

Getting Back To God's Design for the Godly Home

- ♥ **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

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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 o 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

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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

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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."



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

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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>

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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!

Setting Up Your Home to Learn!

By Cindy Rushton



Homeschooling? Thinking about Homeschooling? BUT...do you have to turn your home into a school? No, my dear friend, you do not need to turn your home into a school. Your home can still be a HOME. A home ready to learn! Ready?

Ready? This is EASY as ABC...

- ♥ **Find a good nook!** It does not have to be huge. Certainly does not need to be expensive. All that is needed is a place that invites your children (and YOU!) to think, work through the studies (writing, reading, studying, proofreading, projects, experiments...). Ask yourself, "Where do they gravitate toward to read...to research...to write...to print?" Keep in mind that each and every student in your family will be very different during the learning process, but most will appreciate having all of the supplies and equipment in a safe, quiet, comfortable place to study. When deciding on a spot, make sure that the spot has good lighting and a good, solid, clean, work surface. Make sure it is a good spot to think AND work on lessons." Set up the area with a nice table or desk with plenty of work area... comfortable chairs...limited distractions...shelves for books and notebooks...space for a computer and printer...convenient power supply...space for you to sit down and work with them during their lessons...and a specific spot for organizational bins that will hold supplies.
- ♥ **Get supplies together!** You probably have supplies ALREADY in your home. Use our list to remind you of which supplies you will need to gather for homeschooling. Gather them and organize them so they will be ready to use when your children can snatch time to dig into their studies.
- ♥ **Easy access to materials and supplies!** Don't just gather supplies, give your children easy access to those supplies! Nothing else can encourage your children to dig deeper into studies like having the materials needed to learn AND free reign to use them. Gather the supplies you will need and store them in clearly marked plastic bins and containers. There are SO many options available. Find what will work for you and your family. Get paper and printable pages together. I have always stored ours in our school materials so the children had their materials on hand as

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they needed it. A quick glance can remind me that we need more. I buy all of our paper, ink pens, pencils, 3-ring binders, etc in bulk at Sam's Warehouse. During the school breaks, many stores have supplies and paper in bulk for better prices than all year round. That is when we also stock up. We store it on our school shelves and have what we need as we work.

- ♥ **Invest in the best tools!** It may seem to be an added expense, however tools make all of the difference in the world! For example, you can buy a cheap stapler for under \$5.00 OR you can buy a long-arm stapler for \$29.95 at an office supply store. The difference? Well, we have bought SO MANY cheap staplers. They simply do not last. Plus, they are limited in what they can do. Now, contrast that with the long-arm stapler? They are built to last. You can use those for making any size booklet and for regular stapling. Just watch your most reluctant writer when they figure out ALL that they can do with one stapler! \$29.95 will be the best investment ever! ☺ Buy the best as you can. The investment is more than just for equipment, it is investing in your child's education!

- ♥ **Set up a Library!** YES! What homeschool is complete without bookshelves? Ok... what ONE thing is a dream of a homeschooling mother? Yep! MORE bookshelves! ☺ We only had a very, very few books when we began homeschooling. Want to know "HOW" I came into homeschooling? I had no idea what my children should read. I remember hoping that my favorites from childhood could be part of my children's education—not knowing that God had given me full authority to choose what my children could learn in our homeschool. It is funny now that the books that I DID have from my childhood were truly books that were classics—that SHOULD be passed from generation to generation. Of course, that included just a very few books. My deepest prayer was for God to teach me how to find good books—isn't that SO amazing considering what we do as a business? It did not take me very long until I began finding great places with hidden treasures just waiting for us—used book sales at the library...yard sales...antique stores...even family! My collection grew very quickly. In fact, it took over the few bookshelves that we had and began my life pursuit of MORE bookshelves! ☺ Begin a library in your home. You won't be sorry! Gather the books that you have. Set them up in a logical order that would work for you and your family—catalog like the library? Set up by subjects... or authors? Set up to work for you. Begin to build bit-by-bit. You may want to begin with books that appeal to your child's interests. Or, you may want to begin collecting biographies (our favorites!) or picture books. They will add up quickly. So, how do you make it part of your homeschool? Simply set it up close to where your children study or gather to read. I set up our children's books upstairs in the playroom early on. I put them on their level. I made up THE RULE—you must always

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put away your book before getting another. The rest is history—or well, years of my children learning on every subject! ☺ Now, I am not nearly as likely to buy too many books now as I was in the early years when we were first getting started—there had to be a limit. Now, we buy the best and notebook the rest. We only buy books that I want to pass down to my grandchildren one day—the others we check out from the library and simply take notes into our notebooks from them (notebooks are also sure to be family heirlooms that our grandchildren will adore one day!). All of our resources are accessible and welcoming to our children. Having them in their own special place has invited my children to learn at all times as part of our family life. Give it a try at your house!

- ♥ **Try Notebooking!** Notebooking...ahhh, just the thought makes me hyper! If I could ask every homeschooling family to do just one thing, it would be to just give Notebooking a try. I am sure that if you try just a bit, you will be addicted too! This is the one technique that pulls everything together--studies, research, real life, personal interests--EVERYTHING! It reaches even the most reluctant writer! It makes homeschooling fun and easy! Who wouldn't want to try that? Not just that! Everything that normally clutters up the busy homeschool home can be tucked away into a notebook! All of those books that you have read have great material, pictures, and information begging to be added into notebooks. All of those precious narrations can be safely protected in notebooks. All of those daily copywork lessons can find their home in notebooks on each of the topics that your children love so much. Even those awesome handouts that you have piled up from field trips can find the perfect home in your notebooks! Homeschooling is recorded. An heirloom is built! Just try notebooking! You will love it...and so will your most reluctant writer! How? First, learn about notebooking (we have TONS of information on our website and in most of our books about how to do it!). The basics are as simple as getting your supplies and turning your children loose. Once your children have a "place" to keep their work, the most amazing thing happens—they find themselves becoming more and more addicted to writing. It won't be long and you will find your children digging deeper into their studies. Oh, and it won't be very long until you will find them hunting for their notebooks when "school" is out and they are just pursuing life interests. Then, you will know that education has become a lifestyle that will continue for their whole life!
- ♥ **Set up learning areas in your entire home!** Learning does not just occur during table time or formal lessons. The beauty of a learning home is that children can find learning in every single corner of a child friendly home. Now, I am not advocating that you decorate your home like a kindergarten—in fact, your husband would probably want for you to promptly discontinue reading anything by me if I

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did. There is something about homeschooling that may excite some families to have blackboards and timelines on the wall...world maps on the dining table (which I think is ADORABLE!)...and art easels in the living room. However, if your husband is like mine, he might prefer that there be Home Interior on the wall rather than that good old timeline (how do you think we got started doing ours in our notebooks?). Rather than home being decorated like a school—why not develop a learning home. Something like a nice, clean library with bean bags and audio tapes/headphones—talk about great for a daily quiet time! What about a game room? Just a few organizers and shelves with all of those PIECES in their very own spot—yep, a man will gladly help you transform that old sunroom into a game room! What about a big comfy couch with room for the whole family to cuddle up for long read alouds? What about a TV area for educational movies, old classics, and the history channel? What about a Writer's Nook set up with all your children need to write and produce books? What about a computer/desk area for projects or a place for your little builder to tinker around? How about a spot outside to play and "build" settings for their adventures? Oh, and don't forget about a big chest or closet with dress up clothes! Welcome your children and learning in your home!

Have a blast!

The tough part is over and the rest will be a blast! Are you more prepared than you think? Just go back over the list. Set up your home bit-by-bit to invite learning for LIFE! Not only will your children love it—but so will YOU! Have fun!



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...

- 1. CHOOSE A TOPIC...** What do you want to study first? Now, if your brain is getting carried away (and it probably is!), go ahead let's brainstorm! 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 peaked. 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 Passover??)...etc. Choose a fun topic! One that excites YOU and just begs for your family to dig in!
- 2. 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

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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! 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.

3. 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 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? 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.

4. DECIDE HOW LONG TO DEVOTE TO THIS STUDY. Ok. Now, go back over

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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.

- 5. 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!
- 6. GO FOR IT!!** 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!



Need more help? Check out more of Cindy's articles at her home-on-the-web, found at : <http://www.CindyRushton.com>. There you can sign up for her free email newsletters, read archived articles, listen to her workshops in the comfort of your own home, and even ask your questions on her message board! Check it out today!

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“As Christian parents we are concerned about building whole people—people who are alive emotionally, spiritually, intellectually. The instruction to train up a child in the way he should go encompasses so much more than teaching him the facts of the gospel. It is to train the child’s character, to give him high ideals, and to encourage integrity. It is to provide largeness of thought, creative thinking, imaginative wondering—an adequate view of God and His world. He can never really appreciate the finest without personal redemption. But many a redeemed person lives in a small insecure world because he has never walked with God into a larger place which is His domain. We have books and The Book at our disposal to use wisely for God’s glory. A young child, a fresh uncluttered mind, a world before him—to what treasures will you lead him? With what will you furnish his spirit?”

Gladys Hunt, Honey for a Child’s Heart

Our TOP TEN (OR MORE!) Favorite Books EVER!!

By Cindy Rushton and The Rushton Bunch!



If there is ONE question that we are asked more than any other, it is this very question, "What are your favorite books ever??" Sooo, I am compiling this list just for YOU! These are the books that we think EVERYONE should read!

- Basket of Flowers** by Christoph Von Schmid
Clean Your Boots, Sir? By Anonymous
Dangerous Journey (Oliver Hunkin...took original words and set to beautiful illustrations!)
Famous Boys and How They Became Great Men by Anonymous
Gaining Favor with God and Man by William Thayer
Grace Abounding by John Bunyan
Hedge of Thorns by John Carrol/John Hatchard
Hind's Feet On High Places by Hannah Hurnard (LOVE the children's illustrated version)
Little Pilgrim's Progress By Helen L. Taylor
Mothers of Famous Men by Archer Wallace
Moral Lessons from Yesteryear by A. L. Byers (by Mantle Ministries)
Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan (I LOVE the tape set and a new version that we have just recently run across called, **The Amplified Pilgrim's Progress**)
Rosa of Linden Castle by Christoph Von Schmid
Stepping Heavenward by Elisabeth Prentiss
The Beggar's Blessing retold by Mark Hamby
The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom
The Little Lamb by Christophe Von Schmid
The Little Preacher by Elisabeth Prentiss
The Lost Ruby/The Lost Child by Christoph Von Schmid
The Tale of Three Trees by Angela Elwell Hunt
The Three Weavers by Annie Fellows
The True Princess by Angela Elwell Hunt
Thoughts for Young Men by J. C. Ryle
The Screwtape Letters by C.S.Lewis (EXCEPT the last few chapters that the demon is attacking the Christian in the area of morality...we skipped those!)
True Stories of Great Americans For Young Americans By Anonymous
Vinegar Boy by Alberta Hawse
Winnie the Pooh By A.A. Milne
You Are Special By Max Lucado

Let's Try Notebooking!

By Cindy Rushton



Notebooking...ahhh, just the thought makes me hyper! If I could ask every homeschooling family to do just one thing, it would be to just give Notebooking a try. I am sure that if you try just a bit, you will be addicted too! This is the one technique that pulls everything together--studies, research, real life, personal interests--EVERYTHING! It reaches even the most reluctant writer! It makes homeschooling fun and easy! Who wouldn't want to try that?

Not just that! Everything that normally clutters up the busy homeschool home can be tucked away into a notebook! All of those books that you have read have great material, pictures, and information begging to be added into notebooks. All of those precious narrations can be safely protected in notebooks. All of those daily copywork lessons can find their home in notebooks on each of the topics that your children love so much. Even those awesome handouts that you have piled up from field trips can find the perfect home in your notebooks! Homeschooling is recorded. An heirloom is built!

Want To Give It A Try??

Ready to jump right in? Wondering how you do it? Getting started is as easy as A, B, C. Let me take you through the easy steps:

1. **Gather Your Supplies...** Your supplies can be as simple as a 3-ring binder per child, plastic sheet protectors, and a pencil per child. The great thing about Notebooking is that you can make this as simply or as crafty as you would like! Over the years, Notebooking has worked so wonderfully in our home that we are constantly on the lookout for different and fun supplies. Since I am a Scrapbooking nut, we love trying out all of the new Scrapbooking supplies during our daily Notebooking time. By doing so, our daily lessons are as fun as a Scrapbooking party—EVERYDAY! Of course, you do not have to go this wild, but I am sure you will want to! If you have no idea where to begin, see our shopping list for quick ideas on supplies that work great!

Getting Back To God's Design for the Godly Home

"He was not more than twelve or thirteen years of age, when he read with pen in hand, and note-book in which he jotted down references to particular facts and statements, and thoughts inspired by the book read. He continued this practice through life. In his mature life, he wrote to a young lady as follows:--'I would advise you to read with pen in your hand, and enter in a little book short hints of what you find that is curious, or that may be useful; for this will be the best method of imprinting such particular on your memory, where they will be ready, either for practice on some future occasion, if they are matters of utility, or, at least, to adorn and improve your conversation, if they are rather points of curiosity; and, as many of the terms of science are such as you cannot have met with in your common reading, and may, therefore, be unacquainted with, I think it would be well for you to have a good dictionary at hand, to consult immediately when you meet with a word you do not comprehend the precise meaning of.' The foregoing advice was given one hundred and fifty years ago (NOW 250!), but it is just as good counsel for readers today as it was then. Indeed, change of circumstances, which we have partially considered, adds force and value to the advice. It is the only way of reading to the best advantage, for it fixes the attention, assists method, strengthens purpose, and charges memory with its sacred trust."

William Thayer, *Gaining Favor With God and Man*

2. Make Your Supplies Accessible...Set aside a place for your materials and a place for your children to work. There is something wonderful about having a place for everything and everything RELIABLY in its place. The work in the beginning is well worth the time during the school year. When we begin a new study, I go through my books copying all pages that would make great coloring pages, maps, and timeline figures to go along with our copywork and narrations. I reduce many pictures or copy all thumbnails that would be great for our History Timelines. We have a shelf that contains books that I find along the way with great copywork that I would like for my children to add to their notebooks on those "no ideas are flowing" days. Just having everything there, ready to go, is such a blessing on those busy mornings. Plus, I have learned over the years that this is the best way to really utilize the resources that I have on my shelves.

Just file away any pages or pictures in either manila envelopes or file folders. If the children know where they are, they are more than likely to use them on their own. Also, you will want to use anything else that you have in your home. I keep our paints, papers (plain and colored cardstock and 20lb paper; writing paper; etc.), glues, templates, cutting utensils, rulers, markers, pens, pencils, etc. on a shelf and in plastic bins by our dining table (where we do our daily lessons). They are in their spot and that spot is close by. If we want to encourage our young writers, we must give them free access to the best materials. The benefits are unbelievable!

3. Turn Your Children Loose! Yep! This is all that is left! Inevitably, when I teach workshops on Notebooking, I can almost see the brains of mothers clicking away with one tough reality, "IF ONLY I HAD MORE TIME TO DO THIS!" Oh, beloved! Notebooking is not another thing for you to do! The hard part is almost over. The hard part is learning what this is all about and how to get everything together so we can turn our children loose!

When we began Notebooking, I copied a Bible verse a day as a model for my son to copy. As he copied his verse, he would

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place his page for the day in a plastic sheet protector and add it to his notebook. The next day, his page for that day would slide in behind that page. The next day, he would add another page in another page protector. We built the entire notebook; not specific divisions or subjects. We chose not to divide by subjects because we wanted a nice full "product" built over time. As we added to the notebook each day, I could see the delight building in my young writers. They would sit and just flip through the pages. They loved seeing success. They loved seeing the notebook build up.

As time went on, my son began to find and copy poems that he liked, songs from church hymnal or from his history lessons. He began a collection of art prints. He added maps that highlighted journeys. At the end of the first year, we had a bulging notebook and a young writer that had gone from reluctant to really excited! The notebook quickly became "his own" notebook. At the end of the year, we divided our notebooks (there was no room to add anything else) into obvious divisions. We had a Bible Notebook, a History Notebook, a Poetry Notebook, and another Copybook. All of these have continued and several have divided into other notebooks through the years (he now has FOUR history notebooks—Great Men and Women of the Civil War, Battles of the Civil War, Military Notebook, and World History Timeline Notebook! AND that is JUST History!). As your children dig into their interests, they may have other Notebooks that develop. Let them go! You will learn more about your children as

Tips for Encouraging Our Young Writers...

- ✓ Teach them to dedicate all of the writing to the Glory of God! 100%!
- ✓ SLOW down to teach LITTLE BY LITTLE, STEP BY STEP!
- ✓ Encourage them to become great readers! (Begin by reading aloud as a family!)
- ✓ Beware of YOUR criticism!
- ✓ Encourage a standard of **excellence** instead of perfection!
- ✓ Study the writing of different authors
- ✓ Focus on getting what they "do" know on paper...the alternative is what we see in writing courses and tests...writing what they do not know!
- ✓ Give a purpose for writing (notebooks, journals, letters, creating books, email, article writing, Scrapbooking...)
- ✓ Teach them to **produce** not consume...
- ✓ If you want your children to become great writers, then require them to write every day!
- ✓ Teach your children how to test their writing for excellence.
- ✓ Teach your children that others may not know about their topic and would really love to!
- ✓ Encourage your children to write from the heart!

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they learn more about topics AND writing!

So, What Do You Think?

Want to give it a try? If I could ask every homeschooling family to do just one thing, it would be to just give Notebooking a try. I am sure that if you try just a bit, you will be addicted too! So, think about it. Pray about it. Then, get those supplies. Set aside a spot for your supplies. Then, turn those budding young writers loose! Want to know what will happen? They will be addicted too!

William Thayer, *Gaining Favor With God and Man* describes Rev. Cook, "This counsel of Mr. Cook should have some great weight, coming, as it does, from one of the most remarkable men of our age, or any age...He was a great reader...He read science, literature, history, biography, and even metaphysics, in his boyhood. In academy and college, he kept up his habit of systematic reading. The thorough manner which he read made him master of every subject. Even now, reading is scarcely second to what is called study in his method of public instruction. He is a lecturer, known the world over. But for reading, he would not have dreamed his present field of labor, and, but for it, he would not continue now to be a public instructor."

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Bible Study...

My Prayer List

God's Work: The Parables

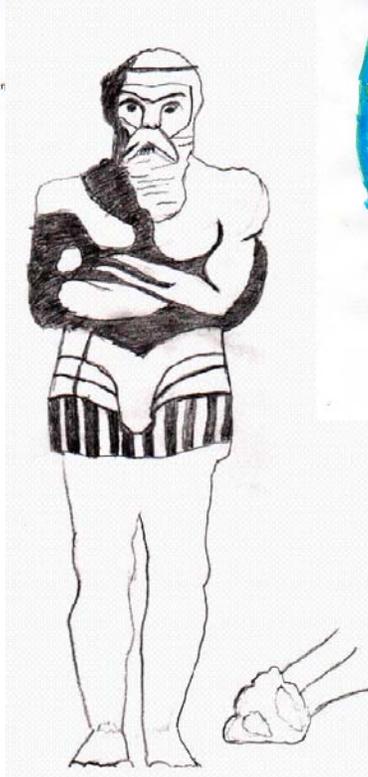
Family: Dad, Mom and Elisabeth (trouble talk)

Friends: Emily and Jessica Wood is Judy Rogers (trouble talk)

Church: Frankfort mib

Government Leaders: Bill Clinton and Al Gore

Other: All the CBS teachers and people.



God created the world Genesis 1:1-5

JUNIOR CBS
Romans / Lesson 1

GROUP ONE: Review

1. Today you begin your study of the book of Romans. Can you tell something you know about Paul, the writer of Romans?
He was a very sinful man before he was all Christian. But God changed him to be a really man.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 1: PAUL: THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE -- Romans 1:1-17
(Please record verses where you find your answers. Questions marked with an asterisk are for deeper study.)

MEMORY WORK FOR THIS WEEK: Romans 3:16-17
I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. First for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith, from first to last, but as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

GROUP TWO: PAUL DESCRIBES HIMSELF -- Romans 1:12

2. Can you find three ways Paul described himself in verse 1?
*a. A servant of God Jesus
b. Called to be an apostle
c. set apart for the gospel of God*

GROUP THREE: PAUL DESCRIBES THE GOSPEL -- Roman 1:2-6

3. a. Who was promised in the Holy Scriptures or Old Testament? *Jesus Christ*
b. Where in the Bible do we find the account of Jesus' life? *Holy scriptures or old testament or gospel book*
c. What facts about Jesus Christ can you find in verses 3-4?
God's son, descendant of David, declared to be the son of God by his resurrection from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ!

NOTE: As you read verse 6, remember that you are stating those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ!

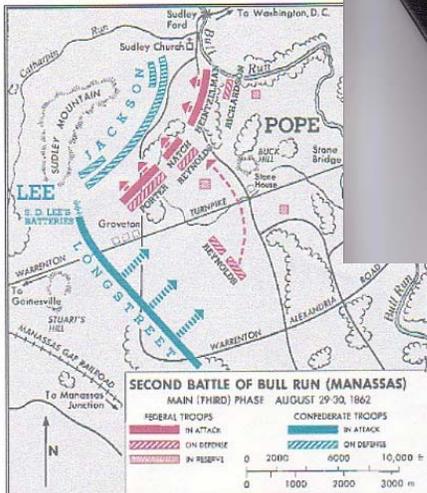
The Laver

The Laver was a large basin containing water. The priest had to wash their hands and feet at the Laver before they could enter the Sanctuary or make offerings.

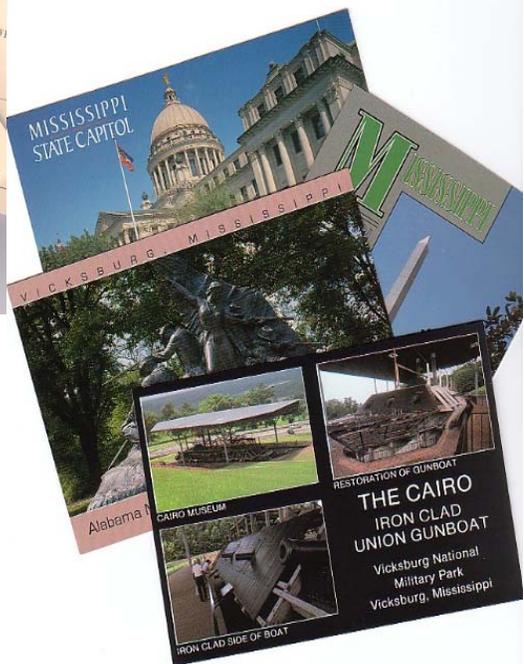
Matthew's Civil War Notebook...



Robert Edward Lee

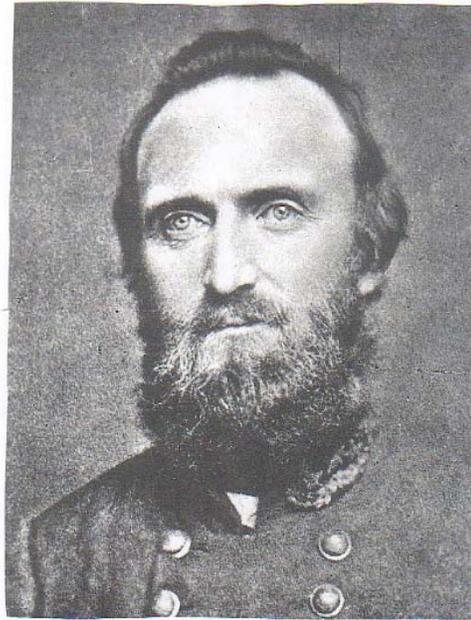


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Famous Copywork From The Civil War

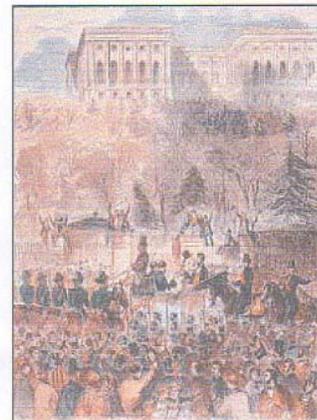
By
Matthew E. Rushton,
12 years old



General Thomas Johnston "Stonewall"
Jackson

"Knowing that intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and supreme call for Christians today, I pleadingly urge our people everywhere to pray...Let there be prayer at sun-up, noon day, at sun-down, at midnight, all through the day. Let us all pray for our children, our youth, our aged, our pastors, our homes. Let us pray for our churches. Let us pray for ourselves, that we may not lose the word 'concern' out of our Christian vocabulary. Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love, for moral forces everywhere, for our national leaders. Let prayer be our passion. Let prayer be our practice."

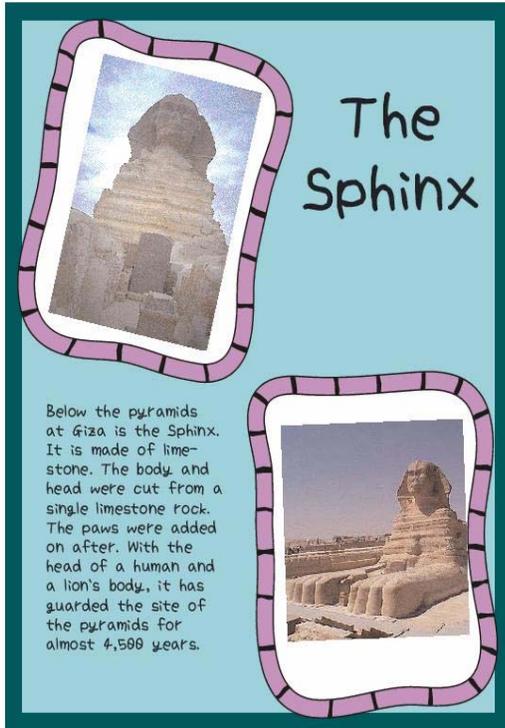
-Robert E. Lee (1807-1870), Commander in Chief of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia



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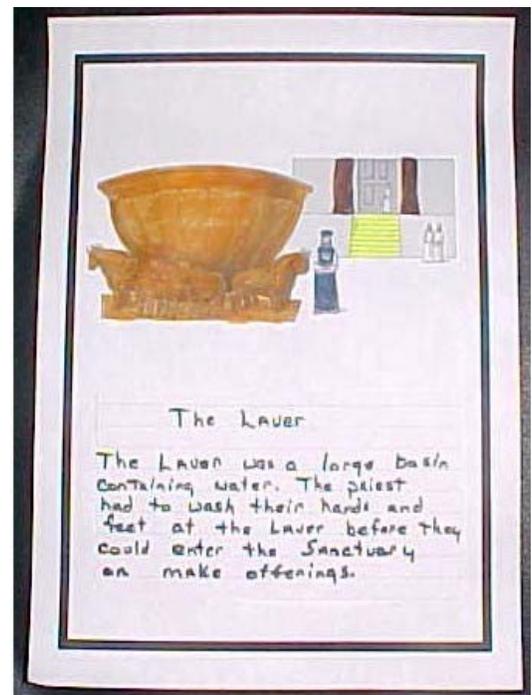
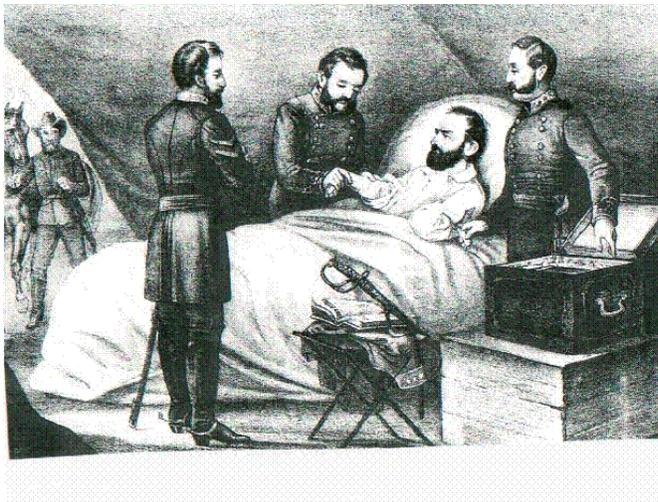
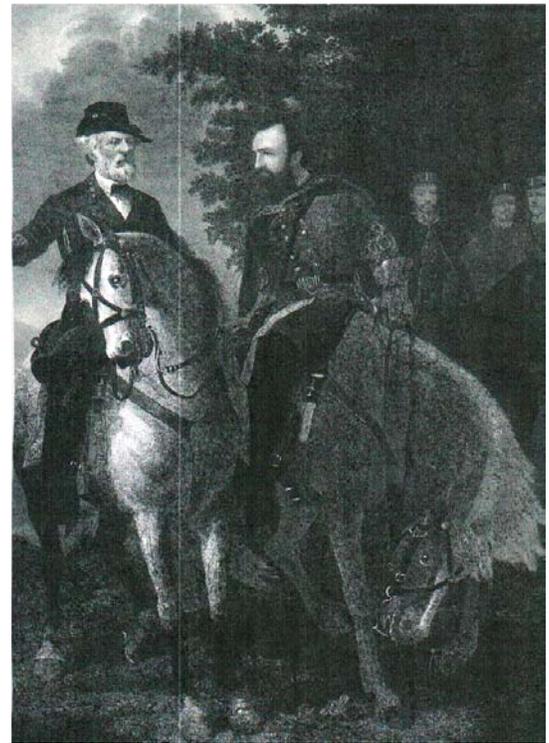
The Granger Collection Abraham Lincoln arrives at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. for his inauguration on March 4, 1861, seated in an open carriage next to President James Buchanan.

History Notebooks!



The Sphinx

Below the pyramids at Giza is the Sphinx. It is made of limestone. The body and head were cut from a single limestone rock. The paws were added on after. With the head of a human and a lion's body, it has guarded the site of the pyramids for almost 4,500 years.



The Laver

The Laver was a large basin containing water. The priest had to wash their hands and feet at the Laver before they could enter the Sanctuary or make offerings.