



# Herbal Resources That You CAN'T Miss!

By Cindy Rushton

***Mommy Diagnostics*** By Shonda Parker...This book is one of my newest favorites! If you have not heard about it, it is probably ONLY because it is newly released! Shonda uses her experience as a Professional Herbalist, Certified Childbirth Educator, and greatest of all qualifications... MOTHER to make this book one you will reach for again and again! I have found ***Mommy Diagnostics*** answers many of the questions that have hindered me from growing and using our own herbs for medicinal purposes. She covers everything from basic nutrition to developing your own "health-chest" of homemade herbal preparations to looking up companies to purchase herbs you may need and not currently grow. This book will prove to be priceless! One you will turn to again and again!

***Naturally Healthy Pregnancy*** By Shonda Parker...This is another book that you won't want to miss! This book kept coming up again and again! I NOW know why! I have struggled with pregnancy loss and infertility without finding much help anywhere...even with infertility doctors. Shonda shines forth with information that can help you treat EACH specific difficulty so you can GET pregnant! That should be enough to make you want to buy the book...but, she has detailed help for any and all of the common ailments that can make womanhood, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing uncomfortable. I have turned to this book time and time again! Don't miss it!

Both Available by Contacting Shonda at 1-888-HERB-101  
OR you can order them through US  
(no shipping if you mention this review and this special offer!!)

Have a favorite resource? Write a review for **Time for Tea** so we can all find out about it! Thanks for so many of you who have so generously sent wonderful books and articles to us as we have struggled through our losses and finding the path to restoring my health. I am feeling SO much better. You have made a difference. I hope to share some of the neat things that God has been teaching me in this area in future issues!

# A Parade of Planners

By Cindy Rushton

*This is a new section of our **Time for Tea**. We are now expanding our mail order division to offer all of the wonderful books that we recommend and carry on the road in our traveling bookstore. This is our way of introducing them more in depth so you will be able to find the most excellent resources! ANY of these may be ordered with NO SHIPPING if you mention that you read it about them here in our Reprint Book!*

**A Garden Patch of Reproducible Homeschooling Planning and Educational Worksheets** By Debbie McGregor...Ever had those resources that you keep CLOSE at all times? This is one of those! From help getting started homeschooling to encouragement ALL along the way, this book will prove to be the MOST used book in your home. WHATEVER you may need, it is ALL here! Portfolios, Notebooking reproducibles, timeline (Debbie has the BEST Book of Centuries reproducible out there!), planners, organizational sheets, calendars, scheduling forms, report cards, even miscellaneous reports and worksheets, plus MUCH, MUCH MORE!! Available in comb-bound version (ready to copy) OR CD-ROM (ready to print off on YOUR computer...fully interactive!). Book \$20.95...CD-ROM \$24.95

**Keepers At Home Organizer**...You met Michele earlier in the last article. She is the author of this organizer. This one is the ULTIMATE! I have taken mine apart to work JUST for me. This is the greatest strength to this planner! You can use it as one big planner, or you can break it into different planners for all the areas of life you are balancing!! Includes: School Planner, Monthly Planner, Home Maintenance Organizer, Meal Planning Organizer, Hospitality Organizer, Bible Reading Plan (This is MY favorite part! Perfect for JUST YOU or your whole family Bible Reading Program!), Personal Journal, Medical Journal, Address book, and Binder! I bought a beautiful leather zip-up binder like Michele suggested. It is SO nice! \$35.00

**Managers of Their Home** by Terri Maxwell...My first impression of this book was YUK! Got your attention? Yes, I felt that there was SO much structure that it seemed much too extreme. Yet, as I began to pour through the pages of this book, I began to realize that I, myself, took too much for granted. We began homeschooling with much structure that has laid a beautiful foundation for what we are doing today. The foundation has made ALL the difference now as we are free to follow the Lord in all areas of life. Having a well-defined structure through our schedule and plans has taken much stress and frustration out of many areas of our life. If you would like to accomplish more... have more time for things that you enjoy, but never seem to have time for...have a more orderly home, then this book will be a tool that can help you to balance all of those areas of life while excelling in your role as wife, mother, teacher, homemaker, mentor, and child of God! \$25.00

**The Homeschool Organizer** by Ericka Brown...This Spring, I met Ericka and first saw her Organizers. I am thrilled to be adding them to our resources. For many mothers, there is a struggle within when it comes to homeschooling in freedom. Many confuse organization with bondage. Organization is REALLY what sets you free to be able to follow the Lord in the direction that He wants to carry you. This organizer is merely a record-keeper so you will not be hindered by making plans that are impossible to achieve, thus wasting your precious time! Each organizer includes a full year's worth of forms ready to use. The notebooks can be dated and filed at the end of the year for easy reference. One great plus...the notebooks are easy to customize as you can insert, rearrange, and remove pages easily. Forms include: lesson plans, reading logs, attendance and grades, monthly calendars, yearly calendars,

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daily schedule/weekly activities, school year goals, curriculum list, frequently called numbers, items borrowed or loaned. Tabs include: multiplication table, basic weights and measure conversions, US Map and States/Capitals, parts of speech, commonly misused words, food pyramid and human body, easy grader, scale and average sheet, toll free number and web address of many Homeschool companies.

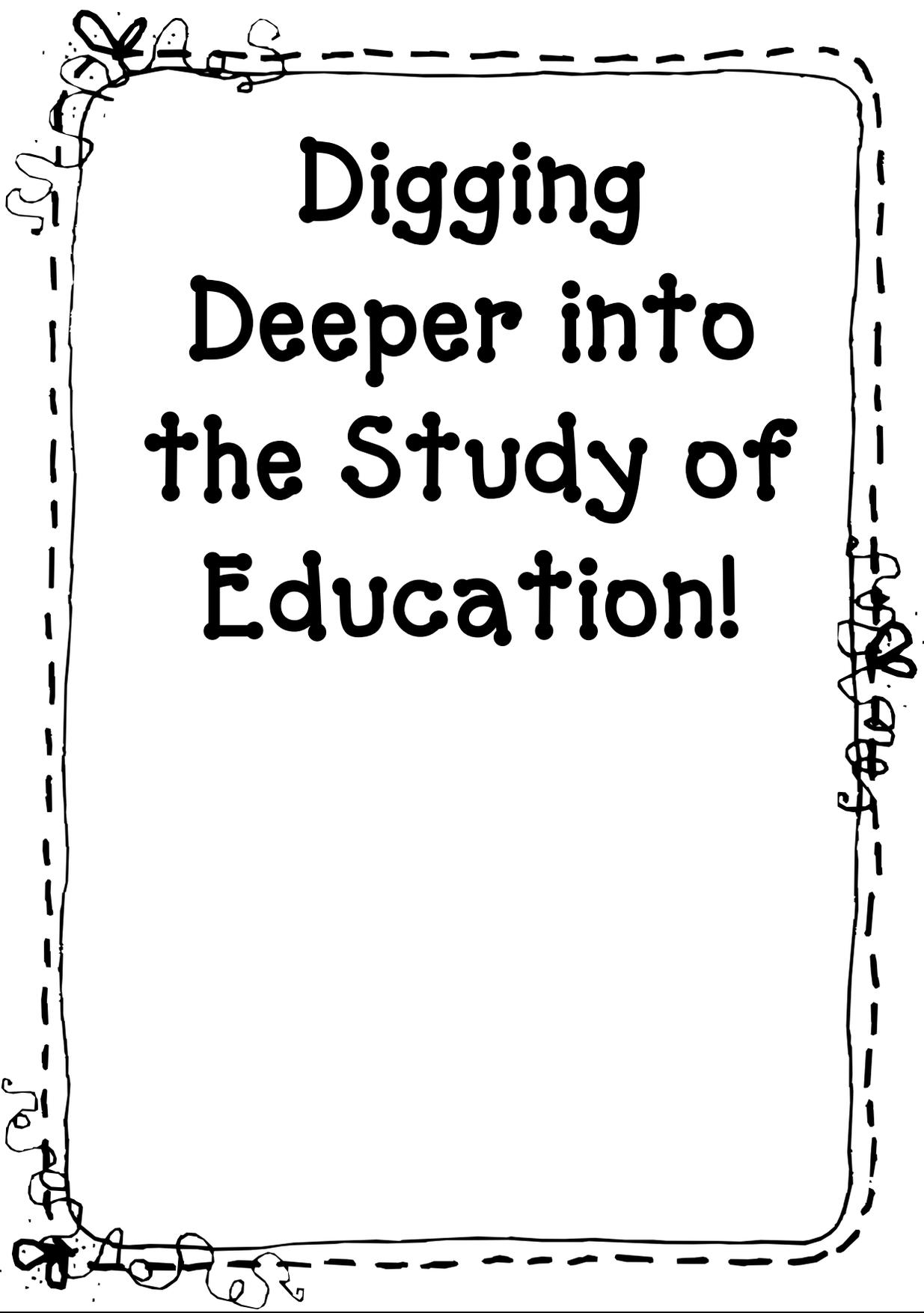
Complete Organizer...\$35.00

Refill Package...\$30.00

Report Cards...\$.50

Blue-Jean Cover/Carrier for Organizer...\$10.00

**The Homeschool Planner** By Joy Griffin Dent...This planner is JUST PERFECT for Mom! Not only is the journal simply gorgeous, but it is also full of wonderful quotes by all of our favorites: God, Charlotte Mason, Raymond and Dorothy Moore, Noah Webster, Edith Schaeffer, plus more! Whether you want this journal during your yearly planning time OR day-to-day, it is easy to love and treasure with its quaint illustrations and wonderful plan sheets (all FULLY REPRODUCIBLE!)! Includes sheets for planning field trips; work, school, and daily schedules for everyone in your home; listing educational resources you are using; writing out your educational philosophy and goals; listing books read; planning learning centers in your home; how to's for logging studies AND plenty of pages to log studies for an entire school year. PLUS a place for jotting down ideas for treating yourself along the way. I love this planner because you can either save it for reproducing through the years OR you can use it and affordably buy another each year! \$14.95



**Digging  
Deeper into  
the Study of  
Education!**

# Developing Your OWN Philosophy of Education

By Cindy Rushton

Welcome to another year! Can you believe it? Another school year! Are you ready? Are you on track again? Are things starting to settle in? Are you still waiting on some of that curriculum? Still working in new things into your daily schedule? Still trying to make everything fit together?

I remember the *hours* that I spent in our first few years of homeschooling just pouring over catalogs, magazine ads, curriculum belonging to my friends...yes, it was HOURS! You would all get a great laugh out of my first look at a curriculum fair. I was so bewildered by it all!

I did not understand at the time that there is not a magic formula for choosing curriculum or for Homeschooling for that matter! I had no idea that Homeschooling would be a constant process of growth. That it is an individual process that constantly changes and grows with the individual child and family. I found myself frustrated when I would get home and begin to teach only to find that things were NOT settling in to be as natural and easy as I would like. This continued on until I began to see that God planned to use Homeschooling to revive and restore our home for His calling for our family! As you can imagine, it took years before I found myself truly free to follow the Holy Spirit as He led me in the way we were to go with OUR family!

I am so thankful for the freedom now that we have to follow His gentle leading in this area of our lives. My prayer is that God will help you move toward YOUR own philosophy of education so that you will not only have His direction in education, but also so you will be free to follow Him in this wonderful journey! Let's take a look at how to develop our own philosophy of education...

## How to Develop Your Own Philosophy or Approach...

There are two steps in developing your own philosophy of education. The first one is to determine your own beliefs. The second is to get to know the various approaches.

Did you know that you *already* have your own philosophy of education? Yes! You *could* write your own book...design your own curriculum...and, of course, teach your own children! This tells me that if you could do your own...you should be able to use other pre-published curriculum too??? The struggle is not with your ability or qualifications, the struggle comes as one mixes curriculum of one philosophy with people of another philosophy of education. Let me give you some examples of differences in philosophy that really affect the success of applying philosophies and curriculum effectively...

What do YOU believe about education? How are children made? What are your children's natural bents? Gifts? What should a homeschool be like...formal, informal, student-centered, teacher-centered? What should be the focus? How do YOU teach best...with lots of preparation, as you go along, teacher's manuals, exploring, hands-on, reading...reading one book or many at a time?? What creates the most interest for you and your children? What gives you a peaceful, relaxed attitude? What would you do if

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you were completely without the influence of ANYONE else? What is the most natural for you? How can you best use your gifts within your home? What best develops the gifts and purpose for your children? What is God's best for your family? What is God's plan here?

Think through your ideas. Do some soul searching. Decide how that YOU teach best. Decide on the way that YOUR children will learn best. Find help from the various approaches! Go for it!

### **Working Out Your Own Philosophy of Education While Choosing YOUR OWN Plan...**

We have looked at the need to develop our own personal philosophy...now what?? Well, now let's work out OUR own philosophy!

#### **Compare with Scripture!**

First, compare all with Scripture! Take what is laid out in Scripture as your model. Don't be afraid to tear away the old foundations of education and begin your homeschool on the foundation of God's Word. All approaches say they are based on Scripture. What do you think?? Are they? Do they really match up with ALL that God says? What DOES God have to say about teaching and training children? Go back through the different approaches and note whether they take into consideration HOW God made you and your children? Do they take into consideration the demands of family life? Be sensitive to God's leading! Keep relationships and child training as primary! All else WILL fall into place!

#### **Compare with Your Lifestyle...**

What does your year look like? What would create balance? Consider whether each approach or technique is really "do-able" with *your* lifestyle? Would it take too much preparation? Would you need too much time at the table? Is it what you need for this particular year? What will work best for you this year?

#### **Consider Your Money...**

We all know that choosing curriculum is confusing. Let's simplify by first choosing resources for our basic skills...Reading and Math! Once children learn the basics of Reading, all they will need is practice. There is no greater text for Reading than the Bible. As for Math, choose a curriculum that is home-friendly...challenges the children to think and reason...and can be done without swallowing up a large portion of each day! Then, consider ways to teach that are inexpensive and fun for the other studies. You could use anything from your local library, your own library, and other educational options that are free like museums, historical sites, festivals, and so on!

### **Take Ideas From Each Approach Which Will Help You Meet Your Goals!**

Don't feel that you have to identify yourself with one approach for life. Although we are primarily using the Charlotte Mason/Lifestyle of Learning Approachs, we still use many resources from the Classical Approach and Principle Approach for original source documents. We occasionally do a Unit Study. Plus, we have a text for Greek and Math. We combine the aspects (that FIT US best) of each approach to make our own Simplified Approach to Real Learning. You can do the same! Use what is

most comfortable and most natural for you and your family! Feel free to use the best resources from each approach! Glean ideas from all...especially the ones that you see in EVERY approach...Whole Books... Real Life ...Character Training!

### **Choose Resources That Will Appeal to YOU and YOUR CHILDREN!**

The first thing I learned when we began homeschooling was that learning would have to be a lifelong process. Just because I hold a diploma, did not mean that I was finished learning. Rather, it meant that I had the ability to continue learning for life. As you select curriculum, decide to become a lifelong learner! Become a fellow student with your children! Choose resources that will appeal to your whole family...YOU and YOUR CHILDREN. C.S. Lewis said, *“No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty and beyond.”* Pick the greatest resources...those that your entire family will enjoy while they build wonderful memories!

### **Adapt What You Have In Your Home To Meet Your Needs!**

I have shelves and shelves of books from our childhood. Some are beloved stories that my mother read aloud to me as I grew up. Some are old textbooks from college. Some are resource books from the years of homeschooling. We need not feel that we need to purge our shelves of all that we have because we use a few ideas from a certain approach. For example, although I am completely confident of approaching language from the more natural methods of Copywork, Dictation, and Narration, I still have my old resources from College for reference. Although I primarily teach History and Science through Real, Living Books, I still have textbooks when I need an outline! We can all use EVERYTHING that is in our home to make homeschooling fun and workable!

### **Not Wanting To Go All The Way With A New Approach?**

If you are not interested in completely changing from the your way of doing things but you would like to bring a breath of fresh air, try just implementing one idea at a time. You might not want to jump entirely into the Charlotte Mason Approach, but you might want to establish a family reading time using whole, living books. Or you may want to begin Picture Studies once a week!

Another option that often gives a much needed break is to try using the approach over your school breaks. You might try Nature Study during the summer...Whole books during Christmas...Unit Study during Spring Break! If you find that this approach is what you want, you can learn more and adapt more into your home bit by bit!

### **Be Sure to Get Support...**

There is a lot of priceless support available to homeschoolers today. Use your support! I treat myself to subscriptions to kindred newsletters/magazines. You will find mine with water spots from coming along for long hot baths at the end of the day...or sand from our many trips outside...or pressed flowers tucked inside from moments stolen away at our local park! These are my dear friends that I can take along with me to cheer and encourage me along the way!

I also must admit that I am a “Hopelessly Addicted Conference Attendee!” I get weary just as you all do! I have been amazed at the way I am ministered to through the wisdom of others shared through conferences and workshops! I am *always* that person on the front row!

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One other “addiction” is our monthly Mom’s Study Group. Just as my children need a constant supply of ideas, so do I! My mind is fed as I consider great ideas and as I feed on the simple how-to’s that are working for *real* moms in the trenches!

If that did not sound like enough, we have just birthed another addiction! We began a list for Time For Tea online! Its purpose is to encourage and inspire women to enjoy their calling.

Take a look around you at all the wonderful options to encourage you along the way! You will find many practical ideas, specifics on teaching, and inspiration and encouragement along the way!

### **Keep In Mind That GOD Gave Your Child To You!**

This is probably the most important point I could share with you! This is probably the most important point I can ever make. We have to keep in mind that God gave us our children.

God has confidence in our ability to teach our own children. His desire is not for us to give them all the best that money could buy. His desire is for us to give them contact with Him through His Word and direct contact with our own heart through deep home relationships! He wants for us to give OURSELVES...Our FAITH, Our LOVE, Our NURTURE, and Our WISDOM!

The gift of yourself is more precious than anything that money could buy. Choose today to trust yourself, your interests, your child’s interests to make your own individual approach to education! Choose today to be humbly submitted to God for His plan for your child! Then, you CAN make homeschooling great!

# Education is A Science of Relations...Relations with God!

By Cindy Rushton

*This study is actually a reprint from our newly revised book **A Charlotte Mason Primer**. **A Charlotte Mason Primer** is our special book offer this month (Well, that month is long gone, BUT...we have a special for readers of our Reprint Book! ☺) It is available for \$8 plus \$2 Shipping. No shipping when you order ANY other of our resources. The regular retail is \$12 plus shipping. Oh, there is also an audio on this topic is available from our September Charlotte Mason Study Group...see back for details! Hope you enjoy this sampling! Love, Cindy*

*“Of the three sorts of knowledge proper to a child, --the knowledge of God, of man, and of the universe, --the knowledge of God ranks first in importance, is indispensable, and most happy-making.”*  
Charlotte Mason, pp. 158 **Toward a Philosophy of Education**

Of all the wonderful things that we can instill into the depths of our children...there is no greater call than discipleship of our precious children. This is the perfect place to begin looking deeper into the ideas of Charlotte Mason. Her tender conviction about this area of child training actually became the basic foundation of all she did and wrote about children. Her ideas blend beautifully with those of Scripture to assist the parent in developing a whole education for the WHOLE child...mentally, physically, emotionally, *and* spiritually. Let's dig in...

## **The Primary Emphasis of Education is Discipleship!**

In Charlotte Mason's writing, we find the priority that Miss Mason placed upon Education as a means toward teaching the child about God. Her hope is not that Education will lift the child to some sort of supremacy void of God, but rather that the focus of the child's education would be to prepare the child to KNOW God intimately. However, Miss Mason knew what she was dealing with in the young child. She writes in her book **Toward a Philosophy of Education** on Page 46, *“The fact seems to be that children are like ourselves, not because they have become so, but because they are born so; that is, with tendencies, dispositions, toward good and evil, and also with a curious intuitive knowledge as to which is good and which is evil. Here we have the work of education indicated. There are good and evil tendencies in body and mind, heart and soul; and the hope set before us is that we can foster the good so as to attenuate the evil; that is on condition that we put Education in her true place as the handmaid of Religion.”*

What truth! Children do NOT come to us complete and ready for ministry at the age of FIVE! Nor do they come to us as mere vessels that we need to fill with information! They are not our parrots, simply in need of learning off facts without a heart for what they are learning! They are REAL people! They learn JUST like we do...only with perhaps more receptivity. There are no inborn limitations to learning due to their age nor their race, social status, or religion...all children desire to learn. Our role is to give them the very best!

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Not only are children capable of learning and attaining knowledge as adults can, but they also are capable of good and evil. Every single child is born with tendencies and dispositions toward doing good *and* evil! Our role as parents is vital as we train...disciple these little ones "*in the way they should go.*" But how??

In *Toward a Philosophy of Education* on page 65, she writes..."*In such ways the great thoughts of great thinkers illuminate children and they grow in knowledge, chiefly knowledge of God. And yet this, the chief part of education, is drowned in torrents of talk, in tedious repetition, in objurgation and recrimination, in every sort of way in which the mind may be bored and the affections deadened. I have endeavored to sketch some of the possibilities for good and the corresponding possibilities for evil present in all children; they are waiting for direction and control, certainly, but still more for the formative influence of knowledge...*"

Let's take a look at some of her ideas for instilling the good!

### Get to KNOW the Child!

*"We must know something about the material we are to work upon if the education we offer is not to be scrappy and superficial. We must have some measure of a child's requirements, not based upon his uses to society, nor upon the standard of the world he lives in, but upon his own capacity and needs."* *Toward a Philosophy of Education* on Page 65-66

What a challenge! This is the foundation for training the child in any area, but never is it more important than in the Spiritual Discipleship of the child! Yes, we need to get to KNOW the child! Just what ARE we working with???

Take some time to really get to know your child! What are their strengths? What are their abilities? What is their bent? Where are their talents? What is God's plan for your child's life? This is where education begins for the child!

If you are uncertain about the answers to these questions, this is where you begin with your foundation of study in education. Fewer things are more important than getting to know WHOM you are working with and WHERE they are going! Without taking this time, much time will be wasted in vain efforts. Taking time to get to know each of your children and God's plans for each of them will get you off on the right track! Take a look at what the Bible says about the call on the lives of God's children. Take a look at their current personal interests. Take a look at WHO you are. You will get on the right track!

### Most Important Lessons are of God...Parents are the BEST TEACHERS!

Speaking of WHO you ARE...The first place to begin with the education of your children is with yourself! The greatest lessons that you will teach your children are those *deep* lessons that God has ingrained into *your life!* Without *knowing* God first-hand, you will have very little to instill in the lives of your children. However, it will be that deep passion for God radiating through you in those tender moments with your children that will make the most lasting impressions in the lives of your children.

On page 158 of *Toward a Philosophy of Education* Miss Mason wrote, "*Of the three sorts of knowledge proper to a child, --the knowledge of God, of man, and of the universe, --the knowledge of God ranks first in importance, is indispensable, and most happy-making. Mothers are on the whole more successful in communicating this knowledge than are teachers who know the children less well and*

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*have a narrower, poorer standard of measurement for their minds. Parents do not talk down to children, but we might gather from educational publications that the art of education as regards young children is to bring conceptions down to their “little” minds. If we give up this foolish prejudice in favour of the grown-up, we shall be astonished at the range and depth of children’s minds; and shall perceive that their relation to God is one of those ‘first-born affinities’ which is it our part to help them to make good. A mother knows how to speak of God as she would of an absent father with all the evidences of his care and love about her and his children. She knows how to make a child’s heart beat high in joy and thankfulness as she thrills him with the thought, ‘my Father made them all,’ while his eye delights in flowery meadow, great tree, flowing river. “His are the mountains and the valleys his and the resplendent rivers, whose eyes they fill with tears of holy joy,” and this is not beyond children...”*

These precious moments with our children are priceless! Not only as memories, but also as moments which will shape their eternal decisions. No one can replace the parents in the discipleship process. Parents ARE the best teachers! This duty and responsibility cannot and should not be passed on to someone else regardless how we may doubt our own qualifications! This is probably the most vital role that we will have in our lives. We must be faithful to this call! So, are you wondering “Just what is OUR role???” Charlotte Mason shares wonderful truths in all of her books about the parent’s role in discipleship...let’s look at a few!

### **Enthroned the King...**

*“‘It is,’ says a writer who has searched into the deep things of God—“it is a King that our spirits cry for, to guide them, discipline them, unite them to each other; to give them victory over themselves, a victory over the world. It is a Priest that our spirits cry out for, to lift them above themselves to their God and Father, --to make them partakers of His nature, fellow-workers in carrying out His purposes. Christ’s Sacrifice is the one authentic testimony that He is both the Priest and King of men.” (Maurice, Sermons on Sacrifice) “Parents have some power to Enthroned the King...It is necessary, however, that we should gather up crumbs of fact and inference, and set in order such knowledge as we have; for the keys even of this innermost chamber are placed in the hands of parents, and it is a great deal in their power to enthrone the King, to induct the priest, that every human spirit cries for!” Charlotte Mason, page 341-342 **Home Education***

### **Give the Idea of God to the Soul of the Child...**

*“In the first place, it does not rest with the parent to choose whether he will or will not attempt to quicken and nourish this divine life in his child. To do so is his BOUNDEN DUTY and SERVICE. IF he neglect or fail in this, I am not sure how much it matters that he has fulfilled his duties in the physical, moral, and mental culture of his child, except in so far as the child is the fitter for the divine service should the divine life be awakened in him. But what can a parent do? Just this, and no more: he can present the idea of God to the soul of the child... it is his part to deposit, so to speak, within reach of the child some fruitful idea of God; the immature soul makes no effort towards that idea, but the living Word reaches down, touches the soul, --and there is life; growth and beauty, flower and fruit!” Charlotte Mason, page 344 **Home Education***

### **Instill the Ideals of God and Divine Life...**

Charlotte Mason, page 144-145 **School Education**, “The most important part of our subject remains to be considered—the inspiring ideas we propose to give children in the things of the divine life. This is a matter we are a little apt to leave to chance; but when we consider the vitalising power of an idea, and

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*how a single great idea changes the current of a life, it becomes us to consider very carefully what ideas of the things of God we may most fitly offer children, and how these may be most invitingly presented.”*

### Teach WHAT We KNOW!

*“How to select these few quickening thoughts of the infinite God? The selection is not so difficult to make as would appear at first sight. In the first place, we must teach that which we KNOW, know by the life of the soul, not with any mere knowledge of the mind. Now, of the vast mass of the doctrines and the precepts of religion, we shall find that there are only a few vital truths that we have SO TAKEN INTO OUR BEING THAT WE LIVE UPON THEM—this person, these; that person, those; some of us, not more than a single one. One or more, these are the truths we must teach OUR children, because these will come straight from our hearts with the enthusiasm of conviction which rarely fails to carry its own idea into the spiritual life of another...Let the parent who only knows one thing from above teach his child that ONE; more will come to him by the time the child is ready for more!”Charlotte Mason, page 346-347 **Home Education***

### Look for Holy Moments...SEIZE THEM!

*“Every now and then there occurs a holy moment, felt to be holy by mother and child, when the two are together—that is the moment for some deeply felt and softly spoken word about God, such as the occasion gives rise to. Few words need be said, no exhortation at all; just the flash of conviction from the soul of the mother to the soul of the child. Is ‘Our Father’ the thought thus laid upon the child’s soul? There will be, perhaps, no more sympathetic meeting of eyes hereafter, between mother and child, over a thousand showings forth of ‘Our Father’s’ love; but the idea is growing, becoming part of the child’s spiritual life. This is all: no routine of spiritual teaching; a dread of many words, which are apt to smother the fire of the sacred life; much self-restraint shown in the allowing of seeming opportunities to pass; and all the time, earnest purpose of heart, and a definite scheme for the building up of the child in the faith...It is as the mother gets wisdom liberally from above, that she will be enabled for this divine task.” Charlotte Mason, page 349 **Home Education***

### Read the Bible...

*“Now our objective in this most important part of education is to give the children the knowledge of God. We need not go into the question of intuitive knowledge, but the expressed knowledge attainable by us has its source in the Bible, and perhaps we cannot do a greater indignity to children than to substitute our own or some other benevolent person’s rendering for the fine English, poetic diction and lucid statement of the Bible.” Charlotte Mason, page 160 **Toward a Philosophy of Education***

*She continues, “Literature at its best is always direct and simple and a normal child of six listens with delight to the tales both of Old and New Testament read to him passage by passage, and by him narrated in turn, with delightful touches of native eloquence. Religion has two aspects, the attitude of the will towards God which we understand by Christianity, and the perception of God which comes from a gradual slow-growing comprehension of the divine dealings with men.”*

*On page 162, she continues, “the teaching of the New Testament, not duly grounded upon or accompanied by that of the Old, fails to result in such thought of God, wide, all-embracing, all-permeating, as David, for example, gives constant expression to in the Psalms. Let us have faith and courage to give children such a full and gradual picture of the Old Testament history that they unconsciously perceive for themselves a panoramic view of the history of mankind typified by that of the*

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*Jewish nation as it is unfolded in the Bible.”*

### Bible Reading...

Bible Reading need not be difficult or intimidating! Actually, Bible Reading can be the easiest lessons that you teach your children. All that you have to do is use STRAIGHT Bible! Don't bury God's Word under endless comments and applications...let it alone with the child! Also, be sure to teach the entire Bible! Don't select only passages that can "indoctrinate" your child...their minds are keen enough to form opinions and beliefs without those being forced upon them. Leaving the child alone with God will really work WITHOUT interference on our part!

Another thing to remember is to be very careful to avoid picking out individual verses to "grind" into the child. Instead instill a LOVE of God's Word! On this Charlotte Mason says on page 349 of *Home Education*, "*I doubt if the picking out of individual verses, and grinding these into the child until they cease to have any meaning for him, is anything but a hindrance to the spiritual life. The Word is full of vital force, capable of applying itself. A seed, light as thistledown, wafted into the child's soul, will take root downwards and bear fruit upwards. What is required of us is, that we should implant a LOVE of the Word; that the most delightful moments of the child's day should be those which his mother reads for him, with sweet sympathy and holy gladness in voice and eyes, the beautiful stories of the Bible; and now and then in the reading will occur one of those convictions, passing from the soul of the mother to the soul of the child, in which is the life of the Spirit.*"

I am not sure if the next quote will apply to you, but Miss Mason also brought out the importance of NOT reading the Bible AT the child! This passage REALLY convicted me! She wrote on page 349 in *Home Education*... "*Above all, do not read the Bible AT the child: do not let any words of the Scriptures be occasions for gibbeting his faults. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to convince of sin; and He is able to use the Word for this purpose, without risk of that hardening of the heart in which our clumsy dealings too often result!*"

Instead of using the Bible as a weapon, let's use it as the very Word of God! Just as we would not dream of bringing our children to spend time with someone who would beat them over the head with every word they spoke, so WE do not want to use God's precious Word to beat our little ones over the head!

Let's give our children a deep love of the Word! Let's teach ALL of the Bible! Let's use the Bible as our primary lesson book! The Bible is the perfect reader. The Bible is the perfect text of Literature. The Bible is the perfect Theology Book. The Bible is the perfect Character Curriculum. The Bible is also the perfect History text. If we want to equip our children *perfectly*, we must give them the entire Bible!

Charlotte Mason felt that instilling a deep love and understanding of the entire Bible from an early age was essential in the lives of all children. Perhaps, this was instilled even more so in her convictions as she studied the life of Goethe. Goethe was a German writer, politician, poet, playwright, thinker...a true Renaissance Man! In his early years, he was brought up with a strong emphasis on Scripture. Although his life was inevitably rocky because of his willfulness and constant immorality, he wrote of the impact that Bible teaching had on his life to offer stability and peace in the midst of his constant errors due to willfulness. Miss Mason used him as an example in her book *Toward A Philosophy of Education* (pages 160-163). She writes... "*Now our objective in this most important part of education is to give the children the knowledge of God. We need not go into the question of intuitive knowledge, but the expressed knowledge attainable by us has its source in the Bible, and perhaps we cannot do a*

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greater indignity to children than to substitute our own or some other benevolent person's rendering for the fine English, poetic diction and lucid statement of the Bible. Literature at its best is always DIRECT and SIMPLE and a normal child of six listens with delight to the tales both of the Old and New Testament read to him passage by passage, and by him narrated in turn, with delightful touches of native eloquence. Religion has two aspects, the attitude of the will towards God, which we understand by Christianity, and that perception of God, which comes by a gradual-slow-growing comprehension of the divine dealings with men. In the first of these senses, Goethe was never religious, but the second forms the green reposeful background to a restless and uneasy life and it is worth while to consider how he arrived at so infinitely desirable a possession...It is well to know how Goethe obtained this repose of soul, this fresh background for his thoughts, and in all the ERRORS OF A WILLFUL LIFE this innermost repose appears never to have left him. His eyes, we are told, were tranquil as those of a god, and here is revealed the secret of that large tranquility. Here, too, Goethe unfolds for us a principle of education which those who desire their children to possess the passive as well as the active principle of religion would do well to consider; for it is probably true that the teaching of the New Testament, not duly grounded upon or accompanied by that of the Old, fails to result in such thought of God, wide, all-embracing, all permeating, as David, for example, gives constant expression to in the Psalms. Let us have faith and courage to give children such a full and gradual picture of the Old Testament history that they unconsciously perceive for themselves a panoramic view of the history of mankind typified by that of the Jewish Nation as it is unfolded in the Bible. Are our children little skeptics, as was the young Goethe, who take laughing joy in puzzling their teachers with a hundred difficulties? Like that wise old Dr. Albrecht, let us be in no haste to explain. Let us not try to put down or evade their questions with modesty and scrupulous care. If we act in this way, difficulties will assume their due measure of importance, that is to say, they will be lost sight of in the gradual unfolding of the great scheme whereby the world was educated."

It is hard to tell, just how Goethe's life would have been different if he had developed a love and passion for a deep, abiding relationship with God...if he had reached a real understanding of WHO God was, not just a nodding acquaintance with stories about Him. This is one reason that we must answer the questions that our children bring up to us. Of course, we will not KNOW every answer! In fact, the greatest lesson we can teach our children is NOT to come to us for these answers...but to go to GOD! To Seek after HIM and HIS ANSWERS!!

Our part is to give them continual teaching in God's Word...all of it! Then, take their questions seriously! If we KNOW the answers, then we can share with them our understanding. If not, weigh out those difficult questions! Go to God with the child for the answers! God is interested in answering those tough questions! Miss Mason continued with this emphasis and some wonderful how-to's that may help in your home as it has in mine, "Let us not try to put down or evade their questions, or to give them final answers, but introduce them as did he to some thoughtful commentator who weighs difficult questions with modesty and scrupulous care...take the measure of children's minds, to help them over real difficulties, give impulse to their thoughts and direction to their conduct. Between the ages of six and twelve children cover the whole of the Old Testament story, the Prophets, major and minor, being introduced as they come into connection with the Kings. The teacher opens the lesson by reading the passage...there will be probably some talk and discussion after this reading. Then the teacher will read the Bible passage in question which the children will narrate, the commentary serving merely as a background for their thoughts. The narration is usually exceedingly interesting; the children do not miss a point and often add picturesque touches of their own. Before the close of the lesson, the teacher brings out such new thoughts of God or new points of behaviour as the reading has afforded, emphasizing the moral and religious lesson to be learnt rather by a reverent and sympathetic manner than by any attempt at personal application...(12-15 year olds) read for themselves the whole of the Old Testament..."

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*“Children between the ages of six and nine should get a considerable knowledge of the Bible text. By nine, they should have read the simple (and suitable) narrative portions of the Old Testament, and, say, two of the gospels. The Old Testament should, for various reasons be read to children. The gospel stories, they might read for themselves as soon as they can read them beautifully. It is a mistake to use paraphrases of the text; the fine roll of Bible English appeals to children with a compelling music, and they will probably retain through life their first conception of the Bible scenes, and, also, the very words in which these scenes portrayed. This is a great possession. Half the clever talk we hear today, and half the uneasiness which underlies this talk, are due to a thorough and perfect ignorance of the Bible text... But let the imaginations of children be stored with the pictures, their minds nourished upon the words, of the gradually unfolding story of the Scriptures, and they will come to look upon a wide horizon within which persons and events take shape in their due proportion. By degrees, they will see that the world is a stage whereon the goodness of God is continually striving with the willfulness of man; that some heroic men take sides with God; and that others, foolish and headstrong, oppose themselves to Him.”*  
Charlotte Mason, page 248-249 **Home Education**

This, the reading of the Bible, is the crucial base that must have a central focus in the home. However, this is not all of the parent’s responsibilities! There are more!

### **Instill the Habits of the Religious Life...**

One third of Miss Mason’s writing was devoted to the importance of establishing Discipline... Habit...in the life of the child! The Religious Habits are vital if we are to disciple our children in the way God wants. Just what are some of these religious habits?? Here are a few...

#### **Thoughts of God**

Our thoughts of God affect much of our behaviour. For this reason, as we teach our children from the Bible or from our life, we must give them an accurate view of God. Give your children “fitting” ideas about God! Let them know WHO God is! As they encounter tough times, which they will, let them know that God can meet any of their needs during that tough time! As they experience joys, let them know that God delights in every blessing that is bestowed in their lives! When they are scared, let them know that God is the God of ALL comfort! These are thoughts of God that are not beyond the child...thoughts that will shape the child as they grow into maturity!

Your greatest tool for teaching correct thoughts of God will be your own life and the lives of others. All of the stories in Scripture can be used to learn the various aspects and characteristics of God. Help the children to search for ways that God shows HIS Character and Sufficiency through every situation in their lives and the lives of others. These thoughts of God will offer more than just knowledge to your children...they will teach your children that God wants a relationship with them! This is truly the most precious gift you could give your children!

#### **Reverent Attitudes**

Ever notice just *how* obnoxious children can behave at their own church? This is a habit! We have endeavored to teach our children to be reverent at church at all times. The funny thing that we have found is that this training carries over beyond church!

Children need to learn the habit of reverence. Not only are unruly children a distraction in the

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church, but they are very frustrating to others. For the elderly in the church (or community), children running all around about them can be very frightening. A broken bone for the elderly may take years or may never heal! It is entirely thoughtless for a child (OR a parent TO ALLOW this!) to be unrestrained and endanger these precious people!

Not only that...there is nothing more distracting than children or teens whispering during a church service or getting up and down. This is not inevitable...it is a poor habit. What about the young mother who is steadfastly teaching her children to behave in church? The poor example of one older child can set back the mother's efforts while instilling a lack of reverence for God in the child!

Reverent attitudes are catchy! We found that our children never were too young to be reverent in the services of our church. Nor was the idea of being considerate to elderly or those sitting behind us too difficult for our children. We never used the services of our church nursery. This habit from infancy instilled in our children a deep reverence for God, worship, and even others. They learned early that others were very precious and must come before themselves or their selfish desires. Be encouraged to instill reverent attitudes young and continue in spite of those difficulties that will inevitably arise. The fruit is worth it!

### Regularity in Devotions (TEA-Time!)

*"The habit of regularity in children's devotions is very important...it is worthwhile to remark that the evening prayers of children and of school girls and boys should not be left until the children are tired and drop asleep over their evening exercises. After TEA is a very good set time for prayers when it can be managed."* Charlotte Mason, page 142 *School Education*

Isn't this just TOO precious? I just found this quote after years of having an evening Tea-Time including our daily Bible Reading and daily Read Alouds. You can only imagine my delight as I found affirmation to our family indulgence!

Before I lose you, we keep this simple and easy! It is really a glorified snack time! We do pull out the tea cups...I want to have memories spilling forth from each and every tea cup one day rather than having perfect, unchipped cups that have no ties to our family!

My "macho" "ALLLL" boy ☺ usually puts the water on to boil...Elisabeth helps to get out a cup for everyone present...they both pull out goodies to snack on while mommy reads...then, we all cuddle up on our couch or in my bed to snuggly memory-making (Ohhh! This IS school at our home!).

Although you will find devotions different in every single home applying the ideas of Charlotte Mason, may you be challenged to make this time YOUR own! Make it special! As it becomes regular, you are instilling habits that will change the lives of your children AND...you will be making a memory!

### Reading the Bible

This habit is not the same as the family reading time...this is a habit that needs to be instilled in the *personal* life of the child. Charlotte Mason recommended giving the children THEIR own little BOOK of the Bible to read through. She recommended a little copy of a gospel such as the gospel of Mark. I must have just plain odd children, but they have enjoyed the Old Testament JUST as much as the New Testament books. One thing that has made Bible Reading easier for our children was giving each of them their own *large print* edition of the Bible. A Large Print Edition will make reading easier *and* less

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intimidating for your beginning readers.

We have also tried to help our children by making a set time of our day for them to have their own quiet time. This has eliminated the guesswork that often burdens young Bible Readers.

One other thing that has helped our children to develop the habit of reading the Bible is to set the example ourselves. Children rarely continue any habit that is not modeled before them by example. Not to mention, if we are doing our own quiet time, we can be of help as the children encounter obstacles because we will know what helped us overcome those same obstacles. One example from our life that I found was not knowing what to read and study each day. As I found my personal need to have some alternatives, I also found that my children needed alternatives for those days that they were short on ideas. If I had not been “doing it” myself, I would not have even *known* the obstacles...much less HOW to help! You may want to find some resources that give them lists of passages to choose from or topics to study. This will help them to continue this life-sustaining habit!

### Prayer

Prayer should not be a difficult habit to instill in your young children. Children LOVE to pray to God! They are the best intercessors! The difficulty comes as they grow older. Too many people begin to get the idea that prayer is an inconvenience for God or that He does not care about the trivialities of our lives. This could not be further from the truth! God has no greater desire than to have a relationship with each and every one of us! The duty that we have is to teach our children the value of prayer...to teach them of God’s heart for them...and to teach them that there is *never anything* in their life that is too big or too small to bring to His attention.

If you want to encourage your children to continue this habit, why not encourage them to begin a prayer notebook. It need not be fancy or even big. All that they need is a record of God’s work in their lives. Our prayer notebooks are very simple. We keep a list in the back of our Bible Journal. The list just has the request, the date of the request and God’s answer! This is a mini-history of God’s dealings in your lives! Begin one today!

### Praise

If there is one habit that can change any day or any situation...no matter how difficult, it is the habit of praise! Oh, we are not just talking about at church! We are talking about praise at church *and* at home! Charlotte Mason wrote on pages 143-144 of *School Education*, *Perhaps we do not attach enough importance to the habit of praise in our children’s devotions. Praise and thanksgiving come freely from the young heart; gladness is natural and holy, and music is a delight. The singing of hymns at home and of the hymns and canticles in church should be a special delight; and the habit of soft and reverent singing, of offering our very best in praise, should be carefully formed...Children should be trained in the habits of attention and real devotion during the short services or parts of services. The habit of FINDING THEIR PLACES in the prayer book and following the service is interesting and aids attention, but perhaps it would be well to tell children, of even ten or eleven, that during litany, for example, they might occupy themselves by saying over silently hymns that they know.”*

I have not found this too difficult for my children either. Children come to maturity and deep understanding of the truths of God much earlier if they have the habit of praise. We have given our little toddlers their own “journals” and Bibles to keep up during our church services. From early ages, (yes, before they could read and write) they would sit in church “taking notes” and “following along” during the music and lessons. The fruit of this is now evident as they continue to follow along the service and

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take extensive notes “just like mom!” One thing to note, if you have a pastor that uses a lot of Scripture, it is VERY difficult to follow in Scripture *and* take notes. My son prefers to jot down the Scriptures that are shared during the service, along with notes about what the pastor is teaching and the Lord is leading...then he uses those Scriptures to look up in his quiet time. What a priceless habit to instill!

### Sunday Keeping

*“The people who clamour for a Sunday that shall be as other days little know how HEALING to the jaded brain is the change of thought and occupation the seventh day brings with it. There is hardly a more precious inheritance to be handed on than that of the traditional English Sunday, stripped of its austerities, we hope, but keeping its character of quiet gladness and communion with Nature as well as with God.”* Charlotte Mason, page 144 **Home Education**

Make Sunday a special day! I can honestly testify that on the Sunday’s that we have not made the day a special day unto the Lord, my whole week is off track! Yes, it is crucial to take that one-day to heal and refuel, and renew for the new week ahead!

Charlotte Mason recommended that parents make Sunday special and different from all other days! She thought that children should have special Sunday stories...Sunday hymns...Sunday walks... Sunday talks...Sunday painting...Sunday knitting...Sunday games...all special to the day --quiet and serene! She challenged parents to make Sunday a day of reflection... teaching... prayer... thinking of God...praising and showing thankfulness...and of course, Devotional Reading!

### Bible Recitation

One last habit to instill in children is hiding God’s Word in their heart! They are NEVER too young to memorize Scripture! Little infants can begin to learn these wonderful truths. Toddlers LOVE to repeat small verses. Once the habit is set, the mind can memorize vast amounts of Scripture!

Charlotte Mason shared about Bible Recitation on page 253 of **Home Education**, *“The learning by heart of Bible Passages should begin while the children are quite young, six or seven. It is a delightful thing to have the memory stored with beautiful, comforting, and inspiring passages, and we cannot tell when and how this manner of seed may spring up, grow, and bear fruit; but the learning of the parable of the Prodigal Son, for example, should not be laid on the children as a burden. The whole parable should be read to them in a way to bring out its beauty and tenderness; and then, day by day, the teacher should recite a short passage, perhaps two or three verses, saying it over some three or four times until the children think they know it. Then, but not before, let them recite the passage. Next day the children will recite what they have already learned, and so on, until they are able to say the whole parable.”*

This is the time to develop the habit of Bible Memory...actually this is the time to instill all of the disciplines and habits of the religious life!!

Our children are like sponges during these years. They are continually soaking up knowledge. For this reason, we want to give them a thorough and deep knowledge of God. They are continually soaking up ideas. For this reason, we must guard those ideas as they are going into their minds, while planting those ideas of God that are fitting and necessary to prepare our children for life. Our children are constantly soaking up ideas that form habits—good *and* bad! For this reason, we want to be sure to accentuate the good, while plucking up any bad habits!

This is Discipleship...that most important aspect of education! Yes, the Religious Side of Education!

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**“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” 1 Timothy 4: 13, 14-15**

# Our Simplified Approach To REAL Learning

By Cindy Rushton

*Special Note...I thought that this part of a chapter in our new book **Homeschooling...Digging Into ALL of the Options** might be a big help for some of you as you begin organizing your homes for another big Homeschool Year. My challenge is for you to really think out your own approach JUST for your family. This will make planning easier...day-by-day implementation easier...and continuing the journey for the “long-haul” much, much easier. Hope you enjoy!*

*Details follow at the end of the excerpt about the special we are offering on this new book!*

- **Go to God...** God really cares about what we do in our Homeschools. No matter where we are... what our needs may be...or where we are in the journey, we can listen to hear the Lord gently beckoning to us, **“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, 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)) The first thing is our foundation. All begins by going to God, seeking Him and His way. When things get to going awry, the first thing I do is compare all to this passage. This simplifies what I am doing. If what I am doing becomes a labor, heavy, or overburdening, it must go! If the yoke I am carrying begins to feel harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, I immediately begin to re-evaluate. It may be that what I am doing is ok, only going at an unreasonable pace (slow OR fast). It may be that what I am doing is not ok...it must be sacrificed so we can have the best that God has to offer. The only way I can know which way to go is to come to the Lord and let Him give me His perfect plan! This has been key in finding just the right way for me and my children.
- **Make Homeschooling a lifestyle!** As I have come home--all the way home--to teach my children, I have found that God has riches in store for the family teaching their children as a lifestyle. Those riches *can be* missed if we do not take the time to be a family. Oh, there are the sweetest memories that directly result from learning together as a lifestyle. It is so much more than just the lessons. The sweetest memories are built around the relationships, with one another and our studies. However, this doesn't just happen. It takes time for relationships to be built. This time is only available as we set up learning as a lifestyle not a block of “school.” But, this can only happen when we begin to view education as a lifestyle of discipleship...all of the time, with all of life. A legacy. How? Seize every moment. Teach your children along the way. Develop a lifestyle that passes down to your children a deep love of learning and most of all, a deep love of family.
- **Take the best of ALL the approaches to weave together a FULL education!** One thing that I loved about homeschooling was that I could weave together the best of all that is available. I loved the thought of using the best books. I have found some of the greatest treasures through recommendations found throughout all of the different approaches. This really helped me since I

had no idea what I should read to my children when we first began homeschooling. I loved the thought of using original source documents. I love how they are right at your finger-tips courtesy of some of the different writers for homeschooling! I loved the easy tips for teaching children. As a Mommy who had NO idea where to begin as I began this journey of homeschooling, I have treasured the writers who have walked me through each step of how to teach language... math... history... geography... nature studies... art... music... so on! It has been priceless help so that I could get on to enjoying my little ones! These are only a few of the ideas that we have taken into our Homeschool, but I recommend this to you as well. You don't have to do it all today. Just take a look at where your greatest need is and hunt down that help that will breathe life into your Homeschool.

- **Develop YOUR Philosophy of Education!** This was one of the things that has been most beneficial in setting me free to enjoy the journey of homeschooling. It was not until I could see God's ways, God's will, and God's plan for education that I was completely free to enjoy the little things along the way. Until then, I felt guilty when we got lost in a great book. I would feel so defeated if we took longer on a lesson than I was expecting...forget how FUN it was! As I drew closer to the Lord, I found that all began to fall into place. I began to devour studies that I only dreamed of pursuing. Did you notice that "I" devoured studies? As I continued my learning, my children caught the passion! It was contagious! Not to mention as I dug into studies, I began to find easier ways to learn topics. I found neat ideas just from the way that I learn (Notebooking, research techniques, writing techniques...) that helped my children to find practical ways to learn their lessons. This was what brought an ease and relief to the pursuit of education in our family.
- **Keep discipleship for the call as the primary focus!** It is so easy to turn our hearts away from the MAIN thing. I believe that it is easy to lose our first love. For this reason, we constantly evaluate our focus to make sure that our heart is turned toward God and our home. This comes by staying in the Word, letting it constantly renew our minds, purify our hearts, and renew our vision for discipling our children. How do we disciple? It first begins with being COMPLETE in our call. There is a battle waging for the heart of our home. So much hits us, tempting us to go after the allure of the world or condemning us for the commitment to our family...but we must be strong. We must know that there is NO greater call! Our children do not need the best education affordable...nor do they need all of the possessions that we can provide for them...nor do they need all of the opportunities for lessons and socialization that we can uncover. Our children need to know and love God. He has the only answers to their deepest questions...He has all that they need to meet any need of their lives...AND He cares about any and every thing in their life. Our children need to know WHO we are and WHAT we know...in other words, they need to know US! God made no mistakes placing our children in our home. He wants for us to pass on WHO we are! Our children need for us to focus more on ministering to THEM than teaching them. They need those disciplines that will bring them to true greatness. They need for us to get back to the simple call of discipling them along the way!
- **Center ALL around the family.** This is one of the first things I noticed about our family as we began to Homeschool. I remember one day as I sat at the park watching Matthew and Elisabeth play. He was 5 and she was 2. I watched them giggle...I watched her follow each and every one of his steps...I watched him gently help her up the slide...I watched them plan every move--together. As I sat there in that park, I began to well up in tears. I had a dream life. They loved each other so deeply. At that age, if Matthew had been in school, he would have been TOO cool for a little sister to follow along. She, and He, would have missed a relationship that God intended for them to have for life. Homeschooling affords the opportunity for all to center around the family. Our focus has been to learn as a family...all ages together...learning together...having fun...having adventures...building memories. My belief has been that if something is drudgery for my children, then I must

evaluate why I am doing it. If we don't enjoy it as a family, it goes! This has developed a deep love for learning, but even greater a deep love for family. Not to mention, we build relationships with one another that are priceless. We will always have sweet memories of great books that we have read together...those great discussions that we have shared together as we have digested great ideas through literature, art, music, and poetry...those fun family days on the boat, at the creek, at the beach, at the museums, or just in the woods in our own backyard...those late night giggle sessions over those family stories that we tell over and over and over again! When we come to the end of this Homeschooling journey, I am in prayer that we will have a storehouse full of great memories that can only be afforded as we say "NO!" to all of the temptations to divide up our family and our family time.

- **Develop skills to learn and allow the process of learning to take place rather than focusing on subjects and certain studies.** If there is one thing that has helped us the most, it has been the season that I spent re-educating myself about what education really is. During that time, I finally learned what education really is. Things have never been the same. I never understood that education is a process in every area that we want to learn about. The main thing is not the "subjects" that are studied. It is teaching the skills of how to learn for oneself and giving a love for learning. If our children are equipped with the skills to learn, then they can learn any and all subjects. If they develop the idea that learning is delightful, then they will never stop learning because they will become hooked on mind-food! Then, all we have to do is slow down for the process of learning to take place. Slow down so they can soak in all that is before them.
- **Encourage delight-directed studies.** Coming from the idea that parents really needed to have a direct influence on training up their children, you can imagine how I struggled with the idea of letting my children go on their own. I prayed and prayed to seek out God's view of education and how He would have me to teach my children. He took me back to my life...and those of many of His greatest servants. I began to see that it was not until a person develops a passion for one topic that learning takes off. We can pour into our children for years and years, but until they begin to LOVE a topic and make it their own, they will not choose to learn for life. I also began to see that a deep passion for one topic ALWAYS leads to another...and another...and another. But, there is ONE difference. If one has studied one particular topic in depth, they will not be able to let another topic just breeze through their life...they will want to devour it with the same passion. This is so key to becoming that person God wants for each of us to be AND for beginning a lifestyle of real education. The neatest thing is that somewhere in all of those studies the Holy Spirit take over and gives us the preparation that is needed for our call. Encourage your children to take the time to learn so deeply that they LOVE learning. Let them have enough free time that they can freely dig into a study deep enough to become intimate with people throughout History, beauty in God's world, and ideas that have shaped the world!
- **Give direct contact and influence with great people!** This has been a main-stay in our home. I am thankful that I was influenced early in our journey to treasure the great people in our lives, past and present. Real people influence our children. I have sought to provide my children with relationships with great people...through real life and real literature. Those people are part of shaping the lives of our children. We have taught our children to listen...really listen to others. To learn from their lives. To glean wisdom from their mistakes and successes. How have we done this? We love to have meals and fellowship with great people. Our children simply devour their time with missionaries, writers, great teachers, and even those quiet people who really shape the world! We also make it a priority to read each and every day. I remember listening to Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn as they shared the importance of having a family reading time for a minimum of 2 hours each day. I sat there thinking, "OH, Lord! I would LOVE that, but how??" God stepped right

up to my aid. He showed me a time of the day that was perfect for our family to curl up, uninterrupted to devour books. For us, this was at the end of the day. We could curl up from 10 PM until we could not read any more! This was perfect for those books that we simply have to continue reading until we are done (in the wee hours of the night!). We did not have the rest of the day pounding on us beckoning us to move on to do more, we could relax and enjoy. This has been one of the greatest tools for discipleship and ministry to the heart of our children. I believe that the influence from great people will be an anchor in the lives of my children throughout whatever they may face in their lives!

- **Use the VERY BEST resources in this short time!** We all know how fast life passes us by. This week my son becomes a teenager, a young man. As I look at this young man who is now taller than I am (did not take him long on that one!)...who will soon be shot forth into our culture to minister for the Lord, I am overwhelmed by how little our time to shape and disciple them really is! Because of this, I am highly convicted that ALL that we do each and every day must seize each and every moment. We weigh out all that we do by this. The great thing is that we usually make well-thought out, wise decisions. The sad thing is that sometimes we don't! When I think that in the 8-12 hours of reading a book, I am either influencing my children to greatness and encouraging them onward toward their call...OR I am tearing down my own home and my own teachings, I am completely humbled. I begin to step slowly and listen intently to the Holy Spirit's leading! This simplifies my focus...my choices...and the options for our time!
- **Develop family ministry.** God kinda had us in the middle of ministry before I realized how much He could use it for educating our children. I had no idea that all of those sweet character lessons I would teach my children were really better taught by my example as I ministered to my family and others that God brought into my circle of influence...right before the eyes of my children. I had no idea that I was blowing it on those days when I was rushed, too rushed to take time to minister a sweet encouragement or smile or simply listen to others along the way. I had no idea they were watching. But they are. We, nor our children, need to go away to a foreign mission field to be in ministry for the Lord. We, nor our children, need to have a "public ministry" on the streets passing out tracks or behind a pulpit teaching our hearts out. In fact, if we really want to maximize our influence, we must minister in the little things. Little things all along the way! This influence will be contagious to our children. It will help them to begin to minister from their toddler years. It will become one of their greatest treasures of life as they continue the legacy!
- **Relax and enjoy the journey!** So often, we get to thinking that WE have to make this education happen. God has a better way! He wants for us to walk with Him in faith, letting Him directly lead and teach our little ones. If we can just realize how much more HE can do as the Teacher of our children, we could relax more. We could see that He really is the only One Who knows exactly what our children need...who they will become...and what they need to minister for Him with their life. We can trust Him to direct us, for one thing because He WILL and for another because He loves our children EVEN more than we do! Trust Him. Give Him a chance. Let Him direct all in your Homeschool. Then, you will find that the burden will be light and easy...and you will have rest, blessed rest for your journey! You will have fun. You will enjoy the journey!

**“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, 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.”**

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### Homeschooling...Digging Into ALL of the Options

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