scrapbooking store
- ☐ An office supply store!!!

Your greatest need for furniture is....

☐ BOOKSHELVES!!!!

Ready to Evaluate???



Go back...give yourself 1 point per check. Tally up your score. The following is our official, unscientific evaluation of your status coming into this book...

20+ points...You are DEFINITELY a binder-queen! Actually, you are a binder nut! You could have written this book! So, why do you have it in your hands???

It is easy. You are ADDICTED. The only words left to describe you are TOTALLY HOPELESS. You want MORE! In fact, I would not be surprised if you are reading this book while on a date with your husband or while your children are playing at a local park! You have an addiction. But, the good news is that you can keep this one going...it is BIBLICAL! (Well, more on that later!) My prayer for you is that tucked into the pages of this book, you will find even more ideas that we have purposely packed into this little book JUST FOR YOU. In fact, I pray that this book will inspire you to keep on Notebooking eternally. Oh, isn't it great to BE a binder-queen???

10-20 points...Warning! You are at great risk of becoming the next binder-queen on your block! At this point, my diagnosis detects a strong disposition for binderitis. Hate to tell you, but it is all "downhill" for you! In fact, my prediction for you is that you will hunt for the list of items needed and begin using notebooking to teach all of your child's lessons before you finish this book! My prayer for you is that you will find ideas that are easy and refreshing for implementing this approach to learning. I pray that you will find those ideas that will fire you up, while encouraging those little writers in your home! Yes! You CAN BE a binder-queen too! Grab the nearest crown!

0-10 points...OK...wondering if this book is for you? Oh, my dear friend, don't stop at this point. This is YOUR book! You see, even though I don't like labels, I believe that each and every one of us can be labeled as binder-queens (and be PROUD of it!). Actually, as you dig into this book, you will find that you probably already are a binder-queen, you just don't know it yet! My prayer for you is that you will see how EASY notebooking is to implement into every home,

with every child, for every subject. My goal is for you to not only dig into the fun of notebooking for your children, but also for yourself! Oh, one more thing! YOU WILL BE a binder-queen too! Ready for your crown???

So, where are you? Still unsure? Let's get to know more about notebooking! You are sure to become ADDICTED! Yes! You CAN BE a binder-queen...just wait and see!

WHY Notebook???



In case you have already detected that I MIGHT be a little excited about this topic, you are VERY right! Oh, there is something in me that wants the whole wide world to go out right now and get busy creating notebooks!

Sound like a stretch? My dear friend, notebooking is for ALL ages... ALL professions... ALL interests... ALL personalities... ALL information! Does that include you? Does that include your children? I sure hope so! If you are not sure, how about looking at all of the benefits of notebooking? I believe as we look at all of the benefits, you will be hooked!

Ready for a few of those perks? Here goes...

A Place for Everything...Everything In Its Place!

There is something deep within me that MUST have a place for everything AND must have everything in its place. In the busy homeschool, this is probably the greatest struggle. At least it has been for our family, where "stuff-bombs" seem to go off in the middle of EVERY night.

I like to KNOW where things are and that I can be sure to find them when I need them. I also like for things to stay nice—especially if my children have worked so hard to finish their work with excellence.

Hands-down, notebooking is the best and easiest way to KEEP your child's work nicely in a place that it can not only be found, but can also be viewed at any time by any one. A simple binder can be used, by the child, to keep records naturally (and easily)...to help them see their progress... to teach them to be neat and orderly...and to encourage and teach the disciplines that are crucial for them all of their life (record-keeping, researching, thinking and discerning, organizing, categorizing, outlining, in-depth studies, writing). What amazes me the most is how effective this simple discipline is in training and developing the

gifts of all children regardless of which age you begin using notebooking or what level their current writing abilities may be.

Perfect for Each Child and Each Family...

Notebooking is the perfect place to compile all of the information so our children can form their own beliefs and convictions based on a very thorough foundation.

I don't know if you are as particular about the material that your children study as I am, but this was one of the greatest concerns that we had as we began to homeschool. The problem with this is that EVEN in the homeschool market, there are materials that are in opposition to what we believe on a wide variety of topics and subjects. If this does not make things tough enough, materials are often written for specific ages/grades instead of to people of all ages/grades, making the material either dumbed down or completely boring. Then, to top-it-off, we have run across great materials with completely inaccurate information. What to do, what to do???

In order to teach our children our beliefs AND what others believe (and why we DON'T believe the same way), we have to search for material from a wide variety of sources. Notebooking is the perfect place to compile all of the information so our children can form their own beliefs and convictions based on a very thorough foundation. We don't have to worry about age or grade segregated materials either. We can take out the great information (pictures, charts, terms, quotes, and stories), compile it in our notebooks, so all is used most effectively regardless of age. We even use the materials that have great pictures yet, have very little or sometimes NO truth in them. All can be used to build a notebook...well, all under our direction, which is one of the benefits of notebooking!

Not only can we guard the material, but notebooking meets our children where they are at academically. Whether they are reluctant writers who would prefer to go to the dentist than to write...older writers who think they know EVERYTHING about writing or any given topic...pre-schoolers who are anxious to "do school"...busy homemakers wanting to find those recipes when they are in a hurry...or even professional writers who are trying to pull together their first or 20th book; Notebooking meets us all where we are! Think about it...the material is collected by the student. It is sure to be...

- ⇒ Challenging!
- ⇒ Interesting
- ⇒ Biblically based (if you want for it to be)
- ⇒ True and dependable (especially if you use original source documents... speeches, songs, journal entries, quotes, etc.) (OH! You can actually include ALL sides in the studies...something that is VERY rare in any textbook.)
- ⇒ Perfect for covering any areas of study needed for any requirements
- ⇒ Focuses on topics of interest.
- ⇒ Develops skills needed when the children are ready (easier AND makes sense!)
- ⇒ Encourages excellence
- ⇒ Grows with them as they mature (readiness, interest, knowledge)
- ⇒ Encourages Godly character!

Wherever your child is in the process of writing or whatever may concern you, notebooking gives the flexibility to teach to your specific child, not the book. Notebooking is so versatile. It goes the pace of the child. It can easily be added to any curriculum, especially those that could use a breath of life. Even those hard to document subjects or unit studies can be recorded in notebooks. Not to mention, LIFE can also be recorded in notebooks! Since education really consists of life, notebooking documents the true education that takes place in the home.

FUN!!!

One of my struggles as we began homeschooling was the guilt I felt when we REALLY had fun homeschooling. Where on earth would my children learn the "fact of life" that life is not always fun??? (The answer to this question is CHORES!) Where would they learn to continue working even when it was tough...especially if they never had a hard time with their lessons? (The answer to this question is CHORES!) How could they learn from a wide variety of subjects unless those lessons were dictated by a curriculum? (This answer is coming soon!) Can education be effective and challenging IF it is fun?? (This answer is YES! Glorious YES!)

Well, well...this brings us to another advantage to notebooking: **Notebooking is**

• **FUN!** The notebooks are wrapped around areas of interests NOT subjects. •
• Subjects are not the focus. In fact, often subjects may not be covered every •
• day or even every week or even every month. This may seem so different from •
• the way many of us were educated; yet, may I assure you that this does not •
• hinder the education of your children. Actually, we have found MANY •
• advantages to this way of teaching...

The greatest
holes in education
are when we do
not utilize the
***greatest tools of
education...***

⇒ **A love of
learning**
⇒ **Skills to learn
all of their
life**

⇒ Subjects are blended into study, in context, so they make sense instead of being disjointed and artificial.

⇒ Since subjects are taught as part of the topic, children begin to see that learning is part of life—real life! They see that life is FULL of learning! Learning becomes a lifestyle, instead of in a box or to just pass a test.

⇒ Subjects are integrated into every topic studied, so they are more interesting. If they are interesting, they will more than likely appeal to the mind of the child. Soooo, they learn more!

• In our home, we have found that our children have certain •
• individual interests. If those interests are the means that we •
• use to introduce new material, we can pretty much teach anything and be •
• assured that they will develop a love for that new topic.

• Want a picture of what this looks like??? Our oldest son, Matthew (now •
• fourteen—ugh...NOW eighteen! ☺) absolutely LOVES anything to do with his- •
• tory, the military, and the “why” behind anything (even Phonics!). We have •
• found that this VERY “boy” boy loves poetry...if it is historical in nature. He •
• loves art...well, IF it depicts historical events (His favorite artists are Mort •
• Kunstler and Norman Rockwell...both known for capturing American life on •
• canvas!). He loves music...especially if it represents ideas (He has collected lots •
• of different songs from the Civil War for his notebooks. He loves them for •
• daily copywork AND believes that they tell the REAL story behind history!! •
• Cute huh??) Your child is wired the same way. Regardless of your child's •
• interest, you can reach them through the discipline of notebooking. ANY topic •
• is game...even, well, ESPECIALLY if it is fun!

• Why make life, especially their lessons, fun??? We have found two tools that •
• will ensure that any child studying any topic can have an education WITHOUT •

holes. Got your attention?? I know that sounds boastful. With all of the vast amounts of information available, our children cannot possibly know it all. As we look around, we quickly realize that there is not even a possibility that we can teach all that every curriculum or approach would suggest. We can be assured that our children will not know about everything when they graduate from high school...or even college. So, how can I positively ensure that ANY child can study ANY topic and still get an education WITHOUT holes???

Think for a moment about what IS a hole in education? The greatest holes in education are when we do not utilize the ***greatest tools of education...***

- ⇒ **A love of learning**
- ⇒ **Skills to learn all of their life**

Now, this is where notebooking takes off and leaves all other methods to education sitting back at the starting line! The child is encouraged to pursue areas of deep interest. God created us as REAL PEOPLE with a REAL need for meaning, purpose, and delights. Education today leaves our children with a generic education that never capitalizes upon their individual gifts, bents, talents, and interests. In turn, many are finding their children left with a diploma yet, an education full of gaps and holes.

All of the skills in the world will not ensure that education will continue for life, only a love of learning will ensure that your children will CHOOSE to learn for the rest of their lives. Likewise, we know that all children are born with an insatiable love of learning. Why do some grow to hate learning? Many become frustrated because they are ill equipped to learn on their own. Frustration leads to apathy. Apathy leads to a dislike for learning. At that point, the children are lost...education ceases until the child's heart, soul, and mind are captured again and they are taught how to LOVE learning AND how to learn.

Regardless of where you find your child, notebooking is the perfect tool for encouraging a love of learning AND for equipping your children with skills to learn. In other words, notebooking CAN provide an education that is hole-FREE! Your children will be encouraged to LOVE learning as they pursue areas of delight. Plus! They will be equipped with skills that can help them keep learning ALL of their lives, everything from simple reading and penmanship to

Notebooking is the perfect tool for encouraging a love of learning AND for equipping your children with skills to learn.

Notebooking is sure to encourage and equip your child, even if they have fun doing it!

research and writing books! Whatever ages, learning styles, you are teaching...whatever the current struggles your child is facing, Notebooking is sure to encourage and equip your child, even if they have fun doing it!

Bears Great Fruit!

My mother has always said that if you want to know if something is GOOD, "the proof is in the pudding." In other words, what is its end result—its fruit???

We began homeschooling much like many of you. I set up our lessons without much thought, in spite of my heart for my children. The result was a homeschool that mimicked the education I had known in my childhood. Oh, well, almost. I did ADD God to OUR HOMESCHOOL. The result was a mixture of public school and Vacation Bible School. (Ever get tired during VBS??? Imagine it daily in your home! WHEW! Yep, that was OUR homeschool!)

It only took a year for me to begin to see some of what would NOT work in our home. However, it took two years for me to get the nerve to step out in faith to try things that I had not seen in my education or VBS either. Fruit test??? Well, as we implemented School/Vacation Bible School-at-home, we found the fruit to be a bit bitter...

- ⇒ School desks
- ⇒ Lectures
- ⇒ Lesson plans (pre-planned, "structured," curriculum based)
- ⇒ No TIME to enjoy studies
- ⇒ Scope and sequences
- ⇒ Twaddle OR at the most SNIPPETS of information
- ⇒ Drill/memorization
- ⇒ Busywork
- ⇒ Grade levels
- ⇒ Throwing AWAY the work
- ⇒ Artificial atmosphere
- ⇒ Often based on philosophy of the world, instead of HOW the Bible says children should learn OR WHAT the Bible says should be taught
- ⇒ Develop an appetite for "entertainment" instead of productivity,

- creativity, and passion for learning
- ⇒ Develop bad learning habits (dawdling, inattention, disobedience, boredom...)
- ⇒ Exhaustion/stress (for MOTHER AND CHILD!)
- ⇒ ULTIMATELY BURNOUT!

It took me only a few days to begin a cycle of constant burnout. I would burnout...re-group...teach my little heart out...burnout. The cycle continued over and over until I began to implement the ideas that brought REAL education into my home. Not only did this affect me, it also began to wear on my children. The "proof WAS in the pudding." The fruit was nothing like it could be.

What did we do? We swapped in the "school-at-home" mentality and lifestyle for something much, much better! We began to pursue a REAL education in our home. What does it look like? Well...

- ⇒ Learning takes place in LIFE!
- ⇒ Couch/TREES/beach instead of desks! (A LOT cozier!)
- ⇒ Discussion TOGETHER!
- ⇒ Lifestyle FULL of learning!
- ⇒ Captures teachable moments
- ⇒ Preserving their work for LIFE!
- ⇒ Reaches for self-education
- ⇒ FULL education (MORE than just basic skills... NATURE, ART, MUSIC, LITERATURE, PLAY, FAMILY!)
- ⇒ Gives taste for BEST (Phil. 4:8)
- ⇒ Encourages delight-directed studies (which fire the passion for their life calling!)
- ⇒ Holy Spirit planned and led!
- ⇒ Encourages thinking GREAT ideas!
- ⇒ Focuses on building skills (How to Learn)
- ⇒ Equips with the tools of learning
- ⇒ Develops GOOD habits (attentiveness, application, thinking, imagining, remembering, perfect execution, obedience, truthfulness...)

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne."

*Matthew 11: 28-30
(Amplified Bible)*

- ⇒ Maximizes the HOME Atmosphere (always learning, centering all around family)
- ⇒ Defined by the Fruits of the Spirit... (Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...Gal. 5:22)
- ⇒ Scriptural! SOOOOO it is EASY! Matthew 11: 28-30

You see the greatest lessons my children have had in our homeschool have surrounded their hobbies, their passions, and the things that they love. Their notebooks contain the real learning that has taken place aside from "organized" lessons planned by me.

Notebooking is integral to all of these things. We can take our notebooks anywhere. We can include all of our life in them. The notebooks that our children have created really capture and communicate the learning that has taken place in our home. You see the greatest lessons my children have had in our homeschool have surrounded their hobbies, their passions, and the things that they love. Their notebooks contain the real learning that has taken place aside from "organized" lessons planned by me. As we have gone through the years, I have found real learning to be superior to anything I can come up with or find in a guide...and to imagine that it is ALL captured in binders!

Want more fruit? One of my favorites is what I see in my children. They don't have to "work" to become something they are not or to reach some unreachable standard. They don't have to be bored from a lack of challenge or frustrated by material that is not designed for them. Notebooking respects the child. It takes them JUST like they are and inspires them toward greatness.

Whether we find them a little reluctant to write because they lack skills to write at five or seventeen or fifty, notebooking meets them where they are, with the abilities that they HAVE. Notebooking focuses on what they do RIGHT, thus encouraging them IN success, whether successes are little or mighty! Whether their need is to learn the basics of writing, reading, record-keeping, organization, or research...or to be challenged a little deeper...or to be inspired with a purpose for learning; notebooking is the perfect answer! The fruit is so abundant as they produce their "own" work!

Notebooking just makes plain, good sense! The process is natural, logical, and

easy. This appeals to many of the most reluctant writers, because so many are crying out for something that *has a purpose*. In most curriculum, the only purpose children find is to cover a subject and make a good grade. This stimulus is often more frustrating than challenging. Notebooking deals with the actual skills that the child has and those that the child needs to develop. It gently confronts their character—excellent?? Slothful?? Skimming by?? Diligent?? Industrious?? Dependable?? Forgetful?? Hard work has a way of confronting us to the depths of who we are. Who can't use that? Oh, and back to purpose...there is nothing like the challenge to develop an heirloom (which is what the notebooks become) to challenge our children toward excellence with a purpose!

Want more fruit?? Look at the long-haul. What do they do later? How are their skills as they get older? How do they compare with those using texts?? This is the MOST interesting benefit of notebooking. Since the focus is upon learning skills needed to keep learning AND developing a love of learning, we find that notebooking helps to encourage and prepare children for self-education that continues for their entire lives. From early ages the children learn easily, yet effectively, how to "learn" any subject of assignment or interest. As they daily copy into their notebooks or collect information for their notebooks, they learn so much! The following are just a few of the skills that a writer MUST have...

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- ⇒ How to gather and order the information they find
- ⇒ How to research topics of interest (All it takes is ONE deep study and they learn that they CAN study ANYTHING they are interested in!)
- ⇒ How to write (everything from basics of handwriting to grammar to punctuation to composition)
- ⇒ How to collect and organize information neatly and most effectively (categories/topics/subjects)
- ⇒ How to proofread their own work (teaches them to correct their own work instead of depending on others to critique and evaluate for them)
- ⇒ How to outline coherently, how to journal (fills in what THEY know and find important)

⇒ AND...my FAVORITE! How to scrapbook (makes it theirs!)

I want for them to see life as a great big world that is there before them with secrets to be uncovered... ideas to be fed upon... information to make theirs.

Sooo, what about the fruit? I really want for my children to CHOOSE to write. I want for them to continue learning all of their life. I would be crushed if I homeschooled them for all of these years only to find that they did not choose to keep learning...or if they ended all of these years "thinking" that they know it all (as I did when I graduated). I want for them to see life as a great big world that is there before them with secrets to be uncovered... ideas to be fed upon... information to make theirs. What is my test for success or failure in Homeschooling? I believe it would be if they ended this journey with no idea where to begin learning about any area of interest or with all of

- the skills we could train them in, yet without a love to keep on learning. Sooo, the "proof is in the pudding." Notebooking can take us where we want to go in
- this journey. It bears the most fruit and is EASY!

No Artificial Deadlines!!!

- Remember writing assignments in high school and college? What is your stomach doing as you think about them? Probably churning as you remember those late nights living off of caffeine just to "buy" enough hours in the day to make the deadlines. Even now, I am not a "deadline" writer. My best work has to be mulled around...thought upon...lived...loved...and made a part of ME.

- Deadlines take away the heart of topics, and eventually the heart of education as well. In fact, they teach us that the product, even if it is shallow and undeveloped, is more important than the process or the relationships with the areas of study. Want true success? Want to develop a writer who loves writing?? Try the discipline of notebooking!

- Notebooking follows the pace of your child. Whether your child comes to a skill that is challenging him to his limits or your child needs to find a real challenge in his education, notebooking meets them where they are and gently challenges them onward without frustrating them!

- Notebooking allows for growth. An example of this comes from our family. We