

Yes, beloved, when His journey brought Him to exhaustion and the brink of weariness, Jesus SAT DOWN! We could learn MUCH from our Saviour! If He HAD to rest, how much more do we? He, without sin, lived the perfect example for us. Where we have tendencies to labor in our own strength, battle on our own, depend upon our own ideas for help, pour out what we do not even have inside, we still do not have the tendency to slow down, sit down, and rest! In fact, even though we are commanded all throughout Scripture to REST (see the 10 Commandments and all of the other verses on REST!), there is something within us that resists this source of strength! We certainly can learn of Jesus in this area!

Jesus constantly went about doing the “little things” for others. He constantly poured out into the lives of others. This is exhausting! Any mom knows this demand. Remember that verse at the beginning of this article? *“You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?” Romans 2:21a (NIV)* Paul seems to know that there is a tendency for the teacher not to sit and learn! He knew that we need to be taught, poured into, in order to have anything to pour forth into those that we teach!

Jesus modeled the lifestyle of the perfect Teacher. He showed in His life what was needed when all was poured out—He pulled apart to be with God alone. As God filled Him up, He was ready to pour forth into the lives of others! He took the time in the midst of heavy demands to pull apart to be with God, the only Source that really fills us back up! He took time to rest and refill! And, He was able to reach the mark! Oh, yes! We CAN learn of Him and find all we need to make Homeschooling easy!

### Jesus Teaches YOU Too!

Tired? Weary? Need Endurance? Need Strength? Hear the call?... *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.” Matthew 11: 28-30 (Amplified Bible)*

Oh! Hear Him calling? Come to ME! He, alone, will cause you to rest! To find ease! To find relief! To find education that is refreshing! To find FUN! And, to find quiet for your soul! You get—rest, blessed rest! A new yoke! A new burden! But, most of all a Teacher Who promises that He will be there each step of the way to teach you, so you may teach!

Happy Homeschooling for YOU TOO!!!



Excerpted from Homeschooling The Easy Way Magazine, Volume 1  
Companion Tape Available.

# 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 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 The Ideas From Each Approach That 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!

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! It's 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!



Excerpted from **Homeschooling! Digging Into All of the Options**  
Companion tapes are ALSO available!

# Evaluating Curriculum...

By Cindy Rushton



As you spend your time praying and deciding on curriculum, here are some considerations...

- Is it home-friendly...is it written especially for the home? Is it written by parents or by "professionals?"
- Is it easy to use...do you have to have a teacher's manual or is the work easy to understand in the book itself?
- Are the lessons short and concise?
- Does it encourage the children to learn on their own? To become interesting in the whole subject... possibly as a profession??
- Would your children choose to study this in their free time?
- Are you giving yourself a balance between the children working independently and alone with you?
- Does this curriculum equip the child to learn on their own or does it make them (and you) dependent upon only this curriculum sequence (except for Math which really needs to be on a sequence!)



# 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!*

*Oh! If you want more details about this book, look at the end of the manual!*

- ♥ **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 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 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 tracts 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 MYYOKE 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 MYYOKE is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and MYBURDEN is light and easy to be borne."



## Need a Do-Able Routine???

By Cindy Rushton



Mid-year! Can you EVEN believe it?? My son is finishing up his sophomore year in High School while my daughter is wrapping up her seventh grade year! I don't know about you, but this year has already be flying by and now it is almost Spring-time again! WOWIE!

After the holidays I have found myself a bit "off-key." We began building on to our home during the Holiday Season and we are almost ready to welcome our business to its home here on Huckleberry Hill. In the meantime, I have been re-organizing and re-strategizing to completely re-vamp our business and our routine to once again adapt to the business being in our home.

What about you? I have been getting letters like crazy asking about how we are balancing so many areas of life and asking for tips on how to organize the home and set up routines that can work for REAL families! Soooo, if this is your need too, this article is just for YOU!

Homeschools are all very, very different. Each and every home all has its own package that makes the home full of blessings, challenges, joy, and even trials. The only thing that really is a "blanket" need for all homeschools AND all families is the great need for routine!

By setting up family routines, we take away much of the daily stress and pain of deciding who does what, when they are to do whatever, and how much they are to do. Routines are simply a MUST! Our children have struggled at times when the routines were not clearly defined OR were in total chaos. Likewise, I have felt the frustrations that come along with constant decisions to be made or the pull of constantly having "extra" things to think about that could be just part of the routine, leaving my mind to think of more important things!

So, what are some ideas for bringing routine into the home? What are some practical, yet EASY ways to bring more order and peace into your home? The following thoughts are a hodgepodge of my thoughts on routine that I have collected through the years in my personal journals. It has helped me so much to go back over these practical helps. I pray that it will help as I share them with you...

**Make Sure that God is FIRST!!**

Remember that when you are planning your family routines, give priority to the most important thing. I know

that the academic education of our children is a very high priority. However, there are many highly educated people in our culture who are very dissatisfied and disillusioned with life. Deep down, they know that there is more to life! **AND** good news! There is!

The most important thing is our relationship with God! In 1 Timothy 1: 5, we find that God is very clear about our educational goals. I think He is absolutely phenomenal! As the “perfect Teacher,” His clarity is unmatched! What are those goals of instruction? They may surprise you, but I doubt it: “love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.” This only comes from a passionate relationship with God!

In our culture, we have almost deified education at the expense of dethroning God! Education has become an idol that demands worship of those from all faiths and cultures. Yet, even education will not bring that soul satisfaction that we all seek for! We are all made with a void in our souls that cannot be satisfied with anyone or anything else but God.

The only satisfaction for this huge void is a relationship with our Lord. Relationships are not built spending one hour a week (or I will indulge the “6-hour-a-week-don’t-miss-anything-at-church crew!”—six hours a week!) in a crowd with 500 others, checking out the local styles, singing a few hymns, praying alongside of those who are praying, and leaving after maybe a tear or two falls! **REAL** relationships take time **ALONE**. Really listening. Really getting to know one another’s hearts. Vibrant relationships require time and commitment. Time set aside and devoted in whole to building the relationship and developing a closer tie day-by-day!

Many of us who homeschool **KNOW** this...but, do our routines truly reflect our passion for God? We all need our time with God as a first priority in life! If nothing else is done each day, why not the quiet times? Why not a few moments of solitude spent one-on-one with God each day? Why not a few moments to pour out our hearts to the Lord and let Him pour forth His heart into ours? Yes. This is **THE MAIN THING!**

I know this. However, often I myself find the struggle is more for the to-do’s than for my relationship with God **OR** with the children. If we value the relationships the most, we find that our priority becomes that time to talk, read, relax, and even work together. Yes, there is always more work to do than there is time to do it. We must accept that reality while planning the time that we devote to that work around time with God and each other!

### **FAMILY!!!**

This brings me to the next area that must be a priority when setting up a routine that will really work: **Wrap the entire schedule around family life!**

For many, many years, I tried to set our whole routine around the model of “school.” We set our “school lessons” during the same hours as the public schools. We even took the days off that they took off, except for Summer break!

I was proud of the “work” that was being done, but it seemed that little things would knock me “off-my-rocker!” Little things would throw my whole life into chaos.

Finally, the Lord began to convict me about seeking out a whole “lifestyle” of learning, not merely “school at home.” A lifestyle that got back to His design for the family in the first place!

I knew deep in my heart that if I were going to have a “lifestyle” of learning, then it meant that our daily routine would have to be more relaxed, slower paced, and wrapped around our family life. This was in direct contrast to our family life being wrapped around “school.” The difference was immeasurable!

Daddy was no longer an inconvenience, but the central figure of our home-life! He could at last be the “King of His Castle” and “Priest of our Home.”

Lessons did not have to rely on textbooks—but, many of the lessons could at last come from our life **TOGETHER** as a family!

The difference is like setting a bird free from the cage in which all of her life has been spent, so at last she could fly free!

So, want a very important suggestion for establishing a do-able routine just for **YOUR** family? Wrap life around being a family! Learn together. Learn from each other. Set up a lifestyle of learning that can go on for generations to come!

### What ARE We REALLY Supposed to Teach???

Learning can be just this simple! The education of our day has become entirely **TOO** complex and abstract! So, what **ARE** we supposed to be teaching anyway???

**Teach your children the SKILLS TO LEARN and give them a PASSION for learning!** Knowing this can make all of the difference in the world when you are setting up a **DO-ABLE** routine!

How? Well, many hours are wasted in many children’s lives each day. **EVEN** those that homeschool. Curriculum companies have convinced us that we need books to teach Spelling, Grammar, Literature, Language Arts, Phonics, Reading, Vocabulary...and that just covers **LANGUAGE ARTS!!!**

Going back to the old paths, we find that education just 100 years ago was so much more simpler. In addi-

tion, that same education trained up thinkers who became the writers, artists, composers, theologians, politicians, inventors, and scientists that were world-changers! Today, the fruit of our educational system is much too sparse!

What DO you need? Well, our children need a time set aside each day to learn, practice, and use skills of learning. What do those skills include? They include: reading, writing, math, research, record-keeping, and later communicating what they have been learning. From the time our children are very, very young, they need daily time set aside in our routines for their skills of learning to be learned and utilized!

Another thing that is needed in our every day schedule is TIME to pursue areas of our children's personal interests. This is the ONLY way to truly encourage a love of learning in our children. Yes, little children do LOVE learning. They love everything. But, their love of learning will dry up unless they have the skills to continue learning for their whole life and eventually, the time and encouragement to spend time learning deeper in areas of their interests.

The keys to lifelong learning are these two aspects of woven together. You can't have one without the other. Without skills to learn a child will eventually get frustrated when even trying to learn. Without a love of learning, our children could possess all of the skills of learning, but never use those skills without an assignment and a deadline set up externally for them!

I wanted more! I wanted for my children to have the skills to learn AND a love of learning that guaranteed that they would use those skills to learn for the rest of their lives! These two goals helped me to set up my daily routine to help me offer a balanced education to my children.

Our daily routine includes a set time each day to learn and develop their skills of learning through a daily table time. Our daily table time covers a daily time of Bible Study as a family, daily Copywork in our Notebooks, daily Math lessons, and daily Foreign Language lessons. Our children know what to expect so there is no guesswork involved, thus our daily stress of making small decisions of what to do each day is alleviated!

Plus, our children know what it takes to get their table time finished so we can work as a family on other projects. The family time is just as important as academics, if not more so! Family time for our family may mean something different for our family than yours—it should since every family is completely different! One day Harold may work with the children on rebuilding an old automobile. (Tomorrow it looks like they will be working on changing my brake pads on my car!) Another day Harold may work with the children on a project needed for building our office. Every day is different, but the lessons still have the bottom line—we take the time with the children to teach them the things that REAL families need to know. They learn practical skills by learning how to work with their hands. They learn character qualities as they have to use them in working as a family. They learn social skills as they learn to work together with us and with those



## Homeschooling The Easy Way Manual

that God brings along our paths. Yep, this is another important aspect of learning!

But, this is not all! All work and no play is not the way that God designed us! I mentioned that love of learning, huh? Well, we try to have a quiet time of the day that each of us can pursue areas of interests. The children USE those skills of learning that they have learned and continue to learn through the years during this time! Actually probably more in depth than during our table time!

Right now, I am writing this article. Matthew is reading about Glock Autopistols (surprised??). Elisabeth is reading about cats AND drawing sketches of her favorites in her "notebook." And, Harold is leisurely reading about flying. We are "using" those skills to learn more, but this is not because of assignments. Rather, we are using the skills we have to fill our minds with that necessary daily food to keep us inspired and growing!

Take a look at your routine to see if it allows short times to learn and practice the skills of learning (long times will burn ALL of you out and possibly do more damage than good!) and if there is enough time to pursue those interests that would instill of love of learning???

### Oops...Stiff or Flexible???

Yep! The hardest thing in the world for me as we began homeschooling was to learn that MY plans were not always GOD'S PLANS! Shocking huh???

Once I learned to be more flexible things really got much, much better! My plans never took into account those gorgeous sunny days in JANUARY! Nor did my plans take into consideration the moments that needed to be seized to really teach the heart of my children. Know what I mean?

So, remember that you can **feel free to alter any given routine!**

As we go through life, we find that life is so short. The sunny moments simply must be snatched along the way. Some lessons only come along once in a lifetime!

Even in Charlotte Mason's schools, she would ring a bell on nice days and set off for an all day expedition! Can we be this spontaneous? Yes, duty calls and responsibilities should be accepted habitually. BUT, all the duty and responsibility is out of balance without the liberty to enjoy life and its spontaneity...without time to make precious memories!

### Choose the BEST!

All through the years, we will face opportunities and options to include so much in the education of our

## Homeschooling The Easy Way Manual

children. One of the blessings of homeschooling today is that there are so many wonderful activities and lessons. We have everything from field trips to online classes...coops to civic events...sports to geography bees. The sky is truly the limit!

We all want for our children to have ALL of the advantages that we can give them. However, somewhere we have to choose the very best! There are so many GOOD things. Those good things can battle against our focus so that we do not have time for the very BEST things! It just takes a little while before our routines are so overcrowded with truly great activities, but no real substance!

We have to be constantly de-cluttering when it comes to time. We all have only 24 hours in each and every day. These days are flying by. We need to redeem the time and use each moment as God wants for us to use it!

We need to KNOW where we are going? Why are we doing what we are doing? Are we stressed out (just ask the kids!)? Can we stay home just ONE day? How are our children behaving? (These can be little warning signs to let us know if we are doing too much or if the things that are really not important!). Is more really better? Are the things that we are doing TRULY the BEST? Is MORE really better? What CAN go?

I tend to get so busy that I don't have time to stop and think. I don't have enough margin to slow down for even thirty minutes to watch the sunset. Unless I constantly guard my lifestyle all becomes "go-go-go...rush-rush-rush!" Yes, busy with stuff that is of very little or no value for me or my family! Stuff...when I want the BEST!

We must be very particular! We must reach for the BEST! We must guard our routine to be sure that we MAKE time for the important...the eternal! Everything in our day must be evaluated from an eternal perspective leaving only those things that work toward the very best!

We need to schedule in time to plan...time to set goals...time to re-fill our cups! Otherwise, we are no good for families and friends! We need this time so that we can make those important decisions KNOWING that we have had time to really hear God and KNOW His perfect will for our children! So much responsibility! LIVES that we affect with daily decisions! But, it is not just decisions. We also have to be filled up with GOOD stuff or we cannot pour forth into the lives of those we love the most! Well, we can pour forth...but, I don't think those around me want what I have to offer apart from my daily time with Jesus! We need to slow down, be filled up, so we are prepared DAILY to pour forth into the lives of others!

Easier said than done, I know! I have those days that my whole daily routine is upset. I can begin the day fine with my quiet time (so of course it is not ME!!). Yet, the moment I come in contact with my family their attitudes throw me for a loop! (after ALL I do to train them right!!!!)

## Homeschooling The Easy Way Manual

That is when we need it even more! The routine is nothing if we lose sight of the most important things: building relationships, discipling our children up in the Lord, and making memories! But, even these things are utterly impossible unless we have time with the Lord! I KNOW how hard this can be!

When my children were little, I thought I would never be able to have a quiet time without wiping breakfast cereal (spilled, of course) out of my Bible! Yet! That time was priceless! It carried me through! It laid the foundation for my relationship with God AND for my children to KNOW how to spend their quiet times with the Lord! GO FIGURE!

If you see this as an impossibility, go to the Lord! Tell Him all about it. I assure you beloved! He WILL provide. He'll provide exactly what YOU need, but you need to trust that He will. Diligently ask for His help!

Then, as our cups are filled...we must offer our families the VERY BEST! We must guard the family routine to be sure that we MAKE time for the important...the eternal!

We need to schedule in time to learn...time to play...time to make sweet, sweet memories...time to really enjoy our children! Oh, time to fill their little cups!

We only have our children for just a little while. For those with children that are now towering over their heads, we only have our children just a little while longer! Let us establish a home centered on GOD... FAMILY...REAL LEARNING...forsaking all to choose the VERY, VERY BEST!

What will happen? Oh, the stress will lessen. The eternal will happen. The world will pass by. And, you will have a legacy, a legacy that God designed from the foundation of the earth for the godly homeschool family!

Happy Homeschooling!



Excerpted from Homeschooling! The Easy Way Magazine Volume 2, Issue 1

# Schedule PLEEEEEEASSEE!

Help I Don't Know Where to Begin???

By Cindy Rushton



What about setting up a schedule that can really be done???

Need tips for setting up a schedule THE EASY WAY! Ready? Here are some quick tips for you to consider in your quiet time:

- ♥ **Look at your life...**What is going on? What is your husband's schedule? What are each of your children needing? How much CAN you balance and still be effective? What is most important for each and every day—to help meet your goals, to help you teach the most needed studies, to help you balance teaching each of your children?
- ♥ **What are your goals...**What is most important for your family? Where do you want to be next—potty training? Obedience? Reading? Writing without tears? Multiplication tables? What do you need to help you reach your goals?
- ♥ **What does EACH child need?** To learn to read? Write? Play? Chores? Time to research a topic of interest? Let this be the “main thing” until they “get it.”
- ♥ **What needs to be done each day?** Think through and possibly discuss with your husband what YOUR family “should” get done in a day. Harold and I decided that our priority was for the following to be done EVERY DAY: Quiet-times, Chores, Table-time, Family time, Free time to pursue interests, Ministry/Business/Apprenticeships, and Read Alouds. Having a general idea of what we found to be MOST important helped us to relax when we had “interruptions” and “distractions” that are inevitable in a real home. On those WONDERFUL days (don't think there are MANY of those in one year!), we can get up earlier and get all done early in the day, allowing more time for Family Time and Free Time. On those days that the morning is shorter than desired, we can roll into the basic frame work without stress and frustration throwing us off. Oh! We also have our family schedule flexible in consideration to our traveling schedule and Harold's always changing work schedule. Look at what needs to be done and how it can RELIABLY be accomplished in a day. SCHEDULE in those naps...plenty of play time...and most importantly, your quiet time!
- ♥ **Most importantly! Go to God** and see what HIS priorities are for each and every day! Everything can be on paper and still not work. If there is one thing that I have learned DEEPLY this year it is that each day is truly the Lord's day. He has a perfect schedule for each day. While He wants for us to have our days ordered, He still wants complete surrender to Him for those days that He has a special “lesson” for our whole family (including MOM!) to learn! Sooo, most importantly go to God each and every day with your schedule on the altar! You will have the best year yet!

# A School Day in a Charlotte Mason Homeschool

By Cindy Rushton

Excerpted from A Charlotte Mason Primer



So, what does this education look like in the home? There are as many applications of the Charlotte Mason Approach as there are families. There is no right or wrong way to implement these ideas...just take these wonderful ideas and implement them your own way! That is just what we have done...our own way! In our home we have implemented a well-rounded plan for our lifestyle of learning. Our plan includes seven aspects of a Real Education. Come join us as we walk through our typical day in our Charlotte Mason Homeschool...

- ♥ **Quiet Times...**Our days begin with each family member having his/her own personal quiet time. This is not pre-determined by me. Each member of our family spends their quiet time based on their own abilities and preferences for study and worship. The one thing that is determined as a standard is the set time and the respect for the quiet time of one another.
- ♥ **Chores...**Usually each family member rolls on into this aspect of our day as they finish their Quiet Time. Because our quiet times vary in time, this was the next logical time for our day. The children are expected to do their portion of the chores. They feed their animals...help to clean the house...help with maintenance of our vehicles...etc. These things are usually checked over while everyone gets ready for our "table time."
- ♥ **Table Time...**This is the time each day that we teach the skills necessary for our children to learn on their own. We have short lessons in Bible Study/Bible Memory, Reading, Writing, Latin/Greek, and Math. These lessons are based on their individual abilities and speed rather than on any certain grade level. We have found that having a set time each day with set expectations has helped our children to work independently at earlier ages...become responsible for their own individual progress...and develop an enjoyment of these often tedious studies!
- ♥ **Family Time...**Our family time is at a different time of the day than many families. We have to finish our work early in the day so that we can enjoy our morning and early afternoon with my husband. I used to wonder just why my husband would not help me teach "subjects" that I "deemed" as important. Well, it was because he had much more important things to teach than a mere textbook! He has the

responsibility from God to teach my children WHO HE IS. This is perhaps one of the most vital lessons taught in our home. He teaches many skills that only he could teach, but that is not enough to “educate” our children in the way that God wants for our children to be educated. He has to teach his love for God...his life story/message...his wisdom...his knowledge...his understanding. There are so many lessons that are more vital than a mere subject and those lessons are taught in our moments with him. This time usually frees me up somewhat because often my children spend time with my husband while I catch up on my responsibilities. I have been amazed to see the abilities of my children at such young ages...but it all comes from “catching” who my husband is...what a family is like...and who we are as a family!

- ♥ **Productive Free Time...** This is the time that our children have free each day to pursue interests, hobbies, and studies that they would like to pursue on their own. If you were to come into our home, you would find our children doing a whole host of things that they enjoy. Our typical day is a mix of anything from observing and studying nature to writing books to helping dad build/fix things to sketching prints studied in our picture studies to “dancing” to Classical Music to climbing trees to playing dress up to re-enacting a war to running to playing to doing crafts to practicing instruments to extending hospitality to our extended family and friends...so on! These things may not seem like “school” but they are actually the most productive times of learning for our family!
- ♥ **Ministry...** This is one area of our lives that has afforded the most opportunities for our children to be trained up for their callings. Although we do primarily minister in many obvious ways, we also take great delight in the little acts of service that are less obvious and what I would call “quiet ministry.” This includes making cards for the sick...praying for those on our hearts...taking meals to those in need...smiling at and encouraging those who are weary and worn along the way (gas station, grocery store, bookstore, library...so on!)...sharing hand-me-downs...offering hospitality...carrying books/boxes/etc...pushing shopping carts into stores...cleaning the house so mom can have more time to write/bake/sew for others...so on. The ideas are unlimited! Our training ground for our little “missionaries” is within our own home. This training needs to be a part of every day life for all committed Christians!
- ♥ **Family Reading...** This is one of our most treasured times of the day! Actually if you were able to come into our home during this time, you would consider this one of the most “quaint” times of our day. We usually do our family reading right before bedtime. Because I have a personal LOVE for tea and coffee time, we usually have a ritual of making up hot tea or mocha coffee or hot chocolate along with some light snacks. We curl up with our steaming cups and goodies while we take turns reading our Daily Bible Reading selection, next chapter of our Read Alouds (we alternate between Classics, Biographies, Stories, Fables, Animal Stories, etc...), and cuddle up to share observations and thoughts about Art Prints. This is such a special part of our day...yet, the time that we “cover” all the things that I desire for my children to study before they are grown!

This ends the typical day in OUR Charlotte Mason Homeschool! Perhaps, you can gain a glimpse into the riches of this approach "revived" from this dear woman. The approach and philosophy of Charlotte Mason brings gentleness and freedom into educating children toward their callings in life. The ideas of this dear lady live on because they are built upon premises that are as old as time. Truly, we can agree that "Education is an Atmosphere, a Discipline, and a Life!"



Excerpted from *A Charlotte Mason Primer*.  
Companion tapes are ALSO available!

# What About Teaching the Older Child???

By Cindy Rushton

Excerpted from *Nature Study...The EASY Way!*



Something happens...we begin our years of parenting with little ones who know absolutely nothing about life! They are dependent upon us to teach them how to talk...how to walk...how to respond to others...how the world works...and most importantly, the purpose of life! By and large, parents do a great job. They find themselves living a life of true fullness...learning many things that they had never learned before and teaching whom they are to these little sponges gathered around them. Then comes kindergarten...

One of the beauties of Homeschooling is that parents do not have to trade in this fulfillment for the "trappings" of the public or private school "schooling" that looms over their heads. They CAN continue this process of teaching their children at home...and continue successfully too! Well, that is until their children get to High School...NOT!

There is something within even the most dedicated Home Educator that questions what to do with High School in every area of study (not just Nature/Science Studies) you know as the children get "older" and need preparation for "real life?" Well, upper level studies need not stump a parent. Instead, they can become the bridges that prepares the children fully for their calling in life!

If this is so, why do parents swap the easy, natural, simple methods of teaching children for the artificial, boring, and difficult techniques common in our day? I think it is because of several very common misconceptions.

## Gap-i-tis???

First of all, parents struggle with a big fear called "Gap-i-tis." You are probably giggling as you read this. Trust me, I know that we have all dealt with this one! I have...because this is a biggie! There is a temptation to assume that a certain list of suggested studies assures us of a "gap-less" education. The truth is that just sticking to a list of studies designed by someone else actually causes many gaps and holes in the individualized program that God has planned for every single child.

There is never enough time for children to learn everything that is to be learned about every single thing we could learn about during our lives. Now, this may lead us to another danger, thinking that children



should at least have a nodding acquaintance with everything. If this were truly possible, which it is not, there would still be no depth, which is necessary for true understanding to occur. Charlotte Mason had a different plan for children. She said,

“Our aim in Education is to give a Full Life...We owe it to them to initiate an immense number of interests...Life should be all living, and not merely a tedious passing of time; not all doing or all feeling or all thinking—the strain would be too great—but, all living; that is to say, we should be in touch wherever we go, whatever we hear, whatever we see, with some manner of vital interest. We cannot give the children these interests; we prefer that they should never say they have learned botany, conchology, geology, or astronomy. The question is not,—how much does the youth know? When he has finished his education—but how much does he care? And about how many orders of things does he care?

In fact, how large is the room, in which he finds his feet set? And, therefore, how full is the life he has before him? I know you may bring a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink. What I complain of is that we do not bring our horse to the water. We give him miserable little textbooks, mere compendiums of facts, which he is to learn off and say and produce at an examination; or we give him various knowledge in the form of warm diluents, prepared by his teacher with perhaps some grains of living thought to the gallon. And all the time we have books, books teeming with ideas from the minds of thinkers upon every subject to which we can wish to introduce children.”

Our role is to give our children a full life. A life that is brought in contact with an immense number of interests, but also full of relationships with what they are studying. This life will safe-guard the child from any chance of “Gap-i-tis.” It will instill a love of learning while teaching the children how to learn for themselves. They can go on to learn all during their life regardless of any hindrances or obstacles that might come their way. They will be prepared for their calling!

### Ignorance???

A second hindrance to pursuing real education for the older child is ignorance. It is so easy to just do what we have seen modeled before us. Often there is no questioning to the “way” that things are done. God wants for us to live our lives trusting in Him and His Way of preparing our children for His call on their lives. He does not have a “one-size-fits-all” method of preparation, nor does He expect us to trust on the methods of “people” for training up His children. In Jeremiah 17: 5-8 God says, “**Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**”

We have to take time to let God teach us each step of the way. His voice is often unheard as we move toward the older years of teaching our children because there are so many “experts” clattering loudly for our attention...giving their ideas and instilling fear and bondage in our hearts! In Matthew 11: 28-30 Jesus