

# My Personal Goals For This Month:



## Discipleship Goals...

My Daily Bible Reading Goal For This Month...

---

How Much Do I Need To Read Each Day To Meet My Monthly Goal?

---

My Bible Study Goal For This Month...

---

My Bible Memory Goal For This Month...

---

My Prayer Goal For This Month...

---

My Devotional Reading Goal For This Month...

---

Ways That I Can Apply My Church Sermons This Month...

---

Ways That I Can I Worship God This Month...

---

## My Family Goals...

Ways I Would Like To Make Memories This Month...

---

Areas That Would Draw Us Closer This Month...

---

Daily Plan For Me and My Sweetheart To Pow-Wow...

---

Daily Plan To Draw Closer to Each Child...

---

Our Family's Greatest Prayer Needs This Month...

---

Ways We Can Minister To Others This Month...

---

## How Did We Do Last Month...

---

---

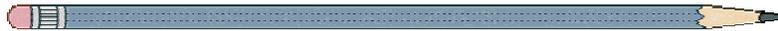
---



"Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."  
Jeremiah 29:13 KJV

# Quick Tips For Setting Up Your Daily Schedule!

By Cindy Rushton



Getting all of the details smoothed out for another BIG Homeschool year...BUT, need just a little bit of help with that schedule? The following are some quick tips to keep in mind when setting up that daily schedule! Hope you have the best year yet!

## Wrap the Schedule Around Your Husband!

Look at what YOUR family is all about! You do not have to set your Homeschool up like a "school." ☺ You can set up your day around your own family, your own husband and children!

As I have prayed over my role as a Biblical woman, one thing is more prominent (based on Scripture) than any other of my roles in my life—being a helpmeet. In Scripture, we find that the first role of the woman was as a helpmeet for her husband. We "help" our husbands by teaching their children, keeping their homes, and bringing glory to them as we mentor others, but God never intends for any of these things to take priority over our chief role as a helpmeet.

I don't know about you, but this is far too often the area in which I struggle the most! Want to create more balance in your home? Is your day wrapped around your husband?

Give this one a try! It is amazing! You will have less struggle with getting things done. You will appreciate your husband much, much more. You will find your own lifestyle that is just right for your family. Things will begin to fit together.

For our family, this has been the anchor as we have traveled...as we have gone through

constant schedule changes with Harold's job... and as we have the constant hindrances, delays, distractions, and disturbances that ALWAYS occur in the home (or REAL WORLD!).

Take time to look at your day. In what ways can you wrap your day around your husband? How can you set a priority on those family moments and family memories? Think through what you is REALLY important. Think through what you would really like to cover (make a list in your planning journal) and incorporate into every day. Decide when you could best cover each thing you would like covered. Then, set up your very own way to teach and train your children!

## Set Up Your OWN Lifestyle of Learning!

Talk about crucial! Want to get more things of value accomplished this year? Want to be sure to beyond the basic academics? Want more time for those things that you never get around to? Nature Study? Reading Alouds? Writing and making homemade books? On and on.

Why not look at your day to see how you can most naturally include all areas you would like to cover? If you are struggling with one-on-one teaching time, why not consider teaching ALL of your children at the same time. Get the little ones going with "their" Copywork...then while they work on their daily Copywork pages, work with each of them individually on areas of need. It helped more than I can express to teach my children to stay busy working on their pages while I taught the

other one their individual lessons.

Now, I KNOW how demanding and very difficult it can be when the children are very young and constantly getting into things and interrupting while you are trying to take those few moments to teach. I had to STAY creative with ideas for seizing moments along the way! I cannot tell you the number of times I taught Phonics to Matthew while Elisabeth splashed in the bath tub...finished out a nap... or played with dad after he came home from work.

It really helped me to teach Matthew Phonics when Harold came home from work and could play with Elisabeth. When I realized that we did not have to stick to any set time OR place, that learning could be part of our lifestyle, in OUR own way, things finally began to fit together.

As they have gotten older, I have found that both of my children tend to enjoy lots of free time late at night to read, study, and pursue "extras!" There is that old battle that rages in my gut saying, "That is NOT how you are SUPPOSED to do it!" However, I love that we can truly wrap learning around OUR LIFESTYLE! If learning is taking place, then indeed, it is certainly acceptable for our children to devour those quiet hours late into the night! Funny...that seems to be the time that I get MOST of my writing done...hummm...could this be preparation for a REAL lifestyle of learning for all of life???

**Remember! ONE Thing is Needful!**

This is probably one of the most important things that we can remember! Unlike that big push of our culture, we will never be able to DO it all, much less all at once!

Christians mistakenly believe that once we are saved that we can do ALL THINGS in Christ Jesus. However, Scripture is very clear that God does not anoint and bless EVERYTHING that we decide to do! In fact, we can

be assured that He will not anoint and bless anything that is not OF HIM in the beginning. His path is narrow...very specific!

Want to keep it all together in this journey? Then, we must ask the Lord for His plan. His Way. We must ask Him to show us and keep before our faces that "one thing is needful" for each child!

Each year that we have Homeschooled, we have found that there was ONE thing per child to focus on. This is Biblical. Remember Mary and Martha?? "One thing is needful."

Each year, we need to sit down before the Lord and seek His face to see what IS the ONE thing that is needful for each child? Obedience? Learning to read? Ministering to their heart? Writing his first essay? PLAY? Learn to cook? Understand Multiplication? Learn to write? Learn to build? Attentiveness? Read more? Make more SWEET memories?

I have found through the years that God tends to place those real needs on my heart long before it becomes part of my schedule. I KNOW those weaknesses that need a special place on the program so I can be sure to set aside enough time to work on them. I know those needs that need special emphasis this year for each of my children. How about you? Is there a need that appears to be blaring? What comes to your mind?

My friend, that is the ONE thing that is "needful." Let that be the focus each and every day! Keep that as your focus for this season. Then, listen to the Lord for the next thing that is needful for each child. As we keep ourselves restrained toward the vision that God has given us for our children and do the thing that is needful, we will simplify our schedule and lifestyle and as a result, we will get MUCH, MUCH more accomplished.

**Center EVERYTHING Around The Family!**

One of the greatest things about homeschooling is that homeschooling gives us

the opportunity to get back to God's perfect design for the godly home. One thing that is simply incredible about God's design is that He planned for the family life to constantly be a learning environment with every single member of the family part of the body! From the youngest to the older generations, God wants for every person in the family to be a vital part of the life inside of the home! Every person in the family enriches and completes the education in the home.

For this reason, be sure to include your WHOLE family in everything that you do! Bring your little ones into your Homeschool!

The first year we homeschooled, my daughter was only 2. That was the year that she decided it was time for her to potty train! She also began BIG experiments with Vaseline... Baby Powder... Toilet Tissue... and MOLD! I was always on the run to keep up with her!! AND I was trying to Homeschool also!

The second year was soooo much better. BUT, I did many things different! First, I read aloud more! The children would cuddle up with me on the couch to listen to story after story. I read aloud on Matthew's level, but I am still amazed at how much Elisabeth understood. Sure, there were times that I did not think she was learning, but she STILL remembers details from those read alouds. It is simply astonishing!

Elisabeth was a busy, busy little girl. There were times that she wanted to "DO" something, evident by our first year homeschooling! I solved many of the problems, frustrations and unnecessary interruptions by bringing her little toys into the floor in our living room for her to play with while we read aloud. I gave her play-doh, legos, dishes to "cook" in, little action figures, sketch pad and paints/colors/colored pencils, etc. This did two things...she made LESS mess AND she began to learn! Less stress! More accomplished!

As time has gone on, we have learned how valuable the FAMILY lessons are. I really do

not think that we would still be homeschooling if I had continued teaching my children the way that I first began teaching them! So much was dependent upon me! There was such a demand for me to keep things going and to plan out almost all of our day. I was wore out from the demands!

I know that much of the demands resulted from the children being so young. Yet, there were many demands that we a result of learning how to BE A FAMILY! By God's design, He plans for families to learn TOGETHER...FROM one another...all along the way!

Studies have determined that we remember 5% of what we hear...10% of what we see... and a whopping 95% of what we teach!

Looking at what happens in the family as we talk to each other and share in each other's lives and interests, we find that as we listen to what Matthew is interested in and learning through his personal studies, we get at least 5%—AND I do NOT have to plan out the lesson, stuff it down their throats, or test them on the information! Rather, Matthew has such a passion about his topic that his interest become the lessons for the moment. We KNOW that HE "gets it." Plus, I may not remember as many details as he does, but my mind is stretched and growing! Then, simply by BEING A FAMILY, when Elisabeth joins the conversation, she shares with the family about HER interests. Not only is she \*reviewing\* what she has been studying and learning, but her passion pours forth over her topic, stretching us and growing us...teaching us even more! By the time that Harold and I share what we are learning, our conversation teaches lessons that books cannot hold!

One of the blessings of homeschooling is that we have been able to instill a strong commitment in our children to dig deep into areas of interest so they KNOW topics to the depth and breadth. This hunger for knowledge and ideas has encouraged all of us to become REALLY GOOD and knowledgeable in the areas

of interest and study. As a result, we can learn of play outside (brings in that Nature Study so much from one another—just like God originally planned! So, not only are we walking out while meeting their need for play!); special true LOVE for one another as we take interest time reading aloud through picture books; nap-time; SHORT table-time to practice in the passions and interests of one another, handwriting/color; then get ready for dad to but lessons are being taught naturally! Just come in from work! Oh, this is just a like God designed from creation! Too cute! brainstorm.

**Balance ALL Areas of Life...**

I think that this is my greatest struggle... Now that my children are older, our days are a balance of Quiet Times/Chores/Table Time/Family Time/Productive Free Time/Ministry and Business Responsibilities/Read BALANCE! There are so many things vying for our constant attention! Years ago, I read an Alouds. This helps us to accomplish our goals for our family AND to offer balance to each interesting quote that has helped me in this and every day. We all know the basic frame-work of every day, so we know what is needed area. Charlotte Mason wrote about the necessity of keeping all the areas of the study and expected of us for each day. Plus! It is in proportion. She said that any area that easier for us to stay balanced if we make sure takes up too much time does so at the expense that we keep each area of our life balanced of all of the others. out.

Take this into our home life as we consider Think about what is important to you and and plan out our schedule... If there is any your husband. Think about your abilities. area that grows out of proportion, the others Then, balance your day so it is JUST right for will suffer. For this reason, we have to your family! constantly be on the look out as keepers of our homes. I made a list of things (areas of our life) that were important aspects of each and every day.

**PLAN!**

I constantly look at all we do to make sure Whether children are little or about to begin their own lives on their own, we ALL need a that every thing we do fits into those aspects basic plan for each day/month/year. Then, of our day. For a few, I had to look to see if with the plan as a framework, we can remain they were important enough to become an flexible! aspect of each and every day OR if they should A plan helps us to have a vision for what needs to be done each day while it keeps us day AND helps me to get the most important restrained to our purpose. things accomplished.

You can use anything for planning...a journal, planner, Day Timer, a calendar, etc. When setting up your yearly schedule, take You can be as detailed or as simple as you a look at what you really want to accomplish in prefer. Just take a look at your year by going your day. Make a commitment to stick to the through your entire yearly calendar marking in priorities that you value the most! In the early all events, field trips, studies, etc. (easier to every day. A simple plan that you can REALLY keep the schedule DOABLE). Then, take a look get done! Getting Daddy to work while the again each month for any updates or additional children watch Sesame Street (I REALLY have plans. Then, each evening take your calendar no idea what is on now—this was one of our fa- and plans before the Father, asking Him to vorites when my children were little!); plenty order your day!

Having a very choleric personality type, I like order and the certainty of knowing what to expect. The only problem is that I have had to learn how to take that part of my personality before the Lord each and every day to surrender my plans to the leading of His Holy Spirit. I have learned that God wants for us to be orderly, but it is also very important to him that we remain flexible.

Having order helps me to have more margin in my life for the spontaneity of motherhood, the fun that often gets us off schedule, and the REAL teachable moments that are NEVER on schedule!

### Work Your Help!

This is a KEY for the Mommy at home with children! I had NO idea how much my children could REALLY do until I began to surrender my incredibly HIGH standards, my pride, and my time in training them!

Oh, I am not just talking about them keeping up the messes they make. I am talking about training them to help manage the entire home.

This is very foreign to many of us who were brought up in public schools. Our mothers had ALL day with us tucked away in schools to clean...not to mention that we were not at home to make messes AND most of us were not as creative (with creativity comes MESS, MESS and MORE MESS!) because we were taught in public schools.

As a result, many of us try to bear the weight of our homes on our own shoulders (my children lovingly call this being a "Mommy Martyr!") until we find ourselves completely exhausted! With the little bit of strength that you do have, allow your children to work alongside of you. Let the 2 year-olds fold and put away the laundry...let your daughter load the dishwasher and put away the dishes...let the children dust the furniture...let the children sweep, vacuum, and mop (talk about

adventures!)...let them clean the windows and mirrors...so on! I usually do two major clean-outs each year (the last year I didn't and you can TELL!) which takes care of the scum and brings order to our home so that we can easily manage quick clean-ups each day during our chore time. Over the years, I slowly but surely trained my children in more and more of the homemaking skills. Not only has this given me relief, but this has helped to use the natural gifts and abilities that my children have. Our children have learned that they are PART of the family. Everyone pitches in. No one carries the load for everyone else! This is truly God's perfect plan!

### Re-evaluate Your Standards...

Now, this may not be YOUR struggle, but it was one of my high places! I tried to keep up with everyone—my mom (who in my eyes was and IS the perfect homemaker!), my mother-in-law (who's house is always perfectly clean, clean enough that I never cared if my toddler's ate off her floor!), my friends (who were not only keeping beautiful homes, but ALSO homeschooled!), and even the ladies at the church. I found myself absolutely exhausted! Not to mention, I had very little joy in my calling!

All it took was a good look at my standards, my actual abilities, my priorities in comparison to what was truly needful! Oh, the house could be a little more cluttered so my child could learn to read. Although the very BEST food was homemade from organically grown foods—BUT, for sanity's sake, frozen pizzas, waffles, and cereal CAN be a reassuring reality when balancing the demands of homemaking, homeschooling, and running a busy home-business!

Sure, I am fully able to take care of my house, homeschool, and help at church...but the BIG QUESTION IS: AM I NICE doing it all? Absolutely NOT!

Asking my family and loved ones, you would soon find that the thing that was needful was a SLOOOWwww pace so I could balance being a responsive wife, fun Mommy, energetic homemaker, and wise mentor! I have to let the things go that would steal away my time, energy, and relaxed life!

### PLAN Time for Fun!

FUN! Yet, another thing that I have to PLAN into my schedule! I am amazed how much MORE we get done each day in our lessons as we take time to have fun...to laugh...to enjoy the little things...and to enjoy one another. Yes, this is a vital element of the Homeschool that endures.

Humor is all around. There are delights at our fingertips ready for us to seize! All we have to do is take the time necessary to have fun! It may mean rolling on the floor giggling...chasing each other down for tickles... laughing at CORNY jokes...getting away for the day to just WATCH the children play. Whatever you do, be sure to leave lots of time for laughs, giggles, and fun!

### Finally, Let the Holy Spirit Lead Each Day!

We have before us children, precious children. Motherhood is a tremendous calling. We are shaping the lives of people, real people. This load is simply too much for a mother to bear alone! For this reason, commit your whole way to the Lord. Ask Him to lead you each and every day. If you are confused, ask Him for direction. If you are tired and weary, check your burden to be sure that you are carrying His Yoke and His burden, then ask Him to give you the strength to press IN to Him and press on toward the mark!!

God will come alongside of you, engulf you, comfort you, and direct you. So! The year is right here before you...what will it be? Ready to make this THE BEST YEAR YET?? Take a break to pray...seek God...and plan out a schedule so each day will count! Make this the best year yet!



"But the noble man makes noble plans,  
and by noble deeds, he stands."  
Isaiah 32:8

### What's Eating Up Your Time???

- ♥ Telephone chat?
- ♥ Kid's in trouble—into things rather than busy in productive pursuits?
- ♥ Business?
- ♥ Going, going, going?
- ♥ Lack of routine?
- ♥ Email?
- ♥ Messes?
- ♥ Lack of organization/preparation/concrete plan?
- ♥ Too much TV?
- ♥ Non-learning toys?
- ♥ Extracurricular activities?
- ♥ Complicated meals?
- ♥ House is not functioning well—need systems?
- ♥ No plan?
- ♥ Daily schedule is not working? Not existent?
- ♥ Dawdling rather than working fast?
- ♥ Clutter?
- ♥ Not saying, "NO!"
- ♥ Too many commitments?
- ♥ Not enough balance?
- ♥ Internet?
- ♥ Lack of purpose and direction for children? For you?
- ♥ Failure to plan?
- ♥ Just too busy?
- ♥ Just too tired?

# Scheduling...EASY???

## Yep! Just Look!

By Cindy Rushton



How on earth do you set up a schedule that can really be done???

Do you feel as frustrated as I do when you read the samples of schedules that other homeschool moms share? Do you find that those schedules sound good, but simply cannot work with your family? Well, beloved friend, you are NOT alone!

Yes, we do need a schedule—a road map—for our day. But, I find that it is more than just the schedule on paper that makes a difference. Here are some quick tips for you to consider in your quiet time as you ponder how to set up a schedule that can REALLY work to make homeschooling easy:

### ♥ Look at your life...

Really take a look! What is going on? What is your husband's schedule? What time of the day is the best for the different aspects of your life? What are each of your children needing? How much CAN you balance and still be effective? What is most important for each and every day—to help meet your goals, to help you teach the most needed studies, to help you balance teaching each of your children?

### ♥ What are your goals...

Goals are different for each and every family, each and every child. Honestly take a look at your goals to see: what is most important for your family?

Where do you want to be next—potty training? Obedience? Reading? Writing without tears? Multiplication tables? What do you need to help you reach your goals? How can you achieve these academic goals?

### ♥ What does EACH child need?

What is it that your child is struggling with? To learn to read? Write? Play? Chores? Time to research a topic of interest? Let this be the "main thing" until they "get it." Focus on what is needed for real success!

### ♥ What needs to be done each day?

Think through and possibly discuss with your husband what YOUR family "should" get done in a day. Harold and I decided that our priority was for the following to be done EVERY DAY: Quiet-times, Chores, Table-time, Family time, Free time to pursue interests, Ministry/Business/Apprenticeships, and Read Alouds. Having a general idea of what we found to be MOST important aspects of a full education helped us to relax when we had "interruptions" and "distractions" that are inevitable in a real home. On those WONDERFUL days (don't think there are MANY of those in one year!), we can get up earlier and get all done early in the day, allowing more time for Family

Time and Free Time. On those days that the morning is shorter than desired, we can roll into the basic frame work without stress and frustration throwing us off. Oh! We also have our family schedule flexible in consideration to our traveling schedule and Harold's always changing work schedule. Look at what needs to be done and how it can RELIABLY be accomplished in a day. Routines such as this free up decision making, lesson stress, and create security in our children's lives. Set up the basic routine of the typical day. SCHEDULE in those naps...plenty of play time...time to make sweet memories...and most importantly, your quiet time!

♥ **Most importantly!**

**Go to God** and see what HIS priorities are for each and every day! Everything can be on paper and still not work. If there is one thing that I have learned DEEPLY this year it is that each day is truly the Lord's day. He has a perfect schedule for each day. While He wants for us to have our days ordered, He still wants complete surrender to Him for those days that He has a special "lesson" for our whole family (including MOM!) to learn! Sooo, most importantly go to God each and every day with your schedule on the altar! You will have the best year yet!



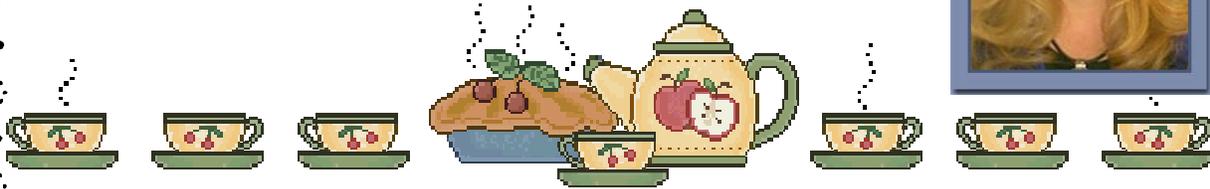
## Scheduling Tips...

- ♥ **Look at how other families get it done!**
- ♥ **Find what works for YOU and YOUR FAMILY!** With your children, your family activities, your personality, your husband's schedule, your home life, your way of teaching, your academic goals, the best time to teach your children.
- ♥ **Set up your day to balance LIFE.** Some days are not going to go well, but a balanced schedule helps to guard against going through a whole year without doing the things on your heart.
- ♥ **Create margin in your schedule for interruptions.**
- ♥ **Always be willing to CHANGE if necessary.** Be open to growth and change. Don't be afraid of not being perfect—you can always tweak out what doesn't work.
- ♥ **Be consistent so your children know what to expect!**

# A Typically Untypical Day

By Mrs. Lorrie Flem

Copyright 2003 TEACH Magazine  
All rights reserved.



What is a typical day? Has anyone ever had one? All I know about them is that I have never experienced one. If I had I would surely remember it. It would stand apart in my memories since it would have been such a novel and odd occurrence!

How unusual to have a day where nothing unexpected happens. A normal day in our home always includes something along the lines of 25 lbs. of flour upended on the kitchen floor, an overflowing toilet, Neosporin tubes IN the toilet, and/or an empty fish tank floating in the middle of the Nile river that used to be our back hallway. A visit to the emergency room is real life in our home and all of us dressed, fed and sitting down doing school while the babies are sleeping is a pipe dream!

Don't get me wrong either, I love our life just as it is and one thing it definitely is, is unpredictable. Of course, I don't know how the days pan out at your house but in ours each day is a new adventure.

I decided to share parts of a typically untypical day in our home with you for three reasons:

- 1) I have been asked so many times.
- 2) As a result, I have begun to believe that it may be an encouragement to

you to "see" that our lives are really very much like yours.

- 3) I hope it shows you that since we are following our own schedule our lives don't leave us feeling as if we are in the middle of a freeway with a horse and buggy. Our vehicle is a sleek sports car (okay, it's a bus when you have eight blessings!), Jesus is the driver, and our schedule is what helps navigate around the potholes of life. We know that roads have sections that need to be repaved and repaired so we try to plan for them and thus are driving and steering our lives with control.

## First Things First: LET'S EAT!

A few mornings a week our routine looks something like this:

- ♥ Daddy often makes or sets out breakfast before he leaves for work (see our *Sanity-Saving Breakfast Ideas Booklets* in Cindy's Bookstore). On the days he doesn't Levi is in charge of this.
- ♥ 12-year-old Levi prepares a serving for everyone.
- ♥ 10-year-old Drew folds and puts away a load of laundry.
- ♥ 8-year-old Dessa sets out the various

and sundry items that go with breakfast and puts Luke in his high chair.

- ♥ 6-year-old Kiley empties the dishwasher (we always start it the night before at bedtime irregardless as to if it is full).
- ♥ Almost 4-year-old Haley puts away the silverware from the dishwasher.
- ♥ 27-month-old Luke helps John bring the dirty laundry hampers to the laundry room.
- ♥ Mom starts a load of laundry.

Completing the above listed chores earns you a breakfast ticket.

" . . . this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat,"  
2 Thessalonians 3:10.

So in our home, unless you complete your before breakfast job 'before' breakfast you don't eat. If this seems cruel to you let me just say that it only takes one or maybe two times of enforcing it for them to become believers. Now it isn't even an issue.

After breakfast there is another 5-minute

chore for everyone:

- ♥ John clears the table, loads the dishwasher, and makes sandwiches for lunch.
- ♥ Levi washes Luke's face and hands (and sometimes his hair and ears too!) and then gets him dressed.
- ♥ Drew washes the table, highchair, bib, and counters.
- ♥ Dessaly washes Haley's face and hands, and then her chair and floor space.
- ♥ Kiley sweeps the floor.
- ♥ Haley straightens her room.
- ♥ Mom heads back for the laundry room, of course!

By starting the day with these things done we get a boost every morning. With an empty dishwasher all breakfast dishes can go straight from the table into there and the counters and sink remain clear. (Of course, this only works if they were clear the night before!) And somehow, just hearing the sounds of the washing machine chugging away and the dryer drying makes me feel as if I have really accomplished something. That is what I consider as "music to my ears."

## About Lorrie Flem...

Lorrie is married to her sweetheart. They are the parents of eight wonderful children: John, Levi, Drew, Dessaly, Kiley, Haley, Luke, and James who are from 16 years to 12 months old. In her SPARE time, Lorrie ministers to moms across our country and around the world through the pages of her own magazine, *TEACH Magazine* (for more information see [www.teachmagazine.com](http://www.teachmagazine.com)), through her FREE online newsletter *TEACHer's Manual*, a multitude of magazines and newsletters, and through her workshops and seminars (also available on audio cassette!).



We are thrilled to feature articles by Lorrie that are so FULL of encouragement and wisdom. Of course, if you want to read more of Lorrie's great encouragement, stay tuned for other issues AND take a peek in our *Homeschooling The Easy Way* for even MORE articles! We plan to have MORE of her great ideas in future issues. If you cannot wait, see the next page full of great new books/tapes that we have just added to our bookstore!

# What is an IEP and Why do I Need One?

By Christie Berry



An IEP is the acronym for Individualized Education Plan. It is basically a set of goals that are written down for you and your child to follow and strive to achieve for the year. IEP's are used by the public system to ensure academic success for children with disabilities. They are not required to be used by private or church based schools, however they are very helpful in a home school environment for several reasons.

An IEP usually consists of academic goals and the steps to reach those goals only (when written by the public system). However, spiritual goals, medical goals, or any other goals are appropriate in home based educational IEP. They may also contain curriculum types, strategies, approaches, methods, or any other notes you may have regarding your child's education in each specific area.

## "Why do I need an IEP?"

The IEP goals help the family or primary educator to stay focused on the purpose of learning. (To include the child's end goal... reading, work, college, etc.) Goals help the educator make sure that the child understands how to do a specific skill in order to move on to the next step, goal, or skill in a series of skills that build upon another. A third reason is for a family to identify other con-

cerns and remedial areas that may not be initially recognized. Forth, goals help to track the progress of the child's education (so that the educator can see that progress when it seems so slow!) Finally, goals help to set a course for the next school year. (As an added bonus, and IEP is recognized by colleges for modifying or accommodating the child's special needs.)

Another frequently asked question is, "What about curriculum?" Unfortunately, there is not a perfect curriculum nor a perfect way to find a workable curriculum. As has been done for decades, you will need to learn what works best for your child by trial and error.

Something important to remember is that curriculum is not your goal. How you will work with your child is the key to his learning. Your books should not dictate your program; your program (IEP) should determine your curriculum choices.

If a curriculum you are currently using doesn't work, first consider modifying it in a way that may be more appropriate for your child. If that won't work, consider saving it for a later time when it might be more effective. If you feel that the curriculum is a total loss, look for something else that will be a better

fit for your child's education. Don't feel bad about closing the book and doing something different to insure the curriculum fits your child.

♥ Do include positive behavioral goals and discipline strategies when behaviors are an issue.

♥ Do include non-academic goals as necessary for the child's needs and ultimate goal for success.

### Program Planning Do's and Don'ts

#### DO's

- ♥ Do individualize the child's program
- ♥ Do base the IEP on the individual child's needs, not on the availability of curriculum or services.
- ♥ Do consider what can be done to modify age/grade appropriate curriculum to meet the child's needs if possible.
- ♥ Do consider the child's strengths to enhance their education.
- ♥ Do specify all modifications, services, curriculum, types of supplementary materials, etc. on the IEP.

#### Don'ts

♥ Don't worry about being able to do everything everyday, set your focus on doing the most important as often as possible and try to touch on everything at least once each week.

♥ Don't give up when things aren't working, give each curriculum, goal or plan at least 2-3 months to work (unless it is obvious from the beginning) then change.

♥ Don't hesitate to revise the goal or plan once you find that a curriculum or program is not working.



### About Christie Berry...



Christie is the wife of Richard, her very best friend, and the mother of some of the most tremendous children in the world (Yep! I am extremely partial!!). Christie stays busy homeschooling, administrating the Vast Network homeschool covering and ministry, writing for her own newsletter and others around the world, and speaking at conventions and conferences.

We are thrilled to have Christie join us in the pages of our magazine with her great articles, tips, and encouragement! Of course, if you want to read more of Christie's great encouragement, stick with us! We plan to have MORE of her great ideas in future issues. If you cannot wait, contact her by email at [christie@vastnetwork.org](mailto:christie@vastnetwork.org) or see her website at [www.vastnetwork.org](http://www.vastnetwork.org)

# Planning FUN and EASY Lessons...

By Cindy Rushton



## Lesson Planning...

Sound dreary, boring, and exceedingly difficult? Did a vision of a school teacher from your past pop into your mind? Or perhaps, did classroom sessions from your childhood pop into your mind?

Well, homeschooling need not be dreary! Homeschooling certainly does not need to be boring! And...beloved friend, homeschooling can be fun and easy! It all begins with planning! Ready to see how EASY it is to plan fun and easy lessons? Let's dig in...

♥**Choose a topic...** *What do you want to study first?* Now, if your brain is getting carried away (and it probably is! ☺), go ahead and print out our brainstorming planning page. Just list any of those ideas that come to mind—you may find that one of those is the best choice for now or, at minimum, you will have a wonderful list of future studies so your brain can rest now! ☺ *Then, ask your children what they would like to learn.* Any good studies? Now, really take this very serious—if they have an area of study that they would like to pursue, this is probably a good time to dig into it while their interest is peeked. (I have lost windows of opportunity by "sticking" to MY plans with intentions to pursue their interests later—later they were

no longer interested! UGH!) You may want to move their area of interest to the top of your list and plan out a study on that topic first. Finally, do be sure to think about what would be a good theme for this time—Presidents (during the election/inauguration??)...Lewis and Clark Expedition (during this two hundred year anniversary of their expedition??)...Egypt (during Pass-over??)...etc. Choose a fun topic! One that excites YOU and just begs for your family to dig in!

♥**Find resources!** Here the whole world opens up to you! REAL curriculum is not limited to a textbook. As a homeschooler, you can use REAL curriculum—real books, real life, and real people! Go back to your theme. What books would make this a great study? Now, you do not have to BUY books (unless you want to!). Your local library will probably have a wide variety of great books if you will take time to dig! Use their computers to search for resources on your theme. You may also want to brainstorm ahead of time for a bunch of great options for things to study while covering your theme. For example, we recently studied all about presidents/government/elections during our study on PRESIDENTS AND ELECTIONS. I brainstormed different topics to look up. When I went to our local library, I had lots of ideas

for topics to look up. I also used this same list to research on the Internet. This was where I hit an unlimited resource of materials! There was anything from printable notebooking pages to coloring pages to games to pictures cute for our lapbooks to games to even full studies. I was elated to find so much great material. That is not all! After we wrapped up our study, Matthew and I were blessed to get to travel to Washington, DC. It was like having a complete review in REAL LIFE—oh! Yep! Another curriculum resource! And, we also were able to access REAL PEOPLE who were able to share what they knew to make the study great! Easy...fun...and VERY doable studies!



ing studies through the years. So, what would you teach? What kinds of activities would be good for developing a study? What about copywork? Are there neat quotes to copy during table time that will coordinate with the study? What about costumes? We have made costumes as part of our study and we have also just let the children dress up in scraps to "play" what we were studying. It worked either way! The children would dress up in their costumes and BEG to hear me read from our books so they could "play" what the characters were doing in the book. What a great way to KNOW what they are taking from the study! Could you encourage your children to dig deeper by making a homemade book or lapbook as you study?

♥ **Decide what you want to cover during your study?** Go back through your resources. Choose key points that you want to cover in your study. What do you want your children to learn? Not sure? Why not study your topic like an investigator, asking who, what, where, when, why, and how? If you have a study like our LEWIS AND CLARK study, why not study that topic in order? Your study may wrap around a single book that you plan to read. You may prefer to brainstorm what to cover by what can help you teach the various subjects. There is NO right or wrong way to plan a study. Just be sure to make a basic plan of what you want to cover in the study so you will have direction and a basic checklist to know that you are studying the topic fully.

♥ **Write down ideas for activities.** This is where we always try to include all of the subject areas. Since we study so many different themes, I don't get upset if a study doesn't "teach it all." We have had no problem balancing

What about food from the period? Research what was eaten and try it out! Try an experiment! Turn the children loose with a video camera and let them "act" out what they are studying! Oh...surely you are having ideas pop into your head...write them down! Don't forget to write down what you will read and write or any field trips!

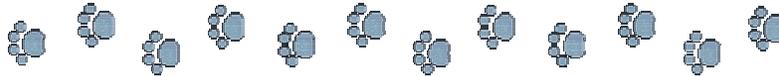
♥ **Decide how long to devote to this study.** Ok. Now, go back over your plans so far. How long do you think it will take to fully study this topic? NOTE! You *can* be wrong! (GRIN!) Get a basic timeline of how long it will take. Group your activities under your objectives of what you want to cover. How long will it take to work through your activities and books to cover your objectives? Do you have activities for each objective? If not, brainstorm ideas for covering that objective or mark that objective off.

♥ **Decide on the logical order to cover your**

**study.** Are you going to cover the study in chronological order? Is there a sequence that just makes good sense? Do you prefer to have special studies for each day—art on Monday...crafts on Tuesday...etc?? Is it going to require a certain sequence for any research or writing projects? Pencil in a logical order. OH! And do note! This is the time to begin scrapping anything that seems

insurmountable! Make it easy! Unless it is easy, it cannot be fun! ☺

♥ **Get ready to dig in!** Ready? Want to jump in? Gather all of the resources. Get all of the supplies together for the study. Make any copies you will be needing. Get that plan finalized and together. Got it all? Then, it is time to dig in! Have fun!



## Studying Presidents and Elections?

Here are Some Great Websites To Check Out!

*During the past few months, Elisabeth and I have been immersed in an intense study of our Presidents and the Electoral Process. What a BLAST we have had! AND...you can too! Here are a few of the neat websites that we have found during our study--we think you will LOVE THEM! Have fun!*

All About Air Force One (one of our FAVORITE sites!)

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/air-force-one.htm>

<http://people.howstuffworks.com/air-force-one7.htm> (more links)

All About the Debates

<http://people.howstuffworks.com/debate.htm>

All About the United States Budget

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2002/guide.html>

Autographs of US Presidents

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/collect/uspresa.htm>

American Presidency Research Site

<http://ap.grolier.com/>

Bill of Rights

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/statecraft/cons.bill.html>

Branches of Government

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/government/branches.html>

Candidate's Stand on Issues

<http://www.vote-smart.org/>

<http://www.abcteach.com/Elections/compare.htm> (Compare your beliefs on issues with each candidate. Neat!)

Elections and Presidents...

[http://www.edhelper.com/American\\_Government.htm](http://www.edhelper.com/American_Government.htm)

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/election/index.html>

Elections and Voting

<http://www.teach-nology.com/themes/social/voting/>

Electoral College Lesson Plan

[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/00-2/lp2086.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp2086.shtml)

Guide to Getting Ready for Election Day (activities and study ideas)

<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/family/guide.asp>

Historical Documents Online

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/documents/index.html>

History of the White House

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/monuments/whitehouse/>

History of the Voting (great for your timelines or research)

[http://www2.edgate.com/elections/inactive/history\\_of\\_the\\_vote/](http://www2.edgate.com/elections/inactive/history_of_the_vote/)

How Laws are Made

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/lawmaking/index.html>  
[http://www.edhelper.com/ReadingComprehension\\_34\\_13.html](http://www.edhelper.com/ReadingComprehension_34_13.html)

Inaugural Addresses of Presidents

<http://www.bartleby.com/124/>

Kids Vote USA

<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/>

Links to Websites About Elections

[http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/subject\\_matter/social\\_studies/elections/](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/subject_matter/social_studies/elections/)

Listen Online to "Hail to the Chief"

<http://www.grolier.com/presidents/gallery/hail.html>

Look at the President's Work This Week:

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/wcomp/index.html>

Make an Election Results Map

[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/00-2/lp2088.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp2088.shtml)

Make a Presidential Windsock

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/windsock/>

Online Tour of Washington D. C.

<http://birdseye.octo.dc.gov/>

Online Tour of the White House

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/tour/>

Outline of American History

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/history/toc.htm>

Political Party Symbols:

<http://www.statefarm.com/kidstuff/politcolor/polcolor.htm>

Presidential Election Results Through History

<http://www.uselectionatlas.org/>

Presidential Prayer Team

<http://www.presidentialprayerteam.org/>

President Word Search

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/pres/wordsearch/preswordsearch.shtml>

Presidents and First Ladies

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/odmdhtml/preshome.html>  
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/odmdhtml/pptime.html>

Primaries, Voting, and Election Studies and Links

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_special/election.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_special/election.shtml)

Printable Coloring Pages of Presidents

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/presidentsday/color/index.html>

Printable Outline Maps (Tracing campaign, keeping up with the vote...)

<http://nationalatlas.gov/outline.html>  
<http://www.50states.com/maps/print/usamap.htm>  
<http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/uspostal.pdf>

Printable Puzzles and Word Searches

<http://www.statefarm.com/kidstuff/pc1.htm>  
<http://www.statefarm.com/kidstuff/pwsearch.htm>  
[http://www.edhelper.com/presidents\\_crossword1.htm](http://www.edhelper.com/presidents_crossword1.htm)  
[http://www.edhelper.com/presidents\\_crossword3.htm](http://www.edhelper.com/presidents_crossword3.htm)  
<http://www.edhelper.com/>

ReadingComprehension\_34\_12.html

<http://www.edhelper.com/presidents.htm>  
<http://www.edhelper.com/presidents3940.htm>

Quick Facts About the United States

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/nation/usa.html>

Study a President...

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/presidents/index.html>  
<http://library.thinkquest.org/11492/index2.html>

The President's Pets

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/pets/>

Timeline of Presidents and First Ladies

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/odmdhtml/pptime.html>

Traditions at the White House

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/traditions/>

US Presidents on the Web

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/curr055.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr055.shtml)

US Symbols

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/symbols/>  
<http://www.edhelper.com/>

ReadingComprehension\_34\_12.html

Voting Rights Around the World

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/fields/2123.html>

Voting Vocabulary

[http://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/soc\\_studies/voting/quiz/](http://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/soc_studies/voting/quiz/)

Washington, DC

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/nation/capital.html>

White House Life

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/whlife/>

White House Official Web Site

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

## Lesson Plans Online

American Government Unit Study (excellent!)

[http://www.edhelper.com/American\\_Government.htm](http://www.edhelper.com/American_Government.htm)

Ben's Guide

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/>

Debates

[http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Social\\_Studies/US\\_Government/GOV0001.html](http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/US_Government/GOV0001.html)

Government Budgeting

<http://pbskids.org/democracy/educators/budget.html>

Homeschoolers for Bush

(I cannot say enough about this website! A friend of mine JUST sent me this link as I was finishing up this unit study. Words cannot describe how much MORE this has added to our last bit of study. This website has a complete study of elections, campaigning, debates, plus much, much more! Check it out! Plus, you may want to join their egroup. The egroup is bustling with ideas and wonderful study helps shared mom-to-mom. I think you will find this to be your favorite website of all!)  
<http://www.hs4bush.net>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hsforbush2004/>

Presidents Unit Study

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/curr055.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr055.shtml)  
<http://www.edhelper.com/presidents.htm>

# Brainstorming Ideas...



"Education is an Atmosphere, a Discipline, a Life."  
Charlotte Mason

# Yearly Planner...

Plan and list below fun topics for study throughout the year! It is so much easier to remember that a topic should be approached in advance than to wait until the last minute. Also, jot down any books, resources, or events that would be great to deepen your studies...

August

---

September

---

October

---

November

---

December

---

January

---

February

---

March

---

April

---

May

---

June

---

July

---



"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord."  
Psalm 19:14



# Resources for this Study...

List below resources that you will need use for your study. List resources that you have and resources that you will need (and where to get them).

Resources on Hand...

Resources to Order...



# Lesson Plans...

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Books:

Field Trips:

Videos/Audios:

Games:

Projects:

Special Events:

# Easy Record-Keeping for the Reluctant Homeschool Mom!

By Cindy Rushton



Record-keeping! Does your hair stand up when you think of record-keeping? Do you begin to grind your teeth? Did you feel like skipping this article just because it seems impossible for "EASY" and "Record-keeping" to ever go together??

Relax. I know that there is not a "one size fits all." I know that in spite of how hard we may search, there is not a perfect system for every mom! That is OK! My prayer is that if you are in need of some ideas to make a couple areas a little easier or if you have no idea of where to begin, that you will find a few ideas as you come home with us to see how simple record-keeping CAN be. Ready for some quick tips??? Here we go...

♥ **Find what is mandatory.** Every state and school district has differing requirements. Find other homeschool families in your area and see how each of them manages their homeschool records. Find the easiest way possible to meet the requirements. Make it as DOABLE as possible!

♥ **Choose what works for YOU.** Every mom has her favorite method that works JUST for them whether a planner with reproducible pages... a ready to use planner... a simple spiral notebook... binders... a filing cabinet... computer... etc, etc, etc! Before you consider anything else, look at who you are. What makes you feel more comfortable? What helps you to feel more accomplishment? Whether

formal or informal... detailed or not even written down... YOUR way is the best way! Decide what works best for you!

♥ **Document daily!** Don't let it build up. Jot it down throughout the day. When my children were little, I kept one journal for everything. I kept it out on my desk so I could just jot down what we were doing as we did it. It was amazing how much easier that was than even waiting till the end of the day. As they got older, I transferred this process to them. I had always made it easy. So, transferring it to them did not overwhelm them. I began this process by letting them keep up with their reading log. The rest was easy after that. They now keep their records just like I used to. At the end of the month and again at the end of the semester I go through making sure that everything is on target and also look to see how well they are keeping up with my overall schedule. Without good records, this would be impossible.

♥ **Keep their work in Notebooks.** We keep ALL of our written work in a binder of some sort. Then, we take it further... we keep ANYTHING that can be pressed in binders. Anything left?? Yes! Then, we take pictures and keep THEM in the binders! (Hehe!) ANYTHING and EVERYTHING that can be studied can also be kept in Notebooks in some way. We keep anything that would expand a study

and build a great collection of information on topics we study... great quotes, definitions about a subject being studied, diagrams, character sketches, pictures, coloring sheets, art prints, poems, Bible verses, narrations, Bible word studies, on and on! Our main reason for Notebooking in this way is that if our children are going to spend their time DOING something, it ought to be worthwhile enough for us to KEEP IT. This teaches them to value their work, do a great job on all they do, and that ALL areas of life are truly educational. *(Want to know more about Notebooking? Check out the articles on our website at <http://www.cindyrushton.com>)*

♥ **Scrapbook events, activities, fun studies, and projects!** Scrapbooks/Yearbooks for what are REALLY doing throughout our school year is not only fun, but it helps to preserve the memories of ALL that we are doing in our family. There are just some things that our children are learning that are impossible to document without scrapbooking! Get out of the old "school" box and really document your family's education. You won't be sorry!

♥ **Use planning sheets designed JUST for homeschooling.** Don't let commercial record-keepers keep you from homeschooling with a lifestyle of learning! Look for printable pages that are designed just for the homeschool mom. You can find great options everywhere! Just check out:

**Our website!** ☺  
<http://www.cindyrushton.com>

**Donna Young...**  
[Http://www.donnayoung.org](http://www.donnayoung.org)

**Organized Home...**  
[Http://www.organizedhome.com](http://www.organizedhome.com)

Buy resources that are designed just for you. We have an entire line of resources that we now have available through our bookstore. Check out our *Make Your Own Brain-in-a-Binder Printables*. It is designed specifically for the homeschool mom who wants pages designed for every area that must be balanced in the busy homeschool family. Also, check out other great resources by homeschool writers and even pages that are included in many homeschool books (we always try to include pages that we use in our books). Now, you may be like me. You may prefer to make your own planning pages. That is perfectly fine! You can tailor your pages to fit exactly with your family needs. Just be sure to use what works for you!

♥ **At the end of the school year, file all records together.** This may seem to be a mute point, however this will save your brain! At the end of our school year, I gather everything together and add them into one big binder. I date the binder and store it away for my children's permanent file. Be sure to pull all of your records together into a set and safe place. When you get discouraged along the way, just look back and see how far you have come—it will be a HUGE blessing!

### Ok...So, Are You Ready?

So, what about you? Still scared about Record-keeping? Why not think through YOUR OWN way? Try your spin. Use what is easy, simple, and will give you more time with your little ones while helping to keep things in place for you. Most of all, find a way that can capture all of these precious memories of these days for you so you will have them to look back upon tomorrow! Have fun! EVEN with Record-keeping!